

Revelation Chapter 21

In the previous chapter we saw what happened at the end of the 1000 years of the Church Age: Satan was loosed from the Abyss and led all the nations astray, gathering them together to surround and attack the saints and the beloved city. However, the Lord rained down fire from Heaven devouring the enemy, and cast Satan in the lake of fire and brimstone. Then the dead were resurrected and judged by their works recorded in books of their deeds. The Book of Life was also opened, and anyone who was not found in the Book of Life was cast into lake of fire. Now we will begin to look at the New Heaven and the New Earth, the consolation of the saved, and who will be there, and who will not be there.

***Revelation 21:1** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth went away; and there is no longer the sea. 2 And the city, the holy new Jerusalem, I saw coming down out of heaven from God, having been prepared as a bride having been adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of (the) throne saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall tabernacle with them, and they themselves shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them. 4 "And God shall wipe away from them every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be death, nor mourning, nor crying; nor shall there any longer be pain, for the first things went away." 5 And the (One) sitting on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give to the (one) thirsting out of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 To him, the (one) overcoming, shall be these things, and I will be God to him and he himself shall be to Me a son. 8 "But to the cowardly and unbelieving and those having become abominable and murderers and fornicators and users of drugs, potions and spells; and idolaters; and all the liars --(their part shall be) in the lake, the one burning with fire and brimstone which is the death, the second one. 9 And there came to me one of the seven angels of those having the seven bowls, the ones full of the seven plagues, the last ones, and he talked with me saying, "Come here; I will show to thee the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb." 10 And he carried me away in (the) Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the city, the holy Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, -- her radiance was like a stone most precious; as a jasper stone, being clear as crystal, -- 12 having a great and high wall, having twelve gateways, and at the gateways twelve angels, and names having been inscribed which are (the) names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel; 13 From (the) east three gateways, and from (the) north three gateways; and from (the) south three gateways, and from (the) west three gateways. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them (the) names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And the (one) talking with me had for a measure a golden reed, in order to measure the city and her gateways and her wall. 16 And the city lieth with four angles, and her length (is) as great as the breadth. And he measured the city with the reed up to twelve thousand stadia [1,379 miles]. The length and the breadth and the height of her is equal. 17 And he measured her wall: a hundred (and) forty-four cubits [216 feet], a man's measure, which is of an angel. 18 And the structure of her wall was jasper; and the city (was) pure gold, like clear glass. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone: the foundation, the first one, (was) jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl,*

Revelation Chapter 21

the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysolite, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gateways (were) twelve pearls: each one of the several gateways was of one pearl. And the broad street of the city (was) pure gold, as transparent as glass. 22 And I saw no temple in her, for the Lord God Almighty is her temple, and the Lamb. 23 And the city hath no need of the sun nor of the moon that they be giving light to her; for the glory of God illuminated her, and her lamp (is) the Lamb. 24 And the nations shall walk in the midst of her light, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into her. 25 And her gateways in no wise shall be shut by day, for there shall be no night there. 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into her. 27 And there in no wise shall enter into her anything profane, and the (one) making an abomination and a lie, except the ones having been written in the book of life of the Lamb.



Revelation 21:1 *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth went away; and there is no longer the sea.*

Revelation Chapter 21

Archbishop Averky: Here is meant ... The renewal of what is grown old does not signify its obliteration and annihilation ... This newness of heaven and earth will consist in their transformation through fire and newness of their forms and attributes ... The sea, whose nature is inconstant and agitated, will vanish.

2 Peter 3:10 KJV But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

St. Andrew of Caesarea: Concerning the sea, it says, that “*the sea was no more.*” for what use is there of a sea when people no longer need to sail it or to acquire goods grown in regions lying far away by means of it? Moreover the sea is symbolic of the turbulence and unsettledness of life, and so then there will be no need of it when there remains no trouble or fear among the saints.

Revelation 21:2 *And the city, the holy new Jerusalem, I saw coming down out of heaven from God, having been prepared as a bride having been adorned for her husband.*

Archbishop Averky: The image of this “new Jerusalem” represents the triumphant Church of Christ, adorned as the Lord’s bride in the purity and virtues of the saints.

Revelation 21:3 *And I heard a great voice out of (the) throne saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall tabernacle with them, and they themselves shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them. 4 “And God shall wipe away from them every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be death, nor mourning, nor crying; nor shall there any longer be pain, for the first things went away.”*

Archbishop Averky: The Old Testament tabernacle was only a prefiguration of the dwelling of God with men, which begins in the future, eternal, blessed life, and will be a source of blessedness for those who are liberated from all the sorrows of the present earthly life. The Church is presently the image of the true tabernacle.

