

## Revelation 21:1 - 27 Pt2

*1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, 4 and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." 5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." 6 And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. 7 "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. 8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

*9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."*

*10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. 12 It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are those of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. 13 There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And the one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. 16 And the city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. 17 And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic*

*measurements. 18 And the material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysolite; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. 22 And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple. 23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. 25 And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; 26 and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 27 and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

I want to return briefly tonight to Vss 7 and 8 of chapter 21.

It's been a busy week of news morally speaking. Things are happening so fast now it's breathless trying to keep up.

The Supreme court is trying from a wholly secular point of view to decide whether people who fear God have the right in this country to refuse to pay for or be a part of their employees abortions and birth control methods that are abortifacients.

Their consciences are telling them that they are enabling murder. Infanticide.

When it gets down to it, our example is in Acts 5:29 no matter what our supreme court says. When ordered not to preach Jesus, in vs. 28 the magistrates *said, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to*

*bring this man's blood upon us."* Peter and the apostles had this response;  
29*But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.*

But the stakes are high. Do you walk away from a business you've spent a lifetime building? We're waiting for the courts decision but the bottom line is we're in a war, and the opposing side . . . is relentless. The onslaught of Satan is like waves crashing on the sea shore.

In England this week the disclosure came that 15,000 fetuses had been burned with other human waste and the BTU's from the furnace used to heat the hospitals that had performed the abortions.

Remember now, this story isn't from Auschwitz, 1944. This is happening now!

When the story went public, the minister of health apologized and stated that he would put a stop to this inappropriate activity.

Heavens no, not the murders. That will go on, but we won't use the btu's from the furnace that destroys these humans to supply heat for the building. There. Feel better?

And sad to say, but of no surprise, sodomy was in the news - again.

No less than Rich Stearns - president of World Vision USA said that sodomites could be employed by that great organization. But with the caveat that they are moral sodomites. Only christian sodomites who are married and living monogamously need apply.

He said he hoped other christian organizations and local churches will follow his organization's lead because this fight amongst the body of Christ is tearing the church apart and causing dis-unity within the body.

Of course we all watched as 2 days later, and notably after irreconcilable damage was done to world vision's mission to feed starving children, Mr.

Stearns reversed the decision that they had prayed over for months and asked for forgiveness.

And finally, one last old news note. Within the last year, in my own extended family, family members whom I dearly love and respect have called me a pharisee.

That sort of brings it home, doesn't it. There is a battle waging. We expect the battle outside the church, but there is a huge battle waging inside the "so-called" church.

So, who's right? Is any of this worth fighting about? Or do we avoid disunity at ANY cost.

What we're witnessing is the church, wholesale, making concessions to the enemy, in the name of peace. Sort of like Mr. Netanyahu giving away thousands of acres of Israeli held land that Jewish people fought for and lost their lives over in order to make peace with the arabs.

Do we look at Bibi and shake our heads at the foolishness of trying to appease an American president that has sold him to his enemies before he ever took office, but in our own camp, the same thing is going on and we shrug and walk away.

Here's the problem, as I see it taught in scripture. If we don't fight, and win, we won't see heaven. That's why vss. 7 and 8 are right there in the middle of this chapter.

*7 "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. 8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

Overcomes. That's war language. That's the language of struggle. Conflict.

Vs. 8 is simply the alternative to overcoming. Winners! Losers!

Now, you can spiritualize this away and say, well, I'm hidden inside Jesus and my faith has thus overcome.

But James, that old rascal, writes that faith that doesn't have works that look a whole lot like "overcoming" is worthless. Dead faith. So we're back to conflict, aren't we.

Words mean things. All those words in that list mean things.

Phil Roberson got in hot water recently citing a similar list. Paul told the Corinthians 6:9 *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.*

What stunned me about Rich Stearns statement was the recognition of sodomite christians. They could come to work for world vision, but only if they're christians, and properly married. Stunning!

People, those terms are mutually exclusive! There are NO gay christians. There may very well be ex-gay christians and we would shout hallelujah and embrace them and eagerly engage in helping them in their battle against their former life.

