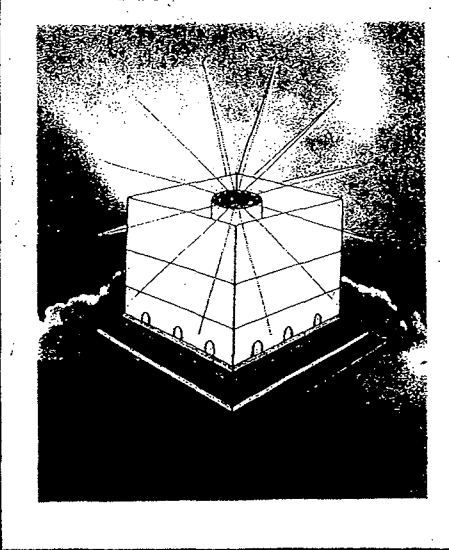
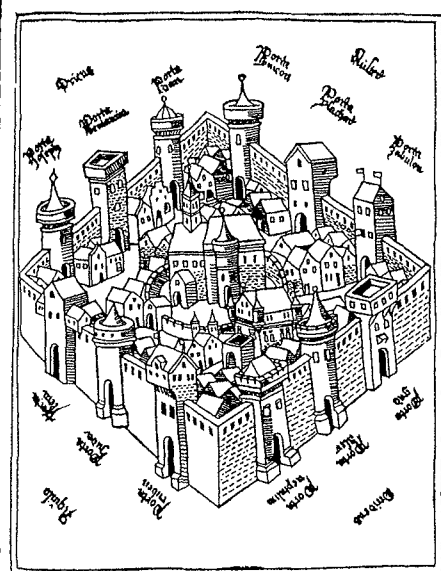
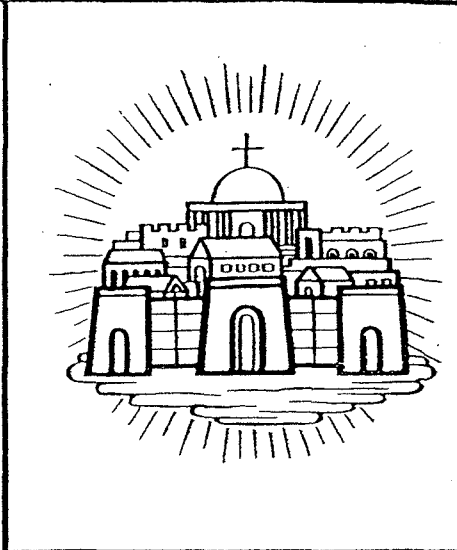
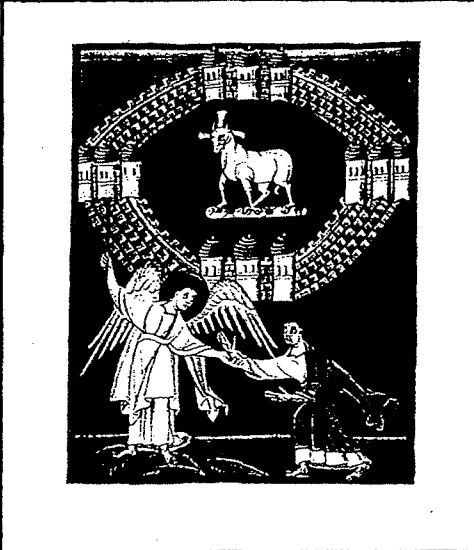
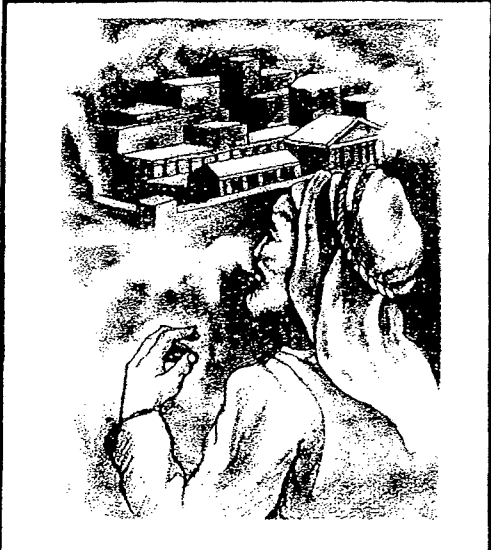
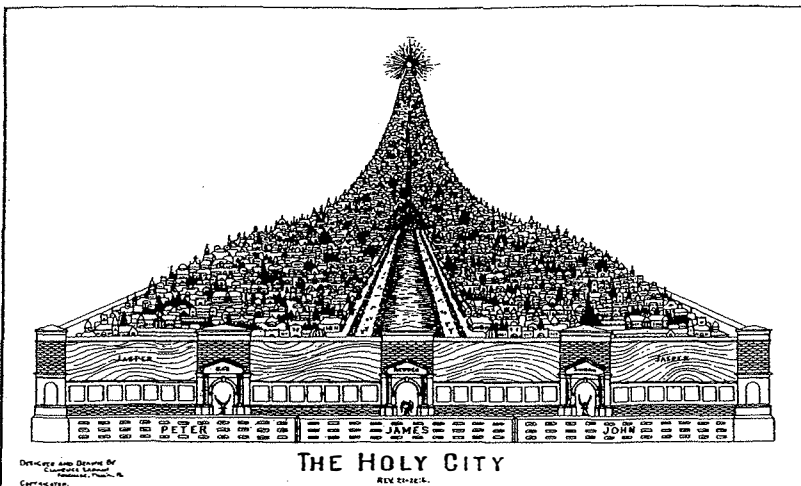


