

THE PEARLS OF NEW JERUSALEM – WHO ARE THEY?



Revelation 21:21a *“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl...”*

On the previous posts, we tackled about the “**Treasures in Heaven**” and “**How can we Store Treasures in Heaven**”. We have known that we are God’s treasures and someday our attributes, which includes our Spiritual bodies, will be like those precious stones which made up the New Jerusalem as described by John in Revelation 21. And in order to store treasures in heaven while we are here on earth, we must deposit (invest) all the goods given to us by our Lord (ourselves, spiritual gifts, time and all the things from our Lord) for us to have a Spiritual body which status depends on how much we have deposited.

We have emphasized also the process of making precious stones like jasper, amethyst, sapphire, emerald, etc. mentioned in Revelation 21 on which they must be first buried underground and must undergo fire and pressure for a long period of time before they become precious stones. However, there is a special kind of precious stone in Revelation 21 that these processes do not apply to them. They undergo a special kind of process in order to produce them. **They are the Pearls – the 13th stone!**

The 13th Stone

Revelation 21:19-21 *And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.*

We know that we represent the twelve foundations of the Holy City, which are also the twelve inorganic precious stones. We are the members of the Bride taken from Gentile race that is founded in the foundations being laid by the twelve Apostles during the Grace Period (The Kingdom of Heaven). These Foundations are the Revelation (Truths) given through the twelve Apostles by where we are being built (Rev. 21:14). We are the product of those foundations. This is the reason why there are twelve different inorganic precious stones.

Since we form the twelve foundations of the City, as foundations, we need to be buried under earth and the process of us turning into precious stones must all happen below. That's why we are represented by precious stones which are formed below earth.

However, unlike the twelve precious stones, pearls are the City's only organic precious stones. Organic means its composition came from a living organism – those that contain hydrogen and carbon bonds. This is the main difference between the twelve precious stones and pearl, the former are inorganic stones while the latter is organic stone. The former are formed below earth, on land, while the latter are formed inside the shell, deep in the waters. So if we are the inorganic precious stones, who are these "Pearls" that are also members of the Bride of Christ who will made up the twelve gates of the Holy City, New Jerusalem?

In order to know and better understand who these Spiritual Pearls are, let us first study their natural counterpart (for the natural typed the Spiritual – 1 Cor. 15:46) – the natural pearls.

The Natural Pearls

The Philippines is known as "**The Pearl of Orient**" (Perlas ng Silanganan) or "**The Pearl of the Orient Seas**". This is because this country is indeed blessed with natural treasures and it will not be called as the Pearl of the Orient for nothing. Its pearls are indeed rare and famous all over the world. Although we don't have sources of diamonds here to mine out like in Africa, the Philippines is known for its quality pearls which are most common in its southern and western part, especially in Palawan Island. As a matter of fact, the world's biggest pearl weighing 34 kilograms, 61cm wide and 30cm long with a whooping value amounting to 130 million U.S. dollars (that's about 6.5 billion Philippine Peso) is found in Palawan Island.

Before our marriage, me and my wife Sarah tried to look for our wedding rings. Even though we don't really have budget for them, we still go for some malls here in Manila just to do "window shopping" and enjoy site-seeing for wedding rings. Then we came across a jewelry shop which most of their jewelries are made out of pearls. They have these golden pearl necklaces whose prices ranges from 100,000 to 250,000 Pesos. The wedding rings are from 25,000 to 150,000 Pesos. Of course, we can only look at them. Later that day, we settle for silver wedding rings which only cost us 500 Pesos each. Hahaha. (Well, wedding rings need not to be expensive anyway, especially if you don't have money).

