

The New Jerusalem— the Consummation of the Divine Economy according to the High Peak of the Divine Revelation

by Ron Kangas

Due to religious darkness, theological ignorance concerning God's will, good pleasure, purpose, counsel, and economy, traditions that nullify the word of God, and the subtle work of the god of this age in blinding and deceiving the believers, an erroneous teaching concerning the New Jerusalem has been circulating for centuries—the idea that the New Jerusalem unveiled in Revelation 21 and 22 is a literal, physical, material city. According to one version of this widespread teaching, for eternity the glorified sons of God will dwell in opulent houses that supposedly are located in this city. Other views are quite imaginative, such as the claim that the New Jerusalem is some kind of celestial body that is proceeding toward earth at the speed of light, or the speculation that the holy city will be an orbiting space station from which the redeemed will be able to make day-trips to the new earth. All these notions are an insult to the only wise God, a distraction and even a stumbling block to believers, especially to earnest seekers of the Lord and His truth, and a deception devised by the enemy of God to mislead the children of God regarding God's eternal purpose and the goal of His judicial redemption and the marvelous organic salvation that is based upon it.

Of course, the New Jerusalem is not a literal city of gold nor an astral entity nor an orbiting space station. Rather, it must be understood according to the governing principle of the book of Revelation. This principle is that the "revelation of Jesus Christ" is made "known by signs," that is, by symbols with spiritual significance (1:1).

The revelation of this book is composed mainly of signs...Even the New Jerusalem is a sign, signifying the ultimate consummation of God's economy (chs. 21—22). This book, then, is a book of signs through which the revelation is made known to us. (Recovery Version, Rev. 1:1, note 2)

In a very real sense, the central thought of this essay is that the New Jerusalem is a sign of the ultimate consummation of God's economy according to the good pleasure of God's will. Understood in this light, the New Jerusalem is the consummation of the divine economy according to the high peak of the divine revelation. This means that the New Jerusalem, as the ultimate and eternal corporate expression of the Triune God, is the consummation of God becoming man and man becoming God in life, in nature, and in expression but not in the Godhead.

A Divine Convergence

With the New Jerusalem we have a marvelous and mystical divine convergence—the convergence of the high peak of the divine revelation and the consummation of the divine economy. The high peak of the divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures is that God became man so that, in Christ, redeemed man may become God in life, nature, constitution, and expression but not in the Godhead nor as an object of worship. This means that apart from the believers in Christ, as regenerated children of God, becoming God as here described, the New Jerusalem, as the holy city of God, cannot exist. In order for God to have the New Jerusalem as His eternal dwelling place, we must become God. This is the high peak of the divine revelation. Moreover, as a city bearing the glory of God, the New Jerusalem is the ultimate and consummate corporate expression of the processed and consummated Triune God with His chosen, redeemed, regenerated, and glorified tripartite elect. This corporate expression is the consummation of the divine economy, the goal of God's plan and arrangement to dispense Himself in Christ as the Spirit into our being to be our life, our life supply, and our everything so that we may express Him. Thus, in and with the New Jerusalem the high peak of the divine

revelation and the consummation of the divine economy converge in blessed fulfillment for eternity in the new heaven and new earth.

If we consider certain crucial and intrinsic aspects of the New Jerusalem as the corporate, yet personal, expression of the Triune God, we may be confirmed in the realization that the existence of the New Jerusalem is predicated upon God becoming man and man becoming God in life and nature but not in the Godhead.

The Holy City

The New Jerusalem is the holy city. Twice the apostle John speaks of “the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God” (21:2, 10). Holiness is one of the main attributes of God (4:8), and for us to be holy according to God’s eternal choice (Eph. 1:4) requires that we become the same as God in His communicable attribute of holiness. Holiness is what God is in His nature. To partake of God’s nature of holiness (Heb. 12:10) is to partake of His nature, of what He is. Through such a partaking, we become holy, sanctified, not only in the sense of being separated unto God but also in the sense of being saturated and permeated with the holy nature of God. The holy Father has regenerated us to be His holy children, the members of His holy family (John 17:11; 3:3, 5-6; 1 Pet. 1:3), and now He is sanctifying us by working Himself with His holiness into our being to make us God in the attribute of holiness.

He makes us holy by imparting Himself, the Holy One, into our being, that our whole being may be permeated and saturated with His holy nature. For us, God’s chosen ones, to be holy [Eph. 1:4] is to partake of God’s divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) and to have our whole being permeated with God Himself. (Recovery Version, Eph. 1:4, note 3)

A New Creation

The New Jerusalem is a new creation. As the consummation of the divine economy, the New Jerusalem is the ultimate consummation of the new creation (Rev. 21:2-3; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). The New Jerusalem is the consummation of all the works of God’s new creation out of His old creation in four ages: the age before the law, the age of the law, the age of grace, and the age of the kingdom. This indicates that God’s goal is to produce the new creation out of the old creation. Whereas the old creation does not have the divine life and nature, the new creation certainly does (John 1:13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4), for the new creation has God within it as its life, nature, and expression. The new creation is new because God has been wrought into it; the New Jerusalem is new because it is full of God. In order to be part of the New Jerusalem—the new creation of God and for God—the believers in

Christ need to be thoroughly and absolutely renewed (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23). Since Christ Himself is the realm of newness, the New Jerusalem will be the ultimate consummation of Christ as the realm of newness and as newness itself.

This brings us, again, to deification, the process of becoming God in life and nature but not in the Godhead. Newness is God; therefore, to become new is to become God (Rom. 6:4; 7:6). In the daily process of renewing (2 Cor. 4:16), God’s element of newness is added into our being to replace and discharge our old element, as the renewing Spirit (Titus 3:5) imparts the divine newness into our being to make us a new creation with the divine life and nature. Through this process of renewing, we are transferred from the realm of the old creation into the realm of the new creation to become the New Jerusalem (Col. 3:10; Rev. 21:2).

Having the Glory of God

The New Jerusalem has the glory of God. “He carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God” (vv. 10-11). Glory is the expression of God, God expressed in splendor (Exo. 40:34; Acts 7:2, 55). God’s intention is to bring many sons into glory (Heb. 2:10), and in order to fulfill His intention He has called us into His eternal glory (1 Pet. 5:10).

