

# *New Jerusalem*

by

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*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:14)*

During 2009, 30 issues of the periodical *The Upward Call* were devoted to the subject of **New Jerusalem**.

This series, titled *New Jerusalem*, is presented in this book as they were posted on the website [kingdomandglory.com](http://kingdomandglory.com).

Lord willing, these will be edited, added to, and compiled into a more formal book at some undetermined point in the future.

Until then, may what follows encourage seekers of the truth to search Scripture under the leading of the Holy Spirit and may we all be prepared as God's dwelling in spirit.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS OF SCRIPTURE VERSIONS**

The following list represents Scripture versions that may have been referenced in issues of *The Upward Call*.

ALT	Analytical-Literal Translation (2001/2008)
ASV	American Standard Version (1901)
BB	Bishops' Bible (1568)
BBE	Bible in Basic English (1965)
BTCB	Bullinger's The Companion Bible (1922)
BWD	Benjamin Wilson's The Emphatic Diaglott [NT] (1942)
CEV	Contemporary English Version
CJB	Complete Jewish Bible (1998)
CV	Concordant Version (1926, 1983)
DNT	Darby New Translation (1899)
ESV	English Standard Version (2001)
GB	Geneva Bible (1599)
GNB	Good News Bible
GW	God's Word
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible
HNV	Hebrew Names Bible
ISV	International Standard Version
JBP	Phillips' The New Testament in Modern English (1958)
JMT	James Moffatt Translation
JPS	Jewish Publication Society Bible (1917)
KJV	King James Version
LITV	Literal Translation of the Holy Bible (1976, 2001)
MKJV	Modern King James Version (1962, 1998)
MNT	Murdock's New Testament
NASB	New American Standard Bible (1960, 2002)
NIV	New International Version (1973, 1984)
NKJV	New King James Version (1979, 1999)
NENT	Numeric English New Testament (Ivan Panin) (1914)
REB	Rotherham's Emphasized Bible (1959, 1994)
TCNT	Twentieth Century New Testament (1904)
TLB	The Living Bible (1971)
TSS	The Sacred Scriptures (1981)
TT	Tyndale's Translation (1530)
WAET	Wuest's The New Testament—An Expanded Translation (1961)
WEB	Webster Bible (1833)
WNT	Weymouth's New Testament in Modern Speech (1912)
YLT	Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible (1898)

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-0991

***New Jerusalem #1.***

January 9, 2009

***Signifies***

**And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having been prepared like a bride having been adorned [for] her husband. (Revelation 21:2 ALT)**

**(9) And one of the seven messengers who have the seven bowls brimming with the last seven calamities came, and he speaks with me, saying, “Hither! I shall be showing you the bride, the wife of the Lambkin.” (10) And he carries me away, in spirit, on a mountain, huge and high, and shows me the holy city, Jerusalem, as it is descending out of heaven from God, (11) having the glory from God. (Revelation 21:9-11 CV)**

This is the first issue of a series, which, Lord willing, will look at New Jerusalem, which is also called the holy city and the bride of the Lambkin. It could be called a city-bride. Like the series on the kingdom of our Lord, I plan to keep this series as an open-ended one that I will expand upon over the next year.

To begin, it seems rather strange to call a bride a city, or to call a city a bride. How are we to interpret John’s vision of this city-bride? Is it to be seen as a literal city, a great monumental structure geographically located on a new earth or perhaps above it in the heavenlies?

Over the years, I have read many descriptions that focus on a geographical city and what men think the city will look like. For example, some picture it as a huge cube; some picture it as a pyramid; some picture it as this thing floating amongst the clouds of the sky; and yet some picture it as the moon, a bright shining orb that will circle the new earth. Others just sing fancifully about the city and “meeting their loved ones at the pearly gates,” “walking on golden streets,” and “living in heavenly mansions” forever and ever. But is this how we are to view the city that John was told by the angel of the Lord is the bride, the wife of the Lambkin? Did the Father send His Son to this earth to die for the sin of the world just so a select group of people will be able to walk on streets of gold? Was Jesus’ death on the cross about bringing forth a literal city; and is this God’s desire, a literal structure of gold and precious stones in which to reside with mankind?

I suggest that the only way to approach a study of the bride, the wife of the Lambkin, is to see it the same way that John saw it—in spirit, and to discern what it **signifies**. It is important to understand that *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* as penned by John, the apostle of love, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, signifies what must occur.

**The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.... (Revelation 1:1 KJV)**

*Signify* means “to be a sign of or indication of;” it refers to something of meaning and importance. The Greek-English Keyword Concordance defines signify as “a faded metaphor, no longer meaning to make known by signs, but by speech.” A *metaphor* is “a figure of speech transferring attributes to an object which does not possess them.” For example, the river of the water of life (Revelation 22:1; also 21:6) represents the spirit of God (John 7:38-39). Therefore, if we want to know God’s heart, we must discern John’s word-pictures for their spiritual meaning.

Unfortunately, many people see the many images of the Revelation in a literal sense and fail to see that they signify something important. In order to understand what is signified in the Revelation, we must look beyond the physical realm to see into the spiritual realm. After all, John was in spirit in the Lord's day when he was given his vision of the unveiling [revelation] of Jesus Christ.

I believe that it is safe to state that many of the Lord's people interpret Scripture with the natural mind and fail to see beyond the physical realm in which we live. Another way of stating this is that many Christians look at Scripture through the lens of the world and the things of the world rather than discerning the meaning *in spirit*. Many are like the Corinthian believers that Paul had to exhort because they were babes who required the milk of the word and could not digest the meat of the word, which is for those who are spiritual.

**(9) But just as it has been written, “What [things] an eye did not see and an ear did not hear and did not enter into the heart of humanity, [fig., no person thought could happen], which [things] God prepared for the ones loving Him.” [Isaiah 64:4] (10) But God revealed [them] to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all [things], even the depths of God. (11) For who among people knows the [things] of the person, except the spirit of the person, the [one] in him? In the same way also no one knows the [things] of God, except the Spirit of God. (12) But we did not receive the spirit of the world, but the Spirit, the [One] from God, so that we should know the [things] having been graciously given to us by God; (13) which [things] also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in [words] taught by the Holy Spirit, interpreting spiritual [things] by spiritual [words] [or, combining spiritual [ideas] with spiritual [words]]. (1 Corinthians 2:9-13 ALT)**

Paul clearly laid down the principle in understanding Scripture and, especially, in understanding the purpose and plan of God. First, he declared that something tremendous is in store for those who love God. Second, he declared that these things are revealed to us through His spirit. Immediately, this tells us that this is a spiritual matter that cannot be discerned through our natural mind. Third, Paul confirms this thought by declaring that only the spirit of God knows such things. Fourth, he reminds all the saints of Christ that we do not receive the spirit of the world but the spirit that comes from God. Fifth, he tells us that the spirit is given so that we should know what God has given us. Sixth, what Paul taught the Corinthians and all the church of his day, as well as us today, was taught him by the Holy Spirit. Seventh, and most importantly, to understand the things of God, one must interpret them spiritual by spiritual. The words in brackets in the above verses are not in the original Greek and most translations add words to make the meaning clearer. This particular translation makes the point that we must interpret spiritual things or ideas with spiritual words.

Now, this fits perfectly with the Patmos vision, which signifies what the spirit of God revealed to John while in spirit. John saw pictures of things in spirit and heard words in spirit. And the only way to understand and interpret what John saw and heard is in spirit, interpreting spiritual things [symbols, pictures] by spiritual words, or combining spiritual pictures with spiritual words. The objective is to see all that John saw from the perspective of the spirit of God and not from the spirit of the world. This is why John had to be carried away in spirit to a mountain, huge and high, when it came time to see the bride, the Lambkin's wife (Revelation 21:9-10).

In spirit, you cannot see or discern the bride, which is also described as the holy city, unless you get above the things of this world and get away from the fog and clouds of life to see into the spiritual realm, to see the very heart of God. You must combine spiritual with spiritual. Anything else is of the world that is passing away. If you believe in Jesus, then you have received the spirit from God so that you should know the things taught by the Holy Spirit.

Be like John, who, when he was in spirit, declared: **“Then I saw...”**

It is time to see what John saw.

# THE UPWARD CALL

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IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-0992

***New Jerusalem #2.***

January 16, 2009

## ***The Name***

This open-ended series has one purpose, and that is to explore the nature and character of New Jerusalem. When John saw it, he was in spirit, and, as such, we need to see it as John saw it; we need the eyes of our heart opened to see what it spiritually signifies.

To understand what John saw, we need to cast aside some things that have conditioned our thinking.

First, we need to put aside the thought that it is simply a literal, physical city with streets of gold, trees of life, the river of life, and many mansions. Without doubt, this is how many of us have been taught to view the city.

Second, we need to take our eyes off the present-day Jerusalem that sits in the Middle East. This is the old Jerusalem that is in bondage. Again, without doubt, many of us have been taught to think of the ancient, earthly Jerusalem as the apple of God's eye. However, what we need to see is that ancient Jerusalem is guilty of crucifying the Lord and is likened to Sodom and Egypt and the great city Babylon (Revelation 11:8), and that God has removed His name from that city (Jeremiah 7:12-15; 26:6; Ezekiel 10-11) and placed it on a people (Revelation 3:12). We can only imagine the joy in John's heart as he beheld a Jerusalem that is not tainted by the blood of the prophets, but something holy and heavenly.

Now, the first thing that needs to be underlined as we begin this series is the actual name of the city of God. If you have read much of my material, you will notice that I refer to the city as **New Jerusalem**, not as *the new* Jerusalem. Most translations call it **the new Jerusalem**; that is, the article *the* is included, as if to place the emphasis on the word *new*. In one sense, this is true, for it is new in comparison to the ancient Jerusalem on earth that has been at the center of worldwide controversy, and is even in our day. It is new in location, in character, and in its very nature. In fact, it is not of this earth, and it is not made of physical materials. As will be shown, it is made of living stones.

Even though many translations use the article *the*, it is apparent that, in some cases, the article does not appear in the Greek. Consequently, some translations leave it out in some verses but not consistently so in all verses.

My reason for leaving it out is more fundamental. New Jerusalem is the name of God's city, at least as far as we are told at this point in time. God may have another name entirely at some point. When we refer to cities, we usually do not precede it with an article. Thus, we call the capital city of the US, Washington, DC, not *the* Washington DC, or the capital of Ghana, Accra, not *the* Accra.

But how do we know that New Jerusalem is the name of God's city? For starters, Isaiah tells us that Jerusalem will be called by a new name.

**(1) For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning. (2) The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name which the mouth of the LORD will designate.** (Isaiah 62:1-2 NASB)

Next, Isaiah also tells us that Jerusalem will be associated with new heavens and a new earth.

**(17) “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. (18) But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness. (19) I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; and there will no longer be heard in her the voice of weeping and the sound of crying. (Isaiah 65:17-19 NASB)**

Isaiah refers to Jerusalem, not New Jerusalem, because he was not given the new name; he was only informed that there would be a new name. However, when we see new heavens and a new earth, it should immediately draw our attention to other Scripture, especially the book of Revelation. The fact is that it is not until we come to John’s Patmos vision and the Lord Himself speaking to the ecclesia that we discover that the name of the city of God is New Jerusalem. Notice that John emphasizes names three times, and within this context, he names the city of God, which is New Jerusalem.

**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. (Revelation 3:12 KJV)**

Of the many translations that I reviewed, only the King James leaves out the article. Whether one capitalizes new or not is preference, but if it is the actual name of the city, then it too should be capitalized. I have chosen to capitalize it based on the conclusion that this is its name.

With the arrival of the day of God, in which all is being made new, John saw New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven.

**And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. (Revelation 21:2 NASB)**

**And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having been prepared like a bride having been adorned [for] her husband. (Revelation 21:2 ALT)**

It is interesting that John introduces the city as New Jerusalem, but the last mention of Jerusalem drops the word *new* and inserts the phrase *the holy city*.

**And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.... (Revelation 21:10 NASB)**

Since punctuation is not used in the Greek, translators have discretion in where to place commas. Thus, the NASB states *the holy city, Jerusalem*, while other translations state *the holy city Jerusalem*. Either way, it is no longer New Jerusalem but simply Jerusalem. I think the reason for this omission is because, at this point, there is no question whatsoever that there is only one Jerusalem; there is no old and new Jerusalem. The old will have completely passed away, never to rise again. New Jerusalem is not part of the old and has never been nor ever will be part of it. It is part of the all new, the new creation in Christ. Consequently, on our side of the day of God, the city of God is New Jerusalem; but in the day of God, it will be known as Jerusalem, just as the new heaven and the new earth will be known as the heaven and the earth, since the former will have passed away. In fact, all associated with the prior eons will have passed away. For this reason, it is important to make a clear break from the old Jerusalem that is destined to pass away. The sooner we make the break, the better.

Obviously, there are other descriptive names for New Jerusalem used in Scripture. Along with the holy city, there is the celestial or heavenly Jerusalem; the bride, the wife of the Lambkin; and the dwelling of God in spirit, to name a few. These will be discussed in subsequent issues.

# THE UPWARD CALL

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(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-0993

## ***New Jerusalem #3. God's Dwelling Place***

January 23, 2009

New Jerusalem is generally associated with what John was given while in spirit on Patmos, but the fact of the matter is that Paul actually explains what it signifies. For this reason, I believe it is best to start with Paul's revelation and not John's description of what he saw. As we do this, it will become apparent that New Jerusalem, as the new creation, is not about literal streets or rivers or trees but about a people.

Just as John was in spirit as he was given such great revelation, so was Paul, except that Paul did not state he was in spirit but simply that he was snatched away. I believe that it is safe to assume that he too was in spirit.

**(1) If boasting must be, though it is not expedient, indeed, yet I shall also be coming to apparitions and revelations of the Lord. (2) I am acquainted with a man in Christ, fourteen years before this, (whether in a body I am not aware, or outside of the body, I am not aware – God is aware) such a one was snatched away to the third heaven. (3) And I am acquainted with such a man (whether in a body or outside of the body I am not aware – God is aware) (4) that he was snatched away into paradise and hears ineffable declarations, which it is not allowed a man to speak.** (2 Corinthians 12:1-4 CV)

Paul could not speak forth what he heard, but this does not mean that he never described the revelation given to him. After all, in seeing the third heaven and paradise, he saw the new creation in Christ which is referenced in his writings. There is no doubt that Paul saw the same thing that John saw, but Paul's vision was of a people, a dwelling place of God. Paul's city-bride was actually a people in which God Himself dwells. It is called a holy temple in the Lord and God's dwelling place in spirit. The city is a people, not a specific geographical place with bricks and mortar. Consider how Paul describes it in his Ephesians epistle.

**(19) Consequently, then, no longer are you guests and sojourners, but are fellow-citizens of the saints and belong to God's family, (20) being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the capstone of the corner being Christ Jesus Himself, (21) in Whom the entire building, being connected together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord: (22) in Whom you, also, are being built together for God's dwelling place, in spirit.** (Ephesians 2:19-22 CV)

Notice how Paul refers to God's family, the entire building, a holy temple, and a dwelling place. In other words, he uses metaphors to liken physical structures to people. The people are part of the family as well as a place in which to reside, a dwelling place for God. This dwelling place begins at the individual level and grows into a collection of individuals, a family, and, we might add, a body, the body of Christ, which was a secret revealed through Paul.

**(16) Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (17) If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.** (1 Corinthians 3:16-17 NASB)

**Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?** (1 Corinthians 6:19 NASB)

The basis for the temple of God is the fact that the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the believer, a fact that Paul testifies to throughout his epistles (Romans 5:5; 8:9, 11; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 7:40; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Galatians 3:2, 5, 14; 4:6; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:8; 2 Timothy 1:14). But it is more than the Holy Spirit simply taking up residence in the believer, for the believer becomes a temple of the living God. We could say that this is the atomic level of the dwelling of God in spirit, New Jerusalem.

**(16) And what harmony [is there for the] temple of God with idols? For you are a temple of the living God, just as God said, “I will dwell in them and will walk about [fig., live] among [them], and I will be their God, and they will be a people to Me [or, My people].” [Lev 26:12; Jer 32:38; Ezek 37:27] (17) For this reason, “Come out from [the] midst of them and be separated,” says the Lord. “And stop touching [any] unclean [or, defiling] [thing; or, person],” and I will receive you. [Isaiah 52:11; Ezek 20:34, 41] (18) “And I will be to you for a Father, and you will be to Me for sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.” [2 Sam 7:14; Isaiah 43:6; Jer 31:9] (2 Corinthians 6:16-18 ALT)**

Notice how Paul relied heavily on Hebrew Scripture. The prophets knew that God’s heart was to dwell among His people and Paul, being a Pharisee, knew this heart. However, Paul revealed that it was more than this, for God desires to take up residence in His people by His spirit. God’s desire is that His sons and daughters be a temple of His life, expressing Him in character and nature. His people will inherit all that His Son inherits, which includes all creation.

By comparing all the above verses with John’s revelation, it is easy to see that they shared the same vision.

**And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them....” (Revelation 21:3 NASB)**

**“He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.” (Revelation 21:7 NASB)**

Clearly, New Jerusalem is about a people coming into sonship, which is God’s ultimate desire for all mankind. But notice that, with John, the loud voice from the throne states that God will simply tabernacle among men, not dwell in them. How are we to answer the apparent discrepancy? Actually, it is not a discrepancy but two sides of the truth. Individually, by His spirit, God takes up residence in His people, and collectively, that is, all together, He dwells among them. In other words, God is fully engaged in the affairs and life of His people as a Father to His children. It takes His spirit in each and every one of His children in order for Him to tabernacle among them.

For this reason, we must join Paul’s vision with John’s vision to have a full understanding of New Jerusalem.

Consequently, New Jerusalem is not about the individual; but rather, it is about the Father having a large family that He can call His house or, if you will, His home. It is rather strange that so many of the Lord’s people have been taught about and are looking for a mansion in the sky, a place in which they will reside in heaven forever and ever, when God is after one mansion of all His people united together in His one spirit. God’s mansion is a people, and it is called New Jerusalem.

Isn’t it time for us to desire what God desires and quit looking to what is in it for us? Oh, there is much in God’s plan for us individually, but it is only on the basis of what God is after and what will satisfy His heart of love. He is after a family that ultimately will include all mankind. But it will start with those called and chosen to be joint heirs with His Son in the next eon. Let us join our hearts with the beating heart of the universe; the very heart of **God is love**. This is the essence of New Jerusalem.

# THE UPWARD CALL

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IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-0994

***New Jerusalem #4.***

January 30, 2009

## ***Living Stones***

When considering New Jerusalem, most would begin with Revelation 21-22 and see it as all future. However, I believe that it is best to start with the epistles, especially Paul's writings, for here we see that New Jerusalem is actually about a people, and it is not all in the future. After all, in Hebrews (most likely written by Paul), we are told that we have come to the celestial (heavenly) Jerusalem; not that we will come to it as some future event but that we have to come it now (Hebrews 12:22 CV). Paul wrote in his Ephesians epistle that God has seated us together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6 CV). Again, this is a present reality and not all future. Further, he wrote to the Galatians that the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother (Galatians 4:26). This is a topic unto itself that will be discussed in another issue, but it helps us, at this point, to see that there is a present reality to New Jerusalem. Of course, this does not mean that there is no future reality to the city-bride. In fact, the glory of New Jerusalem is yet to come. Today, we dimly see the glory of the dwelling of God in spirit, just as we only experience an earnest of the spirit as we live in bodies of death and humiliation. It will take the first resurrection and transfiguration for New Jerusalem to begin to come into sharper focus, but even so, it will not be until God's day that she will be revealed in all her fullness.

Now, to add to the thought of New Jerusalem being a people, especially God's dwelling in spirit, let us consider a word from Peter. You see, John and Paul were not the only ones to have revelation on the matter. After all, Peter was looking for God's day and new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:11-13). Peter described the present reality of New Jerusalem as living stones. Compare Peter's description with John's description.

**(4) To whom having approached [as to] a living stone, on the one hand having been rejected by people, on the other hand chosen [and] precious before God, (5) and you yourselves, as living stones, are being built up [into] a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.** (1 Peter 2:4-5 ALT)

**(18) And the building material of its wall was jasper, and the city [was] pure gold, like pure glass. (19) the foundations of the wall of the city have been adorned with every precious stone: the first foundation [with] jasper, the second [with] sapphire, the third [with] chalcedony, the fourth [with] emerald, (20) the fifth [with] sardonyx, the sixth [with] carnelian, the seventh [with] chrysolite, the eighth [with] beryl, the ninth [with] topaz, the tenth [with] chrysoprasus, the eleventh [with] jacinth, the twelfth [with] amethyst.** (Revelation 21:18-20 ALT)

Christ is a living stone, and in Him, God is building a spiritual house of living stones. This is the whole building, being fitted together, growing into a holy temple in the Lord. It is a temple of living stones, not dead, inorganic stones hewed out of the earth. These are living stones born from above by the spirit of God. Peter describes this house as a holy priesthood, and John describes it as being built with the precious stones that adorned the garments of Aaron and his sons (Exodus 28:17-21). In other words, the precious stones of New Jerusalem speak of the kingdom of priests (Revelation 5:10; 20:6).

The sons of Israel in the days of Jesus were looking for the glory of God to return to Herod's temple; they were looking for God to manifest Himself once again in a temple of stones. But Jesus shocked them with a truth that they had not expected.

**Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up!”** [cp. Matt 26:61; Mark 14:58] (John 2:19 ALT)

Of course, Jesus was speaking of the temple of His body, but it was more than just His body, for the body of Christ came forth after He ascended to His Father’s throne. This body is *the* Christ, the Head and His body, a temple of the Holy Spirit, a temple of living stones. And this temple represents the Stone Kingdom that will crush Babylon and lead the nations in righteousness until it fills the whole earth (Daniel 2:35).

Quoting the prophets, Peter declared that Christ, the living stone rejected by those of the same blood, is the cornerstone of the entire building. The sons of Israel fell over or stumbled over this stone; they were blind to the truth, and it tripped them up.