But to capitulate to the enemy and say there's a category for christian people who are openly gay and living in that life style is a contradiction of terms and a defeat for the church.

Paul says *Such were some of you* past tense. There's room for every kind of

stumbling and failure as we endeavor to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (not talking about salvation by works, talking about the works that real faith produces).

We fail and then fail again. But I am saying there's no room for a lifestyle of any of these things in any of these lists. And that's what the church has embraced. Wholesale!

I'm in such a minority, it's probably good that I live this far out in the sagebrush. Are you sufficiently concerned yet that I'm going to make a shambles of this church, sooner or later?

Let me introduce you to another famous scrapper. Jude, by verse 3 has scrapped any plans to write a nice fluffy encouragement letter to his flock.

*Jude 3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.*

Jude says there's a battle for the once-for-all-delivered-to-the-saints gospel. There's a war going on and Jude says, don't just stand there! Fight!

Because when the gospel is changed in order to accomodate the worlds sin, it's easier, and nicer, and everybody's happy, and we can all just get along, like Rodney King said, but . . . according to verse 7 and 8 here, and according to Paul in Corinthians, the end result will be the lake of fire.

Jesus didn't die so that sinners could live in Satan's kingdom and follow Satan's rules and then go to heaven. The bible looks at that system as slavery and those in it as prisoners. Jesus died to purchase us out of that slavery! It's remarkable that the church wants to be the church and be right in the middle of Satan's camp! Slaves to sin.

Jude's book is concerned with our "common salvation" and where that

originated. The once-for-all-delivered-to-the-saints faith. The gospel.

We fight because the devil is forever and ever undermining the plan of salvation and the apostles doctrine and the result is the church is full of people who on this day will find themselves saying But Lord, lord?! These folks have landed short of real salvation, and the church has welcomed them and coddled them and told them they are eternally secure.

The modern church is wheat and tares. If we knew the percentages, my fear is that it should make us weep.

That's why the Spirit stops right in the middle of all of this glorious description of heaven and talks about 'overcoming' this present world, and then in vs 8 says, 'don't kid yourselves. IF these things are your lifestyle, you won't be seeing the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, you'll be seeing Satan, and the demons, and the false prophet and the anti-christ forever in agony.

The tares who think they're just fine, are going to hell.

Here's how this works. Satan comes along and says his usual, "hath God said"?

He always always always undermines the authority of scripture. Adds works to salvation. Subtracts works from salvation. Both are equally effective. He messes with the Book.

As soon as the authority of scripture over our lives is undermined - anything goes. The Bible is a nice ancient book of out of date ideals that you can imitate if you feel like it. But if not, it's OK, Jesus will save you anyways.

Trinity - questioned.

Authority - questioned.

Creation - questioned. God didn't really mean that! Let me tell you what this really means. I know it sounds like this, but it really means this.

*Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, (we believe sexual activity can only happen in the confines of one woman one man, married until death splits them up) nor idolaters, (we believe if you hold any treasure in your heart as more dear to you than your relationship to the Lord Jesus, including wives husbands parents children houses cars jobs vacation homes whatever, it's idolatry) nor adulterers, (see my first bullet insert, but this one is easier to hide perhaps) nor effeminate, (little boys of any age who are confused and want to be girls and of course, vice versa) nor homosexuals, (anyone who engages in the sin of sodomy)10 nor thieves, (people who take things that aren't theirs) nor the covetous, (this is a tough one, right? Nobody knows if I'm covetous. It's inward sin. Happens in my mind. Easily becomes idolatry. Always is the sin of thanklessness) nor drunkards, ( not talking about recovering alcoholics here.)nor revilers, (people who slander other people) nor swindlers, (people who cheat, especially with money) will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you*

Listening to a radio preacher last week, talking about homosexuals. He said they will argue "I didn't ask for this. God made me this way", and his answer was; "No, Adam made you that way."

I'll say it one more time before we move on to our meat for tonight. There are no, none, zero, christian sodomites. Those and all these other things, are mutually exclusive.

Look at the final verse in Chapter 21. We'll look at it first, and backtrack to the vss 9 - 26.

