

Revelation 20-21 – Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Rev. 19 & 20 are two of the most important chapters in the Bible on the prophecy of future events. [\[1\]](#)

They're crucial because they're the Bible's clearest chronology of the Second Coming of Christ in relation to the Millennium.

I'm sure you're aware of the massive debate that exists in the Church over the issue of the Millennium.

Premillennialists believe that the Second Coming takes place *before* the Millennium; that Jesus returns to Earth *visibly* – then sets up a real Kingdom over all the Earth that lasts for a literal period of 1,000 years.

Postmillennialists believe that the Second Coming comes *after* the Millennium; that the Church effectively *infiltrates & saturates* every nation and every institution of every society with the principles of God's Law.

Once that is done, then Jesus comes back to a world that's been made ready for and worthy of Him as King.

So the Millennium isn't a literal period of 1,000 years so much as it represents a long period of the Church's success in conquering the world.

Amillennialists believe that the Second Coming happens at some point in history that no one really has a clue about.

They believe that the Millennium is not a literal period at all – thus the label, “a”millennial – no millennium.

They see the references to the Millennium here in Ch. 20 as simply referring to the ages of history.

They see the Book of Revelation as being mostly spiritual or idealistic; showing the classic struggle between good and evil, the forces of God against the forces of satan.

Everything will just go on as it always has until eventually, Jesus comes back and ends it all.

Because we believe that a literal interpretation of scripture is the proper way to understand the Bible – we fall in to the Premillennial camp.

And following that line of reasoning we see a continuous and

chronological flow between ch. 19 and 20.

As we saw last week in ch. 19, in vs. 11-21, John has a vision of the Second Coming.

Heaven opens and Jesus, riding a white horse, leads the army of heaven as they come to earth to end the Battle of Armageddon and defeat and cast the antichrist and false prophet into the lake of fire.

Ch. 20 continues on with the pictures of judgment that end ch. 19

CHAPTER 20

¹Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

²He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

³and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

It's pretty clear from what we've seen so far that the antichrist was actually possessed by none other than the devil himself at the midpoint of the Tribulation.

As we saw in ch. 19, when Christ comes, he defeats the antichrist and casts him into hell.

That's referring to the *man* – here we see the *devil's* fate.

An angel comes from heaven.

Take careful note of that – John just says it's an angel; there's no mention of *which* angel!

It might be Michael, or Gabriel – but John doesn't name him – it's *just an angel*.

The final importance and power of Satan is revealed in the fact that it isn't God who deals with him, nor is it one of the major

heavenly heavyweights - just an unnamed angel. ^[2]

The angel carries a key and a chain.

Keys are symbolic of *authority* in scripture; they represent the right to open and close.

That this angel has the key to the bottomless pit means that he has been given authority by God to control other angelic beings. We first encountered the bottomless pit in ch. 9 where we saw it opened and strange creatures like locusts came out; they had power to inflict torment on people for 5 months.

As we studied the bottomless pit when we were in ch. 9, we saw that it seems to be a *holding bin*, a kind of *spiritual prison* for malevolent & especially wicked fallen angels – what we call *demons*.

Well, it serves that purpose once again, as this angel comes to unlock the pit, wraps the devil in a great chain, and then seals him in.

The seal *also* speaks of *authority*.

Seals were legal marks showing *ownership*.

When something was *sealed* it meant that it was closed and put away until a later time.

You see, satan's incarceration in the bottomless pit isn't for *punishment*; it's to shut up his lying mouth.

For 1,000 years, the devil's influence and deceit will be banished from the Earth.

Though it's not said explicitly here, most commentators believe that the devil's binding and stay in the pit encompasses *all* the demons as well.

All spiritual influences of evil will be removed from earth and locked away in this spiritual prison for a thousand years.

But then, as it says at the end of v. 3, the devil is released once more for a short time – for reasons that will become clear later.

4And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them.

The “they” here has to be determined by the closest previous reference of possible candidates – and that would be found in 19:14 in the saints who return with Christ.

This is the Church, that glorious Bride of Christ who comes forth from her Bridal Chamber in heaven.

To this number more are added -

Then / saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had

not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

In Rev. 6, when the 5th seal was broken, John saw the souls of those who had been martyred for their faith under the altar of heaven. They cried out asking how long it would be till their blood was avenged on the earth dwellers.

They were told to wait till their full number was reached, then they would be vindicated.

Well, here's that promised vindication.

They are raised from the dead and given authority to rule with Christ for the duration of the Millennium.