The glory of God is intrinsically related to the economy of God (Eph. 1:6, 10, 12, 14; 3:21; 5:27). This is based upon the fact that the Triune God is a God of glory (Acts 7:2; Eph. 1:17; 3:14, 16; 1 Cor. 2:8; 2 Cor. 4:6; 1 Pet. 4:14). God’s eternal goal is to bring His many sons into glory (Heb. 2:10; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5-6, 12, 14), and for this reason man was created by God in His image in order that man may express Him in His glory (Gen. 1:26; Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6). God created human beings as vessels unto honor prepared unto glory; we were predestinated in His sovereignty to be His vessels to express what He is in glory (Rom. 9:21, 23). Sadly, humankind fell into sin. To sin is to fall short of God’s glory and thus to express sin and the sinful self and to love the glory of men more than the glory of God (3:23; John 5:44; 7:18; 12:43). But Christ’s redemption has fulfilled the requirements of God’s glory (Rom. 3:24-25; Heb. 9:5; cf. Gen. 3:24), and through the gospel of the glory of God, God has called us by and into His eternal glory (2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Tim. 1:11; 1 Thes. 2:12; 1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:3). By God’s mercy and grace, we have believed into Christ, and now the all-inclusive Christ dwells in us as the hope of glory (John 3:15; Col. 1:27; 3:4, 11; 1 Cor. 15:45) for us to experience, enjoy, and express. Day by day, as we behold and reflect the glory of the Lord, we are being transformed into the Lord’s image from glory to glory for the expression of

God in Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). Yet not even transformation is the final goal. The goal of God's organic salvation, and the last stage of this salvation, is glory—our glorification (Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:17, 21, 30). This requires that we be strengthened into the inner man (Eph. 3:16-17). When we are strengthened with power by the Father of glory through His Spirit into the inner man, when Christ makes His home in our hearts, and when we are filled unto all the fullness of God, there is glory to God in the church (vv. 14-21). This is marvelously related to the prayer offered by the Lord in John 17, a prayer not only for oneness but also for glorification (vv. 1, 5). In particular, the Lord Jesus prayed that we would enter into the highest stage of oneness—the oneness in the divine glory for the corporate expression of the Triune God (v. 22). This highest degree of oneness is actually the divine building—the corporate expression of the Triune God through His believers. Furthermore, the building of God is the Triune God wrought into us so that we may become His glorious corporate expression (Eph. 2:21-22; 3:17, 19, 21; 4:16; 5:27; cf. Exo. 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Ezek. 43:4; Hag. 2:7, 9). This expression is seen today in the church as the Body of Christ, but there will be a further expression in the coming kingdom and the consummate expression in the New Jerusalem. Since the kingdom of God and the glory of God are inseparable, the glory of God will be manifested in the coming kingdom (Matt. 6:13; 16:27; 26:64; 1 Thes. 2:12; Rev. 5:13).

An outstanding feature of the New Jerusalem is that it has the glory of God, His expression; the entire city of New Jerusalem will bear the glory of God, which is God Himself shining out through the city (21:10-11). The more we consider this, the more we can realize that the glory of God in the economy of God involves the high peak of the divine revelation—God becoming man so that man may become God in life, nature, and expression but not in the Godhead, for in order to express God we must be the same as God and actually become God in His communicable attribute of glory (John 1:14; Col. 3:4; Heb. 2:10; Rev. 21:10-11). The goal of God's economy is that we all shine forth His glory, and this goal will be achieved for God's delight in the New Jerusalem, the consummation of the divine economy (vv. 11, 23-24).

A Composition of Divine Sons

The New Jerusalem is a composition of divine sons. "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be God to him, and he will be a son to Me" (v. 7). The sons in the New Jerusalem are different from the peoples who will be the nations living on the new earth outside the New Jerusalem (vv. 3, 24).

Son in this verse does not refer to God's people but to God's redeemed saints throughout the generations. The sons of God will dwell in the New Jerusalem, participate in all its enjoyment, serve God and the Lamb, and reign for eternity (22:3-5). (Recovery Version, 21:7, note 2)

God's eternal purpose is to produce many sons for His corporate expression (Eph. 1:9, 11; 3:11; Rom. 8:28; 2 Tim. 1:9). According to the Bible, the spiritual significance of sonship is that a son is the expression of his father. God desires to have many sons because His intention is to have Himself expressed in a corporate way. God does not want simply an individual expression in the only begotten Son but a Body expression, a corporate expression, in many sons (John 1:18; Heb. 2:10). God's intention is to make the only begotten Son the Firstborn among many brothers (Rom. 8:29). Before the resurrection of Christ, God had only one Son; that is, He had an individual expression. By means of Christ's resurrection God has a multitude of sons (1 Pet. 1:3; John 20:17); that is, He has a corporate expression. For eternity, God will be expressed through a corporate Body of glorified sons; this

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is God's intention (Heb. 2:10; Rev. 21:7, 10-11). Sonship, therefore, is the focal point of God's economy, which is the dispensing of Himself into His chosen people to make them His sons (Eph. 1:5; 3:16-17).

In eternity past God predestinated us unto sonship according to the good pleasure of His will, the desire of His heart (1:5, 9; Phil. 2:13). God has a will, in which is His good pleasure. God predestinated us to be His sons according to His pleasure, according to His heart's delight. God's marking us out beforehand was to destine us unto sonship (Eph. 1:5). We were predestinated to be sons of God even before we were created. As God's creatures, we need to be regenerated by Him so that we may participate in His life to be His sons (John 3:3-8; 1:12-13). Sonship implies having not only the life of a son but also the position of a son (Rom. 8:16-17). As God's marked-out ones, we have the life to be His sons and the position to inherit Him (Gal. 4:7). The sons of God have the life, the position, the right, the privilege, and the blessings of a son. To be made holy—to be sanctified by God by His putting Himself into us and then

mingling His nature with us—is the process, the procedure; to be sons of God is the aim, the goal (Eph. 1:4-5). This is altogether in Christ, for being a son of God is a matter of being joined to the Son of God (Gal. 3:26). Moreover, being a son of God requires that we be conformed to a particular form or shape, the image of the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15). Eventually, our whole being—spirit, soul, and body—will be “sonized,” that is, brought into the divine sonship for the corporate expression of the Triune God in glory (1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:23).

