

THE REVELATION TO JOHN

THE THINGS FUTURE, REVELATION 4 - 22

THE ETERNAL STATE, REVELATION 21:1-22:5

INTRODUCTION

- Charles Ryrie, *Throughout these last two chapters of Revelation, the discussion focuses on a city, the New Jerusalem. That this is the description of eternity seems apparent from the phrases in 21:1 and the close association between verses 1 and 2 ... Perhaps the best way to understand this entire section is to regard the New Jerusalem as the abode of the redeemed of all ages. The conditions within the New Jerusalem are those of eternity*
- John Walvoord, *Following the judgment of the great white throne depicted in the closing verses of chapter 20, John's attention is next directed to the new heaven and the new earth which replace the old heaven and the old earth which fled away (20:11). The new heaven and new earth presented here are evidently not simply the old heaven and earth renovated, but an act of new creation (cf. discussion at 20:11) ... 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).*
- Charles Swindoll, *After the great white throne judgment, God will replace this present fallen universe with a new one ... It will be radically different from the sin-twisted, broken, and bruised world we see today. All the things that caused us grief and sorrow will be relegated to the past. Revelation 21:1-8 serves as a short preview for what John will describe in greater detail in 21:9-22:5.*

REVELATION 21:1-27

A. John's heavenly visions (1-2)

1. A new heaven and a new earth (1), ***Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.***
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) Isaiah 65:17, *For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.*
 - 2) Isaiah 66:22, *For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain.*
 - 3) 2 Peter 3:13, *But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*
 - 4) Revelation 20:11, *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.*
 - b. Commentary
 - 1) *a new heaven and a new earth*
 - a) Charles Ryrie, ... *eternal conditions are now being described ... The word for "new" means new in quality - "it suggests fresh life rising from the decay and wreck of the old world." Both heaven and earth are included in this new creation ... The old had "passed away."*
 - b) Warren Wiersbe, *God has promised His people a new heaven and earth (Isa. 65:17; 66:22). The old creation must make way for the new creation if God is to be glorified. Jesus called this event "the regeneration" of the earth (Matt. 19:28), and Peter explained it as a cleansing and renewing by fire (2 Peter 3:10-13).*
 - c) Charles Swindoll, *In 21:1, the new heaven and new earth will not be new merely in a chronological sense—as we talk about a "new day," for example. Rather, John describes qualitative newness. To use a film metaphor, this isn't a sequel; it's a completely new and different production ... Created by a perfect God who does perfect work, these will be perfect places existing in a perfect environment*
 - d) William Barclay, *Sorrow is to be forgotten; sin is to be overcome; darkness is to be at an end; the temporariness of time is to turn into the everlastingness of eternity. This continuing belief is a witness to three things—to the unquenchable immortal longings in the human soul, to the inherent sense of sin in everyone and to human faith in God.*

- e) John Walvoord, *The new heaven and new earth presented here are evidently not simply the old heaven and earth renovated, but an act of new creation (cf. discussion at 20:11). No description is given of either the new heaven or the new earth in verse 1 except for the cryptic statement "There was no more sea." There is remarkably little revealed in the Bible concerning the character of the new heaven and the new earth, but it is evidently quite different from their present form of existence ... No landmarks whatever are given concerning the new earth, and nothing is known of its characteristics, vegetation, color, or form ... 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.*
- f) Thomas Constable, *John now saw a new scene that explained the passing away of the present earth and heaven to which he had just briefly referred (20:11). The new earth and new heaven will come into existence after the Millennium and the Great White Throne judgment. Many interpreters take the new earth and heaven as a picture of the present age of the church, but this is unwarranted ... The reason that God will destroy the present heaven and earth is that He originally made them as the habitat for perfect humanity. However, sin so thoroughly corrupted not only the human race but the race's environment that He will destroy it and create a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. This is the final stage in His plan to deliver humanity into the blessing that He originally intended for people to enjoy ... By the first heaven and earth, John quite obviously meant this planet and the heavens (the atmosphere and the solar system, the sky) above it. He did not mean the abode of God, which Scripture also calls heaven elsewhere, specifically the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2; cf. Eph. 4:10; Heb. 4:14).*

2) *and the sea was no more*

- a) Charles Ryrie, *There was "no longer any sea." Whatever else this phrase may mean, it seems to indicate clearly the end of the old order (Ex. 20:11; Ezek. 48:28) and a complete change in climatic conditions.*
- b) Thomas Constable, *The new earth will have no sea. Some interpreters take this to mean oceans, but others understand the sea as a symbol of evil. In the Millennium there will be both oceans (Ps. 72:8; Jer. 31:9–10; Ezek. 47:8–20; 48:28; Zech. 9:10; 14:8) and evil. This is another indication that what John saw in chapter 21 was not the Millennium but the Eternal State that will follow it. The sea is the first of seven evils that John said would not exist in the new creation, the others being death, mourning, crying, pain, night, and any curse (vv. 4, 25; 22:3, 5). The sea is an evil in the sense that it opposes humankind (cf. 13:1; Dan. 7:2–6). For example, it was the sea that kept John on the Island of Patmos, separated from the churches of Asia.*
- c) John Walvoord, *The eternal state is clearly indicated in the absence of sea, for frequent mention of bodies of water occur in millennial passages (cf. Ps. 72:8; Isa. 11:9, 11; Ezek. 47:10, 15, 17, 18, 20; 48:28; Zech. 9:10; 14:8). The evidence of Revelation 21:1 is so specific that most commentators do not question that the eternal state is here in view.*

