

Praise for my Test  
Bill 5th anniversary  
Travel mercies Bill  
vict.

Parthy  
thankful  
for Doc  
knowledge

## Lesson 36

### Revelation 21:1-27 (NASB)

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.
- <sup>3</sup> 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,
- <sup>4</sup> 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."
- <sup>5</sup> 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."
- <sup>6</sup> 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.
- <sup>7</sup> "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.
- <sup>8</sup> "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."
- <sup>9</sup> 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."
- <sup>10</sup> 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,
- <sup>11</sup> having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.
- <sup>12</sup> 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.
- <sup>13</sup> *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.
- <sup>14</sup> And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them *were* the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.
- <sup>15</sup> The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.
- <sup>16</sup> 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.
- <sup>17</sup> And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, *according to* human measurements, which are *also* angelic *measurements*.
- <sup>18</sup> The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.
- <sup>19</sup> 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;
- <sup>20</sup> the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoptase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.
- <sup>21</sup> 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.
- <sup>22</sup> I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

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

<sup>25</sup> In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;

<sup>26</sup> and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;

<sup>27</sup> 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.

## **P. The new heaven and the new earth ([21:1-22:5](#))**

### **1. THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH CREATED ([21:1](#))**

[21:1](#). The opening verses of [chapter 21](#) describe the creation of the new heaven and the new earth, which chronologically follows the thousand-year reign of Christ described in [chapter 20](#). [Chapter 21](#) begins with the familiar words **I saw**, an expression repeated in [verse 2](#) (cf. [v. 22](#), "I did not see"). This new creation is described as **a new heaven and a new earth**. That it is a totally new heaven and a new earth, and not the present heaven and earth renovated, is supported by the additional statement, **for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away** (also see [comments](#) on [20:11](#)). An amazingly small amount of information is given about the new heaven and the new earth. But one major fact is stated in this verse: **there was no longer any sea**.

In contrast with the present earth, which has most of its surface covered by water, no large body of water will be on the new earth. The Bible is silent, however, on any features of the first heaven except the statement in [21:23](#) that there will be no sun or moon and, by implication, no stars. The new heaven refers not to the abode of God, but to the earth's atmosphere and planetary space.

No landmarks whatever are given concerning the new earth, and nothing is known of its characteristics, vegetation, color, or form. The implication, however, is that it is round and is the residence of all who are saved. A few other references are found in Scripture in relation to the new earth, including [Isaiah 65:17](#); [66:22](#); and [2 Peter 3:10-13](#).

Because in some of these passages the Millennium is also discussed, expositors have often confused the eternal state with the Millennium. However, the principle is well established in Scripture that distant events are often telescoped together. Examples of this are [Isaiah 61:1-2](#) (cf. [Luke 4:17-19](#)), which speaks of the first and second comings of Christ together, and [Daniel 12:2](#), which mentions the resurrection of the righteous and of the wicked together even though, according to [Revelation 20:5](#), they will be separated by a thousand years. Sometimes even the chronological order is reversed, as in [Isaiah 65:17-25](#) ([vv. 17-19](#) refer to the new heaven and new earth whereas [vv. 20-25](#) clearly refer to the Millennium). End-time events are all also brought in close proximity in [2 Peter 3:10-13](#), where the beginning and the end of the day of the Lord are mentioned in the same passage.

Though expositors have differed on this point, the principle that clear passages should be used to explain obscure passages supports the conclusion that the second coming of Christ is followed by a thousand-year reign on earth, and this in turn is followed by a new heaven and new earth, the

dwelling place of the saints for eternity. With the absence of any geographic identification and the absence of a sea, the new earth will obviously be entirely different. By contrast, the sea is mentioned many times in relation to the Millennium (e.g., [Ps. 72:8](#); [Isa. 11:9, 11](#); [Ezek. 47:8-20; 48:28](#); [Zech. 9:10; 14:8](#)). The evidence is conclusive that the new heaven and new earth are not to be confused with the Millennium.

