

The New Jerusalem

Beginning with the binding of Isaac by his father Abraham in "*the land of Moriah*" ... until the time Jesus, as Messiah-King, makes His entrance through the Eastern Gate...God has met with men on the sacred site of the earthly city of Jerusalem. Yet, in the heart of God, the heavenly ***New Jerusalem*** surpasses the earthly Jerusalem in glory in the same way that the sun surpasses the moon in glory. Even now, God is preparing the heavenly city to receive the saved of all generations.

The Apostle John...when he was an old man and banished to the island of Patmos, off the coast of Turkey...received, from God, the prophecies of the end times which John records for us in the last book of the Bible called "***Revelation***." In Revelation 21:1-2, John describes the extraordinary vision God gave him of the New Jerusalem. He states, "***And 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.***"

Heaven, also referred to in Scripture as the "*third Heaven*," is the home of God and, even though the Bible does not reveal the exact location of Heaven, nonetheless, it always describes the location of Heaven as being "***up***" and "***in the north***." Evidently...since Scripture is to be taken literally...Heaven must exist out in the vast universe...enormous light years away from the Earth in a northern direction.

At the present time, the city New Jerusalem is located in Heaven, however, Scripture teaches us that, after the Millennium, this celestial, satellite, city...1,500 miles square...will "***descend from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband!***"

The day will come when the New Jerusalem will descend from Heaven and be positioned somewhere in the atmosphere above the Earth!

(Some Bible students believe that the New Jerusalem will be **on** Earth)

However, before this descent can take place, heaven..."*the atmosphere*" surrounding this Earth, and the Earth...must be purified...by fire...of all sin's pollution. (See 2 Peter 3:10.) Satan, ***the prince and power of the air***...and the atmosphere surrounding this Earth... (Ephesians 2:2) must be cast out..."*cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the Beast and the False Prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever*" (Revelation 20:10).

Thousand of years ago, in the days of Noah, God cleansed the Earth by the purifying effects of water because "*the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence*" (Genesis 6:11). Because of the great sin of Satan's final rebellion, God will, once again...after the Millennium...cleanse the earth of its corruption...however...this time, it will be cleansed by the purifying effects of divine fire, rather than by the effects of water. 2 Peter 3:6-7, 10 states, "***The world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which now exist are kept in store by the same word, reserved for fire until the day of judgment day perdition of ungodly men...the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.***" After this purification of the Heavens and the Earth takes place, then the city New

Jerusalem will descend from the presence of God into the atmosphere of this Earth.

The Heavenly City

Because this great Heavenly city has the glory of God filling her with His divine Presence, it will cause the whole city to glow with an internal light like a beautiful "*jasper stone, clear as crystal*" (Revelation 21:11).

The New Jerusalem is a real city, having measurable dimensions, gates, mansions, streets and inhabitants. In Revelation 21:16-17, John...using the best language at his command to describe this wonderful city that God is preparing for His people...states that it "*is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed; twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. Then he measured its wall; one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man that is, of an angel.*" The size of the New Jerusalem is tremendous; 1,500 miles by 1,500 miles by 1,500 miles (12,000 furlongs) "*Its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits(216 feet)...And the construction of its wall was of jasper*" (verses 17-18).

Because both the shape of a cube and a pyramid correspond to the description of the New Jerusalem that is given in Revelation 21, Bible student differ as to what the shape of the city New Jerusalem might be.

Can you visualize such a city?

Twelve layers of stone foundation support the jasper wall and, on each layer, "*were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb*" (Revelation 21:14). The walls have "*three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west...each individual gate was of one pearl*" (Revelation 21:13, 21). "*The foundations of the walls 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, 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*" (Revelation 21:19-20).

John then says that "*the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass*" (Revelation 21:21).

Up until a few years ago, it was impossible to conceive of the reality that is described in these verses...however...this reality has now taken on a new sense of credibility since we now...in nearly every major city...build skyscrapers that...because their walls are built of glass, with a very thin sheet of gold on the outside of the glass...appear to glow with gold when the sun hits them. However, when one looks directly through the golden windows from the inside, he can see that they are *transparent glass*. This building technique not only gives a beautiful golden appearance to the building, but it also provides excellent heat control and conservation.

If man can create earthly buildings like these towers to reflect the glory of the earthly

sun, think how magnificent the New Jerusalem will be when it reflects the glory of the Son of God!

The light of God will illuminate this city of the saints...the New Jerusalem...for all eternity...and...earth's most sought after mineral...gold...will be so plentiful that John described this city...and its streets...as "*transparent gold*."

Revelation 21:22 states that John "*saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*" While the Bible does describe a Heavenly temple, the New Jerusalem will not have a Temple in it because God Himself will dwell with us.

