

REVELATION 21-22 – THE NEW JERUSALEM

Our Amazing Abode for the Eons of Eternity

1A. THE ABOLITION OF THE OLD ORDER: 21:1-2

Changes in store for earth: Is it renovation in the Millennium and restoration in eternity?
Is it restoration in the Millennium and re-creation in eternity?

1b. The new cosmos: 1

1c. The re-creation of the new universe:

1d. The final deliverance of creation:

2d. The final destiny of man:

2c. The removal of the sea:

2b. The new city: 2

1c. Its designation:

2c. Its development:

3c. Its disclosure:

4c. Its descent:

5c. Its decoration:

6c. The distinctiveness of the city:



2A. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW ORDER: 21:3-8

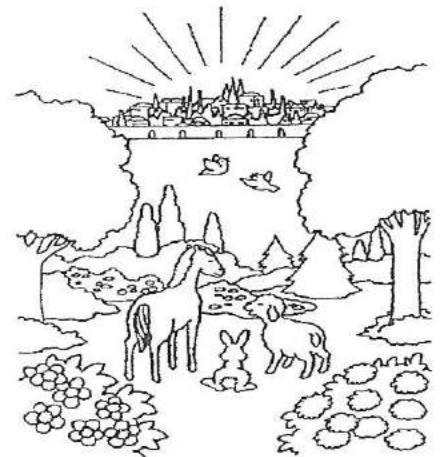
1b. The content of the message: 3

1c. The message concerning the place of God:

2c. The message concerning the presence of God:

3c. The message concerning the peoples of God:

- 1d. The fellowship of God with men in the future:
The believer will not spend eternity with God in heaven, but God will spend eternity with man on the new earth—What a marvel of condescension!
- 2d. The fellowship of God with men in the past:
 - 1e. His fellowship in Eden:
 - 2e. His fellowship with man in Jesus Christ:
 - 3e. His fellowship in the believer individually and the church corporately (Eph. 2:21).
- 2b. The comfort of the message: 4
 - 1c. The concern of the divine comforter:
 - 1d. The cause of tears:
 - 1e. Discouragement:
 - 2e. Death:
 - 3e. Disconsolation:
 - 4e. Despair:
 - 5e. Disease:
 - 2d. The companions of God:
 - 2c. The cessation of dreadful conditions:
 - 1d. The former things: sin's curse
 - 2d. The final condition: the Savior's cure
- 3b. The communication of the message: 5
 - 1c. The divine person:
 - 2c. The distinctive position:
 - 3c. The dependable promise:
- 4b. The consummation of the message: 6-8
 - 1c. The fullness of the Savior: 6
 - 1d. The importance of the completion:
 - 2d. The introduction of the creator:



- 1e. His self-introduction:
- 2e. His self-impartation:
 - 1f. The promise of the gift:
 - 2f. The person of the gift:
 - 3f. The plenteousness of the gift:
 - 4f. The preciousness of the gift: 22:7
- 2c. The felicity of the saints: 7
 - 1d. The meaning of overcomer: 1 John 5:5
 - 2d. The blessings of an overcomer:
 - 1e. Inheritance:
 - 2e. Intimacy:
- 3c. The fate of sinners: 8
 - 1d. The earthly sins:
 - 1e. The description of the sins:
 - 1f. Fearful
 - 2f. Unbelieving
 - 3f. Abominable
 - 4f. Murderous
 - 5f. Whoremongers
 - 6f. Sorcerers
 - 7f. Idolaters
 - 8f. Liars
 - 2e. The damnation of the sinner:
 - 2d. The eternal state:
 - 1e. The identity
 - 2e. The locality:



3A. THE ADORNMENT OF THE NEW JERUSALEM: 21:9-21

1b. The disclosure: 9-10a

1c. The references to the city throughout the Scriptures:

1d. The announcement of the city: John 14:1-6

2d. The anticipation of the city: Hebrews 11:10, 16

3d. The residents in the city: Hebrews 12:22-23

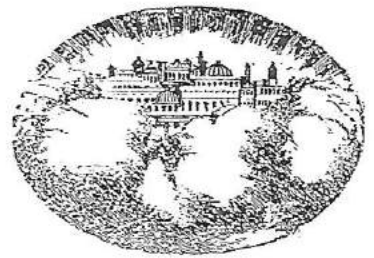
4d. The regard for the city: Hebrews 13:14