## 2. THE NEW JERUSALEM DESCRIBED ([21:2-8](#))

[21:2](#). John's attention was then directed to a specific feature of the new heaven and new earth, namely, **the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband**. The New Jerusalem is called "the Holy City," in contrast with the earthly Jerusalem (which spiritually was compared to Sodom in [11:8](#)). As early as [3:12](#) the New Jerusalem was described as "the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from My God." The fact that the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven and that it is not said to be created at this point has raised the question as to whether it has been in existence during the Millennium (see further [discussion](#) on this under [21:9](#)).

Many expositors regard the promise of Christ in [John 14:2](#), "I am going there to prepare a place for you," as referring to this city. The suggestion has been made that if the New Jerusalem is in existence during the millennial reign of Christ, it may have been suspended in the heavens as a dwelling place for resurrected and translated saints, who nevertheless would have immediate access to the earth to carry on their functions of ruling with Christ. J. Dwight Pentecost, for instance, quotes F.C. Jennings, William Kelly, and Walter Scott as supporting this concept of the New Jerusalem as a satellite city during the Millennium (*Things to Come*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958, pp. 577-79). In the Millennium the New Jerusalem clearly does not rest on the earth, for there is an earthly Jerusalem and an earthly temple ([Ezek. 40-48](#)).

The New Jerusalem then will apparently be withdrawn from its proximity to the earth when the earth will be destroyed at the end of the Millennium, and then will come back after the new earth is created. Though this possibility of a satellite city has been disregarded by most commentators and must be considered as an inference rather than a direct revelation of the Bible, it does solve some problems of the relationship between the resurrected and translated saints to those still in their natural bodies in the Millennium, problems which otherwise are left without explanation.

Here, however, the New Jerusalem is described as it will be in the eternal state, and it is said to be "a bride beautifully dressed for her husband." Because the church is pictured in Scripture as a bride ([2 Cor. 11:2](#)), some have tried to identify the New Jerusalem's inhabitants as specifically the church saints, excluding saints of other dispensations. However, the use of marriage as an illustration is common in Scripture, not only to relate Christ to the church but also Yahweh to Israel. Though the city is compared to a beautifully dressed bride, it actually is a city, not a person or group of people.

[21:3-4](#). Following this initial revelation of the New Jerusalem John wrote, **I heard a loud voice from the throne**. This is the last of 20 times that the expression "a loud voice" is used in Revelation (first used in [5:2](#)).

The final revelation from heaven states that God will then dwell **with men**, that the saints **will be His people** and He will **be their God**. In eternity saints will enjoy a new intimacy with God which is impossible in a world where sin and death are still present. The new order will be without sorrow. God **will wipe every tear from their eyes**, and death with its mourning, and pain with its crying will vanish, **for the old order of things will have passed away**.

Some have wondered if grief and sorrow will exist for a while in heaven and then be done away with here at the establishing of the new order. It is better to understand this passage as saying that heaven will have none of the features that so characterize the present earth.

**21:5-6.** The dramatic change to the new order is expressed in the words, **I am making everything new!** This revelation is **trustworthy and true**, and John was instructed to write down that fact. The One bringing about the change is Christ, who calls Himself **the Alpha and the Omega** (cf. [1:8](#); [22:13](#)), the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, interpreted by the phrase **the Beginning and the End**.

Those who are **thirsty** are promised that they will be able **to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life**. Apparently this refers not to physical thirst but to a desire for spiritual blessings.

**21:7-8.** Christ explained that **he who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be My son**. This expresses the intimate relationship between the saints and God in the eternal state.

By contrast, **those who practice** the sins of the unbelieving world will be excluded from the New Jerusalem and will be destined for the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This judgment is a righteous punishment for their sins, eight of which are itemized here. He adds, **This is the second death**.

It should be obvious that this passage is not affirming salvation by works, but rather is referring to works as indicative of whether one is saved or not. Obviously many will be in heaven who before their conversions were indeed guilty of these sins but who turned from them in the day of grace in trusting Christ as their Savior. Though works are the evidence of salvation or lack of it, they are never the basis or ground of it. Similar lists of sins are found elsewhere in Revelation (cf. [v. 27](#); [22:15](#)).

### **3. THE NEW JERUSALEM AS THE BRIDE ([21:9-11](#))**

**21:9-11.** One of the angels of [chapter 16](#) who had poured out a bowl of wrath on the earth then invited John to see the New Jerusalem as a bride. **Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb**. Carried by **the Spirit** to a high **mountain**, John saw the New Jerusalem **coming down out of heaven from God**, shining with **the glory of God**.