What Do We Know About the New Jerusalem?



WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE NEW JERUSALEM?

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

The believer's hope is a celestial city Christ is preparing as the eternal home for His Bride, the Church. Instead of being burdened with the cares of this life the believer would do well to focus on his glorious future home.



1. The Disclosure of the City: John 14:1-6

a. The climactic announcement by Christ:

On the night before His crucifixion Christ revealed to His troubled disciples that He would depart, prepare a place for them in heaven ("the Father's house") and return to take His own to that place. This is the first biblical reference to the rapture.

b. The current activity of Christ:

While the Bridegroom is absent from His Bride, He is preparing for her a holy habitation for her eternal enjoyment. The place being prepared by the Savior is described in Revelation 21-22 as a glorious city, the New Jerusalem. It took the Savior six days to create the universe and the world. He has been working on our eternal home for almost 2000 years. What a magnificent place that must be!

2. The Desire for the City: Heb. 11:10, 16

a. Patriarchal anticipation of a celestial city.

Abraham, living about 2000 B.C., in faith "looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." As the architect and builder, God not only designed the city but built it as well. Though Canaan was promised to Abraham, he lived in it not as owner but as resident alien. His hope was in a city with permanent foundations in contrast to the temporary abodes on earth.



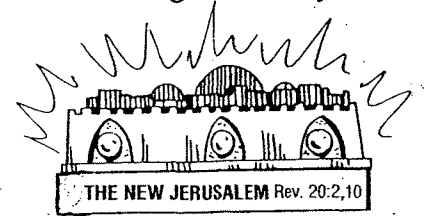
b. Personal acquaintance with the divine designer.

It is not known when this revelation of a future heavenly home was given to the Patriarchs; but in faith, they longed to leave their temporary tents for the celestial city and their endless travels to enter the city of eternal rest. Their firm faith in God was rewarded by Him "Who is not ashamed to be called their friend for He has prepared for them a city" (v. 16). The writer to the Hebrews refers to the city as the **prophetic anticipation** of the Patriarchs (11:16), the **prospective abode**

of the redeemed (12:22) and the **present aspiration** of the saint (13:14). How can the believer “seek [a permanent city] to come,” if he knows nothing of the city?

3. The Description of the City: Rev 21-22

a. The exquisite beauty of the city:



The final chapters of the Revelation provide a description of a city of exquisite beauty, “having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (21:11).

The following description pictures the “holy city, the New Jerusalem” (21:1) as a gigantic jewel radiating the glory of God and a beautiful setting for God’s grace to be manifest in those who have trusted in Him. There are those interpreters who would spiritualize the city, who say “there never was, is not now, and never will be such as city” (Homer Hailey, *Revelation*, 412). It is an actual city with a material existence. While there are symbolic aspects to the city and much transcends human understanding, it is best to accept the details of its description at face value. There is a city with streets of gold and gates made of giant jewels.