According to the book of Romans, the gospel of God is a gospel of sonship for the reality of the Body of Christ (1:3-4; 8:14; 12:4-5). Romans explains how the individual Christ revealed in the four Gospels could become the corporate Christ revealed in Acts, collectively composed of Himself with all the believers (Acts 9:4). In Romans Paul shows that God’s New Testament economy is to make sinners sons of God and members of Christ to constitute the Body of Christ to express Him (12:4-5). The gospel in the book of Romans is the gospel of the One who is now indwelling His believers as their subjective Savior; the gospel of God, as the subject of Romans, concerns Christ as the Spirit within the believers after His resurrection (1:1, 9; 8:9-11).

The purpose of God’s salvation is to have Christ, the firstborn Son of God, reproduced in millions of believers, the many sons of God, so that they may become the members of His Body, not separate and complete individual units but parts of a living, functioning, coordinated, corporate whole (12:4-5).

Christ has already been designated the Son of God, but we are still in the process of designation, the process of being “sonized,” deified (1:3-4; 8:29). In resurrection Christ’s humanity was “sonized,” deified, meaning that He became the Son of God not only in His divinity but also in His humanity. In resurrection He was designated the Son of God, made the firstborn Son of God, possessing both divinity and humanity. The humanity of Christ was designated, marked out, by the Spirit of holiness into divinity; that is, in resurrection Christ was begotten in His humanity to be the firstborn Son of God (Acts 13:33). As the firstborn Son of God, He is the prototype for the mass reproduction, which is the many sons of God (Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:29). In resurrection Christ in His humanity was designated the Son of God, and by means of such a resurrection we also are in the process of being designated the many sons of God. Christ was designated by resurrection, and we shall be in the likeness of this resurrection (6:5). As we share Christ’s resurrection, we undergo a process of being designated the sons of God. We are designated the sons of God by a change in life through the process of resurrection (8:2, 6, 10-11). In

this process of resurrection there are four aspects: sanctification, transformation, conformation, and glorification (6:19, 22; 12:2; 8:29-30). The process of resurrection will continue until we are sons of God in full; this is the central aim of the gospel.

All the believers in Christ, all the sons of God need to be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God (v. 29). God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son so that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers (Eph. 1:5). As the divine life grows within us and transforms us, it spontaneously shapes us into the form, the image, of the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:2; Heb. 8:10). To be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son is to be saved in Christ’s life from self-likeness, that is, from the expression, the appearance, of the self (Rom. 5:10; Matt. 16:23-24). We are to be conformed to the image of God’s firstborn Son, Christ as the first God-man, so that we may be a group of God-men who are exactly like Him (Rom. 8:28-29). Such a conformation makes us the reproduction of God’s firstborn Son so that we may be exactly like God in His righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:24). In this way Christ can be the Firstborn among God’s many sons so that God may obtain the corporate expression of His firstborn Son with the many sons to accomplish His eternal purpose (1:11; 3:11). Being conformed to the image of God’s firstborn Son is our maturity in the divine life through which we participate in God’s divinity in full (Rom. 8:29). For us to participate in God’s divinity means that God is making us God in His life, in His nature, in His thinking, and in His expression. The believers will manifest God in life, in nature, in inward thinking, and in outward expression to enjoy the divine sonship (Eph. 1:5; Rom. 8:23, 18; Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:2). God will be manifested with His sons, who will be the same as He is in life, in nature, in mind, in being, in image, and in glory (v. 2).

The New Jerusalem is the aggregate of the divine sonship for the corporate expression of the Triune God (Rev. 21:2, 7; Eph. 1:5; Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:23). To God we are the many sons, to Christ we are the many brothers, and to His Body we are the many members (Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:29; 12:4-5). The Triune God is still working today to bring many sons into glory (Heb. 2:10). There is only one divine sonship, and we all are in this one sonship for the corporate expression of the Triune God. All those in the New Jerusalem will be called sons of God (Rev. 21:2, 7). The New Jerusalem is the aggregate of all the sons of God together as a corporate expression; this is the fulfillment of Genesis 1:26, of God having man in His own image. The New Jerusalem is the aggregate, the totality, of many God-men (Rev. 21:7). God’s New Testament economy is to make the believers God-men for the constitution of the Body of Christ so that the New Jerusalem may be consummated as the eternal enlargement and expression

of the processed and consummated Triune God (Gal. 3:26; 4:7, 26, 31). The New Jerusalem is the God-men who have been transformed, glorified, and mingled with the processed and consummated Triune God (John 17:22-23; Eph. 4:4-6). The issue of the Bible's teaching is just one entity, the New Jerusalem as the aggregate of all the God-men (Rev. 21:7; Heb. 2:10-11; 12:22). The ultimate purpose of God's salvation is to work on all those whom He had chosen in eternity to such an extent that they become wholly like Him in the divine glory to express the glorious image of God as jasper for His eternal enlargement and expression (Rev. 4:3; 21:10-11). God's purpose in creating the universe is to produce such jasper (4:11; Eph. 1:9, 11; 3:11; Rom. 8:28; 2 Tim. 1:9). We are in the process of being made "a piece of God," to look the same as God, as jasper (Rev. 4:3; 21:11). This is the New Jerusalem as the aggregate, the totality, of the divine sonship—a composition of the transformed, conformed, and glorified sons of God—as the consummation of God's eternal economy.

A Corporate Counterpart

The New Jerusalem is the wife, the counterpart, of the redeeming God. "I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (v. 2). "Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God" (vv. 9-10). The fact that the New Jerusalem is a bride indicates that she is a corporate person and not a material structure. This city-bride is for Christ's eternal enjoyment and satisfaction.

