***The New Jerusalem – Heaven

RV57-02***

Please open your Bibles to Revelation 3. We are studying the letter to the church of Philadelphia. This is segment number 36. All of the human race is divided by Almighty God into two basic groups. One group is that of the overcomers, those who are born again spiritually through faith in Jesus Christ, and thereby destined for an eternity in heaven. The other group is the losers, those who were negative to God consciousness when they came to that, and subsequently were also negative to the gospel when that was brought to them. These are destined for an eternity in hell.

The contrast between the eternities of these two groups of humanity is enormous, and their destinies are completely opposite. These two groups represent world views. One world view is that there is a God out there who has spoken to us, and He has created all that we see. The other world view is that there is no God out there; there is a flying chance and some kind of force that has brought about the material universe; and, there is no communication from anybody. These world views are totally opposite. The people in heaven will be holding the first view. The people in hell will have held the second. Part of the problem that you and I as Christians have is that we are not consistent with our own world view. As believers, we hold to the view that there is a God; He is a Creator; and, He has informed us and how we may rightly relate ourselves to Him. Having begun with that view that God is actually there; God is really the Creator; and, that God has really informed us through the Scriptures, then we must be obedient to the information given to us.

This is one of the reasons that abortion is wrong. This is apart from all the other factors of discussing, for example, when a person becomes a bonafide human being: which may well be when he gasps that first breath of air into his lungs at the point of physical birth; or, whether he is a bonafide human being with a genuine soul at the point of conception. Apart from all that, that fusion of life between a mother and father has been destined by God's creative hand to become a creature in the image and likeness of God. That's what makes it wrong to abort that life. It is designed not to be a horse; not to be a dog; not to be a cat; not to be a monkey; and, not to be a donkey or anything else. It is destined to be a human being in the image and likeness of God. That human value has been upped immeasurably by the fact that Jesus Christ died to preserve that soul for all eternity from the destructions of hell.

If you have a world view that says there is a Creator God, and He has revealed Himself to us, then you cannot be inconsistent with that world view by saying that abortion is an indifferent matter. There are some Christians who do not believe that the social mandate (the cultural mandate) given to Adam still applies to us. That's inconsistent with the world view that there is a God; He has revealed himself to us; and, He has informed us. What does that God tell us to do? He has told us to take the world; to bring it under our dominion; to bring it under our hand; to prosper; to multiply our personal possessions; to enter into those possessions with enjoyment; and, to use them to make divine viewpoint available through our possessions to every human being on the face of the earth. The cultural mandate certainly is part of a Christian world view that sees a Creator God out there. That is the issue.

We are dealing now with two vast groups of human beings. One group subscribes to the God who is out there, even though they may be often inconsistent, as we are, with what we claim we believe. The other view rejects any concept of God, and generally are far more consistent with their point of view. The destiny of these two groups is poles apart.

The Lord Jesus Christ in this letter has promised to overcomers (the born-again people of the church dispensation) that they would hold the position in God's temple in heaven as His pillars. Pillars, as we have found in our research of Scripture, connote strength, stability, beauty, and honor. We have also shown you how Satan has taken this symbol, and he has perverted this in the phallic cult worship of the sun-god. May I remind you (I failed to point out as we were discussing this last time), that I think it's rather interesting the symbolic blow that Samson struck at the phallic cults?

The two main pillars stood (as we have shown you in detail) for a phallus pointing toward the sun, and pagan cults worshipped that as the source of life. The Philistine temple of Dagon stood upon those two main pillars. It was a variation of the Babylonian worship of the sun-god. This was in the fish form, and it was symbolized by a hat that was in the form of the mouth of a fish. That same hat, which is called a miter, is now worn by the Roman Catholic hierarchy. That temple to Dagon was standing upon these two pillars, and, to the Philistines, represented the phallus, and was an object of worship toward their god Dagon. It's kind of interesting that it was that very thing which was the core of their worship that Sampson took and just smashed to pieces with that one last burst of strength that God gave him before he himself entered into the Lord's presence.