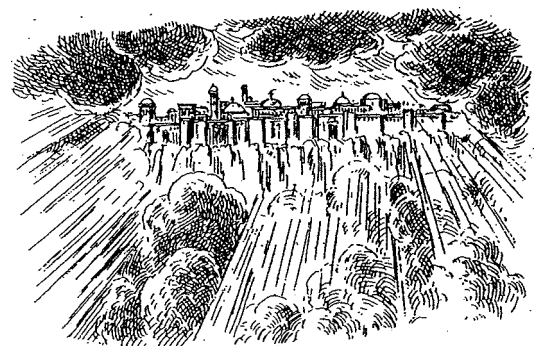
b. The extraordinary dimensions of the city:

The city is laid out as a square (literally, “four-cornered.”) “The length and the breadth and the heights of it are equal” (21:16). The dimensions, translated into modern terms, are about 1500 miles. It is perhaps best to understand the city as being in the shape of a pyramid, similar to the way Clarence Larkin has pictured it (see below). The dimensions of the city stagger the mind. The land area covered by the city would be in comparison the distance from the Pacific to the Mississippi River or from New York to Houston. Robert Thomas correctly notes, “A city 1500 miles high and 1500 miles on each side is no more unimaginable than a pearl large enough to serve as a city-gate or gold that is as transparent as glass” (*Revelation 8-22*, 467).

4. The Descent of the City: Rev. 21:1-10; Rev. 3:12

a. The foretold descend of the city: Rev. 21:1-2

The city will descend from heaven after the millennium when John sees “a new heaven and new earth” (v. 1). If the new heaven, earth and sea are literal, so must be the new city. In contrast to the harlot woman who appears in spiritual Babylon for everlasting destruction (ch. 17), the Bride, the Lamb’s wife appears in this new city for eternal blessedness.



b. The future dwelling of the Godhead: Rev. 21:3

The stupendous truth is that “the tabernacle of God is with men.” God Himself “will dwell with them” (v. 3). Five times this truth is emphasized in this verse. God makes His tabernacle with men, reminiscent of the Shekinah glory that filled the tabernacle in the wilderness. The condition of estrangement between God and man, caused by human sin, has ended. As in Paradise, God can dwell again with men. It is a blessed truth, though difficult to grasp, that the saints will not spend eternity with God in heaven, but rather, God will spend eternity with His own on the new earth. What a marvelous condescension

5. The Designations for the City: Heb. 12:22

a. The varied designations for the heavenly city:

The writer to the Hebrews speaks of the city as “Mount Zion, and . . . the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” Paul speaks of it as the Jerusalem above (Gal. 4:26). The resurrected Lord speaks to the church at Philadelphia of “the city of my God, which is the new Jerusalem” (Rev. 3:12). Our eternal home is described with an impressive list of designations:

- (1) Mount Zion, Heb. 12:22
- (2) City of the Living God, Heb. 12:22
- (3) Heavenly Jerusalem, Heb. 12:22
- (4) Jerusalem from above, Gal. 4:26
- (5) City of my God, Rev. 3:12
- (6) The New Jerusalem, Rev. 3:12; 21:2
- (7) The Holy City, Rev. 21:2, 10 (cf. Is. 52:1)
- (8) The Bride, Rev. 21:2, 9
- (9) A Continuing City, Heb. 13:14
- (10) Father’s House, Jn. 14:2
- (11) Paradise of God, Rev. 2:7



ירושלם

b. The vital denotation of the term “Jerusalem”

The oldest known form, Uru-sa-lim, has been commonly regarded as meaning “city of peace.” At the time of Abraham apparently the name was shortened to Salem = peace (Gen. 14:18, cf. Ps. 76:2). The name yerushalem, in the N.T. as Hierousalem or Hierosoluma, appears to point to the peace which someday will spread from the millennial city to the whole earth. The name Jerusalem further witnesses to the presence of God (Mic. 4:1-3), to authority (Throne of David) and Worship (Temple of Solomon). Someone has well observed, “It is one of the ironies of history that a city which in its long history has seen so little peace and for whose possession rivers of blood have been shed should have such a possible meaning for its name” (ISBE, III, 1960, 1596.)

The earthly Jerusalem will live up to its name in the Millennium, with the presence of the Prince of Peace. Thus it will become a type of the heavenly Jerusalem.





6. The Dwellers of the City: Heb. 12: 22-24

a. The primary design of the city:

In fashioning the heavenly Jerusalem, the Savior is primarily fulfilling His promise to the church in John 14:3, "I go to prepare a place for you." This is why the city is described as a bride adorned for her husband . . . the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:2, 9). The term bride therefore refers to both the church and her abode. The city as the bride expresses God's intimate relationship with it as well as His fellowship with the redeemed in the city.

