

The New Jerusalem—the Bride of Christ

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | April 7, 2022



When you think of the New Jerusalem, do you think of high walls with pearly gates on each side, streets of gold, and beautiful mansions? In other words, do you envision mostly inanimate materials? But could the “New Jerusalem” in Scripture be representative of something more? Could the highly symbolic book of Revelation use the image of a city to depict a people from every corner of the earth who have characters that shine like purified gold, living with immortal bodies, and bonded in intimate union with Jesus?

Consider what John saw in vision:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the **Holy City, the new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, **prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband**. ... One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you **the bride, the wife of the Lamb**.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and **showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God (Revelation 21:1, 2, 9, 10 NIV84).

Is Christ married to inanimate materials or to living beings?

For your Maker is your husband—the LORD Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth (Isaiah 54:5 NIV84).

Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ loved the church** and gave himself up for her to make her holy, **cleansing her** by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” **This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church** (Ephesians 5:25-32 NIV84).

The loving intimacy, trust, and union of marriage require living beings. It cannot occur with non-living matter. The church, the people of God, is the bride of Christ; the Bible metaphorically describes the people of God not only as a purified bride but also as the New Jerusalem. And the New Jerusalem is also described as Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the place where the “names” of the righteous are written:

But you have come to **Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God**. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose **names are written in heaven** (Hebrews 12:22, 23 NIV84).

Further, this heavenly city is described as shining “with the glory of God” (Revelation 21:11). This is not referring to mere photons but to God’s character of truth and love. It will shine with the glory of God because the people of God have been healed to have the character of Christ; they all shine like beacons of glorious heavenly love and truth—they reveal the character of God. And, yes, these healed and sealed saints will also shine brightly as Moses’ face did after being in God’s presence (Exodus 34:29-35).

But the Bible gives us more insight into this profound mystery of Christ being united with His bride. The New Jerusalem is described as being structurally in the shape of a cube (Revelation 21:16). This is the exact shape of the most holy place in the sanctuary (1 Kings 6:20). The parallels between the New Jerusalem and the most holy place are not accidental—they are divinely inspired:

- The most holy place was covered in gold; the city is paved in gold.
- The most holy place was lighted by God’s Shekinah presence; the city is lighted by God’s eternal presence (Revelation 21:21, 22).
- The most holy place is where the high priest conducted a special ceremony: the ceremony of atonement, the ceremony of cleansing, the ceremony of washing away sin and purifying the people (bride), the ceremony of bringing the people into at-one-ment with God, of two becoming one. In other words, it was a wedding ceremony! And the New Jerusalem is the bride being

married to Jesus the Bridegroom!

Just as the apostle Paul described in Ephesians, Jesus is cleansing His bride in order to bring His people into at-one-ment with Him. This is the marriage of the Lamb, when Jesus cleanses her from all defilement and clothes her in the white robes of His righteousness—and the “two” become “one.”

During this time, the cleansing of the sanctuary, Jesus purifies His bride, washing her, removing all sin, all defects, and all shame, guilt, fear, and selfishness. Jesus and His bride are bonded with the bonds of love, devotion, loyalty, and trust for all eternity. This is what happens at a wedding—two hearts united together in intimate at-one-ness

The cleansing of the bride and the cleansing of the sanctuary describe the same event. Jesus, in heaven, is working to completely heal the hearts and minds of those who have exercised faith in Him so that when He returns, we are able to stand in His presence and see Him face to face (1 John 3:2). We who are alive on the earth cooperate with Him for the healing and cleansing of our minds, hearts, and characters to make ourselves ready for His return:

Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and **give him glory!** For the **wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.** Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” (Revelation 19:6–9 NIV84).

The wedding is the intimate joining of the hearts and minds of the people with Jesus, the final cleansing of their characters, bringing them into at-one-ment with Jesus, which occurs *before* His appearing; it prepares us to stand in His glorious presence. The wedding supper of the Lamb is the celebration and feast that the saved experience after the second coming, when the mortal puts on immortality. We will be physically present at the wedding supper, the celebration. But the wedding itself happens before the celebration. The wedding is the bonding, healing, uniting, and cleansing of hearts and minds from sin, the purifying of character, the restoring of the righteousness of Christ within, the writing of His law into our inmost being. The wedding is happening *now*, and the bride—you and me—are to be making ourselves ready by faith, by following Jesus in loving trust and living out His methods and principles today.

And just like a woman takes the name of her husband, those who are united with Christ are given His name:

I will make those who are victorious pillars in the temple of my God, and they will never leave it. **I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem,** which will come down out of heaven from my God. **I will also write on them my new name** (Revelation 3:12 GNT).

The name of God is His character. The people of God have His character reproduced within them. This restoration of God’s character within the living saints is the cleansing of the sanctuary, the removal of sin and rebellion, the restoration of the saved to God’s original design for humanity, the receiving of the

perfection of Christ as their own, being united, at-one, with Christ, being married to Him! We receive our new name—Christian—one who is like Jesus.

This beautiful description of intimacy—of love, of unity of heart and mind, of husband united with wife so that the two are one—is the same event as the cleansing of the sanctuary described in the prophecy of Daniel 8:14, as well as Jesus coming to His temple to cleanse it before His return as described in Malachi chapter three. I am not the first to come to this conclusion. The book *The Great Controversy* states

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, **for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14**; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and **the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage**, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25 (p. 426)

Prior to the coming of Christ, He receives His kingdom (Daniel 7:13), which is the kingdom of truth, love, and liberty—the kingdom of God’s eternal character of love based upon the living law of love, the law upon which all life is built by God to operate. Christ advances His kingdom by writing His living law of love into our hearts and minds (Hebrews 8:10), because, as Jesus taught, “the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21 NIV84). The receiving of His kingdom is the receiving of His bride in holy union; it is the Bridegroom cleansing her, cleansing the spirit temples, the place where God dwells; it is the healing, recreation, restoration of His people to perfect unity with Him. This is the wedding, the purifying of His bride so that when He returns, we are ready to stand in His presence holy and pleasing, a bride adorned for her husband!

The event that began at the end of the 2,300-year prophecy of Daniel 8:14 is Jesus cleansing His people, purifying His bride, bringing all who have professed faith in Him throughout all human history into at-one-ment with Him and His Father, uniting us in heart, mind, and character with Him for all eternity. We receive His name—His character!

If you would like to read more about this incredible healing, cleansing, and unity with God, we invite you to read our magazine [The Heavenly Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment for the Modern World](#).

Jesus is coming soon; at this time in human history, the bride is to prepare herself to meet Him. I invite you to prepare yourself by opening your heart to Jesus, accepting Him as your friend, companion, and partner for all eternity and allowing Him to write His design law of love upon your heart and mind, purifying and cleansing you from all sin. Allow Him to write His name upon you and enter into the reality—become part of the New Jerusalem!

But you have come into the reality (of which the symbols only pointed to), to Mount Zion, the New Jerusalem — the heavenly city of the living God — and you are part of that city. You have come to join millions upon millions of angels rejoicing in God’s presence, into the heavenly sanctuary — the true church of Christ — whose identities are stored in heaven. You have come to God — the source and standard of righteousness for all people; to the archived individualities of righteous human beings perfectly restored into Christlikeness of

character; to Jesus — the conduit and administrator of God's healing plan; and to the reality of God's true nature and character, which was much more potently revealed and disseminated when Christ died than in the symbols offered by Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24 *The Remedy New Testament Paraphrase*).