2c. The revelation through the angel of judgment:

3c. The rapture of the Apostle John:

1d. A spiritual vision:

2d. A superlative vantage point:



2b. The descent: 10b

1c. The preparation before the Millennium:

2c. The position during the Millennium:

3c. The place after the Millennium:

3b. The decoration: 11

1c. The shekinah of God's presence:

2c. The splendor of God's perfection:

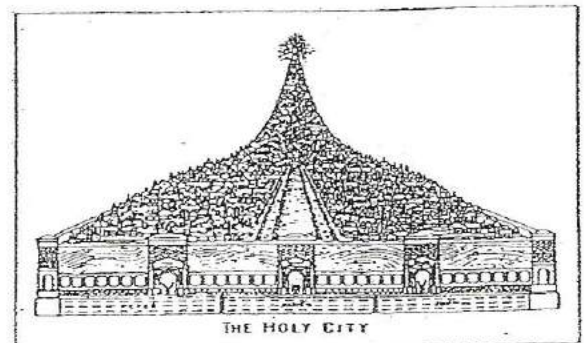
4b. The defenses: 12-14

1c. The enclosure: 12a

2c. The entrances: 12b-13

1d. The necessity of the gates:

2d. The names on the gates:



1e. The distinctiveness of Israel's destiny:

2e. The denial of Israel's destiny:

Reformed or displacement theology does not envision Israel as a separate entity in the Millennial kingdom in a geographic locality, let alone a special place of blessing in the eternal state.

3d. The number of the gates:

3c. The establishment: 14

1d. The construction of the foundation:

2d. The significance of the foundation:

3d. The names on the foundation:

5b. The determination of the size: 15

1c. The golden rod:

2c. The unit of measurement:

6b. The dimensions: 16

1c. Its shape:

2c. Its size:

7b. The description: 17-21

1c. The wall: 16-18a

1d. Its size:

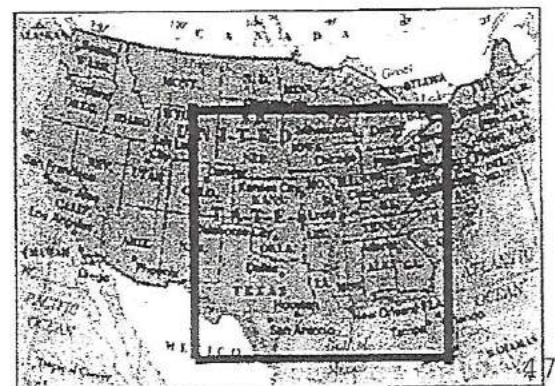
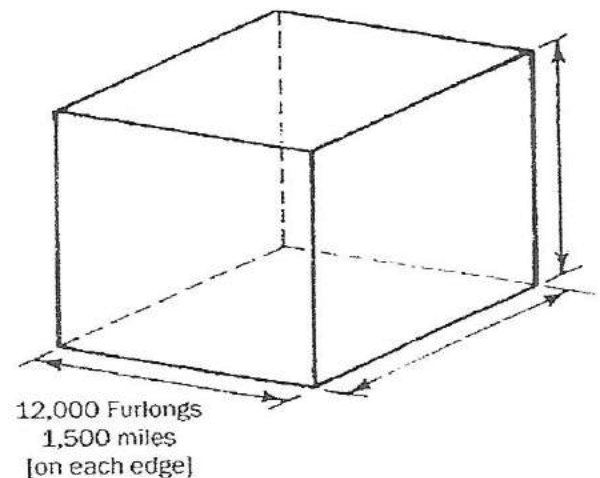
2d. Its splendor:

3d. Its support:

2c. The city: 18b

1d. The preciousness:

2d. The particulars:



Our eternal home is a city of beauty and brilliance, a place of dazzling variety and delightful harmony.

