

Revelation

23

Chapter 21

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2 Peter 3:10-13

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

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Genesis 1:1 says – In the beginning, God created the heavens (plural) and the earth. When the Day of the Lord comes, the original ‘heavens’ and earth will be done away, and replaced by a new heaven (singular) and a new earth.



Three 'heavens' at creation



One 'heaven' after the day of the Lord

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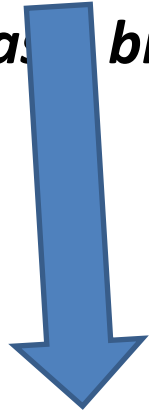
In verse 2 the new Jerusalem is symbolized as a bride dressed for her husband. The ‘new Jerusalem’ is symbolic of the church, the faithful Christians, the city of God where all of God’s family dwells.



2 Corinthians 11:2 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. (The church is the bride of Christ)

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Hebrews 12:22-24

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

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Ephesians 5:22-24

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

The new Jerusalem is the home of the church, Christians, faithful to God, where we will live with God forever

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

The fellowship with God that existed in Eden will be restored. God will be with His people as He used to walk with Adam and Eve in the garden, so He will now be with them forever.

2 Corinthians 6:16-18 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

¹⁷ Therefore, “Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.” ¹⁸ And, “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’ ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

God will wipe away all tears and will make everything new and sinless. No more death or mourning or crying or pain – no more of the problems brought on by sin.

⁶ He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

**Alpha – beginning of Greek alphabet,
Omega – the end of it**

Revelation 1:8

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

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The ‘water of life’ is the source of eternal life – God has supplied it by His grace to those who are thirsty for the truth.

John 4:5-14 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, ⁶ Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. ⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” ...⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” ...¹³ Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

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John 7:37-38

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”

⁸ But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

Those excluded from heaven include:

Cowardly – those who refuse to take a stand for God

Unbelievers – those who refuse to accept the truth, but follow their own ideas

Vile – those who openly reject God’s ways and follow evil

Murderers – those who kill the innocent (infants or adults)

Sexually immoral – those who follow their own passions and reject God’s life plan

Practice magic arts – contact the dead, demons, practice deception

Idolaters – those who follow any god other than the Lord

Liars – those who do not speak the whole truth of God’s word

These will be separated from God in the lake of burning sulfur

Revelation

Lessons 23,24

Revelation Chapters 21,22

7 PM

March 6, 2024

Arlington Church of Christ

John now sees a symbolic vision of heaven. Each of the descriptions given has a symbolic scriptural significance:

Beginning with Rev 21:9

⁹ One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

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The ‘bride’, ‘the wife of the Lamb’, ‘the holy city- the new Jerusalem’ – all these represent the eternal church (heaven) – the place where God dwells with His people. It is described as a walled ‘city’ symbolizing the place of security and protection to the people at that time.

On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The gates with the names of the twelve tribes are symbolic of those who obeyed God in the Old Covenant. The fact that there were three on each side are symbolic of the way the tribes would camp around the tabernacle of the Lord. (Numbers 2)

Has 12 gates, and 12 foundations => '12' being symbolic of religious completeness. 'gates'= tribes of Israel (those who were faithful under the Old Testament)

. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³ **There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west.** ¹⁴ **The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**

In describing a vision of the ‘city of God’ in Ezekiel 48:31-35 the gates of the city will be named after the tribes of Israel. The three gates on the north side will be the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah and the gate of Levi. ³² “On the east side, which is 4,500 cubits long, will be three gates: the gate of Joseph, the gate of Benjamin and the gate of Dan. ³³ “On the south side, which measures 4,500 cubits, will be three gates: the gate of Simeon, the gate of Issachar and the gate of Zebulun. ³⁴ “On the west side, which is 4,500 cubits long, will be three gates: the gate of Gad, the gate of Asher and the gate of Naphtali. ³⁵ “The distance all around will be 18,000 cubits.

“And the name of the city from that time on will be: THE LORD IS THERE.”

14 The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The foundations had the names of the twelve apostles. Symbolic of all who obey the Lord in the New Covenant

Ephesians 2:19-20 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

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Note the numerical significance of the description :

12 => the religious completeness of the city

3 => the divine perfection of the city

15 The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. 16 The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. 17 The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 (12X12) cubits thick. 18 The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. 19 The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

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The size of the city is symbolically shaped as a cube – 12,000 stadia on a side (1400 miles) This is symbolic of room for all .

