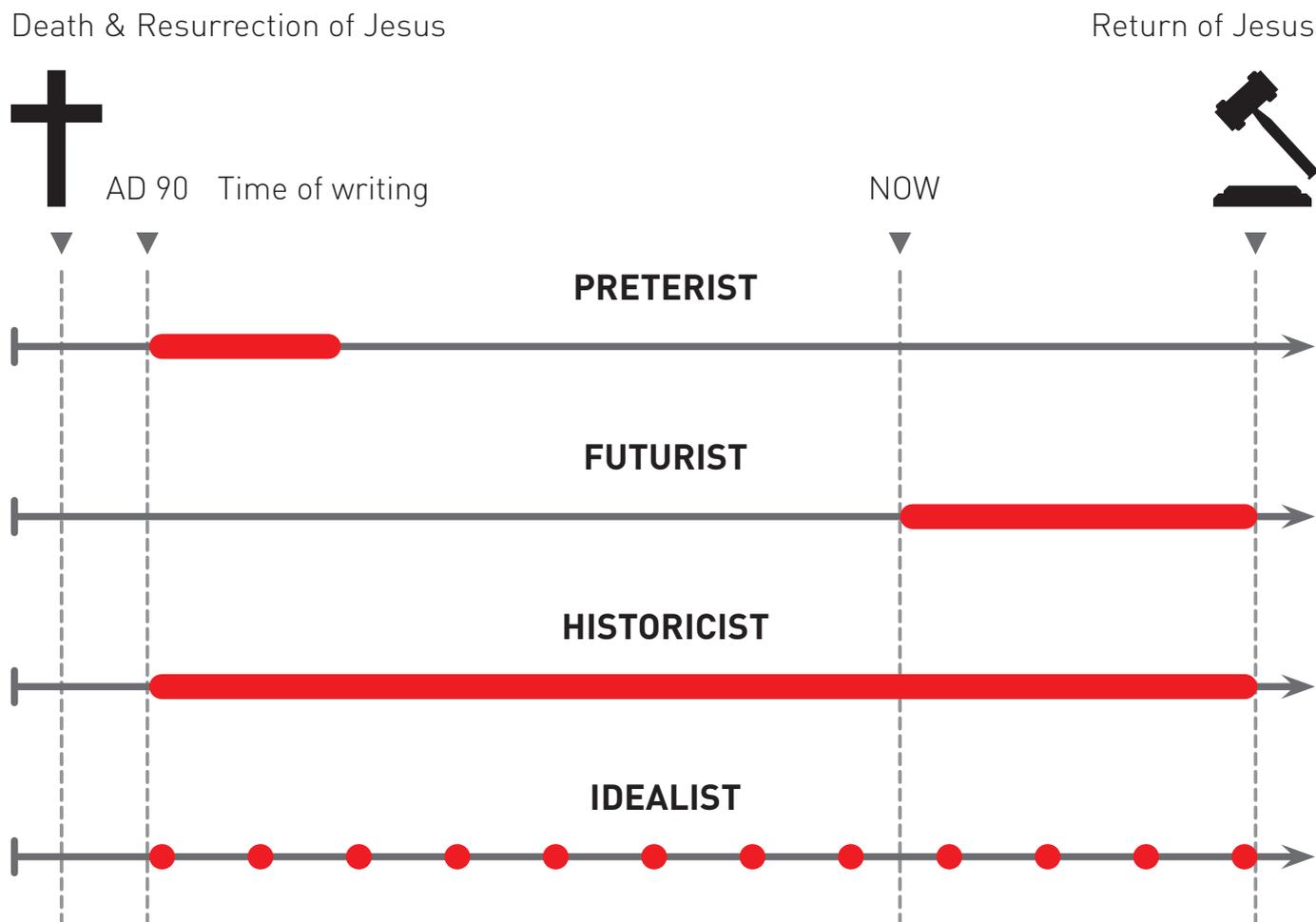


FOUR WAYS TO READ REVELATION

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1. PRETERIST: Revelation is about events in the past

The events described in Revelation all took place around the time of the letter's writing and should be read with that historical context in mind. In other words, the letter was written first and foremost to Christians in the first century, under Roman rule and persecution. As such, we need to understand how they would have originally read it, before applying it to ourselves.