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

a. Related Verses

- 1) Revelation 22:19, *and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*
- 2) Isaiah 52:1, *Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean.*
- 3) Revelation 3:12, *The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.*
- 4) Hebrews 11:10, *For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.*
- 5) Revelation 19:7, *Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;*
- 6) John 14:3, *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.*

b. Comments

- 1) Charles Ryrie, *John then saw the New Jerusalem. The writer to the Hebrews speaks of this heavenly Jerusalem as the abode of the saints (Heb. 12:22-24). John identifies it as the “bride” (v.2). The city comes “down out of heaven” to give accessibility to the earth, but this does not mean that conditions within the city are earthly.*
- 2) Thomas Constable, *As the old Jerusalem will be Jesus Christ’s capital during the Millennium, so the New Jerusalem will be His capital from then on in the Eternal State. In the bride-husband simile, the city is like a bride and Christ is like a husband (vv. 9-10; cf. 3:12) ... this city, the New Jerusalem, now evidently encompasses two previous brides of Christ: Israel and the church.*
- 3) W. M. Smith, *A holy city will be one in which no lie will be uttered in one hundred million years, no evil word will ever be spoken, no shady business deal will ever even be discussed, no unclean picture will ever be seen, no corruption of life will ever be manifest.*
- 4) John Walvoord, *The use of the marriage figure, however, in both the Old and New Testaments is sufficiently frequent so that we cannot arbitrarily insist that figures are always used in precisely the same connotation. The subsequent description of the new Jerusalem in this chapter makes plain that saints of all ages are involved and that what we have here is not the church per se but a city or dwelling place having the freshness and beauty of a bride adorned for marriage to her husband ... Though the city is compared to a beautifully dressed bride, it actually is a city, not a person or group of people.*
- 5) Charles Swindoll, *... we get the idea that the dwelling place of God—and the place for which the righteous long—is the new Jerusalem, a city not made by human hands. It currently exists where God is—in the invisible, infinite heavens. Yet one day this city will descend to the new earth. Then and only then can it be truly proclaimed: “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” (21:3, though cf. John 1:14).*
- 6) Relationship of the New Jerusalem to the New Heaven and the New Earth
 - a) Mark Hitchcock, *While it is impossible to be certain, it seems that the New Jerusalem will descend to the earth, settle on it, and serve as capital city for the eternal state.*
 - b) Thomas Constable on several explanations, *It may be that John saw as a city what he had formerly seen as a new heaven and an new earth ... Alternatively, the New Jerusalem could be a satellite above the new earth. Some suggest that the New Jerusalem will be a satellite orbiting the present earth during the Millennium, and then, when God creates the new earth, it will descend out of heaven and rest on the surface of the new earth. Some believe that the New Jerusalem will be within the new earth. The text does not say that the New Jerusalem will come down to the new earth. It only says that John saw it coming down out of heaven from God (cf. v. 10).*

B. Proclamations from the throne (3-4)

1. God will dwell with mankind (3), ***And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.***

a. Related verses

- 1) Leviticus 26:11-12, *I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. 12 And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.*
- 2) Revelation 7:15, *Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.*

b. Comments

- 1) Charles Ryrie, *The first characteristic of the new condition is that God is with people, v. 3. God Himself will “swell” (literally, “tabernacle;” cf. John 1:4) with people during eternity.*
- 2) Thomas Constable, *This probably angelic voice (cf. 19:5) announced that God’s tabernacle, evidently the entire New Jerusalem, was now among the people. Finally the relationship between God and humankind, which God has always desired for people to enjoy, will be a reality (cf. 7:15; Gen. 3:8; 17:7; Exod. 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).*
- 3) Robert Thomas, *The essence of v. 3 is the focal point of John’s whole description of the new Jerusalem: God’s immediate presence with men.*

- 4) John Walvoord, *The presence of God in Scripture frequently connotes fellowship and blessing. Here it is stated that the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem will be the people of God and that God will not only be with them but will also be their God, a thought which is often repeated in the Scripture ... In eternity saints will enjoy a new intimacy with God which is impossible in a world where sin and death are still present.*
 - 5) Warren Wiersbe, *In both the tabernacle and the temple, the veil stood between men and God. That veil was torn in two when Jesus died, thus opening a “new and living way” for God’s people (Heb. 10:19ff). Even though God dwells in believers today by His Spirit, we still have not begun to understand God or fellowship with Him as we would like; but one day, we shall dwell in God’s presence and enjoy Him forever.*
 - 6) William Barclay, *In the new age, the glory of God is to be not a transitory thing but something which remains permanently with the people of God ... In Jeremiah’s account of the new covenant, the promise of God is: ‘I will be their God, and they shall be my people’ (Jeremiah 31:33). The promise to Ezekiel is: ‘My dwelling-place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people’ (Ezekiel 37:27). The highest promise of all is intimate fellowship with God, in which we can say: ‘I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine’ (Song of Solomon 6:3).*
 - 7) Grant Osborne, *The text here is plural, meaning that in heaven all ethnic and racial discrimination will disappear. The peoples of the world will become one, and we will treasure each other’s cultures (see also 21:24, 26).*
2. God will remove human frailty (4), ***He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.***
- a. Related verses
 - 1) Revelation 7:17, *For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*
 - 2) Revelation 20:14, *Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.*
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 15:26, *The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*
 - 4) Isaiah 35:10 and Isaiah 51:11, *And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Probably God will wipe away every tear at the inception of the Eternal State rather than at some time after that. These are tears caused by life in, and memories of, the old creation, not tears of repentance. This reference to wiping away tears highlights God’s compassion for His people. Sorrow, death, and pain will all end along with all the tears, mourning, and crying that result from them. This is a final reversal of the curse that God gave in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3). All these former experiences (“the first things”) will be gone forever (will “have passed away”) then.*
 - 2) John Walvoord, *The presence of God assures an entirely new state for those who inhabit the new Jerusalem. In contrast to their former suffering which included going through the tribulation for many of these saints, God is stated to “wipe away all tears from their eyes” ... The emphasis here is on the comfort of God, not on the remorse of the saints. The tears seem to refer to tears shed on earth as the saints endured suffering for Christ’s sake, rather than tears shed in heaven because of human failure. This is in keeping with the rest of the passage which goes on to say that other aspects of human sorrow such as death, sorrow, crying, or pain will also be no more in existence.*
 - 3) Charles Swindoll, *The glorious presence of God on earth brings a number of changes. Because wickedness cannot dwell in His presence, all traces of evil will be eradicated. Anything associated with the old world will have “passed away” (21:4), never to return. In fact, because of the abiding presence of God, it will not even be possible for death, mourning, crying, or pain to make so much as a “cameo appearance.” Those former villains in the drama of human history will have been cut from the remake. They will be gone forever.*
 - 4) Warren Wiersbe, *The believers who first read this inspired book must have rejoiced to know that, in heaven, there would be no more pain, tears, sorrow, or death; for many of their number had been tortured and slain. In every age, the hope of heaven has encouraged God’s people in times of suffering.*
 - 5) Grant Osborne, *All this has taken place because “the old order of things has passed away.” The “former things” consist of the “crying and pain” of finite life characterized by “death and mourning.” These present realities have no place in the new world. This was the hope of the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11, whose faith centered on “a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God” (Heb 11:10 NLT). They were looking for “a better place, a heavenly homeland” (11:16), and now that homeland has arrived.*

