

INTRODUCTORY NOTES:

- We have finally moved out of the "gloom and doom" of chapters 6-19, and even some in chapter 20. We are about to hear of the glorious "eternal state" of our forever with Jesus. We could call this "eternity unveiled."
- Watch for the many contrasts in this chapter, what WILL be and what WON'T be in eternity with Him.
- We are now reading about things we can't comprehend or even imagine. God gives us enough to hope and be assured of our future. What we are given in description is already beyond our imagination. The best we can do in interpretation of these last chapters is merely speculation, other than what is plainly told.



In these concluding chapters of Revelation, we have **the unveiling of Eternity**. It is just a peek, but it is enough for us to handle at this time. Everything is restored here. It is helpful to compare the beginning of the entire book with the end:

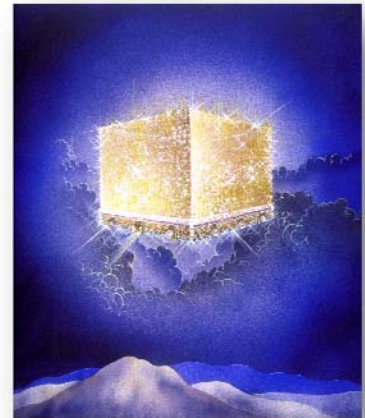
GENESIS		REVELATION	
Genesis 1:1	Heavens and earth are created	New heavens and new earth (recreated)	Revelation 21:1
Genesis 1:16	Sun created	No need of the sun, God is all the Light we need	Revelation 21:23
Genesis 1:5	Night is established	No night, no darkness	Revelation 22:5
Genesis 1:10	Seas created	No more seas	Revelation 21:1
Genesis 3:14-17	Curse pronounced	No more curse, removed	Revelation 22:3
Genesis 3:19	Death is man's destiny	No more death	Revelation 21:4
Genesis 3:24	Mankind driven out of the garden (Paradise) away from Tree of Life	Mankind is restored to the garden (Paradise) and the Tree of Life	Revelation 22:14
Genesis 3:17	Sorrow and pain begin for mankind	No more tears or pain for mankind	Revelation 21:4

¹ *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.*

- We now see a “*new heaven and a new earth,*” the old ones having passed away. We aren't told WHEN or how this happens. That is not important. It is sometime after the judgment, or perhaps even before it as we see the sky and earth fleeing from the One who sat on the throne in the previous chapter. This is not a new concept in scripture (new heaven and earth). It is mentioned throughout the OT (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22) and in 2 Peter 3:7-13 (to be destroyed by fire), Hebrews 11:13-16, and Matthew 24:35.
- There are 3 "heavens" in scripture - 1) the atmosphere, 2) the galaxies, 3) the throne of God.
- “*...no more sea...*” - the **sea often stands for evil** in scripture, danger, unrest, trouble (beasts also came out of the sea, Daniel 7:1-3, 17; Revelation 13:1, 6-8). (Job 26:5-6; Isaiah 27:1; Jonah 2:1-6; Luke 8:30-33; Psalms 69:14-15). Jesus rebuked the sea in Matthew 8:26, and demon swine leaped into the sea (Matthew 8:30). It was also a cleansing agent on earth – it is not needed anymore. (70% of the earth is covered with the seas that contain an antiseptic salinity of 3.5% to clean, purge and preserve the earth. The tidal action of the moon on the seas is a cleansing mechanism. This cleansing is not needed anymore, and this is the sign that the old world order is at an end. A new world order, perfect and clean, is now in effect.

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.* ³ *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

- Now John sees the holy city **New Jerusalem** - comes down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride for her husband. The wedding has already occurred. The city may be full of the saints. The city (New Jerusalem) is related to the bride, just as Babylon was related to the harlot.
- “*...coming down out of heaven from God...*” This is a real place, its origin is in heaven and it is from God, therefore perfect. This is the place promised to all believers from the beginning. It is the place that God will dwell among His people, as He originally intended, forever.
- Verse 3 is an important proclamation, an announcement that **God's dwelling place is now with man** (Immanuel, God with us!), and we will be His people. Not just in spirit, but face to face. No separation ever again. The original Tabernacle in the desert was merely a type to signify God's desire for fellowship with His people, and point to the person (Jesus) He provided to make it happen. Now it is fulfilled. He is with us, finally! Sin cannot separate us again.



⁴ *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”*

- We are told **what will NOT be there**: tears, death, sorrow, crying, pain, former things. It's easier to tell us what won't be there than to hope we can understand what will be there.

- We are told in previous verse **what WILL be there - God Himself**. We don't need to understand more than that. We live currently in a world corrupted, under a curse (including us!). How can we possibly understand what it will be like in a perfect place without this corruption?

⁵ *Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."*

- Jesus (the One who sat on the throne) proclaims "**Behold, I make all things new!**" And he tells John to write these things down and verifies their truth. The Old Testament is full of these promises of newness one day. Newness by God means perfection, no sin, no corruption, no curse – just as He intended them from the beginning.

