

REVELATION—UNVEILING THE END, ACT 3 THE FINAL CURTAIN

STUDY TWELVE

Open House at the Celestial City

Revelation 21:9–22

We all want to go to heaven, but we aren't certain that we want to go right now. Why not? What is there on earth that would keep us from wanting to be there?

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WHEN Jesus told His disciples, “I will be with you only a little longer” (John 13:33), the disciples’ hearts must have sunk. As they heard Jesus talk about leaving them, clouds of confusion and fear darkened their faces. So, Jesus lit a candle of hope:

“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.” (14:1–3)

Jesus’ flame of hope still flickers in the hearts of all who follow Him. Jesus is preparing a place for us, and He’s waiting for just right the moment to welcome us home. In his book, *The Problem of Pain*, C. S. Lewis describes our eternal home’s custom design:

Your soul has a curious shape because it is . . . a key to unlock one of the doors in the house with many mansions. . . . Your place in heaven will seem to be made for you and you alone, because you were made for it—made for it stitch by stitch as a glove is made for a hand.¹

Would you like to take a tour of your future dwelling? Through John’s vision, you can see a preview of what Jesus has been preparing for you.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

“I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep,” Jesus said (John 10:14). Write a prayer to your Shepherd who knows you so well. Ask Him to reveal through His Word the wonders of the dwelling He designed just for you.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

We often think of heaven as a place above the clouds outside our realm. It is somewhere “up there.” When we die, our souls separate from our earthly bodies and go to this place where God is. “To be absent from the body,” Paul wrote, is “to be at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8 NASB). But God never intended humans to be disembodied spirits forever. There’s more to look forward to.

On resurrection day, “we will put on heavenly bodies” that are “made for us by God himself and not by human hands” (2 Corinthians 5:1–2). Then, we will inhabit our eternal home which, according to Pastor Chuck Swindoll, “is actually the *new* heaven and *new* earth. And the center of this new order of things will be the new Jerusalem.”²

The dwelling places that Jesus has been preparing for us are inside this magnificent celestial city. Let’s look inside.



Observation: The Celestial City

Use your skills of observation to write down John’s description of the new Jerusalem.³ In the vision, who showed John the city, according to *Revelation 21:9*? What is the city called?

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Origin—Revelation 21:9–10

Where did the angel take John for a better view, and what did he show him in [Revelation 21:9–10](#)?

Compare these verses with [21:2–3](#). What similarities do you notice about the origin and the nature of the new Jerusalem?

God designed the new Jerusalem and crafted it as He wants it to be. It comes from the very being of God to us as our eternal home. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Appearance—Revelation 21:11

How did John describe the city's radiance in [Revelation 21:11](#)? What key words do you observe?

God's glory filled the holiest of places in the tabernacle just as it fills the new Jerusalem. It is a sacred light, representing His character. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Exterior—Revelation 21:12–14

What features of the wall did John record, according to [Revelation 21:12–14](#)? What's significant about the names of the gates and foundation stones of the city?

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*The wall speaks of protection and the foundation represents permanence.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

Dimensions and Materials—Revelation 21:15–21

What will be the city's dimensions, according to [Revelation 21:15–17](#)?

What materials make up the city in [21:18–21](#)? What do you notice about the colors, the clarity, and the quality of the materials?

*Talk about attention to detail—God even adorns the foundation stones!
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

Distinctive—Revelation 21:22

What makes the city unique compared to all other cities in which God's people dwell, according to [Revelation 21:22](#)?

*In the new Jerusalem, we will have no temple, because almighty God and the Lamb will dwell among us, and they will be the focal point of worship.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

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Interpretation: The Bride

Interpretation seeks to understand the meaning of key sections of the passage. The new Jerusalem not only is “like a bride” (Revelation 21:2), it is called “the bride, the wife of the Lamb” (21:9).

Isn't the church the bride (*Ephesians 5:25–32*)? Should we conclude that the new Jerusalem is the church? Certainly, believers who comprise the universal church will be its residents. But believers aren't the only group of God's redeemed people called the bride in Scripture. What does the “bride” metaphor refer to in *Isaiah 62:1–5*?

What conclusion do you draw regarding meaning of the bride metaphor for the new Jerusalem?

The new Jerusalem as the “bride” in Revelation 21:9 encompasses all the redeemed of all the ages, from Adam all the way to the last person alive in the family of God on earth. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: The Architect and Builder

Correlation appeals to other Scriptures to shed light on our passage. The author of Hebrews mentioned the holy city as well, and he gave us an inside look at God's heavenly construction site.

According to *Hebrews 11:10*, what glimpse of the new Jerusalem did Abraham foresee? How did the author describe it?

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By faith, Abraham traveled to the “land that God would give him as an inheritance” (Hebrews 11:8). But Abraham’s eyes of faith saw beyond the physical land to his ultimate inheritance, the city of God.

Use your eyes of faith to see beyond your current circumstances to the “city with eternal foundations . . . designed and built by God” (11:10). What do you, like Abraham, look forward to?



Application: Celestial Wonders Ahead

Two impressions linger in our hearts from our mountaintop view of the celestial city—first, from the streets of gold, and second, from the gates of pearl.

In the new Jerusalem, the gold will be so pure, it will be translucent, allowing God’s glory to radiate all around us. Why would God use pearls for gates? Oysters form pearls as a protective layer against foreign matter inside the shell. Gates of pearl are protective defenses, beautifully polished through the oyster’s pain. What lessons can we learn from these elements?

1. Like the transparent streets of gold that let the glory of God shine through, *let your transparent life display the glory of God.*
2. Like the gates of pearl that let the suffering of the Lamb live on, *let your bruised life remind others of the sacrifice of the Lamb.*

God is the architect and builder not just of His eternal city but also of your life! How has He built you to display the glory of God?

How do the painful experiences of your life draw others to His Son?

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How would you like the Builder to work in you based on what you learned in this study?

Jesus sealed His promise of an eternal dwelling when He rose from the dead. Because Christ arose, so will we someday. And if you have placed your faith in Jesus, there's a place in God's holy city with your name on it, and when you see it, you'll be home at last.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, confined to this earth, I see glimpses of Your glory from Your Word, but they are always fleeting. I long to be set free to revel in the unlimited freedom of the new heaven and the new earth. I'll never feel at home until I am at home with You in my eternal dwelling. Thank You for preparing a place just for me! In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (n.p.: Epub Edition, 2009), 96.
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Revelation*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014), 310.
3. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the article, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2024 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2004, 2024 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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