Today's Radio Study:

Woodrow Kroll: Go with me to the 21st chapter of the Book of Revelation, 21. This is almost the end; there are only 22 chapters in the whole book. God willing, this week we're going to get right to the end in our study. Today we're talking about the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. Let me begin by reading a couple of verses, and then we'll talk about those verses. "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. Then I, John, saw the holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 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"' (Revelation 21:1-3).

Don't you find it comforting how often in that verse He says, "God will be with them"? This is not new, of course. God sent His Son so He could be with us. But this is a whole new era. This is a whole new way of being with God. Let's talk about the Holy City, first, and then we'll talk a little bit about being with God in that Holy City. Is this a real city? Is this just some symbolic representation of God? He has to live somewhere so we'll call it the Holy City. Well, the interesting thing about this passage is, 15 times in Revelation chapters 21 and 22, this is mentioned as a city, not a symbolic place but as a city. I would guess 15 times is done for emphasis so that we know we are really talking about a city here.

The details of this city are repeated for us again and again and again. It's a city that has walls. It's a city that has streets. It's a city that has buildings—places for you and me to dwell. So, I think that suggests we are talking about a real city here. This city will be the center of God's government. Now, remember, Jerusalem has always been God's town. It's the only city about which He said, "I will put My name on that city; that belongs to Me." If I had my choice, I probably would live in Jerusalem; I just love this town. I'd like to call it my town. Now, I can't, because I don't live there.

But God calls Jerusalem His town. So, the New Jerusalem is His town. This is God's place. This is the place where Jesus' prayer is finally going to be answered—you know, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Heaven is going to come to earth; and the will of God will finally be done when the New Jerusalem becomes our home. Think with me a little bit about this city. You talk about an extravagant city. Look what it says there. "And he carried me away [this is the angel carry, one of the seven angels carrying John away] 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, having the glory of God. And her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (Revelation 21:10-11).
I've said throughout the course of our study of the Book of Revelation, John is caught up while he's banished on this isle of Patmos. He's caught up (chapter 4, verse 1), caught up to heaven (probably not physically but certainly spiritually and emotionally). He is seeing things that God is revealing to Him about the future. Let's face it: John is struggling to find the right words to describe what he sees in ways that you can appreciate it. So, sometimes he says “it's like this” or “it's like that.” In one case he says, “There are demons like frogs”—not that they look like frogs but they just seem to be everywhere, you know. So, John is now struggling to describe the Holy City of God. The interesting thing here is, in verse 11 he says it shines with the glory of God. It has a brilliance of a very precious jewel, like, I don't know...like jasper or something clear as crystal. See, he's struggling to say this is what the city of God is going to be like. He wants you to know how great it is. And he just can't find the words to say it.

Now, interestingly enough, down at verse 18 we get a little more instruction about that jasper. He says, "The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones" (Revelation 21:18-19). Then in the next several verses he begins to list the precious stones that make up the foundation of this city. But what I want you to see here is this: This is not a very usual city. This is a very unusual place. We ordinarily don't describe our town as having foundations listing precious stones like this, maybe sandstone, maybe concrete, you know. But this is not your normal city. This is a very, very uncharacteristic city. It's extravagant. It's the most extravagant city of history past or present or even history future.

I think the precious stones here and the gold represent the incredible worth, the incredible value, of this city. Then, after all, it's God's city. You would expect it to have incredible worth and incredible value. Look at verse 10. He says, "He carried me away...to a great...mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven"—heaven here meaning the “heavens of heaven, the atmosphere.” So, the city of Jerusalem is somehow coming down from heaven, out of heaven. It doesn't actually say it touches Earth, although it doesn't have to hover above the city. I've heard a lot of people talk about this hovering city as if it's a place where the Jetsons lived or somebody, you know. It really doesn't have to hover because this is the bridge between a brand-new creation (the new earth) and another brand-new creation, the new heaven. This is what connects heaven and earth and makes heaven and earth God's entire home.

The interesting thing, though, about this is it relocates heaven on earth. You've heard people talk about heaven on earth, you know—just chocolate ice cream...heaven on earth; Rocky Road...maybe it can be better than that. But how could it possibly be better than that? Heaven on earth? Well, one day there will be heaven on earth. But it's because God brings heaven here, not because we invent some new food or a new ball team or something like that. When God brings heaven down to earth, He comes with it. That's what makes it heaven on earth! Let me quote something to you. This comes from a theologian by the name of Anthony Hoekema. You may recognize that name. Anthony Hoekema says this: "The New Jerusalem...does not remain in 'heaven' far off in space, but it comes down to a renewed earth; there the redeemed will spend eternity in resurrection bodies. So heaven and earth, now separated, will then be merged: the new heaven will also be heaven, since God will dwell there with His people. Glorified believers, in other words, will continue to be in heaven while they inhabit the new earth.”

What that means is this: You won't say, "We're here on earth and God is up there in heaven” because God will be here and we'll be there. The two will be joined and remain joined forever. That's why it's difficult for us today to explain how this is going to look because we've never seen anything like this before.

