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A0645 – 11/05/06 – Rev 21:9-21 – The New Jerusalem - Part 2

Last time we left off with the idea that there are some people that will not have access into the city. That's clear from Rev 21:27 and 22:15. What's difficult to determine is whether they are true believers or not. Now, I've taken a stance that is not all that common, I've said I think they are believers who are not overcomers and I've been led to that conclusion by my exegesis and I'm not going to violate my conscience but I'm going to tell you not to violate yours either. You have to be convinced and I am not being dogmatic with my conclusions. You can reject this. Most scholars do not think these are believers. They think when it says they are "outside" or not allowed to "come into it" that it means they are in the "lake of fire".

Now, I know that there have been some new things coming to your ears, particularly with regard to Rev 21:7-8. I know that there has been some confusion and I don't want that. This week was very draining because it is burdensome for me to carry the idea that I may have left you confused. Now, that's not my intention of course because I love you and I hope that is apparent. I want to give you the truth. Like Christ said, "If you love Me, feed My sheep." and that is what I work diligently each week to do. So, what I am asking you to do right now is right down any questions you might have regarding the following ideas I have taught in the past month:

- The Overcomers (or "He who overcomes")
- The Dual Inheritance
- Inheritance as a Reward
- Grace and Works and Rewards
- The Judgment Seat of Christ
- The New Jerusalem

Please write down your questions on a card in the pew in front of you, the prayer card. I'm sure that if you have a question there are ten others who have that question and I really need you to write it down so I can see where we are and can address your concerns. You don't have to sign your name, these can be completely anonymous. It's very important that you don't get the wrong idea about what I'm teaching.

Okay, let's pick up in Rev 21:12 **It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names *were* written on them, which are *the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.***

We were saying last week that the angels and the great high wall seemed to be there to keep some people out of the city. And the reason would have been because of persistent carnality until death. They were genuine believers but persisted in disobedience, persisted in a life of carnality. For that reason they may not be able to come into the city and eat of the tree of life. And we quoted Dr Barnhouse on this when he said,

“Some have said that eating from the tree of life was the equivalent of receiving eternal life, but this is most evidently a false interpretation. Eternal life is the prerequisite for membership in the true Church. Eating of the tree of life is a reward that shall be given to the overcomer in addition to his salvation...He receives over and above his entrance into eternal life, a place in the Heavens in the midst of the paradise of God.”ⁱ

So, the purpose of the walls seems to be in line with the normal purpose of walls, to keep some believers out. If the life of a believer from Israel or the Church was characterized by anything in this list then they will not be allowed to enter the city. They must remain outside. The **walls** are designed to ensure that they remain outside. This also explains why **twelve angels** are stationed at the **twelve gates**. Again, commentators fudge at this point saying something like the angels stand there to adorn the city or we don't know why but there is some purpose. I'm suggesting that their purpose is to regulate who enters the city. They are watchmen. It seems to be the clear teaching of Rev 22:15 that certain people will not have admittance to the city and the walls and angels are there for this purpose. So, keep in mind that these people who must remain outside will have resurrection bodies. They have eternal life. They will not need the tree of life to sustain their life. They

are not going to be sinning at this time, they are not going to be crying or mourning. They are not kept out because they are sinful in the new heaven and new earth. They are kept outside because during their Christian lives on earth they persevered in these sins and were disinherited at the judgment seat of Christ more than a thousand years ago. Entering the city by the gates and eating of the tree of life are rewards for faithful perseverance in obedience and these believers from Israel and the Church persevered in this list of sins. Therefore they cannot enter because they persistently lived their life in the flesh.

The city also has **twelve gates**, these are actually **gate-towers**, huge towers carved out of pearls. Massive entryways into the city and **twelve** of them. People who live inside the city may go outside and clearly the nations and the kings of the nations can go in and out of the city (Rev 21:24-26). We will identify them a bit later. On each **gate** a **name of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel** is written. This indicates two things. First, Israel will remain a distinct entity for all eternity. Second, the city houses the overcomers from Israel. Thus, one of the **names of the twelve tribes of Israel** is written on each of the **gates**. There are nineteen different lists of the twelve tribes of Israel and we are not told which list is used for the gates, though it is often suggested that it follows the list in Ezek 48:31-34 that list refers to the gates of the Millennial Jerusalem. We will have to wait and see which list and which gate each of the **twelve tribes** names are written on.

