

Just try to pause for a moment and think: What is Heaven going to be like? In all of the pictures and portrayals that we have, it's going to be a whole lot like the best of what's here (on Earth). Take away sin and take away all disease; multiply the beauty ... we just can't comprehend it. It's hard for us to imagine how much damage sin has done to creation; how much of the glory, how much of the beauty of the original creation has been diminished because of the curse of sin.

Let's start in Revelation 21:9, "*Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me ... saying, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.'*" Remember that we're still in the betrothal stage of our marriage union with Christ. In ancient times, when a young man and a young woman became engaged or, as they said, "betrothed," she was considered his wife, even though they were not completely married yet. From the moment that that commitment was made, she was called "the wife." So, "*I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.*"

Revelation 21:10–12, "*He carried me ... in the Spirit to a great and high mountain.*" When have we seen great and high mountains before? Remember in Luke 4 when Jesus was tempted by the devil, he took Him up into a great and a high mountain. This figure is used several times in the Bible. It's really a metaphor—an illustration that pictures a mountain so high that you can see the whole world. "*And [he] showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.*" If you remember in Galatians 4, toward the end of the chapter, Paul makes a point that the Jerusalem that now exists is representative of Hagar and the Law. They were enslaved by the Law. Our mother is not the Jerusalem that now exists, but the Jerusalem that is above. The Jerusalem that is above is "our mother" and therefore we are free. Well, he's talking about this heavenly residence that belongs to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

John sees "*the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.*" When we talk about the glory of God, we're talking about the brilliance and the luminescence of His presence. God is light, and that light is brilliant. "*Having the glory of God*" and "*Her light was like a most precious stone.*" And then He goes through a listing of the stones. Remember that the stones were used for the breastplate of the High Priest. So, it says, "*Her light was like the most precious stone, like a Jasper stone, clear as crystal. Also, she had a great and high wall with 12 gates.*" 12 gates into the city. "*... and 12 angels at the gate and names written on them, which are the names of the 12 tribes of the children of Israel.*" I find this very interesting. So, the city is the Bride of the Lamb, but the city has the names of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Revelation 21:13–14, "*Three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south and three gates on the west. The wall of the city had 12 foundations, and on them were the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb.*" So, what we have here is a gathering together, as I see it, of the family of God, those who have trusted in Him and believed in Him from the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints, represented by the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles. It is also interesting that the Apostle Paul tells us that the Church was built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. So, we have a bringing together of the family from the Old and New Testaments.

Revelation 21:15, "*He who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city.*" If you want to go back, I encourage you to go back and read Ezekiel chapter 40, I think it runs all the way

through verse 46 or 48. Ezekiel goes into detail about doing exactly what's being spoken of here. He is given a reed like a rod, and he was told to measure the city, and he measured the city in great detail. It's very easy to get lost in it. John doesn't go into that detail here.

Revelation 21:16, "*The city is laid out as a square.*" It's actually not a square, it's a cube. Its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with a reed—12,000 furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. So, there we have the cube. How long are 12,000 furlongs? 1500 miles. So, the city is 1500 miles wide, 1500 miles long, 1500 miles high. Can you even comprehend how much space that is in the city? I mean, if that city had floors—let's just imagine that there are floors in this 1500 miles, and every floor is a mile above the other, you can actually have a complete environment within 1500 miles square, with sky and clouds and everything above you. And then you go to the next floor, and you've got another complete environment, followed by another, and another! I kind of like to think, and this is just me dreaming, that God has a place in that city where each of us could go back to a different time in history: If you want to go back to the Renaissance time, there's a Renaissance floor. If you want to, like me, to go back to the early American West in the days of the mountain man, there's a mountain-man floor. I realize it's childish, but I'm just telling you, it'll be better than anything we can imagine!

Revelation 21:17, "*Then he measured its wall: [144 cubits], according to the measure of a man, that is, an angel.*" It's very interesting here that we have the 12,000 (furlongs) with the 144 (by the way, it's 144). It does make me wonder if there is some link, because if you go back to Revelation chapter seven, you'll notice two numbers: 12,000 and 144,000. I'll leave that to you to explore. We are reminded, in 2 Chronicles 3:8 and 1 Kings 6:20, that the Holy of Holies was a perfect cube. The height, the width, and the length were exactly the same. In the ancient world, the cube was a symbol of perfection. The symbol of perfection. Remember that the brazen altar and the breastplate were also in the symbol of a cube. Very interesting. We have references there in Exodus 27:1, 28:16, Exodus 32, and 1 Kings 6:20. You can go back and check those out. John then begins to tell us about the construction (of the wall).