**(6) For this reason, it is contained in the Scripture, “Look! I lay in Zion a stone, a cornerstone, chosen, precious, and the one believing on Him shall by no means be put to shame [or, be disappointed].”** [Isa 28:16] **(7) Therefore, the honor [is] to you, the ones believing. But to the ones disobeying** [or, refusing to believe], **“[The] stone which the builders rejected, this [one] became for [the] head of [the] corner [or, the chief cornerstone]”** [Psalm 118:22] **(8) and “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offence,” who stumble at the word, refusing to believe, to which also they were appointed.** [Isaiah 8:14] **(9) But you [are] a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people [for God’s own] possession, in order that you shall proclaim the excellencies of the One having called you out of darkness into His marvelous light,** [Exod 9:16; Isaiah 43:20] **(10) who at one time [were] not a people, but now [are the] people of God; the ones not having found mercy, but now having found mercy.** (1 Peter 2:6-10 ALT)

But then notice how Peter amplified on the spiritual house, the holy priesthood. We could say New Jerusalem is a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God and for God. They are the saints in light, which not only speaks of truth but of glory. All of these descriptors point to New Jerusalem, the city of the glory of God. But there is more, for it is not only a holy priesthood but a royal priesthood, which speaks of priestly-kings according to the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:1-3). Thus, New Jerusalem signifies the reign of Christ through His king-priests.

Of course, there is much to be gleaned from these verses and more will be presented in later issues, but for now, it is important to lay a foundation of these truths upon which we can build our understanding.

Now, returning to Paul, we again see that this spiritual house of living stones is not complete; it has been under construction for many millennia, and it has not been completed nor will it be until God’s day. Today, it is building itself up in love. Paul describes New Jerusalem as the body of Christ that is connected to the living Head from which she receives life.

**(15) But speaking the truth in love, we shall increase to Him [in] all [things], who is the head, Christ, (16) from whom the entire body being joined together and united by means of the supply of every joint** [or, by what every joint supplies], **according to the working of the measure of each individual part, causing the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.** (Ephesians 4:15-16 ALT)

**The head, from whom the entire body, by means of the joints and ligaments being supplied and being knit together, grows** [with] **the growth of God.** (Colossians 2:19 ALT)

Ultimately, God causes the growth of His city. He is the Architect and the Builder. It is His building project, and He has not entrusted the growth to anyone. He will not fail. Through His Son, the Father will reach His purpose of dwelling, not only in, but among all mankind. How do we know? Because John saw the living stones coming down out of heaven, having the glory of God!

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-0995

***New Jerusalem #5.***

February 6, 2009

***Mother of Us All***

**(22) For it has been written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave-woman and one by the free-woman. [Gen 16:2-4, 15; Gen 21:1-3] (23) But the [one] by the slave-woman has been born according to flesh, but the [one] by the free-woman through the promise, (24) which [things] speak allegorically. For these are two covenants: one indeed from Mount Sinai giving birth to [children] into slavery, which is Hagar. (25) For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and stands corresponding to the present Jerusalem and serves as a slave with her children. (26) But the Jerusalem above is the free-woman, which is mother of us all. (27) For it has been written, “Celebrate, O barren woman, the one not giving birth; break forth and shout, the one not experiencing labor pains, because many [are] the children of the desolate [or, forsaken] [woman] more than [those] of the one having the husband.” [Isaiah 54:1] (28) Now we, brothers [and sisters], just like Isaac, are children of promise. (29) But just as at that time, the one having been born according to the flesh was persecuting the [one] according to the spirit, so [it is] also now. (30) But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the slave-woman and her son, for by no means shall the son of the slave-woman inherit [or, be a heir] with the son of the free-woman.” [Gen 21:10] (31) Consequently, brothers [and sisters], we are not a slave-woman’s children, but the free-woman’s. (Galatians 4:22-31 ALT)**

It is most interesting that Paul, who knew much about what he called the present Jerusalem, was no fan, so to speak, of it. In fact, he declared that the present Jerusalem of his day served as a slave that needed to be cast out. What is interesting is that there are so many Christians proclaiming that the present Jerusalem of our day must be protected and prayed over, for it is the apple of God’s eye, destined to be the center of the nations in the next eon with Christ literally sitting on a throne in a rebuilt temple. If this were so, then why did Paul not state so? Why did he make it very clear that the present Jerusalem is likened to a slave-woman that needs to be cast out? It is as if Christians of our day have a view that is totally opposite Paul’s view, the apostle to whom the secrets of God were revealed. Has some greater revelation come to the church in these latter days, or is the church off in its theology? I propose that the answer is in the latter.

We need to be clear that Paul was a Pharisee and, as such, he was well-versed in Hebrew Scripture. Further, according to his own testimony, after the risen Christ met him on the road to Damascus, he began to search and study Scripture in an entirely new light. Undoubtedly, he saw that the present Jerusalem was no longer the place upon which the name or glory of God rested. According to the prophets, God first placed His name upon the tabernacle in Shiloh (Joshua 18:1), but due to the corruption of His people, He removed His name. Next, He placed His name on Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem (Psalm 78:60-68), but later removed His name just as He had done at Shiloh, and for the same reason (Jeremiah 7:12-15; 26:6; Ezekiel 10-11). Further, there is no reference to His glory resting neither on the second temple built through Ezra and Zerubbabel nor on Herod’s temple during Paul’s day. Notice that the Lord declared that He would make this house like Shiloh and the city (Jerusalem) a curse to all the nations of the earth. God has kept His word, for it would seem that the present Jerusalem is a curse in our day as it continues to be a source of strife and bloodshed.

The good news is that God was waiting for a much better temple not made out of stones of the earth but of heavenly, living stones hewed from above, and it is upon these living stones that He places His name and glory. For those who conquer, the Lord promises to **write upon him the name of My God and**

**the name of the city of My God, New Jerusalem; and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their forehead** (Revelation 3:12; 22:4). In other words, God's intention all along has been to have a people that bear His name and glory. They will be His new temple. The Lord never returned to Shiloh, and He will not return to an earthly Jerusalem. Why? Because He has a new temple born from above by the spirit of God! He has New Jerusalem.

To the Galatians, Paul wrote allegorically of two women, one of which is in slavery and the other of which is in freedom; one is according to the flesh and the other is according to the promise. He was comparing the two covenants, one that proceeded from Hagar to Ishmael and the other through Sarah to Isaac. That which is associated with the flesh and slavery corresponds to the present Jerusalem, and that which is associated with the promise and freedom corresponds to the Jerusalem above.

Hagar bore a child, Ishmael, through Abraham, but he was not the child promised by the Lord to Abraham. Abraham bore a son through the flesh, not the promise. The son of promise had to come through Sarah when she was beyond child-bearing days. The spirit of God had to open her dead womb to receive the child, Isaac, who was then persecuted from his birth onward by his half-brother Ishmael, who was 13 when Isaac was born. We could say that the flesh battled the spirit as depicted in these two sons of Abraham.

But notice that Paul identifies Hagar with Mount Sinai and slavery, and makes it correspond to the present Jerusalem. Mount Sinai signifies the first (old) covenant through Moses. The present or old Jerusalem of Paul's day had rejected the new covenant through Christ and, as such, they became Ishmaelites.

Some in our day proclaim that the present Jerusalem is reserved for those of the new covenant, but this is not what Paul states. Paul very clearly identifies the present Jerusalem with Ishmael and their rejection of the new covenant. To state it more succinctly, Paul declares that the present Jerusalem or, if you will, the old Jerusalem, as contrasted to New Jerusalem, is Hagar and all her children are Ishmael. The old Jerusalem is according to the flesh, not the spirit. God destroyed the present Jerusalem of Paul's day in 70 AD; however, as we all know, it has been rebuilt as a Jewish city in the state of Israel. But, the very character of this ancient city has not changed one iota. It is still according to the flesh and under the control of the Ishmaelites, the ones that call themselves Jews, but they are not, for they reject Christ. There is more from an historical perspective that could be said about the Ishmaelites, but this is beyond the scope of this issue.

Now, what we need to see is that Paul contrasts these two cities, one called this present Jerusalem or the old earthly Jerusalem, and the other called the Jerusalem above, which, although Paul does not use the name, must be New Jerusalem. After all, John records that New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven. Paul no longer recognized anyone according to the flesh, and this extended to God's holy city, the new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:16-17). We too are to be like Paul and not recognize anything according to the flesh, for, just like Isaac, we are children of promise.

**(30) But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave-woman and her son, for by no means shall the son of the slave-woman inherit [or, be a heir] with the son of the free-woman." [Gen 21:10] (31) Consequently, brothers [and sisters], we are not a slave-woman's children, but the free-woman's. ... (1) Therefore, in the freedom in which Christ set you free, be standing firm, and stop letting yourselves be subjected again to a yoke of slavery.** (Galatians 4:30-31; 5:1 ALT)

The old Jerusalem and all associated with it will in no way inherit the kingdom. We are to cast it out, for we are New Jerusalem. Our mother is above, which refers to being born from above, having received the seed of Christ. She is the mother of us all; that is, God has birthed a new creation, New Jerusalem, in a people, His dwelling in spirit, the spiritual house of living stones. Let us not be enslaved to the earthly Jerusalem! Let us give thanks that we are sons of the free woman and are born of the new!

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-0996

***New Jerusalem #6.***

May 11, 2009

***Mount Zion***

The last issue of this series (#03-0995, February 6, 2009) revealed that New Jerusalem is the mother of us all. In Galatians 4, Paul contrasted the present Jerusalem to the Jerusalem above. The earthly Jerusalem is in bondage and speaks of Ishmael, and the heavenly Jerusalem is free and speaks of Isaac, the son according to promise. Those who believe on the Lord Jesus are not associated with the earthly, present Jerusalem but with the heavenly or celestial Jerusalem or, as John described it, New Jerusalem.

Continuing with this thought, let us turn to the Hebrews epistle in which we are told that we have come to the heavenly or celestial Jerusalem.

**But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly [celestial] Jerusalem....** (Hebrews 12:22 NASB [CV])

The first thing to note is that we are not coming to it but that we have come to it. It is a present reality. This is very similar to Paul's encouragement that we have been **blessed with every spiritual blessing among the celestials in Christ** and that we are **seated together among the celestials in Christ Jesus** (Ephesians 1:3; 2:6 CV). This is a spiritual verity, but to realize its impact on us who believe, we must understand to what we have come.

The second thing to note is that we have come to Mount Zion in reference to New Jerusalem, the celestial Jerusalem. Mount Zion and the city of the living God, celestial Jerusalem, are presented together as if they are synonymous or related in some fashion; something that is found in other verses of the Bible (Psalm 102:21; 135:21; 147:12; Isaiah 4:3; 10:12; 62:1; Micah 4:2; Zechariah 1:14). In a sense, they are the same; however, I believe that when Zion comes into view, it speaks of a much greater spiritual truth than Jerusalem does by itself. Simply, Zion speaks of the heart of Jerusalem in relation to the Lord and His people. We have come to the city of the living God by way of Mount Zion, the very heart of the Lord. An explanation will follow, but first we need to be clear what Zion is not.

Just as New Jerusalem is not of this realm and not the present-day Jerusalem in the Middle East, so is Zion not of this realm and not the present-day state of Israel that was brought forth by the Zionist movement that was revived in the 1800's and led to the formation of the state of Israel in the Middle East in 1948 and the capturing of Jerusalem by the so-called Israelites in 1967. This movement could best be described as one according to the flesh that, ultimately, will be judged and will fail. Today, we hear much about Zionism, especially from Christian Zionists who see the current state of Israel in the Middle East as the apple of God's eye, destined to rule the nations. Obviously, much could be and needs to be said about Zionism, but this is beyond the scope of this issue. Suffice it to say, if you see that God's true Jerusalem is above and is spiritual, then you must see that Zion is likewise. Consequently, we must not relate Mount Zion to the present-day city of Jerusalem located in the heart of the state of Israel or to the Zionist movement. Just as New Jerusalem is celestial and spiritual, so is Zion.

Now, the word *Zion* appears in the Bible 162 times, so it is no small matter. A study of these references will reveal that Zion is spoken of in many ways. However, it appears that when it is joined with the word mount, that is, Mount Zion, it takes on a specific meaning that relates to the King, His kingdom, and the future rulers of His kingdom. After all, the word *Zion* means "sunny mount," and mount or mountain also signifies kingdom, so we could say that Zion speaks of "sunny kingdom."

The first mention of Zion establishes its primary significance, and this is discovered when David, the newly anointed king of Israel, went to Jerusalem with his men to capture the stronghold of Zion from the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land. The Jebusites taunted David that there was no way that they

could conquer them, for the blind and the lame could turn them away. **Nevertheless, David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David** (2 Samuel 5:7; also 1 Kings 8:1; 1 Chronicles 11:5, 7; 2 Chronicles 5:2). Henceforth, Zion became known not only as the city of David but also as **the city of the great King** (Psalm 48:2), **the dwelling place of the Lord** (Psalm 74:2; 76:2; 132:13; Isaiah 8:18; Jeremiah 8:19; Zechariah 2:10), and the place from which will **go forth the law** (Micah 4:2). These verses, and many more, speak to the matter that Zion signifies the King and His kingdom; a fact confirmed by God the Father as He speaks of His Son: **“But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain”** (Psalm 2:6 NASB).

The very foundation of Zion is God’s Son, a fact revealed by the Lord through Isaiah and repeated by Peter and Paul.

**Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.** (Isaiah 28:16 NASB)

**(6) For this is contained in Scripture: “BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” (7) This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, “THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone,” (8) and, “A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE”; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.** (1 Peter 2:6-8 NASB; also Romans 9:33)

This is to what we have come. We have come to the precious stone of Christ and the stone kingdom that will crush the kingdom of this world and it becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Daniel 2:31-35; Revelation 11:15). Consequently, Mount Zion speaks of a great mountain, a great kingdom that will fill the whole earth with the glory of God.

As an aside, this is why the Zionist movement of our day is not of God and destined to fail. It has rejected and continues to reject the choice stone of Zion, the Son of God, and our Lord Jesus. To this day, the so-called Zionists of the state of Israel are disobedient to the word, refusing to believe in God’s Messiah. Just as they are not the true Jews or the true Israel of God, so they are not the true Zionists. Only those who believe in Jesus have a claim on Zion, which leads to the last point.

In the Patmos vision, John saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion along with His conquerors, as signified by the 144,000 singing before the throne.

**Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. ... and they sang a new song before the throne....** (Revelation 14:1, 3 NASB)

Then, when New Jerusalem came into view, John saw **the throne of God and of the Lamb** in the midst of the holy city as the very source of the life of the city (Revelation 22:1-3). The blessing of Zion is life forever (Psalm 133:3), and all life comes forth from the throne of Zion as signified by the river of the water of life that feeds the tree of life. In fact, we are told this glorious fact in Psalm 87.

**(2) The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the other dwelling places of Jacob. (3) Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. Selah. (5) But of Zion it shall be said, “This one and that one were born in her”; and the Most High Himself will establish her. (6) The LORD will count when He registers the peoples, “This one was born there.” Selah. (7) Then those who sing as well as those who play the flutes shall say, “All my springs of joy are in you.”**

When all these images are put together, we must conclude that Zion is the very heart of New Jerusalem. It is the dwelling place of the Lord, the seat of His government, the place of His conquerors, and the source of life. But do not look at it as if it were geographically located in time and space. No; we have come to Mount Zion; we have come to Christ. It is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**. This is the Mount Zion of New Jerusalem. Well, this is only a taste of Zion. May we thirst for more!

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-0997

***New Jerusalem #7.***

May 14, 2009

***The City of the Living God***

**But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly [celestial] Jerusalem....** (Hebrews 12:22 NASB [CV])

The last issue of this series (#03-0996, May 11, 2009) dealt with the first half of this verse. We have come to Mount Zion, which speaks of the very heart of New Jerusalem as the source of life for the Lord's people and, I must add, eventually all mankind as well. **Zion is the sunny kingdom**, and we get our first intimation of this from Jesus as He explained to His disciples the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens and the end of the eon: **Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father** (Matthew 13:43). As a play on words, we could say that the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ (Revelation 12:10) is the sunny kingdom, the kingdom of sons (suns), the sons of glory (Hebrews 2:10).

Well, I must leave Zion for the time. Lord willing, I plan to write an article or, perhaps, a book on the subject, since it is so vital to our understanding of our destiny and especially the heart of New Jerusalem. Until then, let us press on with the matter of New Jerusalem and the latter half of the above verse.

We have not only come to Mount Zion, but we have come to the city of the living God. It was stated previously that, at times, the Bible presents Zion and Jerusalem as if they are similar or one and the same. We can liken Zion to the heart of the human body. Both are indispensable and both are integral parts of the whole, in this case, the whole being New Jerusalem and the human body. The city of the great King and the celestial Jerusalem are the city of the living God, not two cities but one glorious city.

To understand why the city of the living God was injected in this verse between Mount Zion and the celestial Jerusalem, we need to backtrack a bit and look at some of the verses that precede Hebrews 12:22.

**(18) For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, (19) and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. (20) For they could not bear the command, "IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED." (21) And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling."** (Hebrews 12:18-21 NASB)

When the sons of Israel were delivered out of Egyptian bondage on Passover by way of the Red Sea, they were led to Mount Sinai to have the laws of God written on their hearts and to become a kingdom nation under God's rule. However, when the glory of the Lord descended on the mount and the Lord spoke, the sons of Israel feared for their lives. They believed that they would have been killed if it had continued on much longer. In fact, they were so fearful that it was fine with them that Moses ascended the mount and left them out of it. Due to their fear, they failed.

The recipients of the Hebrews epistle knew full-well the history of the ancient Hebrews; therefore, Paul, most likely the writer of the epistle, could appeal to their history. "You have not come to this mountain!" You have not come to something so terrible that you will fear for your very life. No; you have come to the city of the living God, the celestial Jerusalem. You have come to life itself, not death; and this life is in **Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant** (Hebrews 12:24)!"

This might not seem to be a big deal to us, but it was to those who were in the ancestral line of that history that was marked by death, defeat, and failure. They needed to be reminded that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the God of the living, not of the dead; a fact borne out by the words of Jesus in response to a question by the Sadducees, the ones that believed there is no resurrection.

**(29) But Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God. (30) For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. (31) “But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: (32) ‘I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”** (Matthew 22:29-32 NASB)

We could say that the city of the living God is the city of resurrection life. There is no death in the city, another fact borne out by John in *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*.

**(2) And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having been prepared like a bride having been adorned [for] her husband. (3) And I heard a loud voice out of heaven, saying, “Look! The tabernacle of God [is] with the people, and He will tabernacle [or, dwell] with them. And they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them. (4) And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will not be [any] more [fig., death no longer will exist], nor sorrow, nor crying, nor will pain be any more [fig., pain will no longer exist], because the first [things] passed away.”** (Revelation 21:2-4 ALT)

Death will be no more! Why? Because New Jerusalem is the city of the living God, and all that are the **dwelling of God in spirit** (Ephesians 2:22; see issues #02-0879, July 2, 2008 and #03-0993, January 23, 2009) are the city of the living, not the dead. It is not a city of the walking dead like so many of the cities of the world are in our day. No; it is the city of the living, the gathering together of all that are in Christ, all that have believed on Him and trusted in His life, the ones that did not stumble over the stone of offense. These are the ones who have come to Mount Zion, not with fear and trembling that they might be killed but with love that they are part of the glorious life of the Son of God's love.

It is not a matter of one's genealogy or one's flesh but a matter of faith. The great danger that Hebrew believers faced in Paul's day was of returning to the old ways, the old covenant, and not pursuing the new covenant in which the God of the living puts His laws into minds and writes them on hearts (Hebrews 8:7-12). The ancient Hebrews hid in fear from the mountain and the voice of the Lord; consequently, they received the law of God etched on inorganic, lifeless stones rather than on life-giving spiritual hearts. They were destined to fail as the law became a matter of outward actions regardless of motive. Their hearts could be deceitful above all else, but as long as they did the right things, they felt justified. Instead of seeing their need for a circumcised heart, they sought to justify themselves by the circumcision of the flesh (Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4). They missed the glorious opportunity to truly become a kingdom of priests that would have led all the nations of the world to God and His righteousness. Instead, they failed, and all who stayed on this line, even to our day, are disqualified from entering the kingdom of God and being the light and the salt of the world.

Consequently, the Hebrews epistle was directed to those who were in danger of following after another gospel. The same danger is present in our day, especially in regard to Zionism and the many Christians who continue to believe that the modern-day state of Israel, as supported by the Zionist movement that birthed the nation and continues to prop it up, is destined to rule the nations in the next eon. No, a thousands times no! Zionism of our day will only lead to death. We have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the celestial Jerusalem. Those who hold to Zionism according to the flesh are still circling Mount Sinai, a mountain they cannot touch but which will bring great fear and trembling upon them. We have not come to that mountain; we have come to the mountain and the city of the living God. The Zionists of our day need to be told of the mountain that they can approach, not based on their flesh but based on a circumcised heart that believes on Jesus, the only true Messiah of God. They need to be told that there is only one true Jerusalem in the heart of God; it is the city of the living God, the celestial New Jerusalem. We who believe in Jesus are the city of the living God; let us live in this light; let us shine brightly to the world. We have come to the city of the living God.

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-0998

## ***New Jerusalem #8. Celestial***

May 16, 2009

In certain groups of Christians, it is not uncommon to hear gospel songs about going to heaven, moving into mansions, and walking on golden streets. As the songs go, Jesus is coming back to remove His people from this old earth and take them to a new land and a literal city, New Jerusalem, which He is building. They sing of going to Beulah land and a land far beyond the sky. These tunes might be catchy, so to speak, and get one's feet moving, but are they according to Scripture? Is our destiny a literal land far, far out in the universe? Are we destined to be divorced from anything to do with this old earth that we now call home? A search of Scripture will reveal that the answer to these questions is no.

As I have written in other issues, the new creation in Christ is New Jerusalem, for the city is a people, the complement of Christ, the dwelling of God in spirit (Ephesians 1:22; 2:22), not a physical piece of property floating some place in the universe. The land that we, as the Lord's people, are looking for is a new body in the image and likeness of the Son of God (Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2), and this only comes through resurrection and transfiguration (Romans 8:23-25). We cannot fulfill our destiny in Christ without a glorious change in our constitution; that is, we cannot fulfill it until we take on immortal, glorified, spiritual, celestial bodies (1 Corinthians 15:42-57; 2 Thessalonians 1:10). Further, the saints are to possess the kingdom of this earth (Daniel 7:18, 22) when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11:15). The saints are to be a kingdom and priests to God that reign upon the earth (Revelation 5:10; 20:6) and judge the world (1 Corinthians 6:2; Revelation 2:26-28; 3:21). Putting these verses together, along with others, we see that the destiny of the saints is related to what God is doing and going to do on our present earth, especially during the next eon, and this has everything to do with the kingdom of the heavens coming to earth and the saints teaching the nations righteousness (Isaiah 26:9) until the whole earth is full of the glory of the Lord (Number 14:21; Psalm 72:19; Isaiah 6:3; Habakkuk 2:14).

