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**A0646 – November 12, 2006 – Rev 21:22-27 – The New Jerusalem
& The Nations**

Question: Where does the idea come from (that some people believe) that the new Jerusalem is going to be (or is) the USA?

This idea is held, as far as I can tell, by Historicists and Mormons although they differ in the extent of the new Jerusalem. Historicists see it as a much smaller area while the Mormon's see it as covering both North and South America. The thing that Historicists and Mormon's hold in common is the belief that the church is the remnant of Israel. These are both forms of replacement theology (supersessionism), the idea that the Church has replaced Israel. The verse which Historicists use to conclude that the new Jerusalem is going to be or is the USA comes from Zeph 3:10

From beyond the rivers ^yof Cush my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering.

They interpret this verse to mean that as you go west of Cush [Ethiopia] according to the modern boundaries of Israel you will eventually run into the southern portion of the USA.ⁱ However, the verse has nothing to do with the location of the new Jerusalem. It has to do with how far dispersed Jews will travel to worship the King of kings in the Millennial Kingdom.

The Mormon's claim this idea as an article of faith. It originated with the prophet Joseph Smith in the early 1800's where he saw that the New Jerusalem would be built on the continent of America, the precise location, Independence, Missouri. He gathered this while studying the Book of Mormon.ⁱⁱ

^y [ch. 2:12]

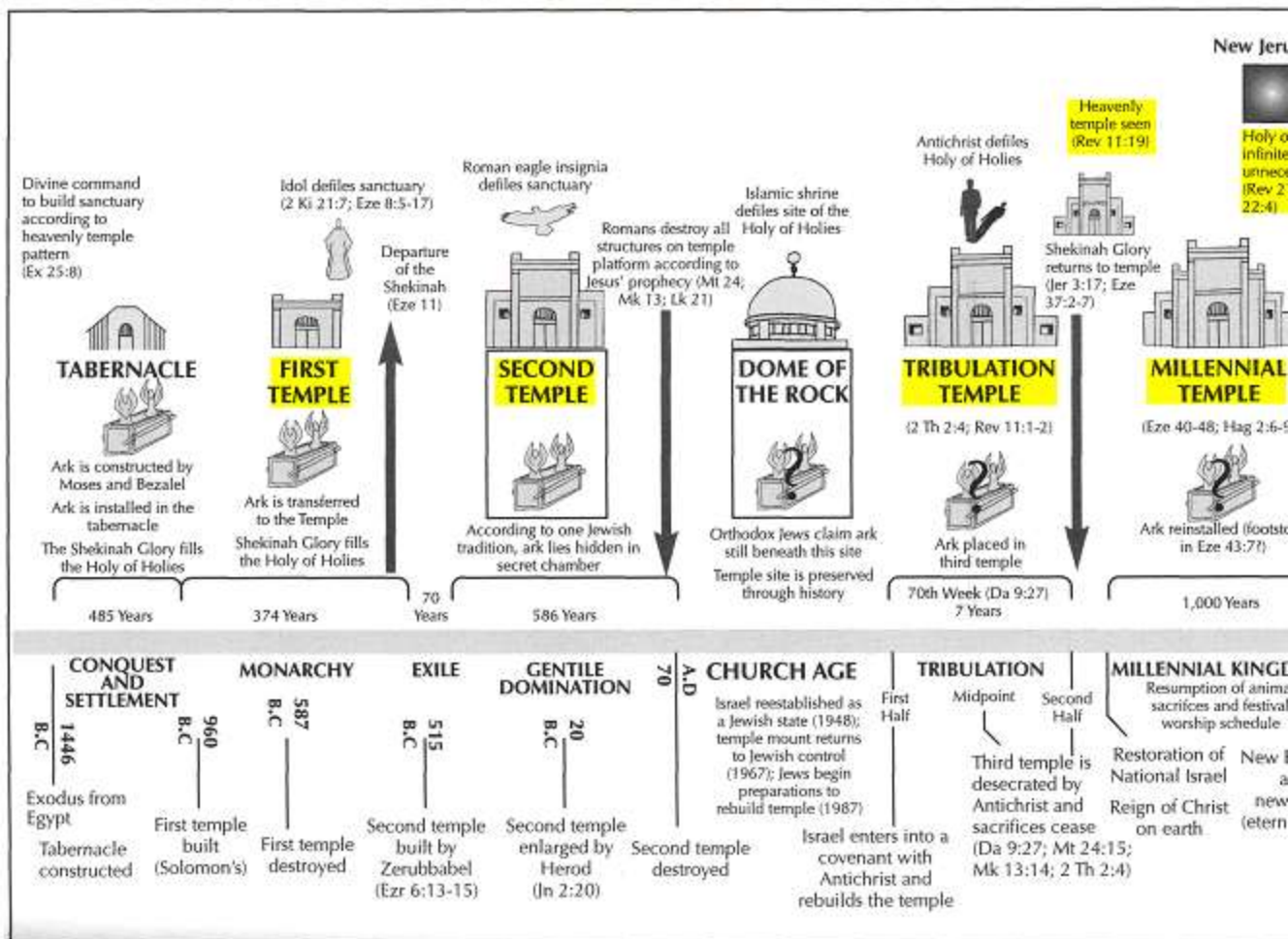
Finally, there is a rather new book that has been written concerning this called “The New Jerusalem: Zionist Power in America” by Michael Collins Piper. This argument claims that America is the New Jerusalem because very wealthy and influential Jews tell George Bush what to do.ⁱⁱⁱ This seems to stem from the old Protocols of the Elders of Zion which is the most influential anti-Semitic document ever written. It contains a supposed conspiracy theory by wealthy Jews to take over the world. I think all these views are ridiculous, but that seems to be where the idea came from, a misinterpretation of the Bible, the visions of Joseph Smith and a guys opinion in a book based on a myth.

