

Revelation 21:9-22:5 | New Jerusalem

Introduction

These verses describe the New Jerusalem – the eternal city where God’s one people will enjoy undiminished fellowship with Him throughout eternity.

Verse-By-Verse Notes

Verses 9-11

- “a great, high mountain” – There are over 500 references to mountains in the Bible. Throughout Scripture, mountains are frequently a place where God meets with His servants. For example, Abraham and *one* of the mountains of Moriah (Genesis 22:1), Moses on Sinai/Horeb (Exodus 3:1), Elijah & Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:17-18), Solomon & Mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 3:1), Jesus and the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1). Jesus is associated with mountains 31 times in the Gospels, 16 of which are recorded in Matthew.
- The city radiates the glory of God, shimmering and sparkling with His purity.

Verses 12-14

- The angels stand as guardians over the city.
- The names of the 12 Tribes of Israel on the gates and the 12 Apostles of Christ on the foundations signify the unity of the one people of God (see Ephesians 2:14-22).

Verses 15-17

- New Jerusalem’s dimensions: The length, width, and height of the city are 12,000 stadia (approx. 1500 miles) and the width (144 cubits) of the city wall is approx. 216 feet. It is a perfect cube shape which models the shape of the Most Holy Place/Holy of Holies in the Temple.
- The size of the city is colossal. It would stretch from Petersburg, WV to Dever, CO.

Verses 18-21

- The beauty of the city is inconceivable to the finite human mind. The jewels roughly correspond to the 12 jewels of the High Priest’s breastplate in Exodus 28:17-20.
- John MacArthur: “Unlike earth’s gold, this gold will be transparent so the overpowering radiance of God’s glory can refract and glisten through the entire city.”

Verses 22-26

- There will be no temple in the new creation for God’s presence will fill the entire universe. *He* will be the temple. New Jerusalem will not need natural light because it will be illuminated by the glory of God and the light of Christ. See Isaiah 60:19-20

- Verse 24 gives us a peek into life in the new creation. Note there *will be nations* (Greek: *ethnos/ ἔθνος* – meaning “people groups” or “ethnicities”), and political rule (“kings of the earth”), but all peoples will dwell in perfect unity with no divisions or hostility. This is *true biblical diversity*.
- The gates of the city will never be shut because there will be no threat.

Verse 27

- Again it is reiterated that the presence of Satan, sin, and sinners will not be a part of the new creation.

Chapter 22, Verses 1-5

- The imagery in 22:1-5 is of a restored Eden. This is creation coming full circle back to the beginning – before sin, before the fall, before death.
- Earthly Jerusalem does not have a river, yet Psalm 46:4 says, **There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.** The New Jerusalem fulfills the imagery of Psalm 46:10.
- The tree of life imagery is another reversal of the fall in Eden. If Adam & Eve would have eaten of the tree of life after eating from the tree of knowledge, they would have lived forever in a state of spiritual death. The “new” tree of life reverses the curse of sin and death and provides healing and life in the new creation.
- The language of verse 3 also indicates the connection with Eden – the *curse* is reversed and nothing *accursed* will enter the city/new creation.
- “They will see his face” (v. 4) is a reference to the triune God revealed in the person of Christ. See 1 John 3:2 & 1 Corinthians 13:12
- Natural light sources will not be needed, the city will have no darkness, and is illuminated by the glory of God in Christ.
- The people of God will reign with God forever – this is the end-game for redemptive history.

BIG IDEA: “God is going to keep his word and return those who trust him to a new and better Garden of Eden.”¹ Jim Hamilton

¹ James M. Hamilton Jr., *Preaching the Word: Revelation—The Spirit Speaks to the Churches*, ed. R. Kent Hughes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 402.