

The Holy City, New Jerusalem, Was Prepared For Whom?

Since the early 70's, or perhaps even much earlier than that, Evangelical and Fundamental Writers authored publications stating that the New Jerusalem (Heaven) would be the eternal home for the church (the bride of Christ). Today, some thirty years later, it seems to be a common belief among most people who profess to be born-again Christians. One of the reasons that a teaching like this could be popularized is the lack of hermeneutical awareness. Any teaching or doctrine must be examined for hermeneutical soundness before it is accepted as a Biblical teaching. Will this teaching about the New Jerusalem being the eternal home of the church pass the context and harmony test? Let's look!

The Context Test

The context test consists of examining the immediate context of a word, phrase, sentence, verse, chapter, or book, with consideration of what is written that immediately precedes and or follows it. The relationship of these discourse parts are what give light to its meaning and the correct understanding of what the author is saying.

The Harmony Test

The harmony test is the assurance that when a passage of God's Word is correctly understood (rightly divided) in its context that it will never contradict itself anywhere else in Scripture.

Revelation 21 Key Verses In Context

Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 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.

Question:

What was prepared as a bride?

Answer:

The holy city, new Jerusalem!

Note: The bride in this context is not the church—it is the New Jerusalem and the Husband is Christ.

Rev 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

Question:

Who was the bride, the Lamb's wife?

Answer:

It was the great city, the holy Jerusalem—not the church.

Rev 21:24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. 26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

Question:

What people are mentioned who will come into the city with free access day or night?

Answer:

The kings and people of all nations who are saved—could not find one mention of the church as the exclusive group of people in the context of Revelation 21.

Revelation 21 With Key Verses In Harmony

These verses support the context of Revelation 21 stating that the saved of all ages will live on the earth (the new earth created by God for His Eternal Kingdom).

Ps 37:9 For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

Ps 37:11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Ps 37:29 The righteous shall inherit the land [earth--same Hebrew word as the other two verses], and dwell therein for ever.

Matt 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

MY FATHER'S HOUSE—ABOUT THE AFTER LIFE

Part (1) If you were to die today, where would you be?

Most born-again Christians would answer correctly—heaven.

2Cor 5:8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Phil 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

Part (2) If you were to die today, where would you spend eternity?

Most born-again Christians would give the same answer—heaven.

If saints are returning during the millennium to reign with Christ, how could that be correct?

1Thess 3:13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Part (3) Where will those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life spend eternity?

First, they will be in heaven where Jesus is now.

Matt 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Second, they will return with Him at Armageddon.

Rev 19:14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Third, they will dwell with Him forever in His new heaven and new earth.

Matt 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

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.

Books, old and new, which would agree that the New Heaven and the New Earth will be the eternal home of all those whose names **are in the Lamb's Book of Life are:**

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Heaven, Randy Alcorn (Tyndale House Publishing, Inc., 2004)