

Session 4. The New Jerusalem: Heaven on Earth, Part 2

INTRODUCTION

I am continuing on the theme of heaven on earth. Last week, we looked at the New Jerusalem, so I'm going to look at New Jerusalem, part two.

The New Jerusalem is God's city coming down to the earth. It doesn't stay in the heavens, it comes down from the heavenly realm. It comes to the earth in the Millennial kingdom, and it has a relationship to the earth of close proximity; but after the Millennial kingdom, it's actually on the earth for ever and ever.

I. The New Jerusalem is our eternal dwelling place. John gave this passage in order to encourage the saints in his day, and the saints all through history, of course, but there will be more believers on the earth in the generation that the Lord returns than in all of history combined, and this passage has its greatest impact on the tribulation saints, on the saints throughout the tribulation.

We are believing God for a billion new souls during that time, between now and then. The idea that the New Jerusalem is coming down to the earth is meant by the Holy Spirit to be an anchor in the souls of the saints that are being tested and tried in the earth.

A NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH

Let's read the passage. "I saw a new heavens and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1).

From last week I'll review a little on this first page for those who weren't here last week. When it says "a new heavens," it's talking about a new atmosphere, a new cosmos, and a new galaxy; a new solar system and that kind of thing.

I'm talking about how the galaxy around this planet is going to be renewed in the resurrection. That is a subject so big, with so many implications, that I just want to point you in that direction. The stars and galaxies, the entire universe will be under the dominion of the saints who live on planet earth.

I don't know where that's going, but we've got billions and billions of years to learn about it, and after billions of years it will be just the introduction. That's actually true!

"I saw a new heavens" —I saw a new solar system, I saw a new universe—"and a new earth, for the first heavens and the first earth were passed away. Then I, John, saw the holy city" (Rev. 21:1-2).

Now, this is the city that the saints throughout history have been focused on. This city doesn't stay in the heavenly realm, but it comes out of the realm of heaven, down to the earth. John said it was prepared as a bride adorned, or a bride who is made beautiful for her husband.

THE THRONE AND CORRIDOR OF GLORY

B. This is review from last week. At the second coming of Christ, Jesus is going to establish His throne of glory on the Millennial earth in Jerusalem. His throne is also in the New Jerusalem. So Jesus' throne is on the earth and in the New Jerusalem. People say, "Well, is there one throne, or two?" I say, "Both;" I say it's really one vast reality with two expressions.

C. The New Jerusalem will descend to a place just above the Millennial Jerusalem. It will be very near the earth, and in very close proximity, but not actually resting on the earth. The joining of the two Jerusalems establishes what I refer to as the Corridor of Glory. That's just a term that I made up; it's not a biblical term, but I believe the idea is biblical.

There are twelve significant aspects of God's glory that come into convergence in this Corridor of Glory. We looked at that a little last week, and you can review the notes if you are new tonight. I have several handouts on this subject from a couple of years ago. They are laid out in a really systematic and in-depth way.

CLOUDS, FIRE, AND PILLARS OF SMOKE

D. This corridor of glory is described by Isaiah as a cloud. Remember in the Old Testament where the cloud was like a pillar, and it was like a pillar of fire, as well, and it reached between heaven and earth. I believe the Corridor of Glory is going to have those kinds of dimensions to it.

There's going to be the element of smoke. This isn't dark smoke, like on the earth, with that horrible smell; this is smoke that is perfumed incense and the glory of God. It's the smoke of God's glory. This corridor will be made up of fire. It will have a whirlwind of glory around it.

Those are just a few of the elements that I wanted to mention, for those for whom this is just a completely new idea. That corridor will connect the New Jerusalem to the Millennial Jerusalem, and the temple, and the Holy of Holies, where Jesus' throne is. His throne is comprised of these two realms coming together.

THE VAST GOVERNMENTAL COMPLEX OF HIS THRONE

E. When we talk about Jesus' throne, we've got this idea of a chair, and I believe it's way more than a chair. It's a vast governmental complex bringing these two realms together. It will include the Millennial temple and the New Jerusalem.

I just want to expand your thinking on this. I believe that descriptions of all these topics can be found in the Word of God. When Jesus returns as fully God and fully Man, the government of heaven and the government of earth are going to come together under the authority of a man, Jesus Christ.

WORTHY IS THE LAMB

Beloved, worthy is the Lamb, worthy is this Man, to rule all things. He has all authority. The Millennial and the heavenly Jerusalems will be brought together and connected by this Man.

