***The Dispensations  
  
RV243-02***

Please open your Bibles to Revelation 21:1-4. Our subject is "The World of Tomorrow." This is segment number two.

**Why am I Here?**

The significant question that faces each human being is one's purpose on this earth. This week, I saw a television news report which showed a man in Russia struggling to survive in his post-communist society. He suffers privation. He eats from the garbage sites. He dreads facing another day of want. In his agony, he asks the question, "Why am I here? What is the purpose?"

**Fulfilling your Mission**

This is indeed a question which every Christian must also ask himself following salvation. At the point of faith in Christ for salvation, the believer receives eternal life irrevocably as a gift from God. But following salvation comes the important question of how one shall live his life, and for what purpose. The quality of a believer's life after salvation depends upon his fulfilling God's plan for him. That is sometimes called "our cross." It is our mission. The quality of your life after salvation is determined by how you live to fulfill that particular mission. Fulfilling our divine mission, or failing to do so, has a great impact on one's blessing in time and rewards in eternity.

**The Judgment Seat of Christ**

One of the things that we shall see at the Judgment Seat of Christ is that if we had been more diligent in living to fulfill our particular callings, how much more enjoyable life would have been for us; how much greater blessings there would have been; and, how much greater divine care and provision there would be upon us. To the extent that we are executing our calling, our life on this earth is enriched with the blessing of God, or we are denied that blessing. So, fulfilling the mission has great impact on your life, but it also has great impact on the rewards that are yours for that service – for fulfilling that calling.

Every normal Christian says, "Yes, I am interested in fulfilling the plan of God. I have no objection to doing that." The first step of doing that is learning doctrines under your right pastor-teacher so that you may store divine viewpoint in your human spirit in order to guide your soul. You cannot possibly be serious about fulfilling your mission if you are ignorant of Bible doctrine, and it is not stored in your spirit as the result of your positive response to it, so that out of your human spirit comes to your mind the guidance of God; out of your human spirit comes to your emotions the guidance of God; and, out of your human spirit comes the guidance of God to your will. So, all of these are on target with divine viewpoint. If they're not, then they're on target with your sin nature, and you are wasting your life.

Only through the knowledge of doctrine and positive volition to it can a believer love God. That's the first problem. Can you appreciate His grace? That's the second problem. And can you worship Him? That's the third problem. If you're going to love God, you have to know the Words. If you're going to appreciate His grace, you certainly have to know the Word, and you have to know how to worship Him. When the time of crises comes, you have to be ready for this.

This morning, Mrs. Jolin, with tears in her eyes, related to us the sequence of the accident of her daughter that resulted in one grandchild being killed (the little five-year-old), and two others being seriously injured in comas, but now making a recovery. Colonel Jolin said, "At that point, we found that what was important was the Word of God and the reinforced energy of the people about us who understood that Word, and could relate to this kind of a horrendous tragedy as part indeed of the plan of a sovereign God. Without that, you would be asking the question of the poor Russian, "Why am I here, and what is the purpose of all this?" This is no small thing for you to understand that post-salvation decision of how we should now live our lives.

**Learning Bible Doctrine**

The learning of doctrine is God's method for fulfilling the command that He gives us in Romans 11:2, where He says, "And do not be conformed to this world." That in the Greek says, "Don't cut the pattern of your life to the world system of Satan." And that's exactly the way you would describe a woman who cuts a pattern for a dress. But it says, "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. In the Greek language, that word for "transformed" is an internal metamorphosis. It has to be changed on the inside so that, with the renewing of your mind (and that can only be done through doctrine), then you may prove what is the will of God, and that which is good and acceptable and perfect in how you live your life. Without this knowledge, and without this instruction in the Word, you are adrift.

Ah, but you say, "That seems a little strong, because it does not seem, as you associate with people hither and yon who call themselves Christians, that they are very well-versed in the Word of God. And you are quite right. To find yourself in a church situation that actually says, "Your life is doctrine" is very rare. And when you do, you should esteem it and, like the song in South Pacific, when you look across that room and see that one "some enchanted evening" that is the desire of your heart: "You should grasp her and never let her go."

