

Parousia — New Jerusalem Day

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ALTHOUGH IT WASN'T ANNOUNCED in the average wall calendar, the 9th annual celebration of Parousia – New Jerusalem Day took place on August 4, 2024. Groups of believers celebrated in various ways in Marietta, Georgia; Long Island, New York; St. Louis, Missouri; Sharon, West Virginia; Chennai, India; and elsewhere. They hold in common a belief in fulfilled eschatology and a belief that Jesus is currently present with His people in the New Jerusalem.

The idea for this holiday came from Joshua John Trent (Iron Scepter Worldwide Ministries), and this was the original announcement in advance of the first official celebration:

Parousia — New Jerusalem Day will be celebrated for the first time on August 7, 2016 (the first Sunday in August). On August 10th, AD 70, the Second Temple fell in Jerusalem. Jesus is the cornerstone of a new temple, God's dwelling place made up of people from all nations (Eph 2:19-22). "Parousia" is Greek for "presence." We celebrate the presence of Jesus in New Jerusalem, the city of God, where Jesus dwells today with His people (Rev 21:3; 2 Cor 6:16).

Some have worn purple (representing royal dominion) and/or gold (representing purity). Other practices have included giving away something old (to charity) and obtaining something new (representing the new covenant). There was a website devoted to this holiday that was accidentally taken down, but hopefully it can be restored. In August 2016, a total of 253 people located in the United States, India, and Russia checked in at a page on that website to confirm that they participated in the first celebration.

The following is adapted from an article that Joshua John Trent asked me to write nine years ago regarding the meaning of this holiday's name (originally published on the website that is currently down):

Parousia – New Jerusalem Day is celebrated on the first Sunday of August. This is close to August 10th, the day that the Second Temple was destroyed in Jerusalem in AD 70. While the old temple and the old city of Jerusalem were desolate (Matt 23:38) and marked for destruction (Matt 22:7, 24:1-3; Mark 13:1-4; Luke 21:5-7), Jesus became the cornerstone of a new temple, God's dwelling place made up of His people from all nations (Eph 2:19-22). New Jerusalem and the new covenant were chosen while earthly Jerusalem and the old covenant were cast out (Gal 4:21-31).

Definition of the Word "Parousia"

The word *parousia* (pronounced *par-oo-see'-ah*) is a Greek word which means "presence." It also means "arrival" or "official visit," and "was used in the East as a technical expression to denote the arrival or visit

of a king or emperor, and celebrated the glory of the sovereign publicly.”¹ The word *parousia* appears 24 times in the New Testament.² It is used to speak of the coming or presence of various individuals: Stephanas, Fortunatas, and Achaicus (1 Cor 16:17); Titus (2 Cor 7:6-7); Paul (2 Cor. 10:10; Phil 1:26, 2:12); and the lawless one (2 Thess 2:9).

In the majority of instances (16 times), though, it is used in connection with the promise of Christ’s coming. This word comes “from the present participle of G3918 [*pareimi*]; a being near, i.e. advent (often, return; specially, of Christ to punish Jerusalem, or finally the wicked); (by implication) physically, aspect: — coming, presence.”³

“Parousia” in the New Testament

Here are the 16 New Testament passages (NKJV) where Christ’s *parousia* is promised:

1. “Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of **Your coming**, and of the end of the age?’” (Matt 24:3).
2. “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will **the coming** of the Son of Man be” (Matt 24:27).
3. “For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will **the coming** of the Son of Man be” (Matt 24:38-39).
4. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at **His coming**” (1 Cor 15:22-23).
5. “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at **His coming**?” (1 Thess 2:19).
6. “And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at **the coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints” (2 Thess 3:12-13).
7. “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until **the coming** of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep” (1 Thess 4:15).
8. “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at **the coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 5:23).
9. “Now, brethren, concerning **the coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come” (2 Thess 2:1-2).
10. “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of **His coming**” (2 Thess 2:8).

- 11 - 12. *“Therefore be patient, brethren, until **the coming** of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for **the coming** of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!”* (James 5:7-9).
13. *“For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty”* (2 Peter 1:16).
14. *“Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle... that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of **His coming**? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation”* (2 Peter 3:1-4).
15. *“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening **the coming** of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells”* (2 Peter 3:10-13).
16. *“And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at **His coming**”* (1 John 2:28).

More than 100 passages in the New Testament declared that the events of the last days, including the Great Tribulation and the coming of Christ, were “*near*” and about to take place “*soon*” in the first century.⁴ Jesus stated that the time would come when, upon seeing all the things He predicted taking place (earthquakes, wars, famines, etc.), His listeners could recognize that He was “*near, at the very door*” (Matt 24:33). James recognized this very thing and declared that the Judge was “*standing right at the door*” (James 5:8-9).

N. T. Wright explains in his book, *Surprised by Hope* (2008), the typical use of the word *parousia* in the first century AD:

When the emperor visited a colony or province, the citizens of the country would go to meet him at some distance from the city. It would be disrespectful to have him actually arrive at the gates as though his subjects couldn't be bothered to greet him properly. When they met him, they wouldn't then stay out in the open country: **they would escort him royally into the city itself.** When Paul speaks of “meeting” the Lord “in the air,” the point is precisely not – as in the popular rapture theology – that the saved believers would then stay up in the air somewhere, away from earth. **The point is that, having gone out to meet**

their returning Lord, they will escort him royally into his domain, that is, back to the place they have come from. Even when we realize that this is highly charged metaphor, not literal description, the meaning is the same as in the parallel in Philippians 3:20. Being citizens of heaven, as the Philippians would know, doesn't mean that one is expecting to go back to the mother city but rather means that **one is expecting the emperor to come from the mother city to give the colony its full dignity, to rescue it if need be, to subdue local enemies and put everything to rights** (pp. 132-133, emphasis added).