Revelation 21:5 *And the (One) sitting on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” And He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give to the (one) thirsting out of the fountain of the water of life freely.*

Ecumenius: “Behold”, it says, “*I make all things new.*” If the heaven, earth, and the sea are new, and moreover if humankind and that which pertains to their joy and glory are new and in no

Revelation Chapter 21

way interrupted by tears or pains or sins, then, indeed, all things are new ... All of these things are trustworthy and true. Therefore, [He says,] O John, write them down.

Archbishop Averky: By the water of life is understood the grace of the Holy Spirit which is presented figuratively in Holy Scripture under the image of living water [as in the parable of the Samaritan woman].

Revelation 21:7 *To him, the (one) overcoming, shall be these things, and I will be God to him and he himself shall be to Me a son.*

St. Andrew of Caesarea: He who conquers in the war against the invisible demons will receive these good things, becoming a son of God and reveling in the good gifts of the Father.

Revelation 21:8 *”But to the cowardly and unbelieving and those having become abominable and murderers and fornicators (KJV whoremongers) and users of drugs, potions and spells (KJV sorcerers), and idolaters, and all the liars, their part shall be in the lake, the one burning with fire and brimstone which is the death, the second one.*

St. Andrew of Caesarea: The God who thirsts after our salvation urges us in every way, both through kindness and through anger, toward the inheritance of His blessings. He brings now before our eyes the brightness of the heavenly Jerusalem and the dark, painful wrathfulness of the fiery Gehenna, so that whether through a desire for eternal bliss or through fear of unending torment, we might, as there is opportunity, acquire that which is good together with the rest of those in need. He indicates that those who were cowards and deserters in the battle against the devil will be condemned to the second death.

May we propitiate Him Who desires mercy and does not will the death of sinners but their conversion, and so obtain His gifts by good deeds. To these gifts He exhorts us, not only through the enticement of works and sufferings. For it suffices Him to encourage toward the good and to discourage from evil, and afterward either to punish or to honor those worthy of glory or punishment. He did not disdain to suffer for us lest by His own power or by His appearance He might harm or disregard anything that pertains to our healing and restoration. Therefore, let us not receive the grace of God in vain, but let us render His beneficence effective by conversion and the demonstration of good works, so that we might attain to the promised blessings in Christ, our God, with whom be glory to the Father together with the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 21:9 *And there came to me one of the seven angels of those having the seven bowls, the ones full of the seven plagues, the last ones, and he talked with me saying, “Come here; I will show to thee the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb.”*

St. Andrew of Caesarea, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, Chapter 67: He correctly calls the Bride, “The Wife of the Lamb,” for when Christ was slaughtered like a lamb, He betrothed the Church to Himself by His own blood. Just as a wife was created for Adam during his sleep

Revelation Chapter 21

through the taking of the rib, so also the Church, fashioned by the shedding of blood from the side of Christ at the time of His voluntary repose on the Cross in the sleep of death, was united with Him Who was wounded for our sakes.

Revelation 21:10 *And he carried me away in (the) Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the city, the holy Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, -- her radiance was like a stone most precious; as a jasper stone, being clear as crystal, -- 12 having a great and high wall, having twelve gateways, and at the gateways twelve angels, and names having been inscribed which are (the) names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel; 13 From (the) east three gateways, and from (the) north three gateways; and from (the) south three gateways, and from (the) west three gateways. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them (the) names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

Archbishop Averky: The rest of the chapter is devoted to a detailed description of this wondrous city. Shining with precious stones, this city had 12 gates named for the 12 tribes of Israel, [similar to the Old Testament Tabernacle which had three tribes camped on each of its 4 sides] and 12 foundations bearing the names of the 12 Apostles.

