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## Revelation 21 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

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### Introduction

† Revelation 21 shows the revealed reality of the new covenant world after the judgment of the old covenant system. The prophets used the language of heaven and earth passing away to describe the collapse of a covenant order and the establishment of another (Isaiah 65:17).

† Jesus warned that the old covenant world centered in Jerusalem would end within the generation of His listeners, which happened with the destruction of the temple in AD 70 (Matthew 24:34).

† John now sees the fulfilled covenant community, the New Jerusalem, the bride of Christ, where God permanently dwells with His people (Hebrews 12:22-24).

### **Revelation 21:1**

I saw a new heaven and a new earth, because the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer there.

† The passing of heaven and earth refers to the end of the covenant world governed by the law of Moses, the same world Jesus said would pass before His words failed (Matthew 24:35).

† The sea often symbolized the restless nations and chaos in prophetic language. Its removal shows the covenant turmoil had ended (Isaiah 57:20).

† Peter spoke of this covenant transition when he described the passing away of the old order and the arrival of the new covenant world where righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:10-13).

### **Revelation 21:2**

Then I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride beautifully ready for her husband.

† The New Jerusalem represents the covenant people of God. Paul explained that believers belong to the heavenly Jerusalem (Galatians 4:26).

† The bride imagery identifies the city as the church united with Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27).

† The city descending from heaven shows its origin comes from God, not human institutions (James 1:17).

### **Revelation 21:3**

Then I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Look, God's dwelling place is now among people, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them.

† This fulfills the covenant promise that God would dwell among His people (Leviticus 26:11-12).

† Under the new covenant God no longer dwells in temples made with hands but within His people (1 Corinthians 3:16).

† Jesus had already said worship would no longer be tied to a physical temple location (John 4:21-24).

### **Revelation 21:4**

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death, mourning, crying, and pain will no longer rule, because the former things have passed away.

† The former things refer to the old covenant age that was filled with persecution and separation (Hebrews 8:13).

† Christ destroyed the power of death and brought life through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10).

† Isaiah had already prophesied that God would remove sorrow and swallow up death (Isaiah 25:8).

### **Revelation 21:5**

The One seated on the throne said, Look, I am making all things new. Then He said, Write this down, because these words are trustworthy and true.

† The renewal here refers to covenant transformation through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

† God promised long before that He would bring about a new covenant order (Isaiah 43:19).

† The promise confirms the certainty of God's redemptive plan (Hebrews 9:15).

### **Revelation 21:6**

Then He said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give water from the spring of life to the one who is thirsty.

† This echoes the completion of Christ's redemptive work (John 19:30).

† The water of life represents eternal life offered through Christ (John 7:37-38).

† The prophets invited the thirsty to receive life from God (Isaiah 55:1).

### **Revelation 21:7**

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

† Overcoming refers to believers remaining faithful during persecution (Revelation 2:10).

† The promise repeats covenant language used throughout scripture (2 Corinthians 6:18).

† Believers become heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17).

### **Revelation 21:8**

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the corrupt, the murderers,

the sexually immoral, those who practice sorcery, idol worshipers, and all liars will face the burning lake of fire. This is the second death.

† The lake of fire represents final covenant judgment against those who rejected Christ (Matthew 23:36).

† The second death represents exclusion from covenant life (Revelation 20:14).

† Paul described the judgment that came upon those who opposed the gospel in that generation (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16).

### **Revelation 21:9**

One of the seven angels who had the bowls full of the seven final plagues came and said to me, Come, I'll show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

† The bride contrasts with Babylon the harlot which had just been judged (Revelation 17:5).

† The bride is the redeemed covenant people joined to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2).

† This imagery shows the completed union between Christ and His people (Revelation 19:7).

### **Revelation 21:10**

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

† The city descending from heaven shows divine origin (James 1:17).

† The prophets described restored Zion elevated above the nations (Isaiah 2:2-3).

† Paul described the church as God's building (Ephesians 2:20-22).

### **Revelation 21:11**

It shone with the glory of God, its brilliance like a very precious jewel, like a crystal clear jasper stone.

† The glory represents God's presence (Exodus 40:34).

† Believers reflect that glory as God's temple (2 Corinthians 3:18).

† The imagery emphasizes purity within the covenant community (Isaiah 60:1).

### **Revelation 21:12**

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

† The twelve tribes show continuity with Israel (Romans 9:6-8).

† The gates represent entry into the covenant kingdom (Psalm 118:19-20).

† God's promises to Israel reach fulfillment through Christ (Luke 22:30).

### **Revelation 21:13**

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

† Gates in every direction symbolize worldwide access to God's kingdom (Isaiah 49:6).

† Jesus said people would come from every direction into the kingdom (Matthew 8:11).

† The gospel opened the covenant blessings to all nations (Acts 13:47).

### **Revelation 21:14**

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

† The apostles formed the doctrinal foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20).

† Their teaching established the new covenant community (Acts 2:42).

† Christ Himself is the cornerstone (1 Corinthians 3:11).

### **Revelation 21:15**

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

† Measuring in prophetic visions symbolizes divine ownership and protection (Zechariah 2:1-5).

† The measurement shows God's covenant community is perfectly established (Revelation 11:1).