3c. The foundations: 19-20

- 1e. The first foundation: jasper
- 2e. The second foundation: sapphire
- 3e. The third foundation: chalcedony
- 4e. The fourth foundation: emerald
- 5e. The fifth foundation: sardonyx
- 6e. The sixth foundation: sardius
- 7e. The seventh foundation: chrysolite
- 8e. The eighth foundation: beryl
- 9e. The ninth foundation: topaz
- 10e. The tenth foundation: chrysoprasus
- 11e. The eleventh foundation: jacinth
- 12e. The twelfth foundation: amethyst

4c. The gates: 21a

5c. The street: 21b

4A. THE ACTIVITY IN THE NEW JERUSALEM: 21:22-22:5

1b. Worshiping His person: 22-27

1c. The place of worship: 22

1d. The absence of the temple:

2d. The adoration of Father and Son:

- 1e. Lord:
- 2e. God:
- 3e. Almighty:

2c. The person of worship: 23

1d. The absence of stellar lights:

2d. The announcement of spiritual light:

- 1e. The provision of light:
- 2e. The presence of the Lamb:

681. C. M.
The Heavenly City.

1 JERUSALEM!—my happy home.
Name ever dear to me.—
When shall my labors have an end,
In joy, and peace, and thee?

2 When shall these eyes thy heaven-built walls
And pearly gates behold?

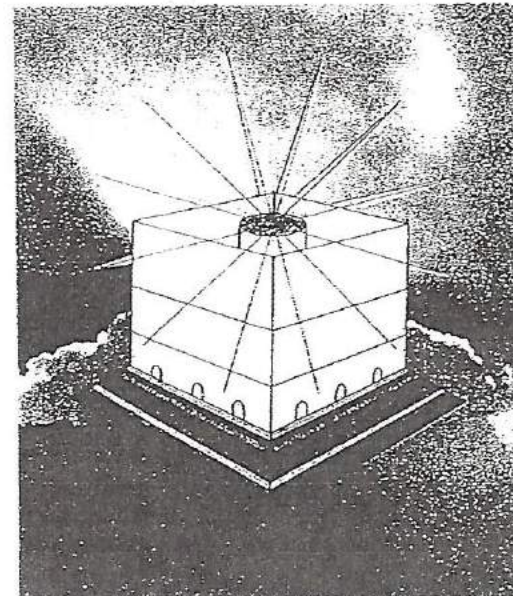
Thy bulwarks, with salvation strong
And streets of shining gold?

3 Oh! when, thou city of my God!
Shall I thy courts ascend?—
Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths never end.

4 Why should I shrink at pain or wo,
Or feel, at death, dismay?
Jerusalem I soon shall view,
In realms of endless day.

5 Redeemed saints and angels, there,
Around my Saviour stand;
And soon my friends in Christ, below,
Will join the glorious band.

6 Jerusalem!—my happy home!
My soul still pants for thee;
Then shall my labors have an end,
When I thy joys shall see.

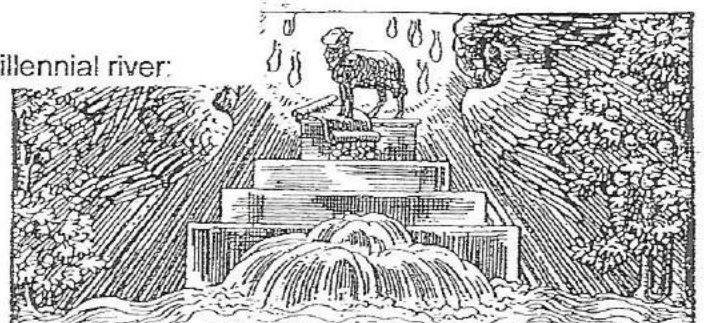


- 3c. The participants in worship: 24-27
 - 1d. The people: 24a
 - 1e. Their designation: saved nations
 - 2e. Their dwelling: scattered abroad
 - 2d. The princes: 24b
 - Perhaps believing kings who ruled in the old creation (Ps. 68:29; 72:10-11; Isa. 60).
- 4c. The purity of worship: 25-27
 - 1d. The emphasis on the gates: 25
 - 2d. The expression of glory and honor: 26
 - 3d. The exclusion from the city: 27
 - 1e. The common:
 - 2e. The corrupt:
 - 4d. The entrance into the city:
- 2b. Walking in His perfection: 22:1-3a

J. Vernon McGee well notes:

Up to this chapter, the New Jerusalem seems to be all mineral and no vegetable. Its appearance is as the dazzling display of a fabulous jewelry store; we wonder if there is no soft grass to sit upon, no green trees to enjoy, and no water to drink or food to eat. However, here are introduced the elements which add a rich softness to this city of elaborate beauty (*Reveling through Revelation* 5:1075).