⁶ *And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts." ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.*

- The finishing touch to this new creation - "**It is done!**" The plan is complete. Reminds us of His words from the cross "**It is finished**" (or literally, "paid in full"). When God has a plan, he sees it through to its perfect completion, including every last detail. He is constantly and ever faithful and powerful to accomplish it.
- Jesus also proclaims **His real identity** - the Alpha and the Omega (beginning and end) and says He will give the free waters of the fountain of the water of life. This is beautifully described in Ezekiel chapter 47. Water is necessary for life - symbolizes ALL our needs being met.
- Now a word to those still struggling, after this picture of new life - "**He who overcomes shall inherit all things.**" WE don't overcome - He does - and that's the **ONLY** way we will overcome.
- "**...I will be his God and he shall be My son.**" This takes our relationship with Him to a new more intimate and personal level. He does not just refer to us as a group, but as individuals with a very real and personal relationship with Him. That is almost beyond comprehension.

⁸ *But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

- This **contrasts the believer who will overcome with the unbeliever who will be in torment in the lake of fire** - the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, all liars. This existence in the lake of fire is identified as the "second death." Separation from God for eternity. This is good news for us. Evil is GONE!
- Note that the **lake of fire is still there**, and remains unchanged. This place is eternal hell, separation from God (second death). It also is beyond our comprehension in its horror.

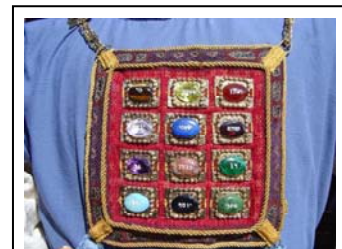
⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

- Now John is shown "...the bride, the Lamb's wife." He is carried away in the spirit. This is similar to the event in chapter 17 where John is taken away and shown "the harlot" in the wilderness. Remember this entire Bible is the "Tale of Two Cities" - Babylon, the city of the enemy, the city of man, and the city of the entire world in opposition to God vs. Jerusalem, the city of God and His people. The harlot is Babylon, the bride is the New Jerusalem. We cannot truly understand any of this, so we can only guess. We just know it will be spectacular! We aren't even sure if this is a literal description (below), but we have *no reason not to think it is*.



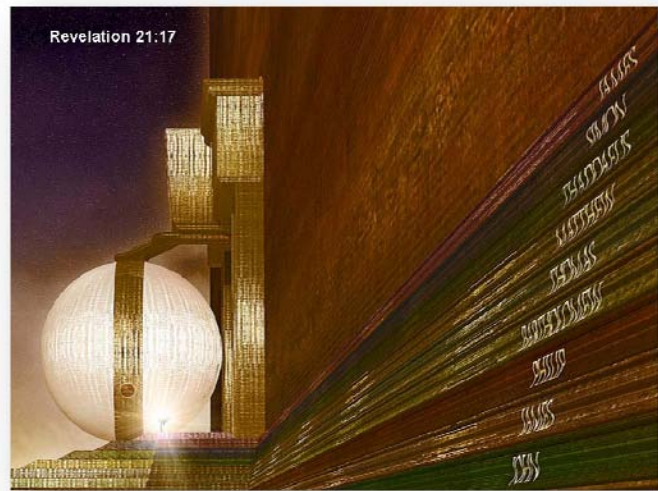
¹¹ having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.¹² Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:¹³ three gates 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.

- Now we have an **elaborate description of this city** (the Bride). It has the glory of God, with light like a precious stone (original Hebrew suggests this is similar to a diamond).
- A **high wall with 12 gates** and 12 angels at the gates with names on them (the 12 tribes of Israel) 3 gates on E, 3 gates on N, 3 gates on S, 3 gates on W. The 12 gates are named for the 12 tribes of Israel, and this layout is similar to the encampment of the tribes of Israel in the wilderness. See Numbers 1-2 where God gave very specific instructions for how these tribes were to camp, with the Tabernacle (the visible Presence of God) in the very middle of the camp.
- Wall had **12 foundations**, names of 12 apostles of the Lamb (The Church)
- **12 Foundations** of wall adorned with **12 precious stones**: jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, amethyst. May not be the identities we know, but ancient names. May represent the same stones found in the high priest's breastplate which represented the 12 tribes of Israel (Exodus 28). Whatever they are, they are a dazzling display of color. These foundations have the names of the 12 disciples.
- The gates are also symbolic of the fact that "salvation is of the Jews." Access to God is through the Jewish Messiah (names of tribes of Israel on the gates). The names of the apostles on the foundations suggest that they were the very foundation of the Church, with Jesus as the Chief Cornerstone. Together, the gates, the foundations and the wall **unite both Jews and Gentiles together as one people**.



High Priest's breastplate
(Exodus 28)

- **The Gates are pearl**, one huge pearl each (v.21). Would love to see THAT oyster! Pearls were most valued of all stones in ancient world - symbolic of beauty born of pain.



