

Chapter 21

Verse 12- *It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on the gates, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.*

great and high wall- Why does the new Jerusalem need a wall? It doesn't, but it will give the city physical dimension and will denote that only the righteous can enter it.

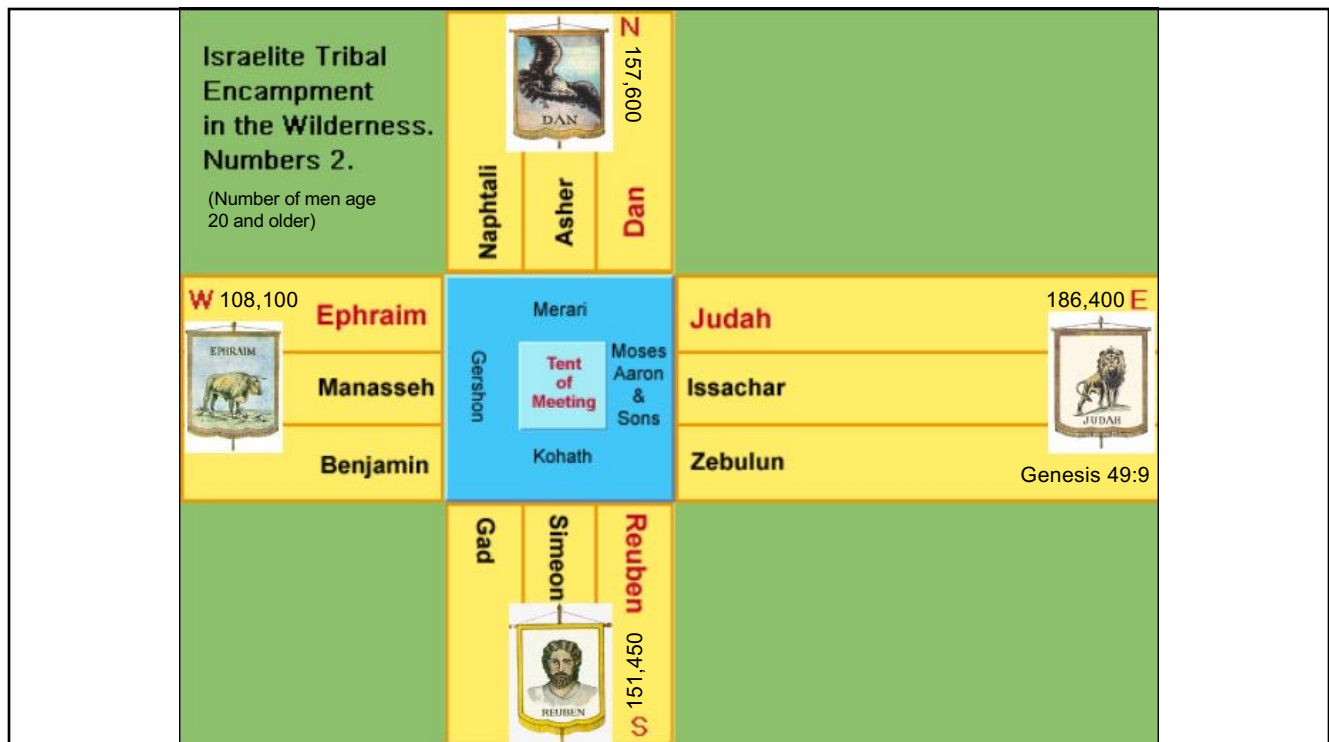
twelve gates- The twelve tribes of Israel are represented by 12 gates, three on each side, much like the encampment of Israel in the Old Testament.

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Verse 13- *There were three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.*

These gates remind us of the 144,000 witnesses in the Tribulation, 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes in Rev. 7:4-8.

Most likely, the arrangement of the gates follows the arrangement of Israel's encampment in the desert: on the east, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; on the south, Reuben, Simeon, and Gad; on the west, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin; on the north, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali (Numbers 2).



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Verse 14- *And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

wall of the city- The wall (which was 72 yards thick) had 12 foundational stones upon which it was built (later described in vv. 17-21). We can imagine that there were three stones per side of the wall, upon which rested three gates and a wall.

the twelve apostles- Matthias replaced Judas (Acts 1:26) after he killed himself. Some believe the 12th apostle was Paul.

