

## The New Jerusalem

...all who remain will worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and celebrate the Feast of Booths.  
(Zech 14:16)

There's really only one step left in our journey through Revelation. But for a minute, I think it's a good idea to look back at where we've been. This will help us see where we're going.

I've already discussed the idea of "typology." "Types" are acted-out prophecies, where a person, place, event, or a thing points forward to something bigger and more important in God's plan for our redemption. The bigger and more important thing is the "antitype."

When Jesus died, He was our Passover sacrifice (1 Cor 5:7, cf. Lev 23:5). The Passover in Egypt led to ancient Israel's delivery from physical Egypt. Jesus, our spiritual Passover, leads true Israel's delivery from spiritual Egypt (11:18). Jesus rose as the first fruits from the dead (1 Cor 15:20, 23, cf. Lev 23:10). Finally, at Pentecost, three thousand were added to the church (Acts 2:41) in the spring harvest of souls (cf. Lev 23:15-16).

In Jesus' first advent, He was the antitypical fulfillment of the spring feasts of Israel, and He fulfilled them in order. This suggests that Jesus will fulfill the fall festivals, in order, in His second advent. Let's look.

In Revelation the spring festivals are recapitulated. First, the Passover is in 5:6, seen in the **lamb standing as if slain**. Of course, all of Israel was present, since this is a pilgrimage festival. Next, Jesus is the first fruits from the dead in 5:9. And 5:6 echoes Pentecost with **seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth**. These three festivals are all blended in one scene.

The fall festivals are Trumpets, Atonement, Booths, and the *Shemini Atzeret*.<sup>1</sup> The Feast of Trumpets was supposed to be a signal of preparation for the Day of Atonement ten days later. Like the Feast of Trumpets, the seven Trumpets warn of judgment to come.

Next, the Day of Atonement is in the seventh Seal and Trumpet; and all the Bowls happen during the Day of Atonement. Judgment comes in favor of the saints, since they ask for Jesus to cover them with His blood. But the wicked who reject God suffer the judgment of the Day of the Lord and are killed.

The next festival in line is the Feast of Booths. It originally celebrated how God delivered ancient Israel from Egypt. In the wilderness, the people built small shelters (booths) to be protection from the sun. This was so important that a booth became a symbol of God's protection.<sup>2</sup> We saw that protection in 20:9, where the wicked multitudes **surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them**.<sup>3</sup>

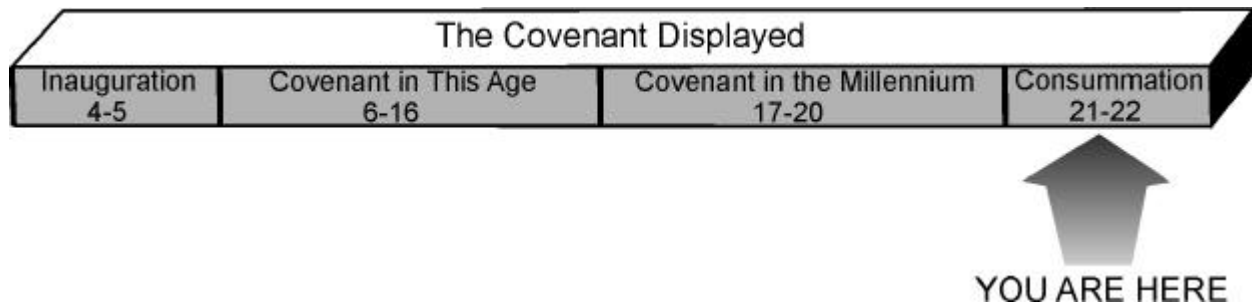
Now we can look forward. The Feast of Booths lasted seven days. In it, the people built temporary shelters and lived in them (Lev 23:39-43, Deut 16:16). On the *eighth* day, everybody came out of the booths and moved into their permanent homes. This symbolism shouldn't be missed as we look at the **New Jerusalem**. So far, every act in the drama has been moving toward a goal. Now we've arrived.

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<sup>1</sup> If you look in the Bible for that term, you won't find it. It is Hebrew for "Eighth Assembly," and is the Great Sabbath of the Feast of Booths (Lev 23:36, 39).

<sup>2</sup> Psa 17:8; 27:5; 31:20; 36:37; 57:1; 63:7; 91:1; Isa 4:6; Amos 9:11; Hos 14:7, etc.

<sup>3</sup> This was promised in 7:15, which literally says **he will erect a booth over them**.



**And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away** (21:1). The drama of sin has come full circle. Adam and Eve were created sinless and perfect. God placed them in Eden, a perfect place on a perfect world. But they believed Satan and rebelled. We've lived this drama for thousands of years. And finally, when every one of Satan's charges has been answered, sin can be permanently abolished. Then God can put us back into the Garden, secure from ever sinning again.

**I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband** (21:2). Wait a minute! How can a city be a bride? This doesn't make sense.

In verse 9, an angel says, **Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the lamb.** And in classic style, when John looks, he doesn't see a bride at all, he sees **the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God** (21:10). John hears one symbolic description, and then sees another, just like he's done several times before. We know from 19:7-8 that the **bride of the Lamb** is the church, the saints of all ages, so the **holy city** isn't a physical structure at all. It's a symbolic description of the saints.