What a turn around from the horrors they had experienced at the hands of the antichrist and his followers during the Tribulation. Because they refused to worship the antichrist and take his mark of loyalty, they were executed.

They rejected the short-lived and pitiful kingdom of rebel man in favor of the eternal Kingdom of Christ.

The devil managed to scrape together a rule of only 3½ years. Jesus will reign on Earth for a thousand!

And His people will rule with Him. (Rev. 2:26-28, 3:12,22, 1 Cor. 6:2-3)

The question many ask is – Rule over what?

The answer is – over the earth, and over those Tribulation saints who will have managed to survive till the end.

You see, when Jesus returns – those who have received the mark of the beast will be immediately judged and wiped out.

All that will be left are the surviving Tribulation saints – the ones who are given the blessing of being invited to the marriage supper in 19:9, and those few unbelievers who have managed to avoid taking the mark of the beast.

In Matthew 25, Jesus tells of the judgment of the nations.

This is not a judgment unto salvation, but a judgment of moral worthiness, and entrance into the Millennial Kingdom.

The unworthy will be sent into eternal damnation, and the worthy will be allowed into the Millennium.

These will then enter into the Millennial Kingdom of Christ and have lots and lots of kidlets – who will in turn mature and have their own families.

The Earth will experience a new population boom.

It is over all these the saints will rule.

⁵But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.

The dead referred to here are the *lost* – those who died without faith in Christ.

It includes all those from the dawn of creation right up to the Second Coming.

This *is* the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

The word “first” could easily confuse us because in English its *primary* meaning speaks of *sequence* and points to a single point in time.

But the *first resurrection* isn't a one time event; it's not the first of many resurrections.

The *first resurrection* refers to the transition from the mortal body to the eternal immortal body of *all those* who are saved.

This includes the OT saints, the Church, the Tribulation saints, and even the Millennial saints.

Jesus's resurrection was the very first (1 Cor. 15:20,23).

The Rapture will be the next phase of the First Resurrection.

Then at the Second Coming there will be another phase when all the Tribulation martyrs will rise, as we read in v. 4.

Those who participate in the first resurrection are blessed because they will never see the second death – meaning eternal separation from God.

There's an old saying that goes – Born once, die twice. Born twice, die once.

If you've only known one birth – natural birth then you'll die twice; first physically, and then eternally in hell.

If you've been *born again* through faith in Jesus Christ, then

the only death you'll know is the retiring of the physical body but your spirit will live with God forever.

5 times in vs. 1-6 John has made reference to a thousand years as a *set block of time* in which the devil will be bound and sealed away and the saints will rule over the earth.

The Bible has many other references to the millennial reign of Christ. Tragically, throughout history the Church has often ignored and denied the promise of the Millennium.

The early church universally believed in an earthly, historical reign of Jesus, initiated by the visible Second Coming of Christ.

It wasn't until the late 4th Century when a guy named Tyconius said the Millennium was to be understood as only a spiritual realm.

He advocated the view that the Millennium began with the Ascension of Christ to heaven and that it would stretch on and on for a long time.

His view was adopted by Augustine, whose thinking ended up influencing most of the Church for the next 1400 years. [\[3\]](#)

When we consider the rest of the Scriptures, the earthly reign of Christ and His people on this earth is plainly taught in the Old and New Testaments.

There are more than 400 verses in 20 different passages in the Old Testament which deal with this time when Jesus Christ rules and reigns personally over Earth.

Psalm 72, Isaiah 2, Isaiah 11, Jeremiah 23 are some of the hallmark passages of the OT.

In the NT we see the Millennium in Luke 1:32-33, Matthew 5:18, Luke 19:12-27, among others. [\[4\]](#)

As we piece the various passages together we find that during the Millennium –

1) Israel will be the “superpower” of the world. (Isaiah 2:1-3, Ezekiel 17:22-24)

It will be the leading nation in all the earth, and the center of

Israel will be *the mountain of the Lord's house* - the temple mount, which will be the “capital” of the government of the Messiah.

All nations shall flow to the “capital” of the government of Jesus.

