

Crisis of belief in a new Jerusalem?

This episode provides six easy fundamentals regarding the new Jerusalem that I believe will energize your faith.

My name is Tom Hill. Welcome to this edition Emmaus Road Chronicles, a series of videos concentrating upon the revelation of Jesus Christ from the Old Testament and from the New Testament. I patterned the title of the series after the conversation that the Lord Jesus had with two men walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the day of Christ's resurrection.

During that conversation, Jesus said that He took the Old Testament and provided for them all of the things from scripture pertaining to Himself. This series of videos will follow that pattern and will provide instruction on the revelation of Jesus Christ, not only in the Old Testament, but also in the New Testament. This particular one, will concentrate upon Revelation.

What do you know about the book of Revelation and why did God provide that book at the time that He inspired it through the Apostle John? The disciples of Christ in that day experienced great tribulation, trials, temptations, difficulties.

It was the era of Roman domination, the time of age 66 to 90 AD, a very tumultuous time, difficult for believers. And the Lord Jesus inspired this book through the Apostle John to send to those early believers encouragement, instruction, reminder of promises of the Lord Jesus that He had made to his followers

So the Lord Jesus encouraged John to write this book and to send it and provide it for all of the churches in southwest Turkey. This book provides a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ and, does so through a variety of means. It uses visions and uses symbols like trumpets and lightning and thunder, and casting down a fire from heaven. He used all kinds of symbols in the book. And a lot of people concentrate upon those symbols, and they miss the revelation of Jesus Christ, that those symbols are meant to reveal.

We take a concentrated effort during these videos on Revelation to look at how that book reveals Jesus Christ. In our previous episode, we looked at Revelation 21 verse number one. That verse talks about the new heaven and the new earth. John had a vision and he said, "I see the new heaven and the new earth and it has no sea anymore."

We discovered that that word "new" does not mean something totally new, replacing something else and disposing of what previously existed, but it's a refurbishing. It's a renewing. It's a refreshing of what already exists.

So God is going to refresh this frail, fragile, sinful, wicked world and transform it into a new heaven and a new earth without sea because the scriptures tell us about the seas and the dangers that they provide and the separation that they bring between peoples.

There will be no danger, there will be no separation in eternity. So, we won't need the seas anymore. There's a new heaven and the new earth, and we saw that described by John in revelation 21 one. This particular study follows up on that and looks at the next verse and the next vision that has provided in revelation 21.

What do you know about the new Jerusalem? Have you heard that phrase? Do you have any familiarity at all with that phrase, and what it might mean? Well, John Describes that he saw a vision and the vision was a new city, a new Jerusalem, and were recorded in Revelation 21 verse number two.

I'll take a moment and read it so you know the context and the text for our study at this time. Revelation 21 two we read this:

“...and I saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

We'll just take it in order just like we're telling a story because that's kind of what it did. It starts off, John said, I saw this vision of a holy city, not just any city, a holy city, a city without evil, no presence of evil, no influence of evil, a city, pure, a city divine, a city that has the presence of God in it. Something different than the cities of our day.

If you live in a city, you know the wickedness that is very popular and present in the cities of our day. This is a new city. It's a holy city, different than any of our cities that we live in today regardless of where you go around the world.

Then we see he describes it as a new Jerusalem, not only a holy city, but a new Jerusalem.

Now put on your thinking cap just a moment and think back to the Old Testament of all the occurrences of Jerusalem and even up through the gospels and even into the apostles, the epistles of Paul, where he talks about Jerusalem.

It was a city in Israel and God chose that city to be His central place for His people. In that city he built, He built a temple, the place of worship, and it was more than just a very glamorous church building.

It was the place of the residents of the presence of God. God designed it for His presence where He would come down and visit His people. He would be there and His people would come and worship Him, and they would fellowship with Him there in the temple in Jerusalem.

John saw the vision and he said, “it's a holy city.” It's a new Jerusalem, not like the old Jerusalem written so frequently in scripture, but a new Jerusalem still having the same purpose as the old Jerusalem had, but a place of God's presence, the place where He would come down and where He would visit His people. He would fellowship with them and they with Him, and His people would worship Him and be with Him for eternity.

John describes his vision. First he sees it's a holy city, and then he calls it a new Jerusalem. Then he goes even further in his description, he says it's coming down from heaven. It's coming down, is descending not only from heaven but from God.

This was a city that was prepared. It isn't just any city that springs up because there's a river or highways nearby. No, this was a prepared city that God Himself prepared for His people where they would come and join with Him and He with them and fellowship together.

And then it says it's prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. You've probably been to a wedding. I've been to many weddings. You've probably even participated in a wedding, perhaps as one of the bride or bridegroom, perhaps alongside a friend of yours who did celebrate their wedding, and you've attended them because of friends and family.

