

## Chapter 21

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John sees the earth and the worthy individuals of earth transformed into celestial glory. He sees the city called a new Jerusalem, and the Glory of God. John gives a very symbolic description of a very real city called the New or Celestial Jerusalem.

**Verse 1:** John's vision has progressed through the seven dispensations of time and the little season following the great millennium. The earth has progressed through teletial conditions, and then through conditions that were terrestrial in nature. It has been purified of all teletial elements, and the men of the earth that were terrestrial in nature have been removed. The earth, though it's inhabitants are worthy of celestial glory, is still terrestrial in nature. That is until this point in John's vision.

John sees the transformation of the terrestrial earth into that of a celestial earth. John *"saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea"*.

Most of John's writings to this point have been symbolic in nature. One might assume that the terms heaven and earth are symbolic in nature, based on the previous twenty chapters; however, John did see a new earth. He also saw a new heaven, that is the skies and atmospheres that surround this globe. There is no symbolic overtures in this verse. The first heaven and earth were terrestrial in nature. It was a terrestrial heaven and earth that were given to Adam and Eve. Though the earth later fell to become a teletial sphere, the millennium shall bring back the first heaven and earth, and restored the earth to it's terrestrial state. After the earth fulfills it's full measure of existence, it, like the people that reside upon it's face, are ready to receive celestial glory. The new earth and new heaven that John saw was indeed the transformation of this world into a celestial orb.

We do not have a lot of information regarding the physical properties of the celestial earth, probably due to our lack of understanding to provide description. The only insight that John offers is that the sea will be no more. Such a description coincides with other references to the celestial earth, and the residence of God which Abraham referred to as a planet named "Celestial". The Lord explained to the prophet Joseph Smith that angels do not reside on a planet like unto the one in which we do, *"But they reside in the presence of God, on a globe like a sea of glass and fire, where all things for their glory are manifest, past, present, and future, and are continually before the Lord. The place where God resides is a great Urim and Thummim. This earth, in its sanctified and immortal state,*

*will be made like unto crystal and will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants who dwell thereon, whereby all things pertaining to an inferior kingdom, or all kingdoms of a lower order, will be manifest to those who dwell on it; and this earth will be Christ's (Doctrine and Covenants 130:7-9)".* Apparently, the earth will literally be void of sea. Though this appears to be a literal description, there could also be some symbolic meaning intertwined. The word sea can be used as a symbol of the abyss or the depths of hell. Since the celestial earth will be cleansed of all wickedness, the depths of hell are literally no more upon the face of the earth.

In the beginning of John's vision, he saw the throne of God and before it was a sea of glass. Puzzled by this, the prophet Joseph Smith asked the Lord what the sea of glass was that John described in the book of Revelations, chapter four, verse six. The reply was, "*It is the earth, in its sanctified, immortal, and eternal state (Doctrine and Covenants 77:1)*". The celestial kingdom and the presence of God are often called everlasting burnings (Isaiah 33:14). In fact, Bruce R. McConkie suggest that the celestial earth is literally a sun (The Millennial Messiah, Bruce R. McConkie, page 703).

The day of restoration for our resurrected bodies appears to occur at the same time as the restoration of the earth to its celestial state. In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord spoke of the changing of the earth into a celestial orb and said, "*And again, verily, verily, I say unto you that when the thousand years are ended, and men again begin to deny their God, then will I spare the earth but for a little season; And the end shall come, and the heaven and the earth shall be consumed and pass away, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth. For all old things shall pass away, and all things shall become new, even the heaven and the earth, and all the fulness thereof, both men and beasts, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea; And not one hair, neither mote, shall be lost, for it is the workmanship of mine hand (Doctrine and Covenants 29:22-25)*".

**Verse 2:** *"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband"*.

A subject that often becomes confusing in the studying of the millennial and post millennial periods is that of the city of Jerusalem. In our day, the city of Jerusalem is in the state of Israel. It has, for most of history, been the religious capital for God's people. It is believed to be the site of Enoch's city prior to its translation. In the millennial period, the city of Jerusalem will have been rebuilt. The city of Enoch will return to earth, to the area that is now called Jackson county, Missouri. It shall be called the city of New Jerusalem. After the millennium and the little season following, the earth will receive celestial splendor. The things of the earth will pass away, and

all will become new. The Lord will establish his city upon the earth, which he calls a new Jerusalem. To differential between the two, I like to refer to the latter as the celestial Jerusalem.

This section of John's vision records the celestial Jerusalem coming from God to the celestial earth. It represents the final and permanent joining of God with His children. It represents the perfect union of the government of God and the church of God. It therefore is appropriate that John uses the analogy that the celestial Jerusalem is as a bride prepared for her husband.

The celestial Jerusalem is to be the dwelling place of God and his children. They will dwell together in a city as a society. The Lord told the prophet Joseph Smith, "...that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy (Doctrine and Covenants 130:2)". Such doctrine coincides with the teachings of the eternal nature of the family. If families are to be held together as eternal units, one could only conclude that some form of society must exist in the eternal realm. Obviously, society will function differently from the societies that we are familiar with in our terrestrial world, but nevertheless, we will dwell together as family and friends.

**Verse 3:** *"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God".* The word "tabernacle" is translated from the Hebrew word *mishkan* which means "tent" (Opening the Seven Seals, Richard D. Draper, page 229). The word tent has important symbolic overtures. Ancient Israel constructed a portable temple that they called the tabernacle. Inside the tabernacle was a tented area which contained the Holy of Holies. This tented area represented the presence of God. To ancient Israel, the tent represented actually having God with them. When the voice came to John and said that the tabernacle of God was to dwell with men, the voice was actually saying that God himself would dwell with them. The celestial Jerusalem, like the tabernacle of Israel, represents God's presence, only in this case God shall actually dwell with man. The true definition of celestial glory is dwelling in God's presence. As the voice declared, God shall dwell himself with those worthy of His glory. He shall be their God, and they shall be His children.

**Verse 4:** *"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away".* John is probably awestruck to see that the celestial world is void of all forms of sorrow, and pain. How can this be? All the causes of pain have

been removed. They have passed away. The wicked have been removed, and Satan has been bound. Temptation and the anguish of sin has been eliminated. Our bodies have been changed. They no longer consist of flesh and blood, but the spirit flows through our veins. They are immortal bodies of flesh and bone, absent of disease, and age. The worries of the world have been removed, replaced with the joy and happiness of being in the presence of God. All of this is given to us of the Father. Could it not then be truly said the he has wiped away our tears? For it is only him that can remove all our causes of grief.

**Verse 5:** *"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful".* There is some debate over who the "he" is that John sights upon the throne. The reason is that at the close of chapter twenty, John sees God, the Father, ascend from heaven sitting on a great white throne. At his coming the earth is transformed into a celestial orb. Chapter twenty-one continues with the changes in the earth at the Father's coming. Now we are told that "he" that sat upon the throne begins to speak. The problem is that the things of which he says, and the terms he uses to identify himself are in line with those of God, the Son.

