

THE CITY WITH FOUNDATIONS

by Henry M. Morris*

In sharp contrast to the lake of fire, which the Bible says is the future home of the unsaved, the Bible also promises a wonderful city as the future home of those to whom has been imputed the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That future city is called *"the holy city, new Jerusalem."* The apostle John, translated in spirit into the future by the Holy Spirit, was permitted to see that city *"coming down from God out of heaven"* (Revelation 21:2) to the new earth: *"for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away"* (Revelation 21:1). He then proceeded, in the last two chapters of the Bible, to describe the wonders of that great city where we shall dwell someday.

The city is not "heaven," as some have thought, for John saw it coming down *out of heaven*. When Christ was here on this present earth, He promised His followers that He would *"go and prepare a place for you . . . that where I am, there ye may be also"* (John 14:3). Perhaps it is almost ready, for many signs indicate His coming is near.

And indeed, when He comes back as He said He would, *"so shall we ever be with the Lord."* That will be the most blessed aspect of our future home. But we shall also see again all those who have preceded us to their present heavenly home, for when He comes, we *"shall be*

caught up together with them . . . to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thessalonians 4:17).

Long before the Lord Jesus was here on earth, His ancient followers, such as Abraham, also *"looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (Hebrews 11:10). Therefore, God was *"not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city"* (Hebrews 11:16).

And what foundations it has! *"The wall of the city had twelve foundations"* supporting *"a wall great and high,"* and those *"foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones"* (Revelation 21:12,14,19).

Some expositors think that all this is symbolic of something or other, but I have to believe it will be exactly as John saw it. It does have certain spiritual remembrances built into it as well, for the twelve gates in the great wall are inscribed with *"the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel"* and the foundations themselves are inscribed with *"the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb"* (Revelation 21:12,14).

As far as personal homes are concerned, Jesus called them *"mansions"* (John 14:2) but they may not be what we mean by that word. The Greek word is *mone*, normally used as a prefix meaning "sole" or "alone." We use its English

*Dr. Henry Morris is Founder and President Emeritus of ICR.

derivative “mono” the same way. It stresses individuality and is used only one other time in the New Testament, in John 14:23. There, Jesus also promised that, even in this present life: *“If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”* We can probably infer from this that, whatever our unique “abode” in heaven may be, it will be like a “mansion” to us, because God’s “presence” will also abide there. That can seem true even now if we truly love Him and keep His words, because the indwelling Spirit of God is here within each believer now.

The city as a whole will be marvelous in size and beauty. It is also called *“Paradise.”* The paradise of Eden will be restored and made even better than at first (note Luke 23:43; II Corinthians 12:4; Revelation 2:7)! The *“tree of life”* will be there—not a single tree as in Eden, but many such trees, lining the banks of a great river emerging from the throne of the Lamb (Revelation 22:1–2).

In size, the city will be a tremendous cube, 12,000 furlongs on each side. The word “furlong” is from the Greek *stadios*; this works out to mean that the city is about 1,380 miles long, wide, and high; (see Revelation 21:16). The “streets” of the city like the city itself, are of pure transparent gold, like pure glass—Revelation 21:18,21. These must be both horizontal and vertical streets, the latter presumably somewhat like elevator shafts. There will be no need for “lifts,” of course, nor even for carriages of any kind. Our new bodies will enable us to travel very swiftly throughout the city and even throughout the universe. Christ will have transformed *“our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body”* (Philippians 3:21), so we will probably be able to go easily and quickly wherever He can go.

Now all this is admittedly hard to visualize or even imagine. It would be very hard to believe at all, if it were not for the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ (who created the universe itself) is building the city. Our wonderful world, with its infinite complexity also would be impossible to imagine had He Himself not created and then given us the Mandate to study it, describe it, use it, and have dominion over it.

Speaking of this universe, the Bible makes it clear that the stars and other components of the cosmos will never pass away (e.g. Psalm 148:1–6). God is not capricious, so must have a purpose for everything He has created. Since we know from astronomy as well as the Bible that *“one star differeth from another star in glory”* (I Corinthians 15:41), the purpose for each star must be unique to itself, and therefore so must also its structure and functions be.

Now, although the Bible does not say it specifically, it seems reasonable that we shall be able to learn much more about the universe in the ages to come than we can ever do in this life. He gave the first man work to do in his immediate home at the beginning in Eden, even before there was any sin. The Bible does say that in the new earth, *“His servants shall serve Him”* (Revelation 22:3). That’s us, not just the angels!

In fact, I like to believe that God’s primeval Mandate to have dominion over the earth may well be enlarged eventually to cover the whole creation. Would it not be a wonderful future to be able to travel to distant stars and planets, explore them and then write about their nature and uniqueness in God’s plan for a book in God’s library? Others could read our reports and we could read theirs, and all would still further increase our awe at God’s great creation and our love and devotion to Him.

The universe and its intricate complexities are infinite, and the time to study

them will be endless. *“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”* (Romans 11:33). We shall never lack for challenging, enjoyable, and useful work to do in these ages to come.

