

Tonights study starts with scripture quote because this verse sets a biblical principle we will want to keep in mind.

Col 1:13 For He delivered us from the domain (i.e. jurisdiction) of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.

In a manner of speaking, Revelation is a tale of two kingdoms and Two Cities: Babylon is one and New Jerusalem is the other. But to understand the Babylon of Revelation 18, we must first understand the Holy City of Revelation 21.

Biblically, who is the "Bride of Christ?"

It is well established that "Bride of Christ" is the church and the redeemed of Israel, so let's look at where this Bride appears in Revelation.

Rev 21:2 "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a BRIDE adorned for her husband."

Now does that verse say the Holy City is just the dwelling place for the Bride? Nope, in the above verse, the New Jerusalem appears to be the bride herself. But that verse does not stand alone . . .

Rev 21:9-10 "And there came unto me one of the seven angels . . . saying . . . Come hither, I will show thee the BRIDE, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem,

descending out of heaven from God."

So the angel states he is going to show John the Bride and he shows John the New Jerusalem.

Ergo: The Bride = the New Jerusalem.

From the above verses, it is apparent that the New Jerusalem isn't a physical city, but the bride herself -- the sum of the redeemed of all time, both Old Testament and New.

Just look at its description . . .

Rev 21:12 "And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel."

These are the elders of the children of Israel and of the Jews of the Christian Era.

Rev 21:14 "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

The Apostles of the New Testament Church.

So the Holy City is the sum of the redeemed, both Old Testament and New. The New Jerusalem is people, it is not a place.

IMHO, we have been looking at the Holy City from a rather narrow, man centered perspective, as if Jesus was now up in heaven building a gilt and tinsel place for us to live, but that doesn't fit the scripture we've been quoting.

Those scriptures indicate that God is building a city where He himself is going to dwell, and He is doing so out of sinful men cleansed by the blood of His only Son.

Rev 21:3 . . . Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

So the New Jerusalem isn't a physical place at all. Brethren, we ARE that city. The gold, silver and precious stones is how God the Father sees His children through the imputed righteousness of His beloved Son.

Are we not, after all, living stones, being built into a spiritual house for our God?

1 Pet 2:5 "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Now understanding the New Jerusalem is the key to understanding Babylon. If the New Jerusalem is the sum of the redeemed of all time, then Babylon would be the sum of the lost of all time – brought to a tragic end . . .

Rev 18:23 "And the light of a candle (the word of God) shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom (the Lord Jesus) and of the bride (the Church) shall be heard no more at all in thee:

for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries (pharmekia) were all nations deceived."

Rev 18:24 "And in her was found the blood of prophets (Old Testament believers), and of saints (the Gentile Church), and of all (nobody left out) that were slain upon the earth."

From the above verse, it is apparent that this Babylon transcends time and includes all the unsaved from the day Cain slew Able until that last tortured saint dies for the faith.

The Babylon of Revelation 18 appears to be God's lament for all those who have turned away from Him and rejected His free salvation through belief in His Son.

As an interesting aside: Revelation is full of references to both the Jews of the Christian Era (still under the old covenant) and the Church:

1. 24 elders appear six times in Revelation. The gates and foundation stones of New Jerusalem tell us who those elders are (12 from the twelve tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles from the Church).

2. In Revelation 7, the 144,000 of the 12 tribes of Israel and the Great multitude of the Gentile Church

3. In Revelation 14, the 144,000 Jews and the "everlasting Gospel" to the gentile Church.

4. In Revelation 15:3 "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God (Christian Era Jews under the old covenant), and the song of the Lamb (the Gentile Church)."