

Eschatology

The Eternal State

The New Jerusalem

As the vision of the New Jerusalem unfolds, history has ended, and time is no more. Because it is the capital city of heaven and the link between the new heaven and new earth, the New Jerusalem is central to John's vision in Revelation 21:9-22:5 and is described in far more detail than the rest of the eternal state.

1. Its General Appearance

The New Jerusalem is described as a bride because it draws its character from its occupants. Those occupants consist of the bride of the Lamb, a title originally given to the church (Rev. 19:7) but now enlarged to encompass all the redeemed of all ages, who live there forever.

Verse 11 describes the city's brilliance "like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper." The word "jasper" in the Greek is referring to a translucent stone. Thus describing a diamond, a very costly one because it is crystal-clear and unblemished. Heaven's capital city is thus pictured as a huge, flawless diamond, refracting the brilliant, blazing glory of God throughout the new heaven and the new earth.

2. Its Exterior Design

The New Jerusalem can be entered by one of twelve gates. At those gates twelve angels were stationed, to attend to God's glory and to serve His people. The gates have the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, celebrating for all eternity God's covenant relationship with Israel.

The massive wall of the city was anchored by "twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Those stones commemorate God's covenant relationship with the church, with the apostles as the foundation (Eph. 2:20).

At the top of each gate was the name of one of the tribes of Israel. At the bottom of each gate was the name of one of the apostles. The layout of the city's gates pictures God's favor on all His redeemed people, both those under the old and new covenants.

As a result from the angels measuring of the city, we read that the New Jerusalem is about 1,500 miles square. The city itself is also made of "pure gold, like clear glass." The New Jerusalem's walls and buildings must be clear for the city to radiate the glory of God.

The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. These brightly colored stones refract the shining brilliance of God's glory into a plethora of beautiful colors. And finally the gates themselves were made from pearls. A pearl not made from an oyster because each one of the gates was a single gigantic pearl nearly 1,400 miles high.

3. Its Internal Character

There will be no temple in the new city because "the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple." Their blazing glory will fill the new heaven and earth, and there will be no need for anyone to go anywhere to worship God. Believers will be constantly in His presence. Because of their glory, there will be no need for the sun or the moon either.

Notice also that the gates will never be closed. It will be a place of safety and refreshment, where God's people will "rest from their labors" (Rev. 14:13), because all in heaven will be perfectly holy.

There is no sea in the new heaven and earth, however there is "a river of the water of life." It's not water as we know it, rather, it is a symbol of eternal life (Isa.12:3; John 4:13-14; 7:38). It's pure unobstructed flow from the throne of God and of the Lamb, symbolizes the constant flow of everlasting life from God's throne to God's people.

The tree of life is the celestial counterpart to the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. It provides for those who are immortal. The tree of life was a familiar Jewish concept that expressed blessing. The celestial tree symbolizes the blessing of eternal life.

4. The Privileges of its Inhabitants

There will be no curse from sin and NO sin nature for sin to ever enter into the picture again. As a result from what God has done for us, we will have the privilege of serving Him forever.

The saints in the New Jerusalem will also see God's face. Being perfectly holy and righteous, they will be able to endure the heavenly level of the glorious light from God's presence without being consumed. This is something impossible for humans on earth (Exodus 33:20).

The redeemed will also be God's personal possession and finally John adds to describing the heavenly experience with the fact that it will never end, because "they will reign forever and ever."

The eternal capital city of heaven, the New Jerusalem, will be a place of indescribable beauty. But the most glorious reality of all will be that formerly sinful rebels will be made righteous, enjoy intimate fellowship with God and the Lamb, serve Them, and reign with Them forever in sheer joy and incessant praise...AMEN!