

9-3-2023 Sunday Sermon Message
Devotional of the Week: Psalm 91:1-16
Text: Revelation 21:9-27

Title: Let us look forward to the hope of entering the city of New Jerusalem gloriously!

The apostle John testified that he saw the holy city of New Jerusalem come down from heaven from God, as if a bride had adorned herself for her husband (Revelation 21:2)

He testified to what the angel once again showed of the city of New Jerusalem: **"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."¹⁰ And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,¹¹ Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;¹² And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:" (Revelation 21:9-12)**

He also testified that there are three gates in the east, west, north, and south, and that there are twelve foundation stones on the walls of the city, on which are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. He also testified of the shape of the city, that it was square, that it was equal in length and width, and that its length, breadth, and height were twelve thousand furlongs. That's about 1,500 miles. It is about the distance between L.A. and St Luis.

As for the materials from which the city is made, the walls were made of jasper, and the city was made of pure glass, and the foundation stone of the city was adorned with various precious stones, And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;²⁰ The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, achrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

The breastplate worn by Israel's high priest also had twelve precious stones. These are gemstones that people rarely see, and they are on display at the Smithsonian Institution in the United States. These twelve jewels represent the twelve tribes.

1. The green gemstone (emerald) is a green stone that symbolizes Judah,

2. The sapphire is a blue stone that symbolizes Simeon.
3. Red agate (sidnix) is a red and white stone that symbolizes Dan,
4. Chalcedony is a white transparent stone that symbolizes Levi,
5. Taehuang jade (topatsu) is a pale yellow-orange stone that symbolizes the issakal,
6. Yellow jade (chrysorith) is a golden stone that symbolizes the lampshade,
7. The green jade (bury) is a frozen fiery stone that symbolizes Assel.
8. The Sadious Stone is a red stone that symbolizes Naphtali,
9. The jade (jesins) is a yellow-red stone that symbolizes Joseph,
10. Amethyst (Emethyst) is a pale purple crystal that symbolizes Benjamin,
11. Jade (emethist) is a yellowish-green stone that symbolizes Zebulun,
12. Jasper (Jasper) is a transparent crystal that symbolizes Reuben.

What a dazzling sight. It would be a sight we dare not even imagine. When the apostle Paul ascended to the third heaven and saw this tremendous sight, he compared it with the earth on which he lived, **saying, " For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:"** (Philippians 1:23). After seeing the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12), he was able to confess that he rejoiced for Christ's sake, like a madman, in spite of all his infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, and distesses (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Also, the twelve gates were made of twelve pearls, each of which was made of one pearl, and the streets of the city were pure gold and like transparent glass. Now the people of the world are fighting each other for having more gold, but then we will be walking on a road paved with gold. In addition, pearls are created when shells suffer from foreign substances that continue to penetrate into them. Therefore, this pearl gate symbolizes Christians who live in the world, who suffer continually, but who only hope for the day when they will enter this glorious city. I am reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul to the Saints in Rome, who were suffering tremendous persecution, death, and trials:

" The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. ¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."(Romans 8:16-18)

John Bunyan, who wrote the book The Pilgrims Progress, realized that the world in which he lived was a city to be judged unto destruction by God,, and asked his family to go with him in search of God's Holy City, but in the end, he was lonely and went through all kinds of hardships and temptations as he went through the narrow path in search of a narrow gate, but finally he found the shining city of God and came back and left with his family. Even in these last days, those who have found the holy city of New Jerusalem will be able to lead many people to this holy city of God, the New Jerusalem, by compelling them to turn away from the world that will perish by witnessing the gospel to their families and other people.

Jesus told his disciples that he was leaving to prepare this holy city, New Jerusalem:" **Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.² In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."**(John 14:1-3)

In the regard to those who shall enter the New Jerusalem, is said to be prepared for the bride of the Lamb. It is reserved for the bride of the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. Through the Apostle Paul He spoke of who the Bride of the Lamb is: **" Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. ² For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.³ But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."**(2 Corinthians 11:1-3)

Yea! The Church of God, which is an organism of Christians who have believed in the gospel of Christ in the Age of Grace after Pentecost, who have received Christ Jesus as Savior and have received the Holy Spirit, will become the bride of Christ, and sooner or later they shall be raptured on the day of Christ, and they will receive crowns

as a reward for their work for Christ at the judgment seat of Christ, and they shall marry with Christ at the marriage ceremony of the Lamb and enter gloriously into the New Jerusalem, the newlywed house prepared by Christ.

However, the Old Testament saints who were not born in the Age of Grace and the Tribulation Saints who are beheaded and resurrected after the Great Tribulation without receiving the mark of the beast will also enter the holy city.

The descendants of Abraham, who died in the bosom of Abraham while keeping the law under the law, shall be resurrected when the graves was opened and resurrected when Christ was resurrected, walked out of the graves and entered the holy city, and raptured and participated in the first resurrection (Matthew 27:50-53). King David looked at this day in his lifetime and prayed:

" As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."(Psalm 17:15)

The Bible testifies that Abraham also lived in the world looking to this holy city, the New Jerusalem:" **By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: ¹⁰ For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."**(Hebrews 11:9-10)

Also, the tribulation saints who were not raptured, but who were beheaded for refusing to receive the mark of the beast during the Great Tribulation, shall be resurrected, and they too shall participate in the first resurrection, so that they also shall participate in the holy city of New Jerusalem, They shall reign with Christ for a thousand years:

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."(Revelation 20:4-6)

Amen! Hallelujah!