

Revelation 21:9-22:5

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. 12 Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. 14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. 16 The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. 17 Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. 18 The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 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.

22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 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. 24 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. 25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. 27 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.

Revelation 22

22:1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 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. 3 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. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 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.

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In Chapter 21:1-8 John saw the New Heaven and the New Earth inaugurate the Age to Come. By several symbolic names, the Church of the Redeemed of the Lamb is ushered into eternity. The bride of the Lamb is complete. All of God’s elect have been taken to heaven and time is no more.

In 21:6 God Himself declares that “It is finished”. “It is finished” were the last words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ as He gave up His righteous life for guilty sinners. At the beginning of eternity future, all that God ever purposed in eternity past has been done. Now is the fulfillment of God’s promise spoken to Satan in the Garden of Eden [Genesis 3:15]. This prophecy was still future to John and now after two thousand years it is future to us. But the certainty of this prophecy being fulfilled is as sure as the words of Him whose name is Faithful and True [19:11]. All prophecy is about Jesus in some way or another, “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” [19:10].

Find Revelation 21:9-10 in your Bible. The bride is the Lamb’s wife and she is seen symbolically as the great city, and the holy Jerusalem.

21:9-10

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God...

The Book of Revelation
“The New Jerusalem”

You will never appreciate the mysterious beauty of the apocalyptic language of the Revelation of Jesus Christ as long as you are shackled to literalism. How can this great city be anything other than symbolic of the Church when Christ, the Lamb of God, is given a bride who is seen as the great city?

Remember what the concept of a city is; a community of people who have the same interests. The harlot city of Babylon is the people who succumb to her seduction and they are only interested in materialism, sexual immorality, lies, and selfishness. The city of God is the New Jerusalem, those who have repented and have Jesus Christ as their only hope for eternal life.

In 21:27 we are told that the inhabitants of the holy Jerusalem are pure.

“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.”

Paul gives us a description of the Bride of Christ in Ephesians 5:22-33:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

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So in verse 9 “the bride, the Lamb’s wife” is pointed out by one of the seven angels. But notice that the bride of the Lamb is the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God. And in verse 27 they are “only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.”

When were their names written in the Lamb’s Book of Life?

We are told back in 13:8 that those who worship the blasphemous beast are those whose names are **not** written in the Book of Life of the Lamb from the foundation of the world. Is that far enough back in time for you? Before God created the heavens and the earth He had chosen a people who would hear the Gospel, they will repent and keep on repenting and continue believing in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Listen carefully. Most of you have heard and read these next verses and probably have memorized them. But there may be someone that God intends to hear this that has resisted the truth of God’s sovereign choice in the election of grace that may just now by God’s grace “have ears to hear.” To “have ears to hear” means to hear and submit rather than only to perceive and ignore.

John 6:35-40

35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. 36 But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. 37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:43-46

43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. 44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

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John 17:1-5

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

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In Chapter 21, John saw the holy Jerusalem.

Now compare the great city, the holy Jerusalem with the wicked city, Mystery Babylon that John saw in Revelation 17:1-3:

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

This is truly the “Tale of Two cities.”

The City of God is the bride of the Lamb, the New Jerusalem.

The City of the World is the harlot Babylon.

In 17:3 John is carried away in the Spirit into the wilderness to see Mystery Babylon.

In 21:10 John is carried away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain to see the New Jerusalem.

The city of the world is the city of death; the heavenly city is the city of life with the water of life and the tree of life the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. Babylon is the world system and pictured as a harlot whose trade is seduction and sin and had arisen from the earth. The New Jerusalem is holy and perfect and comes out of heaven.

Please do not get confused by the various terms used to mean the same thing. The New Jerusalem, the holy city, the Lamb's bride, the architecture of the city; all refer to the redeemed of God, the Church.

Try this.

When you hear the New Jerusalem, think the redeemed of God.

When you hear the holy city, think the redeemed of God.

