

# THE CONSUMMATION OF THE NEW MAN: THE NEW JERUSALEM

BY DAVID YOON

The progressive accomplishment of the divine economy in God's move among humanity is revealed in four significant expressions used in Paul's Epistles: *the first man, the old man, the second man, and the new man* (1 Cor. 15:47; Eph. 4:22, 24). The first man is the corporate man created by God for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose. He is the collective man created in the image of the Triune God with the intention that he would participate in the divine life for the dual purpose of expressing God's glory and exercising His dominion over His enemy Satan (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:8-9; Col. 1:15; Rom. 8:29; cf. Acts 17:26, 28-29). The old man is the created man who became old through the corruption of the fall, thus failing God in His purpose. He is the totality of fallen humanity—"the children of the devil" contaminated by the satanic life and thereby alienated from the life of God. He has fallen short of God's glory, is captured by Satan, and has become divided into many nations (1 John 3:10; Matt. 13:38; Eph. 4:18; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 3:4; Gen. 10:25-32). The second man is Christ, an individual God-man, as the initial accomplishment of God's purpose. As the prototypical God-man, He is the first human being to possess the divine life, live by this life, manifest God in the flesh, and exercise His authority over Satan (Matt. 1:22-23; John 1:4; 6:57; 14:9; 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:16; Matt. 12:28). The new man is the corporate God-man as the enlargement of the second man. He was produced primarily through Christ's redemptive, all-terminating death and His life-imparting resurrection for the full accomplishment of God's purpose (1 Cor. 15:45; Eph. 2:15-16; John 16:21; 1 Pet. 1:3).

The church as the new man—the corporate God-man composed of the believers as many God-men—fulfills God's original intention by partaking of His life, bearing His image, and representing His authority (Eph. 4:24; 6:10-13). This new man, composed of the believers joined to the Triune God and to one another, is now in the process of growing unto maturity until he arrives "at a full-grown man" (4:24, 13). As the full maturation of the new man, the New Jerusalem is the organic aggregate

of all the God-men, expressing God's unlimited glory and exercising His unchallenged dominion. In brief, the first man is a type of the second man; the old man is a corruption of the first man; the second man is the reality of God's intention for the first man; the new man is the enlargement of the second man, who is consummately expressed as the New Jerusalem. In light of such a full history of God's move with and within humanity, the New Jerusalem—the culmination of the divine economy—should not be understood merely as a physical edifice. Instead, it must be interpreted as a sign of a corporate person composed of God's redeemed who are united with the Triune God in life and built up with one another for the manifestation of His glory and the maintenance of His dominion (v. 16; Col. 2:19; John 17:23).<sup>1</sup>

## The Correspondence between the Characteristics of the New Man and the Features of the New Jerusalem

The New Jerusalem is the ultimate and eternal manifestation of the growth of the church as the new man in the present age. According to the intrinsic focus of the New Testament revelation, God's primary intention with His elect is not to transport them from an old environment into a new environment but to transform them from the old creation, the old man, to the new creation, the new man. In light of this, the features of the New Jerusalem should be viewed not from a physical perspective but from the perspective of the divine economy to gain the universal new man, the corporate God-man. The intrinsic significance of the details of the New Jerusalem cannot be understood as physical features of a literal city but as spiritual realities of the new man. The New Jerusalem is the ultimate manifestation of the new man—the consummate expansion of the corporate God-man expressing God's image and exercising His dominion in a profound display of His multifarious wisdom.

In his Epistle to the Ephesians, a book on the church, the apostle Paul first reveals the church as the Body of Christ, speaking of "the church, which is His Body, the

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fullness of the One who fills all in all” (1:22-23). By identifying the church with the Body, Paul indicates that the intrinsic significance of the church is the Body of Christ, an organic expression of the all-filling Christ. In Ephesians 2 Paul goes on to unveil that the Body is the new man. Immediately after describing Christ’s creation of the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers into “one new man” and His making peace between them (v. 15), Paul speaks of Christ’s reconciling these two groups of believers in “one Body” to God (v. 16). In Paul’s view the church as the one Body is the one new man.

**T**he characteristics of the church as the new man in the book of Ephesians correspond to the features of the New Jerusalem in the book of Revelation. These two books reveal that both the new man and the New Jerusalem are a composition of God’s sons, the product of God’s grace unto His glory, the expression of God’s glory, the expression of God’s righteousness and holiness, the means of God’s administration, a composition of the Jewish and Gentile believers, a corporate entity characterized by peace and oneness, and the masterpiece of God. If we see the correlation between the new man and the New Jerusalem, our stance toward the New Jerusalem will not be passive—one of merely waiting to go someday to a physical city. Instead, by the grace of God we will adopt an active attitude, endeavoring to experience the spiritual realities of the new man throughout our Christian life. If we live out and work out the symbolic details of the New Jerusalem today, we will be able to hasten the fulfillment of God’s eternal purpose (cf. 2 Pet. 3:12) by putting on the new man, which is being renewed, in our experience.

### *A Composition of God’s Sons*

Both the church as the new man and the New Jerusalem are a corporate composition of God’s sons, who possess the life of God and have matured in this divine life. Ephesians unveils that in eternity past God predestinated us unto sonship (1:4-5), determining our destiny to be conformed to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:29). Yet our forefather Adam partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which ultimately affected his entire tripartite being—spirit, soul, and body—with death (cf. Gen. 2:17). In the sight of God, when Adam partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, all his descendants, including us, were in his loins (cf. Heb. 7:4-5). Hence, as those in Adam, we too experienced the deadening of our spirit and the spreading of death into our entire being (cf. Gen. 2:17; Eph. 2:1; 4:18). However, “even when we were dead in offenses,” because of His great love, rich mercy, and abounding grace, God “made us alive together with Christ” (2:4-5) by dispensing His eternal life into our deadened spirit through His Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2;

John 3:6). Because we were born of the Spirit of life, we are no longer children of wrath but God’s beloved children (Eph. 2:3; 5:1). As we develop in the divine life, we will no longer remain as little children (4:14) but will grow up into Christ in all things (v. 15) until we become mature sons of God as the full-grown, corporate new man (v. 13).

**L**ike the church as the new man, the New Jerusalem is a corporate composition of God’s sons. Concerning a constituent of the New Jerusalem, God declares in Revelation 21:7, “He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be God to him, and he will be a son to Me.” It is significant that this verse mentions the word *son*, not *child*. As Marvin R. Vincent points out, verse 7 is “the only place in John’s writings where *υἱός son* is used of the relation of man to God” (564). In depicting the believers’ relationship with God in his Gospel and Epistles, the apostle John speaks of the believers as God’s children—those who are born of God and possess His life (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1-2, 10; 5:2). Yet in Revelation 21, when presenting the New Jerusalem as the ultimate consummation of the believers’ relationship with God in life, John speaks of them as God’s sons—those who have matured in the divine life. The New Jerusalem in eternity future is the composition of the regenerated and matured sons of God. This is the fulfillment of God’s predestination of the believers unto sonship in eternity past.

The constituents of the New Jerusalem are not lifeless building materials but living persons—sons of God who are born of Him and have grown in His life unto maturity. The New Jerusalem is not a place but a person—the corporate, universal new man. As a composition of all the mature sons of God, it is the totality and consummation of the divine sonship.

