



Today's Message

Date: September 28, 2014
Speaker: Pastor Steven Thomas
Title: *A Tale of Two Cities, Part Two*

Text: Revelation 21:9-27

⁹ Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb."¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,¹¹ having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.¹² It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—¹³ on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.¹⁴ And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵ And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls.¹⁶ The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal.¹⁷ He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.¹⁸ The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass.¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Introduction: In the first paragraph of Revelation 21, John saw the new creation, including the New Jerusalem descending from heaven. In today's text an angel gives John a tour. He describes the architecture of the city (verses 11-21) and the conditions within the city (22-27).

The passage begins by making an intentional contrast with Revelation 17:1ff. In both passages one of the angels that had poured out the seven bowls of wrath guides John in his vision. The connection is intentional. The first angel showed him the great "prostitute," Babylon; the second angel showed him the pure "bride," New Jerusalem. The former was utterly destroyed, the latter is the eternal, glorious home of all God's people. Truly, it is a tale of two cities.

I. God's people have a home. 9

- A. It lies at the end of the "narrow way." 9a
- B. It belongs to those who belong to the Lamb. 9b

II. It is a city beyond anything we can imagine. 10-21

- A. Believers of every age will be there. 10-14
- B. They will live secure in its majestic glory. 15-21

III. Best of all, the Triumphant Lamb will be there. 22-27

- A. His people will delight in his glory . . . 22-26
- B. Without the possibility of a *hint* of imperfection. 27

Today's take-home truth: Choose the "narrow way," even if it is "hard."