REVELATION 21

All Things New: The New Jerusalem

> *“And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ And He said, ‘Write, for these words are faithful and true.’”*
> REVELATION 21:5

A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · WITH TSARFATI · MACARTHUR · GUZIK · HITCHCOCK · JEREMIAH

Where John has brought us

1. Chapter 20 closed with earth and sky fleeing from a great white throne, the books opened, and death and Hades thrown into the lake of fire (20:14).

2. Read it beside chapters 17 and 18.



All Things New

A new creation, God's tent pitched among men, and the One on the throne speaks

REVELATION 21:3

And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik stops on the word new: kainos, new in kind and quality, not neos, new in time. God is not starting over with a copy; He is making a better creation, the one Isaiah promised.

JOHN MACARTHUR

MacArthur reads verse 1 as an end, not a renovation: after the great white throne the old universe is 'uncreated' and replaced, so completely new in quality that the old will not even be remembered.

DAVID JEREMIAH

Jeremiah says he once believed God would annihilate the earth, but he now reads 2 Peter 3 as purification.

καινός
KAINOS · "NEW"

Greek had two words for new. Neos (G3501) is new in time: young, recent, the latest of its kind.

The Bride, the Wife of the Lamb

Carried to a high mountain: a city with the glory of God, Israel on its gates, the apostles beneath it

REVELATION 21:9

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

AMIR TSARFATI

For Tsarfati the twelve tribes carved into the gates is God putting Israel's name permanently into the architecture of eternity.

MARK HITCHCOCK

Hitchcock reads the symbols as pointing to literal realities, and he follows the text's own identification: the bride is the Lamb's wife, and the Lamb's wife is the holy city, New Jerusalem, a real city with…

JOHN MACARTHUR

MacArthur lets the angel define the bride: the city is the bride because a city takes its character from its residents, first the church, then all the redeemed of every age.

τὴν νύμφην τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀρνίου

TĒN NYMPHĒN TĒN GYNAIKA TOU ARNIOU · "THE BRIDE, THE WIFE"

Nymphē (G3565) is the bride on her wedding day; gynē (G1135) is a wife. John uses both at once, because the marriage of the Lamb has come (19:7).

Measured with a Golden Rod

A city as long, wide and high as it is: a wall of jasper, twelve jeweled foundations, gates of pearl

REVELATION 21:15

The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.

MARK HITCHCOCK

Hitchcock's rule for Revelation's numbers is to take them at face value unless the text signals otherwise, and with Walvoord he treats the twelve thousand stadia and the 144 cubits as real measures.

JOHN MACARTHUR

MacArthur's rule here is blunt: ‘Don't fool with the literal.’ Human and angelic measures are the same.

DAVID JEREMIAH

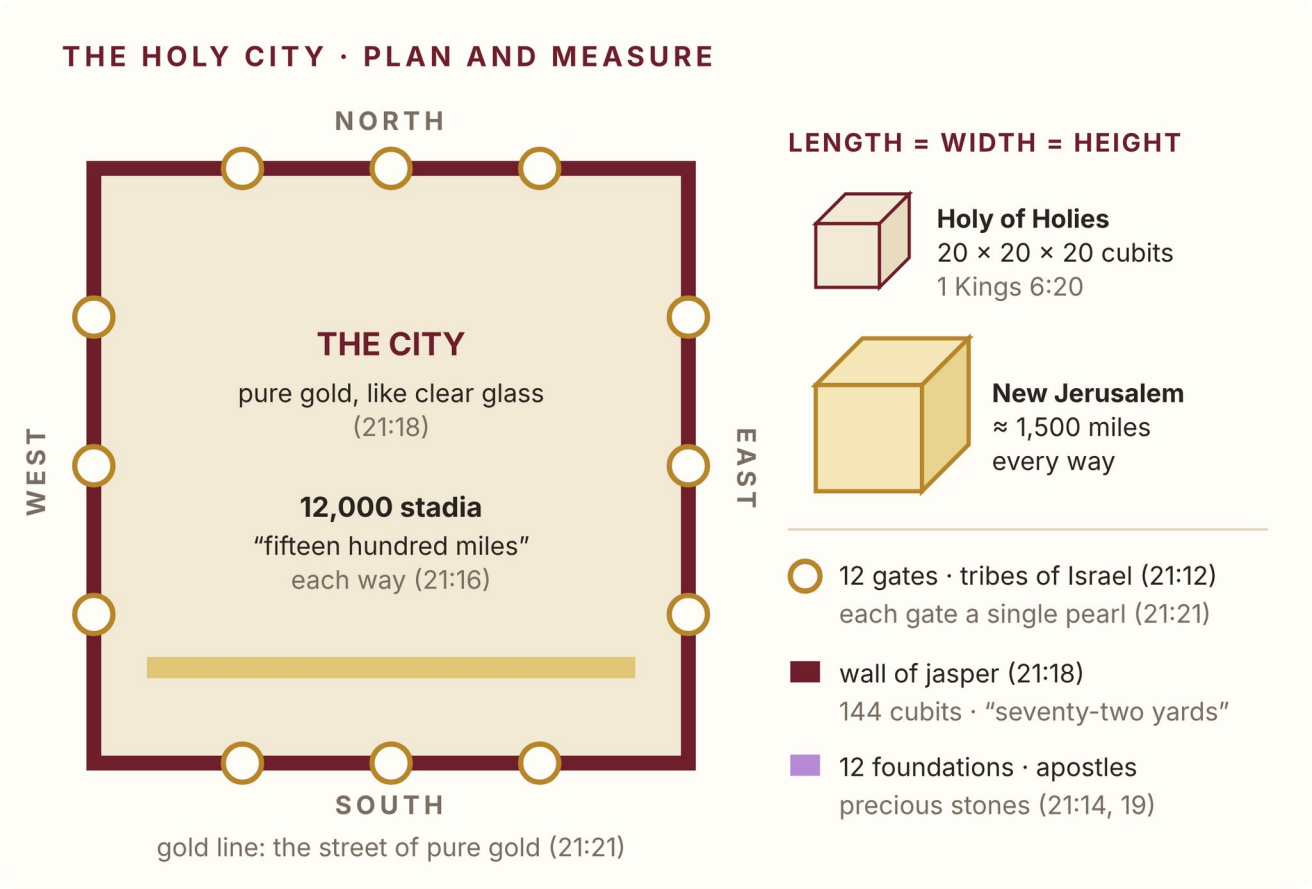
Jeremiah calls it a cube city and connects it to the Holy of Holies, twenty cubits every way; many believe, he says, that the New Jerusalem is one great Holy of Holies.