C. Proclamations from God (5-8)

1. He will make all things new (5), *And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”*
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) Revelation 4:9, *And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever,*
 - 2) Revelation 20:11, *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.*
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:17, *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*
 - 4) Revelation 22:6, *And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Charles Ryrie, *John was probably so overwhelmed at what he was seeing and learning that he forgot momentarily to write (cf. 14:13; 19:9).*
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *John now turned from describing the New Jerusalem briefly to describing some of God’s utterances (cf. 1:8; 20:11). “Behold” again introduces a special pronouncement, namely, that God will bring a new creation into existence ... Evidently an angel subsequently instructed John to write down what God had said because His words were faithful and true, not because they were incredible (cf. 22:6). Possibly it was God Himself who uttered this second statement. Perhaps the vision so enthralled John that he had stopped recording it.*
 - 3) John Walvoord, *As if in contrast to the great voice out of heaven in verse 3, verse 5 specifies that the One sitting upon the throne now speaks. It is probably too much to infer from the use of the singular “he” that God the Father is specifically meant here and not Christ the Son, though it is true that the mediatorial aspect of the kingdom is surrendered at the end of the millennium (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24–28). The Son will share the throne in this situation much as He has done in the past. The special character of His rule over the earth and His contest with the wicked, however, will be ended.*
 - 4) Charles Swindoll, *“Behold, I am making all things new!” (21:5). That’s the sum of the entire vision—in fact, it is the climax of the entire book of Revelation—out with the old, in with the new. Think about it. No more terminal diseases, hospitals, wheelchairs, or funerals. No more courts or prisons. No more divorces, breakdowns, or break-ups. No more heart attacks, strokes, Alzheimer’s, or debilitating illnesses. No more therapists, medications, or surgery. No famines, plagues, or devastating disasters. He is making all things new!*
2. It is certain because of Who He is (6a), *And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.*
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) Revelation 1:8, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”*
 - 2) Revelation 22:13, *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *The One sitting on the throne resumed speaking. The judgments of the Tribulation (cf. 16:17) and of the whole old creation stood accomplished (cf. v. 5). The One on the throne again referred to Himself as the eternal, sovereign God (“the Alpha and the Omega”; 1:8; cf. 22:13), the originator and terminator (“the beginning and the end”) of all things (cf. Isa. 44:6).*
 - 2) John Walvoord, *The message from the throne continues in verse 6 with the utterance “It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” The reference is to the work accomplished throughout the whole drama of human history prior to the eternal state. This statement does not mean that there are no future works of God but that a major work has been brought to completion and that the works now relating to the eternal state are beginning. The speaker now introduces Himself as the “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” It is by this precise title that Christ is introduced in 1:8, and the phrase is again found in 22:13. While the expression is appropriate for God the Father, the fact that it is introduced in 1:8 in reference to Christ seems to confirm the idea that Christ is also in view in this passage as sitting on the throne. With the beginning of the eternal state, there is a difference in the divine undertaking but not a difference in the divine majesty of the Second Person.*

- 3) Charles Swindoll, *God then added two things in verse 6 that secure the certainty of His decree. First, he said, "It is done." The term carries with it absolute finality ... When God declares, "It is done," however, He is pointing forward to a permanent condition that has fully arrived ... Then He said, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." These titles, which also appear in 1:8 and 22:13, remind us that this same God can be trusted to know the future exhaustively and perfectly. He alone dwells outside of our realm of cause and effect. Therefore, He can declare the end from the beginning and utter with confidence: "My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure" (Isa. 46:10).*
 - 4) Kendell Easley, *When the seventh judgment bowl of divine wrath had been poured out, a great voice declared, "It is done" (16:17). The wrath of God had been fully manifested at that point. Now Christ himself makes the same declaration about the glory of God, fully declared through the appearing of new Jerusalem.*
 - 5) Grant Osborne, *All of these divine actions are anchored in the character of God as sovereign over history, seen in the repetition of 1:8, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End" (also 1:17; 2:8; 22:13). The whole of Revelation is framed by this central theme, building on "the first and the last" of Isaiah 44:6; 48:12. All of history has been under his control, so the readers can be assured even in this time of evil that God remains sovereign over all.*
 - 6) William Barclay, *God is the beginning and the end. The word for beginning is arche, and means not simply first in point of time but first in the sense of the source of all things. The word for end is telos, and means not simply end in point of time but the goal. John is saying that all life begins in God and ends in God.*
3. He declares sure promises to humanity (6b-8)
- a. For believers (6b-7)
 - 1) They will be satisfied (6b), ***To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.***
 - a) Related verses
 - 1] Revelation 22:17, *The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.*
 - 2] John 4:10, *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."*
 - 3] John 7:37, *On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."*
 - b) Comments
 - 1] Thomas Constable, *His promise of abundant satisfaction for the one who thirsts is metaphorical. It symbolizes His ability to meet the deepest needs of His people (7:17; cf. Isa. 55:1; John 4:13–14; 7:37–39) ... Contrast "the spring of the water of life" with the cup from which the harlot drank (17:4; 18:3). This is an invitation and a promise to anyone, including believers, to come to God in order to receive what is truly satisfying from Him without cost. It is a beautiful gospel invitation (cf. 3:20; 22:17).*
 - 2] John Walvoord, *The first of three promises made in verses 6 and 7 then follows, where water from the fountain of the water of life is promised in abundance to the one who is thirsty. A similar assurance is given to the martyred throng of tribulation saints in 7:17. It refers to the abundant character of eternal life and the blessings which flow from it and is a fulfillment of the invitation of Isaiah 55:1 as well as that of Christ in John 4:10, 13–14 ... Apparently this refers not to physical thirst but to a desire for spiritual blessings.*
 - 3] Warren Wiersbe, *People who live in modern cities do not think much about water, but this was a major concern in John's day. No doubt John himself, working in the Roman mines, had known the meaning of thirst. Tortured saints throughout the ages would certainly identify with this wonderful promise from the Lord. Free and abundant living water for all!*
 - 4] William Barclay, *At first sight, it might seem to remove God to such a distance that we are no more to him than the flies on the window pane. But what comes next? 'To the thirsty I will give water without price from the fountain of the water of life.' All God's greatness is at our disposal. 'God so loved that he gave ...' (John 3:16). The splendour of God is used to satisfy the thirst of the longing heart.*