The New Jerusalem as the counterpart, the bride, of the redeeming God is a fulfillment of a cluster of types in the Scriptures. In typology, certain women in the Old Testament reveal that the church is the counterpart of Christ (Gen. 24:67; 41:45; Ruth 4:13; 1 Sam. 25:40-42). According to type, the position of the church before God is that of a counterpart; in the entire Bible God likens Himself to a man, and He likens the totality of His created and redeemed people to a woman as His counterpart (Isa. 54:5; John 3:29; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2, 9-10). As the Body of Christ, the church receives life from Him for His expression; as the counterpart of Christ, the church receives His love for the satisfaction of His heart's desire (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:30; John 3:15-16, 29). The church as the counterpart of Christ implies satisfaction and rest in love (Eph. 5:25; Zeph. 3:17). When God said that it was not good for man to be alone, He was indicating that God Himself, although absolutely and eternally perfect, was incomplete and that it was not good for Him to be alone

(Gen. 2:18). God has been longing to find a counterpart for Christ, His Son; this counterpart is the church, the bride of Christ to match Christ (Matt. 22:2). The first couple in the Bible, Adam and Eve, presents a significant and complete picture of Christ and the church; in typology, whatever happened to Adam in Genesis 2 was an experience of Christ, and whatever happened to Eve was related to the church. Christ is life and light in order that those who are enlightened by Him and who receive Him as life may become the church as His counterpart (Gen. 1:3; 2:9, 22-23).

Adam in Genesis 2 is a type of Christ; whatever purpose God had in Adam and whatever work He did in Adam were to be carried out in and through Christ (Rom. 5:14). As the center of God's creation, Adam is a type of Christ as the real center of God's creation, because in Him, through Him, and unto Him all things were created (Col. 1:16-17). As the head of God's creation, Adam typifies Christ as the Head of all God's creation (v. 15).

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God's likeness; this typifies Christ as the One who bears God's image and likeness (Heb. 1:3). Adam, who was created to be God's representative to execute His authority and rule for Him on earth, typifies Christ as God's representative (Rev. 11:15). As the head of all men, Adam typifies Christ as the Head of the church corporately and of the believers individually (Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 11:3). As the unique male in God's creation at that time, Adam typifies Christ as God becoming the unique male in the universe—the unique object of our pursuit and the One to whom we eternally belong (Mark 12:30; Rom. 14:8). Adam's need for a wife as his counterpart typifies Christ's need to have the church as His counterpart (Eph. 5:25, 27; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2, 9-10). Adam typifies God in Christ as the real, universal Husband who is seeking a wife for Himself (John 3:29). Adam did not find among the creatures a counterpart to match him; this typifies that none among God's creation can match Christ as His counterpart, for none was out of Christ, and none had the same life, nature, and character to be a perfect match for Him (Gen. 2:18-20). God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and opened his

side; this is a type of Christ sleeping in death and being pierced in His side (v. 21). The rib taken out of Adam signifies the flowing water and the unbroken bone mentioned in John 19:34 and 36.

The church as the counterpart of Christ is typified by Eve as the counterpart of Adam (Gen. 2:21-24; Eph. 5:23-32). Eve was built by God with a rib taken out of Adam; her coming out of Adam in this way typifies that the church is produced by the life which flows out of Christ (Gen. 2:21-22). In having the same life, nature, and character as Adam, Eve is a type of the church, which has the same life, nature, and character as Christ (Col. 3:4, 11). Eve came out of Adam and was joined to Adam to become one flesh with Adam; this is a type of the church coming out of Christ and being joined to Him to become one spirit with Him (Gen. 2:22-24; 1 Cor. 6:17). Eve was a part of Adam's body as Adam's counterpart, typifying that the church is Christ's Body as Christ's counterpart; the church as the Body of Christ is the counterpart of Christ to match and complement Him completely (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:30, 32). Eve was Adam's reproduction, Adam's duplication, signifying that the church is Christ's reproduction, Christ's duplication (John 3:6; 12:24). As Eve was Adam's multiplication, increase, fullness, and expression, the church as the counterpart of Christ is Christ's multiplication, increase, fullness, and expression (v. 24; 3:3-6, 15-16, 29-30; Eph. 1:23; 3:19). Ultimately, Eve as the counterpart of Adam typifies the New Jerusalem, the universal bride, constituted with the saints throughout the generations, who have been chosen, redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified by God, to be the bride of Christ in the millennium and the wife of the Lamb for His satisfaction and rest in love for eternity (Rev. 21:2, 9-10).

The holy city, a new creation, a city bearing the glory of God, a composition of all the sons of God, and the counterpart, the wife, of the redeeming God—all these aspects of the New Jerusalem lend credence to our testimony, according to the divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures, that the New Jerusalem is the consummation of the divine economy according to the high peak of the divine revelation. Our emphasis from this point onward will be on matters pertaining to our becoming the New Jerusalem as the eternal, corporate expression of the Triune God.

The Process of Becoming the New Jerusalem

We have emphasized the fact that the New Jerusalem is the consummation of the divine economy. As used here, the word *consummation* means that there is a process that will be brought to completion, or fulfillment. This process involves the high peak of the divine revelation, the divine dispensing in the divine economy, and God's complete

salvation, especially organic salvation, salvation in life. The Triune God and we become the New Jerusalem by the divine dispensing of Himself into us as the flowing Triune God for our enjoyment to be our eternal blessing for His eternal glory. We become the New Jerusalem, the enlargement of God, the corporate God-man, through the process of God's organic salvation. The consummation of God's organic salvation is the New Jerusalem, the processed and consummated Triune God incorporated with His regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed, and glorified tripartite elect. We must devote our attention to this crucial matter of becoming, which involves both God and the regenerated believers in Christ. "Eventually, the triune, eternal God becomes the New Jerusalem incorporated with all of us. We do not enter into the New Jerusalem; we become the New Jerusalem. Our becoming is our entering in" (Lee, *CrySTALLIZATION-study* 148). Human beings enter into adulthood by becoming adults. The principle applies with the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is God becoming man and man becoming God in life and nature but not in the Godhead. When God became man and man became God in Christ's resurrection, He became the New Jerusalem; as we become God in life, nature, and expression, growing in life unto maturity (Eph. 4:13-16), we become the New Jerusalem.