THE CONSUMMATION OF ALL PERFECTION

The Psalmist saw into this vast dimension of God's purpose related to the New Jerusalem. I love this verse! The Psalmist, and I assume it was David, said, "I have seen the consummation of all perfection." What a statement! I have seen the full manifestation, the completion of everything that is perfect in beauty. I believe he was talking about the New Jerusalem plus some, the New Jerusalem and its purposes, and its role in God's eternal purpose.

THE BROADNESS OF GOD'S COMMANDMENT

The Psalmist says this very interesting statement. I have found this statement to be true in my experience, and of course, in a much smaller way, because I haven't seen the New Jerusalem in the full sense, but only through the Word. The Psalmist says, "I have seen the consummation of all perfection," but here is the statement that I like: "Your commandment is exceedingly broad" (Psalm 119:96).

When we see the larger purpose of God, what happens is, the commandment—which is another way of saying "the Scriptures;" it doesn't mean the exhortation of Scripture; the commandment or the decree or the judgments of God or His precepts and statutes—it speaks of the whole of the written Word.

When we see that these two realms are coming together in the eternal dimension of our life in this age connected to the life in the age to come, the Bible becomes exceedingly broad in its scope. This means that our understanding really expands.

One simple verse, Ephesians 1:10, says that it is God's purpose to bring the heavenly and the earthly realms together. When you look through that one verse, much of the Bible becomes far bigger in its implication and its scope and its grasp on our heart.

So the Psalmist is saying, "When I see the Word of God through this lens, there are so many more implications than I saw before."

It doesn't mean the Word of God grows; it means our understanding expands. My point is, that I want to encourage you to really take time seeing. Now, we can't get a vision and see it, but we can see it more by prayerful, loving meditation on the Word of God related to the realm of eternity.

Again, the more I do it, the more my understanding expands, and verses that seem to have nothing to do with eternity until I began to see through the lens of eternity just a little, and all of a sudden, these verses have a significant impact and implication.

THE NEW JERUSALEM, THE ABODE OF OUR RESIDENCE FOREVER

F. The New Jerusalem is where the saints in resurrected bodies will live forever. That is the place; that is the city of our residence.

Now, this is still review from last week. However, we are going to reign on the earth in the government. Our residence will be in this city that descends, but we will leave home, so to speak, to go to work for the day and then come back. I don't know exactly how it works, but we will come and go from the New Jerusalem to the new earth in our governmental responsibility.

The saints will travel easily between the two realms, like the angels do now. Now, the angels don't appear that often; they're involved on the earth and they appear occasionally, but remember, at the second coming, the veil is going to be lifted between those two realms. There's going to be significant interaction between those two realms. It won't be ultimate, like it is after the Millennium, but it will be substantial after the second coming.

THE INCREDIBLE VIBRANCY AND DYNAMISM OF THE LIFE TO COME

One reason people say, "I can't get this thing," is because they're not really grasping the idea that when Jesus comes a veil is lifted between those two realms. The life interaction between the New Jerusalem and the Millennial earth will be very dynamic and full. You will have a real role in it. You will have a material and physical body, a resurrected body. You will have a body like you do now, as physical as the body you have now, but it will be supernatural in its qualities.

As I've said over the last few weeks, you will have friendships, you will learn things, you will have conversations that give you new information. You will introduce your friends to other friends, and tell your stories, and tell about different things in history, and different things that are going on in other people's lives, forever and forever.

You won't be omniscient; you won't have all knowledge. Your capacity to learn will greatly increase, but you will still have to learn every piece of information that you will receive. You'll get it from learning, piece by piece, but our capacities will be great.

Our ability to move in and out of this realm will be fantastic. You will eat and drink. You will labor; you will study; you will preach and sing and pray. You will do many things that we do now, and there are many things we do now that we won't do. But the things that are really dynamic to life, many of them you will continue to do.

LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF THIS CITY

The Old Testament saints lived in the light of this city, the patriarchs or the fathers (that's what *patriarchs* means). Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, David, and the patriarchs saw the city by vision. Now, not all the saints did, but these are the ones to whom the Lord chose to reveal this city. They spent their time on this earth waiting and longing for that city, and we need to imitate their faith in this.

When we see the diamond city, the city that is lit up in the glory of God, the brass trophies of this earth won't be nearly as alluring. We look at fame and fortune, notoriety and comfort; those are trophies, and many sell their souls to get those temporary trophies. Even many believers give an inordinate amount of their time and energy to get trophies that are going to pass, that are at best brass trophies that will tarnish and fade away.

Beloved, we have a diamond city filled with the glory of God that we will live in, with physical bodies, on a physical earth, forever. That is our inheritance. We don't need these tarnished brass trophies to get in our way right now—"right now" meaning your seventy-plus years on the earth. We need to get a vision for this city. That is where we are going.

