

The Doctrine of the New Jerusalems

Preface

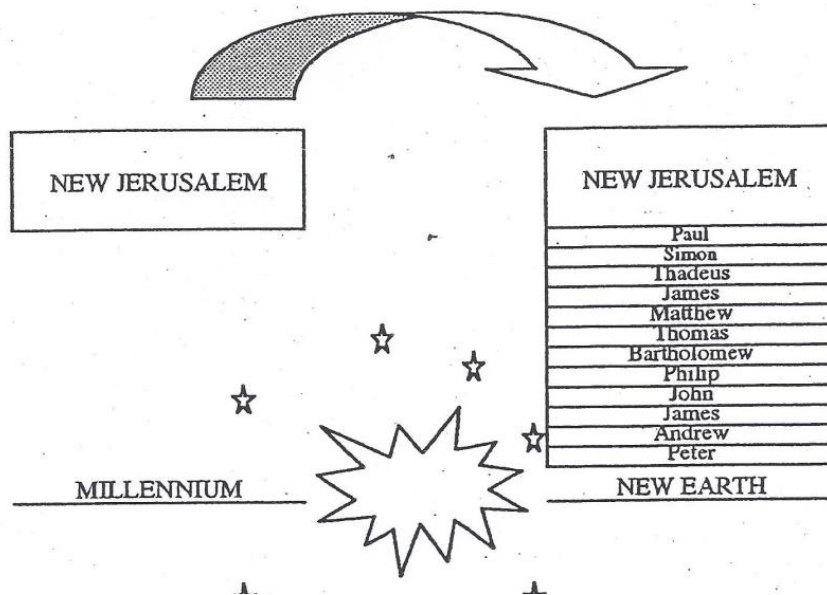
1. Conservative scholars agree the New Jerusalem described in the last two chapters of the book of the Revelation is also the same New Jerusalem in which church age saints will live; a city located above planet earth during the Millennium.

2. 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.

3. Ryrie in his book *Revelation Everymans Commentary* has perhaps said it best:

"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."

4. Ryrie's distinction is no doubt accurate he, like many of his conservative colleagues, makes clear the cities are the same. I think the Scripture supports the positions taken by Charles Ryrie in his book "*Revelation Everymans Commentary*."



Our Future Home

1. The city is described in Rev 21:1-22:5. The appellation "New Jerusalem" appears in Rev 21:2 and 3:12.

NIV

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.

NIV

Rev 3:12 "Him who overcomes (Compare 1Jo 5:5 for a definition of "he 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."

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.

3. It is referred to as Mount Zion 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 used metaphorically 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.

4.1 Gal 4:26 certainly indicates there is a New Jerusalem in heaven even as we sit here today.

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

KJV

Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

6. The New Jerusalem viewed by John will one day be the habitation of Christ and His Church during the Millennium. The city is described first from the standpoint of its 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 overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

7. Next we have a description of its material proportions, a cube 1,500 miles each way, it is made of gold and precious stones.

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.

8. Finally it is described from the viewpoint of its eternal provisions.

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.

9. 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."

10. Given the fact the bride describes Church Age saints, we must assume John sees Christ and His bride residing in the New Jerusalem in resurrection bodies.

11. 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 as it sits above the millennial earth.

12. 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. Walvoord, Pentecost, Ryrie and Chafer find problem with this view given the "ordinary things" which people do on the earth during the Millennium.

13. Many of these ordinary things are incompatible with resurrection bodies. For example we know there is no gender distinction in our resurrection bodies, therefore, physical procreation is impracticable. People on earth in the Millennium do in fact procreate producing both believers and unbelievers.

14. There are those who have taught in error that 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.

15. Clearly, John says the divinely constructed city is where the resurrected saints and Christ will live in resurrection bodies.

16. 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 that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Rev 3:13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

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

18. In the Greek, the expression in Rev 21:10 "out of heaven" precedes the phrase "from God" thus "out of heaven" receives the emphasis."