First, he identifies himself in the next verse as alpha and omega. The Savior identified himself as alpha and omega in the Doctrine and Covenants when he told Joseph Smith, *"Thus saith the Lord your God, even Jesus Christ, the Great I AM, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven, before the world was made (Doctrine and Covenants 38:1)"*. Other references include; D&C 19:1, D&C 35:1, and D&C 54:1. There are a total of nineteen sources in the standard works.

Second, the Savior has consistently been the one that has offered mankind to drink from living waters. In the gospel of John, we read of the Savior being left alone at a well while his apostles went to obtain food. The Savior asked a certain Samaritan woman for a drink of the well. Because of the enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans, the woman asked the Savior, *"How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children,*

*and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw (John 4:9-15)".* It is through Jesus Christ's great atoning sacrifice that living water, which represents eternal life, is offered.

Finally, the term throne does not represent a literal throne but rather a symbolic descriptor that represents authority, dominion, and power. The Father and the Son hold all authority, dominion and power. They could both be symbolized as sitting on white thrones, without putting one above the other. I would reason that the "he" spoken of in this verse is actually Jesus Christ.

The Savior tells John that it is He that makes all things new. Commissioned by the Father, the Son has made the salvation and exaltation of man possible. Were it not for Him, the realization of the celestial earth would not be. All would have been lost, and nothing would have been worthy to be made new. Fortunately, it is He that is true and faithful; loyal to all His Father's words. That is why He commands John to write all these things, for they are true and faithful. That is, they all must come to pass, for He has made it so. In the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord advises us to, "*Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled (Doctrine and Covenants 1:37)*". It would appear that the same advise holds true for John's vision.

**Verse 6:**

The great mediator, who sits upon the throne in verse five turns to John and says what is probably an all too familiar phrase to the Revelator, "***It is done***". Those were words similar to those that He uttered upon the cross as he committed his spirit unto the Father. Knowing that He had completed all of His Father's will for His mortality, he exclaimed, "*It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost (John 19:30)*". Likewise it is appropriate that after laboring for the salvation of man during the terrestrial state of the earth, the Savior of man say, "It is done", I have completed all that Father has asked of me. The Savior continues by saying,

***"I am Alpha and Omega,"***

**A**

**Ω**

or "***the beginning and the end***". Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. Symbolically they represent the beginning and the end, encompassing everything that lies in between. Christ was essential to the salvation of mankind from the beginning of time where he mapped out our eternal progress, through to the end of time where he offers redemption to the children of men who wish to follow after His words. To those he promises, "***I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely***".

What does it mean to be given of the fountain of the water of life? The book of Mormon prophet Lehi was shown a beautifully illustrated vision, that included numerous symbols, which might help us to understand what the Savior means when he offer those that thirst to drink of living waters. Lehi told his vision to his son Nephi who records the following passage,

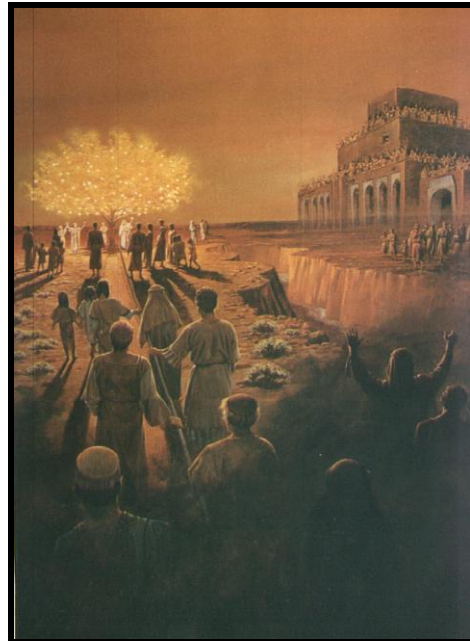
*"And it came to pass that I saw a man, and he was dressed in a white robe; and he came and stood before me. And it came to pass that he spake unto me, and bade me follow him. And it came to pass that as I followed him .....I beheld a large and spacious field. And it came to pass that I beheld a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy. And it came to pass that I did go forth and partake of the fruit thereof; and I beheld that it was most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted. Yea, and I beheld that the fruit thereof was white, to exceed all the whiteness that I had ever seen. And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy; wherefore, I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also; for I knew that it was desirable above all other fruit. And as I cast my eyes round about, that perhaps I might discover my family also, I beheld a river of water; and it ran along, and it was near the tree of which I was partaking the fruit.....And I beheld a rod of iron, and it extended along the bank of the river, and led to the tree by which I stood. And I also beheld a strait and narrow path, which came along by the rod of iron, even to the tree by which I stood; and it also led by the head of the fountain, unto a large and spacious field, as if it had been a world. And I saw numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward, that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree by which I stood. And it came to pass that they did come forth, and commence in the path which led to the tree. And it came to pass that there arose a mist of darkness; yea, even an exceedingly great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost. And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree. And after they had partaken of the fruit of the tree they did cast their eyes about as if they were ashamed. And I also cast my eyes round about, and beheld, on the other side of the river of water, a great and spacious building; and it stood as it were in the air, high above the earth. And it was filled with people, both old and young, both male and female; and their manner*

*of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come at and were partaking of the fruit. And after they had tasted of the fruit they were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost. (1 Nephi 8:5-33)"*



## *LEHI'S DREAM*

As seen through  
the eyes of two artist



The following symbols are used in Lehi's dream. Definitions for the symbols are listed beside them;

<b><i>Symbol</i></b>	<b><i>Definition</i></b>
<i>Man dressed in a white Robe (1 Nephi 8:5)</i>	⇔ <i>John the Revelator (1 Nephi 14:18-27)</i>
<i>Large and Spacious Field (1 Nephi 8:9)</i>	⇔ <i>The World (1 Nephi 8:9)</i>
<i>Tree (1 Nephi 8:10)</i>	⇔ <i>The Love of God (1 Nephi 11:21-22)</i>
<i>White Fruit (1 Nephi 8:10)</i>	⇔ <i>Eternal Life</i>
<i>River of Living Water (1 Nephi 8:13)</i>	⇔ <i>The Love of God (1 Nephi 11:21-22)</i>
<i>Rod of Iron (1 Nephi 8:19)</i>	⇔ <i>The Word of God (1 Nephi 11:25)</i>
<i>Strait and Narrow Path (1 Nephi 8:20)</i>	⇔ <i>Choices that lead to eternal life</i>
<i>Mist of Darkness (1 Nephi 8:23)</i>	⇔ <i>Temptation (1 Nephi 12:17)</i>
<i>Great and Spacious Building (1 Nephi 8:26)</i>	⇔ <i>Pride of the World (1 Nephi 11:36)</i>
<i>Forbidden Paths (1 Nephi 8:28)</i>	⇔ <i>Choices that lead away from eternal life</i>
<i>River of Filthy Water (1 Nephi 12:13)</i>	⇔ <i>The Depths of Hell (1 Nephi 12:16)</i>

Our mortal probation takes place upon this earth, the great and spacious field if you will. It is during our mortal probation that we make choices that will either lead us to eternal life and happiness, represented by the living water and the fruited tree, or to damnation represented by the river of filthiness.