The physical size and shape of the city confirm this conclusion. The city is **1,500 miles long, wide, and high** (21:16). If we put that city on the surface of the earth, it would rise 1,300 miles higher than the orbit of the space shuttle. Now, I'm not about to say that God *can't* build a city like that, but it doesn't make sense. After all, He's in the process of restoring the perfect world of Eden for us, and that kind of city is completely out of place.<sup>4</sup>

Next, the cube shape should tip us off to something really important. That was the shape of the inner compartment in Solomon's temple (2 Chron 3:8). And that chamber was overlaid with gold so that when the high priest entered, he effectively walked on a **street of gold** (21:21). The **Shekinah glory of God** (21:23) filled the chamber with light so that **there was no night in it** (21:25, 22:5).

**There was no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb are its temple** (21:22). **The tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them** (21:3, cf. Exod 25:8). **Those whose name is written in the Lamb's book of life** (21:27) **will see His face and His name will be on their foreheads** (22:4). What a prospect!

There's no way we can physically enter God's presence now. His glory would kill us (1 Tim 6:16, cf. Lev 16:17). Even the ancient priests couldn't do it. Only the high priest could go there, and then only on the Day of Atonement. That priest wore a turban with "Holy to the Lord" on it (Exod 28:36-37), but **the Lord's name** will be directly on us.

Now, before you accuse me of going literalistic on you, let's back up a moment. By saying that **God's name in on the saints' foreheads**, we're not pointing out a bit of divine face painting. If you remember our discussion of the **mark of the Beast**, you'll realize that this is a symbolic way

<sup>4</sup> We'll be talking about restoring Eden in a bit.

of saying that the saints have Jesus in their minds at all times. They belong fully and forever to God. And that leads us to another piece of symbolism.

**He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes** (21:4). This almost sounds like Jesus is running a Kleenex franchise in heaven. But what it really means is **there won't ever be any mourning, or crying, or pain**, because **the first things have passed away, and there is no more death**. Wow! We don't have to worry any more. No kids will get leukemia. No crooks will shoot innocent bystanders. And no old folks will leave children without parents. Its *over!* God will **make everything new** (21:5).

**The cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone – the second death** (21:8). That merism really includes every kind of evil. All the wicked will be kept out (21:27).

Before we get literalistic here, remember that the **lake of fire** isn't next door to the **New Jerusalem**. Literally, the Greek says **their part is in the lake of fire**. At the end of the millennium, the wicked all died in the **lake of fire**. So when the **New Jerusalem** comes along, they aren't around, and neither is the **lake of fire**.

The **twelve foundation stones have the names of the twelve apostles** (21:14). These precious stones remind us of the precious stones on the high priest's breastplate (21:19-20, cf. Exod 28:15-19). The church is blended completely with ancient Israel – again. The **twelve gates have the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel** (21:12). They are made of **pearl**, the incredibly valuable material Jesus told the church the kingdom was like (Matt 13:44-46). This time, the mix is reversed. Israel is blended with the church.

Every saint of every age is part of the city. As the apostle Paul said, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). Nobody gets any particular place based on who his parents were. And that makes me back up for a moment.

God's problem wasn't related to Jews, Greeks, or any other group of people. It was sin, rising in a perfect universe. Everybody who ever lived has sinned (Rom 3:23)<sup>5</sup>. So when God redeems fallen humans, He isn't interested in what your hair color is or where you lived or what your father did. He's only interested in whether you put your faith in Him.

The court that heard God's slander suit against Satan wasn't interested in any of those things, either. In fact, if God *had* bothered with that stuff, it would be easy to support Satan's claim that God was playing favorites. If that happened, Satan would win and God would lose. Sin could never be abolished.

**The nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it** (21:24). What a wonderful reversal! All through history, the "kings of the earth" have opposed God. Now they come to pay homage to God. Of course, by now, all the wicked are dead, so these kings are all righteous Gentiles. And this fulfills Zechariah's prophecy that all who remain of the nations will go to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of booths (Zech 14:16). God has brought the saints safely through the wilderness (cf. Lev 23:39-43), and they now enter the **New Jerusalem**, their permanent home, just like they did in the *Shemini Atzeret*.

The **New Jerusalem** has the **Tree of Life** in it (22:2) **bearing fruit for the healing of the nations**. The ancient hatred between the wicked Gentile nations and the Hebrews is gone. All are one nation, the Jerusalem of God (cf. Heb 12:22, Gal 6:16). **The river of life** runs through the city,

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<sup>5</sup> Except Jesus, of course.

like the river of Eden (22:1, Gen 2:10), fulfilling prophecies by Ezekiel and Joel (Ezek 47:1-12, Joel 3:18). The **fruit in every month** (22:2) sets the table for the **marriage supper of the Lamb** (19:9). The hills will drip with sweet wine and flow with honey (Joel 3:18). The curse that forced man to till the ground for food (Gen 3:17-19) will be reversed. The garden will provide food, just like in Eden (Gen 1:29-30). In Eden, Adam and Eve were to rule by grant from God (Greek: *katakuriuo*). Now they will **reign** by right (Greek: *basileuo*), **forever and ever** (22:5).

God has **made all things new** (21:5). The Eden that was “very good” (Gen 1:31) has been recreated for us to live in forever. Like Adam and Eve, we’ll walk in the Garden with God (Gen 3:8).