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.

19. Nothing is said about the New Jerusalem being created and the language, here and elsewhere, indicates it has been in existence prior to this event.

20. 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.

21. 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 ... living 'ordinary lives.'"

22. Future references in Chapter 21 and Chapter 22 describe a New Jerusalem extant in eternity future.

23. 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 rest above the new earth much like it did in the Millennium. After the creation of the new earth, the city will 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.

24. 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 new 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.

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

26. Its characteristics as presented in Revelation 21 are related to the eternal state rather than to the millennial kingdom except for Rev 21:2 “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.

27. The subsequent description of the New Jerusalem in this chapter 21 and chapter 22 make plain that saints of all ages are involved and that what we have here is not a place only for the church, but a city or dwelling in which special access will be granted for saints of all ages.

28. F. W. Grant in his book *Notes On The Book of Revelation* 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.

29. Grant goes on to write: “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.

30. 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.”

31. Now for an expanded translation of verse two:

Expanded Translation

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. The city descended from heaven is suspended above the earth during the millennial reign of Christ as a home for Christ and His Church Age saints.

32. As John beheld the vision of the new heaven and the new earth he again saw the New Jerusalem and he heard a great voice from heaven.

33. 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.

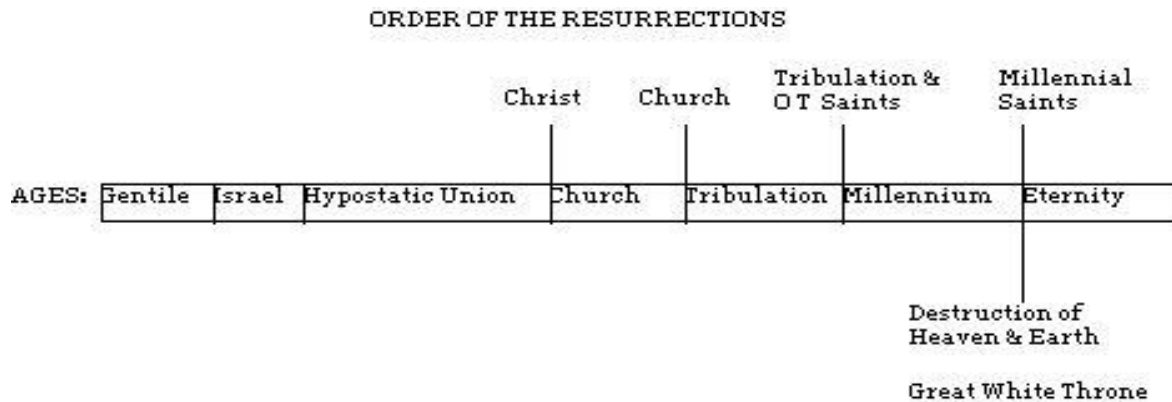
34. The presence of God in Scripture frequently connotes fellowship or blessing. Here it is stated that the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem will be the people of God and that God will not only be with them but also He will be their God.

35. The presence of God assures an entirely new state for those who inhabit the eternal city. It is no longer just a city for His bride. It is a city ready to embrace the saints of all ages. Let's summarize what we have learned:

Summary Points

1. The New Jerusalem of the new earth will be the center of the new universe, with a beauty and a holiness that can hardly be fathomed.
2. Let's review the two locations of this heavenly city, 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.
3. The Holy City is first suspended above the earth during the thousand year Kingdom, as a celestial home for Church Age believers and her Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. This helps 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.

4.1 The following chart will help us understand the order of the resurrections.



5. Given this fact the city must be temporarily withdrawn when the earth is destroyed at the end of the Millennium.

6. After the creation of the new earth, the city will descend upon the new earth and actually rest on it, since the New Jerusalem is said to have foundations, which implies a firm means of support rather than a suspension above the earth.

7. 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.

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

9. 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. Such a restricted inhabitation is only a temporary restriction as we have seen.