When you hear the Lamb's bride, think the redeemed of God.

When we talk about the precious stones, the walls and gates of pearl; think the redeemed of God.

Do you get the idea now that this passage is about heaven and Christ and the Church of the Redeemed and that it is not a blueprint of a literal city?

Neither is John by the Holy Spirit giving us a detailed description of what heaven looks like. I really do not expect to walk on literal streets of gold and see gates made from giant pearls.

What I do look forward to is to be with my Lord Jesus Christ and in whatever form the new heaven and the new earth happens to take to be completely satisfied.

The heavenly marriage was promised in Revelation 19:6-8

6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

John sees that the wedding has now taken place:

Revelation 21:2

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

The “Thousand Years” of Revelation 20 are now complete; Satan has been cast into “the lake of fire and brimstone” and the bride of the Lamb, the Church of the redeemed, are forever with Christ.

We have pointed out that the number seven means completeness.

An excellent commentary [The Meaning and Message of the Book of Revelation](#), by Edward A. McDowell gives seven characteristics of the heavenly city, New Jerusalem and also reminds us that there are seven condemnations of the city of the world, Babylon.

1. The Perfect Glory of the New Jerusalem.

The number twelve and its multiple occur many times in the Revelation. In Chapter 4 there are 24 elders who represent the OT and the NT, the 12 tribes and the 12 apostles. In Chapter 7 the 12 mystic tribes are squared and multiplied by 1000 to equal the 144,000 and represent the “great multitude which no one could number, of all the nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne....”

In Chapter 21 John uses the number 12 seven times to show the “great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven, having the glory of God.

Look at 21:12 ff

The city has 12 gates; there are 12 angels at the gates; the names of the 12 tribes of the children of Israel are on the gates; there are 12 foundations of the wall of the city; the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb are on the foundations; the city is a perfect cube 12 by 12 by 12 thousand furlongs [furlong = 660 feet]; the wall is 12 by 12 cubits.

Much could be said to show how John uses the temple described in Ezekiel 40-48 in this heavenly vision.

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2. The New Jerusalem is a place of perfect worship.

Revelation 21:22

But I saw no temple in it,
 for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

What was the purpose of the tabernacle and the temple?

They were structures ordained by God to allow the people:

1) to step away from the world and 2), to be in the presence of God.

In the holy Jerusalem John saw no temple because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Ezekiel saw this temple and city and writes about it in Chapters 40-48. Nine chapters is a significant portion of the Bible. Might I suggest to you that apart from Revelation 21:12-22:5 you will never grasp what Ezekiel means. Perhaps even Ezekiel did not understand the meaning of his prophecy. However, Ezekiel does give us a clue to its meaning in 48:35:

and the name of the city from that day shall be: **THE LORD IS THERE.**"

John writes:

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Does it not occur to you that the same Holy Spirit that gave the prophecy to Ezekiel gave the prophecy to John in the Revelation? There can be no contradiction in the Scripture since it is all by inspiration of God.

Now I make no apology for often repeating this most significant quote from John Wilmot:

“In the Old Testament God meant what He said;
 in the New Testament God says what He meant.”

In Ezekiel God meant what He said; in Revelation God says what He meant.

Where God is there is no need for temples. To worship God in spirit and in truth does not require “aids to worship.”

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It recently occurred to me that perhaps Jesus meant more than the end of the Old Testament Jewish system of worship when He said to the woman of Samaria in John 4:21-24:

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Jesus is referring to the passing of the Old Covenant and may be prophesying of the New Jerusalem.

Even in this present age the worship of God in spirit and truth does not require visions of the Virgin in a pasture and pictures of Jesus and crucifixes and beads over which to endlessly mutter vain repetitions and ornate and gaudy buildings. How much less will we require religious props when the saints are forever with Christ in endless worship of the Lamb?

3. In the New Jerusalem there are no distinctions of race.

Revelation 21:24-26

24 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. 25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.

