

A New Jerusalem

***Key Verse: "I saw
no temple therein:
for the Lord God
Almighty and the
Lamb are the
temple of it. And
the city had no
need of the sun,
neither of the
moon, to shine in
it: for the glory of
God did lighten it,
and the Lamb is
the light thereof."
—Revelation
21:22,23***

***Selected Scripture:
Revelation 21:9-
14,22-27***

AS WE STUDY THE BIBLE, we find many instances in which a city is used to symbolize, or represent, the authority of a government. "New Jerusalem," the subject of today's lesson, is used as a symbol denoting the new spiritual government of the coming Messianic Age. (Rev. 21:2) This government does not have its origin in earth, nor is it developed by man. In vision, John saw it as a "holy city, . . . coming down from God out of heaven." Its origin is spiritual in every sense of the word, coming directly from God. It is for this coming government that Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) By this, our Lord acknowledged his faith in the promise that a divinely appointed government would, in due time, be established on the earth.

John further declares that in his vision he saw the new Jerusalem "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." This reminds us that the new government of the future will consist of more than one ruler. The Apostle Paul says of this time that Christ Jesus and his faithful

saints will “judge the world in righteousness.” (Acts 17:31; I Cor. 6:2) These “saints” are now being selected based on their faithfulness, unto death, as they “suffer with” Christ, so that they may also be “glorified together” with him. (Rev. 2:10; Rom. 8:16,17) In his account, John views these glorified saints when an angel calls to him, “Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.”—Rev. 21:9-11

We are not to think of this city as comprising literal buildings made of stone that come down from heaven to the earth. To confirm that this is symbolic language, we recall Peter’s words, that those who are being developed at the present time to be part of this “holy city” are considered to be “living stones,” with Jesus Christ as the “chief corner stone” of this spiritual arrangement. (I Pet. 2:4-7) Regardless of the various symbols used in the Scriptures, the new Jerusalem will not be visible to the natural eye. However, it will have earthly representatives, “princes in all the earth,” and when it begins to operate, the whole world will be made aware of the fact that a new government has been instituted. (Ps. 45:16) It will be a rule of love, equity, and peace, and will bring blessings to all who desire to follow its righteous laws.

It is our understanding that the light of the sun and moon, spoken of in our Key Verse, signifies the present sunlight of the Gospel message and the reflective moonlight of the Old Testament types and shadows. In the new Jerusalem, however, “the glory of God . . . and the Lamb” will provide the full light of truth needed for mankind to learn the ways of the Lord. With this light, we are assured that no one will “hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.”—Isa. 11:9 ■