

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

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New Jerusalem #23.

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A Great and High Wall

Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. (Revelation 21:11 NASB)

It had a great and high wall.... The material of the wall was jasper.... (Revelation 21:12, 18 NASB)

The wall is quite prominent in John's vision of the great and glorious city, New Jerusalem. In fact, the wall was the first thing that John saw as the city came down out of heaven. As he gazed upon this wonder, John likened the city to a very costly stone of crystal-clear jasper, and then he said that the material of the great high wall was jasper. Thus, his first view of the city was of the wall, which, according to angelic measurements, had a height of 144 cubits or 72 yards or 252 feet. In other words, the wall was so high that when the city first came into John's view, all he saw was the wall. Then, he saw that the city was made of pure gold, which means that he saw beyond the wall.

Much is associated with the wall, such as names, gates, stones, and the number 12; however, a discussion of these must be reserved for subsequent issues. In this issue, let us concentrate on the meaning and character of the great high wall.

First, what is the purpose of a wall? Simply, **a wall demarcates an area** and preserves that which is in the area. In a geo-governmental way, a wall around a city **provides protection** of what lies within the city, **serves as a boundary** to keep out all that does not belong in the city, and **controls or limits** what is allowed into the city through its gates. There are no open borders to allow aliens to enter illegally. In other words, a requirement must be met for any and all to enter the city. The wall signifies that the city is governed; there is governmental order and rule. However, a wall in itself does not speak to the character and nature of the city and its government. To understand this in relation to New Jerusalem, we need to look at John's other descriptors of the wall.

Second, **the material of the wall is jasper**. Earlier in his Patmos vision, John saw One sitting on the throne who appeared like a jasper stone. In other words, the wall speaks of Christ Himself. He alone is the way into the city; there is no other way but through the Son of God who is **our salvation. God Himself is our salvation** (Psalm 68:19 YLT). Referring to Jerusalem as a prophetic view of New Jerusalem, Isaiah declared: **"You will call your walls salvation"** (Isaiah 60:18 NASB).

I trust that by now anyone who has kept up with this series knows that entering the city refers to being the city or becoming part of the city. Again, New Jerusalem is about organic living stones (i.e., flesh and bones people), not about inorganic stones (i.e., bricks and mortar or physical building materials). I apologize for repeating this point, but if you miss it, then you miss the entire significance and glorious meaning of New Jerusalem, which is the destiny of all who believe and, ultimately, all mankind.

Thus, the wall of New Jerusalem speaks of salvation that only comes through the Lord who is our salvation, as well as our life. Clearly, only the saved will enter the city, or, we could say, only the saved are the city, for it represents a people called "My people" and "My sons." This is why the wall is high and great. A great price was paid for this city, and the material of the wall signifies this cost.

Third, the wall is crystal-clear jasper, which could be called "see-through green." Green stands for **life**; therefore, the wall signifies that only life enters the city, and this life is none other than the life of the Son of God. We could call it **the wall of life** that signifies Christ, for **Christ is our life** (Colossians 3:4) and **the promise of life** (2 Timothy 1:1).

Fourth, the wall represents a **wall of fire**, which is **the fiery law of God**. The law stands for the righteousness of God.

(1) ... there was a man with a measuring line in his hand. (2) So I said, "Where are you going?" And he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide it is and how long it is." (3) And behold, the angel who was speaking with me was going out, and another angel was coming out to meet him, (4) and said to him, "Run, speak to that young man, saying, 'Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it. (5) For I,' declares the LORD, 'will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.'" (Zechariah 2:1-5 NASB)

The ancient prophets often referred to Jerusalem, but we need to realize that their vision was not restricted to the ancient city. Simply, they saw New Jerusalem as well, even though they did not refer to it as such. So, as we read the prophets, we need to discern if their words apply to the historical earthly city or the future heavenly city, or both.

In the above verses, Zechariah saw New Jerusalem. Notice the similarity to the angel that measured New Jerusalem in John's vision (Revelation 21:15). But there is something curious about Zechariah's vision, for the word went forth that Jerusalem would be inhabited without walls, and yet, she would have a wall of fire around her. Actually, Zechariah provides us with the best evidence that the wall John saw was not to be taken literally and physically. The wall of fire refers to the fiery law of God that is seen in type as the sons of Israel received the law at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

And he said: The Lord came from Sinai, and from Seir he rose up to us: he hath appeared from mount Pharan, and with him thousands of saints. In his right hand a fiery law. (Deuteronomy 33:2 DRB)

New Jerusalem speaks of the saints in the right hand of God and the fiery law of God going forth from the saints. Under the new covenant, God writes His laws on the hearts of His people (Hebrews 8:10); therefore, they become a manifestation of His laws, for they are not written on organic dead stones but on organic living stones. The saints are in the right hand of the Lord, and the law is in them.

What does the law represent? It represents righteousness, for it speaks of what is right in the sight of God. Consequently, the wall speaks of righteousness, which makes the fiery wall a moral boundary that keeps out all the lawless; only the righteous can enter the city. But again, keep in mind that this refers to a people. In other words, the people are righteous, and they are bound by God's righteousness or, if you will, by His moral law. There is no unrighteousness in these people whatsoever, for it is all outside the city (Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15).

But again, even in this regard, the wall speaks of Christ, for the Lord our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6) is the wall, and those conformed to His image are conformed to His righteousness as well; they are righteous through and through. Isaiah tells us so: **He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness** (Isaiah 61:10 NASB). Further, Isaiah declares: **For Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning. The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name which the mouth of the LORD will designate.** (Isaiah 62:1-2 NASB). The new name is New Jerusalem.

All of this speaks of the meaning of the wall. This is no literal wall around a physical city, for the saints are the very wall of the city; they are the city. This city of people is not a fixed, singular city sitting on earth; it is a mobile city of people, for it is **inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it**. The cattle means the city is related to the whole earth. The city is wherever the multitude of saints are, for each saint is a wall of fire, a fiery law in the right hand of God, and of righteousness, and of salvation. Each saint is an image of the Son of God, and wherever that saint is on the new earth in God's Day, or even on our present earth in the oncoming eon, so is New Jerusalem. Another way of looking at the wall is that it is the very body of Christ in appearance and in character and in essence. When the nations see the Son of God manifested in the sons of God, they see the wall of New Jerusalem, and nothing unrighteous will ever penetrate this wall.