So it is with doctrine. Some enchanted evening, you need to look across there and say, "What is the purpose? What am I here for?" And you will suddenly realize that that's where it's all at, and grasp the Word of God, and never let it go. God's purpose is to guide you to removing that human viewpoint that is naturally in your mind, and replacing it with the Word so that there is divine viewpoint.

That's why the Bible is also very explicit, that we should attend church services with a rigid regularity. Hebrews 10:25 says, "Not forsaking your own assembling together." That's talking about the church doors being open for a service: "As is the habit of some. But encouraging one another, and all the more, as you see the day drawing near." The day of what? The day of the rapture. So, you keep encouraging Christians. When you see that somebody has not attended a service, you should say, "Gee, I sure missed you last Sunday, because that person needs to be aware that that was no trivial thing to stay home.

That is another thing at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Christians will look back and say, "I can't believe that I used so many trivial reasons not to show up for church Sunday morning and Sunday night. I just let it slip by, and I just coasted along, and thought, "It doesn't make any difference." You too will be crying out, "Why am I here, and what is the purpose?"

**Spiritual Maturity – Super Grace**

God's post salvation life for the Christian is that each of us should grow into spiritual maturity until we have reached what James 4:6 refers to as super abounding grace. We call it super grace. James 4:6: "But He gives super-abounding grace." Therefore, it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. The proud do not care to show up for instruction in the Word. They know it all. The humble say, "I can't ever find the depths of the Word of God in any complete degree. I am always going deeper, and I'm always learning more as long as I'm being instructed."

It is not uncommon for people to say about our Berean tapes that they cannot listen to them once, and get the instruction. They have to listen to them repeatedly, because they are what? They are always directed toward revealing the mind of God. And the mind of God has a depth that has no bottom to it.

**Esther**

The spiritually mature Christian then is capable of fulfilling his divine calling, because he discerns why he is on earth, and he is capable of positive volition to that calling. One of the all-time great classical examples of this being aware that you have a divine calling is Queen Esther of the Old Testament.

**Haman**

Esther found herself in a position in the Persian Empire where, as the Jewess, she, along with the other Jews of the empire, we're going to be killed on a certain day because of the trickery of Haman. Haman hated the Jews, and was one of Satan's agents to destroy the people of God.

**Mordecai**

Esther's cousin Mordecai came to her and said to her, because she was the queen, "You have access to Ahasuerus, and you must take steps to prevent this terrible thing from happening."

You couldn't just go calling on the king any time you wanted to, even though you were his wife. And when you walked in his presence, if he didn't hold out his scepter to you, you were a dead pigeon. So, Esther had that concern while, at the same time, being burdened for the fact, as Mordecai pointed out, "Don't kid yourself, Esther. If the Jews are killed, you're going to go down too because you're one of us.

So, what did Esther do? The divine viewpoint clicked in her mind, and in Esther 4:14, we read Mordecai's statement to her: "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place." Mordecai had enough divine viewpoint, and enough knowledge of doctrine, such that he said, "God's plan for the Jews is going to be fulfilled." He knew what that future was under the covenant promises, so he knew the Jews were not going to be killed and executed entirely. He knew, therefore, that God was going to bring a solution, and a protection, and a salvation for the Jews from this terrible edict. If Esther didn't do it, do you see what it's saying? God is going to raise somebody else up.

You should not fall for that old tripe that if you do not speak to someone about their soul and about salvation, which perhaps you should, then they will go to hell, and it will be your responsibility for all eternity. If that person is elect, and you don't speak, as here Esther understood in her case, God's going to give that blessing and that privilege and that reward to someone else. I don't know how to say that to drum that into your heads, as my old Marine Corps sergeant once said to us: "Into your choroniums." This is an important principle, and you should take it seriously. If you don't do what you're called to do: fine. You can exercise your own priesthood. You're your own Christian. You're your own priest. But others will take your place in the glory land of honors and rewards.