### *The Product of God’s Grace unto His Glory*

Both the new man and the New Jerusalem are produced by God’s grace unto His glory. Ephesians reveals that the believers, who are the sons of God and members of the church as the new man, will enjoy His abounding grace to become His glorious expression. Immediately after speaking of the believers as those predestinated unto sonship, Paul declares that we will be “to the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved” (1:6, cf. vv. 12, 14). The expression *the glory of His grace* suggests a close link between grace and glory. Here, grace is God in Christ dispensed into us for our enjoyment, and glory is God in Christ expressed through us. Grace, the impartation of God, produces glory, the expression of God. For eternity the glorification of God in the believers as the consummate issue of the operation of His abounding grace will elicit praise from the things in

the universe that behold and appreciate the expression of God in and through the glorified believers. This notion is echoed by 1 Peter 5:10-11, which says,

The God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you. To Him be the glory and the might forever and ever.

The God of all grace who has called us into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus will bring us into this glory by dispensing Himself as the multiplied, varied, and true grace into us (1:2, 4:10; 5:12). Because of this, both glory and might will be ascribed to Him throughout eternity future for His wondrous work of grace that has brought many sons into glory (v. 11; Heb. 2:10).

The book of Revelation unveils that the New Jerusalem as the realm of the divine glory is also a product of grace (21:11). According to 1 Peter 3:7, the divine life is the primary element of the divine grace, which has been inherited by the believers as the “grace of life.” Likewise, the New Jerusalem as a city of life is a city of grace. The throne of God and of the Lamb,

the center of the New Jerusalem, is a throne of grace (Rev. 22:1; Heb. 4:16). This is because the throne of God and of the Lamb, the throne of the redeeming Triune God, is the source of the river of water of life, signifying the life-giving Spirit (Rom. 8:2; John 7:37-39). The tree of life, signifying Christ as the embodiment of the divine life, also grows along the flow of the river so that the believers may be supplied with the super-abounding grace of life (Rev. 22:2; John 1:4; 14:6; 15:1). As the believers participate in the grace of life by drinking the life-giving Spirit and eating Christ as the tree of life, the Triune God Himself is wrought into, united with, and expressed through them as glory (1 Cor. 12:13; John 6:57). The New Jerusalem as a city of glory is the climax of the believers’ enjoyment of grace in the divine economy.

### *The Expression of God’s Glory*

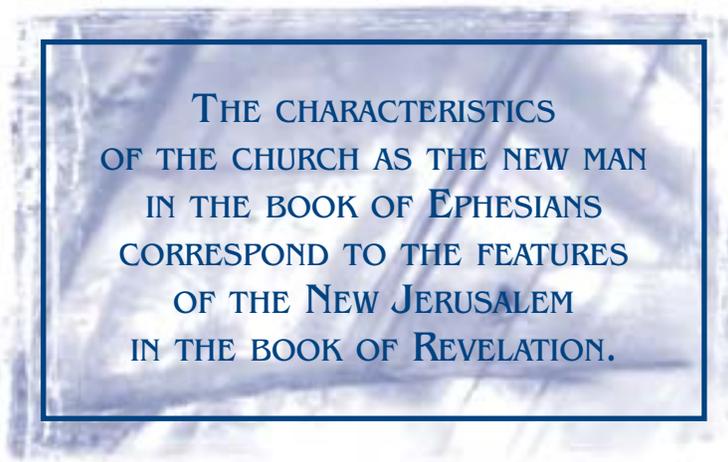
Both the new man and the New Jerusalem express the glory of God. That the church as the new man expresses God corporately is revealed by Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3:16-21, in which he prays that the Father of glory

through the Spirit would strengthen us into our inner man according to the riches of His glory so that Christ, the Lord of glory, can make His home in our hearts and thereby work the element of the divine glory into our inward parts (1:17; 1 Cor. 2:8). As a result of the dispensing of the divine glory into us, we will be filled unto all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:16-20), that is, unto the church as the Body of Christ, which is the fullness, the expression, of Christ (1:22-23), who is the embodiment and expression of God. Consequently, there will be glory to God in the church, the corporate God-man, and in Christ Jesus, the unique God-man, “unto all the generations forever and ever” (3:21). The God of glory will be glorified in the church as His glory is constituted into and manifested through the church. In 1:18 Paul speaks of the riches of God’s glory in the saints, implying that these riches have been imparted into the saints. The glory of God with its riches, which have been wrought

into the saints for their corporate glorification, will eventually redound to God for His glorification in them for eternity. The expression *forever and ever* anticipates the complete answer of Paul’s prayer in eternity future when God is glorified in the New Jerusalem—the consummate corporate expression of God both in Christ as the first-born Son of God, the

glorified God-man, and in the believers as many sons of God, the many glorified God-men.<sup>2</sup>

According to the apostle John’s description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21, the holy city has “the glory of God” (v. 11). Having the glory of God is an outstanding feature of the New Jerusalem. This indicates that the New Jerusalem is the manifestation of God’s being. As Marvin R. Vincent notes, the expression *glory of God* in verse 11 is “not merely divine brightness, but the presence of the God of glory Himself” (565). Hermann Cremer similarly notes that the glory of God is “the revelation and manifestation of all that He has and is”; it is “a self-revelation in which God manifests all that He is” (191). The intrinsic significance of God’s glory in the New Jerusalem does not refer to the physical illumination of light shining upon a literal city; rather, it refers to the God of glory Himself expressed in and through the glorified believers as the city. The New Jerusalem bears the glory of God, which is God Himself illuminating within the redeeming Lamb as the lamp and radiating out through the believers as the transparent city (v. 11).



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As a city filled with the glory of God, the New Jerusalem is the ultimate goal of God in His relationship with humanity. The God of glory (Acts 7:2) has predestined us unto His glory (1 Cor. 2:7), has called us into His glory (1 Thes. 2:12), is transforming us into His glory (2 Cor. 3:18), and will lead us into His glory (Heb. 2:10). Isaiah suggests that God's glory is the reason for the existence of the elect: "Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory" (43:7). This is echoed by the apostle Paul, who testifies that God fashioned His chosen people as vessels unto honor in order that "He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory" (Rom. 9:23). God makes known the riches of His glory upon us by imparting Christ—the effulgence, the shining, of His glory—into us (Heb. 1:3). For this reason, Paul declares in Colossians 1:27 that Christ in us is "the hope of glory," indicating that glory is not a vague splendor but a living person—the indwelling Christ Himself. The expression *the hope of glory* bears three organic implications: an expectation for the divine glory based upon the power of the divine life, a process of growth leading to a consummation, and the ultimate fulfillment of that expectation. Christ as the hope of glory is in us as the seed of glory. Christ as the seed of glory was sown into us at the regeneration of our spirit when He as the Lord of glory was imparted into us (1 Cor. 2:8); He is growing in us through the transformation of our soul as we behold and reflect His glory (2 Cor. 3:18); and He will blossom out of us at the transfiguration of our body, when the body of our humiliation is conformed to the body of His glory (Phil. 3:21). When Christ permeates the entirety of our tripartite being with His glorious element, God's glory will be expressed from our regenerated spirit to our transformed soul and through our transfigured body. At Christ's coming back, not only will He come from the heavens with glory objectively (Rev. 10:1; Matt. 25:31), but He will also be glorified in us, and His glory will be expressed from within us subjectively (2 Thes. 1:10). Hence, when Christ our life is manifested, we also will be manifested with Him in glory (Col. 3:4). At that time, the incomparable glory will be revealed upon us, for we will be unveiled as the sons of God (Rom. 8:18-19). The New Jerusalem, a city saturated with God's glory and composed of His glorified sons, is the eternal realization of the hope of glory.

