

Revelation 21 - Eternal State: New Heaven and New Earth; Heaven; New Jerusalem

IV. After These Things (Rev 4:1—22:21)

(3) After the Tribulation (20:1—22:21)

(c) The Eternal State (Rev 21:1—22:21)

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(2) No Luminaries (21:23)

(g) Relationship to the Nations (21:24-26)

(h) Holiness (21:27)

The Eternal Order was something unforeseen by the prophets of the OT and thus the high point of all OT prophecy was the Messianic Kingdom. The highpoint of the NT prophecy is the Eternal Order. But here again, ***while the Eternal Order description is all new, many of the symbols used within this segment are also based on the way these symbols were used in the OT.*** That would include the various stones mentioned based upon Ezek 28:13, the Tree of Life, the River of Life, and so on.

Only after the defeat of Satan (20:10) will God destroy the present earth and replace it with the new heaven and earth (21:1). With the accomplishment of the earthly, 1,000 year reign of Christ, the divine prerogative has been fulfilled. Thus, God is now free to start anew. He does so with the destruction of the present heavens and earth and the creation of the new heaven and new earth, which will occur prior to the Great White Throne Judgment.

Following the Great White Throne Judgment, there will be the creation of the New Heaven and New Earth.

The New Heaven and New Earth will be an *ex nihilo* (something out of nothing) creation, similar to God's creation of the original heavens and earth as recorded in Gen 1 (see [The Coming Kingdom 36 The Kingdom in Eternity - Part 1 \(Rev 21-22\)](#)). Unlike the present creation which is contaminated by sin (Rom 8:20-22), that even extends into the Messianic Kingdom (Zech 14:16-18; Is 65:20; Rev 20:7-10), the new creation will be completely free of sin and its influence (21:4). Moreover, Peter's description of the final destruction of the present heavens and earth by fire (2 Peter 3:7,10-13) seems incompatible with a renovation perspective. Many other areas of Scripture similarly speak of the complete destruction of the present world (Matt 24:35; 1 Cor 7:31; Heb 1:10-12; 1 John 2:17). Also, the topography and geography of the coming New Heaven and New Earth is described differently than the present heavens and Earth. While the seas (Gen 1:9-10) constitute close to 75 percent of the earth's surface, no sea will be present in the new world (21:1b). Although the luminaries such as the sun, moon and stars are a part of our world (Gen 1:14-19), such luminaries will be absent from the new world (21:23; 22:5). Although the notion of a renovated earth may fit the transition from the present world into the earthly Messianic Kingdom, it seems incompatible with the transition from the Messianic Kingdom into the Eternal State.

Is the New Heaven and New Earth that John saw the same new heaven and earth that Isaiah predicted (Is 65:17; 66:22; Cf. Ps 102:25-26; Is 51:6)? We would assume that the entities are the same since the terms that describe them are almost identical. However the descriptions of these places vary. Isaiah wrote that people will die in the new earth (Is 65:17-20), but John said there will be no more death there (Rev 21:4). Isaiah predicted that the moon will shine in the new heavens (Is 66:22-23), but John implied that there will be no moon there (Rev 21:23). Apparently Isaiah spoke of both the Millennium and the eternal state generally as new heavens and a new earth (Is 65:17—66:24), which is accurate since

even in the Millennium the world will experience renovation. John, in the progress of revelation, distinguished these two aspects of the eschaton and applied the name "new heaven and earth" only to the eternal state, which is appropriate since God will eventually destroy the present world and create a new world (Cf. 2 Peter 3:10). Isaiah's view of the future was more general while John's was more specific. Similarly the OT prophets spoke of Messiah's coming but did not distinguish the first coming from the second coming. Later revelation clarified that there would be two comings. This is in harmony with how God has revealed many things in His Word: first generally, then more specifically.

Rev 21:1 says, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away...". The same Greek word for "passed away" is used a few verses later in 21:4 in a context that speaks of complete elimination. It says, "and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

The literal nature of the Eternal State must not escape notice. In Rev 21-22 while describing the Eternal State, John uses several terms which are typically assigned a literal significance when used elsewhere in Scripture. A few such terms include the words "city," "Jerusalem" (21:2), "gold," "jasper," "glass," "wall" (21:18), "square," "miles" (21:16), "high" (21:12), "seventy-two yards" (21:17), "gates" (21:12), "pearls" (21:21), "tribes" (21:12), "foundations," "apostles" (21:14), "street" (21:21), "river" (22:1), "tree of life" (22:2), "fruit," "month," "nations," and "leaves." Although many more terms could be cited, these alone are sufficient to convey the literal nature of the Eternal State. Just as the Messianic Kingdom will be an earthly, literal, physical experience, the Eternal State will have this same literal aspect.

Because of the Davidic Covenant's (2 Sam 7:12-16) eternal nature, the reign of Christ on David's Throne will continue indefinitely even into the Eternal kingdom. 2 Sam 7:13 says, "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." 2 Sam 7:16 similarly says, "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever." Other verses which speak of the eternity of the Davidic Throne and Kingdom include: Ps 89:3-4,34-37; 45:6; 72:5,17; Is 9:6-7; Jer 33:14-17,20-21; Ezek 37:24-28; Dan 2:44; 7:13-14; Luke 1:30-33; 1 Tim 1:17; Rev 11:15.

Chafer explains the eternal Davidic kingdom and its "adjustment to the eternal state" as follows: The delivery to God of a now unmarred kingdom does not imply the release of authority on the part of the Son...The distinction to be noted lies between the presentation to the Father of a restored authority and the supposed abrogation of a throne on the part of the Son. The latter is neither required in the text nor even intimated. The picture presented in 22:3 is of the New Jerusalem in the eternal state, and it is declared that "the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it." Thus, the rule of the Father through the Last Adam,

God the Son, over creation will continue eternally in the New Heavens and New Earth. John summarizes, "They will reign forever and ever" (22:5).

To Christians, the world beyond this world is what makes the difference. Heaven gives meaning to life on earth because, in spite of rebellion and sin, this is God's world. Believers face death with hope because of their assurance that heaven is their next home. This confidence toward death gives them confidence toward life. The heavenly mansion at the end of life's pilgrimage makes a tremendous difference during the pilgrimage itself.

As great as the Millennial Kingdom will be, it's not as great as the Eternal State. For some reason, many people convolute the Kingdom with the Eternal State, but Scripture clearly differentiates the two...

