

What follows represents the unedited lecture notes of Pastor Merritt's teaching of The Book of the Revelation. Please feel free to reproduce all or part for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The teachings of the Revelation represent a compilation of things learned from such men as Col. R. B. Thieme, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Charles Ryrie, Arno C. Gabelein, John Walvoord, Hal Lindsay, Dwight Pentecost, along with an exegesis of the Greek and Hebrew texts.

Introduction

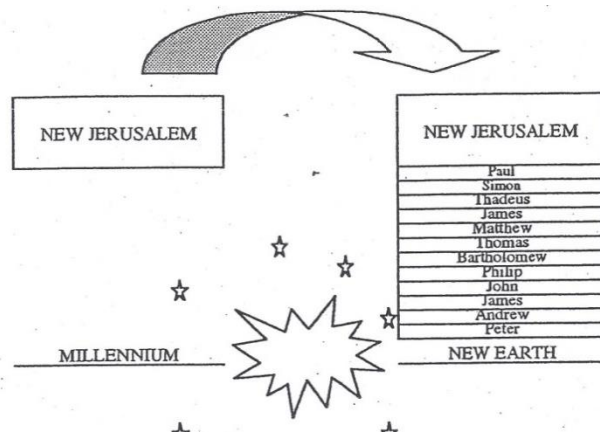
1. Many are convinced that chapters twenty-one and twenty-two described events in heaven. Then there are those who believe what is described in chapters twenty-one and twenty-two describe the Millennium. Others believe certain portions of these last two chapters describe the New Jerusalem and other parts describe the new heaven and the new earth.

2. Then there are also those who believe that John sees the new heaven and the new earth in verse one of chapter twenty-one while the rest of chapters twenty-one and twenty-two describe the New Jerusalem. This is the view of men like John Walvoord, Wycliffe, Col. R. B. Thieme, Lewis Chafer, Charles Ryrie and J. Vernon McGee. I too am convinced the new heaven and the new earth are described in verse one of chapter twenty-one while the rest of chapters twenty-one and twenty-two describe the New Jerusalem.

3. For example Lewis Sperry Chafer writes:

"In Revelation 21:1 ... John writes, 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.' The new heaven is not described at all, and all that is stated about the new earth is, 'There was no more sea.' ... The strange silence of Scripture on the appearance of both the new earth and the new heaven is nowhere explained. Instead our attention is directed immediately to the holy city of the New Jerusalem."

4. Tim LaHaye writes in his book *Revelation Unveiled*: "The last chapter of Revelation contains a final description of that heaven-like earth that God has prepared for those who love him." Earlier LaHaye makes clear chapter twenty-one with the exception of Rev 21:1 describes the New Jerusalem. I am convinced, along with many conservative scholars that the New Jerusalem described in these last two chapters of the book of the Revelation is also the same New Jerusalem in which church age saints will live during the Tribulation; even the same city located above planet earth during the Millennium. More will be taught later of the city and its inhabitants.



5. The earth and heaven of the Millennium recall "flees away" but not the New Jerusalem, it remains. The Bride has a permanent home not made with hands which does not fade away.

6. Ryrie writes in his book *Revelation Everymans Commentary*:

"In other words, the New Jerusalem is the eternal residence of the redeemed during both the Millennium and eternity. It is the place our Lord has gone to prepare for us (Joh 14:2) ... In other words, there seem to be two descents of the city ... being the one related to eternity and ... the one related to the Millennium."

7. Ryrie's distinction is no doubt accurate, however he, like many of his conservative colleagues, makes clear the cities are the same.

The New Jerusalem

1. The New Jerusalem is mentioned by name in Rev 3:12 and 21:2.

Rev 3:12 "Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the house of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name."

Rev 21:2 I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

2. It was looked for by Abraham according to the anonymous writer of the Book of Hebrews.

Heb 11:10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Heb 11:16 Instead, they were longing for a better country--a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

3. It is referred to as Zion the mountain and city of the living God in Heb 12:22.

Heb 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,

4. It is alluded to by Paul in Gal 4:26.

Gal 4:25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.

Gal 4:26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.