What is in the City? (21:22-22:2)

Revelation 21:22 And I saw (1SAAI) no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty is (3SPAI) her temple and the Lamb.

And I saw no temple in it, that is, no physical temple like the Jews were accustomed to worshipping at. Why is there no temple in the new Jerusalem? **for the Lord God the Almighty is her temple and the Lamb.** Let’s talk a little bit about the “temple”. There are eight temples in the Bible. First, before the temple proper there was the “tabernacle”. The “tabernacle” was built by the Exodus generation in 1445-1444BC.

61. The Sacred Sanctuary in History and Prophecy



When completed the Shechinah Glory entered and dwelled in the holy of holies. This tabernacle was a temporary place of worship that was moveable. As the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years they would set up camp and stay until the Shechinah Glory decided to leave and then they would break camp, take the tabernacle down and follow Shechinah until he stopped. Then they would set up camp again. The tabernacle was the place of worshipping God until the first temple proper was built by Solomon in 967BC. When it was completed the Shechinah departed from the tabernacle and entered the holy of holies in the Solomonic temple. The Shechinah departed from this temple in 586BC when the southern kingdom of Judah went into exile in Babylon. The second temple proper was built under the direction of Zerubbabel around 515BC. This temple remained until the time of Herod who enlarged it during the first century. The enlarged second temple was destroyed in 70AD by the Roman army. No temple was re-built to

replace it by the Romans. A pagan temple (Temple of Jupiter) was there until the Dome of the Rock was built on the temple site in 690AD. It remains there to this present day. During the Church age there are two spiritual temples. First, the body of Christ corporate is a temple that is being built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles (Eph 2:19-22). Second, the individual believer in Christ is a temple (1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19). Most Bible prophecy scholars believe that the third temple will be built and operational during the first half of the future Tribulation.^{iv} Jewish plans for this temple are often modeled after the descriptions of the Millennial Temple from Ezek 40-46. So, what they consider the third temple most Christians consider the fourth. This third temple will be desecrated by Antichrist at the mid-point of the Tribulation and will be destroyed completely during the 75-day interval. The fourth temple will be the Millennial Temple and will be built by Jesus Christ Himself. When completed and ritually cleansed the Shechinah Glory will return to indwell this temple for the 1,000 years. After the Millennial Temple there will no longer be need for a physical temple. The temple is the place for sacrifice and there will no longer be any need for any sacrifice for any reason whatsoever, neither for atonement nor for ritual cleansing, for all present will be clean. The only concept of temple in the everlasting state is **the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb**. The word for **temple** here is *naos* and refers specifically to the holy of holies and not to the whole temple complex (*ieron*). So, **the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb** will be the holy of holies forever. This is the first and foremost thing in the city, **the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb**. When we say the **Lamb** we mean **the Lamb of God**, the incarnate, resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. When you see the Lamb of God you will see a man, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will be in His resurrected glorified body as described in Rev 1:13-16.

