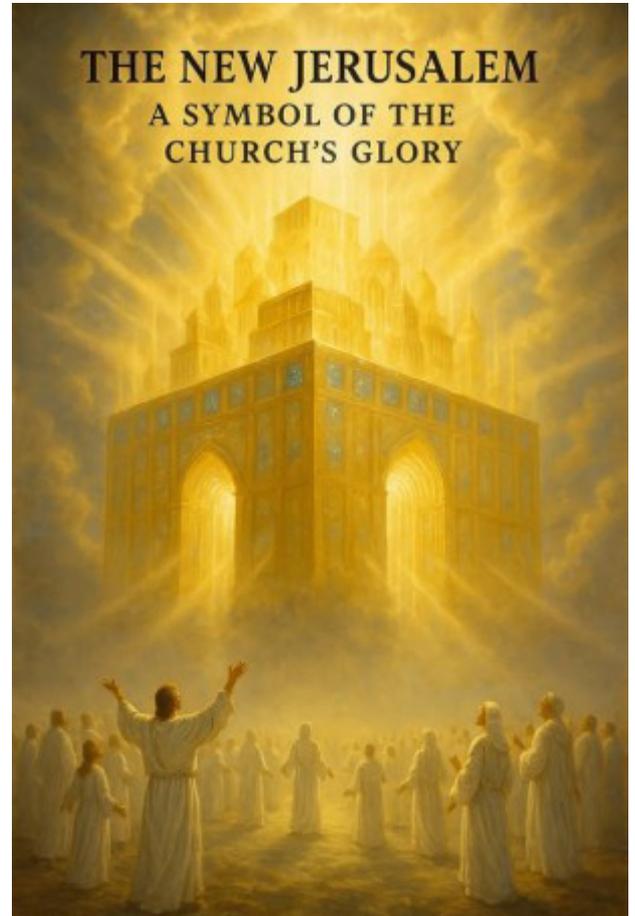


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New Jerusalem - The New Jerusalem - A Symbol of the Church's Glory



By Dan Maines

The New Jerusalem - A Symbol of the Church's Glory

Introduction: Seeing the Bride Through the Symbolism

Many today read Revelation 21 and imagine a futuristic, physical city descending from the sky. Streets of gold, gates of pearl, and walls studded with jewels are taken literally. But we must let scripture interpret scripture. The New Jerusalem is not about city infrastructure. It is a picture of the church, the bride of Christ, now fully restored and dwelling with God.

Revelation 21:9-10 makes this crystal clear: "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the Spirit... and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." The angel promised to show John the bride. What he saw was the New Jerusalem. That means the New Jerusalem **is** the bride. This is not a literal city. This is the church, completed, glorified, and dwelling in covenantal union with Christ.

The Size and Shape: Why a Cube? Revelation 21:16 says the city is **12,000 stadia** in length, width, and height. That's roughly **1,380 miles in each direction**. It is a perfect cube. But why?

In **1 Kings 6:20**, the **Holy of Holies** was a cube: "And the inner sanctuary was twenty cubits in length, width, and height; and he overlaid it with pure gold." The Holy of Holies represented the direct presence of God. Now, the entire city - the entire church - is the Holy of Holies. This shows that God no longer dwells in one spot behind a veil, but now with all His people.

The **12,000 stadia** number is symbolic. Twelve is the number of governmental fullness - 12 tribes, 12 apostles. Multiply it to the third power ($12 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 = 12,000$) and we have a number symbolizing **complete covenantal fullness**. The bride is whole. The kingdom is complete. The church is perfected.

The Foundation Stones and the Apostolic Connection

Revelation 21:14 says, "And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

Ephesians 2:19-20 confirms this: "You are... of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone." The foundation stones of the city represent the apostolic teachings and the early church. This is not a literal wall. It is the doctrinal and covenantal structure upon which the New Covenant people

stand.

The Gems and the Breastplate Parallel In Revelation 21:19-20, we read a list of precious stones that adorn the foundation. This list corresponds directly with the high priest's breastplate in **Exodus 28:17-20**, which had 12 stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel.

These jewels represent the **value and purity of God's people**.

The city's brilliance is the brilliance of the redeemed.

This is **not** about earthly construction, but about heavenly identity.

The Twelve Gates and Open Access Revelation 21:12-13 speaks of twelve gates, each named after the tribes of Israel, with angels guarding them. Verse 21 adds, "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl."

The number 12 again shows completeness.

The gates facing each direction imply **global access** to the kingdom (cf. Luke 13:29).

Pearls are formed through suffering, just as access to the kingdom came through the suffering of Christ and the tribulation of the saints.

Symbolic, Not Literal: A Consistent Pattern The entire book of Revelation is filled with symbolic language: dragons, beasts, bowls, stars falling, and a slain Lamb standing. So why take just chapter 21 literally?

The measurements, jewels, and square design of the New Jerusalem are pulled directly from **Ezekiel 40-48** and **Exodus**

28, both of which are also full of symbols and types pointing to spiritual realities. The Old Covenant temple and priesthood were shadows. The New Jerusalem is the reality fulfilled.

Conclusion: The Bride Has Come We are not waiting for a golden city to drop from the sky. That was never the point. The city has come. The bride is the church. The New Jerusalem is now.

Revelation 21:3: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them."

This is the fulfilled reality of the church in the New Covenant. We are the city. We are the bride. God is with us.

Let us rejoice in the beauty of the New Jerusalem, not as a future building, but as the present and eternal people of God.

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