

The “New Jerusalem” is Jerusalem Restored

By Tim Warner

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Revelation 21-22, dealing with the New Jerusalem, is almost universally misunderstood by Christians.

- The New Jerusalem is **not** “heaven.”
- The New Jerusalem is **not** a new city on some other “new” planet.
- The New Jerusalem is **not** a celestial city that will hover over the earth.

The New Jerusalem is the present city of Jerusalem when it is restored by God at the second coming of Jesus Christ, and co—inhabited by the Father, the Lamb, and the redeemed. This fact can be proven conclusively by demonstrating that its features are drawn primarily from two Old Testament prophetic books, Isaiah (chapters 54, 60, 62, 65-66), and Ezekiel (chapters 43, 47, 48). All of these passages describe the restored city of Jerusalem in the Millennium. The parallel passages in Revelation, drawn directly from these prophecies, are far too numerous to be coincidence. And the context of the Old Testament passages leaves no room for doubt that they refer to the present city of Jerusalem, having been restored. This fact is devastating to both amillennialism (which sees no future for the earth after the second coming), and dispensationalism (which holds a dichotomy between the eternal destinies of Israel and the Church).

Jerusalem Restored

Isaiah 54:1-15

1 **“Sing, O barren, You who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, You who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate Than the children of the married woman,”** says the LORD. 2 “Enlarge the place of your tent, And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your stakes. 3 For you shall expand to the right and to the

New Jerusalem

Gal 4:25-27

25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children — 26 but **the Jerusalem above** is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written: **“Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband.”**

left, And your descendants will inherit the nations, And make the desolate cities inhabited.

4 "Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; For you will forget the shame of your youth, And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore. 5 **For your Maker is your husband, The LORD of hosts is His name; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.** 6 **For the LORD has called you Like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, Like a youthful wife when you were refused," Says your God.** 7 **"For a mere moment I have forsaken you, But with great mercies I will gather you. 8 With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you," Says the LORD, your Redeemer.** 9 "For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; For as I have sworn That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, So have I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. 10 For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," Says the LORD, who has mercy on you. 11 "O you afflicted one, Tossed with tempest, and not comforted, **Behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, And lay your foundations with sapphires. 12 I will make your pinnacles of rubies, Your gates of crystal, And all your walls of precious stones.**

Rev 21:2-3

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.**

Rev 21:9-10

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,

Rev 21:18-21

18 **The 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.**

Isaiah 60

1 Arise, shine; For your light has come!
And the glory of the LORD is risen
upon you. 2 For behold, the darkness
shall cover the earth, And deep
darkness the people; But the LORD will
arise over you, And His glory will be
seen upon you. 3 **The Gentiles [nations]
shall come to your light, And kings to
the brightness of your rising.**

4 "Lift up your eyes all around, and see:
They all gather together, they come to
you; Your sons shall come from afar,
And your daughters shall be nursed at
your side. 5 Then you shall see and
become radiant, And your heart shall
swell with joy; Because the abundance
of the sea shall be turned to you, The
wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.
6 The multitude of camels shall cover
your land, The dromedaries of Midian
and Ephah; All those from Sheba shall
come; They shall bring gold and incense,
And they shall proclaim the praises of
the LORD. 7 All the flocks of Kedar shall
be gathered together to you, The rams of
Nebaioth shall minister to you; They
shall ascend with acceptance on My
altar, And I will glorify the house of My
glory.

8 "Who are these who fly like a cloud,
And like doves to their roosts? 9 Surely
the coastlands shall wait for Me; And
the ships of Tarshish will come first, To
bring your sons from afar, Their silver
and their gold with them, To the name
of the LORD your God, And to the Holy
One of Israel, Because He has glorified
you.

Rev 21:24

4 **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.**

10 "The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, And their kings shall minister to you; For in My wrath I struck you, But in My favor I have had mercy on you. 11 **Therefore your gates shall be open continually; They shall not be shut day or night, That men may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles, And their kings in procession.** 12 For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish, And those nations shall be utterly ruined.

13 "The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, The cypress, the pine, and the box tree together, To beautify the place of My sanctuary; And I will make the place of My feet glorious. 14 Also the sons of those who afflicted you Shall come bowing to you, And all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet; And they shall call you **The City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.**

15 "Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, So that no one went through you, I will make you an eternal excellence, A joy of many generations. 16 You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles, And milk the breast of kings; You shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

17 "Instead of bronze I will bring gold, Instead of iron I will bring silver, Instead of wood, bronze, And instead of stones, iron. I will also make your officers peace, And your magistrates righteousness. 18 Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, Neither wasting nor destruction within your

Rev 21:25-27

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.

borders; But you shall call your walls Salvation, And your gates Praise.