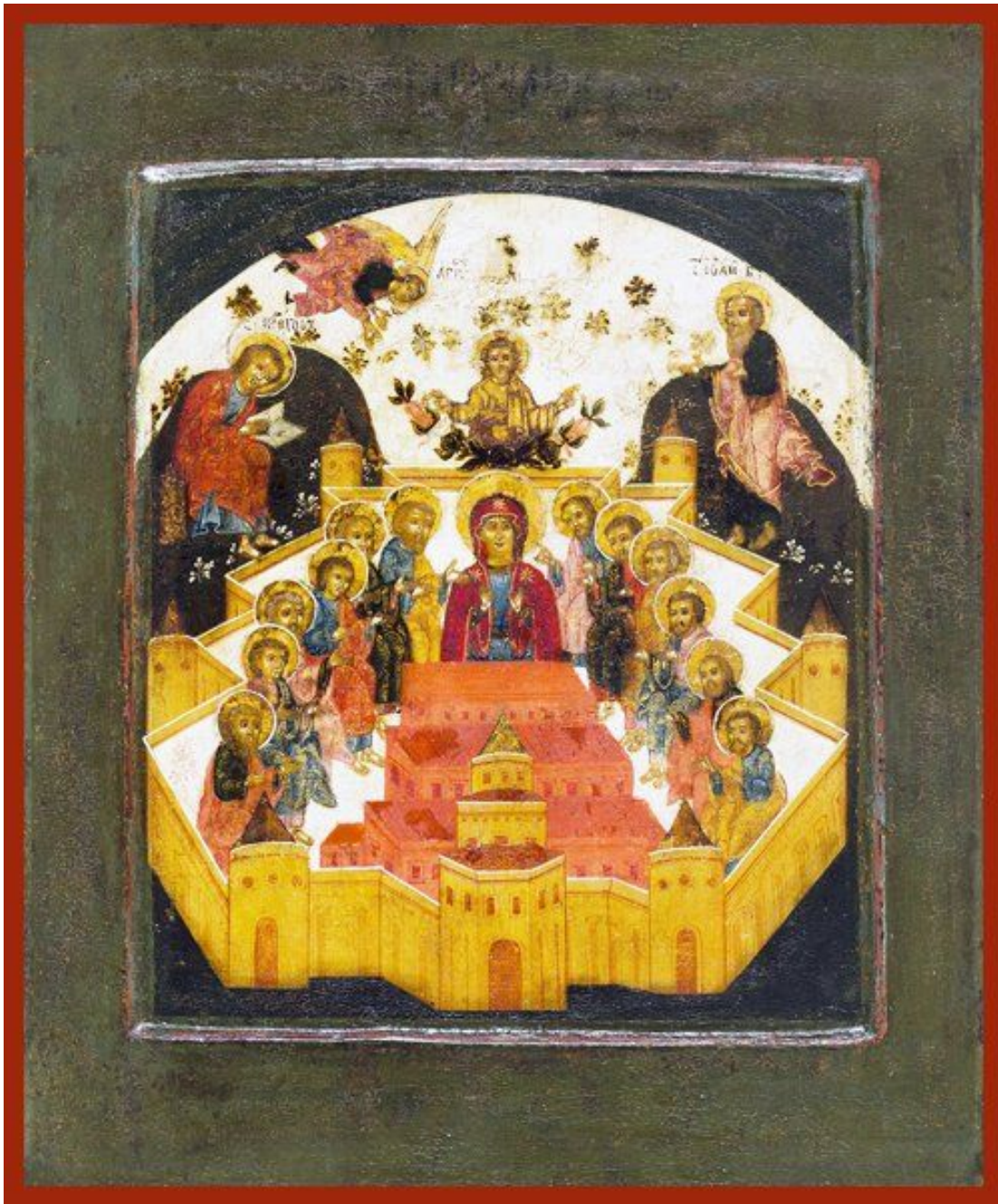
Revelation 21:15 *And the (one) talking with me had for a measure a golden reed, in order to measure the city and her gateways and her wall. 16 And the city lieth withy four angles, and her length (is) as great as the breadth. And he measured the city with the reed up to twelve thousand stadia [1,379 miles]. The length and the breadth and the height of her is equal. 17 And he measured her wall: a hundred (and) forty-four cubits [216 feet], a man's measure, which is of an angel. 18 And the structure of her wall was jasper; and the city (was) pure gold, like clear glass.*

Archbishop Averky: The city is measured by an angel ... [with] a golden reed .. The numerical expressions ... signify the perfection, solidity, and astonishing symmetry of the whole building of the Church of God.

Revelation 21:19 *And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone: the foundation, the first one, (was) jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth crysoprasus, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gateways (were) twelve pearls: each one of the several gateways was of one pearl. And the broad street of the city (was) pure gold, as transparent as glass.*

The wall of the city is built of jasper, symbolizing the divine glory and the ever-blossoming and unfading life of the saints. The city itself was of pure gold, like clear glass, symbolic of the honor and brightness of its inhabitants. As St. Andrew notes, 8 of the 12 stones were worn in the mantle of the high priest; the other four are added to show the harmony of the New Testament with the Old, and the preeminence of those who shone forth in it. And this is true, for the Apostles -- symbolized by the precious stones -- were adorned with every virtue.