TWO VIEWS OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

II. The rest of this is new; we didn't cover this last week. There are two views of the New Jerusalem, the relational and the functional view.

A. First, John gives the description of the city in relational terms, or in terms of nearness to God. In Revelation 21:1—8, he describes the city in terms of how close to God we are, and how we are going to relate to God without pain, without fear, and without death.

We are going to be right before Him. That is the foundational reality of the New Jerusalem. The ultimate reality is the fact that we will be face to face with God, not all day, every day, because we will go out and serve, we will come and go, but we will have access to be face to face with God many, many, many times in our eternal life.

This ability to be face to face with God is the ultimate part of our inheritance. It is our inheritance described in a relational way. It describes the quality of our spirit life after the second coming.

THE HOLY OF HOLIES AND THE GARDEN OF EDEN

B. The description of the city is given in other terms besides our nearness to God, and having no fear and no pain and no death and no sorrow in our hearts. The second view of the city is what we're going to do and how the city functions. We find that the city functions as the ultimate Holy of Holies and the ultimate Garden of Eden.

John describes the city as the Holy of Holies in its full, in its ultimate fulfillment. The Holy of Holies that was in the temple in the Old Testament was only a picture of this diamond celestial city called the New Jerusalem.

They were so excited, the nation of Israel, to have the Holy of Holies, and the glory of God was in the Holy of Holies.

They were the only nation on the earth that had God literally manifest on earth. It was a very small manifestation, and very powerful, but it was the glory of God, the Shekinah glory of God, like a ball of fire and light, that was in the Holy of Holies. It was a very small room, ten cubits by ten cubits, but the very presence of God was there. It was the only place in the earth where God dwelt in a long-term way.

They were so excited about that, but they didn't know it was only a small whisper of an entire city that's functioning as the Holy of Holies forever, that we would live in; we wouldn't just visit it, but we would live in it forever.

It's not only the Holy of Holies, but it's the Garden of Eden. If the Holy of Holies is filled with awe, then the Garden of Eden fills us with pleasure. One causes us to be awestruck, and the other causes us to live in the river of life and the tree of life and the pleasure and the goodness and the beauty of that Garden.

OUR HOLY HABITATION FOREVER

C. We're going to look at the city and break it down a little. This is just really brief, because it's more for your personal study time afterward, if you want to go a little deeper in this. We're going to look at the first view of the city in relational terms of nearness to God.

Our eternal inheritance is to live in the New Jerusalem on the new earth. That is what John said. He said, "I saw the city coming down to the earth." The New Jerusalem is the place where the saints are taken at the rapture to live with God forever. Once our residence is in the New Jerusalem, at the time of the Rapture, that is our residence forever.

Someone says, "Well, on the new earth—will we have a home out there?"

Well, you'll probably have two houses; I don't know how that works. We will freely come and go on the new earth, but our home will be in the New Jerusalem forever. Probably you will have a dwelling in the New Jerusalem and on the new earth. Who knows? I know that wherever it is, it will be a great plan, that is already thought-through and established in the Father's heart.

"LIKE A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND"

It says in Revelation 21:1-2, "I saw a new heavens and a new earth, for the old heavens and the old earth had passed away... Then I, John, saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Now, how does a bride prepare herself? How did Anna Jackson get ready today? "Oh, I'm getting married in an hour or two! Oh no, I had forgotten; I had better turn off the TV." No, that's not what she did. I guarantee you, that is not what she did.

The way that a bride prepares for her wedding day, leading up to it and especially on it, she spares no detail and no extravagance. There is no extravagance too great for a bride preparing on her wedding day. I mean, they even do things with their fingernails, and everything. They do the whole thing, the whole nine yards. No detail is spared.

The Father spared no detail and no extravagance at all in preparing this city, adorning it as a bride would adorn herself on her wedding day.

Now, it's the Father who made this city beautiful. He is the One who came up with the plan, and Jesus paid the price to bring it into reality for us. This is the Father's gift to His family, to His children.

Or, if you want to look at it in a different way, and both of them are true, it's Jesus' wedding present to His bride. He's not giving His bride just any old gift; He's giving her, not a diamond ring, but a diamond city. He is giving a diamond city to the people of God, and it will be theirs forever. We're talking about extravagant preparation, with every single detail seen to by God the Father and God the Son.

THE RENOVATION OF THE EARTH

B. The New Jerusalem rests upon the new earth forever. We mentioned this last week, but just to mention it again: Some theologians debate whether this present earth will be renovated and made new, or will it be annihilated. Will it be completely destroyed and done away with?