Prior to our probation, we all planned on returning to the Father and receiving eternal life; however, earth life has trying challenges. During our probation we find difficult temptation, which Lehi called the mist of thick darkness. We find others who suppose that they have found happiness, and wish to lead us in their direction. They laugh and scorn as we follow the path to eternal life. Lehi taught that those people are caught up in the pride of the world, and he symbolized them as a great and spacious building.

If we follow the pride of the world we are lead down forbidden paths, making choices that the Father has commanded us not to. Such choices inevitably lead to eternal sadness. Lehi compared this to partaking of filthy waters. Such individuals are lost forever.

How do we achieve our goal of reaching the river of living waters and the tree, which represent eternal life? Their is but one way. We must hold to the iron rod. We must follow the word of God, and be not tempted to let go, that we be drawn from that strait and narrow path that leadeth man to eternal life.

This is why the Savior told John that He shall give those that thirst (desire) for living water (eternal life) that which they desire. Through the atonement of Jesus Christ, the strait and narrow path was made. His words and teachings built the iron rod. Without him there would be no path, and no rod to guide us back to the water and the tree. Mankind would be left to the eternity's in the river of filthy waters.



**Verse 7:**

The Lord makes a statement that will fulfill the promise that he made to Abraham centuries ago. He will fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant as he says, "**He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son**".

Thousands of years ago, the Lord told Abraham, "*...I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee....and I will be their God (Genesis 17:1-8)*". We understand that all who are faithful in following the gospel of Jesus Christ become the seed of Abraham and partake in the covenant that he made with the Lord. Paul taught, "*Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham... In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham..... And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:6-9;29)*". As member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, we share in the covenant between Abraham and the Lord.

What all does the covenant consist of? We covenant to be faithful. To follow uprightly all of the counsels of the Lord. In so doing the Lord covenants to bless us "*.....even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal (Abraham 2:11)*". Such blessing are probably much greater than we can possibly imagine. If we are but faithful, we will inherit all that God has. "*Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God-- Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. And they shall overcome all things. Wherefore, let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet. These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever (Doctrine and Covenants 76:58-62)*". Because of the love God had for Abraham, and those that are faithful like unto him, he made it possible for their salvation. He "*so loved the world that he gave his own life, that as many as would believe might become the sons of God. Wherefore you are my son (Doctrine and Covenants 34:3)*".

**Verse 8:**

The Lord gives a caution to those that are not partakers of the Abrahamic Covenant, and says, "**But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the**

**lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death".**

The Lord specifically names those that do not accept the covenant of Abraham. He says that they are the fearful, meaning those that are ashamed of the gospel. They are souls that are fearful of the judgments of man rather than of God. The Lord also names the unbelieving, or those that refuse to hearken unto the voice of God. He names the abominable and whoremongers, who are lovers of fornication, sexual immorality, immoral practices, carnalness, and filth. Others that do not participate in the covenant of Abraham are the murders, who take life for gain. And similarly, the liars, or those that are part of the great secret. The secret that Satan made with Cain. That secret being that one might kill and murder and perform all manner of iniquity to get gain in this world. Liars are those that believe that they can hide their sins, and no one will be the wiser.

Finally the Lord names the idolater and the sorcerer. The idolaters of old worshipped statues and Gods without life. Idolaters of today are those that worship money, and power, and the control of material possessions rather than the God of life. The Lord also names the sorcerer. Anciently, sorcerers were those that foretold events by the casting of lots. Today, they would be those that deny the power of God, yet draw upon other powers to perform great tasks. They are palm readers, psychics, healer, and card readers. They are any one who draws upon the power of the adversary to lead men astray.

A point of confusion is that the scriptures teach that the liars and murders, and whoremongers etc. are heirs to the telestial kingdom. They will taste of the anguish of hell as they are held in a state of spiritual starvation during the millennium and their wait for the second resurrection; however, they will not receive such a fate for eternity. Their fate is symbolically likened unto a lake of fire and brimstone. Such a fate is reserved for the sons of perdition. After King David came to the realization that he was guilty of murder, his soul anguished over the possibility of eternal damnation. He was delighted to find that his fate was not with those of perdition. He said, *"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption (Psalms 16:10)"*. The Doctrine and Covenants further explains, *"David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan, my servant, and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife; and, therefore he hath fallen from his exaltation, and received his portion; and he shall not inherit them out of the world, for I gave them unto another, saith the Lord (Doctrine and Covenants 132:39)"*.

The confusion in understanding the principle of damnation is really an issue of perspective. The telestial kingdom is a degree of

glory. It is a form of exaltation, since by the exact definition of exaltation, one is lifted up to a higher or better stature. Those in the telestial kingdom will live by the laws of this world; however they will have immortal, eternal bodies. Their living conditions will be better than those experienced in mortal probation; for this reason alone they are exalted. For David, the telestial kingdom was more than he expected. His definition of damnation was the fate that awaits the sons of perdition. I would suggest that damnation is also a state of mind. It is knowing, that even though you were exalted to a telestial or terrestrial glory, your full measure was not realized. To those, an eternal torment will be placed, knowing that their eternal progression will be limited to the kingdom that they inherited. For many, the terrestrial kingdom could be considered damnation, appropriately compared to a lake of fire and brimstone. Is not any existence away from the Father a form of hell? Such an existence is a second death, that is, having limits placed upon your spiritual advancement.

**Verse 9:** *"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife".* Note the similarity between the circumstance surrounding John's vision of the church of the devil and this part of John's vision. The vision of the church of the devil starts by saying, *"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters (Revelation 17:1)".* Both instances one of the seven angels, who in most probability is one of the seven archangels, invite John to come and be shown the vision. We know that two of the arch angels are Adam and Noah. We speculate that a third is Enoch. The seven archangels are priesthood leaders from the different dispensations of time.

For the case of this vision John is to be shown the Celestial Jerusalem, which is symbolized as a bride. Brides typically stand for that which is pure and innocent. They are willing to covenant with God and their spouse. The celestial Jerusalem represents the union between the kingdom of God, and the Church of God.

For the case of John's vision of the church of the devil, the great whore was used to symbolize the devil's church. A great whore symbolizes that which is corrupt and filthy. A "whore" represents commitment only for worldly gain. They stand for everything that is not of God.

**Verse 10:** Few have been privileged to see celestial glory, and no one has been able to write, in the words of man, an accurate description of it's glory. Quite simply because we have not the words and knowledge required

to do so. The prophets who have been privileged to see such glory have given us glorious descriptions that could in no way come close to the actual things which they saw. Most of the prophets used symbols as descriptions for things which they lacked adequate wording. Joseph Smith saw the kingdom of God and recorded, *"The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell. I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire; Also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son. I saw the beautiful streets of that kingdom, which had the appearance of being paved with gold"*.

To help John comprehend the vision of the celestial world John writes that the Lord *"carried me away in the spirit"*. The understanding and vision of the Glory of God cannot be done with terrestrial vision. In most cases the Holy Ghost assists in not only protecting individuals during celestial experiences, but aids in their understanding. Such was the case when the young prophet Joseph saw God for the first time. In John's case, the Lord blessed his spirit to experience the vision of the celestial world. How this occurred is probably not something explained in terms familiar to us.

