

Revelation 21:1-22:4: The New Jerusalem upon the New Earth.

The eternal state has arrived with the New Jerusalem as the capital of God's kingdom.

1. The New Jerusalem coming down for her occupants. 21:1-8

The old creation must pass away before the eternal state begins (1-2). 2 Peter 3:10 predicts that it will occur with a loud sound and intense heat. The new earth will be without sea which represents separation and danger. At the centre of the new creation is the New Jerusalem which John saw descending from heaven. Jesus has promised in John 14:2-3 that He will prepare this for His saints. The key reason for the new creation is in v3-4, and amazingly it is for God to dwell among men. This is unspeakable love that God would do all this just to be with us. Furthermore there will be no more crying, death, pain or mourning (4). It implies that these agonies will still be around in the millennium as elimination is only possible when sins disappear in the new creation. God the Father then announces that He will make all things new and that "it is done" (5-8). This must be the completion of salvation by grace because the offer is without cost and we will become God's son. In contrast the unsaved in v8 will burn in the lake of fire, the second death.

2. The structure of the city. 21:9-21

The angel in v9 could be the same one as 17:1, able to carry John to a high mountain (9-11). New Jerusalem is as a wife in v2 and in v9, the husband is the Lamb. John is first shown the exterior of the city. Jasper is used in describing it (11). This is a red stone but it is never clear like crystal. So it must be a brilliance never seen before on earth and the glory of the city must be unbelievable. It is evident that the city is for both Jews and the Church (12-14). The gates have the names of the 12 Tribes of Israel while the Apostles are on the foundation stones. Most likely the foundation stones are seen as buttress enlargements, alternating between the gates. The angel measures the city and it is a 1500 miles cube (15-17). This is most likely because the Greek for square, "tetragonas" in v16 is also used for a cube. In land area it is like Australia but the height is 1500 miles and so it's humongous. The city is adorned with all kinds of precious stones (18-21). Some of the features are almost unimaginable. The city is of gold in v18 and v21. Yet these are transparent like glass, unlike the gold on earth. Each gate is one single pearl, obviously of a size unseen before. What a splendor to behold, awaiting the saints of God in eternity.

3. The focus of life in the city. 21:22-27

In the last section, John seems to have entered the city (22-23). He saw no temple, a structure set up to enable worship. John says God Himself is the temple, indicating that worship is the central activity of the city. There is no more need for any source of light for God will personally illuminate it. Outside on the new earth dwell the nations (24-27). Who are they? It is best to take them as survivors from the Millennium for Satan could not have deceived all the inhabitants. The nations must be the faithful who now multiply on the new earth. They are ruled by kings who bring their glory and honor into the city, which is the offering of their very best to worship God. As only saints can enter the city (27) and they will reign with God forever (22:6), they must be the kings over the nations.

4. Sustenance of life in the New Jerusalem. 22:1-5

22:1-5 is linked to chapter 21 on life in the New Jerusalem. Even in the eternal state, God plays a part in our regular sustenance (1-2). A river of life runs through the middle of the main street in the city and on either side of its banks is the tree of life. In Greek, tree is singular probably to indicate that it is one type of tree but there must be many all over the city. This must be the same tree of life in Eden which God forbade Adam to eat in case he would live forever with his sin (Genesis 2:9; 3:22). However the saints are now cleansed by Christ's blood and the curse of sin is gone. The river of life will in some way have an ongoing cleansing role but as in our salvation, it will be without cost (21:6). The washing thus gives the saints the right to the tree of life (14) whose fruits are needed to sustain life in the city. Its leaves however are for healing of the nations outside. This could not be related to sin but surely problems can emerge even without sin and healing is required. Finally John describes life in the eternal city (3-5). With the curse of sin eliminated the saints will serve God forever. They will relate with Him face to face and having His name on our foreheads simply means that we are His forever. In 21:23, God lights up the city and now in v5, it speaks of God illuminating the saints. In Greek its "epi" or "on" them which means that they will reign forever with His glory and guidance.