Notice the particularity of this vision and how John described it, it's described as a bride adorned for her husband. Bride's dress up for their husbands, for their bridegroom, for the big wedding day. They take care to have their hair done properly, the proper dress, and flowers. Those who are with them celebrate with them, and they're dressed appropriately. It takes great time and all too often a lot of money in order for the bride to adorn herself for her bridegroom.

John describes this holy city, this new Jerusalem in that fashion; it's like a bride adorned for her husband. The

scriptures use that picture often to describe the believer's relationship with Jesus Christ. He's called the bridegroom and scripture and His people, those who trust Him, those who follow Him, are called the bride, the bride of Christ and Christ as the bridegroom.

And there are several times in scripture that that picture is provided for us, that we might have some inkling, some notion as our relationship with Christ. John the Baptist used it in John Chapter three verse 39 I believe is the verse. The Pharisees and the scribes came out to him and said, "John, are you, are you the Christ tell us or are you the one who was to come before the Christ?"

And he said, "I am not the Christ, but I'll tell you what I am. I'm the friend of the bridegroom who has come to announce the bridegroom and His coming." In essence, our terminology, at least in America, I don't know what it would be an Asia or Africa or some other country, but in America we call that the best man, the one who stands closest and is usually the closest friend of the bridegroom who announces and helps the bridegroom prepare for the big wedding day.

That's all John the Baptist described himself. "I'm the best man I have come to prepare the way for the bridegroom who is coming for his bride." Paul took up on that same description and several times he used that same example to describe the believers and followers of Christ in Second Corinthians. Let me look and get the reference. Second Corinthians 11 two he talks about the believers in that city as being betrothed to Christ.

There again, the picture of the bride and the bridegroom was later in the letter to the Ephesians. He took a little more extended description of the relationship, and he used it in Ephesians chapter five starting about verse 22 down through the end of the chapter and is talking about the relationship of a husband to his wife and the wife to her husband, and he compares the husband's relationship to the wife as the same kind of a as Christ to his followers.

He used that picture as an example to give an instruction to those believers in Ephesus about marriage, but he use the picture of Christ, the bridegroom, and the followers of Christ as the bride to help pinpoint for those believers how husbands and wives here on earth in marriage should relate to one another.

This was a very interesting city, very particular city we read even in scripture that it was one that was anticipated. Hebrews chapter 11 describes for us Abraham who was called the father of the faithful. It tells us what his thoughts were as he was following God and believing in him.

Let me read for you just a few of these verses that describe Abraham's thoughts are taken from Hebrews chapter 11 starting in verse 11 it says, let me back up. Let me back up to verse number nine,

"...by faith, he went to live in a land of promise as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob. Heirs have the same promise for he was looking forward to the city that has foundations whose designer and builder is God."

The new Jerusalem, Abraham in his day, thousands of years before Christ even came, and thousands of years before God inspired this book through the Apostle John for those believers in that day, he looked forward to the new Jerusalem, the new city, the holy city.

He anticipated it, and then we read down a little farther and the same chapter that the writer of Hebrews kind of summarizes all of the believers prior to Abraham and Sarah and Issac and Jacob. The writer includes in there, Adam and Eve, Abel and others, and this is what he says in verse 13 of Hebrews Chapter 11,

"These all died in faith. Not having received the things Primus, but having seen them and greeted them from a fire and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the

earth. For people who speak this make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return, but as it is, they desire a better country. That is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.”

This city John described for us in Revelation chapter 21 verse number two, that God inspired through him to provide instruction and encouragement to those believers in that first century, a city of anticipation, a city anticipated by faith, one described as a holy city, the new Jerusalem prepared as a bride adorned for her bridegroom.

Wow, what a description. What an anticipation that those people must have had.

Why do you think God provided this revelation of a vision through John? Why did He do that? Well, the people of that day experienced a great deal of turmoil as I mentioned a little bit earlier, and it tells us in Revelation chapter one verse number one, it says, right away and like the third or fourth verse, I mean third or fourth word of that verse, it says, “...this is a revelation of Christ.”

At the end of the book, they reveal to us something about Christ. Well, what did they reveal? Let's stop and think a moment. We've already looked at the description of the city coming down as a bride adorned for a bridegroom and how that describes for us our relationship with Christ.

Christ is the bridegroom. Those of us who trust in Christ and follow and obey Him are the bride. We will join with Him at the consummation day, yet into the future when we will join with him in that city, bride with bridegroom. The Lord Jesus revealed this to John and He said to send out this letter. The things that I'm going to show you, send it out to your fellow believers to encourage them to remind them to trust Me.

My promises are true. I promised you that

“I would go away to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there you may be also.”