A. The 12 Gates of the City and the 12 Foundations of the City (21:13-14)

Revelation 21:13 From east gates three and from north gates three and from south gates three and from west gates three.

There are twelve **gate-towers** in all, three on each side. Each one has the name of one of the tribes of Israel written on it. We don't know which tribes names will be written on each side though there have been suggestions. We know from this verse that when we get to the new earth it will be sitting on the new earth in perfect harmony with the compass. One wall facing due **east**, another due **north**, another due **south** and the last due **west**. There is perfect symmetry in the new heaven and new earth.

Revelation 21:14 and the wall of the city having (PAPart) twelve foundations and upon them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

the wall of the city has twelve foundations. We find out in a moment that these walls are **one hundred forty-four Roman cubits** which equals 210 US survey feet, very thick walls, almost unimaginable. I'm not aware of any walls that were that thick. The thickest walls I'm aware of were Ur-nammu's city walls at Ur (now Muqayyar, Iraq). These walls were 27-m (88-ft) thick and made of mud bricks. They were destroyed by the Elamites. The walls of the new Jerusalem will be $2\frac{1}{2}$ times thicker, so, of course, they will need several **foundations, twelve** to be exact. Apparently Abraham, 4,000 years ago knew that the city had multiple foundations. He "was looking for the city which had foundations" (plural) (Heb 11:10) though he did not know how many there were.

The layout of the twelve foundation stones is difficult to imagine. Try to fit twelve foundation stones in a square. It's a difficult problem. You can get one, two, four, nine and sixteen, these are all squares of real numbers but its difficult to get twelve. They may be just under the walls or they may extend all the way to the center of the city. It's difficult to find a layout that works. I came up with the following configuration. Below is an aerial view of a possible configuration of the **twelve foundations**. Others have suggested that they are stacked in twelve layers but this doesn't seem to be correct.

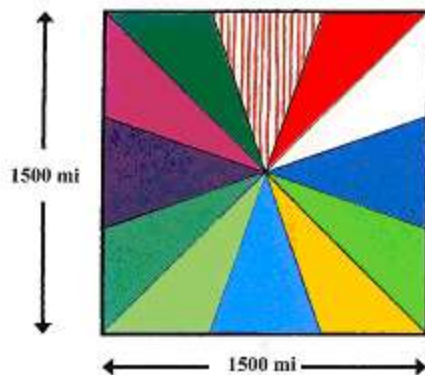


Figure 1: Aerial view of the twelve foundation stones.

**B. The Dimensions of the City and the Thickness of the Walls
(21:15-17)**

Revelation 21:15 And the one speaking (PAPart) with me had (3SIAD) a gold measuring reed, that may measure (3SAAS) the city and her gates and her walls.

Revelation 21:16 And the city is laid (3SPPI) in a square and her length as long as [even] the width. And he measured (3SAAI) the city with the reed at twelve thousand furlongs, her length and width and height are equal.

Revelation 21:17 And he measured (3SAAI) her walls one hundred forty-four cubits (216 Roman Feet or 209.7 US Survey Feet), a measure of man, is (3SPAI) of angel.

Considering the 1,500 mile dimensions of the city these stones would be of immense size. We are not told how thick they are but they are sufficient for sustaining the weight of a wall with length of 1,500 miles, height of 1,500 miles and width of 70 yards (0.0397 mi) for a total volume of ~89,488 cubic miles. The substance of the wall that makes up this volume and sits on these foundation stones is jasper. So, it's a lot of weight that has to be supported. An engineering nightmare. Nothing could move stones of such weight except an omnipotent God. The largest stone used in construction in our world is a foundation stone under the Temple Mount which was placed there by Herod and weighs 570 tons (~1,140,000 lbs.). Even this large stone is no comparison to these **twelve foundation** stones. There is no mention of a roof on the city. It may be completely open. Nothing could scale a 1,500 mile wall of jasper anyway.