John was taken *"to a great and high mountain"* where he was shown the *"great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God"*. Great and high mountains represent being close to God. Anciently, when temples were not available, the Lord used high mountains as temples. Temples symbolize the presence of God and the place at which the full knowledge of God can be obtained. Moses was taken to a high mountain to speak with God face to face (Moses 1:1-2). Ezekiel was taken to a very high mount to be shown the vision of the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem in the last days (Ezekiel 40:2). Likewise, Nephi was taken to a high mount, in the spirit, to be shown the same vision that John saw (1 Nephi 11:1). It is interesting that as John is to be shown the celestial kingdom, he is taken to what would be considered a temple to do so. Where does one learn of God? In the House of God. Likewise, in chapter seventeen when John was shown the great whore, he was taken to the wilderness. Where does one learn of apostasy? In the apostate world.

**Verse 11:** The celestial Jerusalem is seen by John as *"having the glory of God"*. The glory of God is usually associated with light. As Moses conversed with the Lord, the Lord manifest himself as a burning bush. The light was so bright that it was difficult for Moses to look. As he returned to the children of Israel he was white in appearance because of the experience.

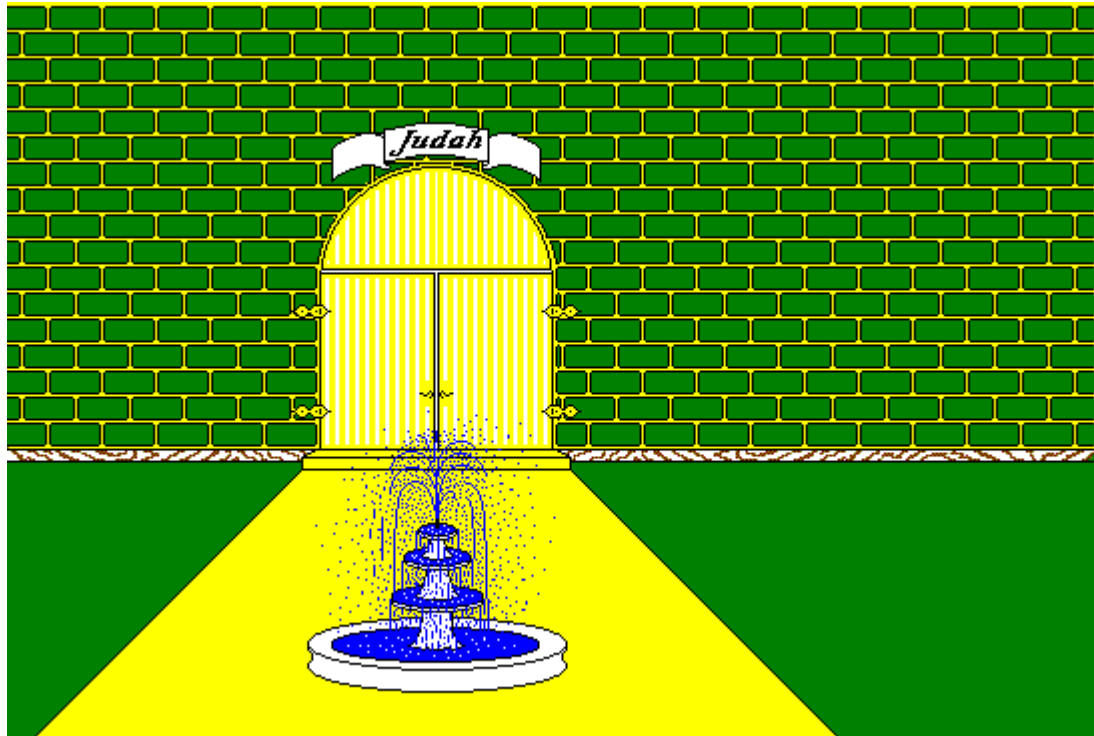
Similarly, the prophet Joseph Smith received what is often referred to as the first vision. A bright light descended from above, whose brightness was greater than any he had seen or could describe. In the midst of the light appeared two personages, the Father and the Son.

Among many other examples, the story of Saul, who latter became known as Paul, tells of his trip to Damascus. As he traveled he was visited by a heavenly messenger. The light associated with the messenger caused Saul to lose his eye sight.

John describes the light of the celestial Jerusalem and records, **"her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal"**. Stones are used to symbolize God's protection. Due to it's hardness stones are also used to symbolize eternal strength and divinity. Since man was said to be formed of the earth, in the case of Adam, the term stone has been used to symbolize life giving characteristics. In the case of John's description, the symbol of the stone was further defined as being like a jasper stone. Jasper, though a stone, is also classified as a gem. Gems carry symbolic meanings of heavenly truth on earth. Jasper is typically a green colored gem that is slightly cloudy. The color green represents, symbolically, life and fertility, or the giving of life. John's description of the celestial Jerusalem uses these specific symbols; however, he sets them apart from their normal representations. As Jasper is typically cloudy, representing imperfection, John's jasper stone is clear as crystal, representing perfection and purity.

John saw a city that defied our definitions of glory. It's light and brightness represented the great power of God as the creator of life. The city's light represented all of the heavenly truths returning to earth. Such truth and power are not as we see truth and power in our telestial realm, but it is in a state of purity and perfection. It is free of the vices of men and distortions of the adversary. The city represents eternal life, and the ultimate in protection. The light of the city represents all that man could hope for. Light in itself symbolizes knowledge, righteousness and spiritual happiness.

**Verses 12-13:** We assume the description of the new or celestial Jerusalem to be for the most part literal; however, some the descriptors used to describe the literal components of the city are symbolic in nature. John describes the walls of the city as **"great and high"**. Walls are a symbol of strength, protection, and power. It is fitting that John should describe them as great and high, from a symbolic perspective, in that the residence of God is the ultimate in protection, strength, and power. From a literal perspective, I could also see that the city, which would contain more beauty and enclose more space than any other city known to man, would indeed have walls that were great and high.

