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The New Jerusalem (Annotated)

G. K. Chesterton

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The New Jerusalem is a 1920 book written by British writer G. K. Chesterton. Dale Ahlquist calls it a "philosophical travelogue" of Chesterton's journey across Europe to Palestine. "On the road to Cairo one may see twenty groups exactly like that of the Holy Family in the pictures of the Flight into Egypt; with only one difference. The man is riding on the ass." "The real mistake of the Muslims is something much more modern in its application than any particular passing persecution of Christians as such. It lay in the very fact that they did think they had a simpler and saner sort of Christianity, as do many modern Christians. They thought it could be made universal merely by being made uninteresting. Now a man preaching what he thinks is a platitude is far more intolerant than a man preaching what he admits is a paradox. It was exactly because it seemed self-evident, to Muslims as to Bolsheviks, that their simple creed was suited to everybody, that they wished in that particular sweeping fashion to impose it on everybody."

About the Author
Gilbert Keith Chesterton (29 May 1874 14 June 1936) better known as G. K. Chesterton, was an English writer, lay theologian, poet, philosopher, dramatist, journalist, orator, literary and art critic, biographer, and Christian apologist. Chesterton is often referred to as the "prince of paradox." Time magazine, in a review of a biography of Chesterton, observed of his writing style: "Whenever possible Chesterton made his points with popular sayings, proverbs, allegories first carefully turning them inside out." Chesterton is well known for his fictional priest-detective Father Brown, and for his reasoned apologetics. Even some of those who disagree with him have recognized the wide appeal of such works as Orthodoxy and The Everlasting Man. Chesterton, as a political thinker, cast aspersions on both Progressivism and Conservatism, saying, "The whole modern world has divided itself into Conservatives and Progressives. The business of Progressives is to go on making mistakes. The business of the Conservatives is to prevent the mistakes from being corrected." Chesterton routinely referred to himself as an "orthodox" Christian, and came to identify this position more and more with Catholicism, eventually converting to Roman Catholicism from High Church Anglicanism. George Bernard Shaw, Chesterton's "friendly enemy" according to Time, said of him, "He was a man of colossal genius." Biographers have identified him as a successor to such Victorian authors as Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, Cardinal John Henry Newman, and John Ruskin.