2. FUTURIST: Revelation is about events in the future

The events described in Revelation were predicted to take place in the far distant future, at least from the point of view of the original readers. So, the focus is on events that are still to come, including times like "the tribulation" and "the millennium."

3. HISTORICIST: Revelation is about all of history

Revelation describes the key events of history stretching from the death and resurrection of Jesus to his return as judge. It can be seen as a *timetable*, by which we can interpret "the signs of the times." In other words, world events *today* are described in Revelation.

4. IDEALIST: Revelation is about timeless principles

Revelation isn't talking about a specific time. It is talking about a pattern of events or trends that will be repeated throughout history, as an encouragement to God's people of all times who face persecution. In that sense, it is a "timeless" message.

THE STRUCTURE OF REVELATION

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INTRODUCTION

1-3

7 X



JESUS AMONG HIS
7 CHURCHES

GOD'S THRONE
HEAVEN

4-5



THE REIGNING CREATOR
& THE REDEEMING LAMB

6:1-8:1

7 X



7 SEALS

8:2-11:19

7 X



7 TRUMPETS

12-14



UNNUMBERED SIGNS

15-16

7 X



7 BOWLS

17:1-19:10



THE FALL OF BABYLON

19:11-20:1



THE FINAL VICTORY

GOD'S THRONE
NEW CREATION

21:1-22:5



GOD, THE LAMB & THE REDEEMED
REIGNING IN THE NEW JERUSALEM

22:6-21

JESUS RETURNING SOON
FOR HIS CHURCHES

CONCLUSION

GOD'S UNFOLDING
JUDGEMENT & MERCY

THE SEVEN CHURCHES REVELATION 2-3

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1 EPHESUS (2:1-7)

Positives = toil and patient endurance for Jesus' sake, abhorrence of evil and false teaching
Negatives = abandoned first love
Command = remember, repent and return to previous good works
Disobedience = will have their lampstand removed
Obedience = will eat from the tree of life

2 SMYRNA (2:8-11)

Positives = enduring opposition and slander and being spiritually rich
Negatives = none
Command = be faithful to the point of death
Disobedience = none
Obedience = will be given the crown of life and will not be hurt by the second death

3 PERGAMUM (2:12-17)

Positives = holding fast to Jesus' name and not denying his faith
Negatives = some have accepted false teaching
Command = repent
Disobedience = will face war from the sword of Jesus' mouth
Obedience = will be given hidden manna and a white encribed stone

4 THYATIRA (2:18-29)

Positives = love, faith, service and faithful endurance
Negatives = toleration of false teaching, idolatry and sexual immorality
Command = reject false teaching and hold fast to Jesus
Disobedience = tribulation and death
Obedience = will be given authority over the nations and given the morning star



5 SARDIS (3:1-6)

Positives = none
Negatives = spiritually dead and incomplete in works
Command = wake up, strengthen faith and repent
Disobedience = will be opposed by Jesus who will come like a thief
Obedience = will walk with Jesus, be clothed in white, will have names in the book of life and confessed by him before the Father and angels

6 PHILADELPHIA (3:7-13)

Positives = kept Jesus' word, not denied his name and patiently endured
Negatives = none
Command = hold fast
Disobedience = none
Obedience = will be kept from the hour of trial, made a pillar in the temple of God and have the name of God, New Jerusalem and Jesus written on them

7 LAODICEA (3:14-22)

Positives = none
Negatives = spiritually lukewarm, wretched, pitiable, poor and blind; need to buy spiritual gold and salve to become spiritually rich, clothed and seeing
Disobedience = be zealous, repent and hear Jesus' voice
Obedience = will eat with Jesus and sit with him on his throne

PATMOS (1:9)

An Aegean island south of Samos, where prisoners were exiled by the Roman authorities. John was sent here 'on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus' (1:9) and received his prophetic revelation during this stay.