† God Himself defines and preserves His people (Ezekiel 40:3).

### **Revelation 21:16**

The city was laid out like a square, its length the same as its width. He measured the city with the rod and found it twelve thousand stadia long, wide, and high.

† The cube shape mirrors the Most Holy Place in the temple where God's presence dwelled (1 Kings 6:20).

† This imagery shows the entire covenant community now functions as God's holy dwelling place (Ephesians 2:21).

† The number twelve thousand reflects completeness and covenant fulfillment (Revelation 7:4).

### **Revelation 21:17**

He measured its wall, and it was one hundred forty four cubits by human measurement, which the angel was using.

† The number 144 reflects covenant fullness connected to the twelve tribes and twelve apostles (Revelation 7:4).

† The symbolism emphasizes completeness rather than literal architecture (Ezekiel 48:35).

† The wall shows the security of God's people (Isaiah 26:1).

### **Revelation 21:18**

The wall was made of jasper, and the city was pure gold, clear like glass.

† The imagery emphasizes purity and holiness within God's covenant community (Isaiah 60:18).

† Gold often symbolized divine glory and righteousness (Exodus 25:11).

† The transparency shows the absence of corruption in the new covenant order (Psalm 24:3-4).

### **Revelation 21:19**

The foundations of the city wall were decorated with every kind

of precious stone.

† Precious stones were used in the high priest's garments representing the tribes of Israel (Exodus 28:17-21).

† This imagery shows the fulfillment of Israel's priestly calling through Christ (1 Peter 2:9).

† The beauty reflects the glory of God's redeemed people (Isaiah 54:11-12).

### **Revelation 21:20**

The stones included jasper, sapphire, agate, emerald, onyx, carnelian, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, and amethyst.

† The list mirrors the priestly breastplate stones symbolizing God's covenant people (Exodus 28:17-20).

† It reflects the completeness and diversity of the redeemed community (Revelation 5:9).

† The imagery highlights the value God places on His people (Malachi 3:17).

### **Revelation 21:21**

The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made from a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent like glass.

† The pearl imagery reflects the great value of the kingdom of God (Matthew 13:45-46).

† The open gates show unrestricted access into God's covenant kingdom (Isaiah 60:11).

† The golden street symbolizes purity and righteousness in God's presence (Psalm 84:10).

## **Revelation 21:22**

I saw no temple in the city, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

† The absence of a temple shows the end of the old covenant temple system (John 2:19-21).

† God's presence now fills the entire covenant community (Ephesians 2:21-22).

† The temple system had served its purpose and was replaced by direct access to God through Christ (Hebrews 10:19-22).

## **Historical References**

† Josephus recorded the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 which ended the sacrificial system.

† Eusebius wrote that the fall of Jerusalem fulfilled the warnings of Jesus about that generation.

† Irenaeus described the church as the spiritual city of God established through Christ.

## **How It Applies To Us Today**

† We live in the reality of the new covenant kingdom where God dwells with His people.

† Our identity is found in the New Jerusalem, the covenant community of believers.

† Because the old covenant system has passed away, we now live under the finished work of Christ.

## **Q & A Appendix**

**Q:** What does the new heaven and new earth represent?

**A:** It represents the new covenant order established after the old covenant world passed away (2 Peter 3:13).

**Q:** What is the New Jerusalem?

**A:** The New Jerusalem represents the people of God, the bride of Christ (Hebrews 12:22-23).

**Q:** When did this covenant transition complete?

**A:** It completed with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 (Matthew 24:34).

**Q:** Why is there no temple in the New Jerusalem?

**A:** Because God's presence now dwells directly with His people through Christ, making the entire covenant community His temple (John 2:19-21; Ephesians 2:21-22; Hebrews 10:19-22).

**Q:** Why are the gates always open in the New Jerusalem?

**A:** The open gates show that access to God's kingdom is now freely available through Christ and no longer restricted by the old covenant system (Isaiah 60:11; Matthew 11:28; Hebrews 4:16).

**Q:** Why are the names of the twelve tribes and twelve apostles on the city?

**A:** This shows the unity of God's covenant plan, the promises given to Israel reached fulfillment through Christ and were built upon the teaching of the apostles (Ephesians 2:19-20; Romans 11:17-18).

**Q:** What does the city being shaped like a cube mean?

**A:** The cube reflects the shape of the Most Holy Place in the

temple, showing that God's entire covenant community now functions as His holy dwelling place (1 Kings 6:20; Ephesians 2:21; 1 Peter 2:5).

## † This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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### Source Index

† Isaiah 2:2-3; Isaiah 25:8; Isaiah 26:1; Isaiah 43:19; Isaiah 49:6; Isaiah 54:11-12; Isaiah 57:20; Isaiah 60:1, 11; Isaiah 65:17; Matthew 8:11; Matthew 13:45-46; Matthew 23:36; Matthew 24:34-35; John 2:19-21; John 4:21-24; John 7:37-38; John 19:30; Romans 8:17; Romans 9:6-8; 1 Corinthians 3:11, 16; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 9:15; Hebrews 10:19-22; Hebrews 12:22-24; Acts 2:42; Acts 13:47; Ephesians 2:20-22; Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 Peter 2:9

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History; Irenaeus, Against Heresies

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