Millennium Rev.20	Eternal State Rev.21-22
Sin restrained	Sin removed
Curse restrained	Curse removed
Death	No death
Mortals / resurrected	Resurrected only
Mortals Destinies undecided	All Destinies sealed
Renovation	Recreation
Temporary	Eternal
Transitional	Non-transitional

Revelation 21

(c) The Eternal State (Rev 21:1—22:21)

(i) The New Heavens & New Earth (21:1-8)

(a) A New Creation (21:1)

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth **passed away**, and there is **no longer any sea**.

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea.

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, because the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and the sea was gone.

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

- "Then I saw" - introduces the seventh "last thing" in John's chronological survey of the events of the end times

— There is a debate amongst theologians about the timing of the passing away of the earth, either at the Great White Throne judgment (20:11) or here

— In 20:11, heaven and earth "flee" from the presence of Christ sitting on the Great White Throne, but it doesn't say that the heavens and earth "passed away." So it's likely that the heaven and earth are destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:10) after the Great White Throne judgment.

- "...new heaven and a new earth" - God told Isaiah that He will "create a new heavens and a new earth" (Is 65:17), however descriptions of these places vary

— "new" [2x] - *kainos*, same word used to describe the new man of the Church (Eph 2:15)

— The Church is not a renovation of Israel, it is a "new man"; likewise, this isn't a renovation of the earth, but a completely new *ex nihilo* (something out of nothing) creation

— God will create a brand new heaven and earth to completely replace the old, which will match who we are in Christ; we are a new creation in Christ, so we deserve to live in a new creation.

— This is the fulfillment to a segment of the Lord's Prayer: "on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10)

- "...passed away" - *apérchomai*, completely done away with, never to be seen again (Cf. v4)

— God's powerful rebirth of the physical creation is similar to the new, glorified bodies of His people when they rise at the first resurrection (20:6)

— This is the fulfillment of many predictions in Scripture (Matt 24:35; 1 Cor 7:31; Heb 1:10-12; 1 John 2:17)

- "...no longer *any* sea" - a reminder of the transient nature of the present created order

— The sea is the first of seven evils that John said will no longer exist on the new earth:

1. Sea
2. Death
3. Mourning
4. Weeping
5. Pain (21:4)
6. The Curse (22:3)

7. Night (21:25; 22:5)

- Why is there no sea? It may be irrelevant, considering its current purpose and a new creation:

- 70% of earth covered to an average depth of 2.3 miles, antiseptic salinity (3.5%) purges, cleanses, and preserves our planet
- The sea today serves as a reservoir for the maintenance of the hydrologic cycle and the water-based ecology and physiology of the animal and human inhabitants of the earth
- This purging/cleansing and ecological cycles may not be necessary any longer

- Alternatively, the sea is often associated with evil:

- Jesus rebuked the sea (Matt 8:26)
- Demon swine take refuge in sea (Matt 8:30; Job 26:5-6; Is 27:1; Jonah 2:1-6; Luke 8:30-32; Ps 69:14-15)
- In John's day, the sea meant danger, storms, separation—he was on an island at the time!
- The Antichrist is described as a beast that comes up out of the sea (Dan 7:1-3,17; Is 57:20; Rev 13:1,6-8)
- The sea represents the disorder, violence, and unrest that marks the present creation (Ps 107:25-28; Is 57:20; Ezek 28:8)
- The sea is the first of seven evils that John said will no longer exist on the new earth, the other six being death, mourning, weeping, pain (21:4), the curse (22:3), and night (21:25; 22:5)
- However, nothing implies that there may not be large bodies of fresh water on the surface of the new earth. John speaks of "a river of the water of life" (22:1) on the new earth.

- There are only two things that make it from this present world into the New Heavens and New Earth:

1. The souls of people (Eccl 3:11)
2. The Word of God (Is 40:8)

[OT reference: Is 65:17; 66:22]

Many scholars argue that John described a renovation of the old creation, not a completely new heavens and new earth, created *ex nihilo* (from nothing). They have five points:

1. The exegetical argument. They argue that a proper exegesis of v5 (as well as of Matt 19:28; Acts 3:21; Rom 8:19-22; 2 Peter 3:10) suggests a renewal and refining of existing materials. In Matthew Jesus spoke of the "regeneration," in Acts Peter spoke of "the restoration of all things," and in Romans Paul wrote of the renewal of the old creation.

2. The theological argument. The view that the old universe is to be utterly destroyed and replaced suggests that the divine purposes will be frustrated by sin.
3. The Christological argument. It is difficult to believe that the earth that was sanctified by the presence and works of the incarnate Son of God is to be destroyed.
4. The soteriological or anthropological argument. There is an analogy between redeemed man and the redeemed earth. Just as there is continuity between the earthly body and the resurrection body, so there is to be continuity between the old earth and the new earth.
5. The scientific argument. The intense heat of the final conflagration will not destroy matter but will only give it a new form.

Renovation or Brand New Creation?

1. "New" (*kainos*) in Rev 21:1
2. "Passed away" (*apérchomai*) in Rev 21:1,4
3. The universal impact of sin (Rom 8:19-22)
4. Topographical changes (Rev 21:1,23; 22:5)
5. Peter's description (2 Peter 3:7,10-11,13)

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Millennium and Eternal State		
	Rev 20:1-10	Rev 21–22
Time	20:4	22:5
Luminaries	Is 30:26	21:23; 22:5
Temple	<u>Ezek 40–48</u>	21:22
Death	Is 65:20	21:4
Satanic activity	20:7	20:10
Rebellion	20:8-9	21:27

(b) A New City (21:2)

2 And I saw the holy city, **new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride** adorned for her husband.

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

2 I also saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

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

- In the same vision as v1, John saw a "city" descending out of heaven, from God (Cf. v10; 3:12; Heb 11:13-16). It was uniquely "holy" in contrast to the former (present) Jerusalem (Cf. 11:8; Is 52:1; Matt 4:5; 27:53).

- "...new Jerusalem" - this is the metropolis or capital of the New Earth, just as "old" Jerusalem was the capital during the Millennium

— The name of the city ("Jerusalem") demonstrates that the blessings of eternity are grounded in the great events that took place in and around old Jerusalem...salvation was accomplished there

— The New Heaven and New Earth will need to be created; however, the New Jerusalem will not as it already exists in the present third heaven. Once the New Earth is created, the

New Jerusalem will come down from Heaven to settle on the New Earth.