I believe that this present earth will be renovated. When it says "passed away," it's the same word as when it says, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation," and "the old has passed away" (2 Cor. 5:17). The person wasn't annihilated; dimensions of their life pass away and they are completely renewed. They have the same human spirit, but they are clean with the Holy Spirit, and they have a new identity and a new power, but they are the same person. It's the same person, and that is the word.

This isn't a huge point, but it is a point that I marvel at. I like to make this point because I marvel at how God thought through the earth so thoroughly in Genesis 1 that He knew that what He put in this eight-thousand mile diameter piece of rock would have all the components necessary to be multiplied and sustain the earth for ever and ever and ever.

"THE EARTH ABIDETH FOREVER"

When He said in Genesis 1, "It is good," He meant a whole lot more than either you or I can understand. The components are present in this earth, layers and layers down, that, when put in proper combination, will multiply and sustain the earth under God's wisdom for ever and ever. He made it perfect.

Oh, I can just imagine the Father and the Son, after Jesus spoke and the Spirit moved and created it, and the Father and the Son looked at each other and said, "This is really, really good." I mean, *really* good. I believe there will be continuity between the very earth you're on now, and our life in the age to come, because we are going to be on the same earth.

YOUR HOME ABIDES FOREVER

It's hard for you to imagine, but the place where you live or grew up, back home, whether it was a big city or a little rural village town, will exist forever. That piece of realty will last forever. The one difference is that the sea, which covers two-thirds of the earth, will be gone, so there will be a whole lot of new territory to cultivate and explore and develop, and all kinds of great things are going to happen.

THERE IS CONTINUITY IN GOD’S PURPOSE

So if you’re on the sea coast right now, it may look different in a couple of thousand years, but the land will actually still be the same. It will be the same dirt, the same piece of land. There is continuity in God’s purpose. We naturally have the Greek mindset that sees everything that’s good as spiritual and removed from the earth. Of course, the Jewish mindset saw things in the natural as good.

We have a hard time appreciating how important the earth is to God’s purpose. Therefore, we lose a sense of continuity between now and then, and then our life now doesn’t make that much difference to us. It’s not that important. “Well, we tried to make it as easy as we can right now...” We need to be laboring and living in such a way that what we’re doing now transfers to the age to come, on a physical, material earth, the same earth. Many things that we do will carry over into the age to come. Praise God, many things won’t, but many things will—some of the things that really define what life is.

THE END OF WOE

C. The Holy Spirit gives a fivefold message. The Spirit of God says five things very definitively, and you can break it down on your own. He talks about seven negatives that are currently on the earth that will be removed forever.

There will be no more sea, no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain, no more curse, and no more night in the New Jerusalem. Those will be gone forever in the eternal city.

D. I noticed that I didn’t put the verses there, so put Revelation 21:5-8 there. Then the Father is revealed, and He is revealed as the ultimate prize, and the ultimate guarantee—or *assurance*, but you could put the word *guarantee*—of the city’s welfare. There is a sevenfold message that we see in verses 5 through 8. It talks about the Father’s role; the Father’s responsibilities, and the Father’s commitment to the people in the city.

There are seven things He says.

This is only the second time in the book of Revelation that the Father speaks directly. He spoke directly in Revelation 1, and He speaks directly here. The Father doesn’t speak in the book of Revelation, but in these two short utterances. That is worthy of investigating and studying out.

THE CITY IN FUNCTIONAL TERMS

Now, let’s move from the city described in relational terms of our nearness to God, with no pain and no sorrow, and nothing that separates us from God, or nothing that causes fear, or nothing that diminishes life.

Now we're going to switch over and we're going to look at Revelation 21:9—22:5, and we see that city in its functional terms. It functions as the Holy of Holies, as we said, and the Garden of Eden.

There is an awe dimension related to the Holy of Holies, and there's a pleasure dimension related to the Garden of Eden. God is the author of pleasure; Satan is the one who counterfeited pleasure. Pleasure was God's idea.

HE WILL DWELL WITH THEM FOREVER

B. Well, first, I just noticed something in Paragraph A, and I will mention it. The Garden of Eden and the Holy of Holies are the two places where God chose to dwell with human beings throughout human history. So those are the only two times that God dwelt in an ongoing way with humans. Of course, it was only Adam and Eve, because after they sinned, that was over. But the point is that the Garden of Eden was created as a place where God dwelt openly with His people.

After that, there was the Holy of Holies, so both of those dimensions will be restored again on the earth in fullness.