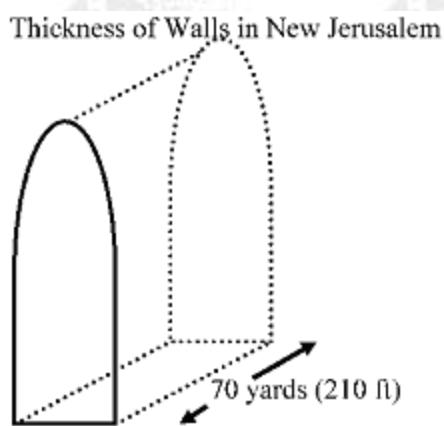
And the one speaking with me, that is, one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls (21:9), **had a gold measuring reed**, a reed was used to measure things, and so here **that he may measure the city and her gates and her walls**. So, the angel will carry out the **measuring** with this **gold measuring reed**. He reveals the measurements of **the city and her walls** but not **her gates**.

Verse 16, **the city is laid in a square**, a perfect cube, **her length as long as the width** and we find at the end of the verse that the **height is equal**. So, we are talking about a perfect cube though some have preferred a

pyramid. I prefer a cube because the holy of holies in Solomon's Temple was a perfect cube (1 Kings 6:20). This, is a very large city. The Greek text reads **twelve thousand furlongs** the equivalent today of 1,500 US Survey Miles. This is very large. No city has ever been this large. A city larger than half the United States. The 1,500 mile length of one wall of the city goes from Fredericksburg to New York City.

The extraordinary size is required to house the overcomers from Israel and the Church and to have all its amenities such as the tree of life and the river and the throne of God and the Lamb.

Verse 17, **and he**, that is the angel, **measured her walls**. The text keeps referring to the city as a **her** and that's because it's a bride-city, a city yes, but inhabited by people too, a people who during their sanctification were made pure by a life of obedience. So, **her walls** were **one hundred and forty-four cubits**, that is, ~210 US Survey Feet or about 70 yards. It doesn't tell us whether this is how tall the wall is or how thick but that wouldn't be very tall. The city is 1,500 miles tall. It seems much more likely that this is the thickness of the **walls**. So, you can imagine walking through the gates into the city and having to walk for 70 yards just to get through the gate. These walls are impregnable, marvelous and composed of the crystal-clear stone jasper and the glory of God radiates through the walls and illuminates the entire heaven and earth.



The text is very clear to point out that though the city and the walls were measured by an angel they are **the measure of man**, so that the text is attempting to be very literal and straightforward. This explanation is reason enough for concluding that the city is not just people but an actual

architectural structure. The measuring was done by **an angel** but it was done for **man** so that we could get an idea of the immensity of the city and her impregnable walls, a city designed to be inhabited by overcomers of Israel and the Church (the volume of which is 1,125,000,000 cubic miles).

C. The Foundations of the Wall (21:18-20)

Revelation 21:18 And the foundation of her wall jasper and the city gold, pure like clean glass.

The dominant appearance of the city is **gold, like pure clean glass**. This is pure gold, nothing like it in all creation now. It's so pure it's transparent.

Revelation 21:19 The foundations of the wall of the city all having been adorned (PerfPPart) precious stone, the first foundation jasper (various colors opaque), the second sapphire (blue), the third chalcedony (milky or grey), the fourth emerald (green),

Revelation 21:20 the fifth sardonyx (various), the sixth sardius (carnelian red), the seventh chrysolite (yellow topaz more valuable than other topazes), the eighth beryl (green or bluish green), the ninth topaz (yellow?), the tenth chrysoprase (green quartz), the eleventh hyacinth (blue?), the twelfth amethyst (purple),

Now, some commentators say that each foundation only has **precious stones** adorning the visible portion of the foundation and not that each foundation is a **precious stone**. That doesn't fit the Greek text. The Greek indicates that each foundation is an adorned precious stone so that the foundation itself is a precious stone and this may be adorned with other things on the visible face of it.

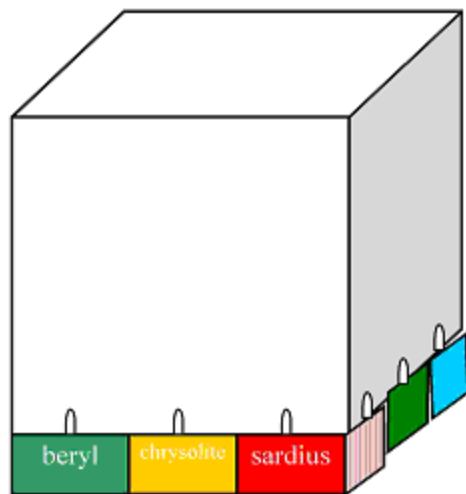
Returning to the twelve foundations, laid out as we described above, each stone is a different precious stone.

