

New Jerusalem: Heaven on Earth (Rev. 21-22)

I. THE CENTERPIECE OF GOD'S PURPOSE: BRING HEAVEN AND EARTH TOGETHER

⁹ *Having made known to us the mystery (hidden plan) of His will...10 that He might gather together in one ALL things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth. (Eph. 1:9-10)*

A. The centerpiece of God's eternal purpose is for Jesus to come back to establish His Kingdom rule over all the earth as He joins the heavenly and earthly realms together. Heaven speaks of the supernatural realm where God's presence is openly manifest. Earth speaks of the physical realm as the place where natural process, human emotion and physical sensation reach full expression.

B. God's purpose has always been to live together with His people face to face on this earth. This is the most difficult yet ultimate reality that God determined to accomplish through Christ. The dilemma is that God cannot violate His blazing holiness and yet will not violate man's free will. Thus, He had to establish a salvation process that created the context for Him to dwell face to face with humans. God can only make His habitation on earth after the nations live in obedience to Him. There are many implications to this grand reality of God fully removing "the veil."

³ *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. (Rev. 21:3)*

C. Jesus will rule the earth with the natural processes not suspended, yet enhanced by the Spirit's supernatural dimension like when Jesus appeared after His resurrection (Jn. 20-21; Acts 1).

II. GOD PROMISED TO ESTABLISH A NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

¹ *I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away... 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God... (Rev 21:1-2)*

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

¹⁷ *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)*

²² *"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 24 and they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me...They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." (Isa. 66:22-24)*

III. PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES: THE PRINCIPLE OF “DOUBLE FULFILLMENT”

- A. The 4 passages that use the phrase, “New Heavens and Earth” are all used in context to both the Millennium and the eternal state (Isa. 65:17-25; 66:22-24; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-2). In a single passage, prophetic Scripture is often written about two events together that are separated by time. ***Many Scripture have an initial substantial fulfillment then a future ultimate fulfillment.***
- B. When looking at all Scripture together, the sequence and distinction of the events becomes clear. For example: Isaiah 61:1-2a describes Jesus’ ministry at His first coming (Lk 4:18-19) while Isa. 61:2b-3 describes His Second Coming. Zech. 9:9-10 does the same.
- C. The coming of Elijah is similar (Mal. 4:5-6). Thus, the coming of the New Earth and the New Jerusalem are also overlapped in biblical prophecy in this way. Gog and Magog is the prophetic name of the man and the coalition of nations under his leadership that opposes God on a global basis. God is against Gog with the idea of judging him (Ezek. 38:2-3). The Gog and Magog reality finds substantial fulfillment in the Antichrist during the Great Tribulation (Rev. 19:17-21) and then it finds ultimate fulfillment at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:8).
- D. The grace manifest in the New Earth begins with an 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 IS OUR ETERNAL DWELLING PLACE

- A. The name "New Jerusalem" maintains a vital identification with old Jerusalem. The New Earth is the permanent resting place of the New Jerusalem. It has been prepared as a place all the saints will live forever in God’s immediate presence (Heb. 11:10, 16; 12:22-24).
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)
- B. The New Jerusalem will descend to the earth on two occasions (at the time of the Second Coming and then after the Millennial Kingdom). It descends from the third heaven to earth.
² ***I, John, saw the holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven... (Rev. 21:2)***
¹⁰ ***And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great City, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God... (Rev. 21:10)***
¹² ***The New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. (Rev. 3:12)***
²⁶ ***The Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. (Gal. 4:26)***

C. The OT saints had revelation of the New Jerusalem and lived in light of it. “They” refers back to Abel (v. 4), Enoch (v. 5), Noah (v. 7), Abraham (v. 8), Isaac and Jacob (v. 9), Sarah (v. 11).

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

²² ***You have come to...the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem... (Heb. 12:22)***

D. Abraham ‘waited’ for the City whose builder is God. (Heb. 11:10). The NIV says that Abraham ‘looked forward’ to the City. The NAS says that Abraham ‘looked for’ the City

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

E. The New Jerusalem will be the joy of the whole Millennial earth.

¹ ***Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the City of our God, in His holy mountain. 2 beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the City of the great King. 3 God is in her palaces...4 For behold, the kings assembled, they passed by together. 5 They saw it, and so they marveled; they were troubled, they hastened away. 6 Fear took hold of them there, and pain, as of a woman in birth pangs... (Ps. 48:1-6)***

F. The New Jerusalem rests forever on the New Earth. Theologians debate on whether this present earth will be renovated (renewed) or annihilated after the Millennium to be the New Earth.

