

Overview of the New Jerusalem: Motivation for Righteousness

The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which 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. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS. 14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation...17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness...18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 3:10-18)

I. THE NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH AND NEW JERUSALEM – WHY UNDERSTAND?

- A. God's ultimate goal is for Jesus to have a Bride established with 'eternal voluntary love' living together in the New Jerusalem ruling His vast empire through the universe. Eternal love is a mystery like sin is (2 Thes. 2:7). Eternal voluntary love takes cultivation. What will keep love fresh for billions of years? Awestruck affectionate gratitude is foundational to loving obedience and will be in the saints. God creates an environment in the New Jerusalem on the New Earth and leads history in a way in which love will flourish forever without violating man's free will.
- B. God gives us revelation of the New Heaven and Earth and the New Jerusalem to reveal His passion for His people and His zeal for righteousness and against sin. *The Church's future glory is related to developing passion for Jesus and zeal for righteousness*. Understanding the timing and nature of the New Jerusalem is foundational to understanding God's End-Time plans.

II. PROMISE OF NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH (2 PET. 3:13)

Look for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2 Pet. 3:13)

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth...18 be glad and rejoice forever in what I create... I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people...weeping shall no longer be heard in her...20 "No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die 100 years old, but the sinner being 100 years old shall be accursed...22...for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people...25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food...says the LORD. (Isa. 65:17-25)

"For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. 23 It shall come to pass...all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD. 24 "And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." (Isa. 66:22-24)

I saw a new heaven and a new earth...(Rev 21:1)

That He may send Jesus Christ...²¹ whom heaven must receive (retain or keep) until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets...(Acts 3:20-21)

"I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. (Mt 19:28)

Creation...will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty... (Rom 8:21)

III. PRINCIPLE OF PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT OF SCRIPTURE

- A. The passages on the new earth are always in context and deal with both the Millennium and the eternal state (Isa. 65:17-25; 66:22-24; 2 Pet. 3:13). In one passage, prophetic Scripture often points to two events or two time frames together that are separated in time. Isaiah 61:1-2a describes Jesus' ministry at His first coming (Lk 4:18-19) while Isa. 61:2b-3 describes His second coming. The Day of the Lord, the Tribulation, and destruction of the heavens and earth are set forth by Peter as events that seem to rapidly follow one another, yet other Scriptures make clear they are separated by a 1,000 years (2 Peter 3:10-13). When looking at all Scripture together, the sequence becomes clear. The coming of Elijah is similar (Mal. 4:5-6). The coming of the New Earth and the New Jerusalem is also overlapped in biblical prophecy in this way.
- B. The grace manifest in the New Earth begins with expression in the Millennial earth. There will be *substantial righteousness in the Millennial earth*, but not total righteousness. The righteousness in the Millennial earth *focuses on the quality of Jesus' rule* much more than the expression of it in the hearts of people. However, righteousness has its ultimate expression in the New Earth when Jesus' rule and the heart of the people are in full agreement.

IV. THE NEW JERUSALEM: FATHER'S GIFT TO THE BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE

I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (Jn. 14:2-3)

He (Abraham) waited for the city which has foundations whose builder...is God. (Heb. 11:10)

They desire a better, that is, a heavenly country...for He has prepared a city for them. (Heb. 11:16)

You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all...and ²⁴ to Jesus (Heb. 12:22-24)

The New Earth is where the New Jerusalem finds its *permanent resting place*. The New Jerusalem is prepared during the Church age as a place for the Bride to be at the time of the Second Coming which is the beginning of the Millennium. The heavenly Jerusalem is where all the saints live with God (Heb. 12:22-24). All saints will live forever in the New Jerusalem (Heb. 11:10, 16).

V. NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH IN CONTEXT OF REVELATION 21-22

- A. **Rev. 21:1-8 Our ultimate eternal inheritance: New Jerusalem on the New Earth** – the eternal state of the resurrected in the city possessing their eternal inheritance, in face to face relationship with God tabernacling among them. The point here is that the saints enter their full inheritance at the Second Coming in New Jerusalem.
1. Seven negatives removed – no sea (21:1), death, sorrow, crying, pain (21:4), the curse (22:3), and night (21:25; 22:5). Rev. 21:5-8 is an encouragement to the tribulation saints with the removal of the old earth with its environment defiled by sin and death.
 2. Rev. 21:3 describes God's dwelling with humans. Our highest inheritance is God dwelling with us (Ex. 25:8; Lev. 26:11-13; Ezek. 37:26-27; Rev. 21:3) which is completely fulfilled to the saints whether in the Millennial or New Earth. The tabernacle speaks of intimate face to face encounter with God's heart and person. In Rev. 21:5-6, the Father speaks in a direct way for only the second time in Revelation (Rev. 1:8; 21:5). The Father's grand announcement is for the whole redeemed community.
- B. New Jerusalem in (Rev. 21:9-22:5) elaborates on Rev. 21:1-8 to give details of the city in which the saints will live forever. **The eternal state of the resurrected** in the city possessing their eternal inheritance, in face to face relationship with God living among them. **The point here is that the saints enter their full inheritance at the Second Coming in the New Jerusalem.**
- C. **New Jerusalem: ultimate Holy of Holies (21:9-21) – external view.** The city is described as a cube (21:16) specifically to be understood as like the Holy of Holies (layout of a cube) in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:19-20) with the precious stones in the foundation of the city (21:19-20) understood as fellowship with God as pictured in the ministry of the high priest in the Holy of Holies. The jasper light that fills the city is the Shekinah glory of God (Rev. 21:11, 23; 22:5) which filled Solomon's Temple at its dedication (2 Chr. 5-7). The ark of the covenant points to God's throne which is available to all in this temple-city (Rev. 22:3-4).
- Overview** – the city's glorious splendor (Rev. 21:9-11); her gates and foundations (Rev. 21:12-14); her layout and size with walls that are each 1500 hundred miles long or approximately 7,000,000 feet high and 216 feet thick (Rev. 21:15-17); her construction is with precious stones like those on the breastplate of the high priest as in Ex. 28:17-20; 39:10 (Rev. 21:18-20); her gates and street that are further described in Rev. 22:2 (Rev. 21:21) as viewed from a distance.
- D. **New Jerusalem: ultimate Garden of Eden (21:22-22:5) – internal view.** The beauty of the interior of the city (Rev. 21:22-27). The light source and illumination of the City (Rev. 21:23-24), its relationship to the Millennial earth (Rev. 21:24-27; 22:2) and life inside the City is like the garden of Eden with face to face communion with God (22:1-5). The River of Life (Rev. 22:1) and the Tree of Life (22:2) point back to Eden.

VI. THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE MILLENNIAL EARTH (REV. 21:9-22:5)

- A. Rev. 21:9-22:5 is a parenthetical section like Rev. 17:1-19:10. It is not meant to be understood as events that unfold in chronological sequence *after* the New Earth is created (Rev. 21:1-2). The angel of Rev. 21:9-10 is intended to parallel the angel of Rev. 17:1-3 to contrast the Harlot and the Bride. *The eternal state of the resurrected saints in the New Jerusalem is pictured during the millennium in this passage.* The occupants of this City are described in their eternal state, possessing eternal inheritance, in eternal relationship with God living with them. No change is in their relationship whatsoever, during the Millennial earth. The point of emphasis is that the *saints have full inheritance at the Second Coming in the New Jerusalem.* This is no different from present as ones in heaven are enjoying eternal conditions with God.
- B. *A satellite city?* New Jerusalem will descend to the earth during the Millennial Kingdom to be in proximity to the earth so that the Millennial kings can come to it and receive the leaves that heal their nations. Yet its dimensions are too large to rest on the earth since the dimension of the Millennial Jerusalem and the Millennial Temple would not allow this. *A Satellite city is assumed when considering all the details of Scripture, but is not clearly revealed in Scripture as such.*
- C. New Jerusalem's relationship to the Millennial earth is seen in context to the Millennial nations and kings (21:24, 26). Nations exist that are distinct from the resurrected saints (Isa. 2:2; 60:3, 5, 11, 20; Dan. 7:14; Mic. 4:2; Zech. 2:11; 8:23) and the kings (Ps. 72:10) will come to Jerusalem to receive from God. These nations and kings are humans with natural bodies in the Millennial earth (Ps. 72:10-11; Isa. 60:3, 11; 66:12). Some nations like Gog and Magog will rebel (Rev. 20:8). The glory and honor of the nations or their most important treasures are brought to God.
- D. The New Jerusalem has light for nations and leaves that bring healing to them (Rev. 21:24; 22:2), with unbelievers not permitted to enter the city who are under the curse (Rev. 22:14-15) and with angels guarding the gates forbidding the entrance of the rebellious (Gen. 3:24; Rev. 21:27; 22:15). These angels are more than symbolic, but they have a significant role. The Millennial earth is not totally free from the rebellion (22:3) as seen in Rev. 20:8-9. The city is lit by the glory of Jesus and it is a source of light for the Millennial earth to some degree. The New Jerusalem does not have daylight and nighttime. The characteristics of Eternity have no curse (Rev. 21:3), no night (Rev. 21:25), no sun and moon (Rev. 21:23) and no Temple (Rev. 21:22).

VII. THE NEW JERUSALEM DESCENDS ON TWO DIFFERENT OCCASIONS

- A. **Rev. 21:2** reveals the fact of the descending of Jerusalem to the New Earth which has no sea. This happens in the chronological progression of Revelation immediately after the Great White Throne events in Rev. 20:11-15. Rev. 21:2 does not develop the ideas that the descent of Jerusalem has two phases, much like the OT gives the reality of Jesus without pointing out His coming in two phases.
- B. **Rev. 21:10** is the descent of Jerusalem to the Millennial earth as a "satellite city" above the Millennial earth. **Rev. 3:12** – the descent of the New Jerusalem probably during the Millennium.