2) They will be children of God (7), ***The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.***

a) Related verses

- 1] Revelation 2:7, *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.*
- 2] Revelation 21:3, *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*
- 3] 2 Corinthians 6:18, *and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."*

b) Comments

- 1] Thomas Constable, *The overcomer (i.e., every believer) will inherit these things (i.e., the blessings of the new creation just mentioned). This promise completes and summarizes the other seven promises to overcomers in chapters 2 and 3. Inheriting emphasizes the privilege of obtaining something because of the work of another, in contrast to one's own work.*
- 2] Grant Osborne, *The greatest blessing of all is the incredible reality from Revelation 21:3, "I will be their God, and they will be my children." This sums up the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 17:7) and the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7:14) and points to the adoption language of Romans 8:14–17, "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God." Now the full adoption has occurred, and what we experience now is a foretaste of that eternal joy.*
- 3] John Walvoord, *Frequently in Scripture, particular promises are given those who triumph in faith, but here the generous provision is made that they shall inherit "all things" rather than some particular aspect of the divine provision (cf. Matt. 5:5; 19:29; 25:34; 1 Cor. 6:9–10; Heb. 1:14; 9:15; 1 Peter 1:4; 3:9; 1 John 5:5) ... 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 ... Promises to overcomers are included in the messages to the seven churches and are anticipated in 1 Corinthians 3:21–23.*
- 4] Warren Wiersbe, *"He that overcometh" is a key phrase in this book (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; note also 12:11). As John pointed out in his first epistle, all true believers are overcomers (1 John 5:4–5), so this promise is not just for the "spiritually elite." Because we are the children of God, we shall inherit all things.*
- 5] Charles Swindoll, *The one who overcomes is not the one who has lived a perfect life, obeyed the Ten Commandments, or observed numerous rites and rituals. Rather, people overcome the world through faith alone: "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4–5). Even in the book of Revelation, John described the saints as those who "overcame [Satan] because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony" (Rev. 12:11). The way a person becomes an "overcomer" is not by his or her own efforts or merits, but solely through faith alone in the Son of God alone. Those believers in Christ, then, will become children of God and heirs of all the good things described in Revelation (cf. 21:7)—hence, "overcomers."*

b. For unbelievers there will be eternal punishment (8), ***But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.***

1) Related verses

- a) Revelation 22:15, *Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.*
- b) 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, *9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*
- c) Hebrews 12:14, *Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*
- d) Revelation 20:14, *Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.*

2) Comments

- a) Thomas Constable, *Since the lake that burns with fire and brimstone still exists after the passing of the present heaven and earth, hell is probably not in the center of the present earth, nor is it connected to this earth spatially. It will probably exist separately from the new heaven and new earth and the New Jerusalem. Even though this passage does not say that sin will be absent in the Eternal State, it seems quite clear that there will be no sin, since the consequences of sin will be absent.*
- b) Charles Ryrie, *Notice that the text does not say that anyone who has ever committed any of these sins will be excluded, but people whose lives are characterized in these ways. There is a difference, for instance, between occurrences of lying in one's life and living a liar's life. The sinful people described here are unsaved people who will be cast forever into the Lake of Fire.*
- c) Warren Wiersbe, *The fearful are the cowardly, the people who did not have the courage to stand up for Christ (see Matt. 10:32–33). The word abominable means "polluted," and refers to those who indulged in sin and were thus polluted in mind, spirit, and body (2 Cor. 7:1). The other characteristics mentioned in Revelation 21:8 need no special explanation, except to note that all of them would be true of "the beast's" followers (note Rev. 17:4, 6; 18:3, 9; 19:2).*
- d) Kendell Easley, *Now the damned are described by the deeds they had done ... cowardly—those who gave in to the threats of the beast and served him; unbelieving—those who were unfaithful and lacking in genuine trust; vile—those who polluted themselves by worshiping the beast; murderers—those who killed the saints during the beast's rule of terror; sexually immoral—those who gave themselves over to the great prostitute; practitioners of magic arts—see 9:21 for this and the previous two evils; idolaters—worshippers of any false god, but particularly of the beast's image; all liars—these are earlier condemned in Revelation (3:9; 14:5).*
- e) John Walvoord, *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).*
- f) Charles Swindoll, *Yet countless people will not overcome. That's the flipside of the good news. Not all will abandon their sin and pride as they receive forgiveness and eternal life as a free, unmerited gift. Instead, God declares this sober reminder: the fearful, unbelieving, wicked, murderous, immoral, sacrilegious, idolatrous, and deceptive will be consigned to the lake of fire—the second death (21:8) ... In the future, believers and nonbelievers will live eternally, though in separate and opposite locations. That explains John's primary purpose for writing his gospel: to convince those who had not yet placed their faith in Christ to do so—immediately (John 20:31)! In the book of Revelation itself, John repeatedly reminded his readers of God's offer of eternal salvation and of the certain consequences that were sure to follow their failure to respond.*

D. The New Jerusalem (9-27)

1. The Bride revealed (9-10), ***Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And 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,***

a. Related verses

- 1) Revelation 17:11, *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters,*
- 2) Revelation 15:1, *Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.*
- 3) Revelation 17:2, *2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*
- 4) Ezekiel 43:5, *the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.*
- 5) Ezekiel 40:2, *In visions of God he brought me to the land of Israel, and set me down on a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city to the south.*

b. Comments

1) The interpreter

- a) Charles Ryrie, *One of the angels who poured out the bowl judgments now bids John to view the city in greater detail. His vantage point is outside the city on a high mountain. Again, the city is identified as the bride of Christ (v. 9), the place He is now preparing for His people (John 14:2).*