But what's unforgettable on that window shopping is that, the shop manager showed us how pearls are made. They have this intricate step by step showroom of the stages of development of pearls with matching sample of pearl still intact in their shells in each stage. So how are pearls formed? Here it is:

Creation of Pearls

Unlike inorganic precious stones which are formed many kilometers below earth, Pearls are formed inside the shell of a mollusk like Mussels and Pearl Oysters. When an irritant or an intruder such as parasite got inside the shell of the mollusk and hurt it, the mollusk produces a "**tear**" called "**nacre**" (mainly made up of Calcium Carbonate) which engulfs and covers the irritant layer by layer which lead to slowly formation of pearl. The commonly held belief that a grain of sand acts as the irritant is in fact rarely the case since mollusks can easily expel sands. The most common irritants include organic material, parasites, or even a displaced or damage mantle tissue which is a part of the mollusk's body.

Pearls are therefore the product of an immune response similar to our white blood cells engulfing a bacteria or a virus. If the mollusk does not react in this way, it will die.

Nacre or **tear** that made up the pearl came from the inner coating of the shell called the “**Mother of Pearl**”. Whatever the color of the Mother of Pearl is, that would be also the color of the pearl.

Types of Pearls

First of all, there are two major categories of which pearls are being categorized: **Salt Water** and **Fresh Water Pearls**. These two categories are further subcategorized into two: The Natural Pearls and the Cultured Pearls. The only difference between the two is that the natural (or wild) pearl is formed accidentally and without any human intervention, while a cultured pearl is started by the introduction of an irritant by man into the mollusk. About 95% of pearls in the market today are cultured pearls.

Natural or Wild Pearls are the rarest. This is because it formed accidentally without any human intervention. It can either be salt water or fresh water pearls. The most famous natural pearl is the 500 year old “**La Peregrina**” (The Pilgrim), a drop shape natural pearl found by an African slave in the Gulf of Panama in 1513 during the reign of King Philip II of Spain (from where the world “Philippines” came from). The King then gave it to Mary Tudor of England in anticipation of their marriage. It weighed 10.192 grams (about 50 carats) and has a current value amounting to 10 million U.S. Dollars.

There are also three most common types of Cultured Pearls: TAHITIAN PEARLS, AKOYA PEARLS and the SOUTH SEA PEARLS. Tahitian pearls are best known for their excellent dark shapes. Akoya pearls are the classic white pearls; they are perfectly round and elegant. South Sea Pearls are what they called the “golden pearl” because of its gold color. It is mainly produce in South East Asian nations especially the Philippines.

Grading a Pearl

Unlike those inorganic precious stone which graded according to clarity, color, carat and cut, pearl grading on the other hand is somehow in disorder. Standards vary from seller to seller, farmer to farmer and auction to auction. Ultimately, the saying “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” applies to pearls. It’s really up to you to decide which pearl is more elegant and beautiful. For example, in France, most people preferred the Tahitian pearls to be more beautiful that’s why it is also the most expensive kind of pearl in there. On the other hand, what’s most expensive in Japan is the Akoya pearls while the Americans and Asians prefer the South Sea pearls.

In pearls, one should not compare one type of pearl to other types of pearls to determine which one is the most beautiful. They are beautiful in their own way and its up actually to the buyer. But you can compare pearls on the same type. For example, you can only compare South Sea Pearl to another South Sea Pearl. Pearls on the same type are compared by **Luster, Shape, Color and Size**.

Luster

Pear luster is the biggest value factor to pay attention to. Had the pearls been rough, and dull in appearance they would not have captured the attention of man and will not be a precious stone. Luster

measures the rate of reflection (how crisp and detailed it is) on a pearl's surface and the amount of light reflected on the pearls. Beautiful luster makes or breaks pearls as a gemstone – pearls without great luster can end up looking like chalky beads. Basically, the brighter, sharper and more reflective a pearl is, the more valuable it will be.

Shape

Pearl shapes are generally the round in shape. The more perfectly round a pearl is, the more rare and prized it is also. However, many pearl connoisseurs enjoy the unique distinctiveness of baroque pearls. Baroques are off-round, drop and asymmetrical in shape, and are graded according to symmetry.

