

San Juan Church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About... Beauty of the Bride of Christ

Students of the Bible are lead to believe that Revelation chapter 21 is describing heaven. There are even hymns based on this chapter telling of the pearly gates and streets of gold we will find there. When Paul was spiritually "caught up in the third heaven," described by him to be Paradise, he "heard inexpressible words which a man is not permitted to speak" (2 Cor. 12:2-4). The Holy Spirit did not allow the apostles to explicitly define what heaven would be like.

One of the seven angels told the apostle John to write, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:9-10). Earlier in the chapter John saw a vision of this holy city, new Jerusalem, "made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:2). The Hebrew writer defined this city to be Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem [spiritual] where the "general assembly and church of the first born are enrolled" (Hebrews 12:22-23).

One might wonder if the angel who spoke to John was confused. He started out showing John "a bride" and then ended up showing him "a city." Yet, if we understand "Jerusalem" as noted in verse two above, and "the bride" as noted by Paul in Ephesus 5:31-32, then we can come to only one conclusion. John is using two figures to describe the same thing - the church! Again we see the church's place of origin "coming down out of heaven." The church certainly has a spiritual and heavenly origin.

When John wrote about the Lord's church, he said, "Her brilliance [bride of Christ] was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear Jasper...and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundation stones of the city walls were adorned with every kind of precious stone" (Rev. 21:11, 18-19). John is giving us a picture of how precious the church, the bride of Christ, is to Him. John describes, in verses 19-21, these precious stones which are symbolic of the Lord's church. This spiritual temple (1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19) makes Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:2-10) look like a shack! The point is that God's people are truly precious in His sight. When Christians consider that God sees us and His church as precious stones we should know we are loved. Yes, the world may say all manner of evil against the church on account of Jesus. But God thinks His people are pretty special!

In Peter's reference to the church he wrote, "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But you are a chose race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession...for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Peter 2:5, 9-10).

God told Moses that Aaron, his brother and his sons with him, should make "holy garments" that they may minister as priests to God. God told Moses how these holy garments should be made (Ex. 28:2-20). The stones adorning Aaron and his sons' holy garments were the same kind of stones that make up the spiritual priesthood of those who wear the holy garments in the church today (Rev. 21:18-20). Christians in the Lord's church wear these spiritual holy garments upon baptism into Christ (Galatians 3:27). The apostle John said, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come [past tense] and His bride has [past tense] made herself ready. It was given to her [the church] to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts [obedience] of the saints" (Rev. 19:7-8).

Send comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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