Revelation Chapter 21



Revelation Chapter 21



Revelation Chapter 21

Revelation 21:22 *And I saw no temple in her, for the Lord God Almighty is her temple, and the Lamb. 23 And the city hath no need of the sun nor of the moon that they be giving light to her; for the glory of God illuminated her, and her lamp (is) the Lamb. 24 And the nations shall walk in the midst of her light, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into her.*

St. Symeon the New Theologian, *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical discourses*, Vol. I, *The First Discourse*, VII, 49: Do you think that the dwelling and the temple are anything other than the King Himself? Of course not! Just as Christ God is Head of the Church, so He Himself becomes her temple, too, and in turn the Church herself is established as His temple and His fully ripened world.”

Revelation 21:24 *And the nations shall walk in the midst of her light, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into her. 25 And her gateways in no wise shall be shut by day, for there shall be no night there. 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into her. 27 And there in no wise shall enter into her anything profane, and the (one) making an abomination and a lie, except the ones having been written in the book of life of the Lamb.*

Archbishop Averky: The general inner sign, which distinguishes this heavenly Church from the earthly, is the fact that while in the earthly Church good exists along with evil and tares grow together with good wheat; in the heavenly Church, only what is good pure and holy is gathered together from among all the peoples of the earth. Everything evil, defiled, and unclean, which has accumulated over the whole period of the world’s history, will be separated, and, as it were, poured out together into a single, foul-smelling cistern, whose impurity cannot in any way come into contact with this wondrous dwelling place that belongs to the blessed alone.

St. John Klimakos, *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Step 29:14: Imagine dispassion as the celestial palace of the Heavenly King; and the many mansions as the abodes within this city, and the wall of this celestial Jerusalem as the forgiveness of sins. Let us run, brethren, let us run to enter the bridal chamber of this palace. If we are prevented by anything, by some burden or old habit, or by time itself, what a disaster! Let us at least occupy one of those abodes around the bridal chamber. But if we sink down and grow weak, let us make sure of being at least within the walls. For he who does not enter therein before his end, or rather, does not scale the wall, will lie out in the desert of fiends and passions. That is why a certain man prayed, saying: By my God shall I leap over a wall (Psalm 17, 29). And another says, as if in the person of God: Is it not your sins that separate you from Me (Isaias 59:2). Friends, let us break through this wall of separation which we have erected to our own harm by disobedience; and let us receive the forgiveness of our sins, because in Hell there is no one to pardon our debts. So then, brethren, let us devote ourselves to our task, for we have inscribed ourselves in the register of the devout. There is no room for any excuse for a fall, or a lack of opportunity, or a burden. For to all who have received the Lord by the baptism of regeneration, He has given power to become children of God (St. John 1:12), saying: Be still and know that I am God (Psalm 14:10) and am Dispassion. To Him be the glory for every and ever.

Revelation Chapter 21

Note: Archimandrite Athanasios devotes multiple homilies and over 100 pages of text to this chapter of Revelation alone. His discussions are brilliant and full of pastoral wisdom as well as beautiful correlation between Old and New Testaments. It is well worth reading.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us!

Text of Revelation, *The Orthodox New Testament, Acts Epistles, and Revelation, Vol 2, praxapostolos*, Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista, CO, 1999, [Source: B. Antoniadis Greek text approved by the Patriarch of Constantinople 1904.]

Archbishop Averky (Taushev), *The Epistles and the Apocalypse in Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament, Vol. III*, Holy Trinity Seminary Press, Jordanville, NY, 2018, pp. 318-323.

Archimandrite Athanasios Mitilinaios, *Revelation, The Triumph of the Lamb, Volume V*, St. Nikodemos Publications, Bethlehem, PA, 2020, pp. 80-189.

St. Andrew of Caesarea: *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, Chapter 65-66, in *Ancient Christian Texts, Greek Commentaries on Revelation: Æcumenius and Andrew of Caesarea*, IVP (Intervarsity Press) Academic, Downers Grove, IL, 2011.

St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston MA, 1991, pp. 223-4.

St. Symeon the New Theologian, *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical discourses*, Vol. I, *The First Discourse*, VII, 49, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1995, p. 49.