**The Presentation of God's Eternal State**

***Revelation 21:1-27***

Pastor Michael Lynn West Hampden Baptist Church

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Introduction: When traveling from one state into another, have you ever stopped at a welcome center? Upon entering the building, you usually find an area which has hundreds of travel brochures arranged in racks around the room. Beautifully colored & artistically designed, each brochure seeks to grab your attention & whet your appetite in order for you to want to visit that particular place or event. John writes a "travel brochure" about heaven, the eternal state, here in chapters 21 & 22. Though he does so without pictures, his words are so vivid & descriptive that we are able to conjure up an image of what heaven must be like. Henry Morris opens his comments on these final chapters of Revelation by saying, "Finally, these ages of probation & testing & judgment are over. The dispensations have run their course & 'the dispensation of the fullness of times' (Eph. 1:10) is come. The grand climax of the Book of Revelation - indeed, the climax of God's entire revelation & all His purposes in creation - is about to be unfolded. The most glorious chapters of the Bible are these last 2 chapters, opening up the wonders of the endless ages of eternity, & the fruition of all the great plans of a loving God." Consider this chapter with me as we note (1) what John saw (:1-8), (2) what John was shown (:9-21), & (3) what John did not see (:22-27).

I. What John saw (:1-8)

A. John saw new places (:1-2).

1. The creation of the new heaven & earth (:1a)

a. The word choice: *"new"* - emphasis upon quality; "...new in respect of freshness...” b. The world created: cf. Isa. 66:22 & 65:17.

2. The contrast with the old heaven & earth (:1b)

a. A remarkable disappearance > *"passed away"* - cf. II Pet. 3:10, Mt. 24:35 & Lk. 16:17

b. A notable difference > *"no more sea"* - no need for all that water.

3. The coming of the new city (:2)

a. Its descent before John.

b. Its description by John.

B. John saw new peoples (:3-8)

1. God's presence with these people (:3)

a. His personal fellowship.

b. His perpetual fellowship.

2. God's promises for these people (:4-7)

a. Safety (:4).

b. Satisfaction (:5-6)

(1) God's invitation (:6b) > *"I will give..."*

(a) Previous offers: > those "thirsty" for salvation - Jn. 7:37 & those "thirsty" for

sanctification - Mt. 5:6

(b) Present offer: (c) those "thirsty" for eternal satisfaction.

c. Sonship (:7).

3. God's pronouncement to His people (:8)

a. The description of the wicked (:8a).

b. This condemnation is for those who continuously practice & die in these sins, yet I. Cor.

6:9-11 promises deliverance & salvation from these types of sin. "The unsaved are here

pictured in their principal characteristics (cf. 21:22 & 22:15). Some of the saved were guilty of like offenses but availed themselves in proper time of the grace of God through

faith in Christ" (Walvoord).

II. What John was shown (:9-21)

A. The sight of the new Jerusalem (:9-11) [the Bride's locality]

1. The city originates from the hand of God (:9-10)

a. Invitation by the angel.

b. Introduction to the city.

2. The city radiates with the glory of God (:11)

a. The city's radiance.

b. The Christian's reflection:

Application: Is your life reflecting the glory of God? Can Christ be seen in you?

B. The security of the new Jerusalem (:12-13) [the Bride's security]

1. The wall depicts security.

2. The gates denote sanctity (separation).

C. The saints of the new Jerusalem (:12 & 14) [the Bride's identity]

1. The twelve tribes inscribed on the gates.

Summary: "The names on the entry gates will be an eternal reminder that it was first of all

through the patriarchal ministry of Abraham, Isaac, & Israel (Jacob), with the twelve sons of

Israel, that we Gentiles first entered into the great family & city of God" (H. Morris). See Rom.

3:1-3 & 9:4-5.

2. The twelve apostles inscribed in the foundations (:14).

Summary: "The analogy between the spiritual temple of God now being erected by the Holy

Spirit composed of living believers, & the heavenly tabernacle pitched by God & now coming to

earth, is clear & beautiful" (H. Morris).

