**Revelation 21**

Introduction

I. V. 2 and 9 must shape our interpretation of the city John describes

He is describing the bride, the wife of the lamb. So it’s not just a description of an actual city; it’s a description of the people of God fully prepared to meet their groom

II. The bride/New Jerusalem is a deliberate contrast with the prostitute/Babylon (see 21:9-10 and 17:1-3)

 The question Revelation poses is: To what city/woman do you belong?

The Passage

I. It is a secure city

 A. A great high wall (v. 12), 144 cubits thick (v. 17)

 B. A city wall in the ancient world is a picture of security and protection from danger

C. In eternity we will be completely secure and there will be nothing that will ever threaten our wellbeing

D. We experience so much insecurity in this life, so eternal security is such a beautiful promise

II. It is a complete city

A. The city is huge (v. 16): about half the size of the U.S.

B. The number 12 represents the complete people of God

 -v. 12: 12 gates with the 12 tribes

-v. 14: 12 foundations with the 12 apostles

-v. 16: 12,000 = 12 x 1000

 -v. 17: 144 = 12 x 12

-So all of God’s people (old covenant and new covenant) are there

 C. And it is a very international community (v. 24-26)

-This depicts God’s plan for Israel (= a light to the nations) finally being fulfilled (see Isaiah 2:2-5)

D. We experience so much disunity in this life, so the picture of God’s complete people dwelling in unity together is wonderful

III. It is a holy city

A. “holy” (v. 2, v. 10) = set apart from sin, selfishness, wickedness

B. Nothing impure will ever enter the city (v. 27)

C. There is so much impurity in today’s church and in our own hearts.

“I am so distant from the hope of myself, in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world” –Mary Oliver

D. So just imagine finally being purified of everything selfish and sinful (see 1 Jn 3:1-3)

IV. It is a glorious city

 A. It’s beautifully prepared (v. 2)

B. It contains beautiful jewels, stones, gold

C. It shines with God’s own glory (v. 11). Jasper is the same stone that described God on his throne in ch. 4

D. We will shine and radiate with God’s own glory

1. Consider Moses coming down from Mt. Sinai and glowing with the Lord’s glory

2. See 2 Corinthians 3: 18

3. “We do not want merely to *see* beauty, though, God knows, even that is bounty enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words—to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it.” – C.S. Lewis

V. Eternity as a wedding ceremony (v. 2, 9)

 A. We are marrying the lamb (Jesus Christ)

B. God the Father plays the role of father of the bride and prepares us and presents us to his son

C. On that day we will be a bride who is perfectly suited for Jesus! Because God has so transformed and purified and glorified us

 D. Jesus will delight in us and we will delight in being delighted in

Conclusion

I. Let’s live each day like we’re engaged to the lamb

II. Don’t go running off after worldly lovers

III. Faithfulness to Jesus is a joy and privilege

**Discussion Questions**

1. How did the perspective that the New Jerusalem is a description of God’s people (not just a city) change or add to your understanding of this passage?

2. Review the 4 descriptions of the new city from the outline above. Which description resonates most with you? Which one are you most looking forward to and why?

3. On Sunday the following statement was made: “When we consider Jesus, we might ask, ‘what woman could possibly be good enough for him?’ And the answer of Revelation is: ‘we will be!’” How do you respond to that idea?

4. As you consider this picture of a wedding ceremony and that fact that you are currently engaged to Jesus, how does thos affect the way you live today? Is there anything specific you feel called to do (or stop doing) as a result of that perspective?