Now, the previous two issues of this series have focused on the verse: **But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly [celestial] Jerusalem** (Hebrews 12:22 NASB [CV]). Mount Zion and the city of the living God are one and the same, with Mount Zion being representative of the heart of the city and the glory of the kingdom of God. But there is more, for the city of the living God is called the celestial Jerusalem. To understand why I have used the word *celestial*, please refer to issue #03-09123, May 18, 2009, *Celestial [Epouranion]*. In other words, New Jerusalem is celestial, which is confirmed by the following verses.

**But the Jerusalem above** [i.e., celestial] **is free; she is our mother.** (Galatians 4:26 NASB)

**And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God** [i.e., celestial], **having been prepared like a bride having been adorned** [for] **her husband.** (Revelation 21:2 ALT)

**(9) And one of the seven messengers who have the seven bowls brimming with the last seven calamities came, and he speaks with me, saying, "Hither! I shall be showing you the bride, the wife of the Lambkin." (10) And he carries me away, in spirit, on a mountain, huge and high, and shows me the holy city, Jerusalem, as it is descending out of heaven from God** [i.e., celestial], **(11) having the glory from God.** (Revelation 21:9-11 CV)

**For he waited for the city having foundations, whose Artificer [Builder] and Architect [Maker] is God. ... Yet now they are craving a better, that is, a celestial; wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be invoked as their God, for He makes ready for them a city.** (Hebrews 11:10, 16 CV [JMT])

I realize that there is great temptation to read these verses as if they refer to a physical city, but we must throw off the shackles of tradition and embrace that which is spiritual, and when we do, we will see that celestial Jerusalem transcends that which is temporal and spatial. John was carried away **in spirit** to a huge and high mountain because he had to get away from the things of the earth to see clearly, and he had to see in spirit, which means it was not to be understood as some mere physical attraction floating in the universe so that people, 2,000 years later, could sing fanciful songs about walking on golden streets and meeting at pearly gates. The city, which is described as the wife of the Lambkin, signified something glorious to John. For an understanding of the word *Lambkin*, please see issue #03-0922, February 13, 2009, *The Lambkin [Arnion]*. It was not of this earth, for it was built by God. It was celestial, for it came forth from God who is spirit. In other words, celestial Jerusalem is spiritual Jerusalem. It represents something spiritual; it is of an entirely different realm. As I have stated in issue #03-09123, we should view celestial as spiritual, and when we do, we will see that the wife of the Lambkin is not a literal city of inorganic stones and other matter with no life but a spiritual, celestial city of living stones. In other words, the city is a body of spiritual, celestial people in the image of the Celestial One. This is what Paul tells us in his defense of the resurrection.

**(40) There are bodies celestial as well as bodies terrestrial. But a different glory, indeed, is that of the celestial, yet a different that of the terrestrial, (41) another glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for star is excelling star in glory. ... (47) The first man was out of the earth, soilish; the second Man is the Lord out of heaven. (48) Such as the soilish one is, such are those also who are soilish, and such as the Celestial One, such are those also who are celestials. (49) And according as we wear the image of the soilish, we should be wearing the image also of the Celestial. (1 Corinthians 15:40-41, 47-49 CV)**

When He walked this earth over two millennia ago, Jesus spoke of His origin in the same manner as John saw New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven: **“I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh”** (John 6:51 NASB; also John 3:13, 31; 6:31, 32, 33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 58). In other words, Jesus is New Jerusalem, the celestial Jerusalem. However, it is not Him alone but Him and His entire body. Celestial Jerusalem is the very image of the Celestial as manifested in His people who are His wife, the wife of the Lambkin. Until the glorious day when His wife is presented to all creation in all her fullness, the saints are a waiting colony on earth.

**But we are a colony of heaven, and we wait for the Saviour who comes from heaven.** (Philippians 3:20 JMT)

Most translations of the Greek text use the phrase *citizenship in heaven* rather than *colony of heaven*; however, the Greek word means *community*, which seems to be best captured by the word *colony*. A *colony* is “a group of people who settle in a distant land but remain under the political jurisdiction of their native land” or “a community of people of the same nationality or pursuits concentrated in a particular district or place.” Another way to look at it is that a colony is an outpost in a foreign land. Paul was not making a theological statement that when we die, we go to heaven, or that in the coming eon, we will go off to a place called *heaven*, leaving this old earth behind. He was stating that those who believe on Jesus have a new constitution within them; it is not of this world; it is heavenly in character. We are from Jesus’ source or origin, and that is heavenly. We have been born from above (see my book *Born From Above*), and we have the seed of Christ in us (1 John 3:9) (see issue #02-0887, July 7, 2008, *His Seed Abides In Him*), which means that we have a new constitution within us that is growing in the womb of our mortal bodies. Christ is being formed in us (Galatians 4:19) so that, one day, we will give birth to a new man in Christ in the image of the Celestial. We must be clear that the entire body of Christ matured into the image of the Celestial is the celestial Jerusalem. Today, the body on earth is merely a colony, but a day is fast approaching when the Savior will come from heaven for His body.

To sum up, the city of the living God is the celestial Jerusalem, and the celestial Jerusalem is New Jerusalem, and New Jerusalem is a holy temple in the Lord, the dwelling of God in spirit, which is the new creation in Christ, the body of Christ, the complement of Christ that is destined to reign with Christ as He heads up or gathers up all things for God the Father so that God may be all in all new.

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***  
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-0999

## ***New Jerusalem #9. Government of God***

May 25, 2009

Among the nations, cities are readily identified by a physical location. One can take a map of the world and point out well-known cities such as New York, Toronto, London, Paris, Hong Kong, Beijing, and Jerusalem, to name a few from among a myriad. Although a city has a unique geographical place in the world that can be identified by longitude and latitude coordinates, this is not what makes it a city. Mere location does not make something into a city, nor do buildings joined together by streets, for without people to occupy the buildings and to walk the streets, there is no life in the city. In other words, in order for a city to be a city, it must have life. But there is more, for this life must be joined together in some sort of common bond, something that unites people together for a common purpose, often laid out in a charter issued by a higher governing authority, such as a state or a nation.

But there is much more to a city than a mere charter. Of the cities listed above, each has its own character that makes it unique from the others. The fact of the matter is that each city is distinct in its people, its history, its culture, its lifestyle, its religion, its commerce, and, often, its form of government.

Some definitions that I have read of the word *city* make it simply a legal entity of the state; however, these definitions seem to miss the real heart of the matter. To me, **a city is a community of people bound together by government, commerce, and social intercourse.** There is much involved in each of these categories, and in an imperfect and, often, corrupt world, cities may differ greatly in the manner by which they operate, but I offer a few thoughts and leave it to your imagination to fill in any blanks. Government encompasses the laws and regulations required to maintain peace and order and by which to judge behavior that is detrimental to the community. Government also provides services and infrastructure required for the common good and to support and encourage commerce and social intercourse. Of course, this assumes that government is for the good of the people and not for the good of corrupt officials who care little for the people. Commerce encompasses the economic and financial realm of a city, that is, how labor and goods are traded and wealth is achieved. Social intercourse encompasses culture and lifestyle, including the religious beliefs (life) of the people.

I have taken the time to discuss the nature of a city in an attempt to break the mindset and, I might add, the teaching that New Jerusalem is all about a physical place located somewhere in the universe or in what is thought to be heaven. A city is much more than a physical location. Throughout this series on New Jerusalem, I have made the point repeatedly that the city of God is not about a physical place; rather, it is about a people. Today, it is a colony of heaven, but a day is coming when it will be a city. New Jerusalem is a people, generally the people of God, and more specifically, at least in the present and oncoming eon, Christ's conquering or overcoming saints. This city is completed in the mind and heart of God, but on our end, which is stuck in time and space, it is still under construction. In God's day, the city of the living God will be the full complement of the body of Christ, with every member built together into the temple of the Lord Jesus, the dwelling of God in spirit. It is vital that we see that New Jerusalem will not merely be a people but rather the very character and nature of the Son of God manifested in and through an immortal, fully spiritual, celestial, glorified people. In other words, just as the Son of God is the exact image of the invisible God, so too is New Jerusalem the exact image of the Son of God. If we are not captivated by this vision, then we will continue to be lost in a sea of gospel songs that have us walking on golden streets, meeting at pearly gates, and living in great mansions for an eternally boring existence with no connection to God's ultimate purpose. We will never make the jump from the physical and the earth to the spiritual and the celestial if we try to discern New Jerusalem in the light of man's cities. May the spiritual eyes of our heart be opened!

Now, I would like to change the emphasis a bit and look at New Jerusalem as the government of God. In other words, God's government is represented as the city of God, or, we could say, His government goes forth through New Jerusalem. Daniel tells us that **the heavens do rule** (Daniel 4:26 ASV), so we know that the government, as represented in New Jerusalem, is heavenly and speaks of the rule of God. In fact, everything associated with the city of God is heavenly or, to use my preferred word, *celestial*. However, for this discussion, I will remain with the word *heavenly*.

The genesis of God becoming all in all new is the heavens do rule. If the heavens do not rule, that is, if God, through His Son, does not rule, then there is no hope of God's purpose being fully achieved. The heavens do rule is paramount in the fulfillment of God's purpose. In fact, the heavens do rule is the plan of God or the means by which His purpose is accomplished. But there is more, for this rule must extend through a people, specifically through a people as signified in New Jerusalem, Mount Zion, the city of the living God. God will not rule by fiat but through a people who have been conformed to the image of His Son, having His character, knowing the will of God through His laws written on their hearts, and being vessels of love filled with the glory of God. Collectively, these spirit- and love-filled people are New Jerusalem. Through them, the glory of the Lord will begin to go forth until it fills the whole earth.

The pattern has been set in our Lord Jesus who declared that He is the living bread that came down out of heaven to do the will of His Father in heaven. Over 2,000 years ago, He came down out of heaven, having emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, being made in the likeness of men, humbling himself by becoming obedient to the point of death (Philippians 2:7-8). Although He did the will of His Father, His glory was hidden from the eye of man until three of His disciples saw it as He was transfigured while on the mountain, which signified His coming in His kingdom of glory (Matthew 16:28; 17:1-2). When Jesus came to earth, He brought the rule of heaven to earth as well, and He manifested the glory of the kingdom or the rule of God.

Another pattern set by our Lord Jesus is the fact that He is the center of God's purpose and plan, for it is the Father's intent **that in all things He might have the preeminence (first place)** (Colossians 1:18). Simply, the Son of God is central and supreme in the purpose of God. Fail to embrace Christ and His preeminence and you will fail to embrace God's purpose and plan.

These two patterns are seen in New Jerusalem as well. Of the ancient, earthly Jerusalem, the Lord declared: **"This is Jerusalem; I have set her at the center of the nations"** (Ezekiel 5:5). However, this is a prophetic word as well, for it points to New Jerusalem **coming down out of heaven, having the glory of God** (Revelation 21:2, 10-11), as it becomes the center of the new earth in the day of God (2 Peter 3:12). The Son of God came down out of heaven as one, but when New Jerusalem comes down, it is the full complement of His body, the many sons of God in Christ, brought unto glory. In that glorious day, the many will bring the rule of the heavens to the new earth. This is proven in the fact that the city is a manifestation of the very glory of God, which means that the absolute rule of God has come to the new earth. When the heavens do rule or, we could say, when the will of God is absolute, with no exceptions, then there is glory. When he beheld the King seated upon His throne, Isaiah heard the seraphim declaring: **"Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory"** (Isaiah 6:3). The throne of the Lord speaks of the authority and rule of God, and when the Lord is seated on His throne, He is ruling, and when He is ruling, there is glory.

This is clearly seen in the next eon as **the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness** (Isaiah 26:9), until **the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea** (Habakkuk 2:14; also Numbers 14:21; Psalm 72:19; Isaiah 6:3). Who will teach them righteousness? New Jerusalem will teach them, for those signified by the city know the perfect will of God and how to administer it. They know the very heart and will of the One who is on the throne. Further, they are filled with the perfect love of God and manifest this love in their lives.

In that glorious day, there will be no doubt about the nature and character of the government of the new earth, for the throne of God and of the Lambkin will be in the midst of the city (Revelation 22:1, 3), which means the body of Christ will reign over and upon the entire earth. The Head and His body are the Christ and the Lambkin, and they shall be reigning for the eons of the eons (Revelation 22:5 CV).

# THE UPWARD CALL

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but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.**  
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

#03-09100

***New Jerusalem #10.***

June 1, 2009

## ***A Treasure in Earthen Vessels***

In this series, I have focused primarily on the future aspect of New Jerusalem; however, this does not mean that there is no present aspect, for there most assuredly is. Actually, the whole concept of New Jerusalem is like a gem hidden in a rock formation of the earth that is chipped away or mined over time until the gem is fully exposed. Initially, all you can see is a hint of the gem, a glimmer of beauty, but you do not see its full glory. However, as time progresses, more of the gem is exposed or, rather, is unveiled until it is fully revealed. It could also be likened to a ball of light hidden or encased in an egg with a hardened shell. Over time, the shell begins to form cracks and some light shines through these openings until the entire shell breaks open and the light is released. From Genesis to Revelation, we see the light progressively shining forth until, finally, we see the glory of God coming down out of heaven to fill the new earth.

If we approach New Jerusalem as a literal city that is located in time and space, we will never understand God's heart on the matter. In fact, we will remain earthbound in our thinking and never rise to the celestial or the spirit realm of our God, and we will miss the mark. It must be discerned spiritual to spiritual.

New Jerusalem is synonymous with the kingdom of God so that every place we see a hint of light revealing New Jerusalem, in part, we can also see a hint of light revealing the kingdom of the glory of God, in part. When New Jerusalem finally comes down out of heaven in all her glory, we know that the kingdom of God comes down out of heaven as well, for it is the kingdom of glory when all is being made new (Revelation 21:5), and God is all in all new (1 Corinthians 15:28).

But there is one other thing that we must not lose sight of, and that is God's Son, our Lord Jesus. In fact, New Jerusalem and the kingdom of glory have no meaning or life apart from the Son of God. His very life is New Jerusalem and the kingdom of God. I emphasize this point because many ministries that I have listened to over the years that focus on the kingdom seem to treat the matter as something separate from the life of Christ. Let us never lose sight of the fact that the kingdom of God and New Jerusalem speak of the Son of God in all His fullness. The kingdom of Christ and New Jerusalem is **Christ in you** (Colossians 1:27); it is **no longer I but Christ** (Galatians 2:20); it is **Christ formed in you** (Galatians 4:19); it is **for to me, to live is Christ** (Philippians 1:21); and it is **the fullness of God** (Ephesians 3:19), which again speaks of Christ, for all the fullness of God dwells in Him (Colossians 1:19). Many verses from the Bible could be joined together that describe New Jerusalem, but I trust that with these few, you get the point.

We are given our first glimpse of God's city in the garden of Eden with a river flowing from its center that divides into four rivers that water the surrounding land, the tree of life in its midst, the gold and precious stones in the land, and man having dominion over it all. God has revealed the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10), and the account of the heavens and the earth, the creation of man to have dominion, and his placement in the garden, as presented in Genesis 1-3, reveals in type all that John saw in antitype as he was in spirit on Patmos, as presented in Revelation 21-22.

Over 2,000 years later, we are introduced to Melchizedek, which by translation of his name means king of righteousness and also king of Salem, which is king of peace (Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 7:1-2), who, most likely, was Shem, the third-born son of Noah. Following the flood, the first God-centered kingdom on earth came through Shem, as indicated by Noah's curse of Canaan and blessing of Shem: **"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem"** (Genesis 9:25-26).

For more on Shem, please see my article #9, May 2008, *A Mystery, The Great City Babylon*.

Of significance is that Melchizedek was the builder and first king of ancient Jerusalem, and he was a type of Christ, the high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1, 10, 11, 15, 17), which speaks of the new covenant enacted on better promises (Hebrews 8:6-13). Obviously, there is much to be gleaned from Melchizedek as a type of Christ, but this is beyond the scope of this issue. What needs to be underlined is the fact that, in type, Jerusalem begins to come into focus with the king of righteousness and of Salem and of peace, and that Abram was given insight into God's heart for a city through his great-plus grandfather Shem, a type of Christ. After all, it was Abraham who **was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God** (Hebrews 11:10). In Melchizedek, who, by the way, outlived him, Abraham touched upon God's purpose, and it led him to be a seeker of the city.

After another thousand years, Jerusalem comes into view again as David captured the stronghold of Zion from the Jebusites and established Mount Zion, which is also synonymous with the heart of Jerusalem, the city of the great King, the dwelling place of God (2 Samuel 5:7; 1 Kings 8:1; 1 Chronicles 11:5, 7; 2 Chronicles 5:2; Psalm 48:1-2; Psalm 74:2; 76:2; 132:13-14; Isaiah 8:18; Jeremiah 8:19; Zechariah 2:10).

As we move forward in history, Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord that filled Solomon's temple and, we could say, rested in Jerusalem, begin to depart from the temple until **the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city** (see Ezekiel 10-11; 11:23). However, it was not until the Messiah, the Son of God, came to the earth as the second Man that the glory that hovered over Jerusalem was finally removed. Jesus entered Herod's temple and cried out over Jerusalem.

**(37) "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. (38) Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!"** (Matthew 23:37-38 NASB)

With this declaration, Jesus walked out of the house of Israel and proceeded to the cross. The glory of God rested in the Son of God, and, with His departure, the glory of God also departed. Consequently, when Jesus died on the cross, was resurrected, and ascended back to His Father, the glory of the Lord finally departed the ancient city of Jerusalem, no longer the dwelling place of God on earth. Apart from the Son, Jerusalem is nothing more than another city built upon the foundation of man.

But the good news is that all was not lost, for fifty days later, on Pentecost, the promise of the Holy Spirit filled the new temple on earth, the body of Christ, which is New Jerusalem. Today, we who believe **have this treasure in earthen vessels** (2 Corinthians 4:7), which speaks of the spirit of the Lord and His glory.

**(17) Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (18) But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.** (2 Corinthians 3:17-18 NASB)

The glory, although hidden in mortal, earthen vessels, is in God's temple on earth today, eagerly awaiting the adoption or placement as sons (Romans 8:18-25).

So, there is a present aspect to New Jerusalem that, at times, has shone forth some measure of glory over the last 2,000 years. However, just as mystery Babylon has remained a secret to most of the world, so has New Jerusalem remained a secret, a mystery hidden to most of the world. But just like the gem that is mined to gradually reveal its beauty or the hardened shell that is cracked to gradually reveal the light hidden within, so is New Jerusalem. Today, we see in a mirror dimly (1 Corinthians 13:12), but a new day is coming when we will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father (Matthew 13:43).

The good news is that the earthen vessel housing New Jerusalem is soon to be broken to release the glory of the Lord so **the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea** (Habakkuk 2:14). Let us wait for it, for it will certainly come. Let us patiently endure until our earthen vessels are transfigured into immortal vessels of glory!

# THE UPWARD CALL

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but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.**  
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

#03-09101

## ***New Jerusalem #11. According to Paul's Vision***

June 5, 2009

In Scripture, New Jerusalem is not directly called a mystery; however, by inference, Paul does call it a mystery, only he calls it the mystery of Christ. Just as Babylon, the great city, is referred to as a mystery, I believe that New Jerusalem, the city of the living God, could be called a mystery as well, for it is part of the mystery of Christ.

The good news is that neither has to remain a mystery for those who are taught by the spirit of God, combining spiritual with spiritual, that is, knowing how to spiritually appraise all things, having the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:12-16). Unfortunately, just as Babylon remains a mystery to many Christians who are looking for a literal city in the modern-day Iraq (or perhaps some other place in the world), so does New Jerusalem remain a mystery to many Christians who are looking for a literal city in heaven with a street of gold, walls of precious stones, and gates of pearl.

According to the Bible, it is a fact that John saw New Jerusalem while he was in spirit on the isle of Patmos, and he has left us the spiritual picture given to him by the Lord. However, there is little doubt that, of the apostles, he was not alone in receiving this spiritual view of the city of the living God, for it is quite apparent that Paul saw the same thing when he was given visions and revelations of the Lord.

We could say that John saw and described New Jerusalem, and Paul saw and explained New Jerusalem.

Whether Paul was in the body or out of the body he did not know, but he did know that he was snatched to the third heaven and snatched into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak (2 Corinthians 12:1-4). Although Paul could not repeat the words he heard, he most definitely explained the visions and revelations of the Lord that he had received when snatched away. I believe that he saw New Jerusalem and called it the mystery of Christ, a phrase unique to Paul (Ephesians 3:4; Colossians 1:27; 2:2; 4:3). After all, Paul linked the third heaven and Paradise to the visions and revelations of the Lord that he had received. In other words, seeing the third heaven and Paradise is likened to seeing the Lord, which is what New Jerusalem is all about, only it is about seeing the Lord in a people, the sons of God.

As I was studying the subject of New Jerusalem, I realized that Paul's Ephesians epistle is actually a description of New Jerusalem. For the sake of this discussion, let us assume that Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews as well. According to Paul, the saints are already among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6), for they have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the celestial Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). See issues #03-0996 to #03-0998 of this series. The saints are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets (Ephesians 2:20), and the wall of New Jerusalem is built upon twelve foundation stones carrying the names of the twelve apostles (Revelation 21:14). Paul desired that the saints be able to comprehend what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of God, being filled up with all the fullness of God, that is, full of His love (Ephesians 3:18-19), and the angel measured the length, width, and height of New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:15-17), which were all equal, which speaks of the impartiality and fullness of God's love. Paul encouraged the saints to inherit the kingdom of Christ and God (Ephesians 5:5) through the adoption as sons (Ephesians 1:5), and the conquerors will inherit all that New Jerusalem stands for and will be sons of God (Revelation 21:7). Paul declared that there is only **one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all** (Ephesians 4:6), and the center and life of New Jerusalem is God who tabernacles and dwells among men as He makes all new (Revelation 21:3, 5). Finally, Paul referred to the age (eon) and the ages (eons) to come (Ephesians 1:21; 2:7), which refer to the oncoming eons when New Jerusalem will be progressively manifested to the nations until it comes down out of heaven to dwell on a new earth.

Now, without mentioning it directly, Paul described New Jerusalem using seven metaphors, all based on the concept that the saints are in Christ (or in Him), an expression used at least twenty times in Ephesians. We are in Christ, and let us not forget that Christ is in us (Colossians 1:27). This sums up New Jerusalem, the mystery of Christ.