19 "The sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, And your God your glory. 20 Your sun shall no longer go down, Nor shall your moon withdraw itself; For the LORD will be your everlasting light, And the days of your mourning shall be ended. 21 Also your people shall all be righteous; They shall inherit the land forever, The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified. 22 A little one shall become a thousand, And a small one a strong nation. I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time."

Isaiah 62

1 For **Zion's** sake I will not hold My peace, And for **Jerusalem's** sake I will not rest, Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, And her salvation as a lamp that burns. 2 **The Gentiles [nations] shall see your righteousness, And all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, Which the mouth of the LORD will name.** 3 You shall also be a crown of glory In the hand of the LORD, And a royal diadem In the hand of your God. 4 You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; For the LORD delights in you, And your land shall be married.

Rev 21:23-24

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.**

Rev 21:27

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.**

Rev 21:24

4 **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.**

Rev 21:2-3

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.

5 For as a young man marries a virgin,
So shall your sons marry you; **And as
the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
So shall your God rejoice over you.** 6 I
have set watchmen on your walls, O
Jerusalem; They shall never hold their
peace day or night. You who make
mention of the LORD, do not keep silent,
7 And give Him no rest till He
establishes And till He makes **Jerusalem**
a praise in the earth. 8 The LORD has
sworn by His right hand And by the
arm of His strength: "Surely I will no
longer give your grain As food for your
enemies; And the sons of the foreigner
shall not drink your new wine, For
which you have labored. 9 But those
who have gathered it shall eat it, And
praise the LORD; Those who have
brought it together shall drink it in My
holy courts." 10 Go through, Go through
the gates! Prepare the way for the
people; Build up, Build up the highway!
Take out the stones, Lift up a banner for
the peoples! 11 Indeed the LORD has
proclaimed To the end of the world:
"Say to the daughter of **Zion**, 'Surely
your salvation is coming; **Behold, His
reward is with Him, And His work
before Him.**" 12 And they shall call
them The Holy People, The Redeemed
of the LORD; And you shall be called
Sought Out, **A City Not Forsaken.**

Isaiah 65:17-19

17 "For behold, **I create new heavens
and a new earth**; ... 18 But be glad and
rejoice forever in what I create; **For
behold, I create Jerusalem as a
rejoicing, And her people a joy.**

Rev 21:9-10

"**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.**

Rev 22:12

12 "And behold, I am coming quickly,
and **My reward is with Me, to give to
every one according to his work.**

Rev 21:1-2

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. 2 **Then I, John, saw the
holy city, New Jerusalem, coming
down out of heaven from God,**

Ezek 43:1-7

1 Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate that faces toward the east. 2 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory. 3 It was like the appearance of the vision which I saw — like the vision which I saw when I came to destroy the city. The visions were like the vision which I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face. 4 And the glory of the LORD came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east. 5 The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

6 Then I heard Him speaking to me from the temple, while a man stood beside me. 7 And He said to me, "**Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever.**"

Ezek 47:1-12

1 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. 2 He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side. ...

Rev 21:3-4

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.**"

22:3 **And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.**

7 **When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other.** 8 Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. 9 And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. 10 It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. 11 But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. 12 **Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.**"

Ezek 48:30-35

30 "These are the exits of **the city**. On the north side, measuring four thousand five hundred [measures], 31 **(the gates of the city shall be named after the tribes of Israel), the three gates northward: one gate for Reuben, one gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi; 32 on the east side, four thousand five hundred cubits, three gates: one gate for Joseph,**

Rev 22:1-2

1 **And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.**

2 **In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.**

Rev 21:12-13

12 **Also 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: 13 three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.**

one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan; 33 on the south side, measuring four thousand five hundred [measures], three gates: one gate for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, and one gate for Zebulun; 34 on the west side, four thousand five hundred [measures] with their three gates: one gate for Gad, one gate for Asher, and one gate for Naphtali. 35 All the way around shall be eighteen thousand [measures]; and **the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE."**

Hebrews 13:10-16

*10 We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. 12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate [of Jerusalem]. 13 Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. 14 **For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.** 15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. 16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

The restoration of Jerusalem, and the permanent inheritance of the land God promised to Abraham, is the true hope of the Christian. This earth will be restored, and become the permanent possession of the righteous, with the Father and the Son living among men.