— Gal 4:26 describes New Jerusalem: "But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which **is** our mother." The "is" is present tense, indicating that it currently exists, but the earth is not yet fit to receive it.

— While the Jerusalem on the earth was continually under bondage and subjugated by various forces, the New Jerusalem in Heaven has been eternally free, and will always remain so.

— It is also described as the eternal abode of all the redeemed (Heb 12:22-24). This includes the Triune God, the entire angelic host, the Church, OT saints. Tribulation and Millennial saints aren't mentioned specifically, but they are obviously included.

- "...coming down" - when New Jerusalem descends to the earth, the distinction between heaven and earth seems forgotten. Heaven will then be on Earth.

— The Bible teaches that man's ultimate destiny is an earthly one. From this passage, believers will spend eternity on the New Earth, not in a heavenly realm removed from earthly existence.

— Some point out that John never says the New Jerusalem will come down and rest on the earth, implying that it may orbit the new earth (see quote from Pentecost below)

- "...out of heaven" - heaven is its place of origin, but earth is its destination

— Many people (Christians) have an idea about heaven that is not Biblical—that the redeemed will spend their lives in the sky. The Bible teaches, however, that man's ultimate destiny is an earthly one. This passage shows that believers will spend eternity on the new earth, not in a heavenly realm removed from earthly existence.

- "...from God" - God was the Creator, the Divine Originator

- "...prepared as a bride" - the Church as a people is described as the Lamb's "bride" (19:7)

— The use of the "bride" metaphor to describe New Jerusalem does not mean that the New Jerusalem is identical with the Church. The "bride" figure elsewhere describes the Church (19:7; 2 Cor 11:2), but here "the city" is compared to a bride.

— The bride describes different entities, each one in a separate, intimate relationship with Christ

— The OT also used the "bride" as a figure to describe Israel's relationship to God (Is 62:5; Jer 2:2; 3:20; Ezek 16:8; Hosea 2:19-20)

— Here, the term "bride" is used to describe the readiness of a place of abode. The city was "prepared as (or "like") a bride," so it cannot "be" the bride. Also, v7 says that the saints "inherit" the city, so they cannot "be" the city.

— This suggests the purity of Christ's redeemed and glorified people, the intimacy they will enjoy with Him, and the fact that they will live together in peace and joy. However, this does

not mean that Israel, the Church and the New Jerusalem are three names for the same entity.



J. Dwight Pentecost

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“It is generally agreed by interpreters...that the city seen in Revelation 21:10 is suspended over the earth...Christ will return to the earth at the second advent and He will reign on David’s throne. The center of that authority is recognized to be earthly Jerusalem. That does not necessitate the presence of Christ on that throne constantly. Christ may still reign on David’s throne over David’s Kingdom, but make the heavenly Jerusalem His place of residence with His Bride”

Heaven

- “Heaven” appears over 500x in Scripture. Hebrew: *shamayim*; Greek: *ouranos*
- These words refer to three different locations or realms: the atmosphere, the universe, and the abode of God.
 - Atmosphere: Deut 11:11,17; 28:12,24; Joshua 10:11; Ps 18:13; 147:8; Prov 23:5; Is 55:9-11; Zech 2:6; 6:5
 - Universe: Gen 1:14; 15:5; Ex 20:4; Deut 30:19; Ps 33:6; Jer 10:2; Heb 1:10
 - Abode of God: Ps 33:13-14; Is 63:15; Matt 5:16,45; 6:1,9; 7:11,21; 10:32-33; 18:10; 2 Cor 12:2; Rev 3:12; 21:10

Heaven is more than a mystical notion, imaginary dreamland, or philosophical concept. It is a real and present place in which God, the Creator of all things, lives. It is a place spoken of throughout the Bible. It is the true home of all Christians (Phil 3:20). It is where Jesus came from at the Incarnation, where He ascended after the Resurrection, and from whence He will come again to receive all those who believe in Him. It is the place which the writer of

Hebrews calls a "distant country" and for which those in his "hall of faith" longed (Heb 11:13-16).

Scripture gives us some glimpses of heaven as the throne room of God (Is 6; Ezek 1-2; Dan 7:13-16; Rev 4-5). But Scripture indicates that when eternity arrives, heaven will be located on the new earth. Throughout the Bible, the ultimate destiny of God's people is an earthly destiny. In typical dualistic Greek thought, the universe was divided into two realms: the earthly or transitory, and the eternal spiritual world. Salvation consisted of the flight of the soul from the sphere of the transitory to the realm of eternal reality. However, biblical thought always places man on a redeemed earth, not in a heavenly realm removed from earthly existence.

According to Rev 21-22, the Eternal State will begin at the end of the millennium. Eternity is distinct from the Millennial Kingdom. After the judgment, Jerusalem will be destroyed by fire along with the rest of the earth (Matt 24:35; 2 Peter 3:10). However, according to Rev 3:12 and Rev 21-22, there will be a New Heaven and New Earth, along with a new city, the New Jerusalem, which will replace the destroyed city and which will continue throughout eternity. This New Jerusalem is the "eternal city."

Jesus told his disciples in John 14:2-3 that He was going away to heaven to prepare a place for believers. It appears that this place He is preparing is the Heavenly Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem will be a heavenly city throughout eternity in that its origin is heavenly, as opposed to having been built upon this earth. However, it will be earthly in that it is physical and geographical, and will be the earthly part of the New Heavens and the New Earth that will replace the current heavens and earth after their destruction. This time the new earth will never be tainted by sin and will thus not be cursed. After this present earth has been destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:10), then the new city will descend from the heavens. The Bible describes life in heaven as full of joy, purposeful activity, and worship. The Bible speaks of at least six activities in heaven: worship, service, authority, fellowship, learning, and rest. Heaven upon the New Earth and in the New Jerusalem will be a place just as physical as our current world, but without sin or the pain caused by the curse. This is why we will receive resurrection bodies so that we can live with our Triune God in perfect fellowship in a resurrected new creation. In fact, Scripture says that the streets of the New Jerusalem will be paved with translucent gold (21:21).

When we get to heaven there will be clear recognition of others and we will be able to fellowship not only with God Himself, but also with all other believers. In His resurrection body, Jesus was clearly and readily recognized. In this same manner, we will be known and recognized to each other in heaven. We will not be nameless and faceless souls without identities. Rather, we will maintain our present identities, but in resurrected and glorified bodies that have no infirmities or faults.

