

## **IF WALLS COULD TALK THE WALLS OF HEAVEN (Revelation 21: 17-20)**

The book of Revelation is written with images and signs to reveal an encouraging message to Christians who were suffering for the cause of Christ in the first century. God allows John to see the great and glorious city of Heaven in Revelation 21. The image is depicted in terms which we in this world would consider glorious, beautiful and magnificent! A city lighted by the glory and person of God. It was like a precious and sparkling diamond (*Revelation 21:11, 21:23*). The city and the streets of heaven are of “pure gold – transparent as glass (*Revelation 21:18, 21*). It is not that the city is literally diamonds and gold, things of the earth, but that it is a precious and glorious city which we associate with the images of diamonds and gold.



We associate glory with things that are perfect in dimensions. So, the city of Heaven is “foursquare” (*Revelation 21:16*). This city’s measurements are greater than any city we have ever seen on earth for it is “12,000 furlongs” long and the same dimensions wide, thus being foursquare. (*Revelation 21:16*). We can convert this dimension to miles, because a furlong is 1/8 of a mile. Do the math and see how long and wide this city is. But the city is also “12,000 furlongs” high, thus making it a perfect cube. Again, the point is not that the city is a cube or is literally thousands of furlongs long, wide and high, but it conveys an image of something large and magnificent.

The walls of the city are also described to add the glorious image of Heaven. Its measurement also conveys its glory. It measures “144 cubits” (*Revelation 21:17*). A cubit was the measurement between a man’s elbow to his middle finger. Measure yourself and see how many inches you come up with. Usually it was between 18-21 inches. This measurement of a man was being conveyed by the angel who was doing the measuring of the wall. Converting that to feet, what was the measurement of the wall? It was indeed a great wall!

While we may consider it a very high wall, in comparison to the height of the city, it is comparatively small. The height of the city is some 30,000 times greater than the height of the wall. What is the measurement of the wall telling us? It is saying that while cities we know of on earth have walls for protection, The walls of heaven are different. They mark out the dimensions of the city, and appear gloriously great and high (*Revelation 21:12*), but are not for protection. In Heaven we will need no protection, for nothing harmful can enter, and we cannot die in this new city we enter for eternity (*cf. Revelation 21:25, 27; 21:4; Luke 20:36*).

The walls bring together all the faithful of the Old Testament and New. On the wall of the glorious city are twelve gates, symbolizing God's people under the Old Covenant – "*the twelve tribes of Israel*" (*Revelation 21:12*) Since the gospel was first preached to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, the gates symbolizing entrance and access, emphasizing the place the twelve tribes had in God's plan for eternal redemption (*John 4:22, Romans 1:16*). The walls had twelve foundations which symbolized the "*twelve apostles of the lamb*" of the New Covenant (*Revelation 21:14*). Heaven is the reward and eternal destiny of the faithful of all time. As the faithful of the twelve tribes of Israel looked forward to entering a city made without hands, they receive the object of their hope in heaven, which the twelve apostles had the privilege of making firm through the preaching of the Gospel (*Hebrews 11:13-16, I Peter 1:3-5, Colossians 1:23*).

The different colors of precious stones which form the foundation of the walls yet add another dimension of the city's glory. To see what John saw, we surely would have been impressed with the color coming from these precious stones. Seeing the different levels of **red** presented by the Sardonyx (fifth) Sardius (sixth) and Jacinth (eleventh); the different shades of **green** presented by the chalcedony (third), beryl (eighth) chrysolite (tenth), and emerald (fourth); the **blue** of the sapphire (second), the **amber** of the chrysolite (seventh), the **pale yellow** of the topaz (ninth), the purple of the amethyst (twelfth), all topped of by the **clear brilliancy** of the jasper (first) which probably indicates the diamond, we no doubt would stand amazed at the glorious and beautiful combination of colors from very precious stones. (*cf. Revelation 21:19-21*)

If walls could talk, the walls of heaven would tell us not to be caught up in the gold, pearls, diamonds of the city and view heaven in materialistic ways. Many see heaven as a place where they will be able to enjoy the hobbies that they cherished on earth, (golf, fishing, etc.) or think they will finally be glorified by having a new "Mansion" which they never had on earth, but these walls are speaking in images that we associate with beauty and glory to establish the concept of "glory" that will be fare greater than any city we saw on earth. For this city is made without hands and an eternal spiritual abode. Heaven walls are speaking of a glory that you do not want to miss. Let us live for the Lord, so we can be with Him in glory inside the glorious walls of heaven.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How is the glory of the city of heaven depicted by: *measurement*:
  
2. Describe the three ways in which the walls of the city of heaven convey its glory:
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  
4. What message are the walls telling us about heaven by its dimensions in comparison to the height of the city?
  
5. How is heaven *inaccurately* depicted today among many people?
  
6. How should we view heaven?