The precious stones once again remind us of the Genesis narrative where precious stones are mentioned (Gen 2:11-12). It also reminds us of the garments Lucifer wore in the Garden of Eden before he fell which are

described in Ezek 28:13-14. They were made almost like armor and of all kinds of precious stones, some of which are mentioned here as making up the foundation stones (e.g. topaz, beryl, jasper, and emerald). Several of the stones also remind us of the stones placed in the Ephod, a garment worn by the priests of Israel and described in Exod 28:17-21 (such as topaz, emerald, jacinth, amethyst, beryl, jasper).ⁱⁱ

Each stone in the Ephod represented one of the twelve tribes of Israel but here each foundation stone represents one of the twelve apostles and so stand for the Church.

As you can see in the diagram below each gate tower stands over one of the twelve foundation stones.



Okay, now let me at least give you the best description I can of each color of stone mentioned here as making up the twelve foundation stones and we'll look at some stones. See the following website for a list of gems that you can look at (<http://www.gemhut.com/gemidx.htm>).

Precious Stone	Color	Tribe
Jasper	White (perhaps green)	Benjamin
Sapphire	Blue/Sky-blue flecked with gold	Issachar
Chalcedony	Green Silicate of copper	
Emerald	Green	Simeon or Judah

Sardonyx	White with layers of red in planes	Joseph
Sardius/Carnelian	Red	Levi or Reuben
Chrysolite	Golden	Asher
Beryl	Blue/Sea-Green	
Topaz	Golden-Green	Dan
Chrysoprase	Translucent Golden-Green	
Hyacinth (Jacinth)	Violet	
Amethyst	Violet and Purple	

D. The Gates and the Streets (21:21)

Revelation 21:21 and the twelve gates twelve pearls, each one of the gates was (3SIAI) from one pearl. And the wide, clean, city pure as transparent glass.

Each gate and again, these are **gate-towers**. Each **gate-tower** is carved out of a single **pearl**. Pearls were highly valued in the ancient world for one basic reason. No improvements could be made by human beings. Humans cut diamonds and other precious stones but if a human messes with a pearl it almost always has negative results. A pearl left untouched is a priceless item. However, since the word for **gates** here is *pulon* it refers to a gate-tower or a gateway. The pearls are not swinging on hinges. The gate-tower or gateway is carved out of a single pearl. There is no such thing as a swinging gate on the gate-towers. It is an open gateway and it is the gateway that is carved out of a single pearl. Rather than a swinging or hinged gate there are angels standing guard at the gateways as watchmen.

And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. This describes the **street** in the new Jerusalem. There is one street but it does turn and go to each gate-tower. It is very wide or broad to accommodate many people walking into or out of the city. It is composed of **pure gold**, that is, its appearance is as transparent as **glass**. There is no gold so pure in this creation. Overcomers and the nations will walk on this translucent gold surface wherever they go in the city.

Everything in the city is pure and of the most majestic and splendid materials. The followers of the beast and the false religious system tried to create a heavenly city on earth in Babylon (Rev 18) but the finest materials are reserved for the perfect city and its inhabitants, the overcomers of Israel and the Church, in the new Jerusalem (Rev 21-22).

ⁱ Donald G. Barnhouse, *Revelation: An Expository Commentary*, 43-44.

ⁱⁱ Researchers at the Temple Institute have concluded that the following stones represent the following tribes and have the following colors. Ruby - Reuben – Red; Jade - Shimon – Green; Agate - Levi - Red, White, and Black Striped; Carbuncle - Judah - Bluish-Green; Lapis-Lazuli - Issachar – Blue; Quartz Crystal - Zebulun – Clear; Turquoise - Dan – Blue; Amethyst - Naftali – Purple; Agate - Gad – Grey; Aquamarine - Asher - Blue-Green; Onyx - Joseph – Black; Opal - Benjamin - A Stone Possessing All the Colors

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