Tami Weissert: When will the renewing of heaven, earth, and Jerusalem take place? Is this right after the battle of Gog and Magog?

WK: Probably. Let's just review for a moment. If you look back at the end of the Tribulation period, the Battle of Armageddon. That's where Jesus comes to Earth. He establishes His king-
dom here at that time. That kingdom, according to the Bible, lasts for 1,000 years. That's why
we call it His millennial reign, meaning 1,000 years. Then after that, Satan is released out of the
bottomless pit at the end of that time. Very quickly, he tries to do what Satan has always been
trying to do—He tries to be God. But you know, he can’t be God so he tries to muster troops
against Jesus in one last battle at the end of the millennial period. That's the battle of Gog and
Magog. Satan loses that battle like he’s lost every other battle he's ever fought. He's thrown into
the lake of fire. Immediately, I think, God brings the new heaven and the new earth into being.
How He does it—that takes a greater mind than mine. That He does it, I believe, because that’s
what the Word says.

TW: Since God will be living with us, will we still be praying to Him like we do now?

WK: That’s a good question. We certainly could, but we can also talk directly with Him face-
to-face as we cannot now. So I guess the choice is up to us. Well, the question we have to ad-
dress now is, just how big is this city? And you might be saying to yourself: How many people
can fit in this New Jerusalem? How many people can fit in a city like this? Remember, we have a
dwelling place in this city.

Let's find out what the Bible has to say, Revelation 21. Look at verse 16: “The city is laid out as
a square, and its length is as great as its breadth [which means it's a perfect square]. And he
measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are
equal.” Now, I am not a mathematician. But I understand for the breadth, length and height all
to be the same, there are only two possibilities: one is a cube and the other is a triangle because
both of those could have exactly the same height, breadth and width. You know, everybody ar-
gues about: Is this a cube or is it a triangle? I don't think God cares. I certainly don't care either.
My concern is that I'm there, not what the shape of the city is.

But look at how long this city is. Its 144 cubits, it tells us, verse 17. “He measured its wall: one
hundred and forty-four cubits.” And now you have to ask yourself: What is a cubit? Well, this
is the measurement that's used all the way through the Bible. It was an easy measurement be-
cause a cubit is the distance between the elbow and the tip of the middle finger in the normal-
sized human being. So, for a basketball player it could be a little longer; but for normal people
that's about 18 inches. So, if you have 144 cubits, you're talking about 2,592 inches or about 216
feet.

He measured its wall; it's 216 feet thick—not high, thick—and nobody is going to burrow
through this wall. That means it is 216 feet thick. Now, the wall also is the foundation of the
building because the wall was built on the foundation. I think the reason he gives the dimen-
sions of the wall here is to tell us we have a sufficient foundation to put a relatively large build-
ing on.

Think about this. How much is 216 feet? For those of you who are not in the U.S. or Canada,
please forgive me for using a football analogy—because in America that's the only way we can
think, you know. Supposing you took the kickoff in the end zone, and you ran it out of the end
zone and you made it past the 20. You were not tackled. You got to the 30. You got to the 40.
You got to mid-field. You crossed mid-field. You went to the 40. You went to the 30. And you
got all the way 72 yards from the other end zone. That's 216 feet. So, the thickness of this wall
is as if you caught a football in the end zone, ran it all the way to the 28 of your opposing team
before you were tackled—that's how thick this wall is. Now, on this wall comes a building; and
this building is 1,500 square miles. Fifteen hundred square miles.

Do you know how big that is? If you put this building in the United States, it would cover
more than the state of Rhode Island. In fact, it would cover more than the state of California.
It would cover more than Texas. (I know how that hurts some of you.) If you put this city in
the middle of the United States, it would stretch from Canada to Mexico. If you put it right in
the center of the United States, it would stretch from the Appalachian Mountains on the east
all the way to California on the west. This is a massive, massive city. Even more astounding, it’s 1,500 miles up, as it is 1,500 miles out and across. That means, then, the New Jerusalem described here in Revelation 21 is about 15,000 times larger than the city of London right now. Could you put the population of the world in the city of London? You say, “I don’t know.” Well, this is 15,000 times larger. This city is 40 times larger than the whole country of England. This city is ten times larger than France or Germany.

If you had a city in which each story in this 1,500-mile city was 15 feet high (your ceilings were 15 feet high), you would have a city of nearly 500,000 stories and 1,500 miles at the base. Ten billion people could occupy that city, and the population of the world today is only six and a half billion. Ten billion people could occupy that city and every one of us would have more than 100 square miles of space. Is it big enough? Oh, when God does it, He does it well! That’s the New Jerusalem. That’s where we are bound if we know the Lord Jesus as our Savior. Now, you see how important it is that you get the issue of faith in Christ right now—because this is a city that is reserved for people who have reserved the place. The only way to do that is by putting your faith in what Jesus did at Calvary for you to be all that God required to pay the penalty for your sin.

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