- b) Robert Mounce, *The descent is an announcement in visionary terms of a future event which will usher in the eternal state. That the city comes down from God means that the eternal blessedness is not an achievement of man but a gift from God.*
- c) Thomas Constable, *One of the seven angels who had poured out one of the seven bowls of judgment served as John's guide in this part of his vision (cf. 17:1). The fact that one of these particular angels helped John understand both the mystery of Babylon and that of the New Jerusalem sets these two cities in stark contrast.*
- d) Charles Swindoll, *As God's final judgment on repentant sinners faded into the distance, one of the seven angels who had poured out the bowls of wrath tugged on John's arm to escort him on his tour of the new Jerusalem. The angel called the city "the bride, the wife of the Lamb" (21:9) ... the new Jerusalem is a real place created by God as the dwelling of all the redeemed of all ages. Both Old and New Testament believers will dwell in this city from God. This is the place Jesus had in mind when He went to prepare a place for us (John 14:2-3) ... After John was carried away in the spiritual realm to a high mountain, he witnessed this Celestial City complete its descent to the earth—coming down out of heaven from God.*
- e) John Walvoord, *With this survey of the eternal state and its blessings before him, John is now invited by one of the seven angels who had poured out the seven vials of the wrath of God to behold the bride, the Lamb's wife. This angel may have been the one mentioned in 17:1 who showed John the vision of Babylon, the harlot, but it is impossible to prove that it is the same one of the seven. In keeping with the earlier revelation of 21:2, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, is here characterized as "the bride, the Lamb's wife." Since a city is not a bride nor a wife, the truth here represented is that the city, the residence of the saints of eternity future, is to be compared to a bride for beauty and is intimately related to Jesus Christ the Lamb.*
- f) Warren Wiersbe, *The eternal city is not only the home of the bride; it is the bride! A city is not buildings; it is people. The city John saw was holy and heavenly; in fact, it descended to earth from heaven, where it was prepared. John's description staggers the imagination, even accepting the fact that a great deal of symbolism is involved. Heaven is a real place of glory and beauty, the perfect home for the Lamb's bride.*

- 2) The time frame - the Millennium or the Eternal State? John Walvoord, *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 ... A number of considerations support the conclusion that the eternal state is in view in Revelation 21:9 through 22:7. There is good reason for concluding that the order of Revelation beginning in chapter 19 is chronological; a retrogression in time would violate the structure of the last great section of the book. The description of the holy city as given in 21:2 is obviously identical to the description in 21:9. As most expositors grant that 21:2 is the eternal state, it would follow that 21:9 should be considered the same. The implication of 21:2 and 21:10-11 is that the holy city arrives on the new earth. Prophecies governing the millennial earth do not allow for such a city on earth. The apportionment of the Holy Land and the description of the Temple as found in Ezekiel's description of the millennial earth (Ezek. 40-48) are entirely different. The heavenly city is obviously seen as it will appear in the eternal state in the entire passage beginning with 21:1.*

2. A description of the city (11-21)

- a. Glory (11), *having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.*

1) Related verses

- a) Revelation 21:23, *And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.*
- b) Revelation 4:3, *And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.*

2) Comments

- a) Charles Ryrie, *The glory of the city is the "glory of God." Its light is the radiance of God's complete character. Its brilliance was like that of a "very costly stone," like that of a "crystal-clear jasper," with its gorgeous hues and transparency.*

- b) Thomas Constable, *The first and most important characteristic that John noted was its radiant glow (“brilliance”). It shone with the splendor (“glory”) of God Himself, because He was in it (cf. Exod. 40:34; Num. 9:15–23; 1 Kings 8:11; 2 Chron. 5:14; Isa. 24:23; 60:1; Ezek. 43:5; John 12:41; Acts 26:13) ... As mentioned earlier (cf. 4:3), this jasper is most likely a crystal-clear gem with many facets of brilliance, probably what we call a diamond. This gemstone described God Himself earlier (4:3), so its brilliance is a further reflection of God’s presence in the city.*
- c) John Walvoord, *As the glory of God is the sum of His infinite perfections in their manifestations, so the new Jerusalem reflects all that God is ... The city is ablaze with light compared to the brightness of a precious stone such as jasper, and clear as crystal. The stone here described as a jasper has its name transliterated from a similar word in the original (Gr., iaspis), a name used for stones of various colors, but here specifying the qualities “precious” and “clear as crystal.” The mention of this stone which is costly to men but used lavishly in the new Jerusalem (cf. 21:19) is designed to manifest the glory of God ... all illumination comes from the Lamb. The believer in Christ does not generate the light of Christ, but he should both reflect and transmit its glory without blurring the beauty and loveliness of Christ.*
- d) Charles Swindoll, *In his inspired description of the new Jerusalem, John used two words to convey its stunning appearance: “glory” and “brilliance” ... They are coupled to describe the same thing: the brilliant glory of God. This glory is also mentioned in 15:8 and 21:23. It most likely refers to the fiery, glowing presence of God (called the shekinah by Jewish teachers). The Shekinah glory blazed ahead of the Hebrew people as they fled Egypt, shined brilliantly among His people in the tabernacle, and sat enthroned between the cherubim atop the ark of the covenant in the temple (Ex. 40:34–35; Ezek. 43:5) ... Nothing on earth begins to compare to what God has prepared for us, since any choice of words fails to capture the breathtaking intensity of His glory.*
- e) Warren Wiersbe, *We have already noted that “the glory of God” has appeared in different places throughout history. God’s glory dwelt in the tabernacle and then in the temple. Today, His glory dwells in believers and in His church. For all eternity, the glory of God will be seen in His holy city. It is the only light the city will need.*
- b. Construction (12-14), ***It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— 13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.***
- 1) Related verses
- a) Hebrews 11:10, *For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.*
- b) 1 Corinthians 3:11, *For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*
- 2) Comments
- a) Charles Ryrie, *The city had a “great and high wall,” suggesting the security of the bride. In the wall are “twelve gates” ... and the names of the “twelve tribes of Israel” are inscribed on them ... The wall has “twelve foundation stones,” and on them are the names of the “twelve apostles.” Notice that even in eternity Israel and the church are distinguished, though both are included in God’s redeemed people.*
- b) Thomas Constable, *The fact that each gate bore a distinct name of one of Israel’s 12 tribes probably indicates that Israel will have a distinctive identity and role in this city, as it had throughout history (cf. 7:1–8). God will perpetuate the memory of Israel throughout eternity ... the church, represented by the apostles (cf. Eph. 2:20), will be in the New Jerusalem as will Israel ... Note the distinction between Israel and the church even in the Eternal State (cf. Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30). God had a role for each group to play, and an identity separate from the other, in the past as well as the present. This distinction between the foundations and the walls harmonizes with our belief that the church has not replaced Israel in the plans of God.*
- c) John Walvoord, *The twelve apostles on the one hand were of Israel and were called out of Israel to be leaders in the church in the New Testament. They are, in some sense, representative of both Israel and the church, though their primary significance seems to be that the saints of the church age are included in this eternal city.*
- d) Charles Swindoll, *On the gates were the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, representing the totality of the Old Testament people of God (21:12); on the foundations were the names of the twelve apostles of Christ, representing the New Testament church of God (12:14). Thus, the city will be the dwelling place of the united people of God—Old and New Testament believers—whose salvation rests on the completed work of Jesus Christ.*

