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The Gates Of The New Jerusalem Are Still Open, Come On In!



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Revelation doesn't end with God's people standing outside a locked city waiting for the New Jerusalem to arrive someday.

† It ends with the New Jerusalem present, its gates open, the river of life flowing, the tree of life available, and an invitation still going out to those who are thirsty (Revelation 21:2-3; 22:1-2, 17).

† This is one of the great WOW moments of fulfilled

eschatology. The gates aren't waiting to open. Revelation says they will never be shut.

† If the gates are open and people are still being invited to enter, the New Jerusalem can't simply describe heaven after the physical universe has ended. The picture is of God's completed covenant city welcoming people into the life, fellowship, and presence of God.

† The fulfilled New Jerusalem isn't an empty future city. It is the present covenant reality of God's people in Christ, and the invitation is still going out today (Hebrews 12:22-24; Galatians 4:26).

Revelation 21:2-3

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

† Notice the direction of the city. John didn't describe God's people escaping the earth to reach the city. He saw the New Jerusalem coming down from God (Revelation 21:2).

† The central promise is God's dwelling with His people. The New Jerusalem represents restored fellowship, covenant relationship, and access to God through Christ (Ephesians 2:18-22).

† The city is also identified with the bride. Revelation isn't merely describing buildings, streets, walls, and gates. It is describing God's redeemed covenant people in the language of a glorious city (Revelation 21:9-10).

Revelation 21:22-24

I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illuminated it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

† There is no physical temple in this city because access to God is no longer centered in the old temple system. God and the Lamb are its temple (John 4:21-24).

† Notice something remarkable, the nations are still present and walking by the city's light. This is a functioning kingdom picture, not a picture of evangelism being finished because human history has ended (Revelation 22:2).

† The New Jerusalem shines outward. God's people aren't hidden from the nations. The nations are pictured as benefiting from the light that comes from God and the Lamb (Matthew 5:14-16).

Revelation 21:25-27

In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

† Here is the WOW moment, the gates will never be shut. An open gate means access. The completed city remains open to those who come to God through Christ (John 10:9).

† Revelation still distinguishes between those inside and those outside. That distinction makes sense in the fulfilled kingdom because people continue to be called from darkness into the light of Christ (Revelation 22:14-15).

† The nations continue bringing their glory and honor into the city. The imagery isn't of a city waiting to descend thousands of years later, it is of an established kingdom receiving people from the nations (Isaiah 60:3, 11).

† The open gates beautifully display the continuing reach of the gospel. The kingdom has been established, Christ reigns, and people can still enter through faith in Him (Colossians 1:13).

Revelation 22:1-2

And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life,

bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

† The river of life is flowing from God's throne. Life isn't pictured as scarce or inaccessible. God's life flows outward from His completed kingdom (John 7:37-39).

† The tree of life appears again, showing the restoration of what humanity lost in Eden. Revelation moves from paradise lost to paradise restored in Christ (Genesis 3:22-24).

† The leaves are for the healing of the nations. Nations that receive healing must still exist to receive it. This strongly supports an ongoing kingdom reality rather than a picture occurring only after earthly history has disappeared.

† Fulfillment didn't end God's work among people. Fulfillment established the completed covenant order through which the life of Christ continues reaching the nations (Matthew 28:18-20).

Revelation 22:14

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life, and may enter the city by the gates.

† People enter the city through its gates. The language is active, there is a city already presented, gates available for entrance, and people receiving the right to enter.

† The blessing isn't merely that the city exists. The blessing is participation in its life, access to the tree of life, and entrance into God's covenant presence (Revelation 22:2).

† Jesus is the way into fellowship with the Father. Entrance isn't based on ethnicity, geography, or belonging to old covenant Jerusalem. Access is through Christ (John 14:6; Ephesians 2:18).

Revelation 22:17

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires, take the water of life without cost.

† Revelation doesn't close by saying, Wait for the city. It closes with an invitation, Come.

† The bride herself says, Come. That is significant because the

bride has already been identified with the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2, 9-10).