Obviously, there is not enough space in one page to discuss the seven metaphors, so I will simply point them out for your study. Lord willing, I will address these in more detail in subsequent writings.

**#1 – Ecclesia:** Paul refers to the ecclesia or the church (used in most translations) nine times (Ephesians 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32). The church is not an institution, a building, or a denomination. It is a called-out company of people, a people called out unto Christ that is in Christ and Christ is in them. See issue #02-0806, January 18, 2008, *Ekklesia— "Out-Called" Body*, and #02-0807, January 25, 2008, *His Body, Which Is The Ecclesia*. Interestingly, during our present age, there is much emphasis on the church. Many even capitalize it to make it a proper noun: the Church. But the fact of the matter is that in our present wicked eon (age), the people of God are called out from the world and are not central in the affairs and the life of the kingdoms of men. But in the day of God, they are no longer a called-out people, for they are central in the affairs of the new heaven and earth. By definition (of the word *ekklesia*), New Jerusalem cannot rightly be called the ecclesia when she comes down out of heaven because, in that day, she will be central and supreme in the affairs and life of all mankind. In fact, the ones whose names are not recorded in the Lambkin's book of life will have no part in New Jerusalem; they will be on the outside. Consequently, New Jerusalem is not out; it is in.

**#2 – Body:** Paul's primary metaphor is the body of Christ, which he refers to nine times (Ephesians 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 30). Paul defines the ecclesia as the body of Christ: **the ecclesia (church), which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all** (Ephesians 1:23). In fact, the whole of chapter 4 is about the body. Thus, New Jerusalem is something very organic. We could say that it is full of life, the life of the Son of God.

**#3 – House:** The body of Christ is of God's household, that is, it is His house, which implies family, another one of the metaphors. God's house is built upon a foundation with His Son as the stone that holds it together and gives it life. Again, compare this with the foundation of New Jerusalem.

**(19) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, (20) having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone....** (Ephesians 2:19-20 NASB)

**#4 – Temple:** Paul continues on by defining the household of God as the holy temple of the Lord and the dwelling of God in spirit. This is the holy city, New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2).

**(21) in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, (22) in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit [in spirit] .** (Ephesians 2:21-22 NASB [CV])

**#5 – Family:** Paul bowed his knees before the Father, from whom every family in the heavens and on earth derives its name (Ephesians 3:14), which speaks of what New Jerusalem will be at the consummation of the eons when God is all in all new (1 Corinthians 15:28).

**#6 – One New Man:** New Jerusalem is the one new man, which is the new creation in Christ (Ephesians 2:15; 4:13, 24; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15). **Behold, I am making all new** (Revelation 21:5).

**#7 – Wife:** Finally, Paul compares the marriage of a man and a woman, and the man as the head of the wife, to Christ and His ecclesia, which is His body and of which He is the Head. Further, Christ is the Savior of the body, for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the ecclesia, because we are members of His body (Ephesians 5:23, 29-30). New Jerusalem is described as **a bride adorned for her husband, the wife of the Lambkin** (Revelation 21:2, 9).

Well, much could be said about each one of these metaphors, but I trust that you get a glimpse of New Jerusalem in Paul's epistle. May the eyes of your heart be enlightened! **The mystery is great!**

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09102

***New Jerusalem #12.***

September 1, 2009

***According to Isaiah's Vision***

I think it is safe to state that when most Christians read the Old Testament and see the word *Jerusalem*, they universally think of the old or ancient city of Jerusalem in Palestine, as well as the modern-day capital of the state of Israel in the Middle East. In other words, all references to Jerusalem are seen in light of a physical city on earth. So, we hear Christians declaring that we must pray for the peace of Jerusalem (on earth), for this is where Jesus will set up His throne and rule the nations through a Jewish people, according to the flesh, who for the last 2,000 years have rejected Jesus as Messiah.

I too once held this view until my eyes were opened to the great danger of what is called Christian Zionism. Needless to say, I have repented of such thinking and have moved on to what I see as the truth of Scripture regarding Jerusalem.

Simply, God is not building an earthly city of dead wood and stone adorned with gold; He is a building a celestial city of living, precious stones adorned with the garments of salvation and the robes of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10). In other words, God's Jerusalem is a company or, more explicitly, a body of celestial people, and they are called New Jerusalem.

Isaiah clearly prophesied of a day in which Jerusalem will have a new name that will come forth from the mouth of the Lord.

**(1) For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning. (2) The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name which the mouth of the LORD will designate. (3) You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. (4) It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken," nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; but you will be called, "My delight is in her," and your land, "Married"; for the LORD delights in you, and to Him your land will be married.** (Isaiah 62:1-4 NASB)

Being true to the word of God, our Lord Jesus has told us this new name and even promised to give it to all who conquer. Not only will the conquerors have the name of God on their foreheads (Revelation 7:3; 14:1) but also New Jerusalem and the Lord's name as well. What assurance is given to those who conquer!

**And I will write upon him, the name of my God, the name of the city of my God, new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my name.** (Revelation 3:12 TT)

Many translations place the article *the* before new Jerusalem; the King James Version leaves out the article but inserts the words *which is*, making it read *which is new Jerusalem*. Previously, I have made the point that New Jerusalem is the proper name of the city; therefore, the article is not needed. See issue #03-0992, January 16, 2009, *New Jerusalem #2. The Name*.

At any rate, just as Isaiah prophesied, Jesus Himself has given us the name of the city of His God.

Moving three chapters ahead in the book of Isaiah, we learn that Jerusalem is also joined with God's new heavens and new earth.

**(17) For, behold, I create new heavens and new earth. And the former things shall not be recalled, and they shall not go up on the heart. (18) However, be glad and rejoice forever in what I create. For, behold, I create in Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. (19) And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people. And the voice of weeping and the voice of crying shall no longer be heard in her.** (Isaiah 65:17-19 LITV)

Isaiah was given the word of the Lord that, one day, there will be new heavens and new earth; however, John actually saw it. John's description is nearly identical to Isaiah's. But instead of Jerusalem being on earth, it came down out of heaven; that is, it is heavenly in its constitution; it is not constituted of earthly materials. John confirmed that what he saw is exactly what Jesus promised to the conquerors—the name of the city of His God, the holy city, New Jerusalem.

**(1) And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea no longer is. (2) And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, having been prepared as a bride, having been adorned for her Husband. (3) And I heard a great voice out of Heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God with men! And He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. (4) And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And death shall be no longer, nor mourning, nor outcry, nor will there be pain any more; for the first things passed away.** (Revelation 21:1-4 LITV)

Through Isaiah, we are told that Jerusalem had been forsaken and desolate, but one day, she will be married to the Lord. Isaiah's reference to *your land* that is *forsaken* and *desolate* is a reference to mortal bodies destined for corruption. The new land that will be married to the Lord is a company of glorified people in resurrected, immortal bodies in the image of the Celestial One (1 Corinthians 15:49 CV). These bodies are **a building from God** (2 Corinthians 5:1), and together they are the bride, the wife of the Lambkin.

**(9) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb [Lambkin]” (10) And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, (11) having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.** (Revelation 21:9-11 NASB [CV])

Notice that, at this point, John does not refer to the holy city as New Jerusalem but simply as Jerusalem. It is as if the Holy Spirit wants to make sure that all understand there is only one Jerusalem in the heart and mind of God. The earthly Jerusalem is no more, just as the old covenant is no more. All is new, for **“Behold! I make all things new”** (Revelation 21:5).

Also, take note that through Isaiah (62:3), we are told that the city with the new name is a royal diadem (crown) in the hand of God. John saw this diadem on the head of Christ as He appeared out of heaven. Christ is the Head of His body of conquerors, and together they are *the Christ, the Lambkin, the holy city, New Jerusalem*.

**His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself.** (Revelation 19:12 NASB)

It should be abundantly clear that there truly is only one Jerusalem that satisfies the heart of God. As Paul confirms to us, the present Jerusalem is in slavery (Galatians 4:25) and cannot be holy, for, as John heard, she is mystically called Sodom and Egypt, and she is aligned with the great city, Mystery Babylon (Revelation 11:8; 18) that is destined to fall in one hour. The Jerusalem above is free; she is the true mount Zion and the celestial Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). **For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet.**

Thus, the visions of John and Paul are the same as the vision of Isaiah. Only one Jerusalem is in view in God's purpose. Let us not yoke ourselves with the present earthly Jerusalem. As Paul exhorted, let us cast out the bondwoman and her son, which means we must cast out the present Jerusalem. The Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother (Galatians 4:26, 30). Conquerors are born from above!

# THE UPWARD CALL

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but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09103

***New Jerusalem #13.***

September 4, 2009

## ***According to Zechariah's Vision***

As stated in the previous issue of this series, it is likely that when most Christians read the Old Testament and see the word *Jerusalem*, they universally think of the earthly Jerusalem, either the ancient or modern-day one in the state of Israel. In other words, every mention of Jerusalem is seen as referring to a physical city on earth, which, by the way, is the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also the Lord was crucified (Revelation 11:8). This great city is aligned with another great city called Babylon the great, Mystery Babylon that will fall in one hour (Revelation 18). Sodom represents the height of immorality, and Egypt represents the height of bondage, two traits that sum up the mystery city that is the dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, a place of immorality that has held captive the kings, merchants, and nations of the earth in its seductive power.

We need to study Jerusalem with spiritual sight. Or, as Paul wrote, we need to be taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words* (1 Corinthians 2:13 NASB), or simply, spiritual with spiritual. For this reason, when we read the Old Testament prophets, we need to transcend the earthly and physical realm to ascend into God's realm of spirit to receive God's vision of Jerusalem.

Now, let us consider Zechariah and his vision of Jerusalem.

**(1) Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a man with a measuring line in his hand. (2) So I said, "Where are you going?" And he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide it is and how long it is." (3) And behold, the angel who was speaking with me was going out, and another angel was coming out to meet him, (4) and said to him, "Run, speak to that young man, saying, 'Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it. (5) For I,' declares the LORD, 'will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.'" (Zechariah 2:1-5 NASB)**

Just as John's Patmos vision was revealed through the activity of angels, so was Zechariah's vision. A man was going forth to measure the dimensions of Jerusalem, just as the one speaking with John had a gold measuring rod to measure New Jerusalem.

**The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. (Revelation 21:15 NASB)**

The actual dimensions of New Jerusalem will be taken up in a subsequent issue, but at this point, we need to make note of the walls referenced by Zechariah.

The angel told the young man that Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle. One might wonder how this could be a reference to spiritual Jerusalem if there are cattle or livestock within it. We need to be reminded of Paul's encouragement to the Romans.

**(19) For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. (20) For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope (21) that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (22) For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. (23) And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:19-23 NASB)**

In other words, the future of creation is intimately linked with the manifestation of the sons of God, the new creation in Christ that is represented as New Jerusalem. When Adam was given the mandate to have dominion over the earth, he was told to rule over the cattle and over every living thing that moves on the earth, so the cattle within Jerusalem refer to the dominion mandate given to the first Adam (Genesis 1:26; 28) and recovered in the last Adam. The cattle simply represent all the creatures on earth that will be set free from their groaning when the conquerors are set free from their groaning.

Although Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls, the Lord Himself declares that He will be a wall of fire around her and be the glory in her midst. How do we reconcile that there is no wall and yet there is a wall? It is easy when we see that the wall represents a spiritual boundary and not a physical structure. A wall represents a boundary, either to keep something out or to protect something within.

Isaiah says that **you will call your walls salvation and your gates praise** (Isaiah 60:18). Thus, the wall speaks of those who are saved, and only the saved are included in Jerusalem. But what protects the saved if there is no physical wall? They are protected by the fiery law of God (Deuteronomy 33:2), which is the word of the Lord. Through Jeremiah, the Lord declared: **“Is not My word like fire and like a hammer that shatters a rock?”** (Jeremiah 23:29). His word or, more explicitly, His law is a boundary against sin; it is a moral boundary. As John wrote, **sin is lawlessness** (1 John 3:4); that is, sin is acting apart from and contrary to God’s divine law. It is breaking His law.

John was clear that no one who breaks God’s law will enter New Jerusalem. Outside are the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, immoral persons, sorcerers, idolaters, liars, and all the unclean (Revelation 21:8, 27). The wall of fire speaks of the Lord’s protection of His dwelling of God *in spirit*; only the saved are constituted to be part of His city, and those within His city cannot break His law. It speaks of protection within and without. Thus, New Jerusalem is bounded by a wall of salvation and a wall of fire or the law of God. No one can merely walk into God’s dwelling in spirit; one must qualify to enter through salvation, first, and conquering, second, if one is to be part of it in the next eon.

Continuing on, through Zechariah, the Lord exhorted His people that He had dispersed them to escape from the daughter of Babylon.

**(6) “Ho there! Flee from the land of the north,” declares the LORD, “for I have dispersed you as the four winds of the heavens,” declares the LORD. (7) “Ho, Zion! Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon.” (8) For thus says the LORD of hosts, “After glory He has sent me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye.”** (Zechariah 2:6-8 NASB)

Zechariah was raised up to speak to the Jews that had returned to Judah to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, but his vision was also for a time many millennia hence. John heard the voice out of heaven saying in reference to Mystery Babylon: **“Come out of her, my people”** (Revelation 18:4). New Jerusalem was in view as John heard the cry to come out. New Jerusalem is the apple of God’s eye.

**But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly [celestial] Jerusalem....** (Hebrews 12:22 NASB [CV])

We who are saved have come to it, and we need to come out of all that is not of God. Mystery Babylon is judged, and we need to be encouraged, for a new day and a new song are coming.

**(10) “Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” declares the LORD. (11) “Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.”** (Zechariah 2:10-11 NASB)

According to John, God will dwell among His people, and they will be His sons (Revelation 21:3, 7). They are the ones who will sing a new song to the Lord, for they have been purchased with the blood of God **from every tribe and tongue and people and nation** (Revelation 5:9). They are New Jerusalem, safe and secure in Christ, and the nations will walk by their light and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it (Revelation 21:24).

Isaiah, Zechariah, and John all are in agreement, and we need to have their vision of New Jerusalem.

# THE UPWARD CALL

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but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09104

***New Jerusalem #14.***

September 8, 2009

***According to Ezekiel's Vision***

So far in this series, I have purposely avoided a line-by-line commentary of John's vision of New Jerusalem as recorded in Revelation 21-22 because I believe it is important for us to lay a foundation based on what others saw, including the ancient prophets of the Old Testament. It is unfortunate that so many Christians seem to approach the Old Testament while wearing old-covenant glasses rather than new-covenant glasses, so to speak. In other words, they fail to look at Scripture for what it signifies under the new covenant. Consequently, Old Testament prophecy of future events, especially events that will take place in the next eon (age) during the Kingdom or Tabernacles Age, are seen through the lens of either the old covenant that has been made obsolete by the new, or a mixture (half-breed) of the two covenants.

A case in point is prophecy given by Ezekiel in chapters 40-48 about a future temple being built in Israel, one that some see as the third temple that will be Jesus' temple on earth during His 1,000-year reign. As the interpretation goes, animal sacrifices will be reinstated as Jesus officiates from this temple; the One, by the way, who took away the sin of the world through His one and final sacrifice. I think the writer of the Hebrews epistle would have taken exception to such thinking.

**(9) He takes away the first in order to establish the second. (10) By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.** (Hebrews 10:9-10 NASB)

Ezekiel's vision of the temple is quite involved, but in this issue I merely want to underline a few points of similarity with John's vision of New Jerusalem that has no temple (i.e., it is not of wood and stone), for the Lord God Almighty and the Lambkin are its temple (Revelation 21:22). Again, it is vital that we understand that what Ezekiel saw, as if it were in the physical realm, needs to be seen in the spiritual realm; it must be seen for what it signifies. To achieve His purpose of being **all in all new**, God's plan is to build a temple of living stones, a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5).

First, the Lord told Ezekiel that He would pour out His Spirit on the house of Israel.

**"I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel," declares the Lord GOD.** (Ezekiel 39:29 NASB)

John was told that the ones constituted as New Jerusalem, a temple of the Lord, the dwelling of God in spirit (2 Corinthians 6:16b-18; Ephesians 2:21-22), will see His face (Revelation 22:4). They are the immortal ones, raised a spiritual body, bearing the image of the Celestial One. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit (1 Corinthians 15:44, 45, 49). Jesus confirmed that this would take place in the last day, the great day, the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:38-39). Today, believers have an earnest of the spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14), but in the next age, they will be the **first** to have the full measure (Ephesians 3:19), for they are the first fruits of the true Israel.

Next, Ezekiel was taken up on a high mountain to see something that looked like a city.

**In the visions of God He brought me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain, and on it to the south there was a structure like a city.** (Ezekiel 40:2 NASB)

John too was taken up on a high mountain to see the city, the holy city, Jerusalem (Revelation 21:10).

Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord fill the house. The writer to the Hebrew Christians states that Christ is faithful as Son over His house, whose house we are (Hebrews 3:6). Paul describes the body of Christ as God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Himself being the corner stone (Ephesians 2:19-20).

**And behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house.** (Ezekiel 43:5b NASB)

John saw the city whose temple is the Lord God and the Lambkin illumined by the glory of God. In fact, he saw the city come down out of heaven, having the glory of God (Revelation 21:10-11a, 23). He saw the house filled with the glory of the Lord.

Ezekiel heard the law of the Lord regarding the house and all that surrounds it. The law of the house is that it is holy.

**“This is the law of the house: its entire area on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.”** (Ezekiel 43:12 NASB)

John saw **the holy city**, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven (Revelation 21:10). **You shall be holy, for I am holy** (Ephesians 1:14; 5:27; 1 Peter 1:15-16).

Ezekiel was shown a river of living water flowing out from the temple, giving life to all that come in contact with the water. He also saw all kinds of trees that bear fruit every month; their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing.

**Then he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, water was flowing from under the threshold of the house toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under, from the right side of the house, from south of the altar.** (Ezekiel 47:1 NASB)

**“By the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing.”** (Ezekiel 47:12 NASB)

John saw the river of living water flowing from the throne of God and of the Lambkin. He too saw trees (tree of life) that bear twelve kinds of fruit, and the leaves of the trees are for healing (Revelation 22:1-2). The river Ezekiel saw flowed from the throne in the house to the Dead Sea and gave life to that which was dead. The river John saw flowed from the throne in the house (city) to the nations of the new earth, giving them life. The river of life eventually will engulf all of mankind, and its tree(s) will bring healing. John saw that there was no more sea in the new earth (Revelation 21:1). The sea signifies separation of the nations. In other words, the nations will no longer be separated from the Lord or from one another. In the days of King Nimrod, the nations were divided and confused according to new languages, but in God's day, there will be no confusion or division. There is only one God and one Lord and one City.

It is God's kind intention that the nations will be blessed through New Jerusalem and will be part of it at the consummation of the eons. The curse of death that came through Adam will be no more, for the last enemy to be abolished is death (1 Corinthians 15:26; Revelation 22:3).

Finally, Ezekiel saw a man measuring the city and he heard its dimensions and its name.

**“The city shall be 18,000 cubits round about; and the name of the city from that day shall be, “The LORD is there.”** (Ezekiel 48:35 NASB)

John saw the angel measuring the holy city and heard its name, New Jerusalem, which is the dwelling place of the Lord, for the Lord is there. Thus, we have the name of the city and its spiritual meaning, for it is the Lord's house and He lives there. He lives not only among His people but in them.

# THE UPWARD CALL

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but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
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IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09105

***New Jerusalem #15.***

October 1, 2009

## ***The Temple***

In the Greek, the transliterated words *heiron* and *naos* are most often translated as the word *temple*. *Heiron* refers to a sacred place, predominantly the entire physical structure [i.e., temple] (e.g., Matthew 4:5; 12:5, 6; 24:1). *Naos* comes from a primary word that means “to dwell” and is used mostly in a narrower sense to refer to the sanctuary of the temple.

However, Jesus is the one who defines the spiritual meaning of the word *naos*, especially in reference to New Jerusalem; a meaning, as we will see, that was taken up by Paul in his epistles.

As the day of the Jewish Passover neared, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Since this was a Jewish feast, there were many Jews in Jerusalem at the time, and it was a time for some to make money by selling oxen and sheep and doves in the temple. When He saw the money changers in the temple, Jesus drove them out.

**And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple** [heiron].... (John 2:15 NASB)

Clearly, this was a reference to the physical structure called the temple. But then, Jesus said something that caught the attention of the Jews that were watching and listening.

**(19) Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple [naos], and in three days I will raise it up.” (20) The Jews then said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple [naos], and will You raise it up in three days?” (21) But He was speaking of the temple [naos] of His body.** (John 2:19-21 NASB)

Notice that the Jews used the word *naos* just as Jesus did, and they clearly thought He was speaking of the physical temple. However, He was not, for He was referring to His body that would be broken (die) on the cross and be raised from among the dead three days later. So, Jesus Himself established the spiritual meaning of the word *naos*; it is His body.

If we stop at Jesus’ word, we might be led to think that He alone is the temple of God, even today. However, Paul was given great revelation of the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ, and he revealed that the body of Christ, both individually and corporately, is now the temple of God.

The temple of God has moved from a physical structure of wood and stone to a body of holy, living stones. This has been addressed in issue #03-0994, *New Jerusalem #4*, of this series.

**(16) Do you not know that you are a temple [naos] of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (17) If any man destroys the temple [naos] of God, God will destroy him, for the temple [naos] of God is holy, and that is what you are.** (1 Corinthians 3:16-17 NASB)

**(19) Or do you not know that your body is a temple [naos] of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? (20) For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.** (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NASB)

**(16) Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.”** (2 Corinthians 6:16 NASB)

All who truly believe on the Lord Jesus receive an earnest of the spirit of God (Romans 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13), and, on this basis alone, each believer becomes a temple of the living God. The earnest of the spirit is a down payment of a greater indwelling of the spirit to come when the living stones are transfigured into immortal, celestial, spiritual bodies in the image of the Son of God, when they are filled up to all the fullness of God as the complement or fullness of Him who fills all in all (Ephesians 1:23; 3:19).

In other words, the temple of God is not complete; it is being built up into a holy temple in the Lord. Each temple of God is joined to the living Head and joined to one another through Christ, and all are being fitted together so that one day there will be a completed temple *in* spirit called New Jerusalem.

Paul has given us the most complete explanation of the temple of God and New Jerusalem.