A VISION OF HEAVEN REVELATION 4-5

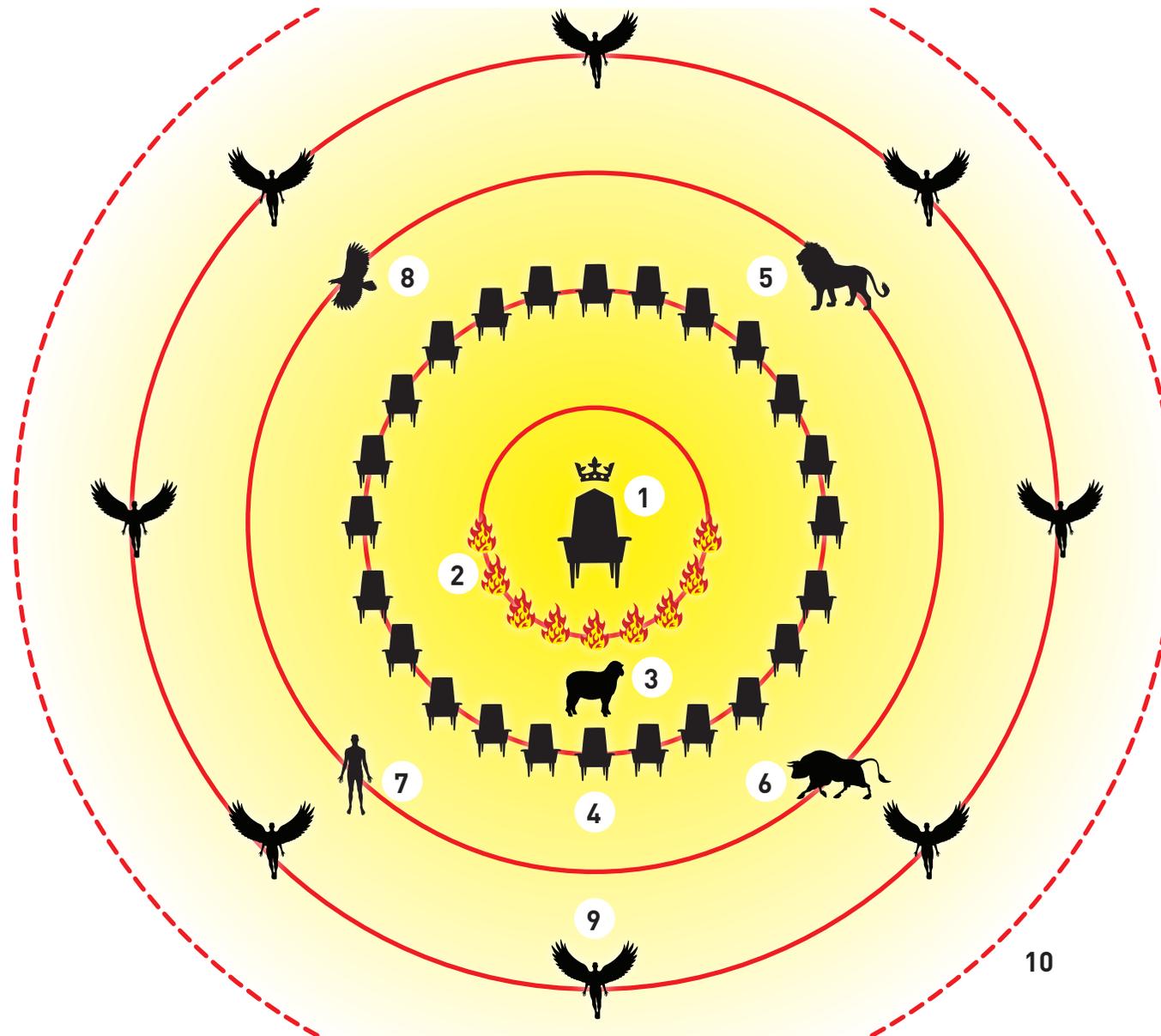
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[1] God the Father's throne at the centre of heaven, around which is a rainbow like an emerald and from it comes flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder (4:2-3, 5).