† The thirsty are invited to drink freely from the water of life. The river isn't locked behind gates that won't open until the end of human history. The invitation is available because God's redemptive work in Christ has been accomplished (John 4:13-14).

† This is why fulfilled eschatology doesn't leave us without hope or mission. Fulfillment means the promised kingdom has arrived, God's dwelling is with His people, and we can invite others to enjoy what Christ accomplished.

Hebrews 12:22-24

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

† Hebrews doesn't tell believers that they will someday come to Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem. It says they had come to it.

† The heavenly Jerusalem was already becoming their covenant reality as the old covenant age approached its complete removal (Hebrews 8:13; 10:37).

† Revelation shows that reality in its completed form. Hebrews announces access to the heavenly Jerusalem, and Revelation shows the city with gates that will never be shut.

† We aren't waiting for another covenant city. Through Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, God's people have access to the city of the living God.

Historical References

† Josephus described the catastrophic destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in AD 70, recording the collapse of the city that had stood at the center of the old covenant world (Josephus,

Wars of the Jews, Books 5-7).

† Josephus' account provides important historical background for understanding the contrast between old Jerusalem under judgment and the heavenly Jerusalem that couldn't be destroyed by Roman armies (Hebrews 12:26-28).

† Eusebius later recorded the tradition that believers in Jerusalem departed before the war and settled at Pella, connecting the first-century Christian community with the events surrounding Jerusalem's judgment (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5).

† These historical witnesses don't establish the doctrine by themselves. Scripture establishes the doctrine, while history helps us see the first-century setting in which those judgment prophecies reached their fulfillment.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't have to spend our lives waiting outside the New Jerusalem. In Christ, God's people belong to the heavenly city (Hebrews 12:22-24).

† We don't have to wonder whether the gates are open. Revelation says they will never be shut (Revelation 21:25).

† We don't have to tell thirsty people to wait for another age before they can drink. The invitation is still, Come, take the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17).

† We can proclaim a kingdom that is here, a King who reigns, a new covenant that is established, and access to God that is available through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:19-22).

† Fulfilled prophecy isn't the end of the good news. Fulfillment is why we can announce the good news with confidence.

† The gates are open. The water of life is flowing. The invitation is going out. The King is reigning.

† Come on in!

Q & A Appendix

Q: If the New Jerusalem is already a present reality, why are people still entering it?

A: Because fulfillment established the kingdom, it didn't end the

growth of the kingdom. Revelation pictures open gates, nations, healing, and an ongoing invitation to come and drink from the water of life (Revelation 21:25-27; 22:2, 17).

Q: Why would the gates need to remain open if everyone were already inside?

A: That's precisely the point. The imagery presents continuing access. People outside are still invited to enter, while the gates of God's covenant city remain open (Revelation 21:25; 22:14-17).

Q: Does this mean everyone automatically enters the New Jerusalem?

A: No. Revelation distinguishes those who enter from those who remain outside. Entrance is connected with belonging to Christ and receiving the life He gives (Revelation 21:27; 22:14-15; John 14:6).

Q: Are Christians still supposed to invite people to Christ if prophecy has been fulfilled?

A: Absolutely. Fulfilled prophecy doesn't mean the gospel has stopped. Revelation ends with the Spirit and the bride saying, Come, and whoever is thirsty is invited to take the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17).

Q: Are we waiting for the New Jerusalem to come down someday?

A: No. Hebrews told first-century believers that they had already come to Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem, and Revelation portrays the completed city with permanently open gates (Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 21:25).

Q: What is the great message for us today?

A: We aren't waiting for God's kingdom to open. Christ has accomplished redemption, the new covenant is established, access to God is available, and the invitation still stands, Come

(Hebrews 10:19-22; Revelation 22:17).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Revelation 21:2-3; Revelation 21:22-24; Revelation 21:25-27;
Revelation 22:1-2; Revelation 22:14; Revelation 22:17;

Hebrews 12:22-24

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Books 5-7; Eusebius,
Ecclesiastical History 3.5

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