**(19) Consequently, then, no longer are you guests and sojourners, but are fellow-citizens of the saints and belong to God’s family, (20) being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the capstone of the corner being Christ Jesus Himself, (21) in Whom the entire building, being connected together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord: (22) in Whom you, also, are being built together for God’s dwelling place, in spirit.** (Ephesians 2:19-22 CV)

This is the definition of New Jerusalem. If you grasp what Paul has given us in these few words, you will never go astray in your understanding of God’s plan and purpose in and through New Jerusalem. In Revelation 21-22, using physical descriptors, John recorded what he saw of New Jerusalem as she came down out of heaven, having the glory of God. However, Paul explains what John saw.

New Jerusalem is Christ Himself; but it is not just Christ alone but Christ and His body, the inseparable Head and Body of Christ, which is called **the Christ** by Paul and **the Lambkin** by John.

**For, even as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the one body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ...** (1 Corinthians 12:12 YLT)

Most translations leave out the article *the*, but the more literal translations leave it in, which gives *the* Christ the proper meaning. *The* Christ is one body, and a body consists of a head. Paul continued on in his letter to include eyes and ears in the body, which are part of the head (1 Corinthians 12:17). There is no division in the body; consequently, it cannot be separated from *the* Head, which is the Lord Himself (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18). Christ the Head and His body is *the* Christ, the Anointed.

**I saw no temple [naos] in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb [Lambkin] are its temple [naos]** (Revelation 21:22 NASB [CV])

When John saw New Jerusalem, there was no physical temple in view. I imagine this puzzled him at first since the temple had been the center of Jewish life, but he was given revelation that New Jerusalem is the temple of God. Just as Paul saw *the Christ* as the Head and Body, John saw *the Lambkin* as the Head and Body, the temple of God that is destined to fill the whole new earth. The word *lambkin* is a better translation of the Greek word *arnion* that refers to a little lamb. The body of Christ will become the Lambkin of God, which is New Jerusalem, and will reign with Christ for the eons of the eons (Revelation 22:5 CV). See issue #03-0922, February 13, 2009, *The Lambkin [Arnion]*.

This is the destiny of all who believe on the Lord Jesus, but especially of those who conquer in our present eon, for they are the ones worthy to reign with Christ in His kingdom in the next eon.

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09106

***New Jerusalem #16.***

October 2, 2009

***A Pillar in the Temple***

As presented in the previous issue, Jesus defined the spiritual meaning of the word *naos*. He referred to His body as the temple of God that was raised up from among the dead (John 2:19, 21).

Paul carried this thought forward to include the body of Christ, a temple of the Holy Spirit, which is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Himself being the cornerstone (Ephesians 2: 19-22). This temple not only is the Christ, the Anointed, but also is the Lambkin, New Jerusalem, the holy city in which God dwells.

New Jerusalem is the temple of God; it is the Most Holy Place where the Lord God Almighty dwells among His sons in glory (Revelation 21:3, 7, 22). At the consummation of the eons or, as some call it, Creation's Jubilee, New Jerusalem will overtake the entire new earth and extend into and become all of God's creation.

Once we are clear that New Jerusalem is the temple of God, we can consider a specific word to the conquerors who will enter into this glorious temple-relationship as the first fruits anointed, the first troop of the out-resurrection and transfiguration (1 Corinthians 15:23). In other words, the conquerors will be the first to be part of the new creation that rules with Christ in the eon to come.

In His letters to the seven ecclesias, Jesus made special promises to those who are conquering while in bodies of death (mortal bodies). One of the greatest promises is made to the conquerors identified with the ecclesia at Philadelphia; however, we need to realize that all the promises of Revelation 2-3 apply to all the conquerors of the ecclesia of God down through the centuries.

**Him that overcometh [conquers] will I make a pillar [stulos] in the temple [naos] 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.** (Revelation 3:12 KJV)

Again, as presented in the previous issue, we need to establish in our hearts that New Jerusalem is the temple of God; otherwise, as we consider the above verse, we might be tempted to think that the temple and New Jerusalem are separate spiritual entities, which they are not.

I believe our Lord Jesus purposely joined the city and the name in this promise to ensure we understand that the temple, the city, and New Jerusalem are inseparable and need to be understood as one. There is only one body, one Spirit, one Lord, and one God and Father who is over all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:4-6).

However, the Lord injected a promise to the conquerors that I have not written about previously; it is the promise to become a pillar in the temple of My God.

I must confess that many years ago, I saw New Jerusalem strictly as a physical city and, as such, did not care much for this word. Frankly, it seemed to be a boring promise. After all, who wants to become a pillar in a temple and never be allowed to go out of it, ever? I wanted to run freely in the city and not be stuck in some temple with balls of incense and the like. It seemed more like a life of servitude than one of liberty. To me, it was like becoming a monk in a monastery.

Of course, I trust you realize that I never thought of literally being a physical pillar in a temple. I knew even then that this needed to be understood as a spiritual truth. Nevertheless, it still seemed boring to me. Well, as you can tell by my writing, I have come a long way in my understanding. Of course, this is a spiritual verity, and it must be understood spiritual to spiritual.

True to form, Paul gives us the explanation of this promise.

**(14) I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; (15) but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church [ecclesia] of the living God, the pillar [stulos] and support of the truth.** (1 Timothy 3:14-15 NASB)

Jesus and Paul used the same Greek word, *stulos*, which means “a post, that is, figuratively a support.”

But notice what type of pillar the ecclesia of the living God is now, not just in the oncoming eons. The true ecclesia, the household of God, is the pillar and support of the truth. We need to be clear that the temple is a spiritual temple. If you recall, as Jesus approached the cross, He encouraged His disciples that the spirit of truth would come and abide in them after He returned to His heavenly Father.

**(16) “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; (17) that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.” ... “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me....” ...“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth....”** (John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13 NASB)

So, by placing these words from the Lord alongside His promise to the conquerors, we see that being a pillar in the temple of God, which is New Jerusalem, speaks of the temple being filled with the spirit of truth. In other words, there is no lie in New Jerusalem (i.e., in His people, the sons), only the truth.

John was given witness to this fact as he saw New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven.

**Nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it....** [i.e., New Jerusalem, the temple of God] ... **Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.** (Revelation 21:27; 22:15 NASB)

Dear brethren, look around you; open your ears, and what do you hear? Lies! The world is filled with lies because it denies God’s only begotten Son as the only answer to the world. The nations are living a lie, and the apparent Jews that many Christian Zionists refuse to make jealous with the gospel of Jesus Christ are living a lie. Let us not support the lie that the Jews of our day, the ones that reject Christ, are God’s chosen people because of their flesh. They need Christ just as the whole world does. We cannot ignore Jesus’ encouragement to the conquerors if we expect to reign with Him.

**‘Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you.’** (Revelation 3:9 NASB)

We have the truth because we have the spirit of truth abiding within us. We are to hold to the truth in this day so that we will be rewarded by becoming pillars of the truth in God’s temple, New Jerusalem, in the next eon and by being given the honor of introducing God’s King to the world. What is the truth?

**“You say correctly that I am a king. [Psalm 2:6] For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify of the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”** (John 18:37)

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09107

***New Jerusalem #17.***

October 12, 2009

## ***According to Jeremiah's Vision***

I had planned to move on to John's Patmos vision recorded in Revelation 21-22, but I realized that the words of one more prophet, Jeremiah, need to be looked at before we do. Actually, Jeremiah had much to say about Jerusalem, especially the ancient and present Jerusalem that is destined for ruin. Suffice it to say; when the prophets spoke of the demise and gloom of Jerusalem, they spoke of the earthly Jerusalem that no longer has the name and glory of God upon it. When they spoke of the glory and joy of Jerusalem, they spoke of the celestial Jerusalem, New Jerusalem; this is where the name of God resides. The prophets did not refer directly to New Jerusalem, but they were given vision of her and felt the heartbeat of God to dwell in and among His people.

Of course, by now, I trust that those reading my material realize that His name is upon a people, and the people are New Jerusalem, the temple of the Lord made up of living stones.

Now, let us consider Jeremiah 31, starting with verse 27.

**(27) "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and with the seed of beast. (28) As I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to overthrow, to destroy and to bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant," declares the LORD.**

This is the Lord's promise to reunite Judah and Israel, which refers to reuniting the King with the Kingdom. Judah was given the scepter (Genesis 49:10), which, in type, refers to the reign of the King of Judah, Jesus, who is not only of the tribe of Judah but also the Leader of Judah. Jacob-Israel blessed the sons of Joseph with his name Israel and blessed Joseph as a fruitful bough [*ben* meaning son] (Genesis 48:8-20; 49:22). Israel speaks of sonship and the many sons that will come unto glory (Hebrews 2:10) to reign with Christ (King of Judah); they represent the kingdom that will be formed on earth. Thus, in that day, Judah (King) and Israel (Kingdom) will be united as one, and the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ will take root among the nations. Of His government there will be no end, only increase (Isaiah 9:7; Daniel 7:14; Luke 1:33; Hebrews 12:28), as it continually increases for 1,000 years until it bursts forth into God's Day when all is made new (2 Peter 3:8; Revelation 21:5).

The basis for this glorious promise is the new covenant.

**(31) "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, (32) not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. (33) "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (34) They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."**

This prophetic word is repeated in the epistle to the Hebrews (8:7-12; 10:16-17). The old covenant of animal sacrifices and the Levitical priesthood has been made obsolete, and the new covenant has been inaugurated based on the Mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises (1 Timothy 2:3-6; Hebrews 8:6). A new priesthood of the order of Melchizedek has come forth according to the power of an indestructible life (Hebrews 7:15-17). God takes away the first in order to establish

the second (Hebrews 10:9), and Jeremiah was given the word that it would come to pass, and so it has, at least in part. We wait for God's Son from heaven (1 Thessalonians 1:10) to inaugurate His kingdom on earth.

Then, Jeremiah records one of the most profound promises of the Lord.

**(35) Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the LORD of hosts is His name: (36) "If this fixed order departs from before Me," declares the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever." (37) Thus says the LORD, "If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done," declares the LORD.**

I must confess that, for years, I used these verses as proof that the Lord is going to restore the fortunes of the earthly Jerusalem and make the present-day state of Israel the head of the nations in the next eon. As I have written elsewhere, I had to repent of such thinking when my eyes were opened to see that this is a promise for the true spiritual Israel and New Jerusalem, which is based on the new covenant. The Lord's nation has not ceased from before Him and will not cease, for He has brought forth a nation producing the fruit of the kingdom of God (Matthew 21:43), and this nation is made up of all that believe on Jesus, the ones who have accepted Him as the King of Judah. The Judahites that stood before Jesus when He came to this earth 2,000 years ago and rejected Him, even demanding His crucifixion, disqualified themselves from entering the kingdom then and in the next eon. Jeremiah likened them to bad figs (Jeremiah 24). Jesus confirmed this when He spoke of the withered fig tree that bears no fruit, and the nation that would come forth with leaves but no fruit (Matthew 21:19; 24:32; Luke 13:6-9). The withered fig tree described the Judah nation that was destroyed in 70 AD when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman army raised up by God Himself (Matthew 22:7). The nation with leaves but no fruit describes the present-day state of Israel that has usurped the birthright name given to Joseph and his sons. It is not destined to bear fruit, only ruin.

**(10) "Then you are to break the jar in the sight of the men who accompany you (11) and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Just so will I break this people and this city, even as one breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot again be repaired; and they will bury in Topheth because there is no other place for burial. (12) 'This is how I will treat this place and its inhabitants,' declares the LORD, 'so as to make this city like Topheth.'"** (Jeremiah 19:10-12 NASB)

The Lord has declared that the city, Jerusalem, will be destroyed in such a way that it cannot be repaired. Jerusalem has been destroyed and rebuilt many times, and in our day, there is a rebuilt Jerusalem that is the capital of the modern-day Israel. But the Lord has declared that a day will come when whatever stands on the ancient ground of Jerusalem on earth will be broken in such a way that it will never be repaired again. Jerusalem must go the way of Topheth, which is what Jesus referred to as **the Gehenna of fire** [not hell] (Matthew 23:29-33, 37). A day is rapidly approaching when those in Jerusalem need to be told to flee for their lives (Matthew 24:16-19). A new city is coming to earth!

**(38) "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the city will be rebuilt for the LORD from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. (39) The measuring line will go out farther straight ahead to the hill Gareb; then it will turn to Goah. (40) And the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be holy to the LORD; it will not be plucked up or overthrown anymore forever."** (Jeremiah 31:38-40 NASB)

This description must be understood for its spiritual meaning. It describes the dwelling of God in spirit. It is **the holy city, New Jerusalem** (Revelation 21:2). The days actually began when Christ rose from the grave, ascended to heaven, and then sent forth the promise of the Holy Spirit. The foundation of the city was laid with Christ as the cornerstone and the apostles and the prophets as the foundation stones (Ephesians 2:20; Revelation 21:14), and since then, the city has been under construction, not as a dwelling on earth but as a **dwelling from heaven** (2 Corinthians 5:2).

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09108

***New Jerusalem #18.***

October 14, 2009

***New— Youthful and Fresh***

In 37 verses of *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, John declared: **“I saw.”** According to biblical numerics, the number 37 signifies **“Jesus as the Word of God.”** This is why John’s Patmos vision is appropriately titled *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. It is a revealing, an unveiling of Christ, and the fulfillment of God’s purpose in and through His Son. So, as we consider New Jerusalem, we should not lose sight of this fact. New Jerusalem is the very embodiment of the Son of God manifested in the many sons brought unto glory, the sons of God, the New Creation in Christ. The conquerors are the city. This sums up what John saw.

To be balanced in this discussion, we need to understand that John was not seeing New Jerusalem as if it were a picture of what we will look like, that is, our spiritual bodies, for John also wrote that we do not know what we shall be like.

**Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it was not yet revealed what we shall be. But we know that if He is revealed, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.** (1 John 3:2 LITV)

The good news is that we will be like the Son of God, for one day we will go from being children of God, born from above, to being adopted as sons of God in the kingdom of God. See the series on *Sons of God*, issues #03-09167 through #03-09169, September 2009. What we know is that when we see Him, we will be like Him. New Jerusalem does not give us an indication of what we will be like individually, but it does give us an indication of our corporate character and purpose until the consummation of the eons. Another way to state this is that New Jerusalem speaks of the constitution or nature of the holy temple in the Lord, the corporate dwelling of God in spirit.

Now, as we consider Revelation 21-22, the first thing that should catch our attention is the word *new*.

**(1) And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea no longer is. (2) And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, having been prepared as a bride, having been adorned for her Husband. ... (5) And the One sitting on the throne said, Behold! I make all things new.** (Revelation 21:1-2, 5 LITV)

The point has been made that the name of God’s city is New Jerusalem, but we need to understand the significance of the word *new*, which is used nine times in *The Revelation* (2:17; 3:12; 5:9; 14:3; 21:1, 2, 5). In addition to New Jerusalem, there is a new name, a new song, a new heaven, a new earth, until ultimately, all is new. By the way, according to Paul, there are nine fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), so it is safe to state that *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit to produce the life of the Son of God in a city-bride people called New Jerusalem.

Let us not forget that the purpose of the eons is to sum up or head up all things in Christ so that God may be all in all new. See my book *That God May Be All in All New*, January 2009. God is driving forward with one purpose, and that purpose is to make all things new.

The Greek word for *new* is *kainos*, which means “youthful, fresh.” Consequently, John not only saw something new in the sense of it not being like the old or former things, but he also saw something

young and fresh. There was a youthful freshness. This is further seen in John's use of the word *arnion*, which refers to a youthful lamb. Most translations use the word *lamb*, but concordantly, the better word is *lambkin*, for it refers to a little lamb, which speaks of something fresh and new. A lambkin has youthful vitality. Please see issue #03-0922, February 13, 2009, *The Lambkin [Arnion]*.

So, all that God is going to bring forth in relation to New Jerusalem will have a youthful freshness to it. It will be like finishing and closing out all the chapters of a book, never to read them again, and opening a new book, hot off the press. The former things will be gone, and all things will be new and youthful.

Dear brethren, let us not think of this as if it were simply a new coat of paint. New paint placed over old paint can wear off and dull until the old paint starts to appear again. God's all new is not a new veneer or a new covering that is placed over something old; it is entirely new from its very core to its outward appearance. The entire appearance, substance, nature, and character of God's all new truly will be something new and fresh. All the former things will have passed away.

Most translations use the word *first* when referring to the first heaven and the first earth, but the Greek word literally means "foremost in time, place or order." The word *first* implies that there was only one orderly arrangement of the heavens and earth in time and place, but we do not know this for sure. In fact, I have made the point elsewhere that our present heaven and earth could be the second one in order, and the one to come, that is, the all-new order, is a third heaven and earth. Simply, there could have been more than one orderly arrangement of heaven and earth prior to the one with which we are most associated and know as mankind's home since Adam. I won't go over this ground again, but if you are interested, carefully read 2 Peter 3:3-7 and you will discover that Peter referred to heaven and earth long ago and to the present heaven and earth, implying that there has been more than one heaven and earth.

To some this may be much ado about nothing, but I make this point in order to stress that all the former things, that is, every order in time since the beginning of time, will pass away and be no more. We will never have to fear that things from the past will ever appear in New Jerusalem. Peter even tells us so.

**(11) Then all these being about to be dissolved, of what sort ought you to be in holy behavior and godliness, (12) looking for and hastening the coming of the Day of God, through which the heavens having been set afire will be dissolved; and burning, the elements will melt? (13) But according to His promise, we look for "new heavens and a new earth," in which righteousness dwells.** Isa. 65:17 (2 Peter 3:11-13 LITV)

The Greek word translated as *dissolved* means "to loosen." Exactly how God will do this, we are not told, but we can be assured that the fire of God will completely loosen mankind from the former things. It will be a complete purging of all the former things. Whether it will be through a naturally occurring stellar event such as a **supernova** [*nova* in Latin means "new"] or a complete purging by the **fiery law of God**, we are not told, but we do know that the dissolution will be complete and thorough, down to the very **God particle**. See issue #03-09120, May 4, 2009, *In The Beginning God Created*.

The good news is this: In New Jerusalem, **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.** Sin reigns in death; therefore, with no more death, there is no more sin, and all suffering associated with death and sin is no more as well. Why?

**(4) And for the former things are passed away. (5) And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."** (Revelation 21:4-5 KJV)

All the former things are gone forever! We are assured that His word is faithful and true; therefore, it shall come to pass. In the day of God, mankind will start over as something youthful and fresh, and it will be centered in and through New Jerusalem.

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09109

***New Jerusalem #19.***

October 26, 2009

***Holy City, Coming Down Out of Heaven***

**(1) And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea no longer is. (2) And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, having been prepared as a bride, having been adorned for her Husband. (Revelation 21:1-2 LITV)**

Many years ago, if you had asked me to describe New Jerusalem, I would have described this huge, mountainous city as large as half the United States descending out of heaven and settling on a new earth. I was not alone in this picture, for some biblical scholars have pictured it the same way. In fact, I have a book in my library by a well-known expositor of Scripture that has a sketch of New Jerusalem in it that looks like the Great Pyramid of Egypt, only it has a flat top with trees growing out the top. Over the years, I have seen similar depictions by others.

Of course, by now, you must realize that I don't see New Jerusalem in this light anymore. Frankly, it seems far-fetched to think of God's city as some huge structure of pure gold that just comes down out of heaven and plops itself on earth. The weight and the size of such a structure would be enormous, which makes me wonder if a new earth could even hold it without causing some imbalance in the earth's rotation or without the new earth being much larger than the present one; an idea some have suggested. Besides, do we honestly think that, after all these years, God is simply after a new mountain to sit on and for mankind to occupy and to visit? Are we to believe that God wants to be wed to a physical structure, a literal city? I don't think so! For this reason, we must see what New Jerusalem signifies, and when we do, we will see that it is about a people that are called a city, bride, and wife. This is what New Jerusalem is.

Now, as we continue to consider John's vision of New Jerusalem, we are told that it is **the holy city** (Revelation 21:2, 10). The word *holy* comes from the Greek word *hagios*, which is an adjective meaning "sacred, dedicated, set apart, holy." (a) of God, pure, implies distance between the Divine and the profane, John 17:11; (b) of things dedicated to God and His service, Ephesians 1:4; Matthew 24:15; (c) of persons dedicated to and thus partaking of the holiness of God, Romans 1:7; Mark 6:20" (Wigram's *New Englishman's Greek-English Concordance & Lexicon*). The last group (c) in this definition appears in Scripture as *saints*, which is translated from *hagios*.

We could say that New Jerusalem is the embodiment of the full definition of *hagios*. Nothing profane is part of the city nor will ever be part of the city, even allowed into it, for excluded are the **cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars** (Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15). The city represents the **Presence and Essence** of God and, as such, is constituted only of that which is of God. As the holy city, New Jerusalem is the city of the Holy Spirit, for it is the very abode of God who is spirit, the whole of which is the tabernacle of God. But God is not alone, for He dwells among and in His conquering sons (Revelation 21:3, 7). The city is the manifestation of the sons of God, the saints, the holy ones, set apart unto God, not only to serve God but to serve all mankind (Revelation 21:24; 22:3-4). In one sense, the holy city is very exclusive since only that which is of the nature and character of the Son of God, the Alpha and the Omega, will ever be part of New Jerusalem. Yet, in another sense, the holy city is very inclusive since the Alpha and Omega will bring life to the rest of mankind (Revelation 21:6; 22:1-2). In other words, the city signifies the immortal, glorified, spiritualized Body of Christ that is filled with the fullness of God, fully conformed to the image of God's Son. This body will lead all mankind into the righteousness of God until all creation is brought into God's grand jubilee and no one is any longer outside the city of God, when all mankind is the holy city of God.

Now, John saw the holy city coming down out of heaven. Again, try to visualize the city as a literal city and your imagination might get stuck on pause. We might be tempted to think that the city is someplace way out in outer space being built by the angels. I once had a thought similar to this, only I saw God doing the building. To correct my faulty thinking, God gave me a vision of the one new man in Christ. Since this would be a diversion from the current discussion, I will explain this in another issue.

The phrase “out of” comes from the Greek word *ek*, which is “a primary preposition denoting origin; the point whence motion or action proceeds.” In other words, “out of” denotes the origin of the holy city. It is not that it comes down out of space or out of the sky; it comes down out of the heavenly or spirit realm, the abode of God. John saw the holy city materialize in the physical world. It was and is a picture of the spirit realm and the physical realm becoming one. If you want to be poetic, heaven and earth kissed. It was not only a picture of the kingdom of the heavens coming to earth but also of it enveloping or overtaking earth.