- 2) The citizens of earth will acknowledge and submit to the Lordship of Jesus. (Isaiah 2:1-5)
It will be a time of perfectly administrated & enforced righteousness on this earth.
- 3) There will be no more war. (Isaiah 2:1-5 Psalm 2)
There will still be conflicts between nations and individuals, but they will be justly and decisively resolved by the Messiah and those who reign with Him.
It isn't the reign of the Messiah itself that will change the heart of man.
Citizens of earth will still need to trust in Jesus and His work on their behalf for their personal salvation during the millennium.
But war and armed conflict will not be tolerated.
- 4) The way animals relate to each other and to humans will be transformed. (Isaiah 11:6-9)
A child will be safe and able to lead a wolf or a leopard or a young lion or a bear.
Even the danger of predators like cobras and vipers will be gone.
In Genesis 9:2-3, the LORD gave Noah, and all mankind after him, the permission to eat meat.
At the same time, the LORD put the *dread* of man in animals, so they would not be effortless prey for humans.
Now, in the reign of the Messiah, that is reversed.
For this reason, many think that in the reign of the Messiah, the Millennium, humans will return to being vegetarians, as it seems they were before Genesis 9:2-3.
- 5) King David will have a prominent place in the millennial earth, ruling over Israel. (Isaiah 55:3-5, Jeremiah 30:4-11, Ezekiel 34:23-31, Ezekiel 37:21-28, Hosea 3:5)
- 6) There will be blessing and security for national Israel in the millennial earth (Amos 9:11-15).

- 7) The Millennium will be a time of global purity and devotion to God (Zechariah 13:1-9).
- 8) There will be a rebuilt temple and restored temple service on the millennial earth as a memorial of God's work in the past. (Ezekiel 40-48, Ezekiel 37:26-28, Amos 9:11, Ezekiel 20:39-44).
- 9) Saints in their resurrected state will be given responsibility in the Millennial Earth according to their faithful service (Luke 19:11-27, Revelation 20:4-6, Revelation 2:26-28; 3:12,22, 1 Corinthians 6:2-3).

So - is this a literal thousands years or should we take this number to be merely symbolic and spiritual?

Following the rules for interpreting scripture, we should take a number literally *unless* there is clear and compelling reason to do otherwise.

The Bible's frequent reference to the Earthly reign of the Messiah demands that we see the Millennium as a literal thousand years. Not only that – but here in v. 3 & 5, John prefaces the word “thousand” with the definite article “the” – which in Greek puts a specific emphasis on the “thousand” as a specific thing.

The Millennium is important as an historical epoch because it will demonstrate Jesus' victory and worthiness to rule the nations.

The world will see the perfection of God's rule over earth and realize His holiness and perfect righteousness.

The Millennium is important because it will reveal the depths of man's rebellious nature even in the midst of a perfect environment.

Remember how in v. 3 it said that the devil would be bound for a thousand years, then released for a little while?

That's so that after having a 1,000 years of paradise and perfect, righteous and just government, the true hearts of men and women can be revealed as they're given an opportunity to rebel or remain faithful.

You see, some people believe that man is basically good, and deep down he really *wants* God.

Many believe that man is really innocent, and corrupted only by a

bad environment.

The Millennium will prove once and for all that the problem with man is not the environment or his external circumstances – and it certainly isn't with God.

Man's problem is his own inner bent toward evil.

When I think about the rebellion that will rise against Christ *after* the Millennium I get confused.

But it only points up the fact that there is no reason or logic to sin!

The Millennium is important because it will display the eternal depravity of Satan, who continues his evil as soon as he is released from his incarceration. [\[5\]](#)

⁷Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea. ⁹They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

John's visions at this point seem to become more summary and less detailed.

When the Millennium is complete, satan is loosed from the bottomless pit and goes forth to deceive the nations once more. He rallies a vast force and they come and lay siege to Jerusalem. But there's no battle this time – Having proved His point that the problem is with rebel man, God just ends it by sending fire from heaven that consumes the rebels.

The devil is then sent to the lake of fire – what we know as hell, where the antichrist and false prophet ARE!

Now –notice that, the antichrist and false prophet were cast into hell at the beginning of the thousand years – but they are still there a thousand years later.

While the word “are” is in italics, meaning it’s not in the original text, the grammar makes it clear that the antichrist and false prophet are there waiting for the devil when he arrives.

They are conscious – they haven’t been annihilated!

I mention this because it’s become fashionable in some theological circles to say that the lost are *annihilated*.

They think of hell as a fire that consumes and ends existence.

But that is not at all the picture of hell the scriptures paint.

On the contrary, Jesus often referred to it as a place of outer darkness where there’s weeping and gnashing of teeth.

It’s a place of conscious, eternal torment.

Those who advocate annihilation do not base their position on scripture so much as on an attempt to make God look better.