*27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

Again. Mutually exclusive. Two key words that should tip us off. *Practices*. This means an ongoing lifestyle. No plans to repent. And *abomination*. How does the old testament describe the sin of sodomy? OK, then. Seems pretty



clear to me. People it is **not loving** to let this just go and whistle while you look the other way.

OK, I know it sort of sounds like God's not going to let filth into His heaven, but let me tell you what that verse really means; .... (did a red flag go up? If it didn't, you slept through the introduction)

OK, long introduction because what is knowable about the rest of this long description is pretty simple. We don't really know. The purpose of these verses isn't to dwell on the minutia, it's to dazzle us.

This is a dazzling place! Don't miss it! Besides, even as dazzling as it is, what's more dazzling is we'll be walking face to face with Jesus, and God, and the Spirit. All the dazzle is secondary. But whoa! What a backshow.

*9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."*

Part of our excitement about the description of this city, this place is that it is mystically a description of . . . us. And I think the reason we have both bride and wife together here is that this describes all the saints of all the ages together.

Traditionally, Israel was the unfaithful wife. The church is the bride. Both are here made perfect. Dazzlingly clean and glorious.

*10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.*

Recall a similar situation in Matthew if you will. The similarities are so striking I had to go and have a ponder.

*Mt. 4:8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"*

This is the final temptation of Jesus by Satan. But the contrast is profound. Both scenes are from a high mountain. An aerial view. Satan's befouled world and false vile worship is all Satan has to offer. This is Vladimir Putin's dream come true. All of the world's leaders are prostrating themselves before Satan to get a piece of this.

How fitting then, that we see the real thing at the end of the book. Dazzling glory! Perfect worship forever as we walk the streets of gold with our Saviour and God. And we make up the whole of it somehow. Comparitively, the glory of the new Jerusalem makes the kingdoms of this world look like a broken pipe spewing raw sewage.

We need to see this scene in heaven. We need to get a sense of this contrast and make it our own, deep within us. When we do, the way we hold on to the sinfulness of this world just looks bizarre.

Divorce yourself from this world and live in view of the one the angel is showing John!

*Vs. 11a having the glory of God.* This is us. This is the bride and wife of the lamb, and He has given her all of His glory!

Daniel 12 says this; *2"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. 3"Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.*

Such is the Glory our God showers on us! Dazzling Brilliant Glory! Ours!

When Jesus explains the parable of the wheat and the tares to His disciples, after the tares are disposed to torment, the final verse of His explanation says; “Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father.” Mt. 13:43

Why do we hold onto sewage when we have glory waiting? How many times have you read 2Cor. 4:17 and NOT made this connection. *For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,*

We don't really understand the description of this place, we can't, but if we can just get a grasp on this. Paul says if you put our trials and tests on one side of the scale and put the glory that is ours in heaven on the other, it would tip the scale over. Boom! No comparison. 1 nanogram of affliction in this world = 1 megaton of glory.

Let go of this place! Live for that place!

*Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper*

Jasper is opaque. Diamonds came along later. They didn't have the technology to cut diamonds when these words were written. But that's the idea. Crystal clear.

If you've ever shopped for diamonds you know that the cost goes up exponentially with the degree of clarity. Here we have a city that diffracts and reflects light with the intensity of the most costly diamond we've ever imagined.

*12 It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. 13 There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west.*

We'll see the number 12 at least a half dozen times. 12 gates, 12 angels, 12 tribes, 12 apostles, 12 foundations, 12 fruits 12 pearls 12X12 wall, and 12,000 stadia X3

In Ezekiel 48:31-34 the millennial temple is described and the gates there are also the tribes. In Ezekiel they are written out in order. You can go there and read which Father has which gate. Is the New Jerusalem the same. Doesn't say.

3 gates East, 3 north, 3 south, and 3 west. The eastern wall was always the most prominent and important in old Jerusalem. That's where the temple was. It was the most fortified. The north was where invaders would enter in.

What interests me here is there is still a N, S, E, W in this new world. Does that indicate that it is polar like this one? I guess we'll find out.

*Vs14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

This metaphor is constant right into heaven. Jesus is the cornerstone that the builders rejected, the precious corner stone. The apostles of the lamb are the foundation, and the church is the building. We're up on the 21st floor hoping there isn't a 22nd.