I realize that this may be a difficult concept to grasp, but God’s plan to achieve His purpose of being all in all is to bring heaven and earth together. We are given a glimpse of this by Paul.

**(4) But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, (5) even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), (6) and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places [among the celestials] in Christ Jesus, (7) so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.** (Ephesians 2:4-7 NASB [CV])

We are still on earth living in bodies of death, and yet, we are seated with Christ among the celestials. We have been joined with heaven, the very realm of God, not what we see when we look up into the sky at night. Because we are in Christ and seated with Christ, and we will receive immortal bodies of flesh and bones, we are destined to be of the spirit and physical realms. We will be constituted in such a way that we will be both heavenly and earthly. See the series #03-09177 through #02-09180, October 2009, *Flesh and Blood Shall Not Inherit the Kingdom*. In the next age, the world will see this in some measure, but it will not be until God’s Day, the age that follows, that the whole earth will see heaven and earth come together.

Think about it; the body of Christ, the body that is born from above, whose mother is the Jerusalem above (Galatians 4:26), is destined to be both heavenly and earthly. Our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20), but our destiny is not heaven alone. Our destiny is heaven and earth, and our vocation for the next two ages will be to bring heaven to earth, not to escape it and leave it to figure out God’s plan and purpose on its own. I pray to God that this truth would sink into the heart of the church of our day that has everyone dying and, in an afterlife, either going to heaven or to hell for eternity. This is not the hope Jesus and the apostles have left us. Our hope is to become like the Son of God whose unfinished work is to sum up all things in the heavens and on the earth (Ephesians 1:10). Christ’s body is destined to be His complement in bringing about this summing up until all things have been subjected to Him so that God the Father may be all in all new (Ephesians 1:23; 1 Corinthians 15:25-28).

The psalmist says of the city of God: **“This one was born there”** (Psalm 87:6). We were born in the very heart of God, the architect of the holy city, and we are destined to be the holy city.

It is likely that there was a time when the physical universe did not exist; only the spirit realm existed. But a day came when God called forth Creation or the Universe out of Himself, and it became a physical manifestation of God Himself. It was not created out of nothing but out of the very life and essence of God. Putting sin aside, Creation was meant to be *heaven on earth*, or the spirit realm joined with the physical realm. This is what the new heaven, new earth, and New Jerusalem represent, only New Jerusalem represents God’s people fully in the image and likeness of His Son. When New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven, they will be heaven on earth as God always intended His creation to be.

Dear brethren, do you have a sense within you that this earth as it is today is not your home? Do you feel a tug of war going on in your inner man, as if you were made to be something other than what you are? Well, take heart; you were. You are seated **with Christ in Christ** and destined to bring heaven to earth for all mankind to enter into. Now, this is truly good news!

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09110

***New Jerusalem #20.***

November 7, 2009

***Having the Glory of God***

**(10) And he carried me in spirit onto a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, holy Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, (11) having the glory of God. And its light was like a very precious stone, as a jasper stone, being clear as crystal.**  
(Revelation 21:10-11 LITV)

As we continue in this series, which, without doubt, is one of the most important subjects in all of Scripture, we need to be like John and be carried away *in spirit* in order to see the significance of the holy city as it comes down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.

The holy city is both heavenly and of God. Nothing, absolutely nothing on earth answers to this city, for it is heavenly in character through and through. Everything we see on earth associated with Mystery Babylon is a counterfeit to God's reality. Nothing of this earth and of fallen man and his corruption are part of this city or will ever be part of this city, for it is holy in character and holy in vocation and destiny, wholly set apart unto God as an integral part of His purpose and plan.

It is through New Jerusalem that all of mankind will be restored back to God, for it is the Complement (fullness) of the One who is completing the all in all (Ephesians 1:23), the One who is summing up and reconciling all things in the heavens and on earth (Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:19-20).

Today, all of us who believe in the Lord Jesus are part of this city in some measure, for, individually, we are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:16), and, corporately, **we are connected together, growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom we are being built together for God's dwelling place, in spirit** (Ephesians 2:21-22 CV). We are of God's household and growing up in His beloved Son to be His holy city of glory. We are the city-future.

I say the city-future, for this city has yet to come down out of heaven and has not been completed. Besides, there needs to be a new heaven and a new earth before it is revealed to the rest of mankind in all its glory. It is part of the New Creation when all things will be made new. **It is the New Creation!**

Now, here is the mystery or the secret of New Jerusalem. When we believe on God's Son, we become part of this New Creation, for as Paul wrote: **So that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new** (2 Corinthians 5:17 LITV). Paul simply stated the same words that John heard coming from the One who sits on the throne: **"Behold, I am making all things new"** (Revelation 21:5 NASB).

As an aside, I believe this is one of the proofs that Paul was snatched away to see the same thing that John saw (2 Corinthians 12:1-4), only Paul could not record the words that he heard; instead, in his epistles, especially in the circular letter titled *Ephesians*, he explained the spiritual greatness of what he saw and heard.

So, when Paul wrote that those in Christ are a new creation, it was as if he pointed to New Jerusalem and declared that if you are in Christ, you are in New Jerusalem. But it is even more than this, for you are New Jerusalem, joined together with all the saints of God from down through the centuries who have been called and chosen to be New Jerusalem. You were born in her (Psalm 87:6), and you will be her as the bride of the Lambkin. Think about it!

But where does this New Creation begin? It begins in Christ! Where does glory begin? It begins in Christ!

John declared: **And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth** (John 1:14 NASB). Matthew recorded the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus as He stood on the mount: **And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light** (Matthew 17:2 NASB).

Again, where does the glory of New Jerusalem begin? It begins in Christ! Paul tells us so.

**(24) I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and do fill up the things lacking of the tribulations of the Christ in my flesh for his body, which is the assembly, (25) of which I did become a ministrant according to the dispensation of God, that was given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God, (26) the secret that hath been hid from the ages and from the generations, but now was manifested to his saints, (27) to whom God did will to make known what is the riches of the glory of this secret among the nations, which is Christ in you, the hope of the glory.** (Colossians 1:24-27 YLT)

**When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory.** (Colossians 3:4 ASV)

It was a secret, but now it has been revealed to a people, the saints who are being raised up to be New Jerusalem. The riches of the glory of this secret is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**, and this will come about when He is manifested and the saints are manifested with Him and in Him.

Here is the good news for those in Christ who overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loves us (Romans 8:37): All who conquer through Christ will be manifested as New Jerusalem 1,000 years before the second resurrection and God's Day (2 Peter 3:12; Revelation 20:11-13). The conquerors will be manifested with Christ in glory through the first resurrection and transfiguration (Revelation 20:4-6). The world will not see New Jerusalem as a whole in that day, which will usher in the Lord's Day, the 1000-year Kingdom or Tabernacles Age, but they will see it in the face of the conquerors who will reign with Christ over the nations for the eon (age). All believers will be brought into glory in God's Day, but only the conquering believers will be brought into glory in the Lord's Day.

What is glory? Glory signifies both appearance and character. In appearance, it is likened to light. After all, **God is light** (1 John 1:5). There is no darkness in Him, which also signifies perfect character and essence. New Jerusalem will have no need of the sun or the moon, for it is the fullness of the light of God. **And its light was like a very precious stone, as a jasper stone, being clear as crystal.** From whence is this light shining. It shines from the precious stones. But what or, rather, who are these precious stones? Peter tells us that it begins with Christ, the living stone, choice and precious in the sight of God, and all in Christ are just as He is, living stones being built up as a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:4-5). The very precious stone is Christ the Head and His Body, all joined together – *the Christ*.

Again, what is glory? It is the absolute manifestation of the very essence or nature of God. It is the fullness of God in every way possible. The glory of God is the manifested expression of the full, ultimate, and absolute satisfaction of God found in His Son and all who are conformed to His image. When Jesus was transfigured on the mount, the Father's voice boomed out of heaven: **"This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"** (Matthew 17:5 NASB). The beloved Son is bringing many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10). When the full expression of His Son is manifested through the many sons of God manifested as New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:7), the Father's heart is pleased beyond measure, and when He is well-pleased, there is glory. When the Father is satisfied, there is glory. The Father is fully satisfied when all things are as they were meant to be according His heart and mind. It is as He purposed and planned for His creation. **Glory is God in all and in all new.**

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09182

***New Jerusalem #21.***

December 1, 2009

***Prepared As A Bride of Glory***

**And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, having been prepared as a bride, having been adorned for her Husband.** (Revelation 21:2 LITV)

John heard the mighty proclamation of heaven that **the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready** (Revelation 19:7-9), then he saw the bride of glory coming down out of heaven, readied for her Husband. Based on Hebrew Scripture, John knew that God was after a relationship likened to a husband and a wife. Further, he had heard Jesus speak parables about a wedding feast (Matthew 22:2-14; 25:1-13; Luke 12:35-40) and, undoubtedly, knew that He referred to Himself as the Bridegroom (Matthew 9:15). However, while on Patmos, the veil was lifted, so to speak, and John was given a full view of the completed bride of the Lambkin.

God's desire to be betrothed to a people He calls "My people" (Hosea 2:23) was not new to John or the other apostles. There is a thread woven throughout the Bible from the beginning to the end, and this thread speaks of betrothal in marriage. The Bible begins with a marriage and ends with a marriage, and in the very middle is a love story of a Shulammitte bride.

God declares the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10), and the first thing we see in relation to the first Adam is a joining together of man and woman as one flesh. God put Adam to sleep, removed one of his ribs, fashioned Eve, gave her the breath of life, and then presented her to Adam as his helpmate. Obviously, God must have explained what He had done, for when Adam saw his helper, he knew from whence she came.

**(23) And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. (24) Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.** (Genesis 2:23-24 ASV)

Paul picked up this theme in his mighty Ephesians epistle as he likened the marriage of a man and a woman to Adam and Eve and the mystery of Christ and the ecclesia.

**(22) Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. (23) For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church [ecclesia], being himself the saviour of the body. (24) But as the church [ecclesia] is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. (25) Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church [ecclesia], and gave himself up for it; (26) that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, (27) that he might present the church [ecclesia] to himself a glorious church [ecclesia], not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. (28) Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: (29) for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church [ecclesia]; (30) because we are members of his body. (31) For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. (32) This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church [ecclesia]. (Ephesians 5:22-32 ASV)**

The marriage of a man to a woman is a picture of the marriage of Christ to His body, which is His ecclesia, and the type for this marriage began with Adam and Eve. Adam loved his wife who came forth

from his body. He cared for her and nourished her. In fact, this is the very reason why he followed her in eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The love of God that was put in his heart for his helper demanded that he sin to save her. If you are willing to accept a fresh view on the fall, please see issues #01-0714, November 8, 2007, *Loving Their Own Wives As Their Own Bodies*, and #01-0724, November 13, 2007, *No One Has Greater Love Than This*. The first Adam is a type of the last Adam, but what the first was unable to do, the second has done and will do. He will present to Himself His body full of glory, holy and without blemish. This is the holy city, New Jerusalem, having the glory of God. This is why the mystery is great!

The old covenant between God and the sons of Israel was based on obedience. After the Lord had delivered Israel out of Egypt, He told Moses to tell them: **“Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; (6) and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”** Upon hearing this, the Israelites responded: **“All that the Lord has spoken we will do!”** (Exodus 19:5-6, 8 NASB). With this promise, they were wed or betrothed to the Lord; however, this betrothal was dependent on obedience if it were to continue. In other words, there was a contingency to the marriage, and if the nation did not keep their end of the deal, then God could divorce them, which, in fact, is what happened. Unfortunately for them, the sons of Israel were unfaithful to the Lord, and He gave them a writ of divorce. Jeremiah was a prophet raised up to speak against the treachery of the house of Judah, but he also was called to speak against the faithlessness of the house of Israel (Jeremiah 3:6-15; 31:32). The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah saying: **“Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord, “I remember concerning you the devotion of your youth, the love of your betrothals, your following after Me in the wilderness, through a land not sown”’** (Jeremiah 2:2 NASB).

This was a word to ancient Jerusalem, which, in this case, was a word to all the sons of Israel. The Lord reminded them that their fathers were betrothed to the Lord in first love (Revelation 2:4), but they strayed from this love and instead accused the Lord of injustice (Jeremiah 2:4-8). To the house of Israel and, by inference, to the house of Judah, the Lord pronounced His judgment of their condition: **“And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also”** (Jeremiah 3:8 NASB). Also, Hosea was raised up to pronounce judgment on the house of Israel: **“For she is not my wife, and I am not her husband”** (Hosea 2:2 NASB).

This is based on the old covenant, but the new covenant is entirely different, for it is based on God’s word, His promise and oath based on His Son, not on man’s word and obedience of the flesh. God has promised: **“I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they will be My people”** (Hebrews 8:10 NASB). In writing to the Hebrew believers, Paul merely quoted the Lord as He spoke through Jeremiah declaring that He would make a new covenant with the sons of Israel [i.e., both houses] (Jeremiah 31:27-38). This is the promise to the true spiritual Israel, the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ. Hosea also adds to this promise.

**(16) “It will come about in that day,” declares the LORD, “That you will call Me Ishi [my husband] and will no longer call Me Baali [my master]. ... (19) “I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion, (20) and I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD. ... (23) ... and I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they will say, ‘You are my God!’”** (Hosea 2:16-20, 23 NASB)

Returning to Paul, he knew the promises of God in light of the old covenant that had been made obsolete and the new covenant that is based on better promises and the power of an indestructible life. With this in mind, Paul wrote to the brethren to remind them that **they were betrothed to another, to Him who was raised from the dead** (Romans 7:4), and that he had **betrothed them to one husband**, so that he might present them to Christ as a pure virgin (2 Corinthians 11:2).

We could say that Paul connected the dots for us based on the word of the Lord that came through the ancient prophets. But John saw! He saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, a people that Christ will present to Himself without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish. He saw the bride of glory.

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.**  
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

#03-09183

***New Jerusalem #22.  
Crystal-Clear Jasper Stone***

December 4, 2009

**Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.** (Revelation 21:11 NASB)

**(4) And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God.... (6) For this is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone....”** [Isaiah 28:16] (1 Peter 2:4, 6 NASB)

**(5) You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood .... (9) But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession [Exodus 19:5-6] ... (10) for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.** [Hosea 1:6, 9; 2:1, 23] (1 Peter 2:5, 9-10 NASB)

In Scripture, the word *stone* is used as a metaphor referring to Christ and His body, which is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, a dwelling of God in spirit (Ephesians 2:21-22). If you have not figured it out by now, this is New Jerusalem.

The earthly temples associated with the ancient nation of Israel, especially the temples built in Jerusalem, were made of stone and wood, but God’s celestial temple is made of living stones, that is, of a people conformed to the image of the Son of God, *the* precious, choice, living Stone. Further, the stone also is used as a metaphor for Christ’s kingdom that has begun to and will fully crush all the kingdoms of men, which are summed up and typified as **Mystery Babylon, the great city** (Revelation 18). Daniel saw it as **the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth** (Daniel 2:35 NASB). Thus, we call **the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ** (Revelation 11:15) **the Stone Kingdom**.

The builders of the earthly Jerusalem and its temple, who were called to be the kingdom of God on earth, rejected the very Stone of God. They not only rejected God’s Son but also refused to place Him as the corner stone of God’s kingdom on earth; consequently, they have been disqualified from inheriting the Stone Kingdom in the coming eon. As further prophetic proof of this rejection, it is a fascinating fact that the Great Pyramid of Egypt is missing the top stone. The good news is that Zechariah prophesied of the bringing forth of **the top stone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it”** (Zechariah 4:7).

Much could be said about the jasper stone in relation to New Jerusalem, but let us look at four points.

First, the English word *jasper* is of Persian origin and literally means “lord of treasure.” This reminds me of the Lord’s teaching on His kingdom: **“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also** (Matthew 6:20-21 NASB). The Lord is our true treasure, and His life is summed up in New Jerusalem, our heavenly treasure.

Second, the jasper gem is green in color. It is a green precious stone.

**Green speaks of life.** For example, plant life is green, and it provides sustenance and oxygen for mankind. Thus, there is not only life in this stone, but life comes forth from it as well. We could say that it is life, or more explicitly, it is the life of the One who was dead but is alive forevermore (Revelation 1:18). It signifies **resurrection and immortal life**, and ultimately, **the restoration of all things**.

**Green speaks of God’s covenant.** After the flood, God covenanted with the earth that He would not destroy it through a flood ever again. As a sign and a remembrance of His covenant with the earth, God

placed a bow in the cloud (Genesis 9:11-17). We assume this was a multi-colored rainbow; however, it may have been a bright-green color like an emerald, as revealed in John's Patmos vision.

**(1) After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven.... (2) Immediately I was in the Spirit [in spirit]; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. (3) And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.** (Revelation 4:1-3 NASB [CV])

When he was snatched away in spirit, John beheld the throne of God, which speaks of ruling and judging according to the divine law of God, which is signified by fire, which is red in color. It is called **the fiery law of God** or **the law of fire** (Deuteronomy 33:2 ASV/KJKV/LITV). Both Daniel and John saw the fire of God coming forth from the throne; Daniel saw a river of fire proceeding from the throne to judge as the court sat and books were opened (Daniel 7:9-10), and John saw the river of fire proceeding from the Great White Throne to form a lake of fire to judge as books were opened (Revelation 20:14-15). They saw the same throne and judgment. Jesus Himself links the law (will) to fire in the parable of the judgment of the slave who knew his **master's will** (law) but did not act upon it. In relation to the master's will, Jesus declared: **"I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled"** (Luke 12:47-49). In other words, the master's will or the law of God is likened to fire, which, again, is red in color.

Returning to John's vision of the throne, the One sitting on the throne appeared like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance. Sardius is thought to be the precious ruby stone, which is red in color. The rainbow was like an emerald in appearance, which signifies a bright-green color. Thus, the One on the throne is likened to both green and red, and the rainbow is likened to bright green. Based on the color of sardius, the One on the throne is seen as judging according to the divine law (fiery law) of God. But, on what basis will God judge? Will He judge with cruelty and seek vengeance through destruction? The answer is in the color green, which not only signifies life and God's covenant with the earth but also how God will judge. He will judge in mercy. Green speaks of mercy, which leads to life.

**Green speaks of in judgment there is mercy.** God will judge, but in judgment there is mercy! Habakkuk cried out: **In wrath remember mercy** (Habakkuk 3:2). Paul declared: **For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all** (Romans 11:32 NASB). And the Lord has promised: **"For you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."**

The rainbow around the throne of God is a reminder to God of His covenant with the earth and all mankind that His judgment is not for destruction, but for correction. He will judge, but in His judgment is mercy, for He is **the Savior of all mankind** (1 Timothy 4:10) and **will all men to be saved** (1 Timothy 2:4). God has purposed to be all in all new, and, in His mercy and love, He will be.

Third, jasper was the last gem of the high priest's breastplate (Exodus 28:20), but it is the very essence of New Jerusalem and the first stone in its foundation (Revelation 21:19). This is a fulfillment of Jesus' word that **the last shall be first, and the first last** (Matthew 20:16; 19:30; Mark 10:31). The first high priesthood according to the order of Aaron (Levi) has been made obsolete and replaced with a new priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7). New Jerusalem is this new order.

Fourth, the jasper stone is crystal clear, which means that it is perfectly transparent with no flaw or blemish. This speaks of the divine nature of God, the life of God that is absolutely clear, perfect, and true in every respect, barring none. There is nothing hidden in this city of crystal-clear jasper stone, which means that New Jerusalem has no mixture, no falsehood, no contradiction, no imitation, no deception, no lie, no abomination, and no darkness in her whatsoever. She is absolutely perfect life!

She is the mystery revealed, the wife of the Lambkin, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, holy and blameless (Ephesians 5:27). New Jerusalem is perfect, and the judgments that come forth through her are perfect. She is the standard (law) by which all in heaven and on earth will be ruled and judged (1 Corinthians 6:2-3). She is the complement of the One whose appearance is like jasper and sardius. She is costly, having been purchased by the blood of the Lamb, and a brilliant manifestation of the mercy of God and His unconditional love based on His new covenant in and through His Son.

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09184

***New Jerusalem #23.***

December 7, 2009

***A Great and High Wall***

**Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.** (Revelation 21:11 NASB)

**It had a great and high wall.... The material of the wall was jasper....** (Revelation 21:12, 18 NASB)

The wall is quite prominent in John's vision of the great and glorious city, New Jerusalem. In fact, the wall was the first thing that John saw as the city came down out of heaven. As he gazed upon this wonder, John likened the city to a very costly stone of crystal-clear jasper, and then he said that the material of the great high wall was jasper. Thus, his first view of the city was of the wall, which, according to angelic measurements, had a height of 144 cubits or 72 yards or 252 feet. In other words, the wall was so high that when the city first came into John's view, all he saw was the wall. Then, he saw that the city was made of pure gold, which means that he saw beyond the wall.

Much is associated with the wall, such as names, gates, stones, and the number 12; however, a discussion of these must be reserved for subsequent issues. In this issue, let us concentrate on the meaning and character of the great high wall.

First, what is the purpose of a wall? Simply, **a wall demarcates an area** and preserves that which is in the area. In a geo-governmental way, a wall around a city **provides protection** of what lies within the city, **serves as a boundary** to keep out all that does not belong in the city, and **controls or limits** what is allowed into the city through its gates. There are no open borders to allow aliens to enter illegally. In other words, a requirement must be met for any and all to enter the city. The wall signifies that the city is governed; there is governmental order and rule. However, a wall in itself does not speak to the character and nature of the city and its government. To understand this in relation to New Jerusalem, we need to look at John's other descriptors of the wall.

Second, **the material of the wall is jasper**. Earlier in his Patmos vision, John saw One sitting on the throne who appeared like a jasper stone. In other words, the wall speaks of Christ Himself. He alone is the way into the city; there is no other way but through the Son of God who is **our salvation. God Himself is our salvation** (Psalm 68:19 YLT). Referring to Jerusalem as a prophetic view of New Jerusalem, Isaiah declared: **"You will call your walls salvation"** (Isaiah 60:18 NASB).

I trust that by now anyone who has kept up with this series knows that entering the city refers to being the city or becoming part of the city. Again, New Jerusalem is about organic living stones (i.e., flesh and bones people), not about inorganic stones (i.e., bricks and mortar or physical building materials). I apologize for repeating this point, but if you miss it, then you miss the entire significance and glorious meaning of New Jerusalem, which is the destiny of all who believe and, ultimately, all mankind.