Angels will be present in heaven and believers will also interact with that aspect of God's creation. Church age believers will judge them because of our union with Christ (1 Cor 6:3). Fallen angels will be judged and cast into the Lake of Fire forever (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). Thus, heaven will be populated with the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), elect angels, and all believers throughout history.

(c) A New Fellowship (21:3)

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the **tabernacle** of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be **His people**, and God Himself will be among them,

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

3 I heard a loud voice from the throne say, "See, the tent of God is among humans! He will make his home with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

- The essence of v3 is the focal point of John's whole description of the New Jerusalem: God's immediate presence with mankind. This pronouncement is anticipatory.

— The five-fold repetition of the same essential truth underscores this reality (Cf. v7,11; 22:3-4)

- "...tabernacle" - *skēnē*, not a temporary dwelling; in the Eternal State, this is best interpreted as God will "dwell" with His people forever. The habitation of God will now be with men.

— The same word is used in the LXX in reference to the tabernacle, a temporary, portable "tent" so God could "dwell" among His people (Ex 25:8-9)

— In John 1:14, John used the verbal form "to dwell" in referring to the Incarnation: "He dwelt among us." In the eternal state God will remain with His people throughout eternity.

- "...His people" - in the old Jerusalem there was one elect nation, Israel. In the New Jerusalem, many different peoples, nations, and races will make up redeemed humanity and will dwell with God in glory (Cf. 5:9).

— "people" - is plural in Greek; should be "peoples" [NASB, 1972 ed]. This hints at other people groups besides Israel in the New Jerusalem.

— The typical designation for Israel is the "people" (*laos*, singular) of God. God had promised Abraham that He would bless many peoples ("all the families of the earth")

through the patriarch (Gen 12:3; Cf. Gal 3:8,16,26-29). This is the ultimate fulfillment of that promise.

[OT reference: Lev 26:11-12; Ezek 37:27]

God's commitment to dwell among His people is His grand plan of redemption. This great promise runs through the entire Bible, occurring in its fullest form almost 50x (Lev 26:11-13; Ezek 37:27; Zech 2:10-12). The promise has three parts: (1) I will be your God; (2) You will be My people; and (3) I will dwell in the midst of you (Cf. 7:15; Gen 3:8; 17:7; Ex 6:7; 29:45; Lev 26:11-12; Num 15:41; Deut 29:13; 2 Sam 7:24; Jer 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 31:1,33; 32:38; Ezek 11:20; 34:24; 36:28; 37:23,27; Zech 2:10; 8:8; 2 Cor 6:16). God will dwell among His cleansed people, and they will experience intimate fellowship with Him. This is the supreme blessing of the New Jerusalem (Cf. Ezek 37:27; 48:35).

The Lord explicitly stated His intent to dwell with His people after He delivered Israel from Egyptian slavery. God directed Moses to build a tabernacle where God would meet with them. Throughout the wilderness wanderings, the tabernacle was at the center of the camp, representing God's presence, the center of their worship. The temple of King Solomon later replaced the tabernacle.

This fellowship existed to some extent when God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and when He dwelt among the Israelites in the tabernacle and then in the temple, hence the reference to the tabernacle (Cf. 13:6; 15:5). It also existed partially when Jesus Christ "tabernacled" among people (John 1:14). It exists today as God inhabits the bodies of Christians individually (1 Cor 6:19-20) and the church corporately (Eph 2:21-22).

(d) A New Order (21:4-5)

(1) The Old Order Passes (21:4)

4 and **He will wipe away every tear** from their eyes; and there will **no longer be any death**; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the **first things** have **passed away**."

4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There won't be death anymore. There won't be any grief, crying, or pain, because the first things have disappeared."

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: **for** the former things are passed away.

- For John to explain to finite humans what this new state is like is similar to trying to explain the concepts of relativity and quantum physics to a two-year-old

- One way John sought to explain the new state was to list five familiar things (caused by the fall of man) that would not be present:
 - "...He will wipe away every tear" - notice the future tense...this announcement is anticipatory
- This (the wiping away of tears) does not happen automatically; Jesus, the gracious Comforter, will wipe them away
- Tears of persecution, misfortune, sympathy, regret, disappointment, bereavement—God will dry them up because the cause of these will no longer be present
- The removal of tears will take place after the judgments, including the Judgment Seat of Christ, when some Christians will suffer loss of reward (1 Cor 3:15; Cf. 1 John 2:28)
 - "...no longer be *any* death" - the debilitating effects of sin will be gone
 - "...for" [KJV] - *hoti*, because; this indicates that the reason that tears and death will be removed is because the "first things" went away
 - "...first things" - the "first" things are those things associated with the old creation; the things in our world that are considered normal because of the presence of sin
- The passing of the "first things" is the means God will use to wipe tears away. The first heavens and earth have passed away (21:1,4), and tears, death, mourning, crying and pain with them.
 - "...passed away" - *apérchomai*, same verb used in v1
- How you treat the verb *apérchomai* in v4 should be the same as how you treat it in v1. If *apérchomai* cannot be describing renovation in v4, why would we interpret it to describe renovation in v1?
- It's a repetition of the same verb, by the same author, in the same context
[OT reference: Is 25:8; 35:10; 51:11; 65:19]

Absent in the Eternal State

1. Satan (Rev 20:10)
2. Sea (Rev 21:1)
3. Death, crying, pain (Rev 21:4)
4. Sun (Rev 22:5)
5. Moon (Rev 21:23)
6. Temple (Rev 21:22)
7. Night/Darkness (Rev 21:25)
8. Evil (Rev 21:27)
9. Curse (Rev 22:3)

Present in the Eternal State

1. God Himself (Rev 21:23)

2. God's Glory (Rev 21:23)
3. God's Holiness (Rev 21:27)
4. God's People (Heb 12:22-23)
5. God's City (Rev 21:2)

(2) The New Order Comes (21:5)

5 And **He who sits on the throne** said, "**Behold, I am making all things new.**" And He *said, "**Write, for these words are faithful and true.**"

5 And He who sits on the throne said, "**Behold, I am making all things new.**" And He *said, "**Write, for these words are faithful and true.**"

5 The one sitting on the throne said, "**See, I am making all things new!**" He said, "**Write this: 'These words are trustworthy and true.'**"

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, **Behold, I make all things new.** And he said unto me, **Write: for these words are true and faithful.**

- "...He who sits on the throne" - this may be the first time in Revelation in which God the Father speaks; some commentators also believe He spoke in 1:8 and 16:1

— Almighty God told John to convey this message to the struggling churches in Asia Minor, and all churches everywhere. They are words of reassurance that God will indeed make "all things new"—the new heaven and new earth.