B. John sees the city from a high mountain. He sees it from two different views. He has an external view of the city, meaning he sees the city from the outside, just looking at its glory.

It's like in *The Wizard of Oz*, when Dorothy turned the corner and she saw Oz and she went, "Oh!"

That was my favorite part of the movie. I was eight years old and I went, "Whoa!" I loved it. I couldn't wait until it was on the next year, for that one scene. She turned the corner and went, "Whoa!" and the emerald city was filled with brightness and glory.

Then John saw it from the internal view, from Revelation 21:22 on through the next chapter. He sees the internal view of what is going on in the life of the city. He sees the external view and then he sees the internal view.

It says here in Revelation 21:9-10, "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."

TWO CORRESPONDING EXPRESSIONS OF HIS ONE PERFECT BEAUTY

It's interesting, though I don't have this in the notes, that one of the angels who was responsible for the seven bowls of wrath, is the angel which God used to reveal the eternal city; for the bowls of wrath were very terrible in their severity.

The point is that God's judgments on the earth are in perfect line with revealing His bride and His city. His judgments aren't like the dark side of God's character. God's judgments are released in the earth for the purpose of removing the things that hinder the brightness of this city from coming to the earth.

The Lord wanted to make a dynamic correlation in our thinking, that His judgments and His glory are two sides of His beauty. They are not in opposition; they are two expressions of His one perfect beauty.

We don't need to draw back in embarrassment at the judgments in the book of Revelation, because the very angel that brings the judgment in its most severe expressions are the angels that also reveal the glory of God, because the two subjects are related.

THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE

He said, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." Now, this is a prayer that I have prayed through the years, and I want to encourage you to pray this. It's the same as in Ephesians 1:17: "Release the spirit of wisdom and revelation" (paraphrased). I urge you to ask the Holy Spirit to show you the bride, to show you the city of God. The Lord will show us through His Word, but He just might show us through dreams and visions in a way that confirms what is in the Word.

Say to the Lord, "I want to see this city; I want it to grow in my understanding. I don't want to live on the earth just holding my breath and gritting my teeth, so I don't go for the brass trophies. I want to see the diamond city and go after it with all of my energy. I don't want to hope that it's real; I want this thing to get hold of me like an anchor in my heart."

THE CITY IS CALLED THE BRIDE

C. The city is called the bride. Some people say that the city is the bride, and other people say the people is what comprises the bride, and the truth is that it's both of them. It's both of them together.

Part of the identity of the people is the city. I don't have this in the notes, but in Revelation 3:12 Jesus tells the overcomers, "I will write upon [you] the name of the city." We have a deep identity with the city. Everything in this city inspires bridal love. It imparts and renews our love for Jesus, our bridegroom.

When we eat the fruit of the city, we will have a burst of love touch our hearts. When we drink the water, we will be renewed and inspired in bridal love. The colors, the music, the perfumes of the city, the fragrance of the city, the interaction of the city, everything in the city enhances love in the experience of the saints.

Some people make a really big case that it's only the city, and others make a really big case that it's only the people, but beloved, it's the people in the city who govern it and who rule in it, and who live in it, and who are inspired by it. It is both; it's not one or the other.

A PARENTHETICAL ASIDE

D. From the literary structure of the book of Revelation, this passage of Scripture is parenthetical, meaning the chronological unfolding of the story ends in Revelation 21:8, when the Father is presented as dwelling with His people. The story ends right there.

The next verse (Rev. 21:9) is parenthetical, where the angel is taking John back to show him more information about what has taken place behind the scenes. I don't want to go into why there are five parenthetical sections in the book of Revelation. We have done that in different classes, and we have it in different handouts, and Dave Sliker's book *The End Times Simplified*.

I just want to point that out to you, that the chronological unfolding of the story ends in Revelation 21:8, and this is parenthetical. This is putting a pause on the storyline, so to speak, these parenthetical sections of the book of Revelation, and giving us behind-the-scenes rationale of God's heart and God's mind, so that it encourages us in the midst of the storyline.

Those who aren't students of the book of Revelation, I might have lost you in that last three minutes, but that's okay. I understand.

THE EXTERNAL PORTRAIT OF THE ETERNAL CITY

V. Now we're going to look at the description of the external view of the city; we're going to look at the Holy of Holies from an external view. The city is described, I shouldn't say as a cube, though it is, because its length, and width, and height are the same, but that could be a pyramid.

When I say it's described as a cube, I should say, "and/or a pyramid." The reason I lean towards *cube*, though I like the idea of a pyramid better, is because the Holy of Holies was a picture of this. It was ten by ten cubits in 1 Kings 6, and the Holy of Holies was a picture of the New Jerusalem.