This reminds us of what Jesus said to the woman at the well when she challenged Him about the proper place to worship God: "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father...But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:22-23). What this verse is telling us...which John confirms to us in the book of Revelation...is that, because the very Spirit of God will pervade the entire New Jerusalem, there will be no need for a special building such as a Temple where men normally communicate with Him.

Revelation 21:23-24 tells us that the glowing golden light of the city was "*the glory of God...and the Lamb. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor into it.*" Although the Bible describes the continuation of the sun, and the moon, in the New Earth, there will be no need for the sun, or the moon, to provide light because Revelation 21:25 states that, "*there shall be no night there.*" The presence of God internally lights the whole city and, since there is no night...and no danger of an enemy besieging the city...the "*gates shall not be shut.*"

Because man will no longer be subject to the curse which God put on the Earth after Adam's sin, there will be no rust, or decay in the New Jerusalem...because...the very process of entropy...[the running down of the universe]...will have ceased. When the curse of sin is removed, decay...germs and decomposition...will also be eliminated...because... Revelation 21:27 tells us that nothing "*that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie*" will ever enter there, though the gates are left open! The angels of God will guard the city forever!

This holy...eternal...city...the New Jerusalem...whose architect is God Himself...is the city which all the faithful...beginning with Abel (See Hebrews 11)...have been waiting for... and... because it is a holy city...only the faithful...those whose lives are "*white as snow*" (Isaiah 1:18).. .because they have been washed clean by the blood of the Lamb...and those whose names, therefore, "*are written in the Lamb's Book of Life*" (Revelation 21:27)... will inhabit this city.

The Inhabitants Of The City of God

At the present, the New Jerusalem is in Heaven and is inhabited by the angels, along with, with all probability, the spirits of those who died in Christ as well as all those Old

Testament saints who were raised from the dead as part of the firstfruits of the first resurrection and who ascended into Heaven with Jesus (Matthew 27:52-53).

At the Rapture, the spirits of those departed saints already in Heaven will receive their resurrected bodies as the "*dead in Christ*" rise first. Immediately after that, we, "*who are alive and remain*," will be transformed into our new bodies. Jesus told the Church, "*I am going away to prepare a place for you...that where I am, there you may be also*" (John 14:2-3). This place that Jesus went to prepare is the New Jerusalem...in Heaven...which, Paul tells us, will also include the Old Testament saints because they, "*all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off...But now they desire a better that is, a heavenly country. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them*" (Hebrews 11:13,16).

One of those saints, Abraham...who left the great city, Ur of the Chaldees, to travel through the desert lands and to live in tents...eagerly awaited the city that had *foundations* and that God had promised him...the New Jerusalem and the Promised Land of Israel. His son, Isaac, and his grandson Jacob..."*heirs with him of the same promise...all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.*" Abraham never again lived in a city with houses and walls...nor did Isaac or Jacob...because..."*All these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise*"...nevertheless...they will **obtain** ...not just the Promised Land of Israel...but also the New Jerusalem (Hebrews 11:9, 13-14, 39).

The book of Hebrews reassures the Church, the Bride of Christ, that we, too, will come to "*the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in Heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant*" (Hebrews 12:22-24).

In Philippians 4:3, Paul speaks of the day when we will be reunited with those "*whose names are in the Book of Life.*" John, speaking of the city that has "*no need of the sun or the moon*," says that "*there shall by no means enter it [the New Jerusalem] anything that defiles, nor causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life*" (Revelation 21:23,27). The sole qualification for one to have his name in the Book of Life is his acceptance of the pardon of sin offered by the Father to all who will accept His Son...Jesus Christ...as his Lord and Savior.

Life In The New Jerusalem

Although the New Jerusalem will be the home of all the righteous sons of God, the members of the Bride of Christ will not be restricted to the Heavenly city, but, rather, we will go in, and out, of the gates to explore the New Earth and the New Heaven as we rule, and reign, with Christ. We will have access to the "*pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb*" (Revelation 22:1). The Tree of Life...which was removed from Earth after Adam sinned...will stand near the river and will bear "*twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month*" (Revelation 22:2). Because Scripture makes mention of months and seasons, that tells us that, not only will we have fruit to eat, in season, in the New

Jerusalem, but we will also, undoubtedly, have a variety of climate conditions. As we serve God, we will be able to approach "*the throne of God and the Lamb*"...and...we "*shall see His face, and His name shall be on our foreheads*" (Revelation 22:3-4).

John must have thrilled as he 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, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.*"

From His Heavenly throne, God, gloriously, declared, "*It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he shall be My son*" (Revelation 21:6-7).

Then, in the midst of these glorious promises, He...with a note of warning...says, "*But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, murderers, sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars - their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death*" (Revelation 21:8).

John ends the book of Revelation with the words, "*The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come: and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life...He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon [suddenly].'* Amen. Come Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:17, 20).