So, Esther is thinking this over. She sees the principle: "For if you remain silent this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, and you and your father's house will perish." And here's the zinger: "Who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"

Need I remind you that all of you are in the royal family of God? Esther rose to the challenge to save the Jews because she was the only one that could do it. She had the means to do it. She had the spiritual capacity, thank God, to rise to her moment of high calling.

Esther 4:16 says, "Go. Assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way, and thus I will go into the king, which is not according to the law. And if I perish, I perish." What are you saying, Esther? Are you trying to tell us that God will take care of you? Is that the song you're singing? That is exactly the song that she was singing. Esther said, "You're right, Mordecai. I am in a position to make the big change. I have the capacity to do this. I have the means to do this. But it may cost me something."

Esther said, "Fine, it's the right thing to do. If I perish, I perish. If it costs me something, it will cost me something." When you do the right thing, God is not oblivious to your work of faith; to your work of confidence in Him; and, to your work of grace. And the result was, when it was all over, the enemy was destroyed, and Esther was elevated to a greater position of honor and power than ever before. And every year on the feast of Purim, the Jewish people, to this very day, sit around the table as the father reads this whole book of Esther as a memorial to this noble and courageous woman who understood that she had been raised to this point in time for a particular and magnificent duty that she could perform. Maybe there was somebody else in the kingdom that could have pulled this off, but that was irrelevant. She was the one that God had touched for the mission, and she was the one who could do it best of all.

A Christian who has grown on doctrine, and is spiritually mature, is capable of fulfilling his divine calling because he discerns why he is on earth. And he is capable of positive volition to that calling. That is the example of Queen Esther, recognizing her divine moment in time. Who knows whether you have not attained to royalty for such a time as this? And I ask you, "Who knows, but what you have attained to a point of royalty in the family of Christ for a high and a holy moment of service that only you can most effectively perform?"

Esther rose to the challenge, and she saved the Jews. And she did it because she had the means to do it, and because it was the right thing to do. She cast herself upon God's care. She rose to her divine moment in history, and saved the Jews of the Persian Empire.

You must not ever sell yourself short that you're not such a magnificent big person on the human scene that God would not call you to some moment of high calling and divine investment. I look across this audience today, and I can spot several of you who have done exactly that. All of us have been blessed, and all of us have been benefited, and all of our eternities have been ennobled because you rose to your point calling as a royal member of the family of God.

So, are you facing up to your moment in history for which you were raised up? Can you now this day cast yourself upon God to care for you and to rise to your mission? Don't sell yourself short on the vital nature of your moment for which God has raised you up. And you'll come to it, and you'll find it, and it will be staggering. And you will say, "This is crazy. I can't do this." Then an angel will whisper in your ear the line of the song, "God will take care of you," as He did to Esther, and you will say, "Yes, I can." You will begin with, "I think I can." You'll go up that little mountain chugging along, "I think I can. I think I can. I think I can." And you'll hit the pinnacle, and you'll go over the top, and you'll go whirling down, and you'll say, "I knew I could I knew I could. I knew I could." Would make a pleasant fairy tale, but it's also a great reality. We're not just blowing bubbles.

The poor Russian man had no answer for this doctrinal principle: Why am I here? What is the purpose?" I have tried to enunciate it for you to some degree today. It is summarized for us in Colossians 3:1-4. If we do this, when your high moment in history comes for an act in the service of God, you will be there. You'll not disappoint Him, and you will not disappoint us.

The apostle Paul says, "If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." Do not waste your life, Christian, on trivialities with no priority given to your high moment in history.

What does God's work need now which you can do? I see it in a variety of ways, all the time among believers who rise to a series of their moments in history, and some of them to some magnificent high point like Esther, that makes all the difference in the world. What is your capacity at this point for the needs of God's work, and can you rise to it?

**The New Heaven and the New Earth**

The apostle John rose to his great call and his great mission on that isle of Patmos. He was there because he was under the edict of the emperor Diocletian. He was put into that exile because of his preaching of the Word of God. The apostle, in his vision from God on that island, in Revelation 21, now stands on the threshold of eternity. Before his eyes appear a new heaven and a new earth, uncontaminated by angelic or human sin. On this earth, there are no seas. The original heaven and the original earth will have been melted down by God in flames. The millennial reign of Jesus Christ will be completed, and the final rebellion of Satan and the unbelievers will have been put down. Christ thus puts down all wills which are in opposition to the will of God the Father, and delivers the perfect kingdom and the perfected humanity to the Father.