- We can't possibly even imagine this, let alone comprehend it. The **beauty will be staggering**, but it won't be the city we marvel at. **It will be HIM**. It's all there to reveal HIS glory. We have to keep this in perspective: *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."* (1 Corinthians 2:9) We don't understand the complete significance of all of this, so speculation and guessing is pretty weak. It's best just to leave it alone and know it will be spectacular, and that all His people are united as one with Him.

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.

- The length of a **furlong** (Gr. *stadia*) can vary greatly, most likely somewhere between 600 and 710 feet. If this is the case, this city would be approximately 1400 to 1650 miles long and wide and high! That is one huge city! Some people have attempted to do calculations on this incredible city to determine how many people it could "hold." We don't have to worry about space, that's for sure!
- This city was a **perfect cube**. The Holy of Holies was also a perfect cube (1 Kings 6:20). Inside the Tabernacle was the Most Holy Place, the place where God dwelled, and the High Priest entered only once each year. This was the place God fellowshiped with His people on earth. Now, this city is also a perfect cube, signifying the dwelling place of God with His people.

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.

- The wall's measurement is 144 cubits (thick or tall?). A cubit can vary from about 15 inches to the Egyptian measure of 25 inches, but is usually standardized at 18 inches. If this is the case, this wall is 216 feet tall, or thick. We don't really know. Again, we are trying to understand things we have never seen, and most likely have no capacity to comprehend at this point.

- Apparently man's measurement is the same as angel's. The wall's construction is of jasper (diamond), the city pure gold, like clear glass (transparent - **no shadows anywhere, light of God will penetrate everywhere!**)
- Again we see the precious stones, the pearls and streets of pure gold that were transparent like glass. This is a **place of incredible beauty, no darkness, no shadows**, just amazing light and color.
- Isn't it interesting that the streets, the places under our feet, are paved with the most precious metal, the greatest possession, on earth? **The world's values do not exist in heaven.** Now it is God's economy.
- The precious **stones most likely relate to those in the High Priest's breastplate**, but we cannot really trace them now since the names of specific stones have changed, and their use throughout literature has changed through the ages.

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.

- **No temple** – we don't need one! God now dwells in our midst, and God and Jesus are the temple.
- The center of God's plan is about **reuniting us with Him**. He has always wanted to "**dwell with us**" or fellowship with us. The earthly Tabernacle/Temple was how He did that. In the garden, God walked with man. After the fall, God could not be in sin's presence, so a tabernacle was built, then a temple. God dwelled in the Holy of Holies. Solomon's temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC, rebuilt around 539-520 BC, redone by Herod in Jesus' time, then destroyed again in 70 AD by Rome. There is no temple today, but the Jews will probably rebuild it, and it also will be destroyed. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. He still dwells with us. There will be a memorial temple during the Millennium (Ezekiel 40-48), but not on the new earth. There is no need for a temple. God is with us forever, and we are with Him.
- **No need of sun or moon**, God's glory is light enough. (NOTE: That does NOT say they WON'T be there, we don't know for sure, just that they are not needed.)

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.

- **"...the nations of those who are saved..."** (critical point) **will walk in His light**, and kings of the earth will bring Him their glory. All glory belongs to Him now. The earthly inhabitants in this time will give Him the honor and glory due Him.
- The people on earth during this time will bring tribute to the King of Kings. We don't know if there will be individual "nations" as we know them now, or one people who live in the regions of previous nations.

- The book of Zechariah gives us a little more information about this. *“And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. In that day “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.”* (Zechariah 14:16-21)
- **“Its gates shall not be shut at all by day...”** City gates were closed at night for protection. There will be no need for protection here, so the gates remain open all the time.
- And finally we are **told again what will NOT be there** - anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or lie. We can't fully understand what will be there, but we can understand what won't be there! The only ones there are those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.



WHAT WILL BE THERE	WHAT WILL NOT BE THERE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New heavens, new earth ▪ Light ▪ Glory ▪ The water of life ▪ The Redeemed ▪ The Lamb ▪ God Almighty in our midst ▪ Nations ▪ Incredible beauty and color ▪ An amazing new Jerusalem ▪ Streets of transparent gold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sea ▪ Darkness (no shadows!) ▪ Abominations ▪ Lies ▪ Defilement ▪ Unbelievers ▪ Tears ▪ Pain ▪ Death ▪ Sorrow ▪ Crying ▪ Sin ▪ Temple

- And this is just in this chapter. There is one more to go. We will be expanding our list above! This chapter is told through **great use of contrast what will be there as opposed to what won't be there.** We cannot imagine what will be there, but we certainly are familiar with what won't be there. We are reminded of Paul's thoughts about this in 1 Corinthians 2:9: *“But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”* This verse is quoting one found in Isaiah 64:4 *“For since the beginning of the world Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, Who acts for the one who waits for Him.”* We indeed await you, Lord! Come!