- 1c. The enjoyment of the River of Life:
 - 1d. Its source:
 - 2d. Its supernaturalness:
 - 3d. Its significance:
 - 4d. Its similarity to the millennial river:



Comparison and Contrast of the Supernatural River in the Millennium and the Eternal State

8

	MILLENNIAL RIVER	ETERNAL RIVER
Passage	Ezekiel 47, Zechariah 14:8	Revelation 22:1-2
Source	The altar of the Millennial Temple	The altar in the New Jerusalem
Length	About 15 miles	1500 plus miles
Destination	The Dead Sea and Mediterranean	The New Earth
Effect	Gives life	Refreshes
Duration	1,000 years	Forever
Fruit	Varied monthly	Varied monthly
Foliage	Healing	Healing

2c. The eating from the Tree of Life:

1d. The unusual fruit:

2d. The useful foliage:

3c. The elimination of the curse on life: 3a

3b. Working in His presence: 3b-5

1c. Service before the Lamb: 3b-4

1d. Involvement in service:

2d. Intimacy with the Lamb:

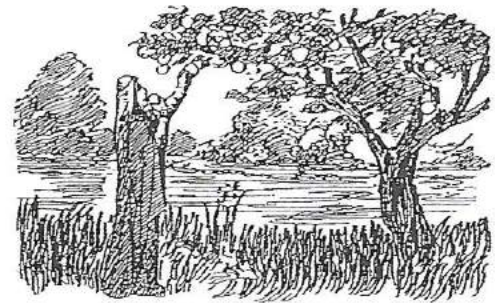
3d. Identification with the Lamb:

2c. Sovereignty with the Lamb: 5

1d. Unnecessary luminaries:

2d. Undimmed light:

3d. Unending lordship:



5A. THE ATTESTATION OF THE TRUTHFULNESS OF THE MESSAGE: 22:6-11

1b. The assertion of truthfulness: 6

2b. The appeal to God and the prophets:

3b. The assurance of the fulfillment:

John concludes his magnificent portrayal of our eternal home with an important assertion. This detailed, dependable message from a truthful God who inspired the prophets will certainly come to pass.

WHAT IS LITERAL AND WHAT IS SYMBOLIC IN REVELATION 21-22?

1. The New Heavens and New Earth
2. The New Jerusalem as an enormous city
3. The Dimensions
4. The Composition: Jasper
5. The Walls
6. The Foundation
7. The Gates
8. The Street
9. The Trees and River
10. The Inhabitants
11. The Triune God



The importance of literal interpretation in relation to the city:

POSITIVELY:

1. The numerous details given.
2. The dwellers are actually redeemed individuals.
3. The vision is twice called faithful and true: 21:5; 22:6
4. The repetition of the city in the Scriptures.

NEGATIVELY:

1. No interpretive key to the symbolism.
2. No agreement among spiritualizers as to the actual meaning.
3. No assurance of the believer's future destiny.

METRE 2 **HEAVENLY JERUSALEM C.M.** 9

1. Je - ru - sa - lem! my hap - py home, Name ev - er dear to me! When shall my

2. When shall these eyes thy heav'n - built walls, And pearl - y gates be - hold? Thy bul - warks

3. O when, thou cit - y of my God, Shall I thy courts as - cend? Where con - gre -

4. There hap - pier bow'rs than E - den's bloom, Nor sin, nor sor - row know; Bless'd seats! through

la - bors have an end In joy, and peace, and thee?

with sal - va - tion strong, And streets of shi - ning gold?

ga - tions ne'er break up, And Sab - baths nev - er end.