This is what the apostle Paul referred to in 1 Corinthians 15:24, when he said, "Then comes the end, when He (Jesus) delivers up the kingdom to God and the Father; when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power, for He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet." What Jesus Christ does at the end of the millennium is finally put to rest, and eliminates once and for all that second will in the universe against the will of God, which Satan instituted.

Verse 28 says, "And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the one who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all" – one will.

John, here in his vision, sees descending from heaven to the earth, the holy city, the new Jerusalem. This city was probably in existence all during the millennium, and has been hovering as a satellite over the earth. Its origin is God, and it is totally untouched by sin. At this point, when the millennium is over, a single will again exists in the universe, and we are on the threshold of eternity. The last dispensation is over, and God has fulfilled the sacred plan for history.

**Dispensations**

Let me review something with you that I think you should be sure you understand about the end of human history at this point. There are four basic dispensations that we find in the Bible, along with subdivisions within them. This is what we're talking about. God's outline of history comes to an end at the end of the millennium. A dispensation is one of God's divisions of human history. A dispensation is one of God's divisions of human history with specific revelations applicable to those divisions. The dispensations revealed in Scripture are a series of divine administrations of mankind for a certain period of time. The doctrine of dispensations enables people living in the different time periods to orient themselves to the plan of God at their point in time.

Adam and Eve had a dispensation. The dispensation of the church age was not what Adam and Eve lived under. That was not the way God was dealing with mankind at that point in time. There was the dispensation of Judaism from the Mosaic Law code. That dispensation no longer exists. There is the dispensation of the church-age. That's the one we're in now. And the lifestyle and the demands between one dispensation and another is totally different. If you don't observe that, then you will be taking Scripture and twisting it out of its literal meaning. You will be spiritualizing it away, and you will be completely at sea of what God is saying. Most churches suffer today from the fact that they try to impose the Old Testament Judaism into the era of New Testament Christianity, and the two don't fit. You cannot understand the bible if you do not understand the dispensations.

Unfortunately, the Protestant reformers didn't understand dispensational truth. They read about it in Scripture. Jesus taught it. The apostles taught it. The great apostle Paul was very explicit about it. If you want to know all the details on that, then get the series on the dispensations. You will find that it's a magnificent, clear, intelligible, understandable presentation. You will understand the program of God for history.

This is not something that we have imposed upon Scripture. It comes from the Word itself. But the knowledge of God's dispensational progression in history enables the application of divine revelation to the appropriate dispensation. Doctrines applicable to Israel and those to the church are not mixed together. Otherwise you have a contradiction. So, you end up spiritualizing to try to make them fit.

When I was at Baylor University, I was talking to one of the students in the Bible department, and he was an amillennialist. I asked him the problem of the fact that God has promised a land (a geographic part on the surface of the earth) forever to the Jewish people. I said, "How can you relate that to Christianity?" And I thought I had asked a brilliant question that would have settled the issue once and for all. He came back and said, "Don't you think that God has given us the United States as our country? God has given us our land. He has blessed us with this territory."

Well, all of that's true, but that isn't what the Scripture meant. It is talking about Israel on the Mediterranean Sea. Everybody that read the Bible knows that, and he knew it. But in order to try to keep his amillennialism (which means no kingdom on this earth), he had to bring in the Jewish system into the age of grace, and he had to twist and distort the Word of God from its meaning.

It so happened that he was my roommate, and it so happened that he was a brilliant man. When he graduated from the seminary, he became pastor of one of the largest churches in the city of Waco, just like that. So, he was no dummy, but he was ignorant about the dispensations, and therefore, he could not deal with the interpretation of Scripture. He had to twist and turn, and make it mean something that God the Holy Spirit never intended it to mean.