NB: I wonder how it felt when John saw his own name as a foundational stone of the capital city of the new heaven!

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Verse 15- *The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, its gates, and its wall.*

The one who spoke with me- The angel who took John to a high mountain to see the heavenly city.

to measure the city- This reminds us of when John was given a reed and told to measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worshiped to demonstrate God's protection (11:1-2). Also, we see this in the Old Testament (Ezek. 40:3-5). This time, the angel (not John) does the measuring with a golden rod to demonstrate the awesomeness and perfection of the city.

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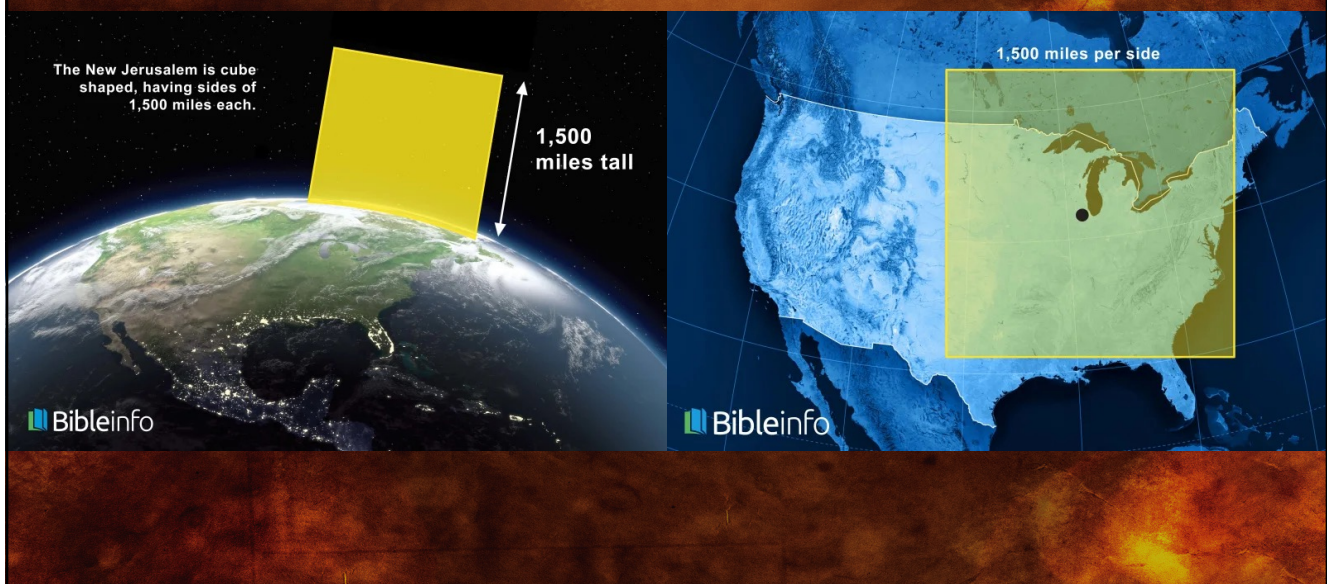
Verse 16- *The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, twelve thousand stadia; its length, width, and height are equal.*

its length is as great as the width- A square was the “perfect” shape in Hebrew and Greek thought. The holy of holies was also a cube- 15 feet x 15 feet x 15 feet.

twelve thousand stadia- One stade is an eighth of a mile. The length and width of the city is 1500 miles. Size of the “new earth?”

length, width, and height- Cube or a pyramid? Pyramids have been associated with pagan worship, so this is probably a cube.

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Verse 17- *And he measured its wall, 144 cubits, by human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.*

cubits- Measured from elbow to middle fingertip (approximately 18 inches).

its wall- The wall is not for protection but for dimension. Most probably, this is its thickness (216 feet or 72 yards), not height.

angelic measurements- John lets us know that the measurement of the city and wall wasn't by some heavenly calculation, but normal measurements we use every day.

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Verse 18- *The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.*

jasper- Occurs four times in Revelation (4:3; 21:11, 18, 19) as the one sitting on the throne, the new city of Jerusalem, the walls of the city, and the foundation of the city.

pure gold, like clear glass- This is not gold that we see today. The gold is so pure and refined. It is clear so God's glory can shine through it.

