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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

(Barnard College, Columbia University, 3000 Broadway, New York, New York 10027-6988)

The vision of the New Jerusalem in Rv 21 1–22 5 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.¹ 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.² Thematic studies examine various motifs found in the text.³ Still other materials concentrate on questions of tradition, redaction, and structure.⁴ 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.

¹ Just. dial. LXXI: Iren., adv. haer. v. 35.2; Tert., adv. Marc. III. 25; Herm. vis. v. 36–7 may also contain a reference to Rv 21 1–22 5.


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