[2] 7 torches of fire, which are the 7 spirits of God (4:5).

[3] The conquering Jesus, announced as 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David' and appearing as a slain Lamb with 7 horns and 7 eyes, which are the 7 spirits of God. Jesus takes the 7-sealed scroll from God the Father on the throne (5:1-7).

[4] The 24 elders sitting on thrones, dressed in white, wearing golden crowns and holding harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. The elders worship God, cast their crowns before his throne and sing a 'new song' praising the worthiness of Jesus to open the scroll (4:4, 10-11; 5:8-10, 14).



[5-8] The 4 living creatures, each with 6 wings and full of eyes all around and within, holding harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. The living creatures perpetually praise the Creator God and sing a 'new song' praising the worthiness of Jesus to open the scroll (4:7-9; 5:8-10, 14).

[5] The 1st living creature looks like a lion (4:7).

[6] The 2nd living creature looks like an ox (4:7).

[7] The 3rd living creature has the face of a man (4:7).

[8] The 4th living creature looks like an eagle in flight (4:7).

[9] 1000s of 1000s of angels praising the worthiness of Jesus (5:11-12).

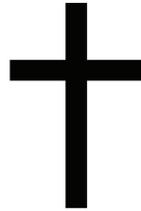
[10] Every creature in heaven and on earth, under the earth and in the sea, praising Jesus and God the Father (5:13).

THE MILLENNIUM THREE VIEWS

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PRE-MILLENNIALISM

Jesus returns to reign with believers on the earth for a literal thousand years before the day of final judgement comes.



JESUS' FIRST COMING



JESUS' SECOND COMING



1000 YEAR EARTHLY REIGN



FINAL JUDGEMENT

POST-MILLENNIALISM

Jesus returns after a literal thousand years of peace and gospel growth on earth to bring final judgement.



JESUS' FIRST COMING



1000 YEAR EARTHLY REIGN



JESUS' SECOND COMING



FINAL JUDGEMENT

AMILLENNIALISM

Jesus reigns in heaven now with deceased believers for a symbolic thousand years before returning to bring final judgement.



