

Revelation 21:13-27 – New Jerusalem

Rev. 21:13-18: *“on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations...”*

- Vs. 13 tells you that there are gates in the New Jerusalem.
- Vs. 14 tells us that there are twelve foundation stones for this massive city that have the names of the twelve apostles on them. Judas would not be on a foundation stone, so Matthias or Paul would be the twelfth. This represents to some the New Testament church.
- The city will be the dwelling place of all believers, both Old and New Testament.
- There are differences of opinion on whether the city is placed on the earth or that it may hover over the earth. Either way, the city is a literal place.

Chuck Swindoll, quoting Alan Johnson, writes,

“Foundations of ancient cities usually consisted of extensions of the rows of huge stones that made up the wall, down to the bedrock. Jerusalem’s first-century walls and foundation stones have recently been excavated. Huge stones, some of which are about five feet wide, four feet high, and thirty feet long, weighing 80 to 100 tons each and going down some 14 to 19 layers below the present ground level, have been found.”

- The foundation stones here for the New Jerusalem do not seem to be buried.
- In vss. 15-16 the city dimensions are given. It is a square shape, or as some think, pyramid shaped. The city itself measures about 1,380-1400 miles. A stadia was, according to one Bible, about 607 feet or 185 meters.
- J. Vernon McGee sees it as cube-shaped inside of a crystal-clear sphere. This is just one theory.

J. Vernon McGee writes,

“To enclose a cube measuring 1,500 miles on each side, the circumference of the sphere would be about 8,164 miles. The diameter of the moon is about 2,160 miles, and that of the New Jerusalem sphere is about 2,600 miles. Thus, the New Jerusalem will be somewhat larger than the moon, and it will be a sphere like the other heavenly bodies. I personally believe that this is the picture that is given to us here.”

- These are literal measurements. They are not spiritual or with some symbolic meaning. The city is huge, beyond our imagination. God is the builder, so nothing is impossible with Him.
- Vs. 17 tells us that the walls are about 216 feet high. A cubit generally equals 18 inches though some think it is a little more in length. Regardless, the walls are tall. They are part of the city, transparent in nature. There is no need for them as protection.

Regarding the incredible size of this city, Chuck Swindoll writes,

“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). We’re never told how large the new earth will be, but we already know that it will be geographically different from the present earth, having no sea (21:1). Furthermore, 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.”

- Vs. 18 tells us the walls were built of jasper, which is a stone of assorted colors. The city is pure gold (not “like” gold), like clear, transparent, glass.

Rev. 21:19-27: *“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...”*

- Vss. 19-20 mention the stones, twelve of them, that covered the foundation stones of the city. It may be that each jewel is on a separate foundation stone.
- The names and definitions of some of these gems (jewels) have changed through the centuries. I believe these are literal gems being used.
- Eight of the twelve stones are found in the breastplate of the high priest (Ex. 28). The point is the city is beautiful.
- Vs. 21 says that each gate is made of a single pearl. There is the thought that the pearl gates remind us of our salvation through the sufferings of Christ. A pearl is formed in an oyster around an irritation (pebble) or something. The gates remind us of our Savior.
- Also, our own difficulties can be used for the glory of God as well as we are refined in character.
- Vs. 21 says the street (possibly the main street) and all streets are made of pure gold, transparent like glass. I do believe God is giving us a literal picture. If you get a chance, read J. Vernon McGee’s thoughts on the “street of gold.”
- Vs. 22-27 give us the “distinctions” as one writer put it, of the city. Vs. 22 tells us there is no temple for God Himself dwells in the city.
- Vss. 23-24 tell us there is no need for the sun or moon for the glory of God is the light of the city, and the glory of Christ shines there. People will come and go in the city, honoring the King of kings. Note that there is no darkness (vs. 25).
- Vs. 25 shows the peace of the new heavens and new earth. The gates do not need to be shut for protection. God’s people come and go and bring honor to God as seen in vs. 26.
- Vs. 27 simply reminds us that nothing sinful will be allowed the city. Sin will have been dealt with.