Thus, the wall of New Jerusalem speaks of salvation that only comes through the Lord who is our salvation, as well as our life. Clearly, only the saved will enter the city, or, we could say, only the saved are the city, for it represents a people called "My people" and "My sons." This is why the wall is high and great. A great price was paid for this city, and the material of the wall signifies this cost.

Third, the wall is crystal-clear jasper, which could be called "see-through green." Green stands for **life**; therefore, the wall signifies that only life enters the city, and this life is none other than the life of the Son of God. We could call it **the wall of life** that signifies Christ, for **Christ is our life** (Colossians 3:4) and **the promise of life** (2 Timothy 1:1).

Fourth, the wall represents a **wall of fire**, which is **the fiery law of God**. The law stands for the righteousness of God.

**(1) ... there was a man with a measuring line in his hand. (2) So I said, “Where are you going?” And he said to me, “To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide it is and how long it is.” (3) And behold, the angel who was speaking with me was going out, and another angel was coming out to meet him, (4) and said to him, “Run, speak to that young man, saying, ‘Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it. (5) For I,’ declares the LORD, ‘will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.’”** (Zechariah 2:1-5 NASB)

The ancient prophets often referred to Jerusalem, but we need to realize that their vision was not restricted to the ancient city. Simply, they saw New Jerusalem as well, even though they did not refer to it as such. So, as we read the prophets, we need to discern if their words apply to the historical earthly city or the future heavenly city, or both.

In the above verses, Zechariah saw New Jerusalem. Notice the similarity to the angel that measured New Jerusalem in John’s vision (Revelation 21:15). But there is something curious about Zechariah’s vision, for the word went forth that Jerusalem would be inhabited without walls, and yet, she would have a wall of fire around her. Actually, Zechariah provides us with the best evidence that the wall John saw was not to be taken literally and physically. The wall of fire refers to the fiery law of God that is seen in type as the sons of Israel received the law at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

**And he said: The Lord came from Sinai, and from Seir he rose up to us: he hath appeared from mount Pharan, and with him thousands of saints. In his right hand a fiery law.** (Deuteronomy 33:2 DRB)

New Jerusalem speaks of the saints in the right hand of God and the fiery law of God going forth from the saints. Under the new covenant, God writes His laws on the hearts of His people (Hebrews 8:10); therefore, they become a manifestation of His laws, for they are not written on organic dead stones but on organic living stones. The saints are in the right hand of the Lord, and the law is in them.

What does the law represent? It represents righteousness, for it speaks of what is right in the sight of God. Consequently, the wall speaks of righteousness, which makes the fiery wall a moral boundary that keeps out all the lawless; only the righteous can enter the city. But again, keep in mind that this refers to a people. In other words, the people are righteous, and they are bound by God’s righteousness or, if you will, by His moral law. There is no unrighteousness in these people whatsoever, for it is all outside the city (Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15).

But again, even in this regard, the wall speaks of Christ, for the Lord our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6) is the wall, and those conformed to His image are conformed to His righteousness as well; they are righteous through and through. Isaiah tells us so: **He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness** (Isaiah 61:10 NASB). Further, Isaiah declares: **For Jerusalem’s sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning. The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name which the mouth of the LORD will designate.** (Isaiah 62:1-2 NASB). The new name is New Jerusalem.

All of this speaks of the meaning of the wall. This is no literal wall around a physical city, for the saints are the very wall of the city; they are the city. This city of people is not a fixed, singular city sitting on earth; it is a mobile city of people, for it is **inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it**. The cattle means the city is related to the whole earth. The city is wherever the multitude of saints are, for each saint is a wall of fire, a fiery law in the right hand of God, and of righteousness, and of salvation. Each saint is an image of the Son of God, and wherever that saint is on the new earth in God’s Day, or even on our present earth in the oncoming eon, so is New Jerusalem. Another way of looking at the wall is that it is the very body of Christ in appearance and in character and in essence. When the nations see the Son of God manifested in the sons of God, they see the wall of New Jerusalem, and nothing unrighteous will ever penetrate this wall.

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09185

***New Jerusalem #24.***

December 14, 2009

## ***The Gates of Praise & Righteousness***

**“But you will call your walls salvation, and your gates praise.”** (Isaiah 60:18 NASB)

**(10) I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (11) For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.** (Isaiah 61:10-11 NASB)

**(6) On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; (7) and give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.** (Isaiah 62:6-7 NASB)

Starting in Isaiah 60, the Lord began to speak through the prophet about New Jerusalem. He did not call it new, but He did say that it would be called by a new name. As we have seen, this new name is New Jerusalem. We have already seen that its walls are called salvation, but there also are twelve gates of pearls in the walls, and these are called praise.

**(12) It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. (13) There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. ... (21) And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl.** (Revelation 21:12-13, 21 NASB)

The gates of New Jerusalem are called praise because gates speak of entrance, and all who enter into this glorious city will sing endless praises to God. All who become the city will praise God for all that He has done. Those who are helped by the city will praise God for His goodness, His mercy, and His love. When all creation beholds the city, it will rejoice and praise God. New Jerusalem is a city of praise.

All who enter the city to become the city must enter through the gates, for the walls are high and impenetrable. As they pass through the gates, meaning they are conquerors, they are filled with praise.

But there is more, for the Greek word for *gate* can refer to a *portal* or *vestibule*, that is, a building enclosing a gate, and each gate is described as a single pearl. I believe that we are not to focus on the gates as round pearls taken from a mollusk but as a structure made of pearl. In other words, our attention is to be drawn to the material itself and its color.

In this case, the gates that John saw were the color of beautiful white pearls. White speaks of character and, most specifically, righteousness, for the conquerors of Sardis are worthy to walk with the Lord, for they have not soiled their garments; thus they will be clothed in white garments (Revelation 3:4-5).

When the great proclamation thunders from heaven that the bride (i.e., New Jerusalem) has made herself ready, she is given **fine linen, bright and clean, for the fine linen is the righteous acts**

**of the saints** (Revelation 19:7-8). Consequently, the gates of pearl are **the gates of righteousness**, and they signify that only the righteous enter the city, and only the righteous will ever be the city.

**Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the LORD.** (Psalm 118:19 NASB)

**Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter, the one that remains faithful.** (Isaiah 26:2 NASB)

**Blessed are those who wash their robes** [i.e., white garments of righteousness], **so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.** (Revelation 22:14 NASB)

The righteous and holy ones will **enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise** (Psalm 100:4).

We should always be mindful of the meaning of the word *righteous*. It simply means doing what is right in the sight of God. It speaks of manifesting God's perfect will. New Jerusalem not only manifests the perfect will of God, but it is also righteousness itself; that is, it is the will of God. When New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven, it comes down as the righteousness of God and settles on the new earth to make the very character of the new earth righteous. Isaiah gives us a glimpse of this.

**Drip down, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds pour down righteousness; let the earth open up and salvation bear fruit, and righteousness spring up with it. I, the LORD, have created it.** (Isaiah 45:8 NASB)

New Jerusalem will be snatched away in clouds to meet the Lord in air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). The conquerors will be like the clouds, and they will pour down righteousness on earth, bringing salvation so that righteousness will spring up with it. This is the glory of New Jerusalem that will bring praise and righteousness to mankind.

Now, John saw twelve gates of praise and of righteousness. The number 12 will be taken up separately in a subsequent issue, but, at this point, it is appropriate to point out that, biblically, the number signifies the perfection of government or governmental perfection. In other words, New Jerusalem speaks of God's perfect government operating in and through His people. One commentator has noted that the number 12 also represents the creature in permanent communion with its Creator. Thus, only those in perfect communion with God are part of the holy city. This brings to mind the **law of the house**.

**"This is the law of the house: its entire area on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house."** (Ezekiel 43:12 NASB)

**Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."** (Exodus 3:5 NASB)

The law of the house is the law of holiness, and only the holy are part of the holy city. New Jerusalem is holy ground, and all who are qualified to become part of the holy city are holy. As it is written: **"Be holy," "because I am holy"** Lev. 19:2 (1 Peter 1:16 LITV).

Dear brethren, do you long to live in endless praise? Do you long to be holy, for He is holy? Oh, by faith, we can declare we are holy, but a day is coming when we will manifest holiness in our very being so that the angels and the rest of mankind will see. The same goes for righteousness. Do you long for righteousness, not simply an imputed righteousness but to be righteous through and through? Well then, let us long to enter through the gates of New Jerusalem.

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09186

***New Jerusalem #25.***

December 17, 2009

***The Pearl of Great Value***

**(12) It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, ... and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. ... (21) And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl.** (Revelation 21:12, 21 NASB)

The last issue dealt with the twelve gates of praise, which are described as single pearls, which, in turn, speak of righteousness. The twelve gates of praise are also the twelve gates of righteousness, and all who enter into New Jerusalem to become the city are righteous, and all that they do is righteous. Simply, New Jerusalem speaks of what is right in the sight of God and of the perfect will of God. New Jerusalem is the manifestation of God's righteousness and will.

However, there is more to be seen regarding the twelve gates of pearl. Each gate is described as a single pearl. Obviously, the pearls in view are much larger than the natural pearl that comes from the sea and, most likely, were not seen by John as a round orb, for this would be a most unnatural gate. Most likely, the gates of pearl were seen by John as structures or buildings in the wall. In other words, the gates were like portals or vestibules made of a substance that looked like pearl.

To me, modern-day renderings of the gates are rather comical. Many depict St. Peter, with wings all aflutter and clouds all about, standing at the "pearly gates" with clip board in hand, checking off names of people who are allowed entrance into the city of golden streets. Others sing fanciful songs about meeting their departed loved ones at the gates. This might be good for songs and raising sentiment, but it is not the truth of the word of God.

To add to our understanding of the gates of pearl, we need to keep in mind that written on the gates are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. At the outset, I feel that my work is cut out for me in trying to explain this because so many Christians have been taught that, whenever they see the word *Israel*, they are to think of the Jews according to the flesh, especially the ones in the present state of Israel. If you have followed my writings, you know that that there is a difference between the apparent Jew (circumcised *flesh*) and the true Jew (circumcised *heart*), and the historic earthly Israel and the true Israel of God. The true spiritual Israel of God is not based on the flesh but on the spirit and the heart. Jacob did not become Israel based on his flesh, that is, he was not born Israel; rather, he became Israel when his heart was changed to see that God rules. Consequently, the true Jew and the true Israel refer to ones who are born from above, having the seed of God residing within them (1 John 3:9), having submitted their lives to the rule of God.

Now, with this brief background, let us consider the parable of the merchant seeking fine pearls.

**(45) Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, (46) and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.** (Matthew 13:45-46 NASB)

When Jesus walked this earth, He said: "**I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel**" (Matthew 15:24 NASB). Many people fail to understand what Jesus meant by this. He was not referring to them as many refer to the lost (i.e., unsaved) today. He was referring to the fact that after Solomon's death, the kingdom was split into two houses (1 Kings 12:16-20), the house of Judah [tribes of Judah and Benjamin] and the house of Israel [the remaining ten tribes with emphasis on the house of Joseph because Joseph was given the birthright and thus the name of Israel (1 Chronicles 5:1)]. Judah was taken captive by the Babylonians, but a remnant of the house of Judah eventually returned to Jerusalem, so that when Jesus arrived on the scene, they were not lost, for their identity was known. In

fact, most of the house of Judah rejected the very King of Judah and crucified Him. The true house of Judah, the good figs, was (and still is) made up of all who accepted (accept) Jesus as the King of Judah. However, in 723 BC, the Assyrians laid siege to the house of Israel as they resided in Samaria, and from there they were dispersed and their national identity lost. They did not cease to exist nor were they condemned to some fictitious hell created by the imagination of man. Simply, they ceased being identified as the house of Israel.

Consequently, Jesus stood in the midst of the Judeans and proclaimed that He had come to seek the house of Israel that had been split away from Judah and dispersed among the nations. The fact of the matter is that the whereabouts of the house of Israel was known. The issue at hand was to get the word to them that Messiah had come, and reunification with Judah was now possible, even if it were not to take place for at least another 2,000 years when Christ comes a second time.

The house of Israel spread north through the Caucasian Mountains to become known as the Caucasians. They occupied much of Europe and spread to the British Isles, becoming known as the Anglo-Saxons and the Celts. All of these names should catch our attention, for these tribes migrated not only throughout Europe but also to North America to become Canada and the United States, and to South Africa and Australia, and ultimately throughout the whole earth. Many of us, especially in North America, are descendants of these tribes.

It was the Lord who caused their loss of identity, for He sold both Judah and Israel to the nations due to their harlotry and rebellion (Judges 2:14; Nehemiah 5:8; Isaiah 50:1). Joseph being sold into bondage by his brothers is a type of the Lord selling His brethren of Israel to the nations. But we need to be clear that the Lord sold both Judah and Israel. A remnant of the house of Judah returned to Jerusalem and its identity was known; nevertheless, they fell under the rule of other nations, even to this day.

Now, returning to the parable of the pearl, the Lord is the merchant, and He is the one who sold all to purchase the pearl of great value. This may be a stretch for some, but the selling took place when the Lord sold ancient Israel to the nations and hid it among the nations. A pearl is formed by a mollusk when a piece of sand or grit is embedded inside the shellfish. To deal with this irritant, the mollusk secretes a pearly substance to enshroud the sand until it becomes the exquisite pearl, having been formed in the sea in a dark, hidden place. The sea often signifies nations. Thus, Israel was cast into the sea (sold to the nations), hidden in the dark places (among the nations), as the Lord went about taking the grit and making it into something of great value through trials, tribulations, and discipline. On the individual level, it is what Jesus called losing the soul-life, which refers to sanctification.

But notice that the merchant found and bought one pearl of great value. This refers to the fact that **all Israel shall be saved** (Romans 11:26), and both Judah (the King) and Israel (His Kingdom) shall be reunited as one. The Israel that shall be saved is comprised of all who have been born from above.

Some might question: Do you mean to tell me that the church is Israel and that we are associated with the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel? Yes, I do mean this. Have you ever asked the Lord for the name of the tribe you are associated with? Try it! God is not forming two separate entities, one called "the church" and the other called "Israel." No; they are one and the same. He is doing one work on one line in, through, and for His Son. We are all being built up as a new creation in Christ, and this new creation is the true Israel of God, New Jerusalem, the dwelling of God in spirit.

The Lord started with the ecclesia (church) in the wilderness (Acts 7:38), which is the Passover church; then He proceeded to call forth the ecclesia (church) from the good figs of Judah and from among the nations, which is the body of Christ. For the last 2,000 years, this ecclesia has been the Pentecostal church. The Lord has placed His spirit within a born-from-above people so that His laws can be written on their hearts, which is the meaning and purpose of Pentecost. But the Lord is not finished, for there is yet a third ecclesia, the Tabernacles church, which is made up of the immortal conquerors of Christ, the sons of God and the sons of glory. This ecclesia is **the complement of the One completing the all in all** (Ephesians 1:23 CV).

So, the parable of the pearl of great value speaks of one pearl, meaning all Israel is united, which speaks of both kingship and sonship. However, New Jerusalem has twelve single pearls to signify that all Israel shall be saved; none will be left out. Thus, New Jerusalem is the full complement of the Son of God.

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09187

***New Jerusalem #26.***

December 21, 2009

***The Foundation Stones***

**And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.** (Revelation 21:14 NASB)

The last two issues of this series considered the gates and the pearl of great value, which speak of the true Israel of God that lost its identity among the nations but reappears as part of New Jerusalem. However, there is another reason for having the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel written on the gates, and it is discovered in the twelve foundation stones having the names of the twelve apostles written on them. The two are connected in what Paul called **the one new man or the one new humanity**. In a few more issues, I will close this series with a vision I was given of New Jerusalem that revealed to me that it is, indeed, the one new man.

I believe that Paul offers more spiritual explanation of New Jerusalem than all other contributors to Scripture, particularly in his *Ephesians* epistle.

**(11) Wherefore, remember that once you, the nations in flesh – who are termed ‘Uncircumcision’ by those termed ‘Circumcision,’ in flesh, made by hands – (12) that you were, in that era, apart from Christ, being alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and guests of the promise covenants, having no expectation, and without God in the world. (13) Yet now, in Christ Jesus, you, who once are far off, are become near by the blood of Christ. (14) For He is our Peace, Who makes both one, and razes the central wall of the barrier (15) (the enmity in His flesh), nullifying the law of precepts in decrees, that He should be creating the two, in Himself, into one new humanity [one new man], making peace; (16) and should be reconciling both in one body to God through the cross, killing the enmity in it. (17) And, coming, He brings the evangel of peace to you, those afar, and peace to those near, (18) for through Him we both have had the access, in one spirit, to the Father. (19) Consequently, then, no longer are you guests and sojourners, but are fellow-citizens of the saints and belong to God’s family, (20) being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the capstone of the corner being Christ Jesus Himself, (21) in Whom the entire building, being connected together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord: (22) in Whom you, also, are being built together for God’s dwelling place, in spirit.** (Ephesians 2:11-22 CV [NASB])

In these verses, Paul had two groups in view. The first group was Israel of the flesh, that is, those who were under the law and were circumcised in the flesh. By using the name of Israel, Paul was referring to the genealogical sons of Israel, the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel that are written on the gates of New Jerusalem. The second group consisted of everyone outside of Israel, that is, the nations outside the law and the physical requirement of circumcision. The two groups were separated, with the latter not granted access to God; they were without God in the world. However, in Christ Jesus, the two groups were made into one new man or one new humanity. In other words, in Christ, there is no division; just unity, peace, and reconciliation. Both groups have been made into one body to God through the cross. Consequently, there is no longer a separate entity called Israel and another called the Church. They are one and the same, so that, in Christ, when we refer to Israel, we are referring to the true spiritual Israel of God, which is also the Church of God and the Body of Christ. They must be one and the same if they are to be one new man with no division.

Further, the two have the same access to the Father through one spirit, which speaks of the dwelling of God in spirit. There is one dwelling of God, not two. All from the two groups that are now in Christ are

of God's family, and all are being built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, joined together in Christ, growing to become a holy temple in the Lord.

But there is more, for Israel of the flesh was first given the law, which speaks of God's demand for righteousness. However, none is righteous, not one; so ancient Israel according to the flesh fell short of the glory of God, just as the rest of mankind falls short. They were to have God's laws written on their hearts, which would have led to righteousness, but they failed to listen to God at Mt. Sinai; instead, they feared for their lives and received the law etched in stone. This was the old covenant.

However, under the new covenant, God has taken it upon Himself to write His laws upon the hearts of His people (Hebrews 8:10). Through His Son, the Lamb slain and the King-Priest raised up according to the order of Melchizedek, He has laid a new foundation based on faith and grace. **Grace is the foundation of righteousness, and by grace, God produces righteousness in man, specifically in the one new man.** Paul refers to grace about 90 times in his epistles, and this comes from one who described himself as blameless as to the righteousness which is in the law but also one who cast it all aside when he was made to see that righteousness can only come through faith in Christ, **the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith** (Philippians 3:6, 9).

The names of the sons of Israel written on the gates and the names of the apostles written on the foundation stones signify that law and grace are united in New Jerusalem, with grace being the foundation of righteousness that is expressed through the divine law written on hearts. Law is not done away with; rather, it is taken to a much higher level, for it is spiritual in nature (Romans 7:14).

Jesus said: **"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill"** (Matthew 5:17 NASB). The fulfillment is found in New Jerusalem, for the holy city is the one new man, which is the embodiment of the Son of God Himself.

Thus, John saw the gates with the names of the tribes of the sons of Israel written on them. These gates are made of single pearls of great value, no longer lost but found by Christ the Merchant. He paid a mighty price to save all of Israel, both of the old covenant and the new covenant. Those that had been under the law and the physical requirements, and those that had been under grace and the spiritual requirements are united as one new man *in Christ*. They all are **the new creation in Christ**, having become **the righteousness of God in Him** (2 Corinthians 5:17, 21).

All who enter New Jerusalem enter by way of the gates of righteousness demanded under the law of God; however, God has made the way to enter through His Son who is the Righteous One and whose righteousness is New Jerusalem.

Then, John saw the twelve foundation stones with the names of the twelve apostles written on them. This is the very same foundation that Paul said the one new man was being built upon in Christ. The foundation is built by grace that produces righteousness in hearts. New Jerusalem signifies that the grace of God will produce many living stones built up as a spiritual house.

**(4) And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, (5) you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.** (1 Peter 2:4-5 NASB)

Finally, John described the foundation stones as the most precious and beautiful stones on earth—vibrant stones that express every color imaginable. Although these stones are identified with the apostles, there should be no doubt that they reflect all the living stones of New Jerusalem.

**(19) The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; (20) the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.** (Revelation 21:19-20 NASB)

Dear brethren, I trust that by now you see the greatness of New Jerusalem, and that there is a mighty work going on inside of you to make you into this holy city, to conform you to the image of the Son.

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09188

***New Jerusalem #27.***

December 23, 2009

***Twelve***

**(15) And he speaking with me had a golden reed, that he may measure the city, and its gates, and its wall. (16) And the city lies four cornered, even its length as much as the width also. And he measured the city with the reed at twelve thousand [12,000] stadia; its length and width and height are equal. (17) And he measured its wall, a hundred and forty four [144 (12x12)] cubits, a measure of a man, which is of an angel. (Revelation 21:15-17 LITV)**

Scripture is replete with numbers that signify spiritual truths. In regard to New Jerusalem, an angel is charged with measuring the city. God is very precise in all that He does, and it is not unusual for Him to give very precise instructions, especially when it comes to building things based on spiritual truths. Moses' tent of meeting and Solomon's temple were built based on precise measurements. Ezekiel's temple is described using precise measurements. Zechariah saw an angel with a plumb-line in hand so that he could measure Jerusalem, which speaks prophetically of New Jerusalem (Zechariah 2:1-5). When we come to the Revelation, John himself was given a measuring rod like a staff to **measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it** (Revelation 11:1).

I have read some commentators who insist that, since all the structures that are measured in Scripture were literally physical structures, we must view the measurements of New Jerusalem as literal as well, which means that we must interpret Revelation 21-22 as depicting a literal physical city built like a huge cube or a mountain that spans 1,500 miles on all sides. But is this how we are to view New Jerusalem? I do not believe so. We must understand what New Jerusalem signifies spiritually, for God is building a spiritual dwelling made of people, not things.

In God's Day, which is comprised of the eons of the future, when the nations see the sons of God, they will see and touch all that New Jerusalem represents in spirit, and, wherever the sons are, so is New Jerusalem. In other words, New Jerusalem is not some static, immovable object on earth but a people that fill the new earth and, we should add, the new heaven with all that New Jerusalem signifies, which is summed up as the divine life of God manifested through His Son and the many immortal sons of God.