Confining people to eternal torment seems harsh and doesn’t square with their ideas of the love and mercy of God.

What they don’t factor into the discussion is the cross!

God’s love and mercy are revealed there.

He’s done all that could be done to save people from hell.

If the only options are eternity in heaven or annihilation, then quite frankly their pretty much equal and the cross was unnecessary.

The cross proves that the options facing men and women are eternal bliss or eternal torment.

You now – the whole debate over annihilation is answered simply by the concluding phrase of v. 10 –

And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

In v. 8, John labels the nations satan recruits into rebellion as Gog and Magog, who are in the four corners of the earth.

Gog and Magog are found in Eze. 38 & 39 where they refer to the land and people of modern day Russia who devise a scheme to attack Israel with a vast coalition of forces.

The battle described in Ezekiel takes place long before what we’re reading about here.

John simply lifts the names Gog & Magog out of that passage as a symbol the world that unites to come against the land and people of God.

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it,

from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

Okay – this is it, the final judgment of lost humanity.

John sees a mega, brilliantly-white royal throne.

On this throne sat One whose countenance was so majestic, so radiant and awesome that all of creation shrank away.

John 5:22-23 tells us this is Jesus.

12And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

This judgement is not like a trial in which the heavenly Judge is trying to determine the facts.

No - the facts are in and this is the rendering of the verdict.

Books are opened – these books contain the works of those who stand before God.

They're judged according to their works.

John says another Book was opened as well - the Book of Life.

People will come before God, and the Book of Life will be examined to see if their name is there.

If it is, then they're exempt from judgment.

You see, the way one gets their name inscribed in the Book of Life is by believing in Christ.

In 21:27 it's referred to as the Lamb's Book of Life.

If their name isn't found in the Book of Life, then *their* book will be opened.

Listed there will be all their works. [Reading someone's diary]
Each sin will be sufficient cause for a guilty verdict.

13The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

The point is, *all* the dead come to stand before God at the Great White Throne.

14Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.

This is the second death. ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Death & hades are the temporary place of internment for the unrighteous dead until the time of the final judgment.

Once they are emptied, then all those who have not put their faith in Christ will be sent to the lake of fire.

This is the second death – eternal death.

CHAPTER 21

¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

All of the pain and sorrow of the previous 15 chapters is now out of sight.

John's eyes are filled a vision of spectacular glory that simply beggars description.

He really struggles here to find words which capture what he saw.

For that reason, we'll offer only minor comment – leaving what we find here to just John's description and our experience of them when we arrive in glory.

John saw a new heaven and earth, because the original ones had passed away.

In 2 Peter 3, Peter tells us how this creation will dissolve.

The heavens will roll up like a scroll and the elements will melt with a fervent heat, which is a perfectly accurate description of what would happen if the atomic forces that hold matter together were released.

Just as a theater group tears down a stage when the run of the play is over, so the moment will come when the creation has served its purpose as the stage upon which history has unfolded.

Then it will be time to take the stage down.

God will have a new stage to erect for a brand new story and that's what we're seeing here. (Isaiah 65:17-19 Psalm 102:25-27)

In this new heaven and earth, there's no more need for the sea.

This is a small but interesting point.

Life could not possibly exist on earth without the oceans the way they are.

They provide so much to the process of earth that without them life would end quickly.

When John says there's no more sea in the new earth, he means us to understand the new thing will be fundamentally and radically *different* from this earth.

The Greek word translated new (*kaine*) means "new in character, 'fresh'."

Not "recent" or "new in time."

This isn't just the *next* heaven and the *next* earth; this is the *better* heaven and earth.

Also, in Isaiah 65:17 God says prophetically that He will create a new heaven and a new earth, and the ancient Hebrew word for "create" (*bara*) means to "create out of nothing," instead of re-fashioning existing material.

2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

In Hebrews 12, the faithful are said to find no home in this world.

They are strangers and aliens here who are traveling to and looking for a better city than any they could find on earth.

The builder of that City is God and they will only find it in heaven.

Here we see their faith realized in the New Jerusalem.

Now, don't confuse this with the Jerusalem in Israel!

Remember, the old earth has passed away and this is something totally new.

This will be the new home for all the people of God.

The greatest desire of the people of God is to abide in His immediate and manifest presence.

The New Jerusalem is the place where that will be realized &

maximized.

All causes of pain and sorrow will be removed – and every motive to weep will be banished.

The New Jerusalem will be a place of constant, growing joy.

