

Revelation 21:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

Analysis

The city's cubic shape (length, breadth, height equal at 12,000 furlongs/stadia) echoes the Holy of Holies' cubic form (1 Kings 6:20), but magnified to contain the entire redeemed community. The number 12,000 ($12 \times 1,000$) symbolizes completeness—12 tribes, 12 apostles, multiplied by 1,000 (fullness). Reformed theology sees the cube as representing perfect holiness—the entire city is now God's dwelling, not confined to a temple's inner sanctum. The enormous dimensions (about 1,400 miles) emphasize abundant space for all the redeemed. God's dwelling with humanity is now unrestricted and comprehensive.

Historical Context

The Holy of Holies was the innermost sanctum where God's presence dwelt, accessible only to the high priest once yearly. Its cubic shape symbolized perfection and divine presence. This vision declares that the new creation is entirely holy—all believers have unrestricted access to God's presence. The measurements' symbolic nature (not literal architecture) communicated spiritual realities.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the cubic shape (like the Holy of Holies) illustrate that all believers now have direct access to God's presence?
2. What does the enormous size teach about God's abundant provision for all the redeemed—is there any shortage in His kingdom?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἡ πόλιν τετράγωνος κεῖται καὶ τὸ μῆκος
And ^{G3588} **the city** ^{G4172} **foursquare** ^{G5068} **lieth** ^{G2749} **And** ^{G2532} ^{G3588} **The length** ^{G3372}

αὐτῆς τοσοῦτόν ἐστιν ὅσον καὶ τὸ πλάτος καὶ
of it ^{G846} **as large** ^{G5118} **are** ^{G2076} **as** ^{G3745} **And** ^{G2532} ^{G3588} **the breadth** ^{G4114} **And** ^{G2532}

ἐμέτρησεν τὴν πόλιν τῷ καλάμῳ ἐπὶ σταδίων δώδεκα
he measured ^{G3354} ^{G3588} **the city** ^{G4172} **with the reed** ^{G2563} ^{G1909} **furlongs** ^{G4712} **twelve** ^{G1427}

χιλιάδων τὸ μῆκος καὶ τὸ πλάτος καὶ τὸ ὕψος
thousand ^{G5505} ^{G3588} **The length** ^{G3372} **And** ^{G2532} ^{G3588} **the breadth** ^{G4114} **And** ^{G2532} ^{G3588} **the height** ^{G5311}

αὐτῆς ἴσα ἐστιν
of it ^{G846} **equal** ^{G2470} **are** ^{G2076}