



# The Holy City

## Lesson Overview

### 1. Jerusalem—Center of Worship

The city of Jerusalem has been a vital center of worship for thousands of years.

### 2. Watch a Video

Watch *New Jerusalem* at [bit.ly/GCEDNewJerusalem](http://bit.ly/GCEDNewJerusalem) (2min 48sec).

### 3. Discuss

What does the city represent?

### 4. Watch a Video

Watch *Why Are There 12 Gates to the Holy City?* at [bit.ly/12Gates](http://bit.ly/12Gates) (4min 22sec).

## New Church Concepts New Jerusalem

Thus says the Lord: I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth.... Zechariah 8:3

I, John, 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 heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people.... Revelation 21:2-3

## FaithBuilder 1 | Lesson 30 | New Church Day

### Jerusalem—Center of Worship

Christians, Jews and Muslims consider Jerusalem a holy city. The city was founded around 2400 BC and King David conquered the city in 1000 BC he made it the capital of the Kingdom of Israel. Today David's city, which is now part of the larger modern city of Jerusalem, is called "the City of David." David's son, King Solomon, built the first temple in Jerusalem around 970-931 BC. The temple housed the Ten Commandments in the Ark of the Covenant, and was the only legitimate place for Jews to worship. The temple was destroyed by the Babylonians and later rebuilt by King Herod. During the Lord's life on earth, He visited Jerusalem; His parents found Him in the temple at age twelve; He entered Jerusalem triumphantly on Palm Sunday, and was crucified just outside its walls.

The Holy City New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation brings up images of the city of Jerusalem. It is a magnificent heavenly city made from precious stones and gold, with high protective walls. As you watch the story of the Holy City descending from God out of heaven, notice ways in which the city is different from the Jerusalem Jews and Christians know. The name of our church, the Church of the New Jerusalem, is taken from this city.

### Watch a Video

Watch *New Jerusalem* at [bit.ly/GCEDNewJerusalem](http://bit.ly/GCEDNewJerusalem) (2min 48sec). (Enter link in web browser bar at the top of your screen.)

### Discuss

*Choose questions for discussion.*

1. The disciple John compared the city to a bride. Can you picture a city looking like a bride? Why did the Lord compare the city with a bride? Think of a beautiful bride on her wedding day. Why do brides make themselves beautiful? How do we "beautify" ourselves for coming into partnership with the Lord?
2. What makes a person beautiful—not just on the outside, but on the inside as well? What does a beautiful person prepare him or herself for?
3. The light of the city was "like a most precious stone...clear as crystal." New Church teachings say the city corresponds to the church; the bridegroom to the Lord. "The church" is all who know and love the Lord through His Word. How can a person "be the church"? How can the light of truth from the Word shine in our lives?



4. Why were the protective walls of the city so high? Wouldn't the Lord want anyone who wished to enter? (see below)
5. The story continues in John 22 with further descriptions of the interior of the city. Look at John 22:2. Which other story in the Word includes the tree of life? How might these two images be "book ends" for the Word?
6. What details about the city in John 21 are also found in the creation story in Genesis? (trees, rivers, sun, moon, etc.)
7. Compare John 22:3 with Genesis 3:14. How do people become "cursed"—or turn away from the Lord?

## Watch a Video

Watch *Why Are There 12 Gates to the Holy City?*—S&L Short Clips at [bit.ly/12Gates](http://bit.ly/12Gates). 4min 22sec.

1. Why are there twelve gates to the Holy City?
2. Which ideas have been "gates" to New Church teachings for you?
3. Are some gates better than others?
4. What does the number of gates tell us about how the Lord reaches out to us?
5. What does the number of gates tell us about ways in which we might share New Church teachings with others?
6. The Holy City is a picture of the New Church, of what our lives can be like when we live in the radiant light of the three-fold Word. *True Christian Religion* 786 says, "this New Church is the crown of all the churches that have hitherto existed on the earth." Why might this be? The Lord has revealed Himself to humankind in many ways. What does this imply about whether there will be a new revelation in future?

### The Walls of the City

Excerpt from *The Holy City, New Jerusalem*, a sermon by Rev. Eric Carswell

The holy city has a wall that is described as great and high. For many this implies protection against dangerous enemies. But that idea is in conflict with the fact that the gates of the city are constantly open in all directions. The wall is not so much an image of protection against enemies as it is a definition of what is true and good. It is a picture of the clear boundaries that we place on what we will think, say and do. These boundaries come from recognizing that the Lord has told us in His Word about the kind of life that He wants to lead us toward. The strength of these "walls" comes from our being able to call up from memory specific words and sentences that we have learned from the Word. The boundaries define what we will and won't do—in work, friendships, marriage, and family. It stops us from saying hurtful things and from harboring thoughts of revenge. It helps us define what it means to justly, faithfully, and honestly do the work that the Lord places before us each day.

### New Church Concept New Jerusalem

"And I John saw the holy city New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven"

means the New Church going to be set up by the Lord, and that it will be in Divine truths as to both doctrine and life.

See *Apocalypse Revealed* 876

"And the city was pure gold like unto pure glass" symbolizes that everything of that Church is the good of love flowing in together with light out of heaven from the Lord. *Apocalypse Revealed* 912

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, 'Behold God's tabernacle is with men'" means the Lord out of love speaking and declaring the glad tidings that He Himself is now going to be present with people in His Divine Human. *Apocalypse Revealed* 876

By "the glory of God" is meant the Word in its Divine light. "Shining like crystal," means the Word shining and translucent from its spiritual sense. These words describe the understanding of the Word with those who are in the doctrine of the New Jerusalem, and in a life according to it. With these the Word shines from the Lord when read by means of the spiritual sense, because the Lord is the Word, and the spiritual sense is in the light of heaven which proceeds from the Lord as a sun. See *Apocalypse Revealed* 879

"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was of one pearl" means that the acknowledgment and knowledge of the Lord, conjoins into one all the knowledges of truth and good, which are from the Word, and introduce into the church. *Apocalypse Revealed* 916