JESUS' FIRST COMING



PRESENT HEAVENLY REIGN



JESUS' SECOND COMING



FINAL JUDGEMENT

THE NEW JERUSALEM REVELATION 21-22

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SIGNIFICANCE

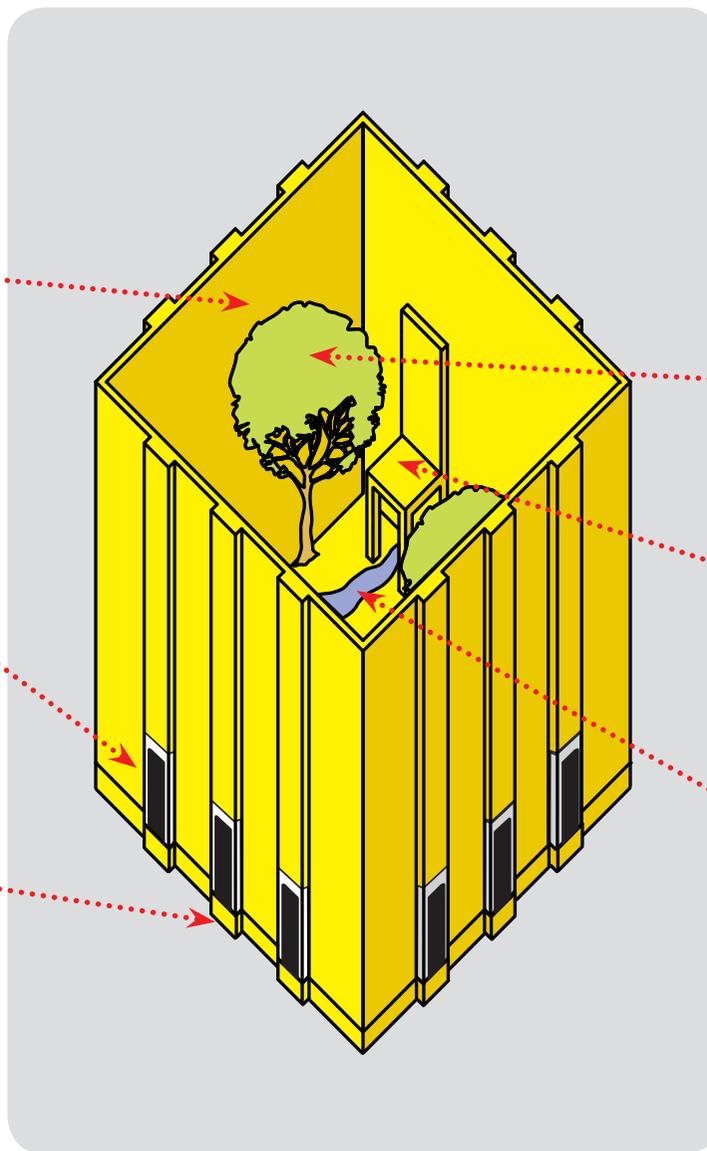
- A great, high wall (2200 km in all directions and 65m thick) = there will be an impenetrable barrier between believers and unbelievers [see 21:27]
 - Made of pure gold and the walls of pure jasper
 - A perfect square, like Ezekiel's vision of God's city [Ezekiel 48:30-35]
 - A perfect cube like the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle and the temple, representing the presence of God [Exodus 26; 1Kings 6:20]
 - As big as the known world of the first century, i.e. from Palestine to Spain
-
- 12 gates with the names of the tribes of Israel representing the old covenant people of God
 - Fulfilment of Ezekiel's vision [see Ezekiel 48:30-35]
-
- 12 foundations with the names of the apostles representing the new covenant people of God
 - Foundations made of 12 precious stones like the breastplate of the high priest [Exodus 28:17-20]
 - Fulfilment of Isaiah's vision of Zion, with walls, foundations and battlements made of precious stones [see Isaiah 54:11-12]

SYMBOL

WALLS
21:12-18

GATES
21:12-13, 21, 25-27

FOUNDATIONS
21:14, 19-20



SYMBOL

TEMPLE
21:22

LIGHT
21:23-24; 22:5

TREE
22:2

THRONE
22:3-4

RIVER
22:1-2

CURSE
22:3

SIGNIFICANCE

- God and Jesus meet face-to-face with their people
 - There is no need for a temple
-
- No need for the sun or the moon for the glory of God gives the city light and the Lamb is its lamp
 - Light = glory and life - the nations will be drawn toward it [see Isaiah 60:1-3, 19-20, John 1:4, 9; 8:12; 12:35, 46]
-
- The tree of life stands on either side of the river representing eternal life for believers [see Genesis 3:22, Ezekiel 47:12]
-
- The throne of God / the Lamb will be in the city and his servants will serve them
 - God's people will now see his face and live, be marked as his chosen people and will reign over the new creation with Christ [see Daniel 7:27; Matthew 5:8; Revelation 7:3; 20:4]
-
- The river of life flows from the throne down the middle of the city, representing the gift of eternal life [see Genesis 2:10; Psalm 36:8; Psalm 46:4; John 4:10; Ezekiel 47:12, Zechariah 14:8]
-
- No longer will there be any curse in the city from the fall [see Genesis 3]

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE NEW JERUSALEM REVELATION 21-22