- c. Size and shape of the City (15-16), *And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. 16 The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. 17 He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.*
- 1) Related verses, Revelation 11:1, *Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there,*
 - 2) Notes
 - a) 12,000 stadia is approximately 1,380 miles.
 - b) 144 cubits is approximately 216 feet.
 - 3) Comments
 - a) Thomas Constable, *Only the utensils used in the holy of holies were gold in the tabernacle and temple, but even this measuring rod is gold, which suggests the high value of the city ... The dimensions of this city were 12,000 stadia (approximately 1,500 miles) on each of its four sides and 1,500 miles high. (The distance from Dallas, Texas, to Philadelphia or Los Angeles is about 1,500 miles) ... What is clear is that this city will be extremely large (cf. John 14:2) ... This verse's description, understood literally, could allow for either a cube or a pyramid shape, the latter being the shape of a Babylonian ziggurat. The fact that the holy of holies was a cube in shape tempts one to conclude that the New Jerusalem will also be cubical ("its length, width, and height are equal").*
 - b) Charles Ryrie, *The cube, or four square shape of the city, reminds one of the fourfold dimensions give of the love of God (Ephesians 3:18).*
 - c) Mark Hitchcock, *The New Jerusalem is pictured as a great Edenic city - many of the features found in the garden in Genesis reappear in the city of God. And it's a massive city - Revelation 21 clearly states that the New Jerusalem will be 1500 miles high, wide and deep. These measurements could describe either a perfect cube or a triangle - both are possible ... I myself favor the cube configure.*
 - d) Randy Alcorn, *A metropolis of this size in the middle of the United States would stretch from Canada to Mexico and from the Appalachian Mountains to the California border ... The ground level of the city will be nearly two million square miles. This is forty times bigger than England ... But, remember, that's just the ground floor ... Given the dimensions of a 1,400-mile cube, if the city consisted of different levels ... and if each level were a generous twelve feet high, the city could have over 600,000 stories ... billions of people could occupy New Jerusalem, with many square miles per person ... The cube shape of New Jerusalem reminds us of the cube shape of the Most Holy Place in the Temple (I Kings 6:20), the three dimensions perhaps suggestive of the three persons of the Trinity. God will live in the city, and it is his presence that will be its greatest feature.*
 - e) Charles Swindoll, *Critics are correct that this massive city could never fit on the present earth, but it will be perfectly proportionate to the new earth, which God will fashion for the eternal state (21:1) ... when we realize that this is the capital city of God's new creation and that its origin is from God Himself, we should not be surprised at its incredible size. It will be the eternal dwelling place of countless saints and innumerable angels.*
- d. The City walls (17)
- 1) Thomas Constable, *The city wall was evidently 144 cubits (about 216 feet or 72 yards) thick (cf. Ezek. 40:5; 42:20). An American football field is 100 yards long. John explained that even though an angel was doing the measuring he was using human units of measurement. Thus these measurements meant the same to John as they would have meant if something else in his day was being measured.*
 - 2) Charles Ryrie, *The wall measures "seventy two yards" (144 cubits or 216 feet high), and these measurements by the angel are the same as "human measurements." Whether this measures the height or thickness of the wall is not clear.*
 - 3) John Walvoord, *In addition to measuring the city itself, the angel measures the wall which by comparison is much smaller, namely 144 cubits or, assuming that a cubit is 18 inches, a height of 216 feet. This measurement is described as being "the measure of a man, that is, of the angel" ... The implication of this statement is that whether man or angel measured it, the measurement would be the same ... The city taken as a whole is pictured as descending from heaven to the new earth, and the fact that it has foundations and comes from heaven to the earth seems to imply that it rests on the new earth itself. This also is implied in the fact that people go in and out of the gates, which fact is difficult to visualize unless the gates themselves rest upon the earth.*
 - 4) Warren Wiersbe, *John had measured the earthly Jerusalem (Rev. 11), but now he is invited to measure the heavenly city. Foursquare means "equal on all sides," so the city might be a cube or a pyramid. More importantly, the fact that it is equal on all sides indicates the perfection of God's eternal city: nothing is out of order or balance.*

e. Materials (18-21)

1) Related verses

- a) Revelation 21:11, *having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.*
- b) Revelation 22:2, *through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

2) Comments

- a) The wall (18), ***The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass.***