5. It is employed as an incentive by John in Rev 3:12.

Rev 3:12 "Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the dwelling place of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name."

6. The city is described in Rev 21:1-22:5.

7. This city comes down out of heaven from God after the Millennium, and is the center of the new order of eternity future.

8. It is the habitation of Christ and the Church.

9. The city is described first from the standpoint of its population, the Church (Rev 21:2-9); then from the viewpoint of its material proportions, a cube 1,500 miles each way, made of gold and precious stones. (Rev 21:10-23)

- The population

Rev 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of 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 shall be with them, and be their God.

Rev 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Rev 21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

Rev 21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Rev 21:7 He that over-cometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Rev 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

- The material proportions

Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

Rev 21:11 It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

Rev 21:12 It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Rev 21:13 There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west.

Rev 21:14 The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Rev 21:15 The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls.

Rev 21:16 The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long.

Rev 21:17 He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using.

Rev 21:18 The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass.

Rev 21:19 The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald,

Rev 21:20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

Rev 21:21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

Rev 21:22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Rev 21:23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

10. Finally it is described from the viewpoint of its eternal provisions in Rev 21:24-22:5.

Rev 21:24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it.

Rev 21:25 On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there.
Rev 21:26 The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.
Rev 21:27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.
Rev 22:1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb
Rev 22:2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.
Rev 22:3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.
Rev 22:4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.
Rev 22:5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

11. This divine architectural achievement has material reality - the resurrected saints and Christ will inhabit it in resurrection bodies.
12. Though John is impressed with the new heaven and the new earth, his attention is immediately directed to that which is central in the vision, "the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."
13. Expositors like Walvoord, Pentecost, Ryrie, Chafer and Lindsey are convinced the New Jerusalem described here is the same as the New Jerusalem positioned above the millennial earth. They all contend believers in resurrection bodies will inhabit this city.
14. This is problematic to some who do not believe that there will be a New Jerusalem above the millennial earth. People of this persuasion believe we as raptured saints will live on the earth during the Millennium. Many expositors like Walvoord, Pentecost, Ryrie, Chafer and others find problem with this view given the "ordinary things" which people do on the earth during the Millennium.
15. Many of these ordinary things are incompatible with resurrection bodies. For example, we know there is no gender distinction in heaven where people live in resurrection bodies; therefore, physical procreation in a resurrection body is impracticable.
16. As we noted last week there are those who hold John is being shown, not the New Jerusalem, but heaven. Such conclusion flies in the face of what we find in the Scripture where John is told he is being shown the New Jerusalem.
17. Clearly, John says the divinely constructed city is where the resurrected saints and Christ will live in resurrection bodies.

18. Though John is impressed with the new heaven and the new earth, his attention is immediately directed to that which is central in the vision, "the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

19. The expression "the holy city, the New Jerusalem" is in antithesis to the earthly Jerusalem, which is metaphorically referred to as Sodom in Rev 11:8.

19.1 In this context the city is ruled by the False Prophet.

Rev 11:8 Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

20. Earlier in the writing of the New Testament, the earthly Jerusalem is referred to as "the holy city" in Mat 4:5. In this context the city is to be the headquarters of Christ's tendered Kingdom.

Mat 4:5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

21. In Rev 3:12 the New Jerusalem is anticipated and referred to not only by this title but as "the city of my God, which is the New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God."

Rev 3:12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.

22. Most important, however, is the fact that the city is declared to come down from God out of heaven.

23. In the Greek, the expression in Rev 21:10 "out of heaven" precedes the phrase "from God."

NIV

Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

23.1 Nothing is said about the New Jerusalem being created at this point and the language seems to imply that it has been in existence in heaven prior to this event.

Rev 21:9 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

24. Nothing is revealed concerning this in Scripture unless the expression of Joh 14:2, "I go to prepare a place for you," refers to this place.