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GARDEN OF EDEN

(Genesis 1-2)

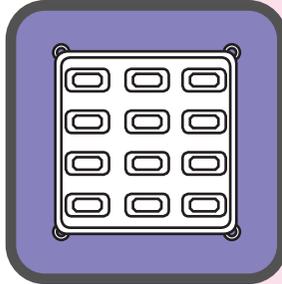
- presence of God
- tree of life
- river of life
- no curse



HIGH PRIEST

(Exodus 28)

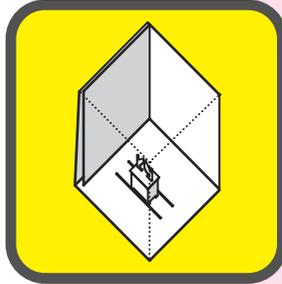
- 12 precious stones on high priest's breastplate, representing the 12 tribes of Israel
- = the old covenant people of God



MOST HOLY PLACE

(Exodus 26 & 1 Kings 6)

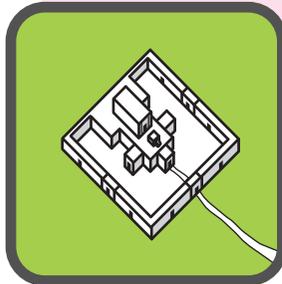
- the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle and the temple = perfect cube = representing the presence of God



NEW TEMPLE & CITY

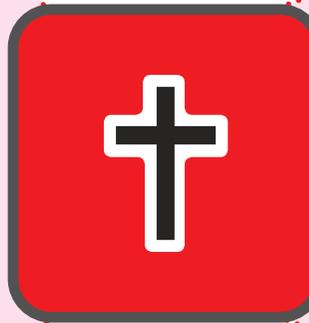
(Ezekiel 40-48)

- the city is a perfect square = representing the presence of God
- 12 gates = 12 tribes of Israel
- river flows from the temple



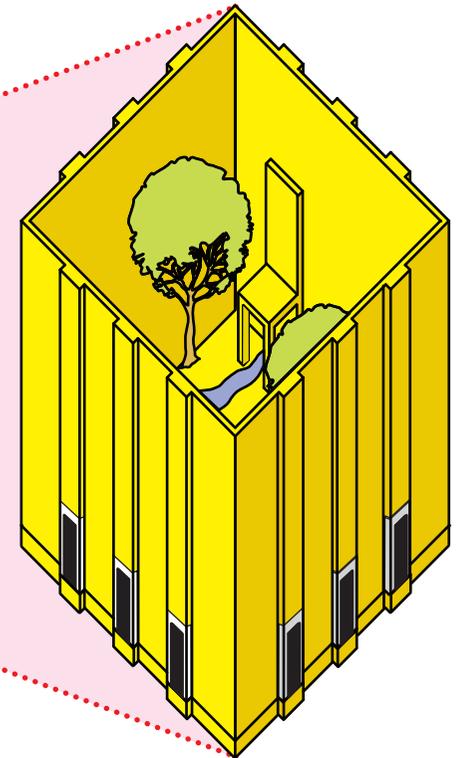
JESUS

- = water of life (John 4:14)
- = light of the world and life (John 8:12 & 9:5)
- = high priest (Hebrews 6:20)
- = temple = presence of God (John 2:21)
- reversal of the curse and redemption on the tree (Galatians 3:13 & 1 Peter 2:24)



12 apostles = the new covenant people of God

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 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 dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God." - Revelation 21:1-3



THE NEW JERUSALEM (Revelation 21-22)

= the fulfilment of all God's promises in the Old Testament through Jesus:

- tree and river of life = eternal life
- no curse = no sin, death or judgement
- no temple = Jesus is the temple
- no light = Jesus is the light
- 12 gates / precious stones = 12 tribes of Israel, representing the old covenant people of God
- 12 foundations = 12 apostles, representing the new covenant people of God