D. The size of the new Jerusalem (:15-17)

1. Dimensions of the city (:15-16)

a. The measuring reed (rod).

b. The measuring results.

a. Its shape > *"lieth foursquare"* - as a cube (though some suggest a pyramid?)

2. Description of the wall (:17)

a. The thickness of the wall.

b. The height of the wall??

E The splendor of the new Jerusalem (:18-21)

1. The materials of construction.

a. The wall > made of *"jasper"* (Hebrew *"yashpeh"*, Greek *"iaspis"*), a transliterated word,

not a translation - unidentified today? But, compare Rev. 4:3 (connected with sardine

stone) & 21:11 (clear as crystal), so it "...suggests that it was a fine translucent stone,

capable of different colors, primarily radiant white, but also with flashing red & purple

tints" (H. Morris).

b. The city & street(s) > made of *"gold"* - The streets are paved & the buildings plastered with

gold ["...most precious of metals, the standard of all currencies & the greatest of all objects

of human greed & conflict" (H. Morris).]

c. The foundations > Their configuration & their construction.

Note: though the precise colors are unable to be determined today, the picture is one of spec-

tacular beauty; the glory of God is reflected in the wide spectrum of colors.

d. The gates > 12 pearls, each gate consisting of one gigantic pearl.

2. The message of instruction

a. "John is endeavoring to give a description of a scene which in most respects transcends

earthly

experience. The constant mention of transparency indicates that the city is designed to

transmit the glory of God in the form of light without hindrance" (Walvoord).

b. "The city is undoubtedly far more beautiful to the eye than anything that man has ever been

able to create, & it reflects not only the infinite wisdom & power of God but also His grace

as extended to the objects of His salvation" (Walvoord).

c. "Our earthly minds trying to comprehend heaven certainly understand from this description

that it is a place of extreme beauty" (Ryrie).

III. What John did not see (21:22-27)

Back in a Sept. of 202, there was a newspaper story recounting a family of four from Virginia that had completed hiking the entire Appalachian Trail. The husband, wife, & two children set out in March & finally ascended up Mount Katahdin in September. Consider having the opportunity to personally interview this family... Might they have been impressed almost as much by what they did not see as they were by what they did encounter? So, too, the Apostle John, in recounting his vision of the New Jerusalem, reports not only what he saw (:1-8) & what he was shown (:9-21), but also what he did not see (:22-27). Review with me quickly the major emphasis found in the first 8 verses of this chapter: *"...him that is athirst..."* (:6). We noted 3 types (or stages) of spiritual thirst: those "thirsty" for salvation (Jn. 7:37), those "thirsty" for sanctification (Mt. 5:6), & those "thirsty" for eternal satisfaction (Rev. 21:6). The challenge for each of us is, "Do we have a spiritual thirst?" In John's report of what he was shown, we noted the sight, the security, the saints, the size, & the splendor of the New Jerusalem. The emphasis in the morning message last week was an examination of our lives to determine if we would be counted with those whose names are inscribed in heaven, like the 12 tribes & the 12 apostles (by having our names inscribed in the Lamb's Book of Life). Sunday evening, the size of the New Jerusalem indicated to us its ample room for many to dwell, & therefore our need to reach the lost, while the splendor of that city, with its transparency reflecting the glory of God throughout, should cause us to want to reflect the Lord in our lives, as we endeavor for others to see Jesus in us. Note with me this morning those things John did not see there in the New Jerusalem: no temple, no sun or moon, no darkness, & no defilement.