Joh 14:2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

Joh 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

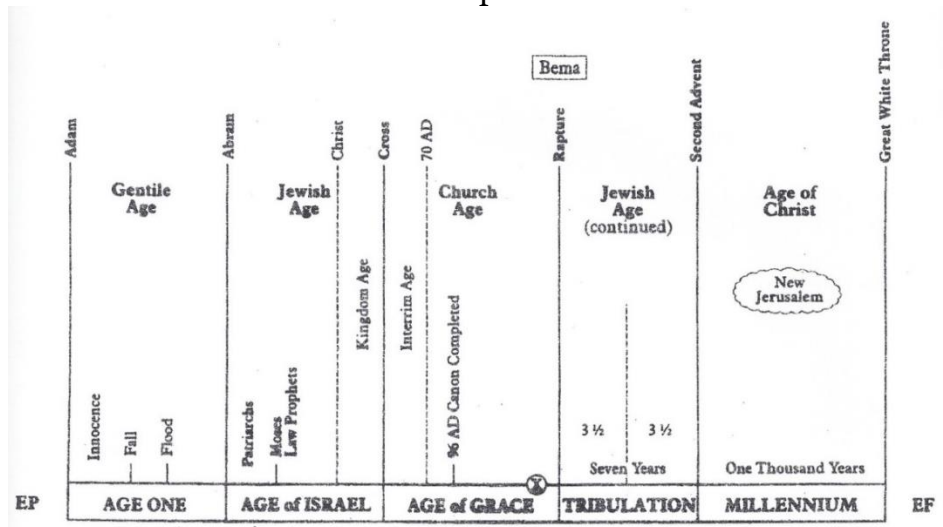
25. Since the New Jerusalem is in existence throughout the millennial reign of Christ, it seems clear it is a satellite city suspended over the earth during the thousand-year reign of Christ as the dwelling place of resurrected and translated saints.

26. Walvoord writes: "This would help explain an otherwise difficult problem of the dwelling place of resurrected and translated beings on the earth during a period in which men are still in their natural bodies and living ordinary lives."

27. The New Jerusalem is withdrawn from the earthly scene in connection with the destruction of the old earth and the old heaven, and later comes down again to the new earth just as it did in the Age of Christ.

28. As presented in Revelation 21 and 22, however, the New Jerusalem is not seen as it may have existed in the past, but as it will be seen in eternity future.

29. The possibility of Jerusalem being a satellite city over the earth during the Millennium is not specifically taught in any Scripture but is a logical inference based on the implication that it has been in existence prior to its introduction in Revelation 21.



30. Its characteristics as presented in chapters 21 and 22, however, are related to the eternal state rather than to the millennial kingdom.

31. The only description of the New Jerusalem given in verse two is embodied in the phrase "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Rev 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

32. Because of the fact that the church, the Body of Christ, is considered under the symbolism of a bride in the New Testament in contrast to Israel as the wife of Jehovah, some have attempted to limit the New Jerusalem as having reference only to the church.

33. Snell in his book *Notes On The Revelation* argues that the New Jerusalem is specifically the bride, that is the saints of the present dispensation, the church.

34. There are even those of this similitude who believe rather than a literal, physical city in the eternal state that the New Jerusalem represents the church as the people of God.

35. For example August van Ryan in his book takes this position when he says, "This city is apparently a symbolic description of the bride herself."

36. The use of the marriage figure, however, in both the Old and New Testaments is sufficiently frequent so that we cannot arbitrarily insist that figures are always used in precisely the same way.

37. The subsequent description of the New Jerusalem in this chapter makes plain that saints of all ages are involved and that what we have here is not the church per se but a city or dwelling place having the freshness and beauty of a bride adorned for marriage to her husband.

38. F. W. Grant holds that the New Jerusalem will contain the saints of all ages. On the basis of Hebrews 11:10 and 16 where Abraham is said to look for a heavenly city, Grant concludes that while it is the bride-city, it nevertheless has other occupants:

39. Grant writes: "Why should it not be the bride-city, named from the bride-church whose home it is, and yet it contains other occupants? ... The heavenly city, the dwelling-place of God, permitting none of the redeemed to be outside of it but opening its gates widely to all."