The point of this view is to show how we're going to function in the city. The city functions to bring us into fellowship with God. Everything in this city functions to enhance our fellowship with God.

The city is described with the same precious stones that were on the breastplate of the high priest. The high priest represented the whole nation before God. There was one man who was the high priest; one man at a time. When his time was up, then another high priest was set into office and anointed. There was one high priest at a time, and they had one breastplate, and the same breastplate was passed on and on. On this breastplate there were precious jewels. The jewels spoke of the children of Israel, the twelve tribes of Israel.

The priest would go into the Holy of Holies, into a little room, ten by ten, ten by ten by ten cubits. That would boil down to fifteen feet by fifteen feet by fifteen feet. It was a very little room. He would have on his chest the breastplate. He would walk into the very presence of God representing the people.

The point is that it represented the fact that the people were near to God's heart, and He wanted them near His glory. That is what He wanted. So the jewels, the precious stones in the New Jerusalem, are very similar: Eight of them are exactly the same stones that were on the high priest's breastplate.

THE CITY'S GLORY

B. The city's glory. It says in Revelation 21:10 that the holy Jerusalem descended out of heaven, and it had the glory of God.

Now it's going to describe the glory of God: "Her light was like a precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."

Now, a modern-day jasper isn't bright; it's opaque. An ancient jasper was like a diamond. Don't look at a modern-day jasper in a book or in a jeweler's shop and say, "Well, that looks pretty dull." An ancient jasper was as clear as crystal, and the jasper stone is the stone that reflects God's glory in the premier way in the eternal city.

All the stones reflect God's glory, but the color of God's being, back in Revelation 4, is jasper. It's this white glory like a diamond. It's the radiance of diamonds and the Shekinah glory of God. When it says "glory of God," put the word "*Shekinah* glory of God" because in the Old Testament, that ball of light and fire which was in that fifteen by fifteen by fifteen foot room called the Holy of Holies was called the Shekinah glory. It's the very presence of God Himself.

That glory fills the entire city. Wow!

THE SIZE OF THE CITY

C and D. The city's design and the city's destruction; we're going to skip past that. You have to study this out on your own to really get the details of this.

E. The walls of the city are 1,380 miles. The NASB says 1,500 miles; they round it off. That's uncharacteristic of the NASB. You'll hear it referenced many times, that it's 1,500 miles. Don't get all worried about that. If you say it, it's fine; but technically, it's 1,380.

In the NKJV it's called a furlong. It's 12,000 furlongs. That was a Greek measurement that was 600 feet. It's clear that a furlong was 600 feet. So, take 12,000 furlongs times 600 feet and you end up with 1,380 miles. I've got a little of the math on the handout here. It's not complicated. The NIV says 12,000 stadia. A stadia and a furlong is the same thing. They're the same length.

Don't be tripped up if you're reading the NIV and you say, "Wait, he said furlongs and this says stadia; I don't know what either of them are!" Well, it's 600 feet either way it goes. It boils down to 1,380 miles, and if you're in a hurry, just say 1,500 miles. I do it all the time. I don't know if that's the best way to do it, but I grew up with the NASB and that's how I learned it.

The walls are 216 feet thick, or 144 cubits. A cubit is eighteen inches... ish. There are actually a few different size cubits that are a few inches different, but let's just go with that for now.

The walls are 200 feet thick—that's 72 yards, which is almost the length of a football field. That's how thick the walls are. They go up 1,500 miles high.

Do you know how high 1,500 miles is? Outer space is 800 miles high. There you go. Mount Everest, the highest place on the earth, is five miles. The ocean is eight miles deep at its deepest, approximately. That's 1,500 miles, or 1,380 miles. It's way up there. It's a huge city. Now, just think on that for a while. It's from here to the east coast. That's the size of the city, or nearly here to the west coast.

THE INTERNAL VIEW OF THE CITY

VI. The description of the city and the internal view. Again, this is just a brief introduction to the city, as the Garden of Eden.

A. John gives us an internal view as the ultimate Garden of Eden. It is way beyond the Garden of Eden back in Genesis 2 and 3. It's the ultimate expression of it. In this passage, John describes the city's beauty in Revelation 21, and then he talks about the life of the city in Revelation 22:1—5.

“THE NATIONS SHALL WALK IN THE LIGHT OF IT”

B. It's interesting that Revelation 21:22 describes some of the interaction between the Millennial kings on the earth, and the New Jerusalem.