Dear Friend, if you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, the new city will be your eternal home!

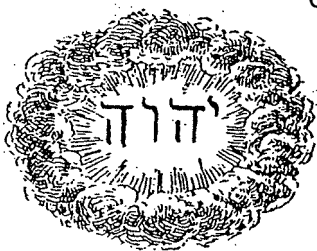
b. The principal denizens of the city: Heb. 12:22-24

The inhabitants of the city are listed as "an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly and church of the firstborn. . . and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." The various companies can be listed thusly:

- 1) The holy angels—"myriads of angels"
- 2) The church—"the assembly and church of the firstborn"
- 3) The redeemed of all the ages—"the spirits of just men made perfect"
- 4) God the Father—"God the Judge of all"
- 5) Christ the Son—"Jesus the mediator of the new covenant"
- 6) The Holy Spirit

While the Holy Spirit is not mentioned separately, He indwells church age believers permanently. Christ promised them that the Spirit would abide with them forever (Jn. 14:16). Since the Church will be there, so will be the Holy Spirit.

The New Jerusalem will thus be the eternal home of the holy angels, church age saints, the triune God and the redeemed of all the ages.



7. The Delights of the New City: Rev. 22:1-5

a. Abundant provisions for human enjoyment:

Our eternal home will be a place of paradisiacal perfection, free of the curse (v. 3) and all darkness (v. 5). Jesus will be there, abundantly providing light and life. We will be refreshed by water from the river of life, "clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1). We will have access to the "tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month" (v. 2)

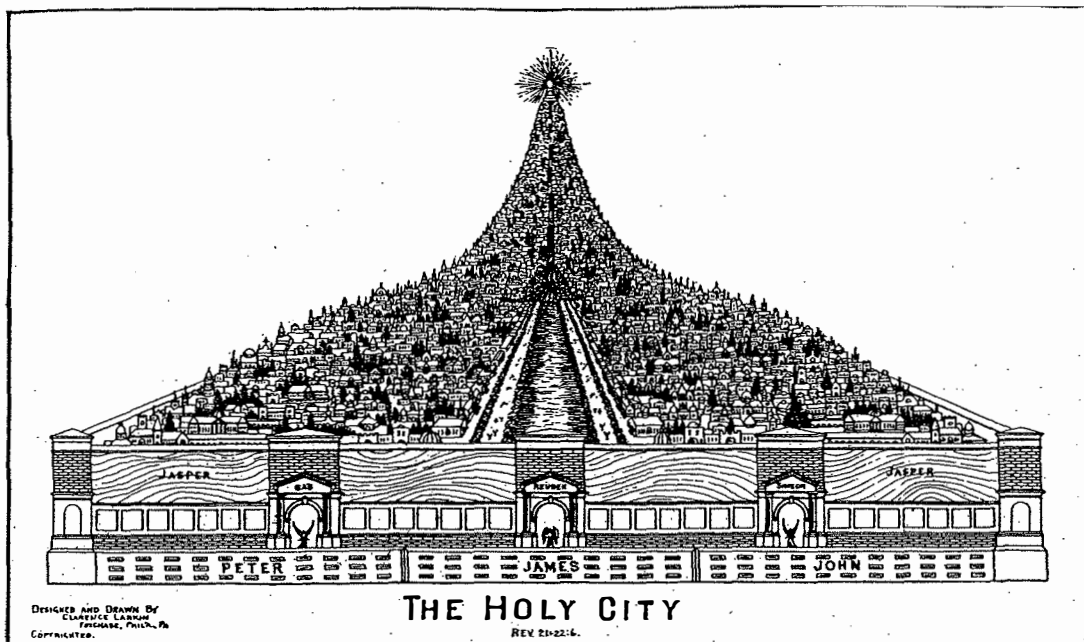
b. Absolute perfection of a holy environment:

The believer, far from pursuing a pedantic eternal routine, will be engaged in rewarding spiritual activity. Two words summarize this activity: service and sovereignty. Our ministry is described thus, "his servants shall serve him . . . and they shall reign for ever and ever" (v. 3, 5). As glorified beings, we will have the privilege of assisting a holy Savior in a perfect environment, free of the encumbrances of sin and enticements of Satan.

The grateful believer concurs with Dr. Ryrie's fitting remarks, "This is complete exaltation and perfect exultation" (Ryrie, *Revelation* [1996], 67).

