

THE CITY OF LIGHT

Cities of this world have dark alleys, polluted air, congested traffic, graffiti painted walls and roads with pot holes. The city of God is much different.

*And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the **Holy City**, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It **shone** with the **glory of God**, and its **brilliance** was like that of a precious jewel, like a jasper, **clear as crystal**. - Revelation 21:11*

*The wall was made of jasper and the city of **pure gold**, as pure as glass. The street of the city was **pure gold**, like **transparent glass**. The city does not need the sun or moon to shine on it, **the glory** of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. - Rev.21:18-23 excerpts*

NASA researcher Danny Cook has said that gold and most metals become **transparent** when in their purest state. He designed the visors for the astronauts that walked on the moon. They were made of thin layers of transparent gold, which protected them from short-wave radiation.

(Info from book: To Heaven and Back by Rita Bennet 1997, page 87)

God's city sparkles with **precious jewels** and **gold** which remind us that **He loves to create beautiful atmospheres** for the enjoyment of his people. He even did so for the first family in the book of Genesis. He made trees that were 'pleasing to the eye' and in the land of Havilah there was gold that was good. - Gen.2:9-12

The Bible has scores of references to **gold**. Most of them relate to the tabernacle of the Old Testament and its accessories, including the high priest who would enter the most holy place. The twelve foundations in God's heavenly city are made of 12 precious stones.

They are similar to names of the 12 stones on the Breastplate of the High Priest with 12 tribes (Exodus 28:15), which must have been intended as a sort of dim photograph, given in the distant past, of what God was working toward. Some of these stones many not have been the same as those that now bear their names. Here are the colors they are thought to represent. Jasper, diamond. Sapphire, blue. Chalcedony, sky blue. Emerald, green. Sardonyx, red and white. Sardius (Carnelian), fiery red. Chrysolite, golden. Beryl, sea green. Topaz, transparent green. Chrysoprase, purple. Jacinth, red, Amethyst, violet.
- Halley's Bible Handbook

For several decades I have gathered books and audio messages of those who say they have seen heaven. (Such anecdotal experiences need to be screened through the truths of the Bible. As we get closer to the second coming of Jesus, there will be an increase of supernatural activity both positive and negative as the forces of heaven's light and hell's darkness are released in greater measure - Isaiah 60:1-3. Jesus tells

us that both will have reached their full maturity when angels come at the final harvest - Matt.13:30).

It is natural to acquire information about a place that one will visit for a few weeks on holiday or even relocate to for a longer period. Before I moved to England in the 1980's, I found it helpful to read a book called *The British*. It helped me to better understand their culture and ways of thinking. Shortly after I moved there, I saw this headline from a newspaper article. The British are reserved, Germans are serious, Americans are rich.

A few years before this I had a desire to learn more about my eternal home in heaven. One of the first accounts I heard was Betty Malz with her testimony, **My Glimpse of Eternity**. I still have the cassette tape on which I recorded her story from a radio program. She was a jeweler from Indiana who had a death experience. As she saw heaven's foundation stones, she noticed the precious gem topaz as mentioned in the Bible. The Bible says that the walls of the city are about 200 feet high and each of the 12 gates are made of one giant pearl. Pearls are formed when an irritant such as a parasite works its way into an oyster, mussel or clam. As a defense mechanism, a fluid is used to coat the irritant and layer upon layer is deposited until a shining pearl is formed. Northwest Australia's South Sea Pearl Oyster produces the largest and most valuable pearls on earth, including one that was sold for 1.5 million dollars. However, there is one more precious and brilliant than a pearl formed in a sea creature.

He was always like the bright morning star, but through the suffering he endured on earth for all of mankind, he became even more desirable, precious and more deserving of praise than any other. **Jesus is the Pearl of great price** who is worth more than anything in the world - Matt.13:45-46. He said that he is the gate for the sheep and no one will enter except through him. - John 10:7,9.

The heavenly city is filled with gorgeous scenery but we find its apex at the throne of God. It is the headquarters of the universe, yet few people know or even care about its relevance. The prophet Ezekiel had the opportunity to see and report on it.

Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard a voice of one speaking.

- Ezekiel 1:25-28

The apostle John had a similar vision of God's glorious throne.

*At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven and someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow resembling an emerald, encircled the throne....
.....before the throne, seven lamps were blazing - Rev.4:2,3,5*

Fire in the Bible can involve or represent many things such as: holiness, purity, judgment, acceptance of a sacrifice, glory, Holy Spirit activity etc. In the Middle East Semitic culture, fire was a symbol of divinity. We often associate fire with the wrath of God and hellfire etc. but most of us have failed to see that **fire originated in heaven.** **Heaven fire!** It is a symbol of God's passionate love, zeal, compassion and holiness. It is God's nature displayed around his throne.

When the **rainbow** first appeared on earth after the worldwide flood (yes, it was worldwide as evidenced by fossil deposits around the world) It was a symbol of God's grace, mercy, patience and faithfulness. The one in the heavenly city encircles the throne which symbolizes his everlasting favor. (God calls his throne one of grace - Hebrews 4:16). I prefer to use the words 'generous favor' to describe God's grace.

As I pondered these truths about the **heavenly city of light**, I wondered why God made everything there so transparent? Obviously, everything was absolutely pure and this enabled everything to fully reflect and display his awesome glory in all its beauty. Then I remembered too, that there are two aspects to this city. One is the gold, precious stones, pearls, lush vegetation, majestic mountains, pristine river of life and wonderful waterfalls. However, God also seems to say that the **people of God are also that city and bride.** (see Isaiah 62)

*Come, I will show you **the bride**, the wife of the Lamb, and he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me **the Holy City**, Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It **shone with the glory of God**..... - Revelation 21:9-11*

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven -Matthew 5:14,16 (words of Jesus to his disciples)

When we mention a city.....we do not usually just think of the physical aspects of it but also of the people. When we think of heaven we may just think of its tangible and visual aspects. **When God thinks of his city, he thinks of you and me.** We are his people that make up his great city.

He is preparing a place for us but is also preparing us to live in that city. That work is going on right now! The irritations of this life are unpleasant but they are the process God uses to make us shine more brightly to display his glory and splendor, just like those South Sea pearls. Isaiah 61:3, 1 Peter 4:12-14.

God's city is filled with transparent gold and gems. That is what he desires from us..... **transparency.** No more hiding or cover ups but **unveiled faces** - 2 Corinthians 3:18. Let his light shine in every area of our lives !!!

***Lord, make my life a window for your light to shine through
and a mirror to reflect your love to all I meet. Amen.*** - Robert H. Schuller
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