10. 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

11. There can be no question that this promised city is the New Jerusalem. While it may be the bride's city, it will later have other permanent inhabitants: the saved of the house of Israel. You will notice that the foundation stones of the city have the twelve apostles' names on them, while the twelve gates are named for the twelve tribes.

12. A third group of people will also have access to the city, though their principle place of residence will be the new earth. This group is called the nations, which means "peoples" or Gentiles.

12.1 They will be comprised of believers who did not happen to be among Israel in the Old Testament or the Church in the New Testament.

13. Noah would be one of these, since he was not an Israelite. Naaman the leper would also be in this group, since he was not a Jew either. Many other Old Testament people knew God and believed in Him and found salvation, but were never part of Israel. Job was also one of these Gentiles.

14. All the Gentiles who are saved during the Tribulation will also be in this company of believers and have access to this wonderful city.

15. The most important thing about this new city and new earth is that the Lord Jesus Christ will be there in person, and we will see Him face-to-face. John tells us that we will see Christ as He is and become like Him. Jesus' glorified human body is the "tabernacle of God" which John says has now come among men. He will have His glorified body for all eternity and we will have ours, so face-to-face fellowship will be no problem.

16. In Rev 21:4 we are told that we will be free from all sorrow in the New Jerusalem. God will wipe every tear from our eyes. Death will be gone forever, and so will its painful shadow – mourning. All sickness and pain will be forgotten in the wonder of our new surroundings. Even our old sin natures will be removed at last, so that we will never lose patience with one another again!

17. In closing I want to read what J. Vernon McGee has written about Revelation chapters twenty-one and twenty-two.

"Eternity is unveiled in chapter 21: a new heaven, a new earth, a New Jerusalem, a new era, and the eternal abode of the Lamb's bride where we will be new creations in Christ Jesus without the old nature that manifests itself so much today. Adopting a popular aphorism of the day, it can truly be said that this chapter is "out of this world." This chapter hasn't anything to do with the earth (except for the first few verses). In it we see the eternal abode of the church. What really is heaven? There is a lot of sticky, sentimental stuff said about heaven, and we get quite weepy when we talk about heaven. However, heaven is a place, a very definite place. You will have an address there. Your name will be put on you so that in eternity, when you wander around into outer space and get lost, some angel will bring you home and you will have a home.

“As the long vista of eternity is before us in this chapter, we move not only from time to eternity, but to a new creation. A new heaven, a new earth, and a New Jerusalem greet us. The redeemed have previously received glorified bodies like Christ's. All things have become new. A new universe suggests new methods and approaches to life. New laws will regulate the new universe. The entire lifestyle will change. Here are some of the changes that are suggested in chapters 21 and 22. There will be a total absence of sin and temptation and testing in the new creation.

“This in itself makes a radical difference. The New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, does not mean another satellite for the earth, but rather the earth and all of the new creation with all of the galactic systems will revolve about the New Jerusalem, because it is the dwelling place of God and of Christ. The law of gravity, as we know it, will be radically revised. There will be traffic between the New Jerusalem and the earth. The church will have already left the earth, and its dwelling place is the New Jerusalem.

“I believe that we will have entirely different bodies, and the law of gravity will not affect us; that is, the law of gravity of this earth or of any other planet. There will be no sun to give light, for God Himself will supply it directly to the universe. There will be the absence, therefore, of night. There is no night there because we just do not need that time to rest since we will have new bodies. I am looking forward to that, by the way. There will no longer be any sea on the earth. The sea occupies most of the earth's surface today; approximately three-fourths of the total surface is water. This denotes a revolution in life upon the earth. Just think of the parking space we will be able to have! There will be no fish to eat. Apparently man will be a vegetarian during the Millennium and throughout eternity, as he was in the Garden of Eden. Fruit is the only diet of eternal man. (See Rev 22:2) The presence of Christ and God, together with the throne of God made visible, ushers in a new day for man "the new creation."