Revelation 21:18, "*The construction of its wall was of Jasper; and the city was pure gold ...*" I doubt that any of you have ever seen gold like this, "*like clear glass.*" Pure gold, but like clear glass. Once again, if the Lord is in the center of that city, and if He is the light of the city, where's that light going to go? It's going to be diffused out of the city!

Revelation 21:19–20, "*The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first a foundation of jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the 10th chrysoprase, the 11th jacinth, and the 12th amethyst.*" Now, how interesting is this? Exodus 28:17–20 gives us those stones in the breastplate of the high priest. The stones in the New Jerusalem are the same as the stones on the breastplate of the high priest. And they're the same stones that were Lucifer's covering before he fell (Ezekiel 28:13). Those stones hold a message that we probably are not yet aware of. Somehow, they reveal the essence of God, the character of God, the glory of God in a way that we probably do not understand at this point.

Revelation 21:21, "*the 12 gates were 12 pearls.*" Anybody in here like pearls? Did you know that in the ancient world the pearl was valued above all other stones? We've looked at all of these

stones and they're all amazing. And we've looked at gold and silver. The pearl was valued above all of it. Isn't it interesting that in Matthew 13, Jesus tells us a parable about a man who found a treasure? So, he went and sold everything he had so that he could buy that treasure. I believe Jesus is the man in the story, and I believe that the treasure that He found in this world and the pearl that He found a great price was you and I. I believe that shows the value that we have in His sight. So that if you were the only one that would ever trust Christ as your Savior, He would have still gone to the cross. He sold all that He had. Remember what Paul tells us in Philippians chapter 2, "*though He eternally existed in the form of God.*" That's what the Greek says (it usually doesn't come through in English translations). "*He eternally existed in the form of God. He did not regard equality with God, a thing to cling to.*" In other words, he laid it aside. "*He made himself of no reputation. He was found in the form of a man and being found in the form of a man. He humbled himself even more, even to death. Even the death of the cross.*" He gave up everything he had. For what? That pearl. And if you're here tonight and you're a believer in Jesus Christ, you are a part of that pearl that He considered worthwhile to sell all that He had. So, we have pearls at the gates. This is where we get the term "pearly gates"—a pearl for each gate.

Revelation 21b–23, "*The street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass,*" once again. But there are several things that are not in the city. It's very interesting, the things that will not be there. "*I saw no temple for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*" It's very interesting that Paul tells us because we're indwelt by the Holy Spirit that "we are the temple of God." "*Do you not know,*" He says, "*that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.*" 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19. He refers to us as the "temple of God." So, there's no temple. Not only that, but "*the city had no need of a sun or of the moon, to shine in it.*" Why? "*For the glory of God illuminated it,*" and "*The Lamb is its light.*" What did Jesus say? "*I am the light of the world.*"

Revelation 21:24, "*And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light.*" So, here's another interesting thought: In eternity future, you know what we call Heaven—that idea that people have, that I got as a kid, that we go up there and sit on a cloud and play a harp—no, it's a kingdom. The closest portrayal that I have ever seen of it is Lord of the Rings. When you get to the end of the Lord of the Rings and you have the King and his bride being joined in marriage, and there's a great kingdom and there's great celebration. And all of that just portrays in my mind what we're talking about. So "*the nations of those who are saved ...*" the nations that are going to be on this New Earth "*... shall walk in its light.*" Again, I picture that as the New Jerusalem circling the Earth, "*... and the kings of the Earth will bring their glory and honor into it.*" There's going to be worship. There's going to be work for us to do. You know, we can only try to imagine, with our feeble imagination, what all will be involved. But the nations will come. You can picture: Here's the city ... and here comes this tremendous procession from a nation of all the leading officials of that nation, bringing their honor and bringing their praise and bringing their glory into that marvelous city.

