

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 #24.

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The Gates of Praise & Righteousness

“But you will call your walls salvation, and your gates praise.” (Isaiah 60:18 NASB)

(10) I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (11) For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. (Isaiah 61:10-11 NASB)

(6) On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; (7) and give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. (Isaiah 62:6-7 NASB)

Starting in Isaiah 60, the Lord began to speak through the prophet about New Jerusalem. He did not call it new, but He did say that it would be called by a new name. As we have seen, this new name is New Jerusalem. We have already seen that its walls are called salvation, but there also are twelve gates of pearls in the walls, and these are called praise.

(12) It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. (13) There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. ... (21) And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. (Revelation 21:12-13, 21 NASB)

The gates of New Jerusalem are called praise because gates speak of entrance, and all who enter into this glorious city will sing endless praises to God. All who become the city will praise God for all that He has done. Those who are helped by the city will praise God for His goodness, His mercy, and His love. When all creation beholds the city, it will rejoice and praise God. New Jerusalem is a city of praise.

All who enter the city to become the city must enter through the gates, for the walls are high and impenetrable. As they pass through the gates, meaning they are conquerors, they are filled with praise.

But there is more, for the Greek word for *gate* can refer to a *portal* or *vestibule*, that is, a building enclosing a gate, and each gate is described as a single pearl. I believe that we are not to focus on the gates as round pearls taken from a mollusk but as a structure made of pearl. In other words, our attention is to be drawn to the material itself and its color.

In this case, the gates that John saw were the color of beautiful white pearls. White speaks of character and, most specifically, righteousness, for the conquerors of Sardis are worthy to walk with the Lord, for they have not soiled their garments; thus they will be clothed in white garments (Revelation 3:4-5).

When the great proclamation thunders from heaven that the bride (i.e., New Jerusalem) has made herself ready, she is given **fine linen, bright and clean, for the fine linen is the righteous acts**

of the saints (Revelation 19:7-8). Consequently, the gates of pearl are **the gates of righteousness**, and they signify that only the righteous enter the city, and only the righteous will ever be the city.

Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the LORD. (Psalm 118:19 NASB)

Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter, the one that remains faithful. (Isaiah 26:2 NASB)

Blessed are those who wash their robes [i.e., white garments of righteousness], **so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.** (Revelation 22:14 NASB)

The righteous and holy ones will **enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise** (Psalm 100:4).

We should always be mindful of the meaning of the word *righteous*. It simply means doing what is right in the sight of God. It speaks of manifesting God's perfect will. New Jerusalem not only manifests the perfect will of God, but it is also righteousness itself; that is, it is the will of God. When New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven, it comes down as the righteousness of God and settles on the new earth to make the very character of the new earth righteous. Isaiah gives us a glimpse of this.

Drip down, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds pour down righteousness; let the earth open up and salvation bear fruit, and righteousness spring up with it. I, the LORD, have created it. (Isaiah 45:8 NASB)

New Jerusalem will be snatched away in clouds to meet the Lord in air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). The conquerors will be like the clouds, and they will pour down righteousness on earth, bringing salvation so that righteousness will spring up with it. This is the glory of New Jerusalem that will bring praise and righteousness to mankind.

Now, John saw twelve gates of praise and of righteousness. The number 12 will be taken up separately in a subsequent issue, but, at this point, it is appropriate to point out that, biblically, the number signifies the perfection of government or governmental perfection. In other words, New Jerusalem speaks of God's perfect government operating in and through His people. One commentator has noted that the number 12 also represents the creature in permanent communion with its Creator. Thus, only those in perfect communion with God are part of the holy city. This brings to mind the **law of the house**.

"This is the law of the house: its entire area on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house." (Ezekiel 43:12 NASB)

Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." (Exodus 3:5 NASB)

The law of the house is the law of holiness, and only the holy are part of the holy city. New Jerusalem is holy ground, and all who are qualified to become part of the holy city are holy. As it is written: **"Be holy," "because I am holy"** Lev. 19:2 (1 Peter 1:16 LITV).

Dear brethren, do you long to live in endless praise? Do you long to be holy, for He is holy? Oh, by faith, we can declare we are holy, but a day is coming when we will manifest holiness in our very being so that the angels and the rest of mankind will see. The same goes for righteousness. Do you long for righteousness, not simply an imputed righteousness but to be righteous through and through? Well then, let us long to enter through the gates of New Jerusalem.