We need to see clearly that the New Jerusalem is God's goal, good pleasure, eternal purpose, perfect will, and aim in His economy. In His economy, God in Christ took steps to become the New Jerusalem—incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Now in God's organic salvation, we need to pass through a process to become the New Jerusalem—regeneration, sanctification, renewing, transformation, conformation, and glorification. Eventually, at the end of this age, when the God who has become the New Jerusalem marries the overcomers who have become the New Jerusalem, there will be the wedding feast and the wedding day (Matt. 25:10; Rev. 19:7). The God who became man to become the New Jerusalem and the man who is becoming God to become the New Jerusalem will soon be joined in an eternal marriage in the new heaven and new earth.

We look to the Lord that in our understanding, and then in our experience, three things will come together in an intrinsic way: the New Jerusalem, the highest truth of God becoming man and man becoming God, and God's organic salvation. Our tendency is to compartmentalize things and isolate them from each other. However, when we overcome this tendency and put these three things together to realize that all these are part of one great process in God's economy, we will have a tremendous view. Witness Lee's hymn "What Miracle! What Mystery! That God and Man Should Blended Be!" brings together the highest truth and the New Jerusalem. It speaks of

“Jerusalem, the ultimate” and then of “a loving pair” who coinhere as man yet God and as God yet man.

We need to see that there is an intrinsic, essential connection between the highest truth and the New Jerusalem. To deny this highest truth is to render impossible, at least temporarily, the New Jerusalem. In order for there to be the New Jerusalem as the ultimate, consummate, eternal, and corporate expression of the processed and consummated Triune God in Christ as the firstborn Son of God with the transformed, glorified believers as the many sons of God for His corporate expression, God had to become man and man has to become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead. Hence, we see that these three great matters—the New Jerusalem, the highest truth, and organic salvation—all converge.

The “Diamond” in the “Box”

The “diamond” in the “box” of the Bible is the revelation that in Christ God has become man in order that man might become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead (2 Sam. 7:12-14; Rom. 1:3-4; Eph. 3:17). The intrinsic content of the Bible from the beginning is God becoming man and man becoming God to produce a wife, a building, and a corporate expression. This is the “diamond” in the “box” of the Bible. The diamond of this high truth is in the box. However, to those who do not see and appreciate the diamond, the box, in a very real sense, is empty at the core. Although we may find many interesting, charming, and amusing things in the box, it is possible that we may miss the diamond. The diamond is there; however, it takes unveiling through the proper teaching and through the new covenant ministry to see it. That this truth is the diamond in the box is a foundational point, and all those who seek the Lord, honor His word, and love His truth need to see it.

God’s Eternal Economy according to His Good Pleasure

The New Testament reveals that the Triune God has an eternal economy according to His good pleasure to dispense Himself into His chosen and redeemed people in His life and in His nature, to make them His reproduction and duplication so that they may express Him in a corporate way. This corporate expression will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal expression of the Triune God in Christ with all the transformed and glorified sons of God (Eph. 3:9; 1:9-23). This is the meaning of the universe according to God, yet countless Christians do not yet realize this.

Many earnest believers are like Job, who had the deepest

questions but no answers. “But You have hidden these things in Your heart; / I know that this is with You” (10:13). However, there actually is an answer, for what was hidden from Job has been revealed in the New Testament. If we understand the answer, we will realize that it gives meaning to everything and even is the meaning of everything. The New Jerusalem is God’s great answer to all that we have passed through. How is the New Jerusalem God’s great answer? The main contents of the New Testament are that the Triune God has an eternal economy, which is a plan and arrangement for dispensing Himself. This economy is according to His good pleasure. The source of all things is God’s will with His good pleasure (Rev. 4:11; Eph. 1:5), which we understand to mean the desire of God’s heart. God has a heart’s desire, and He has a need for His good pleasure to be satisfied. In relation to this, He has a will, an intention that has been formed into a purpose. His economy is the way that He carries out His purpose, accomplishes His will, and satisfies the desire of His heart.

Since God’s economy is according to His heart, if we want

As a holy city, a new creation, a city bearing the glory of God, a composition of all the sons of God, and the counterpart of the redeeming God, the New Jerusalem is the consummation of the divine economy according to the high peak of the divine revelation.

to know God’s economy, we must know the desire of His heart. Even though God’s heart’s desire was hidden for so long a time, the Triune God has opened it to the apostles in the New Testament and thereby to us today. He has shown the believers that the desire of His heart is to have a corporate expression of Himself in His beloved Son. This corporate expression is actually the multiplication and enlargement of His Son as the firstborn Son. God delights in His beloved Son to such an extent that He is determined to have a mass reproduction of Him and thereby produce a corporate person, the New Jerusalem. This is the desire in God’s heart. Under His mercy and looking to Him for His blessing, we must testify that we have been the beneficiaries of the awesome privilege of knowing the desire in the inner being of God. Not only so, our God desires that His desire be wrought into us. We are not merely fulfilling what is our duty; we are carrying out a desire that is not only God’s but is also ours, because we are one with Him, and many consecrated believers can testify that the fire of God’s desire is burning in their being, motivating them to seek the Lord, to study His word, and to live a life in the organic union with Him.

Because God has such an arrangement and desire, He intends to dispense Himself into His chosen and redeemed people. Although we were all fallen and had failed God, we have been redeemed; we have redemption in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6-7). Based upon the redeeming blood of Christ, we now have the right to receive God's dispensing day by day and even moment by moment. God dispenses Himself into us in His life and nature, and the issue of this dispensing is that we grow in life and are transformed to become His duplication for His glorious corporate expression. The name of this corporate expression in its consummation is New Jerusalem. Gradually, through growth, transformation, and building the seeking believers are becoming the corporate expression of God.

The New Jerusalem Involving God Becoming Man and Man Becoming God in Life and Nature but Not in the Godhead

The New Jerusalem, the ultimate consummation of the Bible, involves God becoming man and man becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead (Rev. 21:2; 3:12). To arrive at the corporate expression of God requires that God become man and that we become God in life and nature so that we can be truly incorporated with God to become the New Jerusalem as His expression. Without this process of our becoming the same as God in life, nature, and expression, there cannot be an organic corporate expression of the Triune God involving Him and millions of believers.