So, dispensations, and knowledge of dispensation, is important. Don't let anybody ever pass it off to you and say, "Well, this is something you can believe or not believe. It's trivial. It doesn't matter. It's a discussion, and people have opinions." No, it's not. It's in the Word of God.

A few Sundays ago, I made a little reference to dispensations, and a man in the service leaned over and talked to the person next to him, because he was anti-dispensational, and it upset him to hear me proving him wrong. It upset him to find the Word of God proving him far afield from the truth.

The dispensations are a way of life ordained by God in various eras of human history for this purpose: to demonstrate that man cannot achieve absolute righteousness for salvation by his own efforts, even under varying conditions and lifestyles. What could have been better than what Adam and Eve had for keeping absolute righteousness? And they couldn't do it. What can be better then than the millennium when Christ is on the throne, ruling over this whole world, and righteousness is in force, and people see what the earth's golden age can do with a government that keeps its proper place in history and in society? Things are so great in the millennium. Yet, people born in that time reject Christ, and they cannot accept Him as Savior, and it shows that even in the most ideal environment, you will not, by your own nature, achieve absolute righteousness.

That's what the point is of all these dispensations. Under the Mosaic Law, you were given 613 rules to keep. If you kept them, you had absolute righteousness. Now, what could be better than that? And nobody could do it. So, that proved that. Every dispensation shows that, no matter what the conditions are, the lifestyle always goes toward sin, not toward righteousness.

God is immutable. He is unchanging. But his administration of mankind varies from age-to-age to achieve His specific objectives. Listen carefully: the way of salvation in every dispensation is always the same. It is a grace gift from God by faith in the Savior Jesus Christ. When we say there was a dispensation of Law (the life works system), we're not saying that you are saved by works. The Bible is quite clear that that's not the case. The Jews thought that, and they think that to this day. But the apostle Paul wrote those three chapters in Romans (9, 10, and 11) to explain to them what a terrible mistake they had made on that. No dispensationalist ever says that there are different methods of being saved. I've heard non-dispensationalists say that. But there's only one way to be born-again. That is by grace through faith in Christ. That faith is either in a Savior who is coming, or a Savior looking back that has already arrived.

The doctrine of the dispensation, as the divine outline of history, is not an arbitrary classification imposed upon Scriptures by men. It's an integral part of the Bible. It was taught by Jesus, and it was taught by the apostles. The doctrine of the dispensations is the key to understanding the whole gamut of Bible doctrine truth because it is the mind of God.

**The Four Dispensations**

Let me pull it together for you. At the end of the millennium, we have now come to the age of God's outline of history where we're entering eternity. With the end of that 1,000-year period, God has completed his dispensational program, you will understand what we're saying.

1. **The Age of the Gentiles**

There are four basic dispensations. There are various ways that you can classify these. I think this is a good one. First of all, there is the age of the gentiles. The gentiles are in charge. You always have some person who's the big honcho, the big banana. Here it is. The gentiles are in the authority. The age of the gentiles begins had three phases to it. Phase one is a period that we call "innocence" – positive volition toward the Word of God, with Adam and Eve in the garden. When that broke down, God begin another rearrangement of his household. Remember that this is God arranging His administration of humanity. So, he went to phase two. That's where the Bible says, "Every man did what was right according to his conscience, and that was the period of negative volition. Then phase three of the age of the gentiles followed the flood, and that was human government, with sovereign nations responsible to God for what they do, and societies to operate on the basis of biblical principles.

Well, with that, there came to an end to most of what was in the dispensation of the gentiles, but a lot of things continued. You can understand that. I'm not going to get into that though.

1. **The Age of the Jews**

The second basic dispensation with the era of the Jews. This also had three phases. One is the period of the patriarchs. This goes from Abraham to the Mosaic Law. This was the period in which the promises were made to the Jewish people. They were tributaries siphoned off from the mass of gentiles, and they started a different distinct earthly people for God. Phase two was the era of the Mosaic Law of Judaism, which went from Moses to the death of Christ. Then phase three was separated from the rest, in the fact that it was the tribulation era. So you had the patriarchs; the Mosaic Law; and, the tribulation. The Jews were the custodians there.