Consider: this is longer than the distance from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean. Also consider that our current earth's atmosphere is only 300 miles high while this is 1400 miles high !

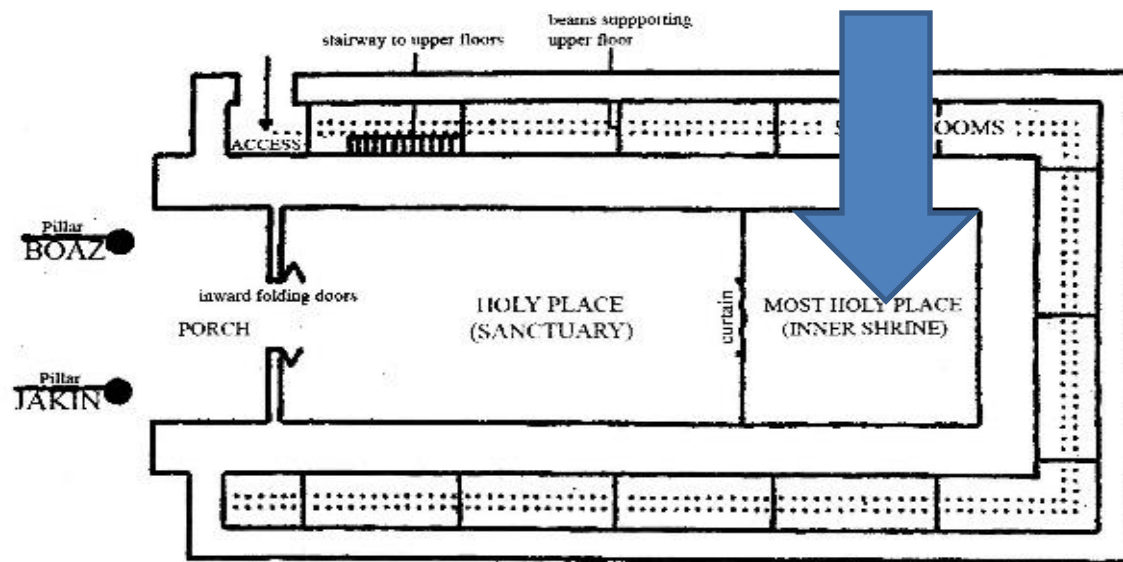
Symbolically 12 (religious completeness) X 1000 (a large amount)

The 'cube' shape is significant – Old Testament symbolism

In Solomon's temple, the Holy of Holies was a room in a cube shape. 1 Kings 6:20

The Holy of Holies was twenty cubits long, twenty wide and twenty high. He overlaid the inside with pure gold, and he also overlaid the altar of cedar.

The Holy of Holies was the place where God dwelled in the temple. Now the whole city of the heavenly Jerusalem is the place where God dwells.



¹⁹ The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

Compare to the stones on the High priest's breastplate:

¹⁷ Then mount four rows of precious stones on it. The first row shall be carnelian, chrysolite and beryl; ¹⁸ the second row shall be turquoise, lapis lazuli and emerald; ¹⁹ the third row shall be jacinth, agate and amethyst; ²⁰ the fourth row shall be topaz, onyx and jasper.

Two are missing – **tribes of Dan and Ephraim (unfaithful) (Rev 7)**
Added were – **Tribes of Levi and Joseph (faithful)**

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The gates were each made of a single pearl. The symbolism is tied into the parable Jesus told in:

Matthew 13:45-46 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Entrance into heaven is worth everything we have !

22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. 25 On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. 26 The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. 27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

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These things are NOT in the city:

- A temple – God and Christ are its temple**
- The sun or the moon – The glory of God is the light (1John 1:6)**
- Night – there is no darkness, the gates are never shut**

- Nothing impure or shameful or deceitful, only those who have obeyed the gospel (names written in Book of Life)**

The 'new heaven and new earth' are symbolic of the new spiritual place that will exist. These are not literal physical places as they will be inhabited by spiritual bodies that will last forever. Time will no longer exist as we know it – but it will be one eternal day.

It will not be a 'refurbished earth' as this physical earth and indeed the whole universe will be destroyed. It will be something spiritual beyond our comprehension.