In anticipation of such a glorious future, one blessing stands out far above any other. **We shall see His face** (v. 4). Eternally we will be in the presence of the One who calls us His Bride. He who redeemed us and resurrected us, regards as His is prized and privileged possession as we cherish His closeness and companionship. Well has the songwriter expressed the believer's blessedness:

*Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,
Will through the ages be glory for me.
Oh that will be, glory for me.
When by His grace I shall look on His face,
That will be glory for me!*



The New Jerusalem in the Epistle to the Hebrews



The Perfect Architect
of the City

Heb. 11:10

The Prophetic Anticipation
of the City

Heb. 11:16

The Prospective Abode
in the City

Heb. 12:22-23

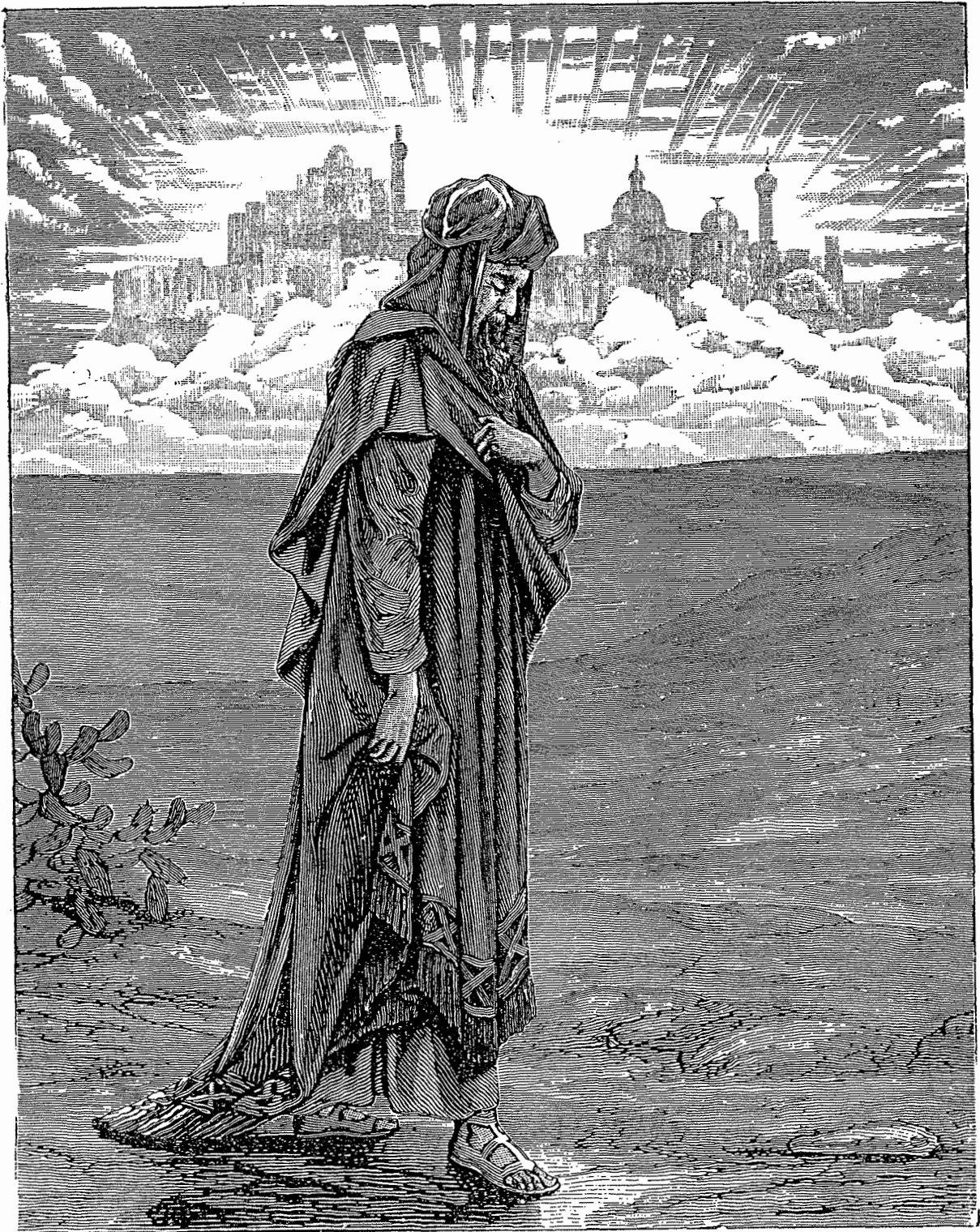
The Present Aspirations
for the City

Heb. 13:14



The Faith of Abraham

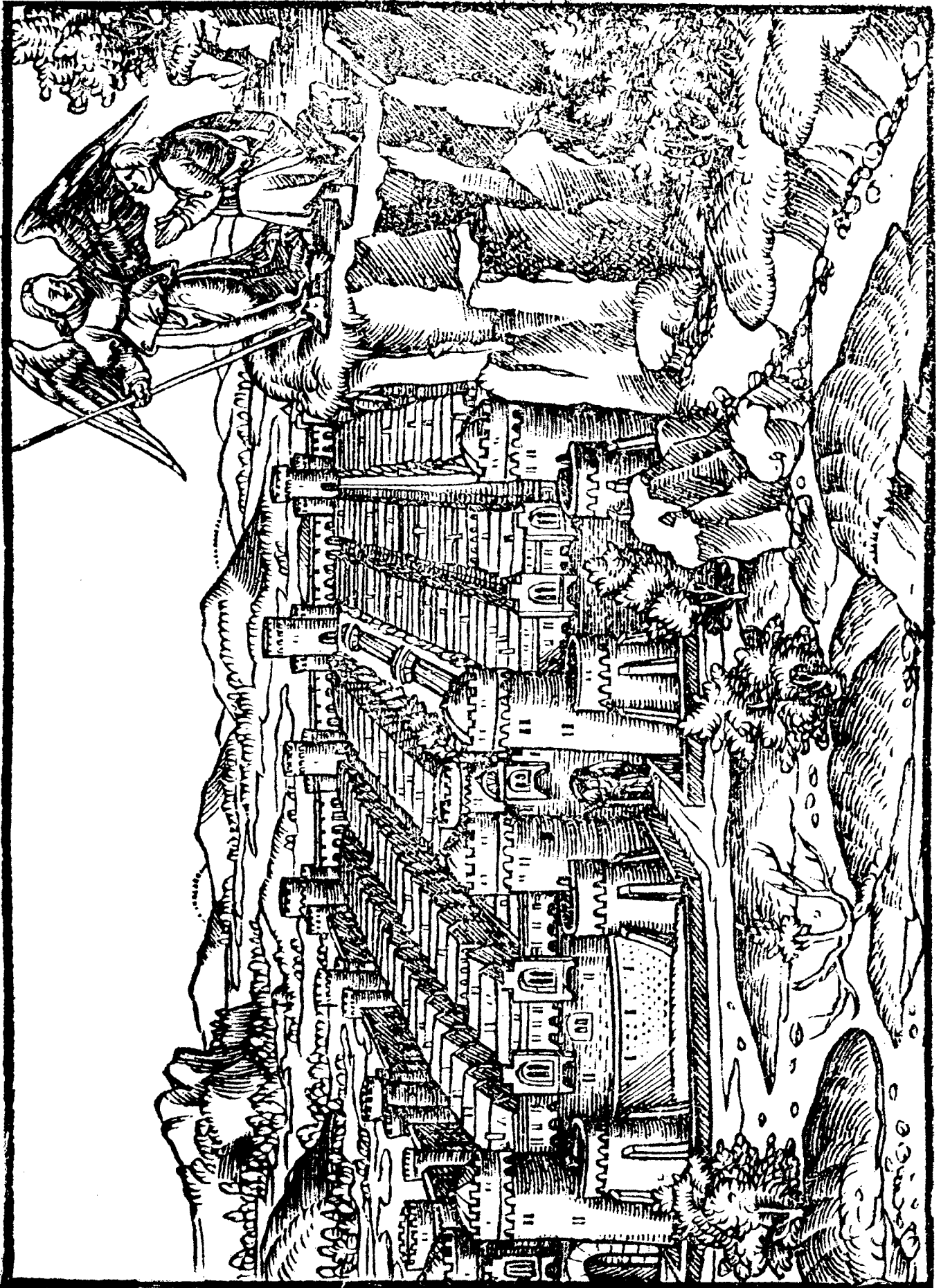
“He looked for a city which hath foundations,
whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10)



THE PATRIARCHS:

**Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their
God: for he hath prepared for them a city.**

Hebrews 11:16



Johannes erblickt das neue Jerusalem.



John is shown the descending heavenly Jerusalem, the eternal home of the church, adorned as a beautiful bride,

Offenbarung Johannis. Kap. 21, Vers 1—7.