Revelation 21:25, "[Its] gates will not be shut at all by day because there will be no night." There's no night there—no night, no sun, no temple. "*And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter into it anything that defiles or causes an abomination or a lie. But only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.*" The most important question that can be asked is, "*Is your name there?*" Is your name written in the

Book? You know, the minute that a person trusts Jesus Christ as their Savior, their name is written in the Book of Records, of the members of the family of God—those who believe in Jesus Christ. That name can never be erased. That name is there for eternity. And those who do not have their name in the Book will not enter the city. And of course, the reason, as we've already seen earlier in chapter 20, is because they're going to be in the Lake of Fire. Now we're zeroing in on the Throne of God.

Revelation 22:1–2, “*And he showed me a pure river of [the] water of life.*” What did Jesus say? What did Isaiah say back in Isaiah? What is Isaiah 55:1? “*Ho! everyone who thirsts, [let him] come to the waters.*” He that has no money. Let him come and let him drink.” Jesus said, “*If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink ... out of his [innermost being] will flow rivers of living water.*”

So, “*he showed me a pure river water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the street was the tree of life.*” That tree that was cut off when Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden is going to be growing in this new city. “*In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, is the tree of life.*” So, I assume that the street is divided, the river runs through the middle, and the street is lined with the Tree of Life. Notice that the Tree of Life bears “*twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month.*” Aren't we in eternity now? Why would we still have months? People say there's not going to be any time in eternity. Well, this tells me that we're going to have 12 months. I assume if we have months, we're also going to have weeks and days. So, instead of the idea of no time, it's time without end. “*Yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*” What does that mean? I have to tell you, I can only surmise. I can't really imagine. We're already dealing with redeemed people. They're already in glorified bodies. We already have a perfect environment. Why would the nations need healing? Well, imagine that you could go tomorrow and be put in perfect health. Perfect health! No need for glasses, no hearing problems, no aches and pains, perfect weight—no need to lose weight. What a wonderful world that would be. And everything is perfect. And you think this is as good as it gets? How much more perfect can you get than perfect? Well, what if there was no limit to the ongoing perfection that you and I would experience? And again, I come back to Ephesians 2:7, “*in all the ages to come, He is going to show the exceeding greatness of His glory to us who are in Christ.*” And I think something like this is being indicated in this passage—“*the healing of the nations.*”

Revelation 22:3–4, “*And there should be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.*” You ready for this one? “[And] *they shall see His face.*” I take this not just to be the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, but the face of God the Father. What does God look like? Remember in the Old Testament when Moses said, “[Lord] *Show me your glory*”? What did God say in Exodus 33? “*No man can see My face and live.*” He can see God after He passed by. Right? Which is, kind of, “you can see My fading glory, but you can't see it full-on.”

“*They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.*” This is one mark we're all going to be thankful to have—His name on your forehead. In my mind, it signifies not just a visible thing on your forehead. It signifies, you know, the forehead represents the mind. And

there's going to be a complete and total surrender of the mind and a total occupation with the glory of God and with His purpose for us. Because I hope you all realize we will have jobs to do. We'll be working. They are going to be things to accomplish. And I'll even throw out this idea: Who knows what He may yet create? You say, "Well, He's not going to create anything else." Why would He not? He's a creator and creators must create and whatever He may create, yet future, you and I are going to be playing a part of, whatever that may be.

Revelation 22:5, "*There should be no night there. They [will] need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord gives them light.*" Get this, "*And they shall reign forever and ever.*" Are you ready to take up the crown? Are you ready to handle the scepter? Now, I believe we're going to reign in different degrees because I think the level of our reigning, as Jesus illustrates in the story of the servants that were given the mites or the talents, is going to be based on what we do with what we have now. "Be thou over ten cities." Well, there's a guy that multiplied his ten talents. "*Be thou over five cities.*" Maybe someone will be over one. Who knows? I may be over a crossroads in Arizona. Who knows? But there are going to be things to do. And I'll even throw out this suggestion: I don't think we're going to be static. In other words, I think we're going to have the opportunity to advance, to continue to grow, to learn, to develop. To me, I can't imagine Heaven without that. A static state would seem very boring to me!

Revelation 22:6, "*These words are faithful and true.*" "Faithful and true" begins the book and ends the book. And as a matter of fact, we're coming to "Alpha and Omega." He began the book with Alpha and Omega, and he's going to end it, and we're going to have to hold off for that.