- "...Behold" - introduces a special pronouncement

- "...these words are true and faithful" - God is vouching for the truth of what He said. He was reminding His people that these promises rest on a secure basis—the promise of God Himself.

— This is God the Father speaking directly to John the Apostle, giving him instructions to write "these words are trustworthy and true"

— This is an affirmation that the future creation of the Eternal Order is assured because the One who makes the promise is both faithful and true

— The very character of God, the One who cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18) stands behind this promise.

Former Creation vs New Creation

Genesis	Revelation
Heavens and earth created (1:1)	New heavens and earth (21:1)
Sun created (1:16)	No need of the sun (21:23)
The night established (1:5)	No night there (21:25; 22:5)
The seas created (1:10)	No more seas (21:1)
The curse announced (3:14-17)	No more curse (22:3)
Death enters history (3:19)	No more death (21:4)
Man driven from paradise (3:24)	Man restored to paradise (22:14)
Sorrow and pain begin (3:17)	No more mourning, crying or pain (21:4)

(e) A New Satisfaction (21:6)

6 Then He said to me, **"It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give *water* to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life, without cost.**

6 Then He said to me, **"It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.**

6 Then he told me, **"It has happened! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give a drink from the spring of the water of life to the one who is thirsty.**

6 And he said unto me, **It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.**

- "...It is done" - a more literal rendering of the perfect tense verb is "They are done," meaning His words have come to pass. The renewal of all things and the future blessings of God's people, resting on the solemn assurance of God Himself, are spoken of as if they have already come to pass.

— 3x in Scripture God announced His work was completed: Creation (Gen 2:3), the Cross (John 19:30), and now, at the line between time and eternity, God declares the plan for creation and redemption is reached!

— God, the One who formed the world as its Creator, is also the One who will bring all things to their glorious consummation according to His perfect will

- The testing of mankind is finished; man is no longer on probation

— God created man in His image, which means man must have a choice. If he doesn't have a choice to either have or not have a relationship with God, then God wouldn't be respecting man to be the image bearer that He created.

— This is why there was a Tree of Knowledge in Eden. Man had to be respected to have a choice; there had to be an avenue of rebellion. But in the Eternal State, there is no Tree of Knowledge because man's probationary period is over.

- "...the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" - Jesus is the point of history; history is HIS STORY

— Alpha suggests that God is the Initiator of creation, the source and origin of all things. Omega points to the fact that He is the End of everything; He is the goal or aim of all things.

— Besides being guaranteed by His faithfulness, it is also guaranteed by His power

— God should not be thought of as the God who creates things like a watchmaker and lets them run without intervention. Having created everything, God guides the whole process along to its desired conclusion.

- "...I will give *water* to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life, without cost"

- His promise of abundant satisfaction for the thirsty is metaphorical, symbolizing His ability to meet the deepest needs of His people (7:17)

- In the middle of His promises to His people, God demonstrates that He is an evangelistic God to the end (Cf. 22:17)
- The invitation is taken from Is 55:1, "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."
- The Lord Jesus offered the woman at the well a drink that would satisfy all her spiritual yearnings (John 4:10-14; 7:37-39)
- The forgiveness of sins, the cleansing, the life that everyone yearns for is found in Christ. And it is free for the asking.
- "without cost" - free grace; Cf. 22:17
- In Gal 1, Paul pronounces a curse upon anyone who would add or complicate the Gospel, which is solely based on faith in Christ

Eden = Probationary Environment	
Eden (Gen 1-2)	Eternal State (Rev 21-22)
Division: light/darkness (1:4)	No night (21:25)
Division: land/sea (1:10)	No sea (21:1)
Sun & moon (1:16)	No sun & moon (21:23)
Garden (2:8-9)	City (21:2)
River flowing out of Eden (2:10)	River flowing from throne (22:1)
Gold in the land (2:12)	Gold in the city (21:21)
Tree of life in the middle of garden (2:9)	Tree of life throughout city (22:2)
Bdellium and onyx stone (2:12)	All manner of stones (21:19)
God walking in the garden (3:8)	God dwells with His people (21:3)
Henry Morris, Genesis Record, p.33	

(f) A New Realization (21:7)

7 The **one who overcomes** will **inherit** these things, and **I will be his God and he will be My son.**

7 He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

7 The person who conquers will inherit these things. I will be his God, and he will be my son.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

- "...one who overcomes" - this verse, along with 1 John 5:4-5 should dispel any argument on who the overcomers are: believers

— Many people look at the term "overcomer" and think the pressure to do something is on them; Jesus is the overcomer, and the believer's status as overcomers is based on faith in what Jesus did as the ultimate overcomer.

— This promise completes and summarizes the other seven promises to overcomers to the seven churches in Rev 2-3

— To the true believer God now makes the greatest promise of all: "I will be His God and he will be My son."

- "...inherit" - *klēronomeō*, the privilege of obtaining something because of someone else's work, instead of your own work; it is something that is legally mine, but I can't yet enter into possession or enjoyment of it

- "...I will be his God and he will be My son" - a statement of special honor, which signifies a special intimate relationship (Cf. 2 Sam 7:14; Gal 4:6-7)

(g) A New Holiness (21:8)

8 But for the cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and sexually immoral persons, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

8 But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

8 But people who are cowardly, unfaithful, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars will find themselves in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This is the second death."

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

- A warning for those who reject the "water of life" (v6); John provides a vivid and instructive catalog of the heavenly city, but in a negative way: he speaks of the kind of people and practices that will not be found in the New Heaven & New Earth (because they are unbelievers).

— Those who reject Christ will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is contrary to what most of the world believes, but it is what God says. If every human being were to ignore the

Word of God, hell would still be real (Cf. Rom 3:4).

- "But" - John moves from a "son" and "inheritor" to the plight of the unsaved. This verse does not describe Christians struggling with sin...it's speaking of people who have not trusted in Christ.

- Here, John reviews all the same sins that Paul raised in other "vice lists" (Gal 5; 1 Cor 6; Eph 5), confirming what Paul spoke in the other passages as referring to unbelievers. In 22:15, John lists these same six sins.