Revelation 21:23 And the city does (3SPAI) not need the sun or the moon in order that she may give light (3PPASubj), for the glory of God illumined (3SAAI) her, and the lamp of her [is] the Lamb.

It does not say there will not be a **sun** or **moon** but that **the city does not need the sun or the moon**. It is possible that there will be a **sun and moon** in the new heaven. If there is they would be new creations of course. Nevertheless, what is certain is that the city will not **need the sun or the moon** to provide illumination. Just as there was no need for the sun or moon

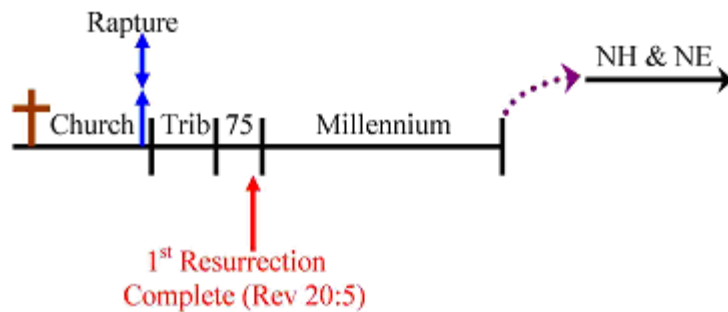
to provide light inside the holy of holies in Solomon's Temple so there will be no need for the sun or moon to provide light inside the new Jerusalem. The reason given is **because the glory of God illumined her, and her lamp is the Lamb.**

Revelation 21:24 And the nations will walk (3PFAI) by her light, and the kings of the earth carry (3PPAI) their glory into her,

It seems from this verse that the illumination for all whether inside the city or outside will be the glory of God. So, the glory of God will radiate through the crystal-clear jasper walls and provide the light for the **nations to walk by**. Note here that we have the first mention of another people group here, **the nations**, *ethnos*, normally a term used to denote the Gentiles. It is difficult to identify these people but one thing is certain, they live outside the new Jerusalem because **the kings of the earth carry their glory into** the city. If there was no need for the new heaven and new earth then all we would see was the new Jerusalem. But the new heaven and new earth are a vital part of the final order in God's plan.

So, who are **the nations**? As we said, the Greek word is *ethnos* and normally refers to the Gentiles in contrast to the Jews. There have been about nine proposals as to the identity of **the nations**. The only one that fits all the criteria is an opinion that considers **the nations** to be the saved of the Millennial Kingdom who do not die and are somehow transformed into bodies like Adam and Eve's before the Fall.

Who are the Nations?



*Israel and Church saints are promised resurrection (Dan 12:2; John 5:28-29). The millennial saints are not.

Remember, there are some believers or those who had not reached the age of accountability from the nations that were not martyred during the Tribulation and they entered the Millennium in their natural bodies to re-populate the earth. It seems possible that there are unbelievers on earth today who could live until the end of the Millennium, more than 1007 years. The new environment of the Millennium would provide for the longevity. If a person is not a believer when the rapture happens and then becomes a believer during the Tribulation and survives to the end of the Tribulation and enters the Millennial Kingdom to re-populate the earth, they may live to the end of the Millennial Kingdom. Probably some people will outlive Methuselah who is the oldest man ever revealed in history at 969 years old. Isaiah says that during the Millennial Kingdom longevity of life will be the norm. Turn to Isa 65:20. I take it that this passage is the Millennial Kingdom because verse 20 says their will be death and we know there won't be any of that in the final phase of the new heaven and new earth.

Isaiah 65:20 No longer will there be in it an infant *who lives but a few* days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Will be *thought* [not in the original Hebrew] accursed.
Isaiah 65:22 For as the lifetime of a tree, *so will be* the days of My people,