Also note that the tribes of Israel (israel) and the apostles of the lamb (the church) are distinct in heaven. Together but distinct. The church is NOT spiritual israel. Israel is Israel and the church is the church.

*Vs15 The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. 16 The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.*

That's a BIG city. 1500 miles cubed. Some scholars say it's possible this is a pyramid. As many times as I've ever read this, I never once thought pyramid.

I always pictured a cube.

1500 miles high! That's in outer space. So your first thought is going to be, this must mean something else. The measurements must not be the same. 1500 miles cubed!

We do damage with our flights of fancy. The bible always suffers when we take the non-literal approach. But here the angel squashes any such flight.

*17 And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.*

The walls are 216 feet thick. But I love that he takes the time to answer our query. Human measurements are the same as angelic measurements. This isn't an allegory.

*18 The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.*

The measurements may be the same, but the gold is different. None of our gold is pure enough to be translucent. Our best gold here is probably like slag heap rubble compared to this city of pure translucent gold with its wall of diamond.

*19 The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.*

At least 8 of the 12 mentioned stones were included on the breastplate of the high priest in Israel.

It's interesting to me that the 11 disciples, after the last supper were crossing over to the garden of gethsemane and as the setting sun was glistening on the

gold covering on the temple they stopped and were gushing at the glorious beauty of it all. They hadn't seen this, but Jesus had. He said, it's a pile of rubble.

Perspective, perspective, perspective. We're just as ignorant as those disciples. We haven't seen anything yet. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* <sup>1Cor2:9</sup> We read this description but our minds eye still hasn't seen anything yet.

*21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*

Pearls are significant in that the beauty is the body's reaction to pain. A kernel of sand. Maybe there's a story there for us. And of course, the streets of gold. Translucent gold.

*22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*

Temples and tabernacles were always a symbol of God's separation from the dirt of this world. Step out of the soiled, into the clean. It wasn't really so, but the symbolism is important. Step out of Satan's world, into God's space.

We can see clearly that in this place, it's all God, all perfection, all Holy. *Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple*

*23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.*

No light sources except God and the Lamb. No darkness, ever. No night and day cycle.

*24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 25 In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates*

*will never be closed; 26 and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;*

Oops! Where did the nations come from? This verse stumbles most of the commentators. They want to backtrack and put this in the millennial kingdom, but that makes wreckage of a literal chronology, which I believe we have.

So who are these folks? Well, one possibility is that the word translated nations can also be translated gentiles. Maybe it's just "us".

But the other possibility that I have no problem at all with is; maybe it pleases God to populate this earth with men that do not suffer from the fall. Like an Adam and Eve race that never had a Genesis 3 event?

We don't know, but . . . we'll find out! Sort of like election and predestination. The stuff I don't understand is God's problem, not mine.

*27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

My wife says I need to do a better job of conclusion. Introduction. Teaching points. Conclusion.

You know I'm practicing on you, don't you. Hopefully the gracious folk in this church will give me a couple more chances than Stephen got. You remember? Acts 7. One sermon wonder, and they stoned him to death.

Vs. 27 brings us full circle with where we began.

The church desperately wants to lower this standard. Why? Are numbers that important that we lower the bar and have a church full of tares? Bragging rights. We had 62 in church this morning!! OK, fair enough, but 40 of them were tares.

Your second thought may be, but Jim, if we don't run them off, maybe they'll eventually be saved, even if not today. Somehow by osmosis they'll become christians from hanging out with the other christians.

Here's how I look at it. You teach this book exactly as it's laid out. If some tares get offended and leave, I'm not going to lose sleep over it. If they don't leave I'm not going into the tare separation business. Jesus in the parable said, let them grow together in the same field.

But most certainly, you DO NOT lower the standard of the once for all delivered to the saints faith in order to keep them coddled and comfortable.

The other thing I'm thinking about in these weeks is toughness and tenderness I've witnessed mostly with John MacArthur. Be tough in the pulpit, but then when the one on one opportunities come, you switch to tender.

Heaven is dazzling. Let's take as many with us as we possibly can!