



**A**ND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Rev 21:1-8)

The reader will be relieved to know I am only commenting on three verses of the original twenty-five verses of this old and beautiful hymn. These are the three provided in the 1940 Hymnal. The hymn is a glowing inspiration of old English sacred folk literature that found its way into this hymn rendition sometime during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The larger 25-verse version contains a beautiful and enlarged description of New Jerusalem to come. The identity of the author is lost in antiquity. The first tune given in the 1940 Hymnal is entitled, *LAND OF REST*, an old Scottish ballad tune sung in the Appalachian region of the United States and adapted to the hymn by Mrs. Annabel Morris Buchanan. The lyrics are primarily comprised of words from the Psalms for a time when English hymns were limited to the metrical phrases or paraphrases of the Psalms.

## Jerusalem, My Happy Home

Jerusalem, my happy home,  
When shall I come to thee?  
When shall my sorrows have an end?  
Thy joys when shall I see?

Thy saints are crowned with glory great;  
They see God face to face;  
They triumph still, they still rejoice  
Most happy is their case.

There David stands with harp in hand  
As master of the choir:  
Ten thousand times that man were blessed  
That might this music hear.

*Jerusalem, my happy home, When shall I come to thee? When shall my sorrows have an end? Thy joys when shall I see?* I hope the reader has not set his heart on the rude and primitively wicked cities of this world. God has made much greater and more glorious provision for His elect! That future city of light and beauty is not that little crime-ridden Jerusalem on Mt. Moriah, but rather that New and Holy Jerusalem which He has promised us to see coming down out of Heaven as a Bride adorned for her Husband. Once we have found our home in Christ, none other Paradise will satisfy. The magnitude of our joy is multiplied in our patiently waiting for God's fulfillment of His blessings in the fullness of time. Whatever time that promise is fulfilled will be the absolutely most perfect time, because God does all things well. When I was a child, my parents would go into the city to shop each Saturday afternoon with the promise of bringing us some special treat. Had the treat been made available immediately, the joy would be much diminished. We waited with bated breath for their return. The longer the wait, the greater the joy when we saw them coming into the driveway of our home.

*Thy saints are crowned with glory great; They see God face to face; They triumph still, they still rejoice Most happy is their case.* The tune, *LAND OF REST*, is so fitting for this song, for Christ (our Sabbath) has promised rest to all of His elect. Did not the beggar Lazarus rest in unsurpassed joy in the bosom of Abraham? We can barely comprehend the joy of being present with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost in fullness. Since our world is far closer to Hell than it is to Heaven, I doubt that the saints on High are aware of our clumsy lives here on earth. It would sadden them to see our lack of faith and righteousness – and there is no sorrow in Heaven. You will recall that those in Hell could see Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham, but Lazarus could not see those in Hell.

*There David stands with harp in hand As master of the choir: Ten thousand times that man were blessed That might this music hear.* The artist of Psalm and psalter is a fitting choice to serve as Master of the Choir whose notes will soothe our hearts more than his did that of King Saul. Though our God is a God of Battles and of Judgment, He is still a God of music and comforting grace. *And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. Psalms 40:3 (KJV) To the believer, God may provide the most joyous songs when the gales buffet, and the sea billows roll – the very moment most awkward to the world are most appropriate to the people of God. 6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. 7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy*

*waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. 8 Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. 9 I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? 10 As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? 11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. (Psalm 42:6-11)*

The True Jerusalem on High is most joyous in its Holy furnishings, and nothing to spoil the eye of the beholder – only beauty in every glance. The Tree and River of Life are there, and nothing can hurt or make ashamed. *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.* No longer does there remain a veil in the Temple to separate the people of God from the Holy of Holies. Christ tore the veil from top to bottom at His death on the cross. Instead of an intermediary high priest to intercede for us, even now we have the High Priest who is our Lord to do so in this life, and to LIVE with us in the life to come always.

The Holy City of New Jerusalem has been our long sought destination for the Elect of God. Abraham sought it, and all of the saints after searched out for that city as pilgrims who travel with few possessions of the world: *8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. (Heb 11:8-16)*

Are you a pilgrim who seeks after that city?