Color

While many prefer the classic white Akoya pearl, pearls come in every color of the rainbow. Naturally colored pearls like black Tahitian pearls or Golden South Sea pearls are graded on their color's depth and saturation- the more strongly colored pearls will be more rare and valuable. Another unique aspect about pearls is their **Iridescence**. This means their surface color saturation changes based on the angle light is hitting them. The same effect is seen in soap bubbles.

Size

Large pearls are rare in nature – the majority of cultured pearls harvests consist of pearls under 10.0mm and wild pearls in very large sizes are the rarest of the rare, so the bigger they are the more valuable they are.

With this enough information about Natural Pearls, we are now ready to tackle the Spiritual Pearls and to know who they are.

The Twelve Pearl Gates – The Twelve Tribes of Israel

Revelation 21:12-13: And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

There is no doubt as describe in Revelation 21:12-13, the pearls of the Holy City, New Jerusalem represents the children of Israel. If the inorganic precious stones are us, the Gentile members of the Wife of Christ, there are also the organic precious stones (pearls) who are also members of the Wife of Christ. They are no other than the Israelites. The twelve gates represent the twelve tribes of Israel (the children of Israel). If the Gentiles are the twelve foundation of the City, the Israelites are the twelve gates of the City.

Pearls and Israel Compared

Just like pearls who came from a living flesh, Israel also is the **“bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh”** of our Lord. Our Lord Jesus came through her. She is the first wife of the Lord before she rejected Him (Jer. 3). The Israelites came from their nation Israel, the **“Mother of Pearl”**. And when Israel will be restored to her position in the **‘Kingdom Age’**, her Twelve Tribes will be the “crown” of the nation (“upon her head a crown of twelve stars”). She will become the **“Nation of nations”**. This is the reason why pearls are formed deep in waters, because “waters” in the Bible means “many people or Nation” (Rev. 17:1).

But before this will happen, before the formation of the pearl, Israel needs to undergo first the shedding of **tears** just like the pearl oyster to produce pearls. They must undergo many tribulations before they will become the Nation of the nations. There tribulations are the necessary **Irritants** that they must engulf in order to produce pearls just like the tribulations described in Isaiah chapters 11 and 65 that they must overcome. More irritants, means more pearls.

The bigger the irritants, the bigger the pearl will become. Its color will depend on the color of the Mother of Pearl which is the nation Israel. The tighter and more compact the layers of nacre (tear) are, the more intense the pearl’s luster will appear. A very large reason behind this is due to the rate at which the mollusk, or oyster, secretes its nacre. The more the Israelites coat their irritants, the more they will become shiny pearl. Coating of irritants for a long period of time will also lead to a bigger pearl.

Why are the Israelites the Gates of the City and not the Foundations?

First of all, we must remember that in order to be the foundation of a building or a city, one must be hard and strong – the kind that can sustain great amount of weight and pressure since foundations need to be buried underground and they will be the one to “carry” the weight of the building. Its main purpose is to transfer that weight to the earth. This is the reason why a foundation must be strong and hard so that the building will not crumble.

Precious stones are built for this very purpose. They became hard and strong by pressure and fire through time because they will become the foundation of the City. They will support the City and the City cannot be conquered (destroyed) and will not crumble because they are hard and strong foundations. Aside from being hard and strong, these twelve foundations are also anchored to the **Capstone – the Lord Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages!** (Isa.28:16).

Being the inorganic precious stones and foundations only fits to the Gentile members of the Wife of Christ. It is the Gentiles that had received the **“Rock of Revelation” (the Word)** given through the twelve Apostles on where the Church of Christ is built. They are the one who has received the **Foundational Rock (Revelation)** that Christ Jesus was the Mystery of God revealed to the world. It is not given to the Israelites, that Rock was given to the Gentiles. This Rock is strong and solid. Having Christ as their foundation will give them more revelations. Their revelations of THE WORD were true. And their **“Rocks”** formed the foundations of the Holy City.

