

A Peek Inside

Revelation 21:21--22:5

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- *“Never judge a book by its cover!”*
- The external view of our heavenly home is breathtaking!
 - Most distinguishing characteristic is the radiance of God’s glory
 - The city will glisten like one flawless diamond
 - The dimensions of our heavenly city are huge!
- But what is on the inside of our heavenly city?

A Peek Inside!

- Revelation 21:21--22:5 -- *“The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.”*

A. The Streets of the City are pure gold, like transparent glass!

1. **In Biblical times, gold was considered to be a very precious metal.**
 - a. God blessed Abraham with plenty of gold
 - Genesis 13:2-- *“Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.”*
 - b. Much of the furnishings of the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle were either made of gold or gold-plated.
 - c. In Solomon’s temple, gold was everywhere.
 - 1 Kings 7:48-50-- *“Thus Solomon had all the furnishings made for the house of the LORD: the altar of gold, and the table of gold on which was the showbread; the lampstands of pure gold, five on the right side and five on the left in front of the inner sanctuary, with the flowers and the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold; the basins, the trimmers, the bowls, the ladles, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner room (the Most Holy Place) and for the doors of the main hall of the temple.*
 - d. The incredible opulence of Solomon’s house
 - 1 Kings 10:14-- *“The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold.”*
 - 1 Kings 10:18-- *“made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold.”*
 - 1 Kings 10:21-- *“All King Solomon’s drinking vessels were gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon.”*

2. **Today, gold is still considered to be one of the most precious metals we have.**
3. **The fact that the streets of our heavenly city are paved in gold...**
 - a. Accentuates the incredible beauty of our future home.
 - 1 Corinthians 2:9-- *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*
 - b. Demonstrates that what we value down here on earth will be valueless in heaven.
 - Matthew 6:19-21-- *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

B. No Temple found inside!

- Revelation 21:22-- *"But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple."*
1. **Every notable city of antiquity had at least one central temple.**
 2. **Jerusalem has had and will have a series of Temples**
 - a. Solomon's temple replaced by Zerubbabel's / Herod's temple
 - b. Tribulation temple
 - c. Millennial temple of Ezekiel 40-48
 3. **Earthly temple was the place where the Holy God met with, had a relationship with unholy people.**
 - a. In the Holy of Holies, atonement was made for the sins of the people, covering the sins so that a Holy God could reside among an unholy people.
 - b. The High Priest on the Day of Atonement would offer a blood sacrifice for his sins and the sins of the nation.
 - c. Jesus Christ's blood sacrifice makes it possible for us to be reconciled to God and to boldly come into God's presence.
 - d. During the Millennial kingdom, blood sacrifices will once again resume as a memorial, looking back at Christ's death on the cross, and as a means of ritual cleansing from ritual uncleanness.
 4. **But in the Eternal Kingdom, there will be NO TEMPLE!**
 - a. No need for blood sacrifices since all inhabitants of heaven will have glorified bodies. We will all be sinlessly perfect so we can be in God's presence forever and ever.
 - b. For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
 - 1) Their blazing glory will fill the new heaven and earth.
 - Revelation 21:23-24-- *"For The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it."*
 - 2) We will be constantly living in God's presence
 - Revelation 21:3-- *"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God."*
 - c. The entire celestial city is one big temple.
 5. **A review of the other things missing in the new heavens and earth.**

C. The River of Living Water and the Tree of Life.

- Revelation 22:1-2-- *“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”*
1. **Ezekiel’s Vision of a similar river during the Millennium**
 - a. The river flows from the threshold of the Temple.
 - Ezekiel 47:1-2-- *“Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side.”*
 - b. The effects of the river are similar to the ones in Revelation
 - Ezekiel 47:7-9-- *“When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. Then he said to me: ‘This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes.’”*
 - Ezekiel 47:12-- *“Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.”*
 - 1) The River will flow from the temple down the Jordan River, and empty into the Dead Sea.
 - 2) The water will turn the highly saline water into fresh water.
 - 3) Fish and aquatic plants will thrive along the river and in the formerly “dead” sea.
 - Ezekiel 47:10-- *“It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many.”*
 - 4) Along the banks of the river will grow all kind of trees for food and for medicine.
2. **John’s Vision of our Eternal Home**
 - Revelation 22:1-2-- *“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”*
 - a. **“Pure river of water of life”**
 - 1) Flowing from the presence of God, down the street, and out into the new world.
 - 2) The symbolism of this flowing, pure river of water of life.
 - a) Symbolic of the purity and holiness of God and the city.
 - b) “Living water” is the water of eternal life.
 - John 4:13-14-- *“Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”*
 - John 7:37-38-- *“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”*

b. **The “tree of life”**

- Revelation 22:2-- *“In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”*

1) Originally planted in the garden of Eden to provide immortality. But when Adam and Eve sinned, they were expelled from the garden lest they eat of the tree and live forever.

- Genesis 3:22-24-- *“the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’— therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”*

2) In heaven, the “tree of life” ...

a) will provide for those who are immortal.

b) will be the source of spiritual blessings.

- Proverbs 3:18-- *“She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her.”*
- Proverbs 11:30-- *“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.”*
- Proverbs 15:4-- *“A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.”*

c) will be for our health and well-being

c. Adam and Eve were barred from eating the fruit from the “tree of life”, but for you and I who are trusting in Christ, we’ve been promised that we can eat of it.

- Revelation 2:7-- *“To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”*

1) We’ve been promised all the blessings of heaven because we’ve accepted Jesus’ gracious invitation and drank freely of the water of life.

- Revelation 22:17-- *“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”*

2) The offer still stands today for sinners to *“come, and take of the water of life freely.”*