“Parousia” Is Closely Connected with “New Jerusalem”

In Revelation 21:1 - 22:5, we read that *“the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God”* (Rev 21:3). We also see that the Lamb, Jesus, is the light of God's city (Rev 21:22-24; 22:5). New Jerusalem is filled with the presence (*parousia*) of Jesus; New Jerusalem is His dwelling place.

New Jerusalem

Isaiah prophesied that God would create new heavens and a new earth, and *“Jerusalem as a rejoicing”* (Isa 65:17-18). In those days, there would still be childbirth, death, building, and planting (Isa 65:20-23), i.e., the realities we know and experience today. There would also be joy, peace, satisfaction, glory, and comfort like a mother's comfort (Isa 65:19, 66:10-13).

The apostle Paul likewise described *“the Jerusalem above”* as a comforting mother (Gal 4:26-28). The author of Hebrews told the first-century saints that they had already come to *“the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . . to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant...”* (Heb 12:22-24). These two passages, along with the book of Revelation, contrast two covenants (the old and the new), two women (the harlot and the bride), and two cities (old Jerusalem and New Jerusalem):

Bible Passage	Two Cities/Mountains	Two Women	Two Covenants
Galatians 4:21-31	<i>“. . . and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage . . . but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.”</i>	<i>“. . . this Hagar is Mount Sinai . . . Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then brethren we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.”</i>	<i>“For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai . . .”</i>

Hebrews 12:18-29	<i>“For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched . . . But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.”</i>		<i>“For you have not come to [Mount Sinai] . . . But you have come to . . . Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.”</i>
Book of Revelation	<i>“. . . the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified . . . standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city!” “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”</i>	<i>“Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot . . . and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.” “. . . the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready . . . Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”</i>	<i>“Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail” (imagery of Mount Sinai — see Exodus 19).</i>

Numerous parallels can be made between John’s vision of New Jerusalem (Rev 21:1 – 22:5) and the descriptions of the new covenant made by Jesus, the apostles, and even some of the Old Testament prophets. Among them are the following⁵:

Passage	Description and Parallels
Rev 21:2	New Jerusalem is God’s holy city, pictured as a bride. Jesus said that His people are a city set on a hill, the light of the world (Matt 5:14; see also Heb 12:22-24, Gal 4:26).
Rev 21:3	God dwells with His people, He is with them, and He is their God. See Ezekiel 37:27, 43:7, 48:35; 2 Corinthians 6:16.
Rev 21:9	John sees the New Jerusalem as a bride, the Lamb’s wife. He contrasts the bride with the harlot/great city of Revelation 17, old covenant Jerusalem (Rev 11:8). Paul also contrasted two women/two covenants in Galatians 4:21-31.

Rev 21:12-13	The new Jerusalem has a high wall with 12 gates, bearing the names of the 12 tribes of Israel, three gates each on the east, north, south, and west sides. Compare to Isaiah 60:18, Luke 13:29, and to Ezekiel 48:30-35 (“...and the name of the city from that day shall be: <i>THE LORD IS THERE</i> ”).
Rev 21:14	The city’s foundations bear the names of the 12 apostles. Compare to Ephesians 2:20.
Rev 21:15-18	The new Jerusalem in John’s vision is cube-shaped, as was the holy of holies in Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 6:20). The holy of holies was overlaid with pure gold, and the holy city in John’s vision is also entirely made of pure gold.
Rev 21:19-21	The foundations of the city walls are covered in precious gems. See Isaiah 54:11-12, and note that Paul clearly affirms that Isaiah 54 is about the church (Gal 4:26-27).
Rev 21:22-23	Jesus is the temple and the light of this city. See Isaiah 60:19.
Rev 21:24	The nations of those who are saved walk in the light of this city. See Isaiah 60:3, 10.
Rev 21:25-26	The gates of the city are never shut, and the glory and honor of the nations come in to the city. See Isaiah 60:5, 11.
Rev 21:27	Only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life enter this city. See Isaiah 60:21.
Rev 22:1	A pure, clear river of water of life flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. See John 4:13-14, 7:37; Zechariah 14:8; Revelation 22:17.
Rev 22:2	On both sides of the river is the tree of life, which bears different fruit each month. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. See Ezekiel 47:1-12.
Rev 22:5	There’s no night in the city, and no need for a lamp. See Isaiah 60:1, 19-20; Daniel 12:3, Matthew 13:43, John 8:12. The citizens of New Jerusalem reign forever and ever. See Isaiah 9:6-7, Luke 1:33, Revelation 1:6.

The New Jerusalem means “the new city of peace.”⁶ Jesus’ presence, His *parousia*, is in this city. He is the Prince of Peace, and there will be no end to His government and peace (Isa 9:6-7); He is peace (Mic 5:5). Let’s rejoice and celebrate, not only annually on the first Sunday of August, but also every day that His presence is in our midst, in the city of God, the New Jerusalem. ✝

1. Gustav Adolf Deissmann (1908). *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*.
2. https://biblehub.com/greek/strongs_3952.htm
3. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3952/kjv/tr/0-1/>
4. <https://adammaarschalk.com/2013/07/23/101-preterist-time-indicators/>

5. For an expanded view of these parallels, see <https://adammaarschalk.com/2016/03/26/long-island-conference-what-was-the-purpose-of-the-end-times-part-2/>
6. <https://adammaarschalk.com/2016/05/25/the-vision-of-the-old-testament-prophets-for-this-new-covenant-age-preterist-conference-call/>