Pearls as Gates of the City

Having pearls for a foundation will be a disaster. Unlike inorganic precious stones which are hard and strong, pearls are highly weak and soft. It can actually be dissolve in vinegar and can fracture each

other when rubbed together. It can easily be crushed into pieces when made as a foundation. This is the reason why an extra caution is needed in handling pearls (or jewelries made of pearls) compared to inorganic precious stones. They are more prone to damage.

The reason for pearls being soft is that unlike inorganic precious stones, they are only exposed to minimal pressure under water and in a short period of time. This is because Israel is known to complain to God even for only small matters and they are also vengeful people as shown in the Revelation 6:9-10. Unlike their Gentile Bride counterpart who would not seek for vengeance but would rather pray for those who persecute them (cf. Lk.23:34; Acts 7:60; Rom.12:19), Israelites are delicate. They are built like pearls and not like inorganic stones that's why they are soft and not strong for foundations.

Although pearls are not ideal to be the foundations, they are ideal for gates where people can enter. A Pearly Gate is a shining and inviting gate that will attract people to come in. In Revelation 21:12-17, the twelve tribes of Israel became the twelve gates of the wall around the City. There are 3 gates on each of the four sides; east, south, west and north, which signifies that the Redeemed Saints are gathered from all the four corners of this present earth. The twelve gates which are also the twelve tribes of Israel shows that it was unto the children of Israel that the Word of God was first given (Acts 7:38; Rom.3:1-2). They are the gates because in order to be a part of this Holy City, one must enter through its gates (Israel) and access the Word of God that was given to them for there is no other way to get into God's House but only through God's own Family.

The Irritants of Israel

From the time that God blinded the eyes of Israel (cf. Rom.11:25) and turned to the Gentiles with His Gospel to gather a Church out of them (Acts 15:14-19), many Israelites were killed from time to time. But during the Second World War from 1939 to 1945, Hitler and Eichmann of Germany killed 6 million Jews. This holocaust of the Jewish people created in the people of the world a greater awareness of the Jews and their faith. It was then God's appointed time to begin the restoration of the land of Israel. However, not all Jews who were killed truly died for their testimony of God's Word which was entrusted to Israel.

Nevertheless God has ordained a place for Israel even before the foundation of the earth was laid. God cannot disannul the promise He made to Abraham when He blinded the children of Israel for the sake of the Gentiles. (Read Roman chapter 11.) Israel was predestinated to be God's true witness since He made a covenant with him. In the Oracle that was given to him Israel had the revelation of the One True God (Monotheism) though his children failed to recognize the Messiah and were thus blinded.

The Great Whore – the Mother of Harlots

Revelation 17:4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

In every doing of the Lord, there is always Satan's counterfeit. Just like the Holy City, New Jerusalem who is the Wife of Christ made up of spiritual gold, precious stones and pearl, Satan has also his wife made up also of physical gold, precious stones and pearls!

Israel and the Philippines

Being the Pearl of the Orient, the Philippines have a long relationship to the nation Israel. During the holocaust, the Philippines is the only Asian country which opens its door to accommodate and protect the fleeing Jews. About 1,200 Jews fled to the Philippines from 1937 to 1941, escaping the throes of the Nazis.

In 2009, a monument honoring the Philippines was erected at the Holocaust Memorial Park in the Israeli city of Rishon Lezion. The monument, shaped like three open doors, thanks the Filipino people for taking in Jewish refugees during the Holocaust.

Also, during the creation of Israel to be a nation on 1947, the Philippines is the only Asian country among the 33 countries who supported and voted for Israel to be a nation.

This little chapter of history about Jewish refugees in the Philippines is not known to many but is never forgotten in the heart of both Filipinos and Israelites. Many of the descendants of the Jewish refugees who fled to the Philippines have not forgotten their family's place of refuge.

Indeed it is hard to be the Pearly Gate of the City. But it is only through the Pearls that the twelve inorganic precious stones became also part of the City. Being the Gates is indeed not easy. But it is only through the gates that one can enter the City of God!

God bless the nation Israel!