- "...cowardly" - listed first, even before the unbelieving? Cowardice is not a trait of the godly (Cf. Prov 28:1). A coward is someone controlled by fear, who is not trusting God (Cf. Heb 11:6); you cannot live in fear and in faith at the same time.

- You can immediately tell when you're wondering off course with the Lord...when you're enveloped in worry and anxiety, in trepidation and fear. When you see yourself doing this, you have to get ahold of yourself and right the ship, understanding that you're not operating in faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God.

- Cowardice, at it's most basic level, is the only unpardonable sin because it's failing to believe and trust in the work of Jesus Christ

- "...unbelieving" - about 150 passages of Scripture condition salvation upon belief; this is the very trait that puts people into the category of the unsaved

- "...abominable" - many sins are called an abomination to God, including homosexuality

- There are many sins today that used to be considered abominable in our culture that are now mainstreamed into everyday life

- Could also refer to those associated with the worship of the Antichrist (Cf. 17:4-5), and those who will be involved in the impurities associated with pagan religions and cults, including unnatural vice

- "...murderers" - you can commit murder many ways, and it doesn't always involve the killing of another human being (Prov 18:21)

- May also speak of the Antichrist's agents in killing believers in the Tribulation (13:15)

- "...sexually immoral" - God's standard for sexuality is one man with one woman for life; sometimes we fall short of this, and when this happens the grace of God is always available for people, but it never changes the standard

- "...sorcerers" - *pharmakeia*, illicit drugs; artificial substances used to change our mindset

- Literally, those who mix potions; a person communicating with spirits by means of mind-altering drugs; a capital offense in the OT (Ex 22:18; Lev 19:26,31; 20:6; Deut 19:9-11)

- "...idolaters" - worshippers of other gods; although many today don't have literal images, they worship materialism and pleasure; whatever takes the place of God is an idol, and idolaters go to hell

- "...liars" - God is characterized by truth and Satan is the father of lies. Lying is contrary to God's nature.

- "...burns" - the verb form is a present passive participle indicating that the lake's fires will never be exhausted
- "...second death" - eternity in the Lake of Fire (Cf. 20:14)

(ii) The New Jerusalem (21:9—22:5)

(a) Four Titles (21:9-10)

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you **the bride, the wife of the Lamb.**"

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came to me and said, "Come! I will show you the bride, the wife of the lamb."

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

- Same verbiage and sentence structure as was used to describe the wicked city (Babylon) in 17:1

- "...the bride, the wife of the Lamb" - the first two names given to the New Jerusalem
— The Church is now the bride of Christ, soon to become His wife; how fitting that we would spend eternity in a city called "the bride" and "the wife of the Lamb"

[OT reference: Lev 26:21]

10 And he carried me away in *the* Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the **holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven** from God,

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

10 He carried me away in the Spirit to a large, high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

- "...holy city, Jerusalem" - the third and fourth names given to the New Jerusalem

— The name of this city is already spiritually written on every believer (3:12)

— Abraham looked for this city (Heb 11:10)

— In contrast to the false bride, the prostitute Mystery Babylon, which is also both a city and a woman, the New Jerusalem will be to eternity what the earthly Jerusalem is to the Millennium

- "...coming down out of heaven" - that the city comes down from God means that the eternal blessedness is not an achievement of man, but a gift from God
— John entered a fresh state of prophetic ecstasy, and he now saw another new vision. From this new vantage point, John saw the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven.
— He was receiving here a fresh revelation that expanded on something he had already witnessed in an earlier scene (v2-8)
[OT reference: Ezek 40:2]

(b) Glory (21:11)

11 having the **glory of God**. Her brilliance was like a very valuable stone, like a stone of crystal-clear **jasper**.
11 having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.
11 The glory of God was its radiance, and its light was like a valuable gem, like jasper, as clear as crystal.
11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;
- "...glory of God" - the purpose of God in everything is to bring glory to Himself, through us
— The Westminster Confession says: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."
— If we are trying to fit God into our purposes and into our plans, we're missing the entire point of our existence which is God seeking to glorify Himself
— God gives us all individual gifts and talents, and often we use them only for selfish or self-serving motives, not understanding that He has given us those things so that He might glorify Himself
- "...jasper" - *iaspis*, similarity between the Hebrew word for crystal (Cf. Ezek 1:22) and the Hebrew word for "ice"; suggests a diamond
— A diamond in a gold setting—appropriate for the bride
[OT reference: Is 60:1-2; Ezek 43:2]

(c) Construction (21:12-14)

12 It had **a great and high wall**, with twelve gates, and at the **gates** twelve angels; and names *were* written on *the gates*, which are *the names* of the **twelve tribes** of the sons of Israel.
12 It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names *were* written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

12 It had a large, high wall with twelve gates. Twelve angels were at the gates, and the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written on the gates.

12 And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

- "...a great and high wall" - the city wall symbolizes its protection; v17 indicates about 216ft thick (or high?)

- "...gates" - *pylon*, gate towers (Cf. Luke 16:20); they stood three on each side (v13) and provide access into the city

- The many gate towers suggest great freedom of access

- Every time you walk into or out of the Eternal City, New Jerusalem, you will be reminded of both Israel (gates, v12) and the Church (foundations, v14)

- The distinction between Israel and the Church continues on throughout eternity, God's two great programs for salvation memorialized in the very structure of the New Jerusalem

- The city will have 12 gates, and an angel will have authority over each gate

- Notice that St. Peter is not guarding any of the gates. Israel is associated with the gates, whereas the Apostles are associated with the foundation (v14).

- Which names will be on which gate towers remains to be seen. The placement of the tribes around the post-exodus tabernacle in the wilderness, and or the gates in the millennial temple, do not necessarily provide this information.

- "...twelve tribes" - a perpetual reminder that "salvation is of the Jews"

- God has worked throughout history in two great programs: first Israel, then the Church

- God first purposed to funnel His blessings to the world through Israel (Gen 12:3). He always blesses with the intent that we will take those blessings and bless others.

- God will never allow the memory of His program with Israel to be forgotten; we will never lose sight of what God did through the Jewish nation

- Israel can explain its origin without the Church, but the Church cannot explain its origin outside of Israel. In Acts 2, the Church flowed out of Israel.

[OT reference: Ezek 48:31-34]

13 *There were* three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

13 *There were* three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west.