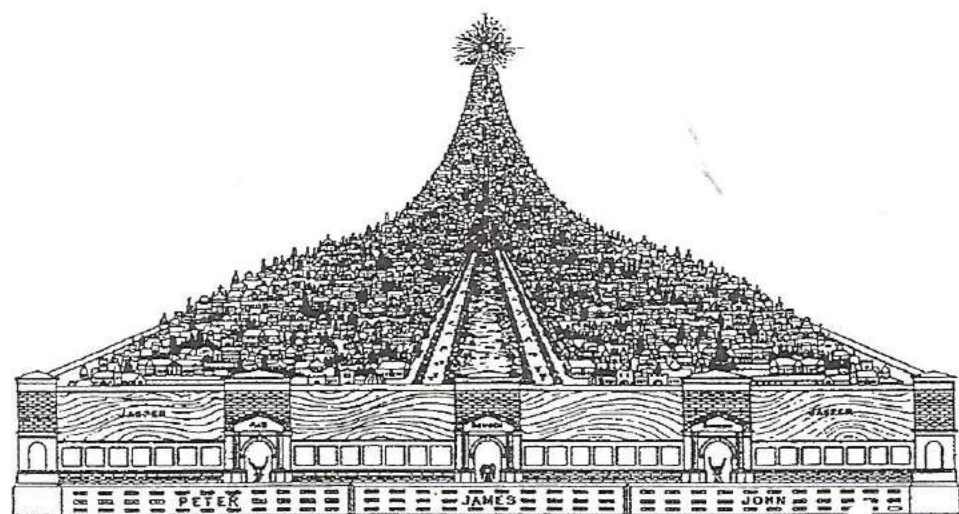
rude and storm - y scenes, I on - ward press to you.

5. Why should I shrink at pain or woe
Or feel at death dismay?
I've Canaan's goodly land in view,
And realms of endless day.
6. Apostles, prophets, martyrs there
Around my Savior stand;
And soon my friends in Christ below
Will join the glorious band.
7. Jerusalem, my happy home—
My soul still pants for thee;
Then shall my labors have an end,
When I thy joys shall see.

On page 6 are reproduced the
almost identical words for this song.
The source is:

Mark H. Newman
Church Psalmist,
or,
Psalms and Hymns,
for the public, social, and
private use of evangelical
Christians.

Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board
of Publication, 52nd edition, 1843,
pp. 608-609.



THE HOLY CITY

Larkin, Dispensational Truth,
page 148.

The fourfold sense of the Scriptures

In one and the same text the words of the Bible contained many layers of meaning, like crystals they reflected light of a different colour when approached from a different direction. This opinion was not the result of idle speculation but had been proposed most strongly by the Evangelists and the Apostle Paul. The system of interpretation established by

Anders Piltz

The World of Medieval Learning

Translated by David Jones

Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981

Fig. 6. The new Jerusalem according to the vision described by the Prophet Ezekiel (Chapters 40-8). Medieval Bible commentary ascribed to the Bible not only its literal meaning but also an allegorical meaning, a moral meaning and an eschatological meaning (referring to the final end of the world). The promises of the Old Covenant are fulfilled in the New and everything recounted in the Old Testament has a counterpart in the New Testament. The unity of content of the two testaments has been described with admirable brevity in a couplet by Hugo of Orleans (it was his contribution to a competition in summarizing the contents of the Bible as briefly as possible)

Quos anguis tristi virus mulcedine pavit.
Hos sanguis Christi mirus dulcedine lavit.

(They who were so tragically seduced into tasting the poison of the serpent were joyfully washed clean by the saving blood of Christ.) The temple in Jerusalem has its allegorical counterpart in the body of Christ, the Holy Church. Morally it can be interpreted to mean that its individual stones, Christians, will in enduring the sufferings of life be so shaped that they can in loving fellowship be united each with the other. The eschatological reference is to the heavenly Jerusalem. These interpretations, which are more or less obviously suggested in the New Testament itself, are presented systematically in *Glossa ordinaria* (cf. p. 54), the continuous commentary in the margin of the Bible compiled by Anselm of Laon, who was Abelard's teacher. In Ezekiel's vision the city had twelve gates, one for each and every one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The same symbol is used in the Book of Revelation but the number twelve is there associated with the twelve apostles, the twelve foundation stones of the heavenly city. Nikolaus of Lyra, *Postille*, printed by Ulrich Zell in Cologne in 1485.

