



The Revelation of Jesus Christ

"A Gem Dandy of a City"

21:9-21

Introduction

What has ninety gemstones, nine diamonds, a star-shaped ruby and an entry in the Vietnamese "Guinness Book of World Records"?

If you guessed the expensive wedding bouquet on display on the sixth floor of Ruby Plaza in Hanoi you'd be right. Valued at around \$125,000 this wedding bouquet of red and white gemstone flowers just happens to be the most expensive bouquet in the world.

The world's most expensive wedding gown was unveiled at the premier Luxury Brands Lifestyle Bridal show in February of 2006.

The Diamond Wedding Gown was a collaboration of Renee Strauss, owner of a highly successful bridal salon in Beverly Hills, and Martin Katz, who deals in rare jewels. Featuring 150 carats of diamonds, the dress was at the time valued at a cool \$12 million.

All such records will be broken in the future when Jesus reveals the New Jerusalem to His bride, the church.

Revelation 21:9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."

It's nice to know that angels can multi-task! This one is retired as a bowl-pourer into a second career as a tour guide in the New Jerusalem.

Seriously, though, I think we must remain flexible. Yes, God has gifted each of us in unique ways. But ministry isn't always about getting to exercise my gift or gifts the way I'd like to. The apostle Paul was arguably the greatest teacher and church planter of his day. Usually he found himself working with his hands rather than being able to be dedicated to those tasks.

What was Jesus' task? Ultimately it was to go to the Cross. It sure took Him a long time to get there! Along the way He seized every opportunity to be used by His Father. Even if it was by being an obedient son to Joseph and Mary.

The city is not the bride - **you** are. The city is an adornment that reminds everyone of Jesus Christ's great love for you. It's like a gigantic wedding ring. More on that in a moment.

Revelation 21:10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

Jesus promised His disciples that He would be building a place for them after His departure from the earth. It's this wonderful city.

Within it are the individual mansions of which He spoke in John fourteen just before going to the Cross.

You're never told that the New Jerusalem is **on** the earth. It seems to hover **over** the earth!

In fact, the earth is like a satellite of the New Jerusalem in that the city is the most prominent feature of the new heaven and the new earth.

Revelation 21:11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

Edison just changed-out all the old florescent lighting throughout our buildings for free. You can tell the difference.

The "light" in and throughout the New Jerusalem will be reflective and pervasive. The city will be constructed in such a manner that the light of Jesus Christ will reflect throughout it. It will be like no light we've ever known before.

Precious jewels and gems are construction materials in Heaven. They have the correct properties needed to reflect the glory of God to every part of the new heaven and the new earth.

The whole city is like a precious gem. It is likened unto a "jasper" stone. The modern jasper is a multicolored quartz stone. The stone referred to here cannot be that for this stone is not opaque. "Jasper" is a transliteration of the word *iaspis* which is of Semitic origin. Moffatt suggests that *iaspis* could mean the modern opal, diamond, or topaz.

The stone is transparent and gleaming so it is most likely the diamond. The diamond seems to fit the description better than any other stone known to man.

Revelation 21:12 Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

Revelation 21:13 three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

More retired angels. These are honor guards.

The city is for the church - but its gates have the names of the “twelve tribes of Israel.” Talk about symbolism. It was through Israel that you and I were able to enter eternity. It is through the King of the Jews that the whole world is offered salvation.

In the Old Testament when Israel camped in the wilderness they did so in a particular order all around the Tabernacle:

- On the east were Issachar, Judah, and Zebulun, along with Moses, Aaron, and the priests.
- On the north were Naphtali, Dan, and Asher, along with the Merarites.
- On the south were Gad, Reuben, and Simeon, along with the Kohathites.
- On the west were Manasseh, Ephraim, and Benjamin, along with the Gershonites.

(Merari, Kohath, and Gershon were sons of Levi. They formed various divisions among the priesthood).

Stuff like this reminds us that God loves order and symmetry. It is not more spiritual to be spontaneous. Spirit-led plans and planning seem more ‘spiritual’ than the spontaneous impulses of men.

Revelation 21:14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The church today is "... built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20). When Jesus returned to Heaven He

committed the keys into the keeping of the apostles. On the human level the church was in the hands of these twelve men. In the Book of Acts we are told, "the former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen" (Acts 1:1-2).

The "twelve apostles" laid the foundation of your faith. Their teaching is the bedrock you live by and they will be acknowledged for eternity as their names are on the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem.