- 1] Charles Ryrie, *The wall was “jasper” (usually green quartz) and the city of “pure gold” - both clear as crystal.*
- 2] Thomas Constable, *Perhaps John meant that the walls were overlaid with this brilliant material—further suggesting the radiance of God’s holy presence. The whole city appeared to shine like an object of pure gold.*
- 3] John Walvoord, *The wall is said to be of jasper in keeping with the general description of verse 11 and probably clear as crystal also. The city as a whole is portrayed as made of pure gold like clear glass. This description would indicate that it is gold in appearance but like clear glass in substance, namely, glass with a gold cast to it. Employing the language of semblance, John is endeavoring to give a description of a scene which in most respects transcends earthly experience. The constant mention of transparency indicates that the city is designed to transmit the glory of God in the form of light without hindrance.*
- 4] Charles Swindoll, *Moving from its structure and size, our lens of Scripture zooms in closer to the actual texture and color of the walls, gates, and foundations. In popular terminology, we could say that the new Jerusalem will be decked out. No wonder John first described the city as “a bride adorned for her husband” (21:2).*

- b) The foundations (19-20), ***The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.***

- 1] Charles Ryrie, *The foundation was “adorned” (a word from which we derive the English word “cosmetics”) with precious stones. The colors are as follows: jasper, green; sapphire, blue, chalcedony, green; emerald, green; sardonyx, brown and white, sardius, red; chrysolite, yellow; beryl, green; topaz, yellow; chrysoprase, apple green; jacinth, blue; and amethyst, purple.*
- 2] Thomas Constable, *The foundation of a building is usually completely functional and not decorative, but these foundations, which were at least partially visible above ground, were adorned and studded with precious, beautiful gems ... These gemstones were of many different colors of the rainbow suggesting the extreme beauty of the city. We cannot identify all of them exactly today, but they were undoubtedly precious gems in John’s day ... The Israelite high priest carried 12 gems, which represented each of the twelve tribes, on his breastpiece (Exod. 28:17–20). Perhaps there is some symbolic connection between these 12 foundation jewels and those, though only eight of them appear in both lists. In the new order of the heavenly Jerusalem everyone will have the privilege of access to God that once was only the unique privilege of the high priest in Israel—and that just once a year.*
- 3] John Walvoord, *Attention is next directed to the foundation of the city which is said to be garnished with all kinds of precious stones. This is a sight of indescribable beauty with the light of the city playing upon the multicolored stones ... Though the precise colors of these stones in some cases are not certain, the general picture here described by John is one of unmistakable beauty, designed to reflect the glory of God in a spectrum of brilliant color. The light of the city within shining through these various colors in the foundation of the wall topped by the wall itself composed of the crystal-clear jasper forms a scene of dazzling beauty in keeping with the glory of God and the beauty of His holiness. The city is undoubtedly far more beautiful to the eye than anything that man has ever been able to create, and it reflects not only the infinite wisdom and power of God but also His grace as extended to the objects of His salvation.*

c) The gates and street (21), ***And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.***

- 1] Charles Ryrie, *The gates were each “a single pearl,” and he street was pure, transparent gold. From this description of heaven, our earthly minds certainly can comprehend that it is a place of extreme beauty.*
- 2] Thomas Constable, *Evidently each gate that John saw (vv. 12–13) had been carved out of one huge (“a single”) pearl (cf. Isa. 54:11–12) ... John further described the street or pavement of the city. He was probably referring to all the streets since all of them would be connected. This pavement was pure gold (v. 18), as pure as transparent glass. Old Testament priests who ministered in Solomon’s temple walked on a gold floor originally (1 Kings 6:30).*
- 3] Robert Thomas, *Among the ancients, pearls were ranked highest among precious stones, because their beauty derives entirely from nature, improvement by human workmanship being an impossibility ...*
- 4] John Walvoord, *Built in the walls are the twelve gates described as each being made of one huge pearl, leading to the streets of the city described as pure gold transparent as glass, that is, golden in color and appearance but having the translucency of glass. The word street (Gr., plateia) is in the singular but is used generically to describe all the streets of the city.*
- 5] Charles Swindoll, *The gate leading into the city will be created from one giant pearl (21:21). The significance of the “pearly gates” is often missed ... The pearl represents pain resulting in beauty, suffering crowned with glory. When we read of this symbol of the pearl eternally embedded in the doorways of heaven, it should remind us that Christ’s suffering had an eternal purpose and opened heaven for us (John 10:9; 14:6). It also assures us that our own suffering for the sake of Christ has a purpose and can be used by Him to reflect His glory in our lives (Rom. 5:3–5; Phil. 3:8–11; James 1:2–4).*

f. The characteristics of New Jerusalem (22-27)

1) The Father and Son are the temple of the city (22), ***And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.***

- a) Charles Ryrie, *The city does not require a temple or a place of worship to provide access to God simply because God and the Lamb are actually present and themselves constitute the temple.*
- b) Thomas Constable, *Unlike old Jerusalem, there will be no temple in the new city, because God Himself will be there, and He and the Lamb will be its temple. The whole city, infused with the glory and presence of Almighty God and the Lamb, will therefore be a virtual temple ... The earthly tabernacle and temple were mainly symbols of the presence of God with people, but in the New Jerusalem that presence will be a reality ... This verse and verses 23–27 stress that God will bring His people into an intimate relationship with Himself in the New Jerusalem.*
- c) John Walvoord, *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.*
- d) Charles Swindoll, *It’s true that in the present age of the church, God redirected the location of worship from the physical temple in Jerusalem to the spiritual “temple” of the church itself—the body of believers (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:19–22). In the future new Jerusalem, in which all the redeemed of every age will dwell, the center of worship will be the Father and the Son. All the inhabitants will worship forever in the presence and by the power of the Holy Spirit.*
- e) Grant Osborne, *The primary feature of the temple was God’s residence (the Shekinah, from the Hebrew shakan, to dwell) there; this is what made the temple sacred. In the new Jerusalem he resides among his people, so the entire city becomes the holy of holies where God makes his home.*
- f) William Barclay, *In verse 22, John points out a unique feature of the city of God: in it there is no temple. When we remember how precious the Temple was to the Jews, this is amazing. But we have already noted that the city is built in the shape of a perfect cube, indicating that it is the Holy of Holies. The city needs no temple because the presence of God is continually there.*