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The observant reader notices two errors in the description of the city:

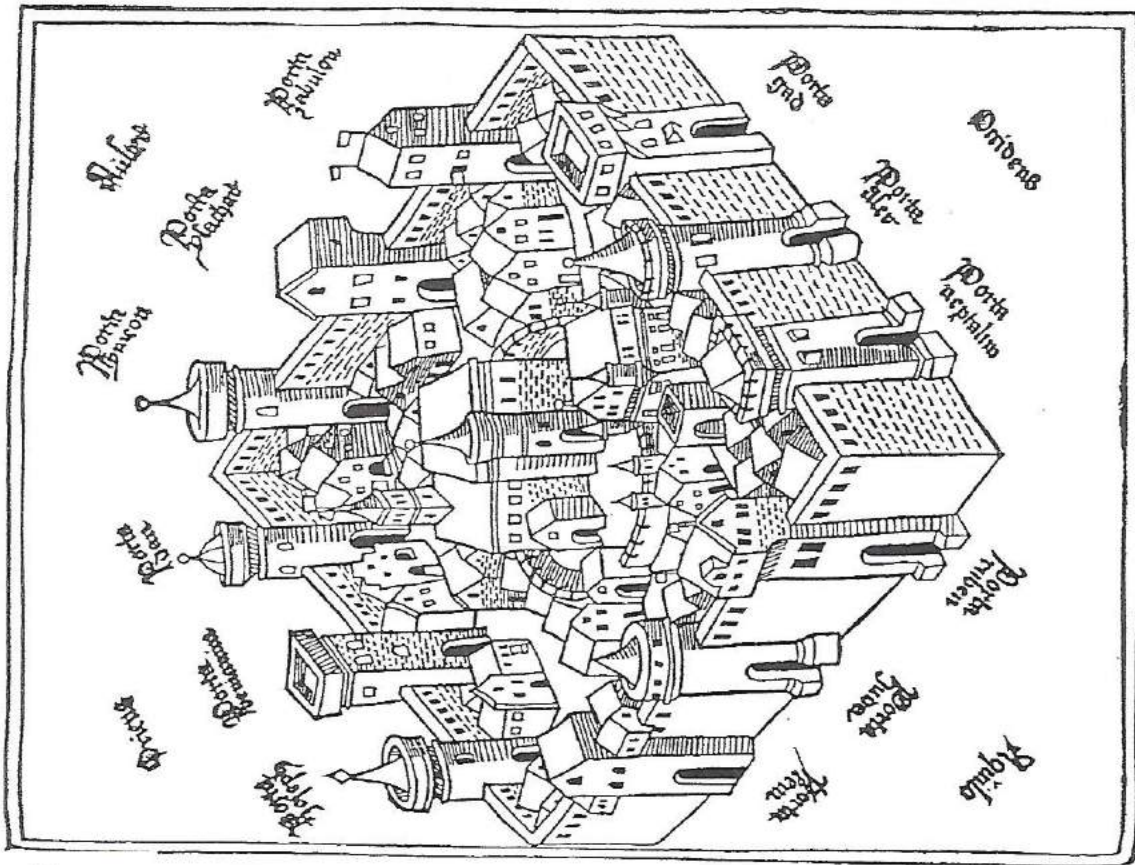
- 1) *The description of the New Jerusalem is found in Rev. 21:1 - 22:5*
(In Ezekiel the New Millennial Temple is described)
- 2) *The literal meaning does not refer to the present city of Jerusalem.*
The Roman Catholic denial of a Millennium extends to the denial of the heavenly Jerusalem as the believer's eternal home.

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• Ezechiel.

Capitulū.

• XLviii.