This is not to suggest that everyone will always be out exploring the cosmos. God will no doubt assign many different forms of service to His redeemed and glorified servants—depending probably on their God-given talents and also on their faithfulness in this present life. There will have been differing rewards presented at the judgment seat of Christ and He has promised that His rewards will be given to every man *“according as his work shall be”* (Revelation 22:12). Our future work probably will be somewhat in relation to our former work. The Lord’s several parables dealing with faithfulness and diligence in service in this life stress that these characteristics will be proportionately rewarded in the future life after His coming. *“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works”* (Matthew 16:27).

One of the most wonderful aspects of these ages to come in God’s holy city is that *“there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth”* (Revelation 21:27). Unutterably sad, however, is the state of those whose eternal residence will be in that far off *“world of iniquity”* (James 3:6), called the lake of fire. In addition to the vast numbers of lost souls of unsaved men and women, Satan and all his demonic hordes will be there.

Modern sinners and unbelieving intellectuals should remember that John the Baptist long ago was warning people to *“flee from the wrath to come”* (Matthew 3:7; Luke 3:7), and that warning is more urgent today than ever. The coming of the


Lord almost certainly *“is near, even at the doors”* (Matthew 24:33).

For a time, no doubt, even in the holy city we shall have tears to shed, especially for unsaved friends and loved ones but then *“God shall wipe away all tears”* (Revelation 21:4), and the glories of life in the new Jerusalem and the new earth will be so magnificent that *“the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind”* (Isaiah 65:17).

I am personally looking forward not only to learning more about God’s creation and not only to seeing loved ones and old friends again and sharing with them all our (and their) experiences, but also getting to meet and talk with Noah and Elijah and John the Baptist and Timothy and all our other heroes of the faith, and then eventually to meet and know all the saints of all the ages. What wonderful times of fellowship, as well as service, await us in that beautiful city!

It is also fascinating to note that the Bible apparently predicts more than just one future age. The apostle Paul refers at least twice to *ages* yet to come. I love especially the promise of Ephesians 2:7—*“That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”* Then there is the great doxology of Ephesians 3:21. *“Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”*

We can safely leave all these undefined “ages to come” to God who, for His own good reasons, has not chosen to tell us about them yet. We do have, however, enough information about that coming age in the holy city in the new earth, with its solid and sure foundations, to look forward to it with great anticipation and eternal joy.

Don’t miss it! *“For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come”* (Hebrews 13:14). 

WERE THE HUGE COLUMBIA RIVER BASALTS FORMED IN THE FLOOD?

by John D. Morris, Ph.D.


Often skeptics of creation/flood/young earth thinking scoffingly claim that no evidence for the Flood exists. Even though most geologists have abandoned old-style uniformity in favor of a grudging acceptance of major catastrophism, they still deny the global, year-long, cataclysm of Noah's day described in Scripture. I like to ask them, "What sort of evidence would you be prepared to accept? Obviously, we can't observe that past event, but if such a world-restructuring flood occurred, what would you expect to result from it?" For most skeptics, no evidence would persuade them. Their rejection of the Noachic Flood, as an outworking of God's holy wrath on sinful men, is for philosophical reasons—"religious" reasons, irrespective of scientific evidence.

When considering non-repeatable events of the past, we are limited to scientific "predictions," not predictions of the future, but predictions of the evidence. Reasoning from the Scriptural record, I "predict" that when we examine the geologic results of the Flood, we will see that the geologic strata were deposited by catastrophic processes, operating on a regional scale. These large-scale results would dominate the rock record. My uniformitarian colleagues would predict the record would be dominated by the rather slow and gradual geologic processes possible today, operating on a local scale. Once both sides have made their predictions, the evidence can be evaluated as to which one is the better fit. That one is more likely correct.

Consider the Columbia River Basalt Group of lava flows in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. This series of lava flows

was stacked one on top of another in rapid succession and covers an area of some 65,000 square miles and with a volume of about 40,000 cubic miles. This dwarfs the largest historic lava flow, which occurred in Iceland in 1783, and covered an area of about 200 square miles with a volume of less than 3 cubic miles. One can scarcely envision such eruptions, producing a veritable "lake of lava" thousands of times larger than anything witnessed by modern men. The molten material flowed from several locations along linear cracks in the earth's surface, but even this deposit is dwarfed by other much larger basalt deposits which have been recognized.

Occurring in layers stratigraphically below the Columbia River Basalts are thick layers of water-deposited, fossil-bearing, sedimentary rock, obviously deposited by the Flood itself. Thus, Flood advocates interpret these mega-eruptions of basalt as probably occurring during the very last stages of the Flood or in the years of readjustment to follow, as Earth's systems regained the relative equilibrium in which we now find them. Surely this was a fearful time.

Obviously such large-scale volcanism does not match uniformitarian predictions regarding the past. Yet it does match the creation/flood/young earth prediction of catastrophic processes operating on a regional scale during and immediately following the Flood. While neither side can directly observe the past, the Biblical, "Back to Genesis" model is the one that predicts the evidence, and, is thus, from a scientific perspective more likely correct. 



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