Expositors have raised questions about the additional revelation of the New Jerusalem, beginning in [verse 9](#). Some believe that this section is a recapitulation and pictures the New Jerusalem as it will be suspended over the earth during the millennial reign of Christ. A preferred interpretation,

however, is that the passage continues to describe the New Jerusalem as it will be in the eternal state. Obviously the city would be much the same in either case, but various indications seem to relate this to the eternal state rather than to the Millennium.

The overall impression of the city as a gigantic brilliant **jewel** compared to **jasper, clear as crystal** indicates its great beauty. John was trying to describe what he saw and to relate it to what might be familiar to his readers. However, it is evident that his revelation transcends anything that can be experienced.

The jasper stone known today is opaque and not clear (cf. [4:3](#)). It is found in various colors, and John apparently was referring to the beauty of the stone rather than to its particular characteristics. Today one might describe that city as a beautifully cut diamond, a stone not known as a jewel in the first century.

As in the earlier references to the New Jerusalem as a bride, here again is a city, not a person or group of people. This is confirmed by the description of the city which follows.

#### 4. THE NEW JERUSALEM AS A CITY ([21:12-27](#))

[21:12-13](#). John saw a gigantic city, "square" in shape ([v. 16](#)), and surrounded by **a great, high wall with 12 gates**. The 12 gates bore **the names of the 12 tribes of Israel**. The number 12 is prominent in the city with 12 gates and 12 **angels** ([v. 12](#)), 12 tribes of Israel ([v. 12](#)), 12 foundations ([v. 14](#)), 12 apostles ([v. 14](#)), 12 pearls ([v. 21](#)), 12 kinds of fruit ([22:2](#)), with the wall 144 cubits—12 times 12 ([21:17](#)), and the height, width, and length, 12,000 stadia, about 1,400 miles ([v. 16](#)). The city has walls north, south, east, and west with **three gates** on each side ([v. 13](#)) and with an angel standing guard at each gate ([v. 12](#)).

This is an entirely different situation from the earthly Jerusalem in the Millennium. But if the names of the gates corresponded to the millennial Jerusalem described in [Ezekiel 48:31-34](#), the north side from east to west would have the gates named Levi, Judah, and Reuben. On the west side from north to south were Naphtali, Asher, and Gad; on the south side from east to west, Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun; and on the east side from north to south, Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan. In contrast to [Revelation 7:5-8](#), where Dan is omitted and Joseph and Manasseh are included, Ezekiel mentioned Dan but not Manasseh.

[21:14-16](#). The **12 foundations** to the city's **wall** bore **the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb**. The apostles were part of the church, the body of Christ. Thus both the church and Israel will be in the city; the former are represented by the apostles' names on the foundations ([v. 14](#)), and the latter by the names of Israel's 12 tribes on the gates ([v. 12](#)). The distinction between Israel and the church is thus maintained. An **angel** measured **the city** with **a measuring rod of gold**, about 10 feet in length. The city is **12,000 stadia in length** and width, approximately 1,400 miles on each side. Tremendous as is the dimension of the city, the amazing fact is that it is also 1,400 miles **high**.

Commentators differ as to whether the city is a cube or a pyramid. The descriptions seem to favor the pyramid form.

*find pic of New Jerusalem*

[21:17-18](#). Surrounding this huge city is a wall **144 cubits** or 216 feet **thick**. The reference to **man's measurement** simply means that though an angel is using the rod, he is using human dimensions.

As John gazed at **the wall**, he saw that it was **made of jasper**, and that **the city** was made of **pure gold, as pure as glass**. John was using the language of appearance, for apparently both the jasper and the gold differ from these metals as they are known today. In [verse 11](#) the jasper is translucent, and in [verses 18](#) and [21](#) the gold is clear like glass.

