

Revelation 21:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Analysis

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. The vision opens with **the holy city** (τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἀγίαν, tēn polin tēn hagian), emphasizing not a renovated earthly Jerusalem but an entirely new creation. The phrase **coming down from God out of heaven** (καταβαίνουσαν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, katabainousan ek tou ouranou apo tou theou) shows divine origin—this city is God's gift, not human achievement.

The bride imagery (ἡτοιμασμένην ὡς νύμφην κεκοσμημένην, hētoimasmenēn hōs nymphēn kekosmēmenēn—'prepared as a bride adorned') fulfills Old Testament marriage metaphors (Isaiah 54:5, 62:5; Ezekiel 16:8-14) and Paul's teaching that the church is Christ's bride (Ephesians 5:25-27). The perfect passive participles 'prepared' and 'adorned' indicate God's complete and finished work—the church's holiness comes from Christ's sanctifying work, not her own efforts. This is the consummation of redemptive history: God dwelling with His glorified people in perfect covenant union.

Historical Context

Written during John's exile on Patmos (c. AD 95), this vision countered Roman imperial propaganda. While Rome boasted of the 'Eternal City' with its temples, forums, and Caesar worship, John reveals the true eternal city descending from

heaven. The bridal imagery would resonate with churches familiar with Jewish wedding customs where the groom prepared a place for his bride (John 14:2-3).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. If the New Jerusalem is 'prepared' by God and 'comes down' from heaven, what does this teach about salvation by grace versus human religious achievement?
2. How does the bride imagery challenge you to live in holiness now, awaiting Christ's return as His prepared and adorned bride?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|---------|---------------|-------|---------|--------------|--------|----------|
| καὶ | ἐγὼ | Ιωάννης | εἶδον | τὴν | πόλιν | τὴν | ἀγίαν |
| And | I | John | saw | G3588 | city | G3588 | the holy |
| G2532 | G1473 | G2491 | G1492 | | G4172 | | G40 |
| Ιερουσαλὴμ | καινὴν | καταβαίνουσαν | ἀπὸ | τοῦ | θεοῦ | ἐκ | |
| Jerusalem | new | coming down | from | G3588 | God | out of | |
| G2419 | G2537 | G2597 | G575 | | G2316 | | G1537 |
| τοῦ | οὐρανοῦ | ἥτοι μασμένην | ώς | νύμφην | κεκοσμημένην | τῷ | |
| G3588 | heaven | prepared | as | a bride | adorned | | G3588 |
| | G3772 | G2090 | G5613 | G3565 | | G2885 | |
| ἀνδρὶ | αὐτῇς | | | | | | |
| husband | G846 | | | | | | |
| | G435 | | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 11:10 (References God): For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Revelation 3:12 (References God): Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Revelation 21:10 (Holy): 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,

Hebrews 13:14 (Parallel theme): For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Isaiah 61:10 (References God): I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

Hebrews 12:22 (References God): But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

Revelation 22:19 (Holy): And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.