From these verses longevity will be the norm in the Millennial Kingdom. There is more evidence that **the nations** will not be given resurrected bodies like you and I will have but will be in bodies like Adam and Eve's. *First*, the first resurrection will be completed before the Millennium. Therefore, if there are only two resurrections and the second one is for all the unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne Judgment then the Millennial saints cannot be resurrected in bodies like Israel, Church and Tribulation saints. *Second*, there is some indication that though they believed in Christ during the Millennium they do not receive the gift of "eternal life". If they did they would not need the tree of life in the new heaven and new earth but they do need it. In Rev 22:2 the "tree of life" re-appears. We'll talk more about the twelve fruits that the tree of life bears but notice at the end of verse 2 it says "the leaves of the tree were for the healing of **the nations**." The word "healing" is *therapeia* and more likely refers to "health". The leaves will provide good health for **the nations**. Eating the fruit will enable them to live forever in bodies like Adam and Eve's before the Fall. As you can imagine, expositors have been troubled over the fact that the leaves of the tree are for the healing or health of **the nations**. However, if **the nations** are believers who do not have resurrection bodies and don't have eternal life then these texts make sense. God's wisdom is manifold and He works different ways with different peoples. This should not surprise us since we already affirm that God works differently with Israel and the Church. So, it seems best to think that **the nations** are saints from the Millennial Kingdom who live to its very end and then are transformed into bodies like Adam and Eve's before the Fall with no sin natures. They will never be able to fall like Adam and Eve because there is no tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Further, since they are in bodies like Adam and Eve's there is no reason not to imagine that they will carry out God's original purpose for man made in His image. Remarkably, it appears that God wants to accomplish His original purpose for man laid out in Genesis 1:26-28. That explains why there are so many similarities between Gen 1-2 and Rev 21-22. Revelation 21-22 seems to be an amplified Genesis 1-2.

Genesis 1:26-28 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female

He created them. ²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Of course, this would have to be fulfilled in the new context of the new heaven and new earth where there is no sea (Rev 21:1). Nevertheless, it appears that God wants to fulfill His original design and purpose for man, to rule over His new earth. This seems to be the function of **the nations**, to fulfill this dominion mandate originally given to Adam and Eve under the King of Kings, the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no reason not to think that the people from **the nations** will be able to procreate since they would not be in resurrection bodies. Through procreation they would fulfill the original command to "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it".

Three Reasons the Number of Millennial Saints is Relatively Small in Comparison to Millennial Unbelievers and How this Relates to Why the New Earth May Have to be Populated

First, Revelation 20:7-9 indicates that the number of millennial saints living at the end of the Millennium is relatively small in comparison to the millennial unbelievers.

Revelation 20:7-9 When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. ⁹ And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

Now, I take it that the camp of saints here are primarily Jewish and Satan, the author of anti-Semitism, is leading the final crusade against these Jewish saints in the land of Israel. During the Millennium this area of the world will be lifted up like a broad plateau. Now notice the number of people from the nations that come up against them in verse 8, "the number of them is like the sand of the seashore". Surely this is the vast majority from the nations on earth indicating that the vast minority of the nations stay home and do not

join the battle against the Jews. The reason? Because they have believed in the Jewish Messiah! But their number seems relatively small.

How is it that such a relatively small number of the nations have believed in Jesus as Messiah, especially when we consider that all will see the King reigning in glory from Jerusalem and peace will reign from sea to sea for the entire 1,000 years? I have two suggestions for this anomaly. *First*, it may be hard to believe that this great King died on a cross. Imagine if you saw a great King, infinite in wisdom and strength. It would be hard to believe that a few thousand years ago He was sentenced to death on a cross and died for you. *Second*, with an environment so good and suffering and death the exception and not the norm they may not sense a need for Christ's salvation! So, there are some good reasons for thinking that during the Millennium there may not be a tremendous amount of Gentile salvation as we normally expect in the KING's presence! So, when the believers from the Millennial nations are transformed into bodies like Adam and Eve's without sin natures and transferred over to the new earth then there may be a lot of space to fill on the new earth. And I suppose that they will be able to procreate and have children until they have filled the earth, that is, at which time they would have fulfilled the dominion mandate. Mathematically there would have to be an end to procreation because if the people of the nations do not die in the new earth and they are procreating forever then eventually every square inch of the new earth will be filled (assuming the earth is of finite size). So, ecologically speaking, whatever the carrying capacity is of the new earth the population will likely grow to that size and then the dominion mandate of Genesis will be accomplished. So, this thing is amazing no matter how you cut it and I'm convinced that on the new earth there will be advancements in agriculture and technology and it's going to be more than you can imagine, more than you ever dreamed of with the Lamb of God at the center of the greatest metropolis ever.

Now, I should note that the reason we don't have a lot of details about the new earth (and I've speculated quite a bit about it) is because it's not the central thing. The new Jerusalem is the central thing and so most of the text focuses there. Just like in Gen 1-2 we don't have a lot of details about the earth outside of the garden of Eden and that's because Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden is the central thing, not the surrounding earth.