A. No temple there (:22)

1. The presence of other temples (previously).

a. Physical structures: (1)Tabernacle > Exodus 25-30 & 35-40; (2) Solomon's temple > I

Kings 8:1-66; (3) Zerubbabel's temple > Ezra 6:1-22; (4)Tribulation temple (built by

Antichrist) > Revelation 11; & (5) Ezekiel's temple (in the Millennium) > Ezekiel 40-42

b. Spiritual sanctuaries (*"vaos"* - inner sanctuary)

(1). God's presence in the believer:

(a) His indwelling (individually) > I Corinthians 6:19-20 & II Corinthians 6:16-18

(b) His indwelling (collectively) > Ephesians 2:19-22 & I Corinthians 3:16-17

(2) God's purpose for the believer:

(a) To glorify God (to praise Him before others) > Psalm 40:3 & I Peter 2:9

(b) To magnify God (to present Him to others) > I Peter 3:15 & II Cor. 5:14-21

2. The absence of other temples (eternally)

a. The constitution of God's presence -

b. The communion with God's presence - "

B. No sun or moon there (:23-24, 26)

1. Illumination of the city (:23).

a. The sun & moon are no longer needed.

(1) Foretold by Isaiah > 24:23 & 60:19-20.

(2) Fulfilled in Revelation > 21:1.

b. The glory of God & the Lamb

(1) God is light > I John 1:5 - "Because God is light & there is no darkness in Him, believers are exhorted to walk in the light in their present existing on this earth in

keeping with their future in heaven (I Jn. 1:5-7)" (Walvoord).

(2) Christ is the light > John 1:4-9 & 9:5.

2. Presentation in the city (:24 & 26)

a. Who are they?

(1) *"Nations"* - saved Gentiles (This is simply a recognition of those not a part of Israel

or the Church).

b. What do they?

(1) They give the glory & honor to the Lord (that once was theirs)

(2) "None of the peoples, even their kings, will seek their own glory through such

accomplishments, but will give all honor to the Lord" (H. Morris).

Summary: "All the honor the world can give will be given to that city. All nations, as one

man, shall then be happy worshippers & all devotion shall concentrate in the New Jerusalem.

...And all the honor that men can render, & all the delight the human heart can feel, will flow

forever to that high tabernacle, whose gates are never shut..." (Seiss).

C. No darkness there (:25)

1. Open gates.

2. Only day.

Application: "Believers in their glorified bodies do not need rest, & their lives are full of contin-

uous activity even like the holy angels" (Walvoord). [Yet here & now we need our rest (Mk 6:31)

physically to rest & spiritually to reflect & remember (Ps. 46:10)]

D. No defilement there (:27)

1. Those excluded from heaven.

2. Those included in heaven:

a. Their names recorded permanently in the Lamb's Book of Life (3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12,15).

b. Their faith residing in the Lamb's finished work (Rev. 1:5, I Pet. 1:18-19, Rom. 10:9-13).

c. Their hope resting in the Lamb's keeping power (I Pet. 1:5, Jn. 10:28-30, Jude :24-25).

Conclusion: The absence of a temple in the New Jerusalem should cause us to reflect upon the presence of previous temples. Whereas in the past, temples could be considered as a prophecy (pointing to Christ), & in the future millennial kingdom the temple is a picture (memorial to Christ), presently the temple is found in a people (believers indwelt by Christ). The purpose for such indwelling (both individually & collectively) is that we might glorify God (that is, praise Him before others) & that we might magnify Him (present Him to others). On the basis of I Cor. 6:19-20, are you a temple of God's presence this morning? If so, are you glorifying God before others & magnifying Him to others? As we have often seen in our study of Revelation, there are only 2 groups of people in the world. Those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life & those whose names are not found there. Our final verse this morning (:27) restates the truth of 20:15, *"And whosoever was not found written in book of life was cast into the lake of fire."* Is your name written there? Do you know for sure that Christ is your Savior; that you have repented of your sins & trusted Christ for your eternal salvation? If not, why not make sure of that today? Come & have that spiritual thirst quenched this morning. If you are truly saved, how is your thirst for sanctification? Are you praising God before others? Are you presenting Christ to others? And are you causing others to thirst for Christ?