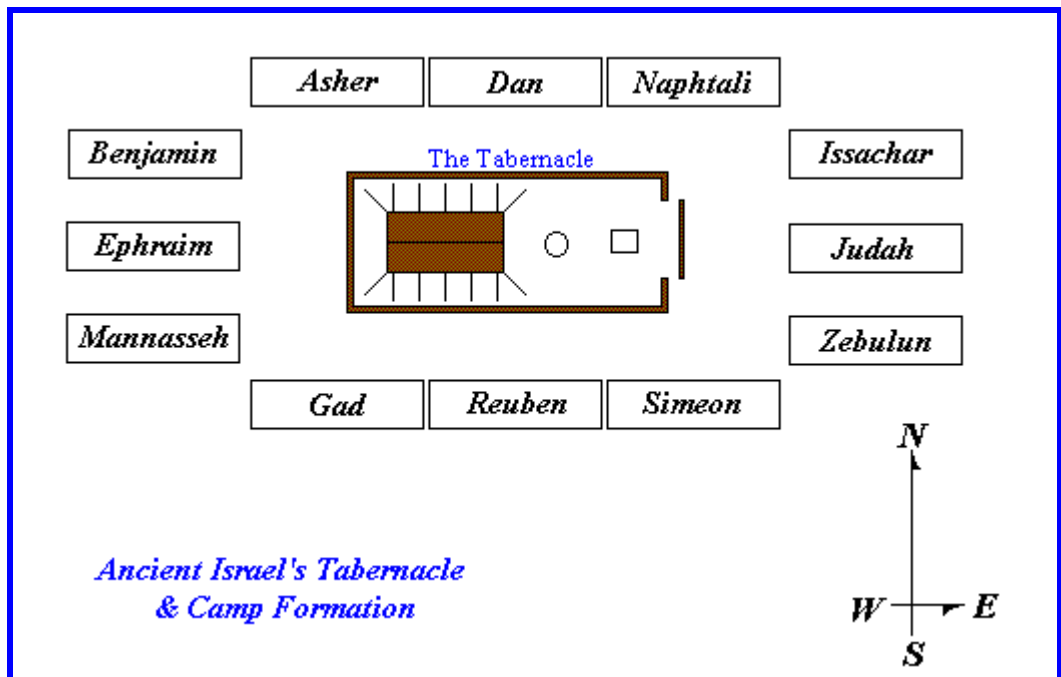


John further describes the outer walls of the celestial Jerusalem as having, "**twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels**". For most people, this passage does not have a great deal of significance. The city basically has twelve entrances with an angel posted at each entrance. To members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saint who have been endowed in the temple of God, it has significant meaning. The prophet Brigham Young said, "*Your endowment is to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell (Discourses of Brigham Young, Compiled by John A. Widtsoe, page 416)*". The angels at the twelve gates stand as sentinels or, by definition of the word sentinel, they are guards to the gates of the city. They allowing only those individuals that have received a fullness of the gospel to enter.

The fact that there is twelve gates is also significant. As members of the church of Jesus Christ, we become adopted into the house of Israel. As long as we are worthy and receive the necessary ordinances, we are included in the lineage of Abraham, which is represented in the twelve tribes of Israel. Each of the tribes are blessed with entrance into the city, shown by the twelve gates

encompassing the celestial Jerusalem. John saw the gates *"and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates"*.

There are some interesting similarities between the celestial Jerusalem and the tabernacle of Moses. In the Old Testament book of Numbers, chapter four, the Lord gave Israel specific instructions as to how they were to erect the tabernacle and camp around it. The tabernacle was to face east and the tribes of Israel were to set up their camps on all four sides of the tabernacle, three tribes per side. The illustration below shows the fashion by which Israel camped. I can't help but to speculate that the entrances to the celestial Jerusalem, which is what the tabernacle represented, are not to be given tribal names in the same order that the ancient tabernacle did.



The pattern which the tribes were to camp around the tabernacle is very similar to the marching order that the Lord gave Israel. The entrances to New Jerusalem would be named, starting with the Judah in the center entrance of the entrances facing east, Issachar to the right of Judah and Zebulun to the Left. Reuben's name would occupy the center of the south entrances, with Simeon to the right and Gad to the left. Ephraim's name would occupy the center of the west entrances, with Manasseh to the right and Benjamin to the Left. Finally, Dan's name would occupy the center entrance of the north entrances, with Asher to the right and Naphtali to the left.

***The marching order that God  
gave to Israel***

<b><i>March Order</i></b>	<b><i>Tribe</i></b>
<b>#1</b>	<b>Judah</b>
<b>#2</b>	<b>Issachar</b>
<b>#3</b>	<b>Zebulon</b>
<b>#4</b>	<b>Reuben</b>
<b>#5</b>	<b>Simeon</b>
<b>#6</b>	<b>Gad</b>
<b>#7</b>	<b>Ephraim</b>
<b>#8</b>	<b>Manasseh</b>
<b>#9</b>	<b>Benjamin</b>
<b>#10</b>	<b>Dan</b>
<b>#11</b>	<b>Asher</b>
<b>#12</b>	<b>Naphtali</b>

The fact that the celestial Jerusalem's only twelve entrances are for the twelve tribes of Israel, is but another testimony that the Lord will fulfill the covenant that he made with Abraham. It is also witness to us of the importance our adoption is into the House of Israel.

***Verse 14:*** As ancient Israel reestablished itself after leaving Egyptian rule, the Lord organized his people and began to teach them of His ways. They were commanded to build a temple, which they called the tabernacle. It represented the presence and leadership of their God and King. The God of Israel organized His people in an orderly fashion. Moses became the prophet and spokesperson for the almighty. Each of the tribes were lead by a prince, and under them were captains and other manner of leadership. Such a structured organization allowed the Lord to accomplish His work. We read in the Old Testament that after the tabernacle was finished the Lord anointed the leaders of Israel for their work, *"And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them; That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes ...(Numbers 7:1-2)"*. As we become acquainted with the scriptures we realize that the princes of Israel were in reality serving the prophet of God in the same capacity as the twelve apostles do today. Such a structure existed in the days of ancient Israel through the meridian of time. Paul spoke of the structure of the church and the



household of God when he wrote to the church in Ephesus and said, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22)". The celestial Jerusalem will be built upon the principles of the Gospel. It will be built upon the organization of God.

When John saw the celestial Jerusalem he recorded that "**the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb**". Is it surprising that the organization of the church here upon the earth is fashioned after that of Heaven? The celestial kingdom will be one of order and structure. The twelve apostles will again stand under their Savior in administering the affairs of the kingdom. We will be organized in stakes and wards. We will have bishops and teachers. And most importantly we will have families, with patriarchs standing at the heads of the homes. The fact that John says that the names of the twelve apostles of the Savior are written in the foundation of the city, symbolizes that the celestial kingdom is organized in a very specific and defined fashion like unto the way the Lord has organized his church here upon the earth.

The twelve apostles of the Lamb, who served in the meridian of time, and will serve again in the celestial kingdom are listed as follows;

***The Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ  
During the Meridian of Time***

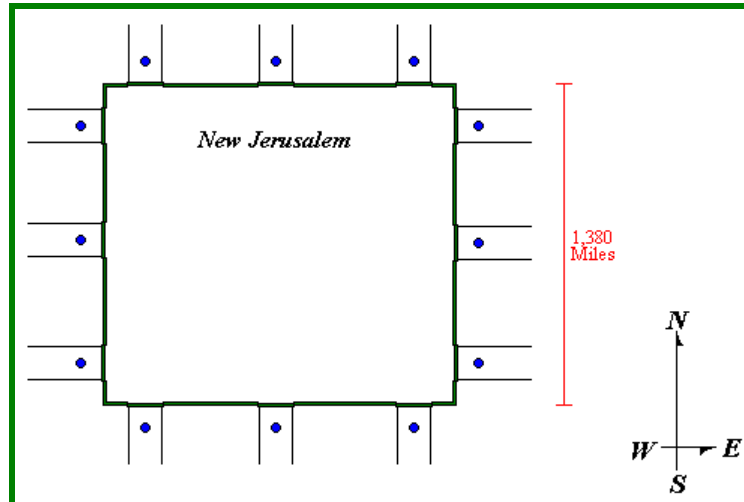
<b><i>Apostle</i></b>	<b><i>Name</i></b>
<b>#1</b>	<b>Peter</b>
<b>#2</b>	<b>James</b>
<b>#3</b>	<b>John</b>
<b>#4</b>	<b>Andrew</b>
<b>#5</b>	<b>Philip</b>
<b>#6</b>	<b>Bartholomew</b>
<b>#7</b>	<b>Thomas</b>
<b>#8</b>	<b>Matthew</b>
<b>#9</b>	<b>James</b>
<b>#10</b>	<b>Thaddaeus</b>
<b>#11</b>	<b>Simon</b>
<b>#12</b>	<b>Matthias*</b>

\* Replaced Judas after the betrayal

**Verses 15-17:** As John viewed the celestial city, he noted that the messenger of God that was narrating this spectacular vision began to show John just how big the city was. John says, ***"he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel"***.