In Revelation 21:11, after mentioning that the holy city has the glory of God, John declares that the light of the New Jerusalem is "like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal" and that both the wall of the city (the most visible part of its structure) and the first layer of its foundation are constructed of jasper (vv. 18-19). It is significant that both the wall and the appearance of the New Jerusalem are jasper. According

to 4:3, God sitting on the throne is like a jasper stone in appearance. Therefore, both God and the New Jerusalem have the same appearance, the appearance of jasper. Hence, the New Jerusalem bears the image of God in His glory and expresses Him by her shining. This implies that we, the believers in Christ, as the components of the New Jerusalem, will become the same as God in appearance but not in the Godhead in order to be His eternal manifestation. Consequently, we will fulfill John's declaration in his first Epistle that "we will be like Him" (3:2).

### *The Expression of God's Righteousness and Holiness*

According to Ephesians 4:24, the church as the new man was created according to God in righteousness and holiness, which are "two aspects of God's essence" (Lee, *New Testament* 1814). "Because the new man was created according to God, in a very real sense the new man is the same as God" (2320). Although the church as the new man is not God in the Godhead or an object of worship, it is the same as God in life, nature, and expression. Christ, the second man, bore the image of God in His human living by expressing God's righteousness (Luke 23:4; Acts 7:52; 22:14; 1 John 2:1) and God's holiness (Mark 1:24; John 6:69; Acts 2:27). Hence, Peter spoke of the incarnated Christ, the second man, as "the holy and righteous One" (3:14). The new man as the enlargement and continuation of Christ also bears the image of God in righteousness and holiness.

The New Jerusalem is the ultimate manifestation of the new man, which was created to express God's attributes of righteousness and holiness. "In the New Jerusalem," Witness Lee says, "we shall realize and understand how Christ created us into the new man through His cross according to God in righteousness and holiness" (2311). Although the word *righteousness* is not used explicitly with regard to the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 and 22, the notion of righteousness is still implied in these chapters. According to Revelation 21, the New Jerusalem is described as "a bride adorned for her husband" (v. 2) and "the bride, the wife of the Lamb" (vv. 9-10). The precursor of the New Jerusalem as the wife of the Lamb adorned for her husband (vv. 2, 9) is the wife of the Lamb who has made herself ready for the marriage of the Lamb (19:7). The wife of the Lamb in 19:7 refers to the bride of Christ in the millennial kingdom, who is composed of only the overcoming believers (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21), whereas the wife of the Lamb in 21:9 refers to the bride of Christ in eternity future and is composed of all the believers, including the defeated believers, who will participate in the New Jerusalem only after experiencing the Lord's discipline during the millennium. According to 19:8, the counterpart of the Lamb is adorned by being "clothed in fine linen, bright and clean,"

which linen is “the righteousnesses of the saints.” In Adam Clarke’s view, “the fine linen here spoken of is not the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers, for it is here called the righteousness of the saints—that which the grace and Spirit of Christ has wrought in them” (*Commentary*). Henry Alford agrees, asserting that the saints’ righteousness is “their own; inherent, not imputed; but their own by their part in and union to Him” (725). Arthur Wallis identifies the fine linen in 19:8 with the white garments in 3:18, claiming that “the white garments of Christlikeness” refer not to “the imputed righteousness which is the portion of all who believe” but to “the imparted righteousness, seen in the practical outworking of holiness day by day” (265). Since the wife of the Lamb during the age of the millennial kingdom will be clothed in fine linen—signifying Christ as subjective righteousness constituted into her—the wife of the Lamb in eternity must be a constitution of God’s righteousness as well. The New Jerusalem as the constitution of God’s righteousness will be the consummate fulfillment of Paul’s statement in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that in Christ—that is, in an organic union with Him—the believers may become the righteousness of God. C.A. Coates notes that in the New Jerusalem we will see “in its fulness the result of Christ having been made sin for us, in the saints having become manifestly God’s righteousness in Him” (224). We who were once constituted sinners in Adam will be fully constituted righteous in Christ (Rom. 5:19). Since the believers, who are components of the New Jerusalem, are constituted righteous, they will practice righteousness and be righteous, even as Christ is righteous (1 John 3:7; cf. 2:29). Hence, righteousness is a prominent feature of the New Jerusalem, the consummation of the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness.

**T**he new man was created to manifest not only God’s righteousness but also His holiness. The believers who constitute the new man should be sanctified, made holy, both in position and disposition. For the believers to be made holy is not only for them to be positionally set apart from all things other than God (Matt. 23:16-17) but also for them to have God’s holy nature imparted and constituted into their being dispositionally (Rom. 15:16; 6:19, 22). The Triune God is the God of holiness: the three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—are related to holiness (cf. Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8).

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The Father is called the “Holy Father” (John 17:11); Christ the Son is referred to as “the holy thing” and “the Holy One” (Luke 1:35; Rev. 3:7); and the Spirit is “the Holy Spirit” and “the Spirit of holiness” (Matt. 1:18, 20; Rom. 1:4). God alone is holy (Rev. 15:4; 1 Sam. 2:2), for He alone is unique, transcendent, and distinct from everything common. Therefore, to be holy is to be deified, that is, to become the same as God in His attribute of holiness but not in the Godhead.

**I**n Ephesians 1:4 Paul declares that before the foundation of the world—in eternity past prior to the creation of the universe—God chose us in Christ to be holy. God’s intention in eternity to make us holy is fulfilled primarily by the operation of His Holy Spirit to impart His holy nature into us. In verses 13 and 14 Paul says that when we heard the word of the truth, the gospel of our salvation, and believed into Christ, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise “unto the redemption of the acquired possession.” According to these verses, upon our regeneration God imprinted His Holy Spirit into us as a seal, causing us to bear His image. Furthermore, the expression *unto the redemption of the acquired possession* indicates that the goal of the Holy Spirit’s sealing in verse 13 is the redemption of the acquired possession in verse 14. As God’s redeemed elect, we are His possession. As Paul tells us elsewhere, God obtained us through His own blood (Acts 20:28); that is, He acquired us by purchasing us with the precious blood of His Son, Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7). Hence, the redemption of the acquired possession corresponds to the redemption of our body in Romans 8:23. In keeping with this notion, Paul says that we were sealed in the Holy Spirit of God “unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30). Although the Holy Spirit has initially sealed us in our spirit by regeneration, He is also continually sealing us by daily saturating our soul with God’s holy element until the day of the redemption, the transfiguration, of our body (Phil. 3:21).

Referring to this gradual process of the dispositional sanctification of our soul, Paul says in Ephesians 5:26 that Christ sanctifies the church, “cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word.” The Scriptures frequently associate water with life. “The fountain of life” (Psa. 36:9) signifies God the Father as the source of life (Jer. 2:13); “the spring of the water of life” (Rev. 21:6) signifies

God the Son as the emergence of life (John 4:14); and the “river of water of life” (Rev. 22:1) signifies God the Spirit as the flow of life (John 7:38-39). The water in Ephesians 5:26 refers to the divine, eternal, uncreated, flowing life of the Triune God (Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4; John 7:38-39; Rev. 21:6; 22:17). Hence, Christ’s sanctification of the church by the washing of the water in the word refers to His dispositional sanctification of the believers by the flowing, the dispensing, of the divine life as water into the believers. Through the impartation of the Spirit of life into the believers (Rom. 8:2), the holy life, nature, and essence of God spread throughout their inward parts during the full course of their Christian life so that at Christ’s second coming they may be presented to Him as His holy counterpart without any sign of oldness (without wrinkles) (Eph. 5:27). The ultimate consummation of this process of organic sanctification is the holy city, the *New Jerusalem*, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2).

