



The Revelation of Jesus Christ

"Ain't No Sunshine When He's Come"

21:22-27

Introduction

Certain cities are notable for their architectural features. Or at least you'd say that when you visit them you want to go to see certain unique structures. I don't know why but the Taj Mahal is the one that always pops into my head! Not the one in Atlantic City, NJ, built by Donald Trump but the one in Agra, India. By the way: I always thought the Taj Mahal was a temple but it is a mausoleum built by the emperor in memory of his wife.

Cities aren't usually notable for what is not in them. The New Jerusalem *will* be notable for something that is not there. There will not be a temple of any kind there.

Revelation 21:22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

The sense I get of John's statement "I saw no Temple in it" is that he was looking for one. The Temple at Jerusalem had been a focal point in his life. For many years he had visited it at least twice annually as was required of every male Jew. Its rites and rituals were the backbone of Jewish society - a constant in an uncertain world.

From his knowledge of the Millennium, gained from reading the Old Testament and especially Ezekiel, John was expecting a magnificent Temple on the earth during Jesus' thousand-year reign. It would be a prominent location in the Millennium.

The lack of a Temple would have been a stunning realization for John. Stunning in a good way because he was immediately inspired to understand that "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its Temple."

The New Jerusalem is the same shape as the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and Temple where God dwelt: a perfect cube. That is no accident. The physical temple was a poor substitute for the presence of God. The New Jerusalem possesses the genuine article - God in person. It is probably the first place where God will make a personal appearance before man.

Revelation 21:23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

Something else is missing. There is no "sun" or "moon." We know that this is eternity and not the Millennium because in Isaiah 30:26 we read concerning the Millennium,

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Isaiah 30:26 Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, And the light of the sun will be sevenfold, As the light of seven days, In the day that the Lord binds up the bruise of His people And heals the stroke of their wound.

Talk about global warming! It is important we keep these time periods distinct otherwise we get confused about what is happening and when it happens.

God provides direct lighting for the city. The word “light,” which describes Jesus (the “Lamb”) means *another illuminator*. The Father and the Son both equally provide all the physical light necessary.

Since “God is light” and “in Him is no darkness at all” (1John 1:5) and since Jesus is “the light of the world” (John 9:5) it would not do for there to be darkness or night in the New Jerusalem. We’re told in 1Timothy 6:16 that God dwells “in the light which no man can approach” in his natural body. The glory of God filled the Tabernacle and Temple with His radiant glory and it will fill the Millennial Temple. In the New Jerusalem it fills the entire city.

- Light speaks of *joy*, for in the Scriptures light and joy go together.
- Light speaks of *beauty*, because without light there is no beauty.
- Light speaks of *knowledge* and in Heaven we will all know Him as He knows us.

Revelation 21:24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.

The New Jerusalem will provide light for the earth. Remember it isn’t on the earth but hovers over it. The earth is like a satellite to the city.

Interesting insight. The earth under the hovering New Jerusalem will still have “nations” and “kings.” Who are these earth dwellers?

Well, whoever they are, they will all be “saved.”

There are at least these three theories:

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1. They are the human survivors of the millennium who go on into eternity as humans (David Hocking).
2. They are an entirely new race of people, a part of God's new creation (Chuck Smith).
3. They are all the other glorified saints from the Old Testament and from the Tribulation and from the Millennium whose primary residence in eternity will be on the new earth.

It seems most likely that these are indeed the saved and glorified saints from the Old Testament, from the Tribulation, and from the Millennium. The New Jerusalem is the residence of the bride of Jesus, the saints of the church age from the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers until the resurrection and rapture.

I might mention in passing that there will always be an innumerable company of angels hanging around, too. Because we know there are at least horses in eternity, we can speculate that there will be a great variety of animal life, too.

These earthly saints will have to commute to the New Jerusalem! They will "bring their glory and honor into it." I get the idea that there will be a lot of visiting going on and, as glorious as will be the saints living in the city, so will there be a glory and honor for every saint.

We have an idea that everything must always be equal in order for there to be satisfaction. There shouldn't be a king because then there would be subjects and that seems unfair.

But in our glorified bodies a citizen is equal to a king - they simply have different functions. It's probably impossible for us to totally grasp this.

But, really, this is what it is supposed to be like even now, in the church or in the home. At home you and your spouse are equal but have different roles and responsibilities. Likewise in the church.

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Now at home this breaks down because, in our flesh, we don't love our wives the way Jesus loves the church and wives don't submit to their husbands as unto the Lord.

In the church, too, we have a hard time submitting one to another in the fear of God.

But in eternity, in our glorified bodies, that won't be a problem. So for the saints on the earth it won't really matter who is a king or who is a citizen.

Revelation 21:25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).

It's odd wording but necessary. You can't say "the gates won't be shut at night" because there is no night!

Why have gates at all? Why not just big arches?

Shutting the gates of a city were for its protection from enemies and intruders. None will exist in eternity! So the open gates will be a constant reminder of the blessedness of our mutual fellowship.

Even today you still refer to some communities as a place where people don't have to lock their doors. Sadly, you usually here that expression in the past tense after something awful just happened in a place where people never used to lock their doors.

Second, these gates are beautiful! They are beautiful architectural marvels that enhance the extravagance of the city.

Besides that, you remember they are to be made of pearl. Not just made of many pearls but "the twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl." You can't help but think of the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price that Jesus told while on the first century earth. In it a wealthy merchant shopping for pearls found a magnificent pearl. He sold everything to purchase it.

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In the parable, the merchant is Jesus and the church is the pearl. He did indeed pay a great price for us - a king's ransom as it were. He died on the Cross to ransom us from sin and death.

The pearly gates, as we like to refer to them, are a constant reminder of the Lord's love for His bride.

Revelation 21:26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.

When folks go somewhere they often bring something back with them as gifts that represent the place they've visited. Macadamia Nuts from Hawaii, for example.

I don't know what will be going on upon the earth but I can assume there will be produce and products. We won't need to eat but it seems we will because there is a tree yielding fruit. Whatever it is that the nations do during eternity will be brought up to the New Jerusalem to be enjoyed and to reveal the glory and honor of those nations and their inhabitants.

Revelation 21:27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

We cannot even begin to imagine such a place so John again emphasizes its character. Even with all this coming and going through wide open gates there is no danger. All who enter or exit will have been fully and finally conformed into the image of Jesus. We will have free will that is incapable of sinning.

Anything or anyone who might defile has been permanently removed and sentenced to the Lake of Fire. There is no escape and they can never enter the city or walk upon the earth.

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“The exhortation warns present readers that the only way to participate in the future city is to turn one’s loyalties to the Lamb now” (Johnson).

The only ones on the earth or in the New Jerusalem will be those “who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.”

There are six references to the “Book of Life” in the Revelation (3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, & 20:15). Only here is it called the “Lamb’s Book of Life.”

My take on the “Book of Life” is that it is the census of every person ever conceived. Those who reach an age and an understanding that can reject Jesus Christ and who die without Him as their Savior will have their name “blotted out,” deleted from the Book of Life. If you receive the Lord your name will remain.

In the end, then, the book is indeed the “Lamb’s Book of Life” in that every name in it belongs to a person who availed themselves by faith to the Lord’s universal provision of salvation.

Here’s what I’m seeing in the reference to it being finally designated as the “Lamb’s.” Up until eternity, it contains names of the unsaved, of nonbelievers. They are living but do not have eternal life. Jesus died on the Cross for the entire human race but not all will turn to Him to receive salvation. In the end, though, only the saved will have their names written there. Only then can they truly be called the “Lamb’s.”