

A Symbolic Picture of Those Who WIN in CHRIST!

Sunday, 1/29 at 8:00 & 10:45

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany – 2012

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, today we see a symbolic picture of *all Christians together with God forevermore!*

⁹ ~~Then~~ [And] one of the seven angels ~~who had~~ [having] 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.” **The *bride of the Lamb* includes everyone who has *faith in Jesus alone as Savior!*** So why is this picture of the bride important for John *back then* and for us *today*? Even though we are deeply loved by God and forgiven in Jesus, the sinful world opposes us and persecutes us (1:9; 2:3, 10). *So, this picture is given for our eternal encouragement!*

1. **First Glimpse:** ¹⁰ And he carried me away in ~~the Spirit~~ [spirit] to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem [see v. 2], coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God [1 Thess. 4:14; Romans 8:30]. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper [*remember, we cost God the suffering and death of His Son*]. // Look at other Christians, *also look in the mirror*, we do not look like a very costly stone *but more like a lump of coal*; nevertheless, **God’s action in Christ has cleaned us up beyond recognition in a most wonderful way!** As believers in Christ, *as we ponder our readiness for heaven*, let us ALWAYS look to Christ alone – NEVER to our own sorry, sinful lives.

2. **12 and Its Multiples Symbolize the Church:** ¹² It [new Jerusalem] 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. 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. //
- a. The church in glory – *The number 12 is used multiple times to symbolize the church in glory!* God wants us to know that He will make it happen in Christ. According to **Romans 8:30**, God **predestined** us before time; then He **called** and **justified** us in time, so that He could **glorify** us in eternity! God promised it and He will do it, *so we are so blessed in Christ!*
- b. An apostolic foundation – *What does that mean?* God moved the apostles to write and preach this Word: ***All have sinned, but salvation is being offered to all through Jesus!*** Then God worked through that Word to bring you and me to Christ! That same Word continues to be essential for our Christian lives!
3. **Size and Beauty:** ¹⁵ [And] the one ~~who spoke~~ [speaking] 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 [literally 12,000 stadia – 12x10x10x10]; its length and width and height are equal [the shape is a perfect cube (we are talking symbolically, not literally)]. So why that shape? It's the same as *“the holy of holies in the tabernacle and, later, in Solomon’s temple.... The heavenly Jerusalem is thus the new holy of*

holies in which God will dwell with his own forever.” (Becker, 337)].

17 And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards [*literally 144 cubits – 12x12*], according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. **18** 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 [kal-SED-uh-nee]; the fourth, emerald; **20** the fifth, sardonyx [SAHR-duh-niks]; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase [KRIS-uh-prayz]; the eleventh, jacinth [JAY-sinth]; 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.

4. **Perpetual Fellowship, Light, Peace, and Purity**: **22** [And] I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple [*now our relationship with God is through means – Word and Sacrament, so let us faithfully receive – but in eternity we will “live in direct communion with God.” (Becker, 344)*]. **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 [*think about “...the Shekinah, the bright light in which God made his presence visible to ancient Israel and which shone around the shepherds when the angels came to announce the birth of the Savior.” (Becker, 345)*], and its lamp is the Lamb [Jesus, the Lamb of God, is also the Light of the World]. **24** The nations [*believers from all nations*] will walk by its light [*no more sin – 1 John 1:6-7*], and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it [*even some kings will be saved through the King of kings*]. **25** In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed [*long ago gates were closed before*

it got dark to protect from enemies, but, in eternity, night will never come and all enemies will be gone]; ²⁶ **and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it** [*now, motivated by God's gift of forgiveness, we try to live unto God's glory; in eternity we will do so perfectly*]; 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. //**

- a. The statement in verse 27 of *those who will not enter* is made with the Greek double negative “οὐ μὴ,” which could be translated: “**by no means**” or “**shall surely not.**” That *strong negative* is calling us to rightly understand that those who *continue* without repentance (sorrow and faith) will not enjoy God's eternal blessings!
- b. The Lamb's book of life – it is essential for us to have our names written in that book; however, *not a single person deserves to be written in that book!* If a blessed eternity depended upon us, *all is lost!* **But there is super-great news in Jesus Christ:** Because of ♦God's grace, ♦God's mercy, ♦God's saving actions, and ♦the sin-washing power of the blood of the Lamb, *Jesus has written our names in His book of life!*

Conclusion: Therefore, even now, let us ♦rejoice in God's gift of full forgiveness and ♦look forward with peace and joy to our eternal home in God's glorious presence! And all God's people said: *Amen!*