Objections Answered

1. John saw "no more sea." From this statement it is supposed that the "new earth" is some other new planet, created specifically for the redeemed, and that there will be no oceans. However, notice that "sea" is singular, not plural, and has the definite article in the Greek. It therefore refers to a particular well known "sea," the Red Sea, through which the Israelites were led by God to the Promised Land. This objection suffers from

the same deficiency we have already exposed, interpreting Revelation in isolation from Old Testament prophecy.

Isaiah 11:15-16

15 The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, And strike it in the seven streams, And make men cross over dryshod.

16 There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, As it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.

Isaiah 51:10-11

10 Are You not the One who dried up the sea, The waters of the great deep; That made the depths of the sea a road for the redeemed to cross over? 11 So [in like manner] the ransomed of the LORD shall return, And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The permanent elimination of the Red Sea, of which the previous dividing was just a sign, will be to make a permanent gateway for all of Africa to the Holy Land, so they too can come up to Jerusalem to worship unobstructed.

2. John saw “no temple” in the New Jerusalem. Yet, the prophecies from Ezekiel refer to the Millennial Temple in great detail. However, there are two Greek words for “Temple.” Ἱερον refers to the whole temple, including its courts and various buildings. This is the word usually rendered “temple” in the New Testament. However, John used “ναος.” This term in its strictest sense referred to the inner sanctuary, the place where the Ark of the Covenant resided as a substitute and representation of God’s actual presence. This very private area was cloaked in the veil, which separated this space from the rest of the Temple, and hid the Ark of the Covenant from the view of everyone, even the priests serving in the Temple, (Heb. 9:3). That John saw no “ναος” in the New Jerusalem indicates that God will no longer have a cloaked or hidden room that is off limits, or a man made “Ark of the Covenant” to represent His presence. Instead, He will literally be present, and accessible to all. After his comment about the absence of a “ναος,” John immediately wrote, “for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its ναος.”

The Millennial Temple is conspicuously missing the most important feature of the old Tabernacle and Temple – the Ark of the Covenant hidden behind the veil. The Ark was a symbolic representation of God’s Throne, implying His symbolic presence in the Holy of Holies. In its place will be the Throne of God, and His actual presence upon it.

Ezek 43:6-7

6 Then I heard Him speaking to me from the temple, while a man stood beside me. 7 And He said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever.

Jeremiah 3:16-17

16 "Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days," says the LORD, "that they will say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore.

17 "At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.

3. The dimensions of Jerusalem in Ezekiel are much less than those given by John of the New Jerusalem. To answer this objection, let's first look at the dimensions given in Ezekiel of the city.

Ezek 48:30-35

30 "These are the exits of the city. On the north side, measuring four thousand five hundred [cubits] 31(the gates of the city shall be named after the tribes of Israel), the three gates northward: one gate for Reuben, one gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi; 32 on the east side, four thousand five hundred [cubits], three gates: one gate for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan; 33 on the south side, measuring four thousand five hundred [cubits], three gates: one gate for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, and one gate for Zebulun; 34 on the west side, four thousand five hundred [cubits] with their three gates: one gate for Gad, one gate for Asher, and one gate for Naphtali. 35 All the way around shall be eighteen thousand [cubits]; and the name of the city from that day shall be: *THE LORD IS THERE.*"

Notice that the word "cubits" is in brackets (or italics in the NKJV). This is because the word does not appear in the Hebrew text, but was assumed and supplied by the translators. The unit of measurement is not given in this text. The LXX has, "four thousand five hundred measures." However, earlier in Ezekiel, the "reed" was identified as the "measure" (Ezek. 40:5), its length being "six cubits, the cubit and handbreadth." That is, it was six long cubits, each cubit consisting of the distance from the elbow to fingertip (18-20"), plus the width of the hand (4"). That works out to a cubit of 22-24 inches. Six of these long cubits make up the "measure" rod. If the long cubit is 24 inches, the "measure rod" is 144 inches, or 12 feet exactly. The length of each side of the city was 4,500 "measures" (rods) of 12 feet. That is equal to 54,000 feet, (about 10.2 miles).

In Revelation, the measurement of the city is given as “12,000 stadia,” the length and width being equal. But, whether this figure is the length of each side, or the circumference of the city, was not stated by John. There are two reasons it most likely refers to the circumference. First, the parallels to Ezekiel are obvious, and Ezekiel gave both the length of each side (4,500 measures) plus the total circumference (18,000 measures). Since John gave only one measurement (12,000 stadia), it is more likely that he gave the total. Second, 12,000 stadia would put exactly 1,000 “stadia” between each of the 12 gates. Therefore, with a circumference of 12,000 stadia, each side of the city would measure 3,000 “stadia.”