13 There were three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

- 12 gates total
- Evidently cardinal directions appear to exist in eternity suggesting that physical space will exist throughout eternity, as well as time (Cf. 20:10)
- It has been suggested that three gates in each of the four directions signifies that there is free access from any part of the world
- [OT reference: Ezek 48:31-34]

14 And the wall of the city had twelve **foundationstones**, and on them *were the* twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them *were* the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

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

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

- "...foundation stones" - the Church was built on the foundation of the apostles (Eph 2:20); the foundations are a symbol of permanence

— Just like Israel with the twelve gates, God will never allow the memory of the Church to go out of existence

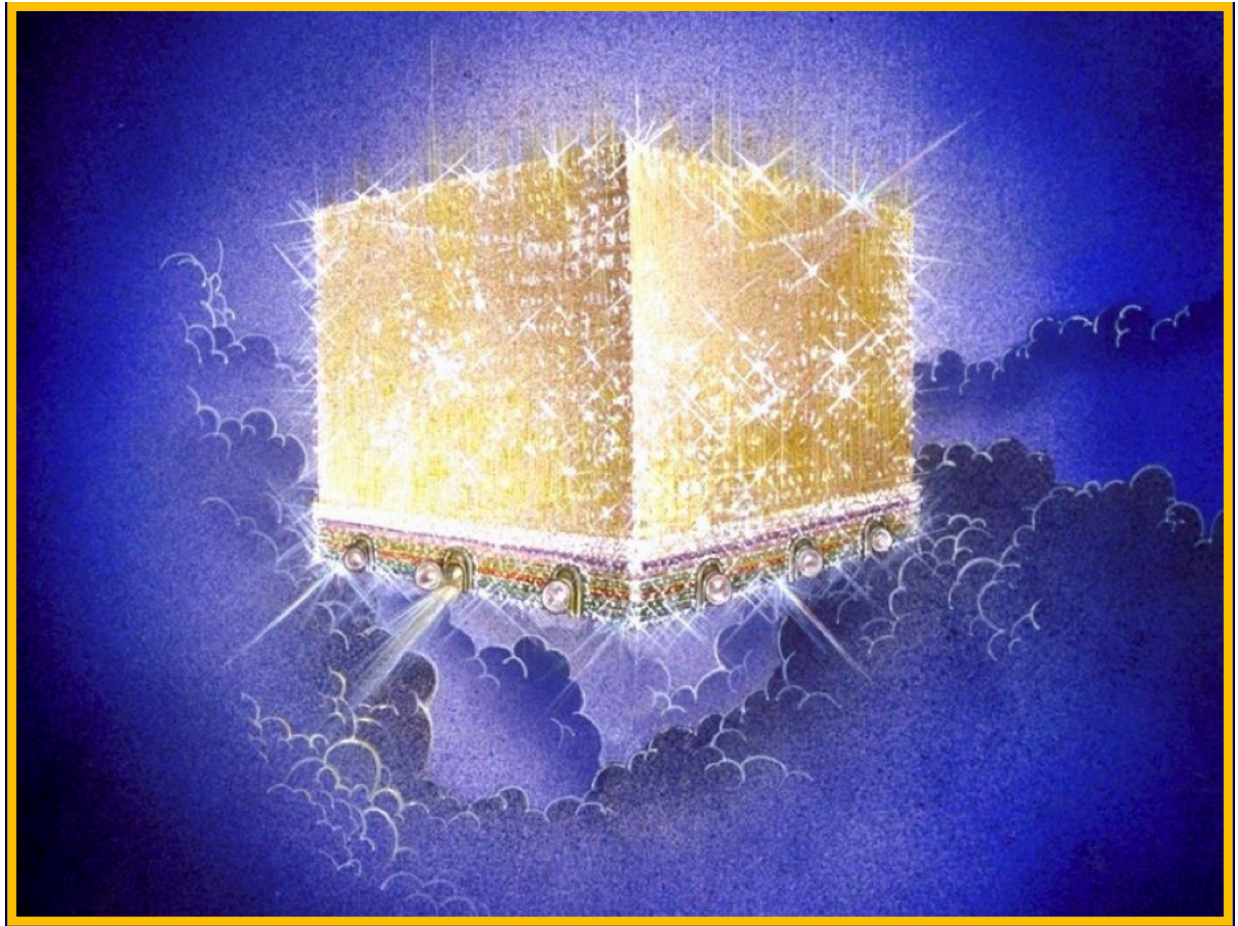
— Notice the distinction between Israel and the Church, even in the Eternal State (v12,14; Cf. Matt 19:28; Luke 22:30)

— God has a role for each group, and an identity separate from each other, in the past (today) as well as in the future

— The distinction between the walls and the foundations harmonizes with the belief that the Church did not replace Israel in the plans of God

- Access to the city is through Israel

- No middle wall (Eph 2:14-18)
- No Temple (John 4:21-24)
- Suggests the order of Israel's encampment around the Tabernacle in Num 2
- Israel on the earth will enjoy the same relationship to the city that they did toward the wilderness tabernacle, and later, the temple (Song 8:5)
- Apostles are the foundation; Christ is the Chief Cornerstone



(d) Measurements (21:15-17)

15 The one who spoke with me had a **goldmeasuringrod** to measure the city, its gates, and its wall.

15 The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.

15 The angel who was talking to me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, its gates, and its walls.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

- "...gold measuring rod" - the fact that the angel's measuring rod was gold reflects the dignity of the task of measuring the city

— This temple differs from the temple Ezekiel described being measured (Ezek 40-43), not only from the context, but also from the measurements

— Only the utensils used in the Holy of Holies were gold in the tabernacle and temple, but here the measuring rod is gold, suggesting the high value of the city

[OT reference: Ezek 40:3,5]

16 The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, **twelve thousand stadia**; its length, width, and height are equal.

16 The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.

16 The city was cubic in shape: its length was the same as its width. He measured the city with his rod, and it measured at 12,000 stadia: Its length, width, and height were the same.

16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

- "...twelve thousand stadia" - 1378 miles in length, width and depth (a cube)

— It will be the largest city ever known to mankind, with plenty of room for all the redeemed of all ages to live



17 And he measured its wall, 144 **cubits**, *by* human measurements, which are *also* angelic measurements.

17 And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, *according to* human measurements, which are *also* angelic *measurements*.