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

“Behold, I make all things new,” is in the present tense.

It could be translated, “*I am making everything new.*”

Though John has had a vision of the recreation to come at the end of history – God reminds him that the roots of that recreation are already at work in his day; in his life.

While the New Jerusalem will be utterly new, it will be populated by us who are new creatures IN Christ – that newness being created by the Spirit of God today, and day by day.

In 2 Cor. 5:17 we read –

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new

In 2 Cor. 4:16 Paul wrote -

Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

6 And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

“It is done!” Those word’s place the final seal on the flow of history as we know it.

God’s eternal purpose in Jesus is now accomplished.

Ephesians 1:10 has been fulfilled:

That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; in Him.

I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

This promise is lost on us because we don't face the issue of water the ancient world did.

Water was life to them.

Being an agriculturally based economy and not having the convenience of modern plumbing, life revolved around the well.

A fountain was even better than a well, because there was no work to do to draw water – you just opened your mouth and drank!

God's promise here was simply overwhelming to the people of the ancient world.

7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

The one who overcomes is the one who has faith in Christ, as it says in 1 John 5:5.

This is the one who will inherit all things – but most importantly – God Himself!

8 But the cowardly, [those who shrink from faith in Christ to serve self] unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.” ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God.

At first reading we might jump to the conclusion that the New Jerusalem IS the Bride.

But ch. 19 and other passages make it clear that the bride of Christ is the Church.

The angel invites John to see the Bride, but then take him to a vantage point to see the New Jerusalem because it's there the Bride is to be found.

It's like me saying to you – “Come one, I'm going to show you my wife,” and then stopping at the top of the grade above Camarillo on the 101 and pointing toward Oxnard and saying – “There she is! Isn't she a babe?”

The difference with what John is seeing here is that in the New Jerusalem, it's the union of Christ with His people that decorates and gives it its glory.

Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. ¹²Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

¹⁴Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. ¹⁷Then he measured its wall: one hundred *and* forty-four cubits, *according* to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.

The New Jerusalem's length, height and width are equal meaning its shape is that of a cube.

The Holy of holies in the tabernacle was a cube as well and since that was a model of heaven, it makes good sense to see the New Jerusalem as the final form of the Holy Place.

The size of the New Jerusalem is massive.

12,000 furlongs equals 1,500 miles!

That's roughly the distance from LA to North Central Iowa!

The square footage would approximate the size of the Moon!

Scientist Henry Morris, guessing that there will have been 100 billion people in the human race, and that 20% of them will be saved, calculates that each person would have their own

“cube” with about 75 acres on each face to call their own. John wants to be properly understood here that he’s describing a real thing so he gives a reference to what he means by a cubit.

The angel’s unit of measure was that of the standard cubit – so about 18 inches.

Now John describes the beauty of the New Jerusalem –

18The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. **19**The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation 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 chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. **21**The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

As John describes what he saw, he’s using words with reference to *this* earth, but this is in the *new heavens and earth*.

Suffice it to say, John is using some of the most precious materials of his time and place to describe the most mundane things of the new world; walls, foundations, gates, streets.

From his repeated use of the word “clear” it seems that the New Jerusalem is a place of openness and transparency so that the light and glory of God can radiate throughout it without hindrance.

22But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. **23**The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light.

Imagine coming back from Chicago and telling your friends about your trip and saying, “Chicago is a fantastic city, but there are no stores there.”

They’d think you were nuts!

In the ancient world, it was unthinkable to have a great city without a central temple that housed it’s main deity.

There's not need for a temple in the New Jerusalem because God's presence will tangibly permeate the entire thing.
Each and every person will be in the immediate, manifest presence of God.

That presence will be seen in the light that illumines it.

24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.

This verse has proven to be difficult for many commentators because they're troubled by the words "nations" and "kings."

I don't understand their confusion.

The word nations is *ethnos* and simple means "peoples."

John is simply saying the grandeur of the New Jerusalem will be expanded because God has saved from every nation, every ethnic group.

Even their kings and great men and women live in it.

25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. 27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

City gates were closed at night to keep enemies from springing a surprise attack.

Since there is no night in the new heavens and earth, there's not need to shut the gates.

Besides since all evil has been banished, there's nothing to threaten it or its inhabitants.

[1] Walvoord, John *Prophecy Knowledge Handbook* pg. 623

[2] Morris, Henry *The Book of Revelation*

[3] Guzik, David *On-Line Commentary - Revelation*

[4] *ibid.*

[5] *ibid.*