The word “σταδιον” (stadion {singular}, stadia {plural}) used by John is often defined as the length of the foot race course used by the Greeks, which was about 603 feet long. And if we suppose that John was referring to the Greek race course, it would make the New Jerusalem about 300 miles across, a size that cannot fit within the Holy Land.

The Greek word literally means “a fixed standard of length.”¹ The most common application of the term was no doubt to the Greek the race course. But this was not likely John’s meaning. In this context, a “fixed standard of length” had just been introduced in the previous verse – the golden measuring rod carried by the angel (v. 15). Therefore, “σταδιον” (fixed standard of length) in this context refers to the angel’s golden measuring rod. But, what would the fixed length of the rod be? Unlike Ezekiel’s prophecy, where the length of the rod was clearly defined (12 ft), Revelation does not give the measuring rod’s length. However, if we suppose that the angel’s measuring rod in Revelation was 18 feet long, (instead of the 12 foot rod in Ezekiel), the measurements come out exactly the same as Ezekiel’s. Three thousand 18 foot rods in Revelation would measure 54,000 feet. Four thousand five hundred 12 foot rods in Ezekiel also measure 54,000 feet. The one-third greater length is probably why it is called a “golden measuring rod” as opposed to simply a “measuring rod” as in Ezekiel. (There was also a standard “cubit” and a “royal cubit,” of greater length). There is no conflict between Ezekiel’s and John’s measurements. And a city of this size, (10.2 miles square, or 104 square miles), fits comfortably within the land boundaries in Ezekiel 48.

4. The New Jerusalem descends from heaven. From this it is assumed that it cannot be the present city of Jerusalem, which is already here on earth. However, notice the parallel between Ezekiel’s first sight of the restored city of Jerusalem, and John’s first sight of the New Jerusalem.

Ezek 40:2-3

2 In the visions of God He took me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain; on [or above] it toward the south was something like the structure of

***a city.** 3 He took me there, and behold, there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze. He had a line of flax and a measuring rod in his hand, and he stood in the gateway.*

Rev 21:10-12

*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. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.*

It is easy to suppose that Ezekiel also saw the city descending, viewing it from high up in a mountain. What would be the point of taking Ezekiel up into “a very high mountain” to view the city if it was not suspended (as with John’s vision)? The parallel here is undeniable. Therefore, it is quite likely that both Ezekiel and John saw the same city suspended in the air, descending.

The question is, why? The answer is, the city is portrayed throughout Isaiah as being both the physical city and its redeemed inhabitants. They are viewed as a unit. Hence, the city is called “the Lamb’s Wife.” Paul referred to “the Jerusalem above” as “the mother of us all,” (Gal. 4:26). The city itself is to be the abode of God among redeemed mankind. And redeemed mankind will be caught up into the air to be united with the Father and the Lamb at the second coming, and descend with Him. Therefore, the city is portrayed symbolically as descending from clouds.

That this really is the present city of Jerusalem restored, as the capitol of the restored earth, is very plain from many of the passages quoted in this article which refer to her past affliction in contrast to her glorious future.

Notes:

1. It is impossible to determine from the Greek text whether John was using the plural form of “σταδιον” (neuter) or “σταδιοσ” (masculine), because in the genitive plural (as in Rev. 21:16) the spelling is exactly the same for both words. The masculine form (σταδιοσ) simply means “firm” or “fixed.” Bullinger’s Greek Lexicon assumes that the masculine “σταδιοσ” was used here, and defines it as: “that which stands fast, hence, [by implication] a fixed standard of length; ...” Strong’s notes that it could be either “σταδιοσ” or “σταδιον,” and says: “From the base of G2476 (as fixed); a stade or certain measure of distance; by implication a stadium or race course: - furlong, race.” Wiktionary.org defines “σταδιον” as follows: “a measure of length, a running track, especially the track at Olympia, which was one stadium in length. **The Greek word may literally mean fixed standard of length (from σταδιοσ (stadios), firm, fixed.**” (<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/stadium>). Sources agree that the primary meaning is simply, “a fixed measure of length,” and that the Greek race course of 600+ feet was the usual application, but is not inherent in the meaning of the word itself. When no measuring standard or instrument appears within the immediate context, σταδιον probably implies a distance of 600+ feet. However, in this case, a definite measuring instrument of predetermined length was just introduced in the previous verse, the golden measuring rod of the angel. Consequently, the most natural interpretation of Rev. 21:16 is that the city measured 12,000 times the fixed length of the golden measuring rod that the angel was using to measure the city.