Let's look at that. “The nations of those who are saved” —it's talking about on the Millennial earth. This is before the New Jerusalem lands on the earth in a final, permanent way. This is when the New Jerusalem is near the earth, and that Corridor of Glory—call it whatever you want if you can come up with a better name for it; that's just a name a few of us worked on around here—the Millennial nations of those who are saved will walk in the light of the city.

This 1,500-mile city will shine so brightly that the kings of the earth will walk in the impact of that light. The sun and the moon will still be going on in the Millennium. The light from that city will influence the nations of the earth. They will walk in it.

It doesn't mean that the sun will disappear; it means they will be impacted and influenced and directed and touched by the anointing of the Spirit that comes from visiting this city, and from the radiance of God from the city that goes forth to all the nations.

Here is what the kings of the earth are going to do: They are going to bring their glory and their honor into the city. We know the city is close enough to the earth that the kings of the earth can go into it, in and out of it. I don't believe they're getting on a space rocket to go to it. I believe they walk right into it.

Remember, the veil is lifted between the two realms. There is still a distinction between the two realms in the Millennium, but there will be much easier access. They bring their glory and they bring their honor into it, to present it to God.

Its gates will not be shut all day, and there will be no night inside the city.. There's a night on the Millennial earth, but there's not a night inside the city.

Then it says it again in case we tripped and said, "What?" We tripped over it and didn't get it, so John said, "The kings will bring the glory and the honor of the nations of the earth into the city" (Rev. 21:26, paraphrased).

The city isn't synonymous with the nations of the earth. The nations of the earth will have people with resurrected bodies, and once they live in the New Jerusalem, they live in it forever.

"There shall by no means enter it anything that defiles" (Rev. 21:27). There will be sin on the Millennial earth; it will be significantly subdued, but there will be those who still sin and say, "No."

At the end of the Millennium, many will rise up, not most, but there will be a representation from the nations of the earth. I don't imagine it's the majority at all, but there will be a representation from the four corners of the earth, a representation of rebellion. So the angel lets John know that no one has access to the city who isn't living in wholeheartedness.

All the kings of the earth will be radical; more than born again, though they will be born again. They will have radical, King David hearts. All the kings of the earth will be radical worshippers. They will be the spiritual leaders of their nations, like King David was.

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

C. John described the beautiful light-source of the city, and the beauty of the city. It says, "The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it" (Rev. 21:23).

Now, the sun and moon are shining in the Millennial earth, and then after that, it's over; we say goodbye to the sun. "We appreciated you, but we have no need of you anymore." The glory of God will illuminate the New Jerusalem.

Here's what it says—is this awesome? Jesus is the light that illuminates the city. Eventually, the light of the city, after the Millennium, will illuminate the entire earth.

Remember when Jesus said in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world." He knew what He meant; they didn't know what He meant. They thought He was bringing truth in through His preaching, but God the Father has such a measure of glory He's given to Jesus that that glory will light up the New Jerusalem 1,500 miles in each direction, and then the whole earth after the Millennium.

It will influence the Millennial earth dynamically, and nations will walk in the impact of that light and that anointing, but in the age to come His being will literally be the light source for the entire earth.

“YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD”

That’s really something, but I’ll tell you something that’s even more radical than that. Put your seatbelts on!

Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, “You are the light of the world.” I mean, it’s awesome that Jesus is, and we can’t even comprehend that, but beloved, we will be married to Him forever, and it’s in our relationship that the light of God will go through the earth throughout all the ages to come.

I don’t know how it all works; I know it all comes from Jesus, and it will flow in our love relationship with Him. It’s just outrageous in the most awesome way. It’s off the charts! Jesus said, “You are the light of the world.” We have reduced that only to right now; it’s significant, but only a little right now is that really happening. It has to happen right now, and we need to focus on that right now, but it doesn’t end there. This relationship of being the vessels of light will go on for ever and for ever.

LIFE INSIDE OF THE CITY

D. Life inside the city. Well, there’s the river of life and there’s the tree of life, and both of these point back to the Garden of Eden. “He showed me a pure river of water of life” (Rev. 22:1). Beloved, when you drink this water, the anointing of God will hit you.

WE WILL EAT AND DRINK FOREVER

This is my opinion, but I believe it is right. In our resurrected bodies, we will still thirst. People imagine that because no one will go thirsty in the negative sense of being parched, and dying like people die now in the earth, they assume there will be no thirst because we will have resurrected bodies.

Do you know how horrible it is to drink when you’re not thirsty? “I read a little pamphlet on drinking more water, and so I’m going to try and drink more water. Oh, oh! Another one!” A little is OK, but drinking water when you’re not thirsty is only surpassed by eating when you’re totally full.

