

1. Review:

- Theme of Suffering and Perseverance.
- Earthquakes, famine, persecution
- Did not deny the name of Jesus.

2. Main Topics:

- New Jerusalem (Jewish Mystics).
- Suffering/struggle and Spiritual Growth
- Receiving a “Crown” (Rev. 3:11)
- New Jerusalem (Philadelphia and today)

3. New Jerusalem (Jewish Mystics)<sup>1</sup>:

- Two Promised Lands/**Jerusalem**: one invisible and one visible.
- Two **Garden of Eden**: one invisible and one visible.
- The Messiah will establish a new Jerusalem in the reign of the **Messianic Kingdom**.
- New Jerusalem will hold the presence of God – “THE LORD IS THERE” – Ezek. 48:35

	<b>Heavenly Icons</b>	<b>John in Revelation</b>
Promise Land/Jerusalem	- Jerusalem	- Rev. 3:12 and 21:2, 10
	- Temple	- Rev. 21:22
	- Ark of the Covenant	- Rev. 2:17(?)
Garden of Eden	- Tree of Life	- Rev. 2:7 and Rev. 22:2
	- Manna	- Rev. 2:17
	- River	- Rev. 22:1
God’s Reign	- Messiah/Messianic Kingdom	- Everywhere

- So if Jesus is the Messiah, then we should see the establishment of the **New Jerusalem**.
- Question: is it a literal rebuilding of Jerusalem? Or a metaphorical rebuilding of Jerusalem?
- John does not see a rebuilding of the Temple (Rev. 21:22).

4. Establishment of New Jerusalem is always tied to strife:

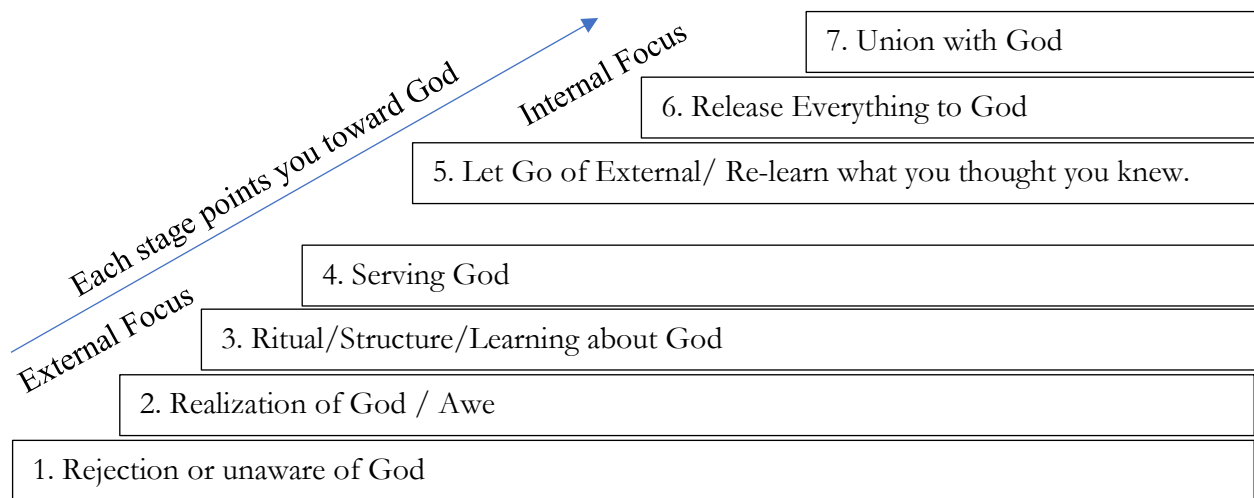
<b>Writing</b>	<b>Strife that will end with New Jerusalem</b>
Ezekiel 40-48	Babylon
Book of Enoch	Antiochus IV Epiphanies (174 BC – 164 BC)
Dead Sea Scrolls	Corrupt Temple/Priests and Rome
Revelation	Rome / battle with Devil

<sup>1</sup> An introductory resource on Jewish Mysticism is a book by Rabbi Lawrence Kushner called *Honey from the Rock*.

5. Suffering/Struggle and Spiritual Growth

- Spiritual Growth happens in the crucible. Our Spiritual Growth and character development happen during difficult times, not during the easy times.
- In moments of difficulty or testing (temptation), your spiritual character is strengthened.

6. Model of Spiritual Growth<sup>234</sup>:



- The upper stages are very difficult and often come through moments of suffering
- The “Dark Night of the Soul”
- There is *ALWAYS* a gift of growth in the suffering/difficulty.

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking in anything.” James 1:2-4

<sup>2</sup> An excellent resource on Spiritual Growth stages is a book called *The Critical Journey* by Janet Hagberg and Robert Guelich. They use a term – “the Wall” – as a point that everyone must go through which is difficult and causes us to see God and ourselves in a different light.

<sup>3</sup> St. John of the Cross (1542-1591) writings such as *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*.

<sup>4</sup> A good introductory book to St John of the Cross and his thoughts on the Dark Night of the Soul is a book by Gerald May – *The Dark Night of the Soul*.

### 7. Crown (?)

- There existed a Jewish Legend surrounding Mt. Sinai and obedience to God (Shabbat 88a)<sup>5</sup>
  - John alludes to other Jewish legends – Rev. 3:14
  - Paul alludes to a Jewish legend – 1 Cor. 10:3-4
- The Israelites exclaimed “We will do” (Ex. 24:3) before they exclaimed “We will hear (obey)” (Ex. 24:7)
- It relates to (Ex. 19:5-6) “**If** you obey...then you will be a kingdom of priests.”

Note: The Hebrew word that we translate “obey” – *shema* – means “hear” as in “Hear, O Israel... (Duet. 6:4-5). So, in a sense to *obey* God is to *hear* God and then act on it. Obedience is not simply following a list of “external” rules – rather it is listening to the still small voice inside and acting on it.

- When they said, “*We will do*” and “*We will obey*,” angels descended and gave each Israelite two crowns.
- When they sinned with the golden calf – angels of destruction descended and took away the crowns.

“I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your **crown**.” Rev. 3:11

### 8. New Jerusalem:

- John places the New Jerusalem with the city of Philadelphia (Rev. 3:12)
- By extension – the New Jerusalem is applied to all the cities in Asia Minor.
- By extension – the New Jerusalem is applied to us!
- “coming down” – the New Jerusalem is actively coming down (Rev. 3:12 and 21:2)

### 9. We are the Temple, and we establish the New Jerusalem

- Wherever we profess Jesus as Lord

“And in him you (plural) too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” Eph. 2:22

“Don’t you know that you yourselves (plural) are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?” 1 Cor. 3:16

“you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. 2:5

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sefaria.org/Shabbat.88a?lang=bi>