One of the designations of the New Jerusalem is that of the *holy city* (vv. 2, 10). This implies that holiness is a defining characteristic of this city. The city is holy because its constituents, all of God’s redeemed saints, are absolutely separated unto God in position and fully saturated with Him in disposition; they have completely put off the old man and put on the new man. On the one hand, the great and high wall of the holy city sanctifies the city positionally, protecting the New Jerusalem from everything profane, abominable, or common (v. 8). Hence, anything that offends God’s holiness shall by no means enter into the city (v. 27). On the other hand, the river of water of life, signifying the Spirit of life, sanctifies the New Jerusalem dispositionally, saturating the saints with God’s holy life and nature. As the holy city, the New Jerusalem is the fulfillment of God’s choosing the believers to be holy in eternity past, Christ’s creation of the new man on the cross for the expression of God’s holiness, and Christ’s dispositional sanctification of the believers for the producing of His holy counterpart (Eph. 1:4; 2:15; 4:24; 5:26-27).

### *The Means of God’s Administration*

The New Jerusalem is the consummation of the new man not only in the aspect of bearing God’s image but also in the aspect of exercising His authority. Ephesians 1:10 speaks of “the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him.” The expression *the times* in this verse refers to the ages; hence, the fullness of the times will be when the new heaven and new earth appear after the completion of all the dispensations of God in all the ages, which include the age of sin (Adam), the age of the law (Moses), the age of grace (Christ), and the age of the kingdom (the millennium). God’s economy is to

head up all things in Christ at the fullness of the times. God created the universe in an excellent order (Job 38:4-7; Isa. 45:18). However, Lucifer, an archangel and the head of all creatures in the preadamite age, rebelled against God and became Satan (ch. 14; Ezek. 28), causing the universe to collapse into chaos (cf. Gen. 1:2). God came in to restore the damaged creation, and He created Adam and made him the head of all the created things on the earth (vv. 26-28) so that he would defeat Satan and fulfill God’s intention to head up all things in Christ. However, Adam rebelled against God, and, as the head of creation, he led all creation into a state of vanity and corruption (3:1-6; Rom. 8:20-21). The universe that was created for the fulfillment of God’s will thus entered into a state of collapse. Amidst this dismal situation, Christ was given to be Head over all things in order to rescue the universe from the heap of collapse.

According to Ephesians 1, the Christ in whom God intends to head up all things is not the individual Christ but the corporate Christ—Christ as the Head with the church as the Body, the new man (1 Cor. 12:12). The church’s indispensable role in Christ’s heading up of all things is revealed in Ephesians 1:22-23, which says that God gave Christ “to be Head over all things to the church, which is His Body.” The expression *to the church* implies that whatever Christ, the Head, has attained through His resurrection and ascension is transmitted from Him to the church. In this transmission the church as the Body of Christ shares all of Christ’s attainments, including the headship over all things. This unveils God’s ordination to head up all things in Christ, the Head, through the church, the Body (2:15-16). Although the church in and of itself is not the Head, the church may and must participate in Christ’s headship by being the Body of the universal Head. This thought is echoed by Heinrich Schlier, who asserts that the heading up of all things in Christ in verse 10 “obviously consists in” giving Christ to be Head over all things to the church in verse 22 (3: 682). Schlier writes,

The summing up of the totality [the heading up of all things] takes place in its subjection to the Head. The subjection of the totality to the Head takes place in the coordinating of the Head and the Church. As the Church receives its Head the totality [all things] receives its κεφάλαιον [heading up]. (3: 682)

Schlier’s comments suggest that Christ heads up all things in Himself by being the Head of the church, His mystical Body. God executes His administration today through the corporate new man, the Head of whom is Christ and the Body of whom is the church. Just as the head of our physical body administrates, and the body functions to carry out the administration of the head, so also Christ as the Head administrates God’s plan, and the

church as His Body carries out the administration of the Head.

The universe can be headed up in Christ only to the extent that the church as His Body is incorporated into Christ as its Head. In Ephesians 4 Paul reveals that in order for us as the Body to coordinate with the Head, we should “grow up into Him in all things, who is Head, Christ” (v. 15). In order for God to head up all things in the universe in Christ, we as members of His Body should take the lead to be headed up in Christ by growing up into Him in all things. Instead of remaining little children (v. 14), we need to grow up into Christ the Head and attain to a full-grown man, arriving at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (v. 13). To grow up into the Head is to allow Him to increase within us as life (cf. John 14:6; 10:10). This is suggested by Paul’s word in Colossians 2:19, which says, “Holding the Head, out from whom all the Body... grows with the growth of God.” This verse reveals that the growth of the Body is dependent not upon the increase of doctrinal knowledge but upon the growth of God, that is, the increase of God’s life in the Body.

**T**he economy of God to head up all things in Christ is fulfilled through the impartation of the bountiful supply of the Triune God as life into the members of the Body. In an attempt to foil God’s plan, Satan injected himself as sin into man (cf. Rom. 6:14; 7:11-12, 21) to become death within man (cf. 5:17). Through the disobedience of Adam, sin and death entered into the human race (v. 12). Death ushers in darkness, and darkness issues in confusion. In contrast, in accomplishing His eternal economy, God in Christ dispenses Himself as life into the believers (vv. 17-18; 8:10, 6, 11). Adam, the first man, brought in death through sin (5:12), but Christ, the second man, brought in life through righteousness (vv. 17-18). Life overcomes death and results in light (John 1:4); light dispels darkness and brings in harmony. Even though Satan brought creation into disorder by infecting man with himself as death, God in Christ brings creation out of the satanic chaos into the divine order by imparting Himself as life into the church. Therefore, by partaking of the divine life, the church as the new man exercises God’s dominion and participates in the heading up of all things in the universe.

The New Jerusalem in eternity is the ultimate fulfillment

of God’s economy to head up all things through the new man. In the New Jerusalem there will be no more darkness, death, and chaos. God in Christ will head up every item in the new heaven and new earth through the New Jerusalem. He will carry this out by dispensing the divine life into the believers, saturating them with the divine light, and shining from within them into the universe. The throne of God and of the Lamb, which is located at the center and peak of the New Jerusalem, symbolizes “the divine authority of God’s headship in Christ” (Lee, *Revelation* 742), and the river of water of life, which proceeds from the throne and flows throughout the entire city, signifies the fellowship of life (cf. 1 John 1:2-3). From the throne of the redeeming God flows the life-giving Spirit as the river of water of life. This river saturates the New Jerusalem with the divine life and conveys the divine authority of the throne to every part of the city. The divine life and divine authority, in turn, bring the

city under God’s headship in the fellowship of His life. This is the consummate fulfillment of the believers’ growing up into Christ the Head through their participation in the divine life (Eph. 4:13).

**B**ecause the believers as the constituents of the New Jerusalem are brought under the headship of the redeeming God, they are also

the means for God to subject every creature under His headship. The New Jerusalem is the center of God’s eternal reign in the new heaven and new earth, and the throne of God and of the Lamb is the administrative center, the ruling authority, within the holy city. Throughout eternity future, the Lord God will reign over the constituents of the New Jerusalem by continually dispensing the divine life into them from His throne and shining upon them with the divine light. The believers will then reign with Him over the nations on the new earth by shining forth this light upon them (Rev. 22:5).