¹ ***I saw a new heaven and earth, for the first heaven and earth had passed away. (Rev. 21:1)***

G. The earth will continue forever (Ps. 37:29; 78:69; 104:5; 105:10-11; 125:1-2; 1 Chr. 23:25; 28:8; Isa. 60:21; Ezek. 37:25; Joel 3:20).

²⁵ ***They shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. (Ezek. 37:25)***

⁶⁹ ***He built His sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which He established forever. (Ps. 78:69)***

⁵ ***You who laid the foundations of the earth, so it should not be moved forever... (Ps. 104:5)***

H. The word translated “passed away” is used 3x in the NT (Rev. 21:1, 4; 2 Cor. 5:17).

¹⁷ ***If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away... (2 Cor. 5:17)***

V. JESUS’ THRONE OF GLORY: 2 DIMENSIONS OF ONE THRONE (EARTHLY/HEAVENLY)

A. At the Second Coming, Jesus will establish His Throne of Glory on earth to judge all nations.

³¹ ***When the Son of Man comes in His glory...then He will sit on the Throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them... (Mt. 25:31-32)***

B. Jesus will establish His Throne of glory in the Millennial Jerusalem Temple to judge all nations.

¹⁷ ***At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. (Jer. 3:17)***

- C. Jesus' Throne of Glory will be connected to the Holy of Holies in the Millennial Temple.
⁴ *The glory of the LORD came into the Temple (Millennial Temple)... 6 I heard Him (Jesus) speaking...from the Temple (Holy of Holies)... 7 He said, "This is the place of My Throne and the place of...My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of Israel...forever." (Ezek. 43:4-7)*
¹² *Thus says the LORD... "Behold, the Man (Jesus) whose name is the BRANCH! From His place (New Jerusalem)...He shall build the Temple 13...He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His Throne; He shall be a priest on His Throne." (Zech. 6:12-13)*
- D. Jesus' Throne is also established in the heavenly New Jerusalem. The government of heaven and of earth come fully together as the heavenly and earthly Jerusalem are brought together.
³ *The Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it (New Jerusalem). (Rev. 22:3)*
- E. **Summary:** at the time of the Second Coming, the government of heaven and of earth come fully together as the Jesus' Throne brings the two Jerusalems together (Rev. 22:3). At Jesus' Second Coming, He establishes His Throne to judge all nations (Mt. 25:31; Jer. 3:17; Ezek. 43:4-7; Zech. 6:12-13). His Throne has an earthly and heavenly dimension; being established in Millennial Jerusalem (Jer. 3:17; Lk. 1:32) and also in the heavenly New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:3-4).

VI. DYNAMIC CONVERGENCE: THE "CORRIDOR OF GLORY"

- A. The joining of the two Jerusalems establishes what I refer to as the "Corridor of Glory" in which 12 significant aspects of God's plan come into a dynamic convergence. (Converge means to come together from different directions to an intersecting point to achieve union). The term convergence points to the paradox of both dimensions (heavenly and earthly), each having distinction, yet with a significant merging or overlapping as a unified reality.
- B. This "Corridor," is described by Isaiah as including a *cloud* (pillar of glory reaching from earth to heaven) with elements of *smoke* and *shining fire*. This "Corridor" is described by Ezekiel as a *whirlwind* (the vast glorious tornado funnel that engulfs Jesus' Chariot-Throne, Ezek. 1).
- C. The whirlwind, pillar of cloud of glory, perfumed smoke and the shining fire connect God's Temple in heaven (New Jerusalem) to His Temple on the Millennial earth establishing His glorious resting place on the earth (Isa. 66:1; 11:10; Ps. 132:7-14). Some have referred to this corridor as a vast "heavenly elevator" connecting God's Temple in heaven (New Jerusalem) to His Temple on the Millennial earth.
- D. The 12 significant aspects of Jesus' Throne of glory are: 1) *God's Mountain*, 2) the *City of Jerusalem* (with 12 gates), 3) *God's House* (where God's family lives together with God), 4) the *Holy of Holies* (Temple), 5) the *garden of Eden* (physical paradise), 6) the *River* that heals, 7) the *Trees* (bearing 12 kinds of fruit), 8) the *Highway*, 9) the *whirlwind* (funnel of glory), 10) the *pillar of cloud*, 11) the *perfumed smoke* and 12) the *shining fire* (that surrounds Jerusalem).

