

The New Jerusalem

Scripture: Revelation 21:9-27

Introduction:

All things are new; a new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness alone dwells has replaced the old world order. The people of God; the overcomers, who have stood firm against the beasts and the whore, have been resurrected in their new glorified bodies, unto eternal life and rest. The glorious presence of God is forever with His people, and there is no more sorrow, crying, death, pain...etc.

This morning, we continue on with the glorious, preordained end of it all, where we view the New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ, in all of her redeemed and completed glory. And again, while the place of our eternal dwelling can be represented here as well, the primary emphasis of this New Jerusalem, is the church herself. She is the New Jerusalem that comes down to the earth in all of her glory.

I. The New Jerusalem

In verse 9, we begin, as John sees one of the angels who had the seven bowls with the seven last plagues, which were poured upon the earth, coming to him, with the words, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." It is interesting to note that the same angel, who is fierce in judgment against the world, is the one who introduces John to the glorious Bride of Christ. Those who are ministers of fire; God's angelic servants, who execute His judgments upon the earth, are also blessed, friendly servants of the people of God. And then, John is carried away to a high mountain, reminiscent of Mt. Zion, where the earthly Jerusalem was, but this being the heavenly Mt. Zion, as it were, where the true Jerusalem is. Only, the Jerusalem here, is represented first, by the people of God themselves. They are the glory of the New Jerusalem!

And John sees the New Jerusalem; the Bride of Christ, descending out of heaven, having the glory of God. And from verses 11-21, we are given a description of this glorious Bride, as

she now bears the glory of God. In fact, when you consider the various gem stones and the light, which surrounds her, it is clear that the descriptions given here are meant to show us that the people of God, indeed, bear the glory of God. The New Jerusalem descends out of heaven; it comes down from the divine glory, radiant with that glory herself. She is holy; she is righteous, she is godly in the most perfect sense. [Analogy of Moses coming down from Mt. Sinai, bearing a fading glory on his face] [Extreme makeover example; a changing of the clothing and the appearance...in this case, given the glory of the Beloved eternal Christ, her husband] [Compare vs. 11 to Rev. 4:2-3]

And brethren, as we view this picture of the glory of the New Jerusalem, a few things ought to come to mind:

1) We are meant to compare her to the blood thirsty Scarlet whore, who once carried the beast, but is no more [Rev. 17:1-3]. The whore represented the glory of this world and the facade of beauty covering it because of its many lusts, its luxuries, its drunkenness, and its materialistic sway. The whore even knocked John back a bit off of his feet, because of her luxurious appearance, but she was a fraud, a lie, a temporal distraction, that kept lost souls from seeing the big picture, namely the coming eternal glory of the people of God; of those who have borne the Name of Christ! The whore and all of her lusts is now gone; and here emerges the glorious New Jerusalem; made up of former defiled sinners; made up of a former persecuted, rejected and oppressed people, but now a people who forever bear the very glory of God. She is pure, righteous, true and holy. We are meant to keep this in mind, brethren; close at hand, at all times, as we trek through this corrupt, dying and fading world.

2) This glorious city is surrounded by gates, which bear the names of the twelve patriarchs; the twelve tribes of Israel. And those gates are attached to a surrounding wall, which stands on twelve foundations, containing the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. Here we find that the glory of this city; the glory of this one church, is surrounded by and grounded in the Patriarchs and the Apostles. There is one Jerusalem in truth; there is one people of God and one church, taken from both covenants. Here, we have the true Israel of God; those sharing the faith and promises of Abraham; united to the eternal Seed of the glorious Christ! [Guarded by angels- impenetrable by evil of any sort---Gen. 3:24]

3) The angel also has a gold reed, with which he is to measure the city. And he finds that it is laid out as a perfect square. It is architecturally perfect. No doubt, this is not only to speak of the perfection of the city, but it is also to resemble the Most Holy Place of God's sanctuary. The Most Holy Place is that place which bore the very Shekinah Glory of God, where the Ark of the Covenant rested beneath the mercy seat, and only the high priest could enter that inner sanctuary, once a year, and not without blood. Here, the New Jerusalem is representative of that Most Holy Place, as it were. The glory of God is in her midst; the Law of God is in her midst; the mercy of God is in her midst...forever. God is with His people in the most real and felt sense.

And the dimensions of the city are 12,000 furlongs (L, W & H). And the wall was 144 cubits. Again, these numbers are both symbolic of the completed church, the number 12 x 1000, representing the Apostles/Patriarchs X 1000, and 144 cubits being symbolic of the fullness of the church, divisible by 12 (Apost./Patri.), and taken from Rev. 7's 144,000. This is the completed church; the whole Bride, and not one person is missing! The integrity of God, in the keeping of His glorious promises, is here confirmed as well!

4) Read verses 18-21. All of these speak to the glory of the Bride, especially as she bears the glory of God. The City reflects the glory of the God, who fills it! [Some similarity to the 12 precious stones, worn on Aaron's breastplate---Exodus 28:15-21---Truly, a kingdom of priests, where all have the benefit given to the high priest, forever!]. [Streets of Gold!]

Such is the glory of the New Jerusalem; the Bride of Christ, which reflects the glory of God. [Note Ezekiel 40-48: following the destruction of Gog (38-39)]

5) Read verses 22-26. Here, the New Jerusalem is recognized in its spacial sense (Again, the Bride is identified with the actual location).

-There is no temple there. God and the Lamb are present there. They are the Temple! The people of God will worship in the realized presence of God.

-God's glory illuminates the City. All revelation and light come directly from God and Christ.

-The glory of all redeemed humanity (every tribe, tongue and nation) is within its gates.

-The gates remain open, indicating no threat of opposition or contamination ever. There is no need for security. God is present. [Isaiah 60:11].

6) Read verse 27. Warning and encouragement. Only those written in the Book of Life will find themselves there.

Conclusion

These revealed realities are written for us (this hope is not yet realized). How will we respond? Will we stand fast and sacrifice the "now," for the eternal "later." Will we overcome? Is it the whore or the Bride? Only the holy will be there!

Amen!!!