The New Jerusalem as the means of the divine administration is a light-bearer that radiates God as light over the nations around the city. As such, the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth is the eternal kingdom of God—a realm in which a corporate man manifests God’s glory and maintains His dominion over the earth (cf. Matt. 6:9-10). In Revelation 21:23-24 the apostle John reveals that the New Jerusalem is a city of light through which God in Christ administrates the nations: “The city has no need of the sun or of the moon that

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they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. And the nations will walk by its light." This portion of the Word portrays a dynamic relationship between the light, the lamp, and the diffuser, shining forth the divine light over the nations. God with His glory is the light of the holy city (John 1:5). Christ the Lamb is the lamp that embodies God as the light and illumines the city with the glory of God. The city with its transparent wall, a composition of His glorified elect, is the universal diffuser of the light to shine over the nations outside the city. It is by this light radiating from the city that the nations will walk. This thought is also conveyed by C. A. Coates, who describes the holy city as "a vessel of light and glory" that rules the nations around the city (235-236). God's "glory will shine out in the assembly [the church]," and "the assembly as the city will administrate the kingdom." Consequently, the nations "will regulate all their course by the light of the heavenly city," and "all the course that the nations take will be directed by the influence of a city where the light of God and of the Lamb shines" (235). The shining of God's glory in and through the New Jerusalem will accomplish His eternal economy to head up all things, both in the heavens and on the earth, in Christ. In eternity future every creature will be headed up in the corporate Christ, composed of Christ as the Head and the believers as the Body. God will shine in and through Christ the Head as the lamp to illuminate the city with the glory of God. Christ, in turn, will shine through the Body as the transparent jasper city to illuminate the nations around the city. All the living beings in the new heaven and new earth, represented by the nations, will be brought under the headship of God through the light of the city. In summary, God as light will shine from within the Lamb as the lamp through the New Jerusalem as the light-bearer so that all creation will be governed, headed up, by the shining of the city. God's intention that the new man carry out His administration is thus fully consummated in the New Jerusalem.

### *A Composition of the Jewish and Gentile Believers*

As God heads up all things in Christ through the New Jerusalem, every trace of division among human beings will be removed, and all things in the universe will be brought into absolute harmony and oneness. In this light, it is significant that the new man in Ephesians 2 and the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 and 22 are a composition of the Jewish and the Gentile believers. Because Christ created the Jews and Gentiles into the one new man, the new man is a corporate, composite person (Eph. 2:15). The Jews and the Gentiles were separated by the middle wall of partition, the law of the commandments in ordinances, which law was composed mainly of three ordinances: the practice of circumcision,

the observance of dietary regulations, and the keeping of the Sabbath (vv. 14-15). On the cross Christ abolished the law of the commandments in ordinances by nailing the separating ordinances to the cross (Col. 2:14), thereby breaking down the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles. Moreover, Christ created the Jewish and Gentile believers in Himself into one new man by dispensing Himself as the divine life into them (3:4). Consequently, Christ "has made" the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers "one" (Eph. 2:14).

Ephesians 2 further reveals how Christ joined the Gentiles to the Jews for the building of the church as the house of God. Through the cross Christ reconciled both the Jews and the Gentiles to God in His one Body, the one new man (vv. 15-16). Through Christ and in one Spirit, both the Jewish and the Gentile believers have access to the Father (v. 18). As a result, the saved Gentiles are no longer strangers but "fellow citizens with the saints" (v. 19). "*Fellow citizens with the saints* indicates the kingdom of God," which is "a sphere in which He exercises His authority," and "all the believers, Jewish and Gentile, are citizens in God's kingdom" (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 19, note 3). In the present age both the Jewish and the Gentile believers constitute the church as God's kingdom (Rom. 14:17). Further, the saved Gentiles are no longer sojourners but "members of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19). Hence, both the Jewish and the Gentile believers are children of God who have been born into His household in order to enjoy His riches (cf. Gal. 6:10). Moreover, the church, the one new man, is the holy temple, wherein Christ as the cornerstone joins together the two walls of God's building—the wall of the Jewish believers and the wall of the Gentile believers (Eph. 2:20-21). "In Christ, who is the cornerstone, all the building, including both the Jewish and the Gentile believers, is fitted together and is growing into a holy temple in the Lord" (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 21, note 1). Verse 6 of chapter 3 goes on to unveil that the Gentile believers are fellow heirs, fellow members, and fellow partakers. They are fellow heirs of God who inherit God; they are fellow members of the Body of Christ as His unique expression; and they are fellow partakers of God's promise through the gospel.

Just as the materials for the new man are the Jewish and the Gentile believers, so also the materials for the New Jerusalem are the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel—representing the Old Testament saints—are on the twelve gates of the city (Rev. 21:12), and the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb—representing the New Testament saints—are on the twelve foundations of the wall (v. 14). This indicates that the holy city is comprised of both the Old Testament saints and the New

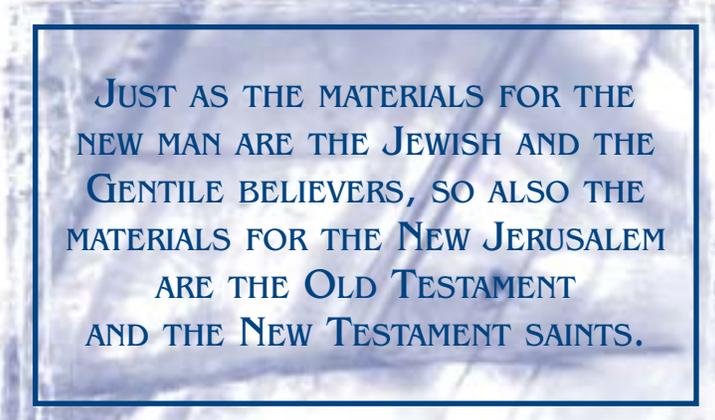
Testament saints. As such, the New Jerusalem is a living composition of all God's redeemed and perfected saints in both the Old and New Testaments throughout the generations.

The New Jerusalem is the eternal kingdom of God, for it is composed of the believers who express God's glory (Rev. 21:11, 23-24) and reign with Him forever and ever (22:5). According to Revelation 5:9-10, Christ was slain and thus has purchased for God by His blood "men out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation," and has made them "a kingdom" so that they may "reign on the earth." No matter what our kindred, language, race, or nationality may be, we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ so that we may be formed into the kingdom of God and joined together as one entity in the one new man. The church as the kingdom of God in the present age is composed of the believers in Christ who have been purchased out of every tribal, linguistic, racial, and national background. The New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth is the consummation of the new man, whose oneness and harmony are a triumphant counterpoint to the division and confusion of the old man.

#### ***A Corporate Entity Characterized by Peace and Oneness***

Both the new man and the New Jerusalem are a corporate entity characterized by peace and oneness among God's elect. God created man as a corporate entity (Gen. 1:26). However, because of the fall, all kinds of ordinances—customs, habits, and ways to live and worship—have arisen, contributing to the divisions, misunderstandings, and conflicts among the peoples and nations on earth today. Barriers between nationalities and races provoke enmity and discord in lieu of genuine, lasting peace. However, Christ not only made peace through the cross to reconcile the believers to God (Col. 1:20); He also abolished the separating ordinances, thereby slaying the enmity among the believers. On the cross Christ created the Jewish and the Gentile believers into one new man, making peace between all the believers (Eph. 2:15-16). In resurrection He came as the Spirit to announce peace as the gospel (v. 17; Col. 1:20; 2 Cor. 3:17; John 20:19, 21, 26; cf. 14:27; 16:33). Christ Himself is not only the Peacemaker but also "our peace," our oneness and harmony (Eph. 2:14).

It is in Christ as the unique bond of oneness that the believers are one. For the proper practice of the Body life today, we need to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace (4:3). The peace that Christ made on the cross for His Body should bind all believers together as the uniting bond. "The uniting bond of peace is the issue of the working of the cross," and "when we remain on the cross, we have peace with others" (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 3, note 3). By allowing the peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts, we are able to live the life of the new man (Col. 3:15). As we allow the peace of Christ to arbitrate, adjust, and decide all the things in our heart that concern our relationship with the other members of His Body, this peace dissolves all our complaints against one another (v. 13). As a result, all disputes are settled, and harmony and oneness are maintained. Thus, the peace of Christ is the oneness of the new man.



