

Inside the Text

I. **Heaven is a massive garden. (2 Corinthians 12:1-6)**

First heaven – where the birds fly

Second heaven – where the stars hang

Third heaven – celestial

- A. It is glorious. (1-3)
- Paradise (Garden – Gen. 2 [Eden]; a transcendent place of blessedness; the same word Jesus used to describe heaven to the criminal on the cross in Luke 23:43)
- B. It is mysterious. (4-6)
- He heard things that cannot be told (*arrētos* – of something that cannot be expressed, since it is beyond human powers...)
 - And which man may not utter (*laleō* – engagement in small talk to chattering and babbling... perhaps going back to the previous word “told” which can also refer to something that is too holy to talk about)

II. **Heaven contains a marvelous house. (John 14:1-6)**

- A. The owner is God the Father. (1-2)
- B. The carpenter is God the Son. (3)
- C. The down payment is God the Spirit. (4-6; Ephesians 1:13-14)

III. **Eternity includes a magnificent city, set in the midst of a massive garden, containing a marvelous house for all those written in the Lamb’s book of life. (Revelation 21:9-22:5)**

- A. It will radiate God’s glory. (9-11)
- A picture of a wedding ceremony. In this case, the bride is the city.
 - The angel took John to a great, high mountain (similar to the experience of Moses and Jesus)
 - Jasper – a transliteration, not a translation, of the Gr. Word. Rather than the modern opaque jasper, the term actually refers to a completely clear diamond, a perfect gem with the brilliant light of God’s glory shining out of it and streaming over the new heaven and the new earth *like a prism!* [John MacArthur Study Bible]
- B. It will illustrate God’s sovereignty. (12-14)
- 12 gates with 12 angels standing guard (similar to the cherubim in Gen. 3:24) [12]

- Note the connection to Ezekiel 48:31-34 (unlike Revelation 7:5-8 in recording the tribes sending out the 144,000 witnesses, the gates in the New Jerusalem include DAN!) [13]
- 12 foundation with the names of the 12 Apostles
 - Who made up the 12 names? Matthias... Paul...[note: the text doesn't refer to 100s of Apostles suggesting that the office of Apostle ceased at one point in redemptive history]

C. It will highlight God's majesty. (15-21)

- The size of the city is massive! (15-17)
 - It was shaped like a square with identical dimensions for its length, width, and height. (15-16)
 - 12,000 stadia = approximately 1380 miles (from Powersville to Fargo, ND)
 - Cubed
 - Paralleling the construction of the inner sanctuary in the tabernacle and temple (therefore, probably not a pyramid but a cube)
 - nearly 1400 miles cubed equals 2 million square miles
 - The width of the wall was 144 cubits (18 inches per cubit) = approximately 72 yards or 216 feet thick. (17)
- The beauty of the city was extraordinary. (18-21)
 - Jasper – a transliteration, not a translation, of the Gr. Word. Rather than the modern opaque jasper, the term actually refers to **a completely clear diamond**, a perfect gem with the brilliant light of God's glory shining out of it and streaming over the new heaven and the new earth *like a prism!* [John MacArthur Study Bible]
 - The gold will be transparent so the overpowering radiance of God's glory can refract and glisten through the entire city.
 - 8 of the 12 stones are found in the breastplate of the High Priest (Ex. 28, 39)... the other 4 may be related to the breastplate.
 - First stone:
 - Jasper – see above (**crystal clear like a diamond**)
 - Second stone:
 - Sapphire -- **Sapphire** is the most precious and valuable **blue gemstone**. It is a very desirable **gemstone** due to its excellent color, hardness, durability, and luster. In the gem trade
 - Third stone:
 - Agate or Chalcedony – the name derives from Chalcedon, an ancient name for a city in modern Turkey. The gem is a **sky-blue agate stone with translucent, colored stripes**.
 - Fourth stone:
 - Emerald – If the hue is too yellowish or too **bluish**, the stone is not emerald, but a different variety of beryl, and its value drops accordingly. **The intensity of the green in the finest emeralds might not be equaled by anything else in nature**. Chromium, vanadium, and iron are the trace elements that cause emerald's color.
 - Fifth stone:
 - Onyx or Sardonyx – **a variety of chalcedony with parallel layers of red and white**
 - Sixth stone:
 - **Carnelian or Sardius** – a common stone from the quartz family, which **ranged in color from orange-red to brownish-red to blood-red**.

- Seventh stone:
 - Chrysolite – a gem with a transparent gold or yellowish tone
 - Eighth stone:
 - Beryl – a mineral with several varieties of gems, ranging from the green emerald to the golden yellow beryl to the light blue aquamarine.
 - Ninth stone:
 - Topaz – Ancient topaz was a softer stone with a yellow or yellow-green color.
 - Tenth stone:
 - Chrysoprase – the modern form of this jewel is an apple-green variety of quartz. The Gr. Name suggests a gold-tinted, green gemstone.
 - Eleventh stone:
 - Jacinth – today this stone is a transparent zircon, usually red or reddish-brown. The one John saw was blue or shining violet in color.
 - Twelfth stone:
 - Amethyst – a clear quartz crystal that ranges in color from a faint purple tint to intense purple.
- The colors are connected to the symbol of the Noahic Covenant (RAINBOW)

The order of colors in a rainbow is easiest to remember by the following mnemonic (a formula that helps one remember something): ROY G. BIV. R=**red**, O=**orange**, Y=**yellow**, G=**green**, B=**blue**, I = **indigo**, and V=**violet**. **Red** is at the top edge of the rainbow and **violet** is at the bottom edge, with the other colors in between.

- The stones are connected to the ones found in the Garden of Eden (Ezekiel 28:13-14)
- The stones are connected to the ones found in the breastplate of the priest (Exodus 28:17-21)
- The stones form the foundation of the wall and have the names of the 12 Apostles written upon them. (like the stain glass windows at Family Baptist Church)

D. It will model God's supremacy. (22-27)

- Supreme over all created things (INCLUDING ALTHOUGH NOT LIMITED TO THE TEMPLE) [22]
- Supreme over all creation (Sun and Moon) [23]
- Supreme over all kings and rulers [24-26]
- Supreme over all the citizens permitted to dwell in heaven [27]
 - It is interesting that in the six references to the book of life in Revelation only this one calls it "the Lamb's" (3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15).

Apply the Text

- **Make sure your name is written down in the Lambs Book of Life.** (Rev. 21:27)
 - The Garden, House, and City all have similar entry points (through Jesus Christ alone)...
- **Praise God for caring enough to create and craft a special place for you.** (John 14:1-6)
- **Identify a way to daily remind yourself of the glories of heaven. (diamond ring, prism, garden, sunset)**
 - It will help you live a victorious Christian life. (Colossians 3:1-4)
 - It will increase your desire to maintain personal purity and a godly testimony. (1 Peter 2:11-12)