The dictionary definition of a reed, is any of various tall perennial grass, having hollow stems, broad leaves, and large plum like terminal panicles. We find in the book of Ezekiel, that not only was Ezekiel given a vision similar to these two verses, but we are told that a reed is used as a unit of measure, *"...the length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand reeds..."*. A reed is said to be approximately ten and one-half feet long or just over three meters. In chapter eleven of John's vision, he was given an ordinary reed to measure the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is very fitting that when the angel goes to measure the celestial Jerusalem, that he is given a golden reed. The symbol of gold represents exaltation, royalty, love, and the highest of virtues.

The length of each of the four walls is said to be twelve-thousand (12,000) furlongs. One furlong is two-hundred and twenty (220) yards. Since there are One-thousand-seven-hundred and sixty (1760) yards in a mile, each wall would measure 1,500 miles in length. That would be correct as long as furlongs were the proper measurement; however, the Greek translation indicates that the measurement is actually a stadia. One stadium is approximately six-hundred and seven (607) feet. Twelve-thousand (12,000) stadia is the equivalent of approximately one-thousand-three-hundred and eighty (1,380) miles. That would result in a city wall that would extend from El Paso, Texas to Seattle, Washington. The city would be so large that it would cover a large percentage of the continental United States.



The Height of the wall is said to be one hundred and forty-four (144) cubits tall. A cubit is an ancient measurement that was defined as the distance from ones elbow to ones finger tips. John indicates that the height of the wall is measured after the man, or angel in this case, measuring it. Unfortunately, we have no idea how long the angels arms were. His arms might have been long or short, for all we know. For the sake of discussion let us use the average measure for one (1) cubit, which measures seventeen and one-half (17.5) inches. That would make the wall two-hundred and ten (210) feet tall.

**Verse 18:** When John originally saw the splendor of the celestial Jerusalem, he compared it's light and glory to that of a clear jasper stone. Upon seeing the wall of the city, John finds that it is actually built of jasper stone. Jasper stones are typically cloudy green, and are used in the symbolic world to represent life, or the giving of life. A wall symbolizes protection, and all encompassing. The celestial Jerusalem is the all encompassing representation of eternal life and exaltation. Only those that are granted such gifts are permitted to enter.

Referring to the city itself, John says, "**the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass**". The term city, though literal in terms of celestial Jerusalem, can be used as a symbol of those that dwell in the city. Gold represents exaltation, love, and the highest of virtues. Pure gold would represent the ultimate and highest levels of exaltation, love, and virtues. The golden city is compared to clear glass, which is another representation of perfection and purity. The symbolic meanings form a well accepted doctrine, that the inhabitants of the celestial kingdom will be those that live a celestial law.

**Verses 19-20:** Looking at the foundations and walls of the celestial Jerusalem, John says, "**the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones**". Though the city has literal foundations and walls, there is important symbolic imagery associated with them.

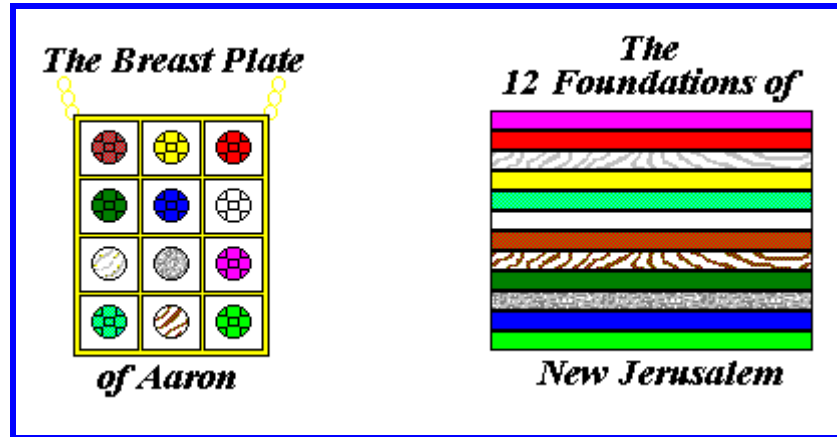
The term “foundation” is a symbol used to represent that upon which something is built, the supporting elements if you will. Walls represent protection and things that are all encompassing.

The foundations of the city were made of, or garnished with, precious stones and gems. Since the foundation represents the things that celestial Jerusalem is built upon, the symbolism of the stones and gems in the foundation will give us some insight as to what the city’s symbolic foundation means. There are twelve foundations. The number twelve represents completeness and perfection. John sees the twelve foundations and the stones and gems associated with each foundation. He records, ***"The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst"***. Gems symbolize heavenly truth on earth, while stones represent the protection of God. Due to the hardness of the stone it also represents eternalness and immortality. Specific stones and gems, for the most part, derive their symbolic meaning from their color and appearance. Below is a list of the twelve foundation stones and the color and appearance associated with them.

### ***Foundations of the New Jerusalem***

Jasper (Green)
Sapphire (Translucent Blue)
Chalcedony (Milkish Grayish Quartz, often called Copper Emerald)
Emerald (Translucent Deep Green)
Sardonyx (Bands of Brown and White)
Sardius (Translucent Brownish-Red)
Chrysolite (Translucent Clear)
Beryl (Translucent Pale Green)
Topaz (Translucent Yellow)
Chrysoprasus (Apple Green Chalcedony)
Jacinth (Translucent Red Zircon)
Amethyst (Translucent Violet)

Seeing that the twelve foundations of the celestial Jerusalem are associated with specific stones and gems as dictated by the Lord, my thought was drawn to the breastplate worn by the ancient Israelite priests. It too contained twelve stones and gems, which were dictated of the Lord. Each stone or gem represents a tribe of Israel. Interestingly enough, each of the twelve gates of entering the celestial Jerusalem are named for a tribe of Israel. Quite possibly the tribal stone associated with the tribal gate of the celestial Jerusalem is incorporated in the foundation beneath the gate.