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Whereas division is the rule of the old man, the hallmark of the new man is oneness. In Ephesians 2:15 Paul speaks of the *one* new man, singling out oneness as its fundamental attribute. Such an entity of oneness is composed of the believers who are one with one another in Christ. Ephesians 2:15 reveals Christ's accomplishment in His

crucifixion—the abolishing of all the ordinances and the creation of the new man. Colossians 3:10-11 unveils the issue of this accomplishment: in the new man, "there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all." On the cross Christ abolished in His flesh all the separating ordinances, thereby nullifying the differences in race, religion, culture, and social class that were due to ordinances (Eph. 2:14-15). There He also created the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers into one new man "in Himself" (v. 15). The Greek word translated as "in" (ἐν) in verse 15 conveys a sense of *with* and thus has an elemental significance. This implies that Christ created the new man with Himself as its unique element by imparting Himself as the element of newness into the believers. Consequently, there cannot be any natural persons in the new man; there can only be Christ, who is all the members and in all the members. Because Christ is the unique constituent and person of the new man, in the new man there cannot be natural distinctions according to race (Greek and Jew), religious background (circumcision and uncircumcision), culture (barbarian,

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Scythian), or social status (slave, free man). Since Christ as the divine element of newness is the sole factor that joins all the members of the new man, He is the preserving oneness and holding factor of the one new man. In the new man all divisive distinctions are terminated, and all the members are organically constituted with and replaced by Christ. Thus, they are one with one another in Christ, that is, in their Christ-constituted being.

Christ's work on the cross to abolish the separating ordinances and to create the one new man was a nullifying of the confusion and division of Babel (Col. 2:14). As a result of Satan's corruption, the God-created corporate man was eventually divided into many nations (Gen. 10:25-32), issuing in the rebellion of humankind at Babel. There, God caused human language to become confused and divided into many different speakings. In sharp contrast, on the day of Pentecost Christ was poured upon the believers as the uniting Spirit, and the new man came into existence on the earth. There, different peoples with different languages understood one another and became one (Acts 2:5-11).

**I**n the proper church life as the manifestation of the one new man, there is oneness and harmony, and all the believers have one mind with one opinion and one mouth with one speaking. When the believers put on the new man experientially by being renewed in the spirit of their mind, they will have "the mind of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:27)—the mind saturated with the Spirit—and "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16)—the mind "which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). Because their renewed mind will be the mind permeated with Christ as the Spirit, they will "think the same thing in the Lord" (4:2; 2 Cor. 13:11), "thinking the one thing" (Phil. 2:2), and they will "be of the same mind toward one another according to Christ Jesus" (Rom. 15:5; 12:16). As a result, their "heart and soul" will be one (Acts 4:32).

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Matt. 12:34); whatever fills our heart proceeds out of our mouth. If the believers are "attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion," they will also "speak the same thing" (1 Cor. 1:10). Similarly, when the believers are "of the same mind toward one another according to Christ Jesus" (Rom. 15:5), they will glorify God "with one accord" and "with one mouth" (v. 6). In the new man Christ as the unique Head has one mind and one mouth. The believers, as members of the Body, think with the mind of Christ and speak with the mouth of the Head in order to glorify God in one accord. This one accord in the believers' thinking and speaking is the reversal of Babel—God's judgment upon the rebellious old man—and the culmination of Pentecost—the practical manifestation of the one new man.

The New Jerusalem, the enlargement of the new man, is likewise a single, organic corporate entity. The New Jerusalem is a city, signifying God's unique spiritual building (Rev. 21:18-19, 21, 23; 22:14), with the recurring characteristic of oneness. In the New Jerusalem, the unique city, we see one throne, one street, one wall, one river, one tree of life on both sides of the river, and one light. The one throne, the throne of God and of the Lamb, signifies the unique administration of the divine authority executed by the redeeming Triune God as the eternal King (22:1). The one street, the street of gold, signifies the holy way of the divine nature as the unique way for the daily living of God's redeemed elect as the constituents of the city (21:21; 22:1). The one wall, the jasper wall, signifies the unique appearance of the city that expresses the Triune God (21:18; cf. 4:3). The flow of the one river, the river of the water of life reaching the entire city, signifies the unique fellowship of the divine life circulating among all of God's redeemed (22:1; cf. 1 John 1:1-3). The one tree, the tree of life, signifies the unique life supply for the spiritual nourishment of the components of the city (Rev. 22:2). Finally, the one light, the glory of God shining in the Lamb, signifies the redeeming Triune God as the unique source of illumination in the city, which has no need for the sun nor the moon (God-created natural light) nor the light of a lamp (manmade artificial light) (21:23; 22:5). The New Jerusalem is a city of oneness—one city administrated by one throne, directed by one way, expressing the Triune God through one wall, nourished by one tree, supplied by one river, and illuminated by one light.

**T**his city of oneness is constructed with God's redeemed people as many precious stones. At Peter's conversion the Lord gave him a new name, Peter, meaning "stone" (John 1:42). Later, when the Lord brought the disciples to Caesarea Philippi, He reminded Peter of his new identity as a stone when He spoke to him concerning the building of the church (Matt. 16:18). From these two events, Peter obtained the revelation that the believers are living stones that are being built up as a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:4-5). This indicates that the destiny of all the believers in Christ is to be transformed from worthless clay into living, precious stones and to be built up with one another as God's spiritual house (2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:22). The New Jerusalem is not a massive, disordered pile of precious stones but a city built up with the transformed believers to be His habitation (Rev. 21:13, 18-20, 3). In eternity all the believers will be built and fitted together to form the jasper wall of the holy city (v. 18; cf. Eph. 2:21-22). Hence, none of them will be isolated, independent, or individualistic units; instead, all of them will be measured, tempered parts of God's one unique building (cf. 4:16; 1 Cor. 12:24).

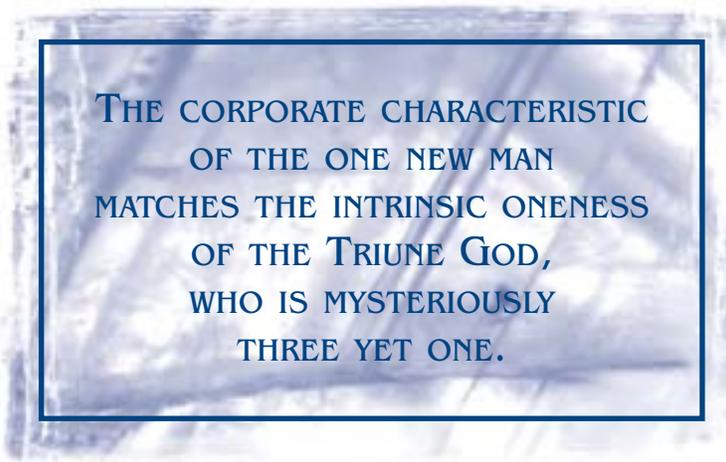
As previously mentioned, the fact that the appearance of

both God (Rev. 4:3) and the wall of the New Jerusalem is jasper (21:10-11, 18) indicates that the holy city will have the same appearance as God and thereby express Him. All four sides of the New Jerusalem have the same expression—the expression of jasper, the glorious appearance of God. This implies that all the believers, who constitute the jasper wall of the city, are one in the expression of God’s image. This is genuine oneness among the believers. Though all the members of the Body of Christ may have different functions (Rom. 12:4), they should have the same expression, the unique expression of Christ. They should all live Him for His magnification and be conformed to His image (Phil. 1:20-21; Rom. 8:29). Similarly, although those who constitute the New Jerusalem will continue to exist as recognizable persons created, redeemed, regenerated, and transformed by the Triune God (cf. Rev. 21:19-20), they will be one in the expression of God’s glorious image because they will have been fully “transformed into the same image” (2 Cor. 3:18), the image of the glorified Christ, who is the image of God (4:4).