Roman Catholic Interpretation of Scripture:

(Especially taught by Gregory the Great, d. 604)

Each passage contains a four-fold meaning:

Literal
Allegorical
Anagogical
Tropological

DISPENSATIONALISM, ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH

The Search for Definition

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CHAPTER 9

The New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:1-22:5: Consummation of a Biblical Continuum

David L. Turner

The New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:1-22:5

ultimate community of God on the new earth: The present groanings of believers and of the earth itself are not for the earth to be eliminated but for it to be set free from the debilitating effects of sin.²³ Between the already and the not yet comes the inescapable duty of perseverance (Rom. 8:18-25) as believers anticipate the consummation of history in Revelation 21:1-22:5.²⁴

THE HERMENEUTICS OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

How should one interpret the pervasive symbolic imagery of apocalyptic literature in general and of the book of Revelation in particular? There appear to be three major approaches. First, some take the imagery quite literally, at face value. The reasoning seems to be that the reality and truth of the passage depend upon this approach. Apocalyptic visions are viewed as if John were viewing photographic prints of the reality envisioned. Either everything will literally occur just as in the details of the vision, or the passage totally loses its force. Though he acknowledges the symbolic nature of the passage, Walvoord seems to reason that it accurately describes the actual details of the eternal state upon the new earth: "It is probably a safe procedure to accept the description of this city as corresponding to the physical characteristics attributed to it."²⁵

A very different approach argues from the visionary nature of the passage that its details do not correspond to earthly reality. Indeed, there is doubt that the passage describes physical or material reality at all. In this view the concept of an eschatological, temporal, spatial locale is replaced by the idea of a mystical portrait of timeless spiritual blessing. According to Wilcock, the final vision of Revelation "has no meaning on earth; it deals entirely with heaven."²⁶

²³Here the conclusions of DeYoung (ibid., 116-17, 128) assume too much discontinuity between Old Testament and New Testament eschatological hope. The New Testament is just as interested in an earthly city as the Old Testament is. The new Jerusalem's heavenly origin does not rule out its earthly destination. Christians have been ethically united with the new Jerusalem as a present spiritual reality, but their hope is ever for this ethical-spiritual union to be manifested temporally and physically (Matt. 6:10).

²⁴This view of Jerusalem in biblical history and eschatology will go far to blunt the cogent but overgeneralized critique of dispensationalism found in D. F. Wells, "The Future," in *Christian Faith and Practice in the Modern World*, ed. M. A. Noll and D. F. Wells (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 290-91.

²⁵J. F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 320. This approach is developed in detail by G. G. Cohen, who calculates the square miles covered by the city as well as its potential population ("Some Questions Regarding the New Jerusalem," *GJ* 6, no. 3 [Fall 1965]: 26-28). More calculations of a similar sort are found in H. M. Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, San Diego: Creation Life, 1983), 450-52.

²⁶M. Wilcock, *I Saw Heaven Opened: The Message of Revelation* (Downers Grove, Ill.:

Neither of these views is accepted in the present study. The first view is weakened by its insensitive hermeneutical approach to apocalyptic imagery, and the second has an inadequate grasp of the biblical theology of creation and redemption. While the first view handles the symbolism woodenly, the second takes it merely as poetic license or hyperbole. What is needed is an approach that does justice to apocalyptic symbolism without evaporating the earthiness of biblical protology and eschatology.

A wooden approach to apocalyptic imagery tends to put the question of interpretation too simply: either the passage describes material reality just as the images literally portray it, or it does not describe reality at all. Tan, who argues that an actual literal city is portrayed just as it is, never seems to grasp the fact that an actual literal city may be portrayed through symbols.²⁷ Few would argue that the four different metals of the statue that appeared to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2 are the literal descriptions of the four kingdoms symbolized there. Nevertheless, this does not mean that actual, literal kingdoms are not found in the passage. A similar argument could be made from the four vicious beasts, which symbolize the same four nations in Daniel's dream in Daniel 7. Indeed, if the nations literally conform to the imagery, the perspectives of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 would be contradictory instead of complementary pictures of the four nations.