17 He also measured its wall. According to the human measurement that the angel was using, it was 144 cubits.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according to* the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

- "...cubits" - from Latin *cubitus*, elbow; while there are many variations, all approximately 18 inches. 216ft thick (or high?)!

— If viewed as a cube, wall thickness (rather than height) seems more likely

— Herodotus described the walls of Babylon as 50 cubits thick and 200 cubits high

— The measuring angel is using the measurements of man so there would be no misunderstanding as to the size of the city and wall

The Composition of the City

The wall will be built of jasper, and the entire cubed city will be made of transparent gold. As for the twelve *foundations* of the wall, each foundation will be composed of different *precious stones* with its own dominant color. They can be delineated as follows:

1. Jasper — green
2. Sapphire — blue
3. Chalcedony — greenish
4. Emerald — green
5. Sardonyx — red and white
6. Sardius — fiery red
7. Chrysolite — golden yellow
8. Beryl — aqua green
9. Topaz — greenish yellow
10. Chrysoprase — golden green
11. Jacinth — violet
12. Amethyst — purple

(e) Materials (21:18-21)

(1) Its Wall (21:18)

18 The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

18 The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

18 Its wall was made of jasper. The city was made of pure gold, as clear as glass.

18 And the building of the wall of it was *of* jasper: and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glass.

(2) Its Foundations (21:19-20)

19 The foundation stones of the city wall were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald;

19 The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald;

19 The foundations of the city wall were decorated with all kinds of gems: The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

[OT reference: Ex 28:17-20; Is 54:11-12]

Our God is a God of beauty, and He will lavish His beauty on the city He is preparing for His people.

20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth and the twelfth amethyst.

20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

[OT reference: Ex 28:17-20; Is 54:11-12]

(3) Its Gate (21:21a)

(4) Its Street (21:21b)

21 And the twelve gates were twelve **pearls**; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the **street** of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls, and each gate was made of a single pearl. The street of the city was made of pure gold, as clear as glass.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

- Written on each of the gates is the name of one of the twelve tribes (v12)

- "...pearls" - a Gentile stone; not kosher (Matt 13:45-46); each gate tower John saw (v12-13) was carved out of one huge single pearl (Cf. Is 54:11-12)
- They come from the sea, not the earth; they grow in response to an irritation/stimuli; they grow by accretion. When harvested, they are removed from where they grow to be an item of adornment. Their beauty derives entirely from nature, improvement by human workmanship is impossible.
- The church will be the fairest jewel of all (Mal 3:17-18)
- Gates are never closed (Cf. v25)
- "...street" - singular; one street



(f) Relationship to God (21:22-23)

(1) No Temple (21:22)

- 22** I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
- 22** I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
- 22** I saw no temple in it, because the Lord God Almighty and the lamb are its temple.
- 22** And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

- Besides the sea (v1), there will be other omissions in heaven: temple (v22), sun and moon (v23), night (v25)
- The earthly tabernacle and temple were mainly *symbols* of the presence of God with man, but in the New Jerusalem, that presence is a reality
- The whole city will be a virtual temple. There will be no need for a separate temple because the Triune God will inhabit the city (Cf. Matt 12:6).

(2) No Luminaries (21:23)

23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illuminated it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb.

23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb.

23 The city doesn't need any sun or moon to give it light, because the glory of God gave it light, and the lamb was its lamp.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof.

- Verses 23-27 stress that God will bring His people into an intimate relationship with Himself in the New Jerusalem

- No sun is necessary because the city is illuminated by the Son (Cf. 22:5; 1 Tim 6:16)

- God's glory will illuminate the whole earth (Is 60:19); His presence will dispel darkness of all kinds

- God illuminated the camp of Israel with a pillar of fire; He lit the Holy of Holies with His presence between the Cherubim.

- The Lamb is the radiance of the Father's glory (Heb 1:3), but the Father is also the light (22:5)

[OT reference: Is 60:19-20]

(g) Relationship to the Nations (21:24-26)

24 The **nations** will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

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24 The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

- "...nations" - the nations were born out of corruption at the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-4), and they will continue on through the millennial kingdom and into the Eternal State, but in an incorruptible state

[OT reference: Is 60:3-5,16]

25 In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;
25 In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;
25 Its gates will never be shut at the end of the day—because there will be no night there.
25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.
- In contrast to the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:22-24), entrance and exit from the New Jerusalem is always open
- Gates keep enemies out; since there will be no enemies, there is no need for gates to be closed (Is 60:11)
— The “kings” (v24) may enter whenever they wish
[OT reference: Is 60:11; Zech 14:7]

26 and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;
26 and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;
26 People will bring the glory and wealth of the nations into it.
26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.
- Just like during the millennial kingdom, when the nations will go to Jerusalem to worship the King (Zech 14:16-18), the same thing happens during the Eternal State into the New Jerusalem
[OT reference: Is 60:5,16]

(h) Holiness (21:27)

27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the **Lamb's book of life**.
27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.
27 Nothing unclean, or anyone who does anything detestable, and no one who tells lies will ever enter it. Only those whose names are written in the lamb's Book of Life will enter it.
27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.
- "...Lamb's book of life" - a record book in heaven of the names of everyone throughout history who has trusted in Jesus Christ for their personal salvation; the most important book in human history
— Those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life endured final judgment at the Great White Throne (20:12,15)
— Only those whose names are written in this book will enter the New Jerusalem
— In Luke 10, the disciples returned from a mission trip and told Jesus about how great it was that they were able to cast out demons, etc. Jesus told them to not rejoice that the

demons are in submission to you, but instead rejoice that your name is recorded in heaven.
— Our names written in the Lamb's book of life is our passport to enter the Eternal State & New Jerusalem

[OT reference: Is 52:1; Ezek 44:9; Zech 14:21]

Application

1. This present life on earth is conditional and probationary; it is a time of testing. God's purposes for His creatures are not fulfilled in this life. This life is not "all there is." Here the gap between the Bible and modern thought is great. People think that death ends everything, but that is not true: on earth people are only just passing through.
2. Each person's choices matter. People hold in their hands, under the sovereignty of God, the power to determine their everlasting futures. They are responsible to confess Christ as their Savior, trust His promise of forgiveness, and receive eternal life which He offers. The alternatives are indescribable bliss with the Lord or banishment forever from the Lord. A glorious future is certain for those who make the right choice in this life. Heaven is promised to all who embrace Jesus Christ as their Savior.