The New Jerusalem is an organic corporate entity marked also by peace. The word *Jerusalem* is composed of *jeru*, which means “foundation,” and *salem*, which means “peace.” Hence, *Jerusalem* means “foundation of peace”; it is founded, grounded, and safeguarded in peace (cf. Heb. 7:2). The Bible reveals that peace is related to each of the three of the Godhead. God the Father is “the God of peace” (Rom. 16:20; 1 Thes. 5:23), the source from which peace proceeds (Col. 1:2), and the One who “has called us in peace” (1 Cor. 7:15). God the Son is the “Prince of peace” (Isa. 9:6), “the Lord of peace” (2 Thes. 3:16), “our peace” (Eph. 2:14), and the Maker, Announcer, and Giver of peace (vv. 15, 17; John 14:27). Moreover, peace is one of the items of “the fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22), and peace is “in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). Therefore, the Triune God is a God of peace. At the beginning of their Epistles, the apostles’ greeting is customarily first with grace and then with peace (1:7; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:4), suggesting that in the believers’ experience, peace is a condition that results from their enjoyment of the Triune God as grace. When we live in communion with God, praying to Him, thanking Him, and letting our requests be made known to Him in every aspect of our daily living, the all-surpassing peace of God is dispensed into us in order to guard our hearts and our thoughts in

Christ Jesus, keeping us calm and tranquil (Phil. 4:6-7). Thus, the peace of God is the God of peace, that is, God as peace “infused into us through our fellowship with Him by prayer” (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 7, note 1). As we partake of the Triune God as grace and practice fellowship with Him in prayer, He as the God of peace will be imparted into us, and we will be founded, grounded, and safeguarded in Him as peace. The consummation of the believers’ enjoyment of the Triune God as their peace is the New Jerusalem in eternity. The New Jerusalem will be “an entity of peace,” for the constituents of the city will be “solidly grounded and safeguarded in the Triune God as peace and safety,” enjoying Him as peace forever (Lee, *Economy* 281).

For eternity, the believers, the components of New Jerusalem as the city of peace, will enjoy peace not only vertically between themselves and the Triune God but also horizontally with one another. This means that the New Jerusalem is the consummation not only of the oneness between the Triune God and His elect but also of the oneness among His elect in Him. Genesis 1:26 reveals that the Triune God (“let Us”) created the first man as a corporate man (“let them”), making him in His image and after



His likeness so that this collective man could manifest God’s trinity, His “foremost and highest attribute” (Lee, *Elders’ Training* 54). Similarly, Christ on the cross created the church as a corporate new man in order to express that God is triune. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are distinctly three yet inseparably one (Matt. 28:19; John 10:30). Similarly, “there are many believers, but there is only one new man in the universe,” for “all the believers are components of this one corporate and universal new man” (Lee, *Ephesians* 206). This thought echoes the apostle Paul’s proclamation concerning many believers constituting the one Body of Christ as its members: “We who are many are one Body in Christ” (Rom. 12:5). Hence, the corporate characteristic of the one new man matches the intrinsic oneness of the Triune God, who is mysteriously three yet one. In the New Jerusalem, the conclusion of the divine revelation in the Bible, “all of God’s chosen and redeemed people will be absolutely one in the Triune God”; “He is three but He is uniquely one, so in the Triune God, the three-one God, we all can be made one” (Lee, *Overcomers* 109).

In keeping with this, the Son prayed in John 17 that the believers, who have the eternal life (v. 2), the holy word of God (vv. 8, 14), and the divine glory (v. 22), might be perfected into one to the extent that they might be one even as the Father and the Son are one (vv. 22-23). In verse 21 the Son prayed, “That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us.” This verse reveals that the oneness of the Triune God is a communicable attribute; it is possible for the believers in Christ to be one, even as the Father and the Son are one. Just as the Father and the Son coinhere—that is, mutually dwell within each other—so also the believers may coinhere with the Triune God (v. 21; 15:4). It is in this state of coinherence with the Triune God that the believers are made one.

John 17 shows us two kinds of oneness which are incorporated together through the coinhering of the Triune God with the believers in Christ. The believers in Christ are many and the Triune God is three; among the three there is no division but only harmony and oneness. Their oneness becomes the oneness of the believers in Christ, which becomes the oneness of the Body of Christ. The Body is the new man. (Lee, *Crystallization-study* 116)

Here we see that the oneness of the new man as the Body of Christ is the reproduction of the oneness of the Divine Trinity. Since the New Jerusalem is the completion of the new man, this holy city, which is characterized by oneness, is the consummate answer to the Son’s prayer that the believers’ oneness may be the enlarged oneness of the Triune God.

### *The Masterpiece of God*

Both the church as the new man and the New Jerusalem are the masterpiece of God. There is a clear and important link between Ephesians 2:15, which says that Christ *created* the Jews and the Gentiles *in Himself* into one new man, and verse 10, which says, “We are His masterpiece, *created in Christ Jesus*” (emphasis added). According to the context of the first ten verses of Ephesians 2, we who are God’s masterpiece are the believers who have been enlivened, raised, and seated together with Christ in the heavenlies by the God of love, mercy, and grace (vv. 4-6). Therefore, the masterpiece of God created in Christ Jesus is nothing other than the new man created in Christ, the embodiment of God. The heavens declare the glory of God, the expanse proclaims the work of His hands (Psa. 19:1), and man bears His resemblance (8:4). All these items of God’s creation are the works of His hands (Heb. 1:10; Gen. 2:3), yet none of them can claim the title of being *His masterpiece*, and none of them are as precious or desirable to Him as the new man. God’s unique masterpiece, His highest work of art, is the new man—a corporate man united with the Triune God for His expression

and representation. Today the church as the new man is still a work in progress under God’s craftsmanship, yet this work will ultimately issue in the New Jerusalem in eternity.<sup>3</sup>

The New Jerusalem also is the masterpiece of God, the expression of His wisdom. Hebrews 11:10 speaks of “the city which has the foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God.” The city here refers to the New Jerusalem, because 12:22 identifies “the city of the living God” with “the heavenly Jerusalem.”<sup>4</sup> Hence, the city that has the foundations is the holy city that has the twelve solid and unshakable foundations composed of twelve kinds of precious stones (Rev. 21:19-20). The New Jerusalem is the masterpiece of God, a miraculous structure of treasure, designed by an ingenious Architect and built by a skillful Craftsman.