τετράγωνος … σταδίους δώδεκα χιλιάδων

TETRAGŌNOS · STADION

Tetragōnos (G5068), four-cornered, is the Greek Old Testament word for the bronze altar and the high priest's breastpiece.

The city measured (21:12–21)



Twelve gates in a great wall, three on each side; twelve foundations; a city as high as it is wide, like the Holy of Holies.

No Temple, No Night

God and the Lamb are its temple, the glory of God is its light, and its gates never close

REVELATION 21:27

and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that saying a great city had no temple would have been unthinkable to the ancient world, but here the temple was not removed; it was expanded until it filled the whole city.

AMIR TSARFATI

Tsarfati's workbook says it plainly: the New Jerusalem will not have nonessentials. Sun and moon are essential for life now; in the new creation they are replaced by the incomprehensible glory of God.

DAVID JEREMIAH

Jeremiah reads verse 22 practically: no need for preaching or church buildings, because God is present.

ὁ λύχνος αὐτῆς τὸ ἀρνίον

HO LYCHNOS AUTĒS TO ARNION · "ITS LAMP IS THE LAMB"

A lychnos (G3088) is a household oil lamp, the thing that holds and carries light. The glory of God illumined the city, and the Lamb is the lamp that carries that glory to it.

Two women, two cities

BABYLON · THE HARLOT	JERUSALEM · THE BRIDE
"Come here, I will show you" 17:1	"Come here, I will show you" 21:9
carried "into a wilderness" 17:3	"to a great and high mountain" 21:10
"drunk with the blood of the saints" 17:6	"a bride adorned for her husband" 21:2
gold, precious stones, pearls worn 17:4 · 18:16	gold, precious stones, pearls built in 21:18–21
her lamp goes out 18:23	"its lamp is the Lamb" 21:23
bridegroom and bride silenced 18:23	"the bride, the wife of the Lamb" 21:9

Wealth worn for pride there; laid down for God's glory here.

The same angel and the same words show John a harlot and a bride, built of the same materials and put to opposite uses.

What to carry from this chapter

1

New in kind, not just in time.

John uses kainos for the new heaven, earth, Jerusalem and all things, and Revelation never uses neos: God is making what has never been.

2

God pitches His tent.

The tabernacle of verse 3 is the line that runs from Eden through the wilderness and Bethlehem to God's permanent home among men.

3

Eternity by subtraction.

No sea, no death, no mourning, no crying, no pain, no night: John describes heaven by what is gone because our words were made in a fallen world.

4

Drinking is faith.

The water of life is without cost to the thirsty; drinking is the simplest picture of faith in Scripture, nothing earned, only received.

More to carry

5

Israel is on the gates.

Every resident walks in under the name of a tribe of Israel, while the apostles are in the foundations; God gave each people its place in one wall.

6

The city is a Holy of Holies.

Length, width and height are equal, like the room one priest entered once a year; now all of God's people live there.

7

Heaven is entered through a wound.

Each gate is a single pearl, and a pearl forms only around a wound; heaven is entered through a wounded Redeemer.

8

Babylon lost her lamp; the city has the Lamb.

The same word, lychnos, describes the lamp that goes out in 18:23 and the Lamb who is the city's lamp in 21:23.

Talk it through

1. “Behold, I am making all things new.” What in your life have you quietly decided God can only patch, not make new?

2. Tears and death leave in verse 4 only because God arrives in verse 3. If you could have heaven's comforts without heaven's God, would you be tempted?

3. “The cowardly” heads the list in verse 8. Where is fear of people keeping you from standing openly with Christ this week?

4. God spent the most beauty on the foundations, the part no one sees. What hidden work is He doing underneath your life right now?

5. The only way in is a name written in the Lamb's book of life. Who do you know that needs to hear that the gate is still open?

CLOSING

The Bible opens with a garden and a guarded gate; it closes with a city whose gates never shut, lit by the Lamb. The water of life is still offered without cost to anyone who is thirsty. Come and drink, because He is making all things new.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides, reflection journal and film: see the Revelation study page.