- E. ***Summary***: the New Jerusalem (heavenly Temple) will descend to a place just above Millennial Jerusalem (at the Temple on Millennial Mt. Zion). Jesus' Throne (Mountain-City-House) or His vast governmental complex includes the Millennial Temple and the New Jerusalem joined by a "Corridor of Glory" comprised of the pillar of the glory cloud, smoke, and fire forming a whirlwind of glory around His Chariot-Throne (Ezek. 1). This is the place of God's Temple or His glorious Resting Place on the earth or the place of the soles of His feet (Isa. 66:1; 11:10).

VII. THE NEW JERUSALEM: INITIALLY IS ABOVE THE MILLENNIAL JERUSALEM

- A. The New Jerusalem will descend to the earth during the Millennial Kingdom. It will be a City that extends far above the earth. This is seen when taking into account all the specific details of the prophetic Scriptures. It is not clearly revealed as such, but is understood by implication.
- B. There are at least ***five reasons*** that we know that the New Jerusalem is distinct from the Millennial Jerusalem in being close to the earth, yet not resting on it. First, the kings of the earth come into the New Jerusalem during the Millennium to bring their glory (Rev. 21:24). Second, the leaves are for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2). Third, the angels guard sinners from entry (Rev. 21:12, 22:14-15; Gen. 3:22-24). Fourth, the New Jerusalem lights up the saved nations on the Millennial earth; not unsaved ones (Rev. 21:24; 20:7-9). Fifth, the size of the Millennial Jerusalem is approximately 10 square miles (4,500 rods x 4,500 rods) (Ezek. 48:30-35; 45:6; 48:15-19) whereas, the New Jerusalem is 1,380 miles (Rev. 21:16).
- C. The saints reign on the Millennial earth (Matt. 19:28, Lk. 22:29), yet we live with resurrected bodies in the New Jerusalem. Our residence is in the New Jerusalem, but our governmental role takes place on the earth. The New Jerusalem is the permanent abode of the saints. We live in resurrected bodies in New Jerusalem but reign on earth. The saints will easily travel from the New Jerusalem to the Millennial earth as angels do it now. Angels appear on earth infrequently. We will come much more frequently because the veil between the two realms will be lifted.

VIII. THE NEW JERUSALEM DESCENDS TO THE EARTH ON TWO DIFFERENT OCCASIONS

- A. We must understand the outline of Rev. 21-22 and its relationship to the two descents of the New Jerusalem. This passage has two sections (Rev. 21:1-8; Rev. 21:9-22:5).
- B. Rev 21:1-8 describes our ultimate eternal inheritance in the New Jerusalem on the New Earth in relational terms nearness to God. It describes the eternal state of the resurrected saints in the City in face to face relationship with God. It describes the dynamic quality of spiritual life in the New Jerusalem on the Millennial earth and the New Earth.
- C. Rev. 21:2 reveals the fact of the New Jerusalem descending 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 that speaks of the reality of Jesus coming as the Messiah without pointing out that His coming would be in two phases.

- D. The City is described in relational terms of nearness to God (21:1-8). The foundational reality of the New Jerusalem is God with people on earth (v. 3, 6). This passage combines the Holy of Holies and the garden of Eden realities.
- E. The splendor of the New Jerusalem is described in Rev. 21:9-22:5. It is seen from two points of view: the external view (Rev. 21:9-22) and the internal view (Rev. 21:23-22:5).
- F. The New Jerusalem seen 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 will enjoy their eternal inheritance in face to face relationship with God. The point here is that the Great Tribulation saints enter their full inheritance at the Second Coming in the New Jerusalem.
- G. 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). Rev. 21:9-22:5 refers to the Millennium because the nature of things mentioned are out of character with the eternal state. The angel took John to a mountain to show him the Bride in Rev. 21:9-10. This is intended to parallel the angel taking John to the wilderness to show him the Great Harlot in Rev. 17:1-3. The contrast of the Harlot and the Bride is a major theme in Revelation.
- H. Rev 21:9-22 describes the eternal and temporal together. 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 during the Millennium.
- I. **Overview** – the City's glorious splendor (Rev. 21:9-11); her gates and foundations (Rev. 21:12-14); her layout and size. The New Jerusalem is 1,380miles (7,286,400 ft.) in length, height, and width. A furlong (NIV stadia) is a Greek measurement that is approx. 600 feet. Thus, 600 feet x 12,000 furlong equals 7,286,400 ft (1,380miles). The wall is 216 feet thick (Rev. 21:15-17) and is made with precious stones like those on the breastplate of the high priest (Ex. 28:17-20; 39:10; Rev. 21:18-20); her gates and street are described in Rev. 22:2 as viewed from a distance.
- J. ***New Jerusalem as the ultimate Holy of Holies (21:9-21) – external view.*** The City is described as a cube (21:16) 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.
- K. ***New Jerusalem as the 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.