That's written in John Chapter 14 verses one, two and three. And so Jesus wanted to encourage those early believers to trust Him. He had told them He was coming. He promised them a city. He promised that He would join with them as their bridegroom, and He wrote to them this series of visions in this whole book of Revelation to encourage them and to strengthen them.

And we find that this book of Revelation provided that instruction for those believers to comfort them, to encourage them, and to strengthen them in their faith and their walk with Christ to face and endure the trials and tribulations of their day.

Well, what does it mean for you and me? We live thousands of years after they lived and after this book was sent to them by John provided by God for them. What relevance does it have to us? Does it have any correlation to our lives today?

Yes, it does. Think for a moment how, how many similarities exist in our day that existed at the same time that God sent this message for the Apostle John: great governmental interference in the practice of worshipping Christ, persecution, persecution throughout the world.

We see many false prophets as they saw in that day, false doctrine rising up and people following after them. We find doubt and fear on behalf of even those who follow Christ. Many similarities. I could give you a longer

list than this, but I don't want to take the time to give such an exhausted list. Our day very much emulates the day when God sent this book through the Apostle John for the followers of Christ.

Therefore we can glean from it the same kind of benefits that those early believers did. The followers of Christ can find encouragement and trust upon Christ, their bridegroom, the One with whom they will join forever in eternity at the consummation of the ages, and we can trust Him.

We can obey and follow Him. He is trustworthy and this vision reminds us to trust Him in the midst of our difficulties, in the midst of our trials and persecution and difficulties. So, we followers of Christ, we must trust Him in the midst of our difficulties, in the midst of our struggles, in the midst of our doubts and fears. Christ calls upon us to trust Him and obey Him regardless of our circumstances.

For unbelievers, this gives a warning, and the warning is this. That new city that will come that John Describes here in Revelation 21 verse number two belongs as the habitation of the bride and the bridegroom. The bride is comprised of those who follow and obey and worship Christ and have trusted him.

If you have never trusted Christ as Lord and Savior, this vision comes to you as a warning, and the warning is this: if you don't trust in Christ and follow Him, you will face a crisis...eternity. You will not join in the celebration of Christ uniting with His bride on that special day when we fellowship together at the feast and the marriage supper of the lamb as described in Revelation 19

I pray the Holy Spirit will first of all, encourage you as a believer. If you are a follower of Christ, I pray that the Spirit of God will encourage you today to trust Him, follow Him, obey Him, and worship Him as your Lord and Savior.

Yes, you may face difficulty and hardship, but Christ reminds us through this vision that He has control of the future, and He is in the midst of preparing a place for you where we will join together with Him, bride and bridegroom in the new Jerusalem to celebrate with Him for all eternity.

If you are an unbeliever today in Jesus Christ and you've never trusted in Him, in fact, He may mean absolutely nothing to you. You may have had no interest of prior to this episode of even have any interest in Christ, nothing more than just a catch phrase. I pray that the Holy Spirit of God will open your eyes to see your need of Jesus Christ, to see your helpless, hopeless condition without Him, and that the spirit of God will enable you to turn from your sin, from your hopelessness, from your helplessness, from your inability to in any fashion please God by your own self works or self righteousness.

Turn from those evil practices and trust Christ, God's provision for sinners like you and like me. He provided His own Son Who came to live a sinless life as a human just like you and me. He died on the cross as sinless man, and He did so as a substitute on behalf of people like you and me, helpless in our sin. He provides for people like us, a bridge between God and our sinful condition.

And I pray that the spirit of God will turn your heart to believe and trust upon Christ as your Lord and Savior, and that you will obey Him and follow Him. Trust Him as encouragement from this vision that provides for us. I pray that you will trust Him and follow Him.

© Thomas P. Hill

Web site: www.masterministries.org

Email: hill_tom@att.net

Personal Information: Thomas P. Hill, M. A. in Ministry, Luther Rice Seminary; author of 3 books: *Wolves in Sheep's Clothing*; *Homosexuality, Christians, and the Church*; and *Keys To A Revolutionary Life* (all available online at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Tom's web site). To invite Tom to speak at your college, church, or group, contact him by email at hill_tom@att.net.

Permissions: You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format, in whole or in part, provided that you do not alter the Document2; 12/4/18

wording in any way and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, whether in whole or in part, a link to this document on our website is preferred but not necessary. Please obtain permission from Tom Hill for all exceptions to the above request.

Please note that the preceding commentary results from personal, Biblical research. It is not necessarily the opinion of any entity by which I am employed, any church at which I belong or attend, any person or organization that may reproduce this article, or the educational institution at which I am enrolled. Any copyrighted material displayed or referenced is done under the doctrine of fair use.