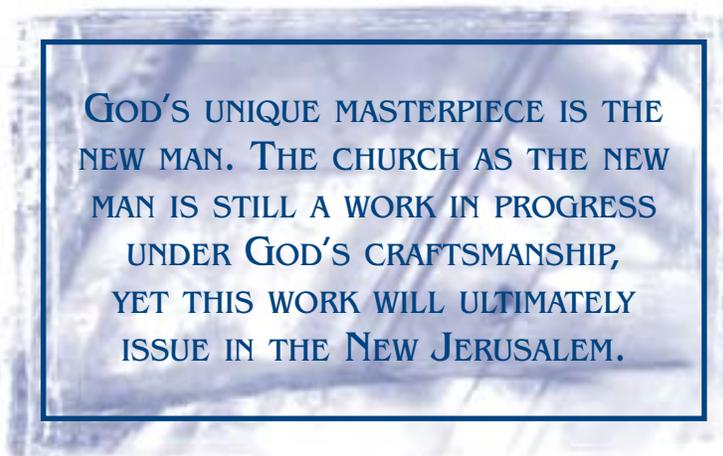
It would thus be grossly unfitting for the saints who sojourned on earth as foreigners and longed after a better country to find their final home merely in a physical city that catered to their soulish yearnings and fleshly lusts (Heb. 11:8-16). Nowhere does the New Testament suggest that God is building a material city in heaven. Instead, a host of verses in the New Testament testify of God’s intention to build the church, the new man. The Son of God, the embodiment and expression of God, disclosed this intention of God by declaring, “I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18). In Acts, Luke spoke of the building up and multiplication of the church (9:31). The apostle Paul, who had been appointed by God to know His will and reveal His economy (22:14; Eph. 3:9), repeatedly underscored the building up of the church, the Body of Christ and the house of God, as the singular aim of the believers’ life and work (1 Cor. 3:9-17; 14:4-5, 12; Eph. 4:12, 16). Paul said to the believers in Corinth, “You are...God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9). He defined the building up of the Body as the work of the New Testament ministry to perfect the saints (Eph. 4:12), and he pointed to the growth and building up of the Body as the goal of every believer’s function as a member of the Body (v. 16). Just as Paul said that the believers “are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit” (2:22), so also Peter wrote that the believers as the stones “are being built up as a spiritual house” (1 Pet. 2:5). The holy city is an organic, spiritual entity as the consummation of the Body of Christ, the corporate new man. Only such a wonderful building could match the biblical promise of a masterpiece worthy of both God as the wise Architect-Builder and the believers as His heavenly pilgrims.

Since the New Jerusalem in eternity is the completion of the new man in the present age, Paul’s emphatic expression *we are His masterpiece* in Ephesians 2:10 indicates that the New Jerusalem as God’s masterpiece is not a literal city but a composition of *persons* who are joined to

the Triune God and blended with one another (1 Cor. 6:17; 12:24). As the masterwork of God in the new creation, the New Jerusalem expresses the infinite wisdom and divine design of God as the Architect and Builder of the holy city (Heb. 11:10). The New Jerusalem will be a universal, public display of the surpassing riches of God's grace in the ages to come—the very grace by which He has transformed the sons of disobedience to be the glorified sons of God and has built them into His corporate expression (Eph. 2:7). It will forever declare God's multifarious wisdom in designing and constructing a marvelous divine-human structure—a universal, mysterious, corporate person composed of the Triune God with His glorified elect (3:10). A literal interpretation of the New Jerusalem as a physical city of transparent gold and huge pearl gates insults the only wise God, depreciates His untraceable wisdom, belittles His mystical architectural design, and diminishes God's supreme workmanship.

### The Issue of God and Man Passing through a Long Process

In His eternal being, the Triune God is a God of newness, even newness itself. In the divine economy the Triune God intends to dispense Himself as newness into humankind in order to manifest Himself in the created realm. For the accomplishment of this economy, the Triune God created the first man, a corporate man, in His image to express His glory and gave him dominion to represent Him with His authority. This first man fell and through Satan's corruption became the old man, thereby losing God's ordination to express and represent Him. Instead of forsaking His purpose with man, God in Christ became the second man, a man united with God, in order to recover man's lost ordination and accomplish God's purpose. In His human living, Christ the first God-man expressed God in humanity and defeated Satan while standing in the position of a man. In order to fully accomplish God's purpose, Christ, as an individual God-man, was enlarged to become a corporate God-man. Therefore, on the cross the second man, the individual Christ, crucified the old man and created the new man, the corporate Christ—a corporate God-man composed of the believers in Christ—as the reproduction of Himself. The church as the new man is God's corporate expression and representation for the realization of His purpose. Although the new man was created in Christ's crucifixion and born in His resurrection, he still needs to



be practically manifested on the earth. Thus, there is the need for the new man to grow through the believers' putting on of the new man experientially, that is, their being renewed in the spirit of their mind. The full maturation of the new man will issue in the New Jerusalem, which is the eternal, consummate, corporate expression and representation of the Triune God in His excelling attributes, which include newness, glory, righteousness, holiness, peace, and oneness.

The New Jerusalem as the enlargement of the new man is "the organic constitution of God and man, both having passed through a long process" (Lee, *Experience* 18). The Triune God in Christ passed through a series of processes, including His incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, in order to unite Himself with humanity to become the Head of the new man. The believers in Christ undergo a series of procedures in God's salva-

tion in the divine life, including regeneration, sanctification, renewing, transformation, and glorification, in order to be constituted with the processed Triune God to become God-men, the Body of the new man. In Christ God became a man, and in Christ man will become God to constitute the New Jerusalem, the eternal, consummate, corporate God-man. The

New Jerusalem is the eternal union of the God who became man with human beings who have become God, an eternal union of the Head and the Body of the new man. **AFC**

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>The New Jerusalem is the culmination of the union of the Triune God with His redeemed and transformed elect. Rejecting the physical interpretation of the New Jerusalem, R. C. H. Lenski asserts that just as "the throne" in Revelation 4:2 is not "a grand chair set on an elevation with space before it but the symbol of God's power, rule and dominion in the universe," so also the New Jerusalem is not "many houses or palaces with streets, a surrounding wall with portals and angel guards"—it is "the ultimate fulfillment of the name of Jesus: 'Immanuel' = 'God with us' (Matt. 1:23)" (619, 631). In brief, according to Lenski, the holy city is "the eternal union of God with us" (641). The New Jerusalem is the consummate Immanuel—the Triune God fully united with His tripartite elect.

<sup>2</sup>C. A. Coates similarly speaks of the New Jerusalem as the fulfillment of Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:

[The holy city] is the full answer to Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3 that the saints "may be filled even to all the fullness of God"; and where he also refers to the assembly [that is, the church,] as the shrine of divine glory. "To him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages. Amen." Here we see the answer to that prayer in a vessel adequate for the display of what God is! What a blessed work of God by His Spirit, what formation in the divine nature, is needed to bring about such a result! "All the fullness of God" was in Christ, but the assembly is to be filled to it so as to be adequate for the setting forth of God. It is truly wonderful that it should have been God's purpose to have a holy vessel, entirely the product of His own work, in which His glory shall shine forth. The holy city will be the light-bearer in the world to come. (224)

<sup>3</sup>C. A. Coates also asserts that the church, the assembly, as a miniature of the New Jerusalem is a work under construction that will result in the city:

[The city] is the assembly viewed in its completeness as the result of God's workmanship, God's building...It is of deep interest to know that the divine work is going on at the present time which will issue in the city, but it is productive of much exercise also. So far as the work of God is effected in saints, and they have become God's workmanship, the city exists today. (227-228)

<sup>4</sup>We need to note that Hebrews 12:22 does not say that Jerusalem is in the heavens; rather, this verse speaks of the "heavenly Jerusalem," emphasizing the heavenly nature of the city of God. This city is heavenly in nature because it is composed of the believers who are the corporate reproduction of Christ—the second man, who is heavenly—and who, like Him, are heavenly and will bear the image of the heavenly (1 Cor. 15:47-49). The heavenly Jerusalem is constituted with the believers who have been seated together with Christ in the heavenlies in Him (Eph. 2:6), those who have received a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1), have tasted the heavenly gift (6:4), and live a heavenly life on earth today (Col. 3:1-2).

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## Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians

The church as God's masterpiece is the corporate and universal new man (2:15)...Verse 10 says that we are God's workmanship "created in Christ Jesus." As the masterpiece of God's work, we, the church, are an absolutely new item in the universe, something newly originated by God. We have been created by God in Christ through regeneration to be His new creation (2 Cor. 5:17)...God's masterpiece is absolutely new because it is the mingling of God and man...God's masterpiece, His greatest workmanship, is the working of Himself into man and the constituting of man into oneness with Himself to produce the church.

From the *Life-study of Ephesians* by Witness Lee, pp. 186-187