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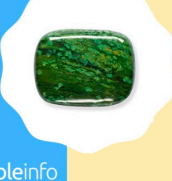
Verse 19- *The foundation stones of the city wall were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald;*





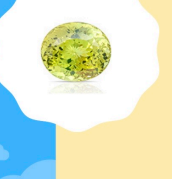
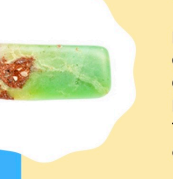
every kind of precious stone- These stones remind us of the breastplate the high priest wore when he entered the Holy of Holies.

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Verse 20- *the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.*

(See chart following)

 <p>#1 JASPER</p> <p>Greek name: Iaspis Color: Green or clear (perhaps even red) Description: The jasper mentioned as the first foundation may have been clear. Revelation 21:11 states that the city would be like jasper, as clear as crystal. Pliny states that the white jasper called "Astrios" was like crystal and no doubt transparent.</p>	 <p>#6 SARDIUS</p> <p>Modern or other names: Carnelian or odem Greek name: Sardion Color: Orange red Description: A precious stone related to the chalcedony with two possible varieties. The first is carnelian and is flesh-colored. The second variety is sard which is deep reddish-brown in color, rarely its color is almost black.</p>
 <p>#2 SAPPHIRE</p> <p>Greek name: Sapphiros Color: Blue Description: The sapphire is a blue and translucent variety of corundum. Commentaries also note that the sapphire of the Bible may be the modern-day lapis lazuli.</p>	 <p>#5 SARDONYX</p> <p>Greek name: Sardonyx Color: Reddish-brown Description: Sardonyx is related to chalcedony and is a combination of onyx (white) and sard or carnelian (red) in alternating layers. In ancient times the sardonyx was a popular engraving stone because of its soft nature.</p>
 <p>#4 EMERALD</p> <p>Greek name: Smaragdus Color: Green Description: Emeralds are a variety of beryl. The name emerald comes from the Greek word smaragdus, which means green gem.</p>	

 <p>#9 TOPAZ</p> <p>Modern or other names: Peridot (see description) Greek name: Topazion Color: Golden green Description: Ancient topaz is probably our modern-day chrysolite or peridot. Historically, the most important deposit of topazion was on the volcanic island of Zabargad located in the Red Sea. This island's topazion was very well known in the ancient world.</p>	 <p>#12 AMETHYST</p> <p>Greek name: Amethystos Color: Purple (from light pink-violet to a deep purple) Description: The amethyst is a variety of quartz. The name amethyst comes from "not" and "intoxicate", a reference to the belief that the stone protected its owner from drunkenness.</p>
 <p>#8 BERYL</p> <p>Modern or other names: (see description) Greek name: Beryllus Color: Pale green Description: According to Bible commentaries, beryl was a pale green precious stone. The emerald, aquamarine, heliodor, maxixe and morganite are varieties of beryl. Many people don't recognize the name beryl, but are more familiar with its varieties.</p>	 <p>#11 JACINTH</p> <p>Modern or other names: Hyacinth or perhaps the zircon Greek name: Hyacinthos Color: Deep blue Description: The jacinth or modern-day hyacinth is a precious stone and of the same color as the dark blue hyacinth flower. The hyacinthus of ancient writers may be similar to modern-day sapphire or blue corundum.</p>
 <p>#7 CHRYSOLYTE</p> <p>Modern name: Topaz (see description below) Greek name: Chrysolithos Color: Golden yellow Description: The Chrysolite of Bible times is the equivalent of modern-day topaz and is a precious stone of golden color. The Greek name, chrusolithos, means "gold stone" and likely refers to the yellow topaz.</p>	 <p>#10 CHRYSOPRASUS</p> <p>Modern or other names: Chrysoprase or chrysophrase Greek name: Chrysoprasos Color: Apple green to deep green Description: Chrysoprasus is a variety of chalcedony. The word chrysoprase comes from the Greek word chrysos meaning 'gold' and prasinon, meaning 'green'.</p>

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Verse 21- *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*

twelve pearls- The gates of the city were made of a single pearl. Pearls in the Bible are highly valued and remind us of the parable of the Pearl of Great Price (Matt. 13:45-46). Those who enter heaven are reminded of the great cost to the Savior for their salvation.

pure gold, like transparent glass- Again, this gold is not like what we've seen. It's so pure that it's transparent.