Unfortunately, the Old Testament records the tribal stones of the ancient breastplate with only seven out of the twelve stones matching those seen by John in the celestial Jerusalem. Only fifty-eight percent (58%) were identical matches. The Old Testament book of Exodus records the stones and gems of the breastplate as follows;

### *Gems of the Breastplate of Aaron*

Sardius (Translucent Brownish-Red)	Topaz (Translucent Yellow)	Carbuncle (Translucent Red)
Emerald (Translucent Deep Green)	Sapphire (Translucent Blue)	Diamond (Translucent Clear)
Ligure <i>Opal</i> (Milky Iridescent)	Agate (Milkish Grayish Quartz)	Amethyst (Translucent Violet)
Beryl (Translucent Pale Green)	Onyx (Bands of color)	Jasper (Green)

Given my initial findings, I felt that maybe there was not a correlation after all; however, I felt that the five stones, or gems, that did not correspond should be further investigated. In studying the unmatched stones, I found that, though their names were different, they had matching colors and appearance. John quite possible saw the same stones that were incorporated in the breastplate of Israel, but he either called them by different names or during the course of time the translation for the stone's names resulted in the use different names. In the table hereafter, the gems of the breastplate and the foundation of Israel are listed with their possible counterparts, description, and possible symbolic meanings;

<i>Breastplate Gem</i>	<i>Foundation Gem</i>	<i>Color</i>	<i>Possible Symbolic Meaning</i>
Sardius	Sardius	Orange-red / Brown-red	Blood, Life
Topaz	Topaz	Yellow	Sun, Eternity, Exaltation
Carbuncle	Jacinth	Bright Deep red	Blood, Atonement
Emerald	Emerald	Deep Green	Royalty, Glory
Sapphire	Sapphire	Deep Blue	Sky, Heaven
Diamond	Chrysolite	Clear, Light refraction	Perfection, Purity, Spirituality

Ligure (Opal)	Chrysoprasus	Milky iridescent / apple green	Knowledge and Wisdom
Agate	Chalcedony	Milkish Cloudy, Gray	Resurrection, Judgment
Amethyst	Amethyst	Violet, Purple	Humility
Beryl	Beryl	Pale Green	Death
Onyx	Sardonyx	Brown and White	Earth, Purity
Jasper	Jasper	Green	Life, Fertility

The foundation stones, or gems, of the celestial Jerusalem symbolize those things upon which the Celestial Kingdom is built. It is built upon such things as immortality, humility, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, purity, perfection, and the righteous judgments of God. It is established with the resurrection of man, the divinity of the Father and the Son, and all the life giving blessings that they offered to mankind. Though I would not doubt that the foundations of the glory celestial city were garnished with these precious gems, I believe their true purpose is as a standing testimony as to what the Celestial Kingdom is built upon.

The fact that John includes the wall of the city in his description of the foundations might symbolize that the city encompasses all of the symbols associated with the foundations. The great city of celestial Jerusalem possesses all of the attributes symbolized by the stones of the foundation.

**Verse 21:** John is given some insight as to the gates of the city. In a symbolic passage he writes, *"and the twelve gates were twelve pearls"*. Gates carry the symbolic meaning of protection, and restricted access. Only one with the key to the gate may enter. In the case of the celestial Jerusalem, only one that has been adopted into the seed of Abraham, having been given a new name, has a key to the gate. John symbolizes the gates as pearls. Pearls are typically considered great in value. Biblically, we are often reminded of the pearl of great price. Such a pearl represents the knowledge of the gospel and heavenly wisdom. Pearls have also been used to symbolize perfection because of their spherical shape and their inimitable luster. They have also been used to symbolize immortality because of their hardness and durability.

Because of the joining of the two symbols, the gate and the pearl, I would suggest that access through the gate is only gained by those that possess a knowledge of the gospel and heavenly wisdom. There is but one place on earth that man can gain such knowledge and wisdom as to pass through the gates and enter the celestial city. That place is the house of the Lord, the holy temple of God.

John adds that *"every several gate was of one pearl"*. In other words, passage into the city required the same things from gate to gate. No special treatment or exceptions were made for specific

tribes or individuals. The laws of God are set. There is but one road to heaven, and but one gate, for though there be twelve, they are identical.

John, looking past the gates, is struck by the appearance of the streets. He records, "***the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass***". Streets and roads are often used to symbolize a way of life or the choices made during life. Gold is a symbol of exaltation, love, and the highest virtues. Likewise, transparent glass symbolizes purity and clarity. This passage could represent the idea that only those that have chosen a life of perfection and purity, walking after the highest virtues, are allowed to dwell in celestial Jerusalem.

Like most of the symbols associated with heavenly Jerusalem, those associated with the foundations, walls, and streets are more than just symbols. God's city will be one of spender, built and garnished with unspeakable wealth. Though there are beautiful messages hidden in the items of the city, through their symbolism, they are literal images. The celestial Jerusalem will have foundations and walls garnished with precious gems. The streets will appear as gold, and its beauty will be above description.

**Verse 22:** Looking inside the city, John "***saw no temple***". How could this be, that the celestial kingdom would contain no temple? Is the temple not the most celestial edifice on earth? To understand why the celestial kingdom contains no temple, we must understand the function of the temple. The temple represents the House of the Lord upon the earth. It is a place that worthy members of the Lord's church can go and obtain the knowledge necessary to return into His presence. The temple is a symbol of being in the presence and glory of God.

In the celestial Kingdom, the inhabitants will have already entered into the Father's presence. They will have already learned those things necessary for entering into the celestial city. The inhabitants will have no need for a special place to go and feel the presence of the Lord, because the Lord will reside with them. The purposes of the temple will be fulfilled. In a sense, the celestial Jerusalem could be called a temple. John clarifies that the reason the city has no temple is because "***the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it***". They are the sources of spiritual power and strength.

**Verse 23:** The great prophet Isaiah spoke of the celestial kingdom, and the glory that shall accompany it. The glory of which can be compared to nothing else. To illustrate this, Isaiah wrote that the Lord will create the celestial city using elements superior to all those used by man, "***For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for***

wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise". He went further to describe elements in the firmament of the celestial kingdom. He said, "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. (Isaiah 60:17-21)". It is of this same prophesy that John testifies when he wrote, "**And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof**". The modern day apostle, Bruce R. McConkie explained, "Of course there is no need for a sun by day and a moon by night, for the earth will have become a sun. It will be its own sun (Millennial Messiah, Bruce R. McConkie, page703)".

It is beyond our present understanding to comprehend the celestial kingdom existing on a sun, for this reason John was taken by the spirit and shown the celestial world. For full understanding, we must be taught spiritually. Such insight might help us in understanding all of the factors associated with the celestial kingdom. Let us not suppose that we can comprehend these things with mortal minds that exist in a telestial sphere, for true understanding we must enlist the use of spiritual understanding. We must search for spiritual gifts, like those given to John, that we might comprehend the things of God. Without such gifts, our knowledge will never grow outside of this telestial sphere.