So... Who is the 'real' twelfth apostle? After Judas apostasized there were eleven. In the Book of Acts they cast lots to pick Matthias. But some say that it was God's intent for Paul to be the twelfth apostle.

The weight of the biblical evidence seems to favor Matthias. After he was chosen the Holy Spirit refers to the group as "the twelve," not "the eleven plus Matthias."

Is it really possible that the great apostle Paul will not have his name commemorated in the city, on a stone? Yes. Let it be a lesson to us.

Revelation 21:15 And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall.

The tour guide angel moonlights as a surveyor. He measures the city using a "gold reed." Aren't you fascinated by that? I mean, how long is the reed? How did the angel actually measure the city - a reed at a time?

Revelation 21:16 The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal.

Revelation 21:17 Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.

The New Jerusalem's length, height and width are equal. This means that it is either a cube or a pyramid.

- H.A. Ironside speculates it is a pyramid.
- J. Vernon McGee sees it as a cube within a crystal-clear sphere.

A cube is reminiscent of the Holy Place of the tabernacle suggesting that the entire city is the Holy Place.

While you are trying to visualize the city consider that it may be more than four dimensional - which puts it in a realm I can't really comprehend.

People always wonder if it is large enough to accommodate the saints of the church age.

If it were only four dimensional, it would measure about fourteen hundred miles in every direction. If it had, say, twenty billion inhabitants, then, based on these measurements, each of us would have a block of space with seventy-five acres in every direction!!¹

John mentioned that the cubit measure of an angel is the same as for a man. We won't have to learn a new system of weights and measures!

Revelation 21:18 The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

Revelation 21:19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald,

Revelation 21:20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

Revelation 21:21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

¹ See Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record*

I'm indebted to J. Vernon McGee and his sources for his list of the colors of these precious stones.

1. Jasper (*iaspis*) - its color is clear. As mentioned before, this is probably the diamond.
2. Sapphire (*sappheiros*) - its color is blue.
3. Chalcedony (*chalkedon*) - its color is greenish. It is an agate. Pliny describes it as "a variety of emerald gathered on a mountain in Chalcedon."
4. Emerald (*smaragdus*) - its color is green.
5. Sardonyx (*sardonux*) - its color is red. Robertson describes it as white with layers of red.
6. Sardius (*sardios*) - its color is fiery red. Pliny says that it is the red stone from Sardis.
7. Chrysolite (*chrysolithos*) - its color is golden yellow. Moffatt assigns it a golden hue. Robertson says it is a golden color like our topaz.
8. Beryl (*beryllos*) - its color is green. Pliny says it is sea green.
9. Topaz (topazion) - its color is greenish yellow. Robertson calls it a golden greenish stone.
10. Chrysoprase (*chrysoprasos*) - its color is gold-green. A golden leek, "a leek colored gem," says Robertson.
11. Jacinth (*hyakinthi*) - its color is violet. It is the color of the hyacinth.
12. Amethyst (*amethystos*) - its color is purple.

You might have noticed in verse twenty-one that there is mention of only one "street." It might give a clue as to the shape of the city. Those of you who are architectural or mathematical can meditate on how a huge city with four gates can yet have only one street.

I want to concentrate on the building materials. They are precious gems and minerals. What do you think about that? I've heard it said that gold will be so common that it's being used as asphalt.

That's one way of looking at it. But let me ask you: What do we do with precious stones and gold today? Or, better yet, what do wives want their husbands to do with them?

They are in the jewelry that we give to the one we love!

Remember we saw the city described as a diamond? The New Jerusalem is a diamond in a gold mounting. This city is the engagement ring of the bride; in fact, it is the wedding ring. It is the symbol of the betrothal and wedding of the church to Christ.

But it is far more than a ring given to one person. It is a city, within which are our mansions, given thus to the church as a whole and to each saint individually.

It would be like me giving Pam Disneyland.

You want to be able to give your lover something amazing. It's not because you are materialistic; it's because you are romantic. Things that have value, when given to your lover, show you care more about him or her than all the things in all the world. If you could you'd give your lover the world – because the one you love has more value to you than everything valuable in the world.

If you are Jesus you *can* give your beloved everything! It is symbolized in the extravagance of the New Jerusalem. Extravagance is a trait of romantic love.

By the way: If the city itself is so extravagant, just imagine what your individual residence in it must be like. Jesus has been busy constructing it ever since His ascension into Heaven. If it only took six days to create the entire universe – what do you think the Lord can do in two-thousand years?

Eternity is an extravagance of Jesus' romantic love for you. He's over-the-top when it comes to romance.

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