In Christ God has become man to make man God in His life and in His nature so that the redeeming God and the redeemed man can be mingled, constituted, together to be one entity—the New Jerusalem (21:3, 22). The New Jerusalem is a corporate person, a single corporate entity that is produced by a mingling and constituting involving divinity and humanity. With redemption in Christ as the basis, there can now be a mingling of divinity and humanity within us in order to produce the New Jerusalem. However, the redeeming God and the redeemed man need to be in a situation in which mingling between them is possible. This requires that God become man to be a God-man and that the redeemed and regenerated believers become God to be God-men. To say that man becomes God to be a God-man absolutely does not mean that we, the believers, will ever become part of the Godhead or become an object of worship. Rather, to assert this is to testify that, in a limited sense involving life, nature, and expression, we will be the same as God, while only He possesses deity, the Godhead, and only He remains the unique object of worship.

God becoming man and man becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead is not an end in itself. On the contrary, this process makes possible an unspeakably

marvelous mingling, incorporating, blending, and constituting, which results in one entity. In this entity God will still be God with the Godhead as the sole object of worship—we will not be worshipped—and we will still be recognizably human. Although we will continue forever to be human, we will be mingled, blended, constituted, and incorporated into one corporate entity. God and we will be deeply at peace, and we will enjoy the flowing out of the Triune God forever and ever, shining Him forth on the new earth and in the new heaven. The nations around us will praise the glory of His grace (Eph. 1:6), and the devil, who did his best to frustrate the New Jerusalem and to damage humanity, will be in the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:10). In the end, as the consummation, Satan goes to the lake of fire, and we become the New Jerusalem.

Eventually, the triune, eternal God becomes the New Jerusalem incorporated with all of us, and we also become the New Jerusalem through the process of God's organic salvation (Rom. 5:10). The moment that we were regenerated, a part of our being, the human spirit, became divine and a part of the New Jerusalem. Regeneration marks the beginning of the process of God's organic salvation. Having thus begun, we now want the normal process of God's organic salvation to take place in us continually so that we may become the New Jerusalem.

Before God created anything, He planned to have the New Jerusalem. God had a will, good pleasure, purpose, and plan to have a corporate expression, the New Jerusalem. Accordingly, in Christ He chose us to be holy and predestinated us unto sonship so that we might be this corporate expression. He decided and determined this in eternity past according to the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11). Thus, He has decided our destiny. As believers, our destiny is fixed—we will be a part of the New Jerusalem. Becoming the New Jerusalem is not something we can avoid. Ephesians 1:5 says that we were predestinated unto sonship, which is for the New Jerusalem. Ephesians 1:11 says that we were predestinated according to His purpose, which is to have the New Jerusalem. Romans 8:29 says that we have been predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's firstborn Son. This is to have the many sons for the New Jerusalem. All this was determined in eternity past.

In time we have been regenerated, and eventually, we will be sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed, and glorified to become the New Jerusalem. Concerning this, there can be no doubt, for the apostle John saw the New Jerusalem existing as a reality in the sight of God.

Although there is no question of *whether* we will become the New Jerusalem, there can be a question as to *when*

this process of becoming will be completed in the experience of any particular believer. That we will become the New Jerusalem is inevitable, but the Word of God indicates that we may have options regarding when we will become the New Jerusalem. "Option A" is that now—in the church age, the age of grace—we may experience God's organic salvation in full to become the New Jerusalem sooner rather than later. If "option A" becomes our choice and our experience, we may then become His corporate expression, the New Jerusalem, in our own lifetime. Furthermore, in the coming age of the kingdom (which will be the initial stage of the New Jerusalem), we will enjoy the blessings of being in the New Jerusalem. We will be in the New Jerusalem in glorious manifestation. This is in keeping with the reward to the overcomers; they will enjoy in the coming age what they have become in Christ in the present age. Revelation 3:12 says,

He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

Here, "the temple of My God" is the New Jerusalem. This is the Lord's word to the overcomers in Philadelphia. The overcomers in Philadelphia who become the New Jerusalem in their lifetime will be raptured to the throne before the great tribulation, marry Christ, come back as the bridal army to destroy Antichrist, and reign on the earth. This is the first option as to when we become the New Jerusalem.

There is, however, "option B." Regrettably, most of God's people do not know that there is the option of not being produced as the New Jerusalem in the age of grace but during the age of the kingdom, during which time the overcomers will be enjoying the New Jerusalem, which they became in the present age, the age of the church. Sadly, the vast majority of the believers, being under the influence of deception and leaven, are not being properly taught, and thus, they have not given themselves to the Lord for His purpose, and neither are they willing to pay the price to become now what God wants them to be. As a result, these believers will not become the New Jerusalem in this age. Instead, they will be judged negatively at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10), and since they have not become the New Jerusalem before that time, they will not be found by the Lord as those who have become mature and perfected. Their only option will be to become the New Jerusalem during the age of the kingdom. Those who take this option will suffer dispensational punishment, which serves the purpose of

maturing all the children of God. According to God's dispensational chronology, at the end of the millennium all of God's chosen, redeemed, and regenerated elect will have been made God in life and in nature and will have become the New Jerusalem. This is God's administrative arrangement.

Some may choose to dispute this word and discount it, perhaps even arguing against the revelation that, as chosen, predestinated, redeemed, and regenerated children of God, they will become God in life and nature in order to become part of the New Jerusalem. Nevertheless, based upon the divine revelation, we can say with assurance that all God's chosen and predestinated ones will become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead, and we thus will become part of the New Jerusalem. This is God's economy, God's goal, and God's purpose, and nothing and no one can change it or negate it.

A Composition of Divinity and Humanity

The New Jerusalem is a composition of divinity and

The overcomers who become the New Jerusalem in their lifetime will be raptured to the throne before the great tribulation, marry Christ, come back as the bridal army to destroy Antichrist, and reign on the earth.

humanity mingled, blended, and built up together as one entity (John 14:20, 23; Rev. 21:2-3, 9-23). All the components of the New Jerusalem have the same life, nature, and constitution and thus are a corporate person. Because God became like us in humanity and we are becoming and will fully become the same as He in divinity, we and God have the same life, the same nature, and the same constitution. Thus, God and man can be a corporate person. If we differed from God in life, nature, and constitution, there would be no way for us to be a corporate person with God.