Just as the four actual kingdoms of Daniel 2, 7 do not literally correspond to the imagery that portrays them, so the new Jerusalem does not literally correspond to the imagery of Revelation 21–22. Though it is an actual literal city, its glory will far surpass the language that John uses to portray it. John's language is an attempt to describe what is in one sense indescribable.²⁸ His language adequately and genuinely describes what he saw, but what he saw, characterized as it is as "having the glory of God" (21:11), cannot be fully described by finite human beings in a vision. If that were the case, the new Jerusalem would be considerably less glorious than it is. Recognizing that John's language does not literally correspond to the actual description of the holy city hardly lessens its glory. On the contrary, the approach that limits the glory of the city to John's finite imagery is the approach that is guilty of diminishing its magnificence.

InterVarsity Press, 1975), 203. Elsewhere Wilcock indicates that he views Rev. 20 as symbolic and timeless (181) and that the city in Rev. 21 is the church (207).

²⁷P. L. Tan, *The Interpretation of Prophecy* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1974), 285–92.

²⁸According to E. Sauer, the angel who mediated the vision to John "employed human measures and forms, so as to bring the infinite to the consciousness of the finite spirit" (*The Triumph of the Crucified*, 193–94).

The point being made here can be demonstrated by noting John's characteristic language of visionary correspondence. John often uses the words *ὁμοιος* and *ὡς* to describe the realities he is envisioning. In the passage under consideration, 21:1–22:5, *ὁμοιος* occurs in 21:11, 18,²⁹ and *ὡς* occurs in 21:2, 11, 21; 22:1.³⁰ In these instances John compares what is seen to an object with which he is familiar in the present world. What he sees is "like" that object; the visionary detail corresponds to the physical object from everyday life, but it is hardly to be equated or identified with that object. This is tacitly admitted even by some who argue for a totally literal approach. One commentary, billed as the most literal interpretation of Revelation available,³¹ describes each "pearly gate" (21:21) as "one magnificent shimmering pure body of flawless pearl."³² The problem here is that the text does not speak of a "body" of pearl material; it affirms that each gate is from one pearl. Along the same lines, the streets of gold are taken to be "lined with" gold,³³ but the text literally indicates that the streets are gold in their entirety. Perhaps the absence of oysters large enough to produce such pearls and the absence of sufficient gold to pave such a city (viewed as literally 1,380 miles square and high) is viewed as sufficient reason not to take these images as fully literal!

If the preceding discussion serves to warn against a "hyperliteral" approach to apocalyptic imagery, what follows serves to avoid a "hypoliteral" approach. It should be noted first that the Apocalypse should not be viewed as a nonprophetic piece of imaginative speculation.³⁴ The book repeatedly claims to be prophetic (1:3; 10:7, 11; 22:6, 7, 9, 10, 18, 19). As such, it confronts the people of God in terms of ethical obedience to their present covenant obligations and speaks of the future in order to serve the present ethical goal. The author of Revelation intended to speak to God's people in the same way that the Old Testament prophets spoke to God's people. He intended to interpret the historical experiences of his audience in the light of the

²⁹Other uses of *ὁμοιος* for visionary correspondence in Revelation are 1:13; 4:3, 7; 11:1; 13:2; 14:14.

³⁰Other uses of *ὡς* for visionary correspondence in Revelation are 1:10, 14–17; 2:18, 27; 3:3; 4:1, 6, 7; 5:6; 6:1, 6, 12–14; 8:8, 10; 9:2, 3, 5, 7–9, 17; 10:1, 9, 10, 12:15; 13:2, 11; 14:2; 15:2; 16:3, 13; 18:21; 19:1, 6, 12; 20:8.

³¹Morris, *The Revelation Record*, 9, 12, 14, and dust jacket.

³²*Ibid.*, 454.

³³*Ibid.*, 455.

³⁴D. Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (London: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1979), 86. Hill develops several similarities between Revelation and prophecy. See also G. E. Ladd, "Why Not Prophecy-Apocalyptic?" *JBL* 76 (1957): 192–200; and idem, "Apocalyptic and New Testament Theology," in *Reconciliation and Hope*, ed. R. Banks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 285–96. Ladd's argument that biblical apocalyptic is ethically prophetic is crucial for the present discussion.