Does this mean that there will be nothing in the physical realm that answers to the heart of God and His divine life? Most definitely not! The new earth and new heaven will be so spectacular in the physical sense that it would take our breath away if we were given a glimpse of it now. Poetically speaking, when the physical and spirit realms kiss, it will be beyond our wildest imagination.

What I have been endeavoring to do with this series is to see beyond the physical and touch upon the spiritual truths signified by New Jerusalem. Even so, the more I have dug into this marvelous subject, the more I have realized that I am only touching the tip of the iceberg. New Jerusalem is portrayed throughout Scripture in types and shadows, just as the Son of God is, for New Jerusalem is the manifestation of the Son, our Lord Jesus.

When we come to the measurements of the holy city, one number and its multiples stand out; it is the number 12, which is one of God's perfect numbers. One commentator has stated that the number 12 symbolizes God's perfect, divine accomplishment actively manifested, and shows a completeness of growth or administration. Most commentators agree that it signifies governmental perfection and divine authority. Thus, the number 12 has to do with the rule of God in His creation. The most obvious example of this is discovered in the sun that rules the day and the moon and stars that rule the night.

They course their way through the universe completing a full year of 12 months (12 x 30) by passing through the 12 signs of the Zodiac. This is the hand of God. Some say that God has encoded the heavens. I believe they are correct, for it was God who asked Job who made the Bear, Orion, and Pleiades (Job 9:9; also see 38:31). God did!

Now, when we consider the number 12 as it appears in relationship to New Jerusalem, we discover that it is associated with names, tribes, angels, apostles, gates, foundation stones, pearls, and fruit, as well as the measurements of the city. Thus, there are 12 gates of 12 pearls with 12 names on them, the names of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel, and with 12 angels at the gates; there are 12 foundations (precious stones) with the names of the 12 apostles on them; and there are 12 kinds of fruit for every month of the year, meaning for 12 months. The city proper is laid out as a cube (equal in length, breadth, and height) with each side being 12,000 furlongs, and its wall being 144 (12 x 12) cubits high. In human measurements, the city encompasses 2,415 kilometers on all sides, including its height. Dimensionally, this is mighty impressive, and spiritually, it is even more impressive, for it means that God, through His Son, is doing a mighty inclusive work. His building project is huge!

Given the symbolism of the number 12, we see that every aspect of New Jerusalem speaks of divine perfection and authority, as well as a completeness of growth, administration, and government.

The holy city represents God's perfect government. It is perfect in its righteousness as seen in the gates of righteousness, which will exude praise as if praise were in the very fiber and pores of the city. The government of God is righteous, and when people experience the perfect righteous rule of God, they too will be unable to hold back their praise of God and of the Lambkin.

God's perfect government is seen in the walls that represent the fiery law of God written on hearts and not on stones or in books that gather dust on bookshelves. Again, the law stands for the righteousness of God.

Dear brethren, I realize that, in our day, many people, including Christians, want no part of God's law, for many prefer man's law or no law at all, which is lawlessness, which, by the way, is sin (1 John 3:4). But, can you imagine a people with God's fiery law written on their hearts (Hebrews 8:10) so that they know, do, and administer God's law with the same ease that our physical hearts beat effortlessly and without direction from us for the entire span of our life in mortal bodies? Can you imagine living in a world where there is perfect government administered through perfect righteousness? This is the meaning of the number 12 as signified in New Jerusalem.

Considering the dimensions of New Jerusalem, we see the number 12,000 assigned to each side of this cube. In some ways, the unit of measurement does not matter; nevertheless, in the physical sense, the city would occupy 60% of the United States' land mass, stretching from Maine to Florida and from the Atlantic Ocean to Colorado. But we miss the point if we focus on the literal unit. The number 12,000 appears 12 times in Revelation 7 as John saw the four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, until 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel were sealed on their foreheads. The total number of those sealed was 144,000, the same number seen in Revelation 14 pertaining to **the first fruits to God and to the Lambkin** (Revelation 14:4). The number 144 also represents the height of the wall. Putting all of this together seems to indicate that the numbers 12,000 and 144 represent the full complement of the number of people that will be included in New Jerusalem. In other words, 12,000 and 144 signify that God will harvest a full crop of conquerors, the ones He calls "My son." He will not fail to bring in a full and complete harvest, all to His glory.

But we need to be cognizant, of what I believe to be fact, that New Jerusalem is not the endpoint in regard to mankind, as if once the full complement of first fruit sons is harvested, the rest of mankind forever will remain outside of New Jerusalem. Revelation 21-22 is not a view of eternity; rather, it is a view of the start of the eighth day, consisting of other eons to follow, that will progress until the consummation of the eons, when, at this point, God's purpose is finally fulfilled and God the Father is all in all new (1 Corinthians 15:28; Revelation 21:5). In order for God to fulfill His purpose, all mankind and all creation must become New Jerusalem. **This is the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09189

***New Jerusalem #28.***

December 25, 2009

## ***The Throne of God and the Lambkin***

**And he shows me a river of water of life, resplendent as crystal, issuing out of the throne of God and the Lambkin....** (Revelation 22:1 CV)

**(3) There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb [Lambkin] will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; (4) they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.** (Revelation 22:3-4 NASB [CV])

As his Patmos vision came to an end, John saw the throne of God and the Lambkin.

Now, most people probably think that in the midst of the city is a throne, and God the Father and His Son have sole possession of it. In fact, most probably picture God and His Son sitting on a great throne. However, we need to be reminded that we must see what New Jerusalem signifies spiritually and not view it as some physical city sitting on earth. This does not mean that New Jerusalem will not be manifested in the physical realm, for it most surely will as heaven invades earth. New Jerusalem is the spirit realm and the very character and essence of God's Son manifested in the physical realm.

In the case of the throne, I do not believe that we should look upon it as if it were a physical platform with kingly chairs sitting upon it. The word *throne* signifies power and authority, so in the context of New Jerusalem, we could say the throne is the power and authority of the holy city. **It could be likened to a generating plant that produces the electricity to power a city.** As we will see in the next issue, life comes forth from the throne, which means that the throne is the very source of life and power for the entire city, the new earth beyond, and the nations therein.

The question is: From whence or from whom does this power emanate? Is it only through God and His Son? I propose that **the throne of the Lambkin is New Jerusalem itself**, which means that the sons of God are seated on this throne along with the Son of God. I make this claim on the basis of the word *lambkin*, as well as the Lord Jesus' own words to His conquerors.

First, let us consider the word *lambkin*.

In the New Testament, the word *lamb* comes from one of two Greek words, *amnos* or *arnion*.

The word *amnos* is **a young sheep** and is used exclusively when referring to Jesus as the Lamb of God dying for the sin of the world: **"Behold, the Lamb [amnos] of God who takes away the sin of the world!"** (John 1:29 NASB). In the New Testament, it is used only four times (John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Peter 1:19).

The word *arnion* is **a little lamb** and is used exclusively by John, especially in the book of Revelation, where it is the only Greek word used for the word *lamb*. To ensure that the distinction is not lost, the Concordant Version translates *arnion* with the word *lambkin* thirty times in the New Testament. In Webster's dictionary, a *lambkin* is defined as "a little lamb; sometimes applied to a child or young person as a term of affection." So, *lambkin* portrays youthfulness and affection.

This should remind us of the declaration made by God in reference to "My sons" inheriting "these things" (i.e., New Jerusalem): **"Behold, I am making all things new"** (Revelation 21:5, 7). Thus, the lambkin is associated with what is new and fresh and youthful. Again, this word is used in reference to the Son of God who was slain.

**And I perceived, in the center of the throne and of the four animals, and in the center of the elders, a Lambkin [arnion] standing, as though slain....** (Revelation 5:6 CV)

Without any doubt, the Lambkin uniquely refers to the Son of God, our Lord Jesus. Only He has the right to take the scroll and to be worshipped by all creation (Revelation 5:11-14). This is unquestionable; however, the word *arnion* also was used by Jesus to refer to His people when He said to Peter: **“Graze My lambkins [arnion]!”** (John 21:15 CV).

This is significant, for this brings the lambkins into relationship with *the* Lambkin. It is as if Jesus identified Himself with His people in a very unique way. He is the Lambkin, and all who are in Him are in the Lambkin and, in fact, are the Lambkin.

I believe that *the* Lambkin could be seen in the same light as *the* Christ, which Paul used to describe the body of Christ.

I propose that, as presented in Revelation 22:1 and 3, *the* Lambkin is very much like *the* Christ. In issue #03-0911 (February 2, 2009) *Head Up All In The Christ*, I made the point that Paul saw *the* Christ as both the Head and the body. You cannot have a head without a body (see 1 Corinthians 12:12). The two are inseparable. When Eve was fashioned out of the body of Adam, it was declared that they had become one flesh (Genesis 2:24). Paul tells us that this mystery is great as he declares that this now speaks of *the* Christ and His ecclesia, which is His body. The two are now one (Ephesians 5:22-33).

To be sure, there are times when *the* Lambkin and *the* Christ refer singly to the Lord Himself, but there are also times when we need to see that both *the* Lambkin and *the* Christ ultimately refer to the two, that is, the Head and the body being one. I propose that the Revelation signifies this truth, especially as New Jerusalem comes into view.

Thus, when he saw the throne of God and the Lambkin, John saw *the* Christ on the throne. In other words, he saw that the power and authority of God were manifested in the conquering body of Christ, which is New Jerusalem. Part of the proof is found again in the words of our beloved Lord.

**“The one who is conquering, to him will I be granting to be seated with Me on My throne as I, also, conquer, and am seated with My Father on His throne.”** (Revelation 3:21 CV)

It is very clear that the conquerors will make up the throne of the Lord, which, in terms of New Jerusalem, is the throne of God and of the Lambkin. They are the ones conformed to the image of the Son, having taken on immortal, glorified, and spiritual bodies in His likeness, and possessing His very character of righteousness, holiness, and love. They are like Him for they are *the* Christ, *the* Body, and *the* Lambkin. They are not bond-servants, for they are the bride and the wife of the Lambkin. But notice the reference to bond-servants in relation to the throne. How can a bride or a wife be called a bond-servant? I propose that they cannot be; therefore, this refers to others not included in the Lambkin.

**(3) The throne of God and of the Lamb [Lambkin] will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; (4) they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.** (Revelation 22:3-4 NASB [CV])

The bond-servants must refer to the nations on the new earth that receive the power and life of New Jerusalem that emanates from the throne of God and the Lambkin.

Finally, there is one more proof that the throne of the Lambkin signifies the conquerors and the Conqueror.

As stated already, the word *arnion* or *lambkin* appears thirty times in the New Testament. The number 30 signifies “dedication” or “spiritual maturity.” Joseph, a type of Christ, was 30 years of age when he was set over the land of Egypt (Genesis 41:46). David, another type of Christ, began to reign when he was 30 years of age (2 Samuel 5:4). Jesus began His ministry when He was 30 years of age (Luke 3:23).

Likewise, the word *arnion* or *lambkin* appears 30 times to signify the spiritual maturity of the sons of glory, those who have conquered through the love of Christ.

In other words, a day will come when the lambkins, the sons of God, will have matured into the likeness of the Lambkin, the Son of God, and will reign with Him, sitting upon the throne of God. The thirtieth mention of the Lambkin declares that the throne of God and the Lambkin is in New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:3), and, in fact, is New Jerusalem. The conquerors will have arrived at their destiny!

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09190

***New Jerusalem #29.***

December 28, 2009

***Abundant Divine Life***

**The city was pure gold, like pure glass.** (Revelation 21:18 LITV)

**(1) And he shows me a river of water of life, resplendent as crystal, issuing out of the throne of God and the Lambkin. (2) On each side of the river are trees [the tree of life] that grow a different kind of fruit each month of the year. The fruit gives life, and the leaves are used as medicine to heal the nations.** (Revelation 22:1-2 CEV [NASB])

It only seems right that, as we come to the conclusion of John's vision of New Jerusalem, the key word to describe this glorious city is *life*. The city itself is life, and it extends life to and influences all that it touches. But the question is: What kind of life exudes from the city, and whence does it come?

It is the divine life, the very life of God and of His Son, and it comes from the very throne of God and the Lambkin.

In relation to judgment, Daniel saw a river of fire flowing forth from the throne (Daniel 7:10), and John saw the river form into a lake of fire (Revelation 20:14-15). But in John's final vision of New Jerusalem, there is no longer a river of fire but rather a river of water of life. Judgment according to the law is no longer in view, for the law is written on the heart of New Jerusalem, and there is no more need for judgment; all is done according to the perfect will of God.

When God's perfect government goes forth as depicted by His throne, it brings life to all that it touches, which means that the new earth and, by extension, the new heaven will be filled with the very life of God or, if you will, with divine life. All will come to know the mind, the will, and the love of God, for this speaks of divine life.

I have not mentioned it in previous issues, but the city is made of pure transparent gold, like clear glass. In other words, this gold is so refined that you can see through it. In the physical realm, most gold has some impurities in it and is seldom transparent. For it to become transparent, it must be worked into extremely thin sheets; only then will light shine through it. But God's city is depicted as huge, and it is transparent; nothing is hidden. The entire city shines forth as gold, and absolutely everything about the city speaks of transparency. The transparent gold speaks of divine life just as the river of water of life does. However, the gold speaks of the very character and essence of this life, which is love. **God is love** (1 John 4:8, 16) is **the gold of God**. The whole city is the love of God. True love is always transparent and never fails (1 Corinthians 13). Think about!

Consider the streets of gold; streets signify fellowship and commerce. People travel and meet one another on streets, and they conduct business on streets. New Jerusalem is the perfection of commerce and fellowship because the very life and essence of the city is divine life and love. It is a pure and transparent relationship between God and His sons, as well as between and among all the sons of God, and all that is outside the city experiences this same transparency when in contact with it.

Returning to the water; today, the water that we drink is often filled with impurities, but not so with the water of God. It is pure; it is refreshing; it is fulfilling; it is life itself. It too is transparent, for it is crystal clear. The end of the Revelation calls out for all who are thirsty to come and take of the water of life without cost, just as Jesus cried out on the eighth day of the feast of Tabernacles (John 7:38).

But what is this water? It is the life of the spirit of God, for **it is the spirit that gives life**, and the words that Jesus spoke are **spirit and life** (John 6:63). Let us not forget that **in Christ all will be made alive** and that **the last Adam became a life-giving spirit** (1 Corinthians 15:22, 45).

**God is spirit** (John 4:24) and, to commune with God, that is, have fellowship with Him, we need to be in spirit. Also, let us not forget that New Jerusalem is a holy temple in the Lord, the dwelling of God in spirit. So, the river of water of life speaks of the spirit of God that gives life. Need we be reminded that those who are in Christ are a temple of the Holy Spirit, and when they are transfigured, they will occupy immortal, glorified, spiritual bodies in the image of the Son of God?

But there is more, for John saw the tree of life on each side of the river. The Concordant Version translates the tree of life as trees, which makes sense, since there must be more than one tree for it to be on each side of the river. There was one tree of life in the Garden of Eden, but here there are twelve trees lining the river of water of life. The spirit of God flows from the throne as signified by the water of life and feeds the trees with the divine life.

Of course, we must understand this by combining spiritual thoughts [pictures] with spiritual words [understanding, truth] (1 Corinthians 3:13). The Son of God is the tree of life, but how we are to interpret more than one tree. We could say that it is one tree, for there is only one divine life; however, this life is expressed by 12 trees that speak of **the abundant life of Christ** (John 10:10) and perfect communion with God. It is one tree, yet it is expressed in 12 ways as depicted by the 12 kinds of fruit given forth by the trees. This means that this life never ceases; **it is immortal and eternal**.

Again, there is more, for in Scripture, the word *tree* can signify a *nation* (Judges 9:8-15), which refers to a community of people under one government. As such, the tree(s) of life signifies the nation that sustains the life of all other nations on the new earth. If you recall, Jesus told the Jews—the bad figs or the Judahites, according to the flesh, who rejected Him as Messiah and the King of Judah—that the kingdom of God was being taken away from them and given to a nation [ethnos] producing the fruit of it (Matthew 21:43). This nation is New Jerusalem, the tree that produces kingdom fruit. It is the nation of abundant life manifested in and through the immortal sons of God.

As presented in issue #28 of this series, the throne of the Lambkin speaks of the rule of God's Son along with all the sons of God; they are the Christ and the Lambkin, just as Christ is both Head and Body.

We could say that the nation or people of life will be the fruit that sustains life, and its leaves will be medicine to the nations. There are twelve kinds of fruit, for New Jerusalem is made up of twelve tribes of the sons of Israel (Revelation 21:12), which, as we have seen, also speaks of the perfection of government. I believe that every nation on earth will be governed by one of the tribes.

It is interesting that the first mention of leaves in Scripture is the fig leaves that Adam and Eve used to cover their naked bodies after Adam's one transgression (Genesis 3:7). In Hebrew, the word for *leaf* is *aleh*, which comes from the root word *alah*, which has many meanings, one of which is "to ascend or arise."

Since the tree of life first appears in Genesis, perhaps, we can apply this same meaning to the tree(s) of life in Revelation. If so, then the leaves speak of the ascended life of the nation or New Jerusalem. It is the ascended life of Christ in an immortal people called New Jerusalem that will bring healing to the nations, those that are outside. The healing comes through New Jerusalem, that is, the complement of Christ. They have ascended to the throne, and, in their ascendancy, they will bring life and healing to all.

Finally, the fruit and leaves of the trees could be seen as divine influence. Life influences that which it touches. If we see that New Jerusalem signifies a people, that is, the sons of God conformed to the image of Christ, the Son of God, we must see that these partakers of the divine life influence all that come in contact with them.

This is the spiritual picture we need to see in the conclusion of John's Patmos vision. It is summed up with three words: **ABUNDANT DIVINE LIFE!**

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09191

***New Jerusalem #30.***

December 31, 2009

***Vision of One New Man***

With this thirtieth issue on New Jerusalem, it is time to bring this series to a close for 2009. However, this does not mean that I am done with this great subject. Lord willing, I will have more to say about it as I am given more light.

Now, I want to conclude with a vision of New Jerusalem that I was given by the spirit of God in 1992. I have reported on this previously, but it seems the most appropriate way to sum up the thread that has run through this series.

Prior to 1992, I had been studying New Jerusalem, but I must confess that my understanding was quite shaky. I had a real heart-yearning to see as John saw, but I kept coming up short in the vision department. I sought the Lord to see more clearly. Then, one day, I was reading a book by a well-known commentator of Scripture, F.B. Meyer, and I was caught by the following quote from one of his books.

**“Around us the most stable structures are being tested and some are crumbling to the ground. As they fall, they show that their service was transient. But as the scaffolding is taken down, the true building, the city of God emerges.”**

If there were ever a word for our day, this is it. All around us we see the structures of men, especially of Mystery Babylon, falling to the ground. So much of what men and, even, the church-at-large hold to is transient. That which can be shaken is being and will be shaken; even if men manage to prop it up for a season, it is still transient.

Don't be misled by the things you see going on in the world, even that which appears to be good. Even good things can and will be shaken if they are not of the Lord. I state this as a reminder that the smart minds that run Mystery Babylon are quite capable of keeping things intact or, at least, making them look intact, even if they are built on sand or the building is a house of cards. We need spiritual discernment in these days of shaking, as well as in these days of great deception.

Let us be like the wise man who built his house on the rock, the word of the Rock of Christ.

**(24) Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: (25) and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. (26) And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: (27) and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.** (Matthew 7:24-27 ASV)

Well, when I first read the quote from F.B. Meyer, the full impact of what he wrote did not come to me until some time later.

One Sunday during worship, I began to see more of the heart of God in relation to this quote. As I was meditating, I imagined (not a vision, just “picture thoughts” in my mind) God working on the scaffold of this huge structure. It was like a typical building project we observe here on earth. If we visit a building project, what is often seen is a mess with debris all over the place; scraps of wood, concrete, wire, etc. It

is usually not a pretty sight. In fact, a building project can be quite messy. We look at it and wonder how anything of any beauty or utility will emerge from such a mess. Oftentimes, we cannot even imagine what the final structure will look like.

In meditating on this subject, I pictured a scaffold in my mind with God building from it. God was also the architect of this structure, and He was like the painter looking at the scene He wanted to paint. God had in full view the end product of this building project, and He was diligently working. As He was working, it was like most building projects; debris was falling onto the ground—building materials that were of no use to the final product. Parts that were of no value, that would not become part of the building, were thrown down onto the ground. It looked like a big mess to an observer. Some parts were given a prominent place in the building; others were given less prominent, but functional, places. At times, men would try to help in the project but would not really be working with God.

My imagination went a little further to picture the structure also going through wind, rain, and even earthquakes. Through these tumults, other things would fall off the building to the ground, things that men attempted to put into the building; and so it continued to be a messy project. However, through it all, God kept working, building, until one day, He was done. The scaffold was removed, and there emerged the finished product. What God had in His mind to build was finally completed.

But what happened next shocked me. In my mind, I was going to imagine a city, but the spirit of God had something else in mind for me. As I was trying to picture a literal city, I was given a vision.

**In spirit, I saw the silhouette of a Man standing with His arms outstretched. In the same instant, the spirit of God revealed to me that I was looking at the one new man in Christ, the new creation in Christ, New Jerusalem.**

The Lord was standing as the one new man. I was given a vision of what the city-bride truly is in the heart of God. With this vision, all I could do was worship and praise God.

The vision revealed New Jerusalem as a people gathered together into one man conformed to the image of the Son of God, the many sons brought unto glory (Hebrews 2:10). After all, **our lives are hidden with Christ in God, and when Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory, for it is Christ in you, the hope of glory** (Colossians 3:3-4; 1:27).

New Jerusalem is the Father's answer to His Son's prayer as He faced the cross.

**(22) And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; (23) I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me.** (John 17:22-23 ASV)

New Jerusalem is the perfection of unity, oneness, and of the love of God.

Dear brethren, if there is one thing that you learned from this series, may it be that you see that New Jerusalem is about God the Father being fully satisfied in His Son and in a people conformed to the image of His Son. It is not about a place or a thing; it is about the Son of God and the sons whom He is bringing to glory.

If you are truly born from above, you are part of the city which God is now building. The building of the city is going on inside of every child of God that will be placed as a son in the kingdom of God. The Son of God is being built in you, and you are being built in the Son. And when all is said and done, collectively, there will be one new man that answers to the heart of God.

This man **will reign forever and ever** (Revelation 22:5).