We will become hungry and thirsty; there will just be such an abundant supply that it will never be painful or troublesome. One of the pleasures of life is quenching thirst and quenching hunger pains. There is the water of life and there is the tree of life, and you will have pleasure in drinking and eating because you will actually need to drink and eat it.

There is so much that nobody will ever go without, but our lives will be renewed and invigorated by this. This isn’t incidental, it’s real. In our humanity we will need the water of life and the tree of life. But because the provision is so abundant that no one will ever lack it, no one will ever go without.

Some people take that to a wrong conclusion, and they think they'll just drink water to make God feel good, that we're eating His food or something, but we don't really need it or want it. "Well, we don't want to hurt His feelings; He went through all the trouble to plant the tree, so let's go ahead and eat something..." No, it's not like that. This is strategic. God isn't being poetic right now. This is a dramatic, significant part of your life, forever, this water and this tree.

TIME WILL ENDURE FOREVER

"In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits" (Rev. 22:2). This is literal. The tree yields its fruit every month because time passes in eternity. People have this idea that in eternity, time is no more. That isn't true. In eternity, time will never end, and that part is true, but time will go on.

I don't know the exact number, but there are about half a dozen times in the book of Revelation, where time is indicated in the eternal city around the throne of God. There is a half-hour of silence. There is sequence. There is real life and real time.

We have this idea that we're going to be spirits floating around, and no one will know anything, and that we'll be in the place where time will be no more. That's not true. There will be months and days. Time will pass; there will be cycles of life.

THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS

"The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2b). What nations? The nations in the Millennial earth. There are no nations inside the city. The nations are on the Millennial earth. There won't be any need to heal nations after the Millennium. The thousand-year Millennial kingdom is about healing the nations to prepare for the Father to come down to the earth.

E. Let's just finish with Revelation 22:3-5. "And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him." They will serve Him in the city and on the earth; back and forth they will serve Him in this 1,500-mile city, whose length and width and height is 1,500 miles on the earth.

"They shall see His face" (v. 4). Some people have the wrong idea that we're going to spend billions of years in front of God, the whole time; that's not what we're going to be doing. We're going to see His face, but not all day; not every day. We will have appointments when we stand in small numbers and large numbers, and at other times the entire population of God's kingdom, angels and saints, will appear before the Lord at these holy convocations.

We will be laboring; we will be relating; we will be working. We will be ruling. We will have a connection with the Holy Spirit that is never broken. There will be key times where we all appear before Him, in large and small numbers, depending on the occasion.

THE MEANING OF IT ALL

The reason that it's important to get this clear is because people feel this conflict. They feel love and loyalty to God, so they want to be committed to standing there for billions of years, but when they really think it through, they think, "Lord, I would really like to say hi to some friends and do stuff." It's not bad, and so they get disconnected from eternity and heaven because they get wrong ideas about this.

Nowhere does it say, "They shall see His face, and they will never, ever do anything but stand there and worship."

We are going to subdue the earth. We are going to bring all of creation, the entire cosmos, under the dominion of God the Father's glory forever.

"There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 22:5).

Then it ends (this parenthetical section), and it reminds us that we are going to reign there. We aren't going to float. We are going to reign forever. We aren't just going to be in an abstract existence. We are going to reign in a concrete, material way. We are going to have a spiritual dimension of reigning, as well, when the two come together.

Amen. Let's stand.

MINISTRY TIME

I want to encourage you really to go after this. I'm going to pray for us all right now as they're coming up. I'm going to ask from Revelation 21:9, "Show me the bride."

Lord, I ask for this precious group of people whom You love so dearly: I ask that You would show this group of people the bride. Show us the bride, Lord. I want to see the city; I want to see the bride. I ask You even now to touch our spirits.

Let's wait on the Lord for just a moment.

Lord, we ask You to come and touch us. Lord, come and touch us. Come and touch us.

Some of you, and I'm sure many of you are saying, "I feel it; I feel it! I feel renewed. I want to be fully committed to the Lord; I don't want any darkness in my life." These ideas make us long for righteousness and long for God. I'm going to ask the Lord, and even now, Lord, I ask You to fan the flame of this longing for righteousness.

Come and touch us; come and release Your power, Lord, even now. Here we are, Lord. Here we are, Lord; break in. Jesus, break in, Lord. Lord, release Your Spirit even now in this room, we ask.

Break in.

Show us the city, Lord. Show us the city of God. Even now, Lord, tonight, release the wind of Your Spirit.