One of the nearly lost themes in prophetic interpretation in our time is how the OT prophets spoke of the nations [Gentiles] being included in the people of God.

In Romans 9 Paul defines the Israel of God as the election of grace that includes Gentiles, he wrote:

Romans 9:22-28

22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the

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vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

25 As He says also in Hosea:

"I will call them My people, who were not My people,
 And her beloved, who was not beloved."

26 "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,
 ' You are not My people,'
 There they shall be called sons of the living God."

27 Isaiah also **cries out** concerning Israel:

"Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea,
The remnant will be saved.

28 For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness,
 Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth."

There it is; the Israel of God [see 9:6-8] is the Church of the Redeemed made up of elect Gentiles and elect Jews.

The case for the Church is made in Ephesians.

Turn to Ephesians Chapter 3:

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles — 2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages

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has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,

11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. 13 Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

The New Jerusalem is a community of people made up of Gentiles and Jews who constitute the Church.

4. The New Jerusalem is a holy place.

Revelation 21:27

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.

Sisters and brothers if we cannot desire holiness now do not think that heaven will be our home.

5. Life is perfect in the New Jerusalem.

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. 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.

Creation begins with a marriage in a Garden called Eden which means “delight.” This passage can mean nothing less than a return to Paradise.

Compare the Garden of Eden in Genesis with the New Jerusalem.

From the first Creation to the new heaven and the new earth.

From the subtility of Satan to his being cast into the lake of fire forever and ever.

From spiritual death to life eternal.

From Eden to Paradise.

John weaves a beautiful tapestry of images from the OT.

Genesis 2:8-10

The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. 9 And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The **tree of life** was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 Now a **river** went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads.

Ezekiel 47:1-12

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. 2 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.

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3 And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. 4 Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. 5 Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. 6 He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river.

7 When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. 8 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. 9 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. 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. 11 But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. 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."

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The “tree of life” was in the midst of the Garden of Eden, and “river went out of Eden to water the garden.” In Ezekiel’s vision the stream flows from under the temple and proceeds eastward until it becomes a river too deep to cross. The river flows on to the Dead Sea, which converts it to fresh water. On the banks of Ezekiel’s river grow fruit trees which bear all year long. The river of New Jerusalem flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. On its banks grow the tree of life with leaves that are for the healing of the nations.

Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden lest they eat of the tree of life and live forever [Genesis 3:22]. God did not want Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of life and live forever in sin.

In Revelation the tree of life appears where there can be no death.

Revelation 22:3-4

3 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. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. [See Rev 14:1]

6. In the New Jerusalem there is perfect light and no darkness at all.

Revelation 22:5

There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light.

Light often stands for knowledge.

Ephesians 5:8

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

This may be a reference to the knowledge of God as it is called the “light”. Jesus said the His disciples were lights not to be hidden under a bushel. Jesus also said that He was the “light of the world” which is quite an arrogant claim unless He is God.

7. In the New Jerusalem the saints of God have perfect dominion.

And they shall reign forever and ever.

In Genesis Adam was to have dominion over the rest of creation. In Revelation the Church reigns with Christ.

One of the great themes of the Revelation is the sovereignty of God in Christ. As saints of God were are told that we will reign with Christ.

In Revelation 11:15 it is the sovereignty of Christ.

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

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In Revelation 20:4-6 John saw the martyrs and the saints reigning with Christ for the Thousand Years.

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

What a perfect ending to the drama of redemption with the saints secure in glory with their Savior forever.

Revelation 22:5

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.**

No “invitation” can have any spiritual meaning unless it demands repentance and faith. My invitation is to those who have not surrendered their will to Jesus Christ to repent and believe in the Gospel.

We do not ask anyone to make a “decision” implying that you have final control over your being saved or not. What we do is to tell you that apart from genuine commitment to Jesus Christ and repentance from sin you remain under the condemnation of God. Has the Holy Spirit touched you soul?

The elders of this church are available to counsel with you.