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# Transformation of Symbols: The New Jerusalem in Rv 21 1–22 5

**Celia Deutsch**

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# Transformation of Symbols: The New Jerusalem in Rv 211 – 225\*

by Celia Deutsch

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The vision of the New Jerusalem in Rv 211 – 225 has been an object of speculation since the second century, when Justin, Irenaeus and Tertullian all used the text to articulate their own eschatological hopes.<sup>1</sup> In the past several decades the text has been subjected to critical analysis, and this from several viewpoints. Full-scale commentaries tend to view the passage in comparison with, or contrast to, parallels from the Hebrew Scriptures and Second Temple Jewish literature.<sup>2</sup> Thematic studies examine various motifs found in the text.<sup>3</sup> Still other materials concentrate on questions of tradition, redaction, and structure.<sup>4</sup> And

\* The draft of this paper was first presented to the members of the Christian Study Group on Judaism and the Jewish People, sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

<sup>1</sup> Just. dial. LXXX; Iren., adv. haer. v. 35.2; Tert., adv. Marc. III. 25; Herm. vis. v. 3.6–7 may also contain a reference to Rv 211 – 225.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation*, Grand Rapids 1981; W. Bousset, *Die Offenbarung Johannis*, Göttingen <sup>1</sup>1896; R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, ICC, vol. 2, 1920; E. Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, HNT 16, 1926; E. Lohse, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, NTD 11, <sup>1</sup>1960.

<sup>3</sup> E.g., A. Y. Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation*, HDR 9, 1976; R. Prigent, *Une trace de liturgie judéo-chrétienne dans le chapitre xxi de l'Apocalypse de Jean*, RSR 60, 1972, 165–172; M. Rissi, *The Future of the World. An Exegetical Study of Revelation 19: 11–22: 15*, SBT, 2nd series 23, 1972; E. Schüssler-Fiorenza, *Priester für Gott. Studien zum Herrschafts- und Priestermotiv in der Apokalypse*, NTab n.f. 7, 1972.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., R. Bergmeier, *Jerusalem, du hochgebaute Stadt*, ZNW 75, 1984, 86–106; G. Bornkamm, *Die Komposition der apokalyptischen Visionen in der Offenbarung Johannis*, in: *Studien zu Antike und Christentum*, München <sup>1</sup>1959, 204–222; C. H. Giblin, *Structural and Thematic Correlations in the Theology of Revelation 16–22*, Bib. 55, 1974, 487–504; J. Lambrecht, *A Structuration of Rev 4:1–22:5*, in: *L'apocalypse johannique et l'apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament*, ed. J. Lambrecht, Gembloux 1980, 77–104; E. Schüssler-Fiorenza, *Composition and Structure in the Book of Revelation*, CBQ 39, 1977, 355–366; U. Vanni, *La struttura letteraria dell'Apocalisse*, Rome 1971; M. Wilcox, *Tradition and Redaction of Rv 219–225*, in: J. Lambrecht, *L'apocalypse johannique*, op. cit. (n. 4) 205–215.

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