God and man, man and God, are built up together by being blended and mingled together (John 14:20, 23; 15:4; 1 Cor. 6:17). God wants to dispense Himself into us and mingle and blend Himself with us, and we should open our entire being to Him so that He will be able to carry out His intention regarding us without hindrance. When we are open to the Lord's dispensing, much mingling and blending can happen in even a short period of time. We need to pray, "Lord, here I am. I choose to become the New Jerusalem now. It is not by

my working; it is by my enjoyment of You. Lord, dispense Yourself into me for the New Jerusalem. Mingle Yourself with me in every part of my being, blend me with You, and incorporate me with You for Your corporate expression.”

Once again, this is a matter of God becoming man and man becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. In order to have the New Jerusalem as this corporate expression, God becomes man and man becomes God. When God became man, He was becoming the New Jerusalem. As we are becoming God, we are becoming the New Jerusalem through God’s organic salvation in sanctification, renewing, transformation, conformation, and glorification.

The Enlarged God

This brings us to a very striking point: The New Jerusalem is the enlarged God (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:2-3; 21:10-11). In making such a remarkable statement, we mean something particular in God’s economy. God is infinite and immutable, and thus He can neither increase nor decrease; He in Himself cannot become larger. Nevertheless, the expression *the enlarged God* is used because it is solidly based upon utterances found in God’s Word, such as, “He must increase” (John 3:30), and “grows with the growth of God” (Col. 2:19). Thus, although God *in Himself* does not increase or enlarge, once God in Christ enters into us, spontaneously there is the opportunity, need, and necessity for God to enlarge *in us*. This enlargement of God in us results in an expression of God in us, and this expression is the enlargement of God, the expression of the God who has been growing and increasing in us for His manifestation.

The New Jerusalem as a corporate expression of God necessitates our becoming the same as God in life and nature. God in Christ is working Himself into millions of believers in order to be incorporated with them as one entity. In this sense, He is the enlarged God because He is enlarged in the way of working Himself into redeemed, regenerated people. It is with this in view that we speak of the New Jerusalem as God enlarged—the corporate manifestation of God. The New Jerusalem is God’s enlargement and expansion, God’s expression in eternity, which is the corporate God (Rev. 4:2-3; 21:10-11). In the beginning of the Bible, in Genesis, there was God, and at the end, in Revelation, there is the New Jerusalem. This is God in His economy becoming the New Jerusalem.

In the beginning of the Bible, there is a single God; at the end there is a great, corporate God—the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2, 9-11). However, this corporate God is God in life and nature and expression, not in the Godhead. The

Godhead is unique in that it cannot be communicated or shared; only the Triune God possesses the Godhead. Hence, God is the unique object of worship. The wife spoken of in the Bible is God married to the Husband. However, only God in His Godhead as the Husband receives worship. The wife will therefore not only love her Husband but will also worship Him (22:9; Matt. 4:10).

To speak of a corporate God means that God, in His economy, is wrought into His redeemed and regenerated believers to bring forth a corporate expression of Himself. Nevertheless, in His Godhead, and purely in His Godhead, He is single, not corporate, and is the unique object of our worship. However, He does not want to be worshipped merely by angels, restored creatures on the earth, and sinners who are merely objectively justified. God wants to have an intrinsic worship from those who are one with Him in the deepest possible way. Only this will satisfy the Father’s thirst (John 4:23-24). The universe exists for this purpose, and everything in redemption and salvation is for this goal.

Those who participate in the New Jerusalem are all God’s children, God’s species (1:12-13; 3:3-6). God has fathered many sons who are the same as He is in life and nature. When He and His many sons are together, they are a corporate entity, the corporate God, the New Jerusalem. This is the New Jerusalem as the corporate God in the economy of God.

The Firstborn Son, the Many Sons, and the New Jerusalem

The firstborn Son, the many sons of God, and the consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God issue in one thing—the New Jerusalem (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10; John 7:39; Gal. 3:14; Rev. 21:2). The firstborn Son is Christ in His humanity, uplifted in His divinity to be incorporated into the sonship of the only begotten Son of God. The many sons of God are the believers in their maturity. The consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God is the Spirit. When we put these things together, we have the New Jerusalem.

God the Father has a great family of many sons (Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15-16). In the divine family, the Father is God, and all the sons are the many God-men (Heb. 2:10). We are not merely creatures and sinners—we are God-men. We are God-men by the new birth, and we are becoming what we are.

The Father is God, and all the sons are “small gods” in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. John 1:12-13 says, “As many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name, who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of

the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” First John 3:2 says, “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been manifested what we will be. We know that if He is manifested, we will be like Him because we will see Him even as He is.”

We have pointed out that the New Jerusalem is the aggregate, the totality, of the many God-men (Rev. 21:7). It will be a great sight when the Triune God in the firstborn Son and hundreds of millions of reproductions of the Firstborn as the glorified sons are mingled, blended, united, and incorporated together as one entity. We must learn to be content with simply being a small part of the corporate expression of the Triune God. If we are delivered from ourselves through God’s organic salvation, we will be happy merely with being a son of God in the corporate expression of God. In this expression we will be forever content, eternally satisfied because our God is satisfied with the consummation of His eternal economy. At present, we are simply members of the Body of Christ, exercising our function for building the Body and standing with all the other members when they exercise theirs. It is a great deliverance to be released from the self that wants to be the center of everything, and to be immersed in the corporate expression of God.

Christ is the firstborn Son, and we are His many “twins.” Romans 8:29 indicates this, saying, “Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers.” The New Jerusalem is God the Father with many “God the sons.”