Okay, but we do know for certain that **the nations** will be living out on this new earth and most likely in bodies like Adam and Eve's and they will need these leaves from the tree of life which is inside the city to promote their health. When we compare this with Gen 1-3 we see that Adam and Eve had access to the tree of life, probably for this precise reason, to promote good health and live forever. Turn over there now to Gen 3:26.

Genesis 3:22-24 "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever "-- ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

See, this tree of life has the capacity to enable those who eat of it to "eat, and live forever" and since after the Fall Adam and Eve had a sin nature "living forever" would be a horrible thought. That's why the end of verse 22 has a dashed line. That dashed line means that, in the Hebrew it's not a complete sentence. God's just talking and all of a sudden He stops mid-sentence. One of the reasons for stopping mid-sentence is because the thought is too horrible to even utter and so here, most likely, that is the reason. Living forever in sinful bodies is a terrible thought. That's why Christ came, to reverse the terrible effects of sin upon the world and spiritual death (Rev 21:4). So, because Adam and Eve were sinful, in a state of spiritual death, God drove them eastward outside of the garden and stationed cherubim, angels, at the gates of the garden, to keep them from "the tree of life". If they continued to have access they could have eaten and lived forever in sinful bodies. When we read now in Rev 22:2 that the nations will need the leaves of the tree of life for good health in the future new earth you have to wonder "Why?" And it seems impossible for them to need these leaves if they have resurrection bodies and eternal life. The resurrection body is immortal and imperishable (1 Cor 15:53). If you have one you have no need for the leaves or the fruit of the tree of life. But if you don't have a resurrection body and you don't have eternal life but are like Adam and Eve then sense can be made out of their need for the tree of life. I suppose that since the Bible is silent on what will happen to the millennial saints that there will be future revelation during the millennium which will answer this question. So, what a millennial saint

is promised at the moment of faith alone in Christ alone seems to be something different than what we have as a part of the Church. This further explains why the tree of life is a reward for the overcomers of Israel, the Church and Tribulation saints since we will all have resurrection bodies it is not necessary but its choice fruits are a reward.

Some notes about the new earth. We don't know how large the new earth will be. We don't even know if the new earth will be a sphere or not. We don't know if there will be new planets in the new heaven or not. One author, Clarence Larkin in his book on Dispensational Truth claimed it is silly to think that God created all the planets just to adorn the heavens. Surely God originally designed them to be full of the offspring of Adam and Eve. In the new heaven He may also create other planets to be populated by the offspring of the nations! I'm not sure about that because God told Adam and Eve to fill the earth and subdue it. He didn't say anything about other planets. But it's not impossible. All we know is that these nations are out there on the new earth and most likely, since the first resurrection was complete before the Millennium, they will be translated into bodies like Adam and Eve before the Fall. It will be amazing to see new children born into the new heaven and new earth without sin natures. Robin and I have always wondered what it would be like for a woman to give birth without pain since that was the curse upon women at the Fall. Well, most likely we will find out and we will be astonished to see it happen. It will also be astonishing to see man labor without toil or exhaustion (in Rev 21:4 the Greek word translated "pain" is actually "toilsome labor"). I mean, how did God intend these things to work. Wait and see. When God created this heavens and earth "it was very good" (Gen 1:31) and when He creates the new heaven and new earth it's going to be "very good". God made man to be great and to rule and I'm convinced He will accomplish His original design and plan for man, the only kind made in His image.

Who are the **kings of the earth**? They are clearly rulers over **the nations** and they clearly live on the new **earth** and not in the new Jerusalem but they certainly have access. They will **bring the glory of the nations into** the new Jerusalem. The word **bring** refers to a schedule of coming into the city with the **glory of the nations**, probably they will bring the produce of their labor, wonderful things that have come forth from the gardens of the new earth.

ⁱ <http://www.historicist.com/america/zephaniah.htm>

ⁱⁱ http://www.lightplanet.com/mormons/basic/gospel/last_days/new_jeru_eom.htm

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.texemarrs.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=catalog&Product_Code=bboa_new_jerusalem

^{iv} In 1988, Dr Pentecost did not believe there would be a re-built temple for the Tribulation though he did believe there would be a pagan temple there.

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