**Verse 24:** In seeing the righteous of the city, John says, "**the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it**". In a literal sense, those who are worthy of celestial glory, will be capable of existing in the light that is associated with the celestial Jerusalem. Symbolically, light represents knowledge and righteousness. Those that are worthy of celestial glory are blessed with spiritual growth. In the celestial Jerusalem, we will have access to the constant knowledge of God. The earth itself will be as a Urim and Thummim, showing all things unto its inhabitants; the past, present, and future. As the offspring of God, being worthy of all that He has, we will be able to become as He who knows all things.

John then sees "**the kings of the earth**". This passage is somewhat misleading, in that the earthly kings are usually considered wicked; however, when the Lord speaks of the Kings of this earth, he is referring to those that he accepts as Kings. To be accepted as a King by the Lord, one must be anointed of the Lord as such. Such an



anointing must be performed by someone having authority to perform such an ordination. It must also be performed in a place allocated of the Lord. In the beginning of John's vision, he saw the celestial kingdom. He also saw that the righteous were made kings and priest unto God. John previously wrote that the Lord *"hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:10)"*.

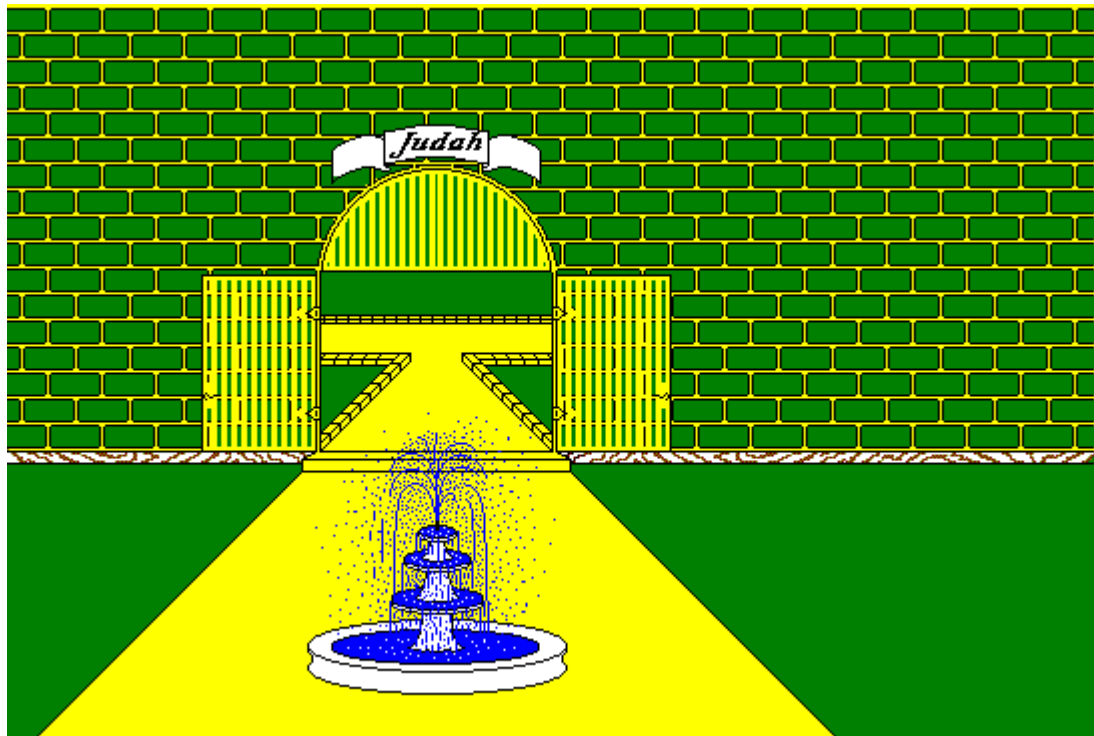
The book of Revelation, contains a beautiful accounting of the progression of mankind, from our state of spirits, to becoming like unto God and dwelling in His presence. In chapter four of the book, John sees the celestial kingdom and the throne of God. From there John was taken through the dispensations of time. He has now returned to the throne of God in the midst of celestial splendor. Like in chapter five, those that have been made kings and priest unto the most high *"do bring their glory and honour"* unto God and His celestial city. In chapter five we were told that *"every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever (Revelation 5:13)"*.

How is it that we can bring honor and glory unto the God of all? Understand that the work and glory of God is to bring to pass the immortality and the eternal life of man (Moses 1:39). There is no other glory and honor greater than to bring with us our families and friends when we enter into the presence of God. To truly praise and honor God in the celestial world, we must be part of His work. Isaiah saw the last days, and the gathering of the elect of God. The Old Testament records, *"Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers (Isaiah 49:22-23)"*. Though Isaiah was not directly speaking of those entering the celestial Jerusalem, his imagery can easily be used in accordance with John's vision. For us to truly give honor and glory to our Father, we must return with our sons in our arms, and our daughters on our shoulders. As kings and priests unto the most high, we have a sacred obligation to gather the elect of the world and prepare them for entrance into the city of God.

**Verse 25:** *"And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there"*. The significance of this passage has to do with the protocol of ancient cities. For protection, cities of old built walls that encompassed their cities. They limited access to the city to but a few portals or gates. At the gates, they placed gate keepers to keep out

unwanted visitors. At night, when the vision of the watch tower was limited and most of the city slept, the gates to the city were closed and locked. This added protection to the city. Enemies that would come to overthrow the city in the dark of night, would find it difficult to gain access. The city of celestial Jerusalem has been freed from all enemies. Their need to close the gates for protection is no longer. The gates remain open and the fear of the adversary is gone.

The Lord of the city has placed peace throughout the land, and done away with the night. The absence of night, or darkness, represents the fact that wickedness has been eliminated. The fact that there is daylight all the time, symbolizes the fact that only righteousness resides. Free access to the city of celestial Jerusalem is given to the righteous.



**Verse 26:** *"And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it".* John reiterates the vision he has of the kings and priests of God giving glory and honor to God and His city. Isaiah, who saw much of the same vision that John was shown, wrote that the elect would be gathered together, that they might be brought into the presence of God. And with such rich blessings give praise unto the great giver of life. Isaiah wrote, *"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons*

*shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee (Isaiah 60:3-5)".* Like previously discussed in the commentary on verse twenty-four, the work and glory of God is the return of His children. I am sure that upon our return to His presence, we will not find word enough, nor songs glorious enough, to express our thankfulness for the blessings that God has bestowed upon us. Likewise, I can imagine great tears of joy, rolling from the eyes of an eternal Father as He opens His arms and say, "Welcome home, thou good and faithful servant."

**Verse 27:** Wo unto the workers of iniquity, for they can not enter into the presence of the Lord! Only the true and faithful may enter into the Lord's rest. Such is the warning when John writes, "***And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life'***".

The Savior of the world has bridged the gap that sin created, preventing us from returning to the Father. Because He bridged the gap, He has been given stewardship over judging man worthy of returning to the Father. Since we are all sinners, having to one degree or another partaken of the enticings of the adversary, we must rely on the atoning sacrifice of the savior and sincere repentance to grant us passage back into the Father's presence. Of this principle Nephi taught, "*O then, my beloved brethren, come unto the Lord, the Holy One. Remember that his paths are righteous. Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him, and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name (2 Nephi 9:41)".*