- 2) The Father and Son are the light of the city (23), ***And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.***
- a) Related verses
- 1] Revelation 22:5, *And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.*
 - 2] Isaiah 60:19-20, *God the Glory of Zion 19 The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. 20 Your sun shall no more go down, or your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.*
- b) Comments
- 1] Charles Ryrie, *The city requires no sun or moon since the glory of God and the Lamb will light the city. This does not necessarily mean that there will be no sun or moon (which may still furnish light for outlying areas), but only that they will not be required for light within the city.*
 - 2] Thomas Constable, *God illuminated the camp of Israel with His presence in the pillar of fire, and He lit the holy of holies with His presence between the cherubim. He will similarly dispel all darkness of all kinds in the new city ...*
 - 3] John Walvoord, *That God Himself should be the light of the city is of course entirely in keeping with many passages in the Old Testament comparing God to light; and this new situation correlates with Jesus Christ Himself being the light of the world (cf. John 1:7–9; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35). Because God is light and there is no darkness in Him, believers are exhorted to walk in the light in their present existence on this earth in keeping with their future in heaven (1 John 1:5–7). The whole of the city of the new Jerusalem is designed to transmit the light in all the beauty and color previously described.*
 - 4] Kendell Easley, *Since physical light is so often a biblical picture for spiritual and moral right (John 1:9; 8:12), the presence of an everlasting lamp points to the permanent overthrow of sin and evil. Part of the curse on the wicked prostitute city was that never more would a lamp shine there (18:23). By contrast, the New Jerusalem will be forever full of light.*
 - 5] William Barclay, *The city of God needed no created light, because God, the uncreated light, was in the middle of it. ‘The Lord’, said Isaiah, ‘will be your everlasting light’ (Isaiah 60:19–20). ‘In your light,’ said the psalmist, ‘we see light’ (Psalm 36:9). Only when we see things in the light of God do we see things as they are.*
- 3) All nations will worship in the light continually (24-26), ***By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.***
- a) Related verses
- 1] Isaiah 60:3, *Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.*
 - 2] Isaiah 60:11, *Your gates shall always be open; day and night they shall not be shut, so that nations shall bring you their wealth, with their kings led in procession.*
- b) Charles Ryrie, *Nations and kings on the earth will bring glory and honor to the city. Several suggestions have been made concerning the involvement of “nations” here. (1) Some feel that the mention of nations shows that the time referred to reverts back to the Millennium and that John is viewing the relation of the New Jerusalem, which is suspended over the earth during the Millennium, to the people on the earth during that time. (2) Others translate (legitimately) the word “nations” as “Gentiles” and understand that saved Gentiles are simply being delineated as belonging to the New Jerusalem and bringing glory and honor into it. (3) [Leon] Morris suggests that the redeemed will not only have their residences in the New Jerusalem but will also be organized with national boundaries on the new earth over which they will have jurisdiction.*
- c) Mark Hitchcock, *concerning verse 24 (kings) and verse 26 (nations), ... this is simply referring to Gentiles who have been saved by God’s grace and who bring whatever glory they had on earth to heaven and give it all to the Lord. Any glory that anyone possessed here on earth will dissolve and be swallowed up in the eternal worship of God.*
- d) John Walvoord, *That the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into the city means that those among the saved who have honored positions on earth will ascribe the glory and honor that once were theirs to their Lord and God.*

- e) Thomas Constable, *The identity of the nations and the kings mentioned is difficult to determine. The most probable explanation seems to be that the nations are groups of believers viewed according to their old-creation nationalities, which they will retain in the new creation. The kings (rulers) probably are believing national leaders who ruled over nations during the old creation. These leaders will bring their glory into the city, thus increasing its glory, by simply entering it, since they are glorious individuals by God's grace ... In John's day, cities closed their gates to keep enemies out, but there will be no enemies in the Eternal State, so the gates will remain open at all times (cf. Isa. 60:11). John said that the city gates will never ever be closed (double negative, Gr. ou me kleisthosin). These kings, therefore, may enter whenever they wish.*
- f) Charles Swindoll, *In this light—the glory of God—all nations will walk (21:24). They will pass through open gates, entering the presence of God without hindrance or hesitation (21:25–26).*
- 4) The city admits only those saved by the Son (27), ***But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.***
- a) Related verses
- 1] Joel 3:17, *So you shall know that I, the LORD your God, dwell in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall never again pass through it.*
 - 2] Revelation 3:5, *If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white robes, and I will not blot your name out of the book of life; I will confess your name before my Father and before his angels.*
- b) Comments
- 1] Charles Ryrie, ... *entrance into the city is clearly restricted to those who are redeemed (v 27).*
 - 2] Thomas Constable, *This verse warns the reader that the only way to gain entrance into this heavenly and holy city is to have one's name recorded in the Lamb's book of life (cf. 20:15).*
 - 3] John Walvoord, ... *all who are there have entered the city as the objects of God's grace, otherwise they too would be excluded. This will be a perfect environment in contrast to the centuries of human sin, and the saints will enjoy this perfect situation through all eternity to come. The inhabitants of the city will be characterized by eternal life and absolute moral purity.*
 - 4] Kendell Easley, *John notes two groups specifically. First, those who have done what is shameful could also be translated "what is abominable," and so refers to those who were allied to the prostitute city, the "mother of the abominations of the earth" (17:4–5). Second, those who have done what is deceitful, that is, have worked or spoken lies, are excluded (see v. 8, where all liars were sent to the fiery lake). By contrast, the true citizens are defined as those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (see 20:15). All who are registered in the book have full and free access to the city. This emphasizes again what Christ has done: it is the Lamb's book because he alone is the author and finisher of salvation.*
 - 5] William Barclay, *The chapter ends with a threat. Those who will not lay aside the evil of their ways are barred from the city of God. There are sinners who sin against their will; there are sinners who deliberately sin. It is not the repentant sinners but the defiant sinners who are barred from the city of God.*

SUMMARY

- John Walvoord, *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.*
- Grant Osborne, *So much has been written about heaven down through the centuries, yet the only extended biblical description is found only here in Revelation 21. The most important thing about it is that it will realize the greatest promise of all—we will dwell with God face to face. Moses could not look on him and live; we will not only look upon him but walk with him hand in hand. Moreover, all our suffering will be over; there will be no crying or tears or pain—only joy as we inhabit our perfect eternal body.*
- Kendell Easley, *The bride city of the Lamb, new Jerusalem, descends to earth in the new creation, and Christ is eternally present with his people.*