[21:19-21](#). The decorations of the **foundations** (with the apostles' names inscribed on them) include 12 stones involving different colors. The color of the **jasper** is not indicated. The **sapphire** was probably blue; the **chalcedony** comes from Chalcedon, Turkey and is basically blue with stripes of other colors. The **emerald** is a bright green; the **sardonyx** is red and white; and the **carnelian**, called a "sardius" in the NASB, is usually ruby-red in color, though it sometimes has an amber or honey color. In [4:3](#) the carnelian stone is coupled with the jasper to reflect the glory of God. The **chrysolite** is a golden color, probably different from the modern chrysolite stone which is pale green. The **beryl** is a sea green; the **topaz** is a transparent yellow-green; the **chrysoprase** is also green; the **jacinth** is violet in color; and the **amethyst** is purple. The stones together provide a brilliant array of beautiful colors. The gates resemble huge, single **pearls**, and **the street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass** (cf. [21:18](#)).

While the beauty of the city may have symbolic meaning, no clue is given as to the precise interpretation. Since it is reasonable to assume that the saints will dwell in the city, it is best to take the city as a literal future dwelling place of the saints and angels.

[21:22-27](#). John declared that he **did not see a temple in the city** because **God the Father and the Lamb** (God the Son) **are its temple**. There will be no need for light from the **sun or moon** because **the glory of God** will provide the **light**. As John explained, **the Lamb is its lamp**.

From the fact that the nations (the Gentiles) will be in the city ([vv. 24, 26](#))—as well as Israel and the church—it is evident that the city is the dwelling place of the saints of all ages, the angels, and God Himself. The description of the heavenly Jerusalem in [Hebrews 12:22-24](#) itemizes all those mentioned here and adds "the spirits of righteous men made perfect," which would include all other saints not specifically mentioned.

John learned that the gates of the city will never **be shut**, and because God's glory will be present continually **there will be no night there**. **The glory and honor of the nations will be** in the city, and everything that is **impure... shameful, or deceitful** will be excluded (cf. [Rev. 21:8; 22:15](#)). The inhabitants will be **only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life**. It is interesting that in the six references to the book of life in Revelation only this one calls it "the Lamb's" (cf. [3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15](#)).

Though the description of the city does not answer all questions concerning the eternal state, the revelation given to John describes a beautiful and glorious future for all who put their trust in the living God.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

### Open it

1. What is the most beautiful place you have ever been?

**Hawaii**

2. What is one of the happiest or best memories you have?

**Big dinners at my mom and dads**

### Explore it

3. What did John see once all the judgments had taken place? ([21:1](#))

**A new heaven and a new earth**

4. In his vision, what did John see coming down out of heaven from God? ([21:2](#))

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

5. How did the voice from heaven describe the new world to come? ([21:4-5](#))

**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.”**

**<sup>5</sup> 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.**

6. What did the one on the throne promise to those who overcome? ([21:7](#))

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

7. What fate was assured for those who are evil? ([21:8](#))

***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. In what way will the New Jerusalem reflect God’s glory and holiness? ([21:21-27](#))

***Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple there is no need of sun or moon for the glory of God has illumined it and the lamp it Jesus***

9. What did John discover about the temple in the New Jerusalem? ([21:22](#))

***There is none, as the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.***

Start  
here

10. What will be the New Jerusalem's source of light? ([21:23-24](#))

***The glory of God and the Lamb***

11. How did John describe the New Jerusalem in terms of safety or security? ([21:25](#))

**It's gate will always be open**

12. How did John describe the heavenly city in terms of purity? ([21:26-27](#))

***they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; <sup>27</sup> 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.***

### **Get it**

13. What are the implications for us that this present earth will pass away?

**That what we store here is worthless, only what we store in heaven will be worthy**

14. What does it mean that God will wipe every tear from our eyes?

**All hurt, injury will be gone**

15. What kind of thirst does God promise to fill in heaven?

**The thirst we have to know God better**

16. Why do you think God revealed so many details about the measurements and appearance of the New Jerusalem?

**So we would know and recognize what we see**

17. What does the Bible mean when, speaking about the New Jerusalem, it says, "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple"?

**We are to worship them and not just a building, or object**

### **Apply it**

18. How can you remind yourself every day this week of God's promised future for His people?

**By remembering what we have learn in the bible**

19. How can you bring comfort today to someone who is facing death or pain or some other kind of sadness?

**Praying for them and showing them mercy, being there for them**