啟示錄 21:1-22:5：在新地上的新耶路撒冷

永恆展開，新耶路撒冷成為神國的首都。

1. 新耶路撒冷從天降下迎接她的居民—21:1-8

舊的創造必須消逝，永恆的國度才會開始（1-2節）。彼得後書 3:10 預言將會有大響聲和烈火。新的地是沒有海的，因為海代表分離和危險。在新創造的中央是新耶路撒冷，約翰看見她從天降下。這是耶穌在約翰福音 14:2-3 應許為聖徒預備的。3-4 節給出新創造的主要原因，令人驚喜的是原來神要住在人中間。這樣的愛真是口舌不能述說，因為神所做的這一切都是為要與我們同在。此外，在新地上是沒有哭泣、死亡、痛苦或悲哀的（4節）。這樣說來千禧年還是會有痛苦的，惟有當罪在新創造裏完全消失時痛苦才能完全除滅。父神接著宣告祂會使一切都變成新的，而事就這樣“成了”（5-8節）。這一定是指恩典救贖工作的完成，因為神白白給我們救恩，讓我們成為祂的兒女。截然不同是第 8 節那些不得救的人，他們將被丟進火湖裏焚燒，這是第二次的死亡。

2. 城的結構—21:9-21

第 9 節的天使和 17:1 節的可能是同一位，他能夠把約翰帶到高山上（9-11 節）。在 2 和 9 節新耶路撒冷好像新婦，是羔羊的妻子。天使讓約翰首先看見城的外貌。城有如晶瑩的碧玉（11 節），這種紅色的寶石並未見過有像水晶般的透徹，所以它的燦爛一定是見所未見的，這城的榮美真是超乎想像。顯然這城是猶太人和教會居住的地方（12-14 節）。城門上是以色列十二支派的名字，而使徒的名字則在城的基石上。有可能這些基石就如特大型的扶垛，建在兩道門之間。天使量度這城，是一千五百英哩立方（二千二百二十公里）（15-17 節）。城應該是個立方體，因為在 16 節四方這詞的希臘原文“tetragonas”也是正方形的意思。城的地上面積像澳洲大小，但因為高度是一千五百英哩，所以它會是其大無比。城的裝飾包括各式各樣的寶石（18-21 節），有些特徵是非常難以想像的。18 和 21 節形容這城為純金打造，不過這些金子又透明如玻璃，和地球的黃金大不相同。每道城門都是由一顆珍珠造成，這樣體積的珍珠很明顯是前所未見的。多麼瑰麗璀璨的城在永恆裏等待著神的聖徒！

3. 城的生活—21:22-27

在最後一段約翰似乎已進入城中（22-23 節），他並沒有看見用作敬拜之用的聖殿。約翰說神就是聖殿，意味著城中的主要活動就是敬拜。城也不需要日月照明，因為神就是她的燈。新地外面是列國（24-27 節），它們是誰呢？最合理的解釋似乎是他們都是從千禧年存留下來的，因為撒但不可能把所有人都欺騙了。那些列國都是至死忠心的人，如今在新地上繁衍生息，他們被世上的君王管治，而這些君王又會把自己的榮耀和尊貴帶進城去，也就是把自己最好的獻上敬拜神。因為只有聖徒才可以進入聖城（27 節），而他們會與神共同永遠掌王權（22:6），管治列國。

4. 新耶路撒冷的生活作息—22:1-5

22:1-5 接續第 21 章，都是有關新耶路撒冷的生活的。就算在永恆裏，神和我們的生活作息仍是息息相關的（1-2 節）。生命河流過城內大街的中央，河兩岸有生命樹。在希臘文樹是單數的，可能那些樹都屬同一品種，並且遍佈全城。這生命樹應該也是在伊甸園中神不讓亞當吃的，免得他永遠帶著自己的罪活著（創世記 2:9; 3:22）。但如今聖徒已被基督的寶血洗淨，罪的詛咒也已除掉。生命河負責提供不斷潔淨的功能，像我們的救恩那樣，它也是白白的（21:6）。因被洗淨，聖徒亦得著吃生命樹果子的權利（14 節），而這些果子是用以維持城中生命的。樹葉為城外的列國提供療效，但卻是和罪無關，因為就算罪不存在問題總是會產生的，所以便需要醫治。最後約翰形容在這永恆城裏的生活情況（3-5 節）。罪的詛咒既已消除，聖徒就可以永遠事奉神，他們跟神會面對面相交。額頭上寫著神的名字，是表示我們永遠屬神的意思。在 21:23 神把整座城照亮，如今在第 5 節神又會光照所有聖徒，在希臘文光是在他們“上面”或“epi”他們，意思是他們會永遠掌王權，並且有神的榮耀和帶領。