The New Jerusalem Being a Composition of God’s Chosen, Redeemed, Regenerated, Sanctified, Renewed, Transformed, Conformed, and Glorified People Who Have Been Deified

The New Jerusalem is a composition of God’s chosen, redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed, and glorified people who have been deified (John 3:6; Heb. 2:11; Rom. 12:2; 8:29-30). This is the process of organic salvation. For us to be deified means that we are being constituted with the processed and consummated Triune God so that we may be made God in life and in nature to be His corporate expression for eternity (Rev. 21:11). If we are truly open to the Lord, this process will go on moment by moment, even now, making every day a day of constitution and filling our lives with divine meaning, for we are living in spirit under the divine dispensing for the consummation of the divine economy. Eventually, under the Lord’s sovereignty and under His mercy we will realize that everything in

our experience is for this marvelous corporate expression of God.

We use the word *deification* here to denote the process in Christ by which the believers are becoming God in life, in nature, and in expression for the New Jerusalem as the corporate expression of the Triune God. The deification of the believers is therefore an organic process that is for the New Jerusalem and will consummate in the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is the goal; deification is the process by which we reach that goal; and this process equals God’s organic salvation. What a profound truth!

The New Jerusalem Being the Real and Consummate Shulammitte

The New Jerusalem is the real and consummate Shulammitte—a corporate Shulammitte, including all of God’s chosen and redeemed people (S. S. 6:13; Rev. 21:2, 9-10; 22:17). The name *Shulammitte* is a lovely name. It is the Hebrew feminine equivalent of *Solomon*.

To speak of a corporate God means that God is wrought into His redeemed and regenerated believers to bring forth a corporate expression of Himself. Nevertheless, in His Godhead, He is not corporate, and He is the unique object of our worship.

In Song of Songs, Solomon the king courts a country girl who eventually becomes his duplication. In her maturity she receives this new name (S. S. 6:13). In the same way, every believer in Christ is in the process of becoming a Shulammitte and will eventually be a part of the New Jerusalem as the eternal, corporate Shulammitte. To become a Shulammitte is to live in the divine romance portrayed throughout the Bible and especially in Song of Songs. The more we love the Lord and experience His love for us, the more we grow in life and are transformed and thereby become God for the New Jerusalem. It is by loving the Lord and advancing in the divine romance that we become the Shulammitte, a figure of the New Jerusalem (v. 13; Rev. 21:2).

As Solomon’s counterpart, the Shulammitte became the same as Solomon in life, nature, and image, as Eve to Adam (Gen. 2:20-23). This signifies that the lover of Christ becomes the same as He is in life, nature, and image to match Him for their marriage (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29; Rev. 19:7; 21:2). The many lovers of Christ eventually will become duplications of God in life and in

nature but not in the Godhead; this is the fulfillment of God becoming man so that man may become God, which is the high peak of the divine revelation.

We have seen that Eve is a type of the New Jerusalem. As Eve came out of Adam, we came out of Christ to become Christ in another form. Hence, Christ marries His duplication in a female form. This marriage is the New Jerusalem. What great love is in God, that He in His Son would die for His enemies, reconcile them to Himself, forgive their sins, cleanse them from all unrighteousness, justify them, regenerate them, and take them through a process of organic salvation to make them all His duplication! God works with people like us to make us the same as He is. This is a love story in which God fulfills the desire of His heart to have a counterpart, a Shulammitte, as His expression. The high peak of the divine revelation—God becoming man and man becoming God in life and nature but not in the Godhead—and the divine economy converge and consummate in the New Jerusalem as the corporate Shulammitte. Ultimately

and eternally, Christ and His wife, the Shulammitte, will be joined together to be the New Jerusalem for God's expression; this is the consummated Shulammitte (Rev. 22:17).

The Bible reveals how the story ends—with a divinely human and humanly divine couple enjoying a blissful married life for eternity as the New Jerusalem. God became man in Christ to court us, and we are becoming God in Christ to marry Him. This is God's goal, the fulfillment of His desire. May all the believers see this and live for the New Jerusalem as the consummation of the divine economy according to the high peak of the divine revelation. **AC**

Works Cited

- Lee, Witness. *Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John*. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1996.
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Footnote from the Recovery Version of the Bible

“And I saw the holy city, **New Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:2).

New: The revelation of this book is composed of signs...Because of the profundity of the great and important matters in this book, it is difficult for man to speak of them exhaustively in plain words. Thus, all these matters are symbolized and depicted by signs, such as the lampstands, signifying the churches, and stars, signifying the messengers of the churches (ch. 1); Jezebel, signifying the degraded, fornicating Roman Church (ch. 2b); jasper and precious stones, signifying life and the redeeming God (4:3); the Lion and the Lamb, signifying the overcoming and redeeming Christ (ch. 5); the four horses, signifying the gospel, war, famine, and the spreading abroad of death (ch. 6a); the universal woman, signifying God's redeemed throughout the generations, her child, signifying the strong, overcoming ones among God's redeemed, and the dragon, the serpent, signifying the cruel and subtle Satan, the devil (ch. 12); the beast out of the sea, signifying Antichrist, and the beast out of the earth, signifying the false prophet (ch. 13); the harvest, signifying the people growing under God's cultivation, and the firstfruits, signifying the ones who ripen early among those who are growing under God's cultivation (ch. 14); Babylon the Great, signifying Rome, in both its religious aspect and its material aspect (chs. 17—18); and the bride, signifying the saints who are mature and are prepared to be Christ's counterpart (ch. 19a). Besides these, there are many other signs. The final sign, which is also the greatest, is the New Jerusalem, signifying the composition of the totality of God's redeemed saints throughout the generations, who have been regenerated, transformed, and glorified. It is not a material, lifeless city but a corporate living person as the bride, having Christ, such a wonderful person, as her husband (v. 2).

The New Jerusalem is a living composition of all the saints redeemed by God throughout all generations. It is the bride of Christ as His counterpart (John 3:29) and the holy city of God as His habitation, His tabernacle (v. 3). This is the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22), which God has prepared for us and which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob long after (Heb. 11:10, 16). This is also the Jerusalem which is above and which is our mother (Gal. 4:26). As the bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem comes out of Christ, her Husband, and becomes His counterpart, just as Eve came out of Adam, her husband, and became his counterpart (Gen. 2:21-24). She is prepared by participating in the riches of the life and nature of Christ. As the holy city of God, she is wholly sanctified unto God and fully saturated with God's holy nature to be His habitation.