Heb 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Heb 11:16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

40. Jennings likewise in his book *Studies In The Revelation* believes the saints of all ages occupy the heavenly Jerusalem:

“But since thus all Saints of the olden times, be they prior to any distinction, as Enoch; or Gentile, as Job; or Jewish, as Abraham, may have their place in this city, she [the New Jerusalem] must by no means be accounted as characteristically Jewish. The Jerusalem of the Jews is ever and always on the earth, nor does she come out of heaven at all, since she has never left the earth; but the glory of the Lord rises upon her there (Isa. 60:1) ... Every child of God through all the ages, whose earthly tabernacle has been dissolved, shall be at this time in his heavenly house, and thus together form the heavenly city.”

41. Now for an expanded translation of verses one and two:

Expanded Translation

Rev 21:1 “Then I, John saw a new heaven and a new earth, the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and unlike that which had passed away there was no sea. God was making clear that in eternity future there will be no more nations to operate outside God's protocol.

Rev 21:2 I, John was then given a panoramic view of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, it came down out of heaven, a gift from God to His family, the city was beyond description, like a gorgeous bride prepared for her right man; adorned in the finest attire - the quintessence of pulchritude.

42. As John beheld the vision of the new heaven and the new earth and the New Jerusalem, he heard a great voice from heaven.

43. This is the last of twenty-one times that "a great voice" or "a loud voice" is mentioned in the book of the Revelation. The fact that the voice is great teaches what follows is important and authoritative.

44. The presence of God in Scripture frequently connotes fellowship or blessing. Here it is stated that the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem will be the people of God and that God will not only be with them but also, He will be their God, a thought which is often repeated in the Scripture.

45. The presence of God assures an entirely new state for those who inhabit the New Jerusalem. In contrast to their former suffering which for many of these saints included going through the tribulation; God is said to “wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

46. The new earth as a whole will not be the principle residence of the believers, though they will have free access to it.

47. The New Jerusalem is where Jesus has been preparing mansions for His own and is the capital from which He will rule. It will be the center of the new universe, with a beauty and a holiness that can hardly be fathomed.

48. Revelation 21 and 22 describe the glories of this city.

49. Let's see where this city will be located, and then we will look at its beauty. In Rev 21:2 John said he saw the Holy City coming down out of heaven from God.

Rev 21:2 I, John was then given a panoramic view of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, it came down out of heaven, a gift from God to His family, the city was beyond description, like a gorgeous bride prepared for her right man; adorned in the finest attire - the quintessence of pulchritude.

50. Some Bible expositors believe that this city has existed from the time Jesus left the earth to go to prepare a place for His bride, the Church.

51. If that's so, this city is in existence during our present age although it is invisible, and it will exist during both the Tribulation and the Millennium.

52. It may be that the Holy City will be suspended above the earth during the thousand-year Kingdom, and that the immortal believers will principally live there.

52.1 This would help to explain the question of how mortal and immortal beings can live together in the Millennium, since the mortals (those believers who live on earth during the Millennium) will continue to marry, have children, and live ordinary lives.

53. This, of course, will not be true of the raptured saints, since these saints will already have received their gender-less resurrection bodies.

54. If this view is correct, then the city would have to be temporarily withdrawn when the earth is destroyed at the end of the Millennium.

55. After the re-creation of the earth, the city will apparently descend to the new earth and actually rest on it, since the New Jerusalem is said to have foundations, which implies a firm means of support.

56. Also, the New Jerusalem has twelve gates through which the peoples of the nations will go in and out of the city. In any case, the New Jerusalem will be the center of the universe.

Rev 21:12 It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Rev 21:13 There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west.

Rev 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

57. All light will emanate from the city and all life in the universe will revolve around it.

Rev 21:23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

58. John pictures this magnificent city as a new bride adorned for her husband. Because of the term "Bride," some interpreters feel that only the bride of Christ, the Church, will live in this city.

59. However, we know that Abraham was promised a city, for the writer of the Book of Hebrews tells us, "For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God ... But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one; wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared for them a city." (Heb 11:10 and 16)

60. There can be no question that this promised city is the New Jerusalem. While it may be the bride's city, it also has other permanent inhabitants: the saved of the house of Israel.

The Westbank Bible Church accepts direct donations to further the spreading of the Gospel. You can mail or drop off a check or money order made payable to Westbank Bible Church, 4010 Bee Cave Road, Austin, Texas 78746

We do not authorize any third party to solicit donations on behalf of the Church.