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Verse 22- *I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*

saw no temple- The New Jerusalem becomes a temple itself because God resides in it. The Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple was a cube (1 Kings 6:20), and now this cube functions as a final Holy of Holies. Every believer has direct and constant access to God, not just one day a year as the High Priest in Scripture atones for the sins of Israel.

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Verse 23- *And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illuminated it, and its lamp is the Lamb.*

no need of the sun- The New Jerusalem doesn't need a temple or an exterior light source- the sun or moon. Light is often a biblical picture for spiritual and moral right (John 1:9; 8:12), so this part of John's vision shows the permanent overthrow of sin and evil. Part of the curse on the great prostitute city was that nevermore would a lamp shine there (18:23), but the New Jerusalem will always be full of light. Isaiah saw the same vision (Isaiah 60:19).

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Verse 24- *The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.*

The nations- (ethne) These are Gentiles in heaven from every tribe, language, people, and nation; they were purchased with the blood of the Lamb (5:9).

kings of the earth- Some earthly leaders and their followers believed Satan and were cast into the lake of fire, and others repented and believed God. These former kings, as all other redeemed, will acknowledge and worship the only true King of Kings and give glory to Him.

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Verse 25- *In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;*

the daytime- Again, darkness has no place in heaven.

gates will never be closed- The gates and the wall around the city are ornamental. There is perfect safety and no need to shut the gates. Isaiah also saw this vision in Isaiah 60:11:

“Your gates will be open continually; They will not be closed day or night, So that people may bring you the wealth of the nations, With their kings led in procession.”

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Verse 26- *and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;*

the glory and the honor- “Glory and honor” were an ancient word pair for fame and reputation (Ps. 8:5; 28:1; Job 37:22; Rom. 2:7, 10; Heb. 2:7) (Aune). Any glory or honor that was once was ours we now give gladly to the true King.

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Verse 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.*

Who cannot enter the New Jerusalem? The unclean, the abominable, and liars.

Uncleanness characterizes the kingdom and followers of the Beast (16:13; 17:4; 18:2).

Abominations are closely related to the great prostitute (17:4-5) "holding in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her sexual immorality."

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Verse 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.*

The liars are those who persecute the saints (3:9) and those who are false Christians (Beale).

the Lamb's book of life- This is the last of six times this book is mentioned in John's vision (3:5; 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 20:15, 21:27). As we have seen, this book contains the names of those who are true believers.

Next week...

**Chapter 22-
“The River and Tree of Life
and a Final Message”**



ORGANIZATION

**THE CAMPUS CHURCH AT
MID-AMERICA**

HOW IS THE CHURCH ORGANIZED

ACCORDING TO OUR FIVE PURPOSES:

WORSHIP

DISCIPLESHIP

EVANGELISM

MINISTRY

FELLOWSHIP

WORSHIP

GATHERING FOR:

PREACHING, PRAYING,

MUSIC (SINGING AND
PLAYING), GIVING

DISCIPLESHIP

SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

DEVELOPING HABITS OF:

PRAYER, BIBLE HABITS- (READING, STUDYING, MEMORIZING, MEDITATING), FELLOWSHIP, EVANGELISM

EVANGELISM

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS:

OF JESUS' LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION
AS A CHURCH BODY AND AS CHURCH MEMBERS

MINISTRY

MEETING THE
SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF
MEMBERS AND
OTHERS

FELLOWSHIP

GATHERING TO SHARE:

BELIEFS, WORK FAITH,
NEEDS, STRUGGLES

TO STRENGTHEN PURPOSE,
CONVICTION, AND HOPE

BIBLE STUDY

AGE-GRADED

BIBLE-CENTERED

ORGANIZED BY PURPOSE:

(INREACH, OUTREACH, RECORD-KEEPING, FELLOWSHIP)

MEMBERSHIP

BASED ON:

SALVATION

BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

COMPLETION OF DISCOVERY CLASS

LEADERSHIP

BASED ON:

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

SPIRITUAL SHAPE

IN HIS STEPS

GOVERNMENT (POLITY)

CONGREGATIONAL

PASTORS

DEACONS

“Pastor-led, deacon-served, committee-operated, and congregationally-affirmed”