1. **The Age of the Church**

Along comes the third dispensation. This is the dispensation of the church. This began at Pentecost, and it continues until the rapture. The custodians are Christians. They are God's representatives. This is the dispensation in which we now live. It has run for 2,000 years, and it is soon to cease.

1. **The Age of the Kingdom**

Then the fourth dispensation is the dispensation of the kingdom. The custodian is Jesus Christ. This goes from the second advent of Christ for 1,000 years to the start of eternity. It is here that we have now come in the book of the Revelation. The 1,000 years is over, and eternity looms before us.

So, this is the dispensation of the divine outline of history. It has clicked along so that at this point, at the end of this 1,000 year, 7,000 years of human history, from the creation of Adam to the end of the kingdom age, will have passed. That is amazing, isn't it? 7,000 years since Adam was running around? Some of you have lived most of that time. That's not really very long. 7,000 years? I mean, even a few hundred years seems like yesterday, and 7,000 years isn't really that long ago.

**The Holy City**

So, John's vision has arrived at the end of the last dispensation – the dispensation of the kingdom. So, in verse 2, he sees what he calls the holy city. This is the satellite new Jerusalem, which has been around the earth for all the period of the tribulation. He sees it now coming down out of heaven from God. What is this city? The city is again referred to elsewhere in Scripture. Let's take you through a few of them.

John 14:2-3: "In My Father's house are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you. For I go to prepare a place for you." He's talking about the new Jerusalem: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again (that's the rapture), and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." And where Christ is, is in that new Jerusalem, which is in heaven now. This is what the patriarchs looked forward to like Abraham. They referred to a city of God, which was to be their dwelling place.

Hebrews 11:10 is speaking of Abraham when it says, "For he was looking for the city, which has foundations, and whose architect and builder is God." We just seen that John says that this city comes down from God. God has prepared it. It comes down. It is a satellite for a while. It is the city that Abraham looked forward to.

Hebrews 11:16 indicates that this was a city prepared for the descendants of Abraham. They would be in it: "But as it is, they desire a better country; that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them, the new Jerusalem." These are the descendants of Abraham. It is the home of the New Covenant Christian believer priests.

Hebrews 12:22-23: "But you have come to Mt. Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly, and the church of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect." Here again is a city that God has prepared here as a dwelling place now of Christians.

Galatians 4:26 refers to this new Jerusalem, where the apostle Paul says, "But the Jerusalem above is free. She is our mother" (referring to the new Jerusalem above).

Also, in Hebrews 13:14, believers are seeking the city which is to come, for here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come." All of us believers don't have a home. We don't have a real city. We are looking for the city to come. That is our true home, which is the new Jerusalem.

The new Jerusalem is not limited only to church saints. It includes believers of all ages. Both the new Jerusalem and its inhabitants are called Holy. The new Jerusalem is probably (during the millennium) the residents of the glorified saints, but they have access to earth to do their service. During the millennium, you have people who are in bodies like we are now – mortal bodies that can die, and bodies that have the sin nature. Whereas during the millennium, there are also be people who have glorified bodies like Christ, where they will be free of a sin nature, and they cannot die. So, you've got both kinds of human beings. It seems that the new Jerusalem, in part, will be a separation of residence for those two. Though we who had those glorified bodies will be in active duty on this earth as the administrators of Christ. So, this concept of new Jerusalem out there as a satellite would separate those two bodies of human beings.

This is also probably the place where dead saints go before the Second Coming of Christ. When you die as a believer, you will probably go to the new Jerusalem city, which is in heaven now. It will be brought down at the Second Coming of Christ to become a satellite of the earth, and then it will be brought down to the earth itself when the new earth is created. The new Jerusalem is where the Judgment Seat of Christ will take place. After the millennium and the creation of the new heaven and the new earth, the new Jerusalem will be brought down to the earth to remain forever.

There's one other thing that we're told here in Revelation 21:2 about this city: that she has made herself ready as a bride adorned for her husband." "Made herself ready" is the word that implies a preparation. The Greek word is "hetoimazo." "Hetoimazo" means "prepared." This is in a tense which indicates that this is a past act, and that it has a present result. It's a city that has been prepared. It is passive voice. That means that God has done this. The city didn't make itself. And it's a spiritual principle being enunciated that she has made ready.

In John 14:2, once more (we just read), I want to point out to you that Jesus used the same word: "In My Father's house are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I should have told you, for I go to 'hetoimazo' (to prepare) a place for you. That is the exact same word, because Jesus is referring to the exact same place – the new Jerusalem.

Hebrews 11:16 also uses the word "prepared," indicating the same idea.

We are told that: "She is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The word "adorned" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "kosmeo." We get the word "cosmetics" from this Greek word. "Cosmetics" is a word that indicates beautifying oneself. So, here you have this city, as a past work of God, and He has designed the new Jerusalem to be a place of beauty. She hasn't beautified herself. God has done this for her. What this refers to is the picture of the freshness of a bride's appearance on her wedding day. Most brides look their best on their wedding day. After that, it's downhill. But on that day, everything looks great. Just go back home tonight, and pull out those wedding pictures, and take a look, and you won't believe what you see. You will probably wish that things were as they once were.

In any case, this new Jerusalem is like a bride who is preparing herself. She is doing all the things that she needs. She needs every little thing on her that she has to have.

When my daughter Heidi was getting married, she was down the street here at the church that they were using. She suddenly realized that there was some piece of jewelry or something that she had left at home, and she couldn't find me, and she didn't have the key. So, her uncle was there. She said, "Drive me home, Uncle Paul, I have to get this." It was needed for her adornment on her wedding day. They came home, and there was no way to get in. They went around to the garage door, and in those days, the parsonage was something less than the vault where we keep our gold at Fort Knox. So, they managed to "jimmy" open the back door of the garage, and fortunately, the other door was open. They rushed in, and the got this trinket, and jumped in the car, and swished down back down the street in order to finish this adornment (cosmetics). This is what this was referring to – this bride adorning herself, for whom? Primarily, she's doing it for her husband.

So, the new Jerusalem here is compared to a bride grooming herself for her husband-to-be. This doesn't mean that only Christians are in the new Jerusalem. She is a bride. But in the Old Testament, the Jews were also the wife of Christ. In the New Testament, the Christians are spoken of specifically as in marriage to Christ as His bride. In the Old Testament, the Jews were in marriage to Christ as her husband.

All this is telling us is that a bride seeks to adorn herself for her wedding. So, the new Jerusalem is going to have a quality of great beauty, as does the bride on her wedding day. The new Jerusalem will have an attractiveness, in part, because she's holy. Do you know why a bride wears a white dress? It is to tell all the world that she is a pure person morally. You can imagine what would happen if a bride was about ready to walk down the aisle as the wedding march is played, and somebody dropped some India black right on the front of her gown. There's this horrible black splotch. Would it make any difference? It would be terrible, because it would ruin the symbolism of her purity portrayed by that white gown.

**Eternity**

So, the new Jerusalem is attractive, in part, because she is a holy city of God. All the tribulation is passed. All the millennium's is done with. All the rebellion is over. A single will reigns in the universe. And now, with the last of the dispensations behind us, the dispensation of the kingdom, we launch out into eternity. And the first thing that we see is Jerusalem, that new city of God, which will be His headquarters on the new earth, coming down from heaven, looking as beautiful as the bride on her wedding day, to be positioned upon the earth as the headquarters of Jesus Christ for all eternity.

Then the apostle John picks up a very lovely; a very sensitive; and, really a very tender evaluation of what comes next – for what Jesus prayed for in His high priestly prayer: that He; the Father; the Holy Spirit; and, the believers that that had been given to Him would be one to see the glory of God. That's what Jesus prayed for. Suddenly, John sees how it's all going to come together, and be fulfilled in the next verses that follow, and climax in a tremendous crescendo of comfort in verse 4. Please join us at the next session, and we will look at that in detail.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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