So, the overcomers, as pillars in heaven, are going to have a magnificent place. I remind you, that that's a believer. It doesn't matter whether you're a sorry believer or a very dedicated saint. Everybody is going to be a pillar in God's temple in heaven. Of course, God's temple is heaven itself because that is the presence of God. Furthermore, we have seen that we would "no more go out." Once we are in this temple, we are secure. Even as we are now secure, we will be secure for all eternity. We can never again fall into Adam's error in sin.

**Our Identification in Heaven**

These overcomers are also to be honored with a three-fold mark which identifies them forever with the God of creation. The first mark which we looked at was that we would bear upon us the name of God. That will be indicative to show whose we are. The second mark that we began looking at is the name of God's heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, which is sent down from the third heaven, the throne room of God. The New Jerusalem is, in brief, to be the eternal home of the redeemed of all dispensations. Adam will be in the New Jerusalem. David will be in the New Jerusalem. Abraham will be there. All the great saints will be there. Samson will be there. And you and I will be there. This will be a place of complete holiness. It is a place of absolute total joy.

I want to say right off the bat that, in this session, we are going to talk in language which is very frail, and which is very incompetent. We are dealing with a subject that, as you think about it, I'm sure you'll get to feeling as I feel now: overwhelmed by attempting to convey some idea of where it is that you are going to – what it's going to be like living on the other side for all eternity. The Bible puts it in language on a human level to give us some idea. Dependent upon your own imaginative capacities and your spiritual ability to enter into these things, you will be able to get some feel for what heaven is going to be like. It will be a place of holiness. It'll be a place of real joy. Again, we say the word "joy," but we don't really know what that means in terms of heaven. It's going to be a place that's bathed in the glory of God, with all of the perfections and the majesty of God. It's going to be a place which will have no evidence of the consequences of human sin whatsoever.

**The New Jerusalem**

So, we're going to look at the New Jerusalem. In order to do this, we're going to leap ahead to Revelation 21:9. Actually, chapter 21 should have begun at verse 9. The first 8 verses of chapter 21 are verses that tie up the revelation which is given in chapter 20 concerning the end of the millennium. Revelation 21:9 leaps forward into eternity. It's a description of heaven. Then the dividers missed the boat again because they should have included in chapter 21 all the way through Revelation 22:5, because that also has to do with eternity. So, in your own mind, sort of get this straight: from Revelation 21:9 through Revelation 22:5, we're talking about heaven. We're not talking about the millennium at this point. Then the rest of chapter 22 is tying up the book.

So let's look at the New Jerusalem. We're now well acquainted, as we looked last time, with the earthly old Jerusalem, with all that that has connoted in human history, and the place that it plays today. This earthly city of Jerusalem is the place where Israel came into the presence of God because of the temple that was built in that city. This earthly Jerusalem is to be restored during the millennium as the dwelling place of God, as the temple will once again be restored. The old Jerusalem will become the central capital city of all the world. All the nations of the world, during the 1,000-year reign of Christ on this earth, will be looking to this earthly restored Jerusalem for the information and enlightenment concerning the living God.

The New Jerusalem is designed by God as the eternal dwelling place of all born-again people since the time of Adam. The Book of Hebrews gives us that information. In Hebrews 11:16, we read, "But now they desire a better country (that is a heavenly) wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city." Then Hebrews 12:22 adds to that: "But you are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels." So, the writer of Hebrews pointed out that there is, in God's future plan, a specific city designed as a New Jerusalem, and it is a heavenly city. It has to do with heaven itself.

God Himself, we are told, is the builder of this city. Again, Hebrews 11:10 says, "For he looked (speaking of Abraham) for a city which had foundations whose builder and maker is God." What was Abraham looking for? Abraham was looking for what is recorded in the Revelation under the description of the New Jerusalem. God had given direct information to Abraham – much more than we have recorded in Scripture. But Abraham knew that God was someday going to build a city which was going to continue for all eternity, and that that's where Abraham was going.

So, what Abraham had in his earthly sphere was not of too much importance. He knew that God had promised him a country in the land of the Canaanites, and to his descendants, and that he would possess that forever, and he looked forward to that. But God said, "Abraham, the thing that is important is that I'm going to put a city out there that will be your dwelling place forever." The Lord said, "I personally am going to build that city for you."

That was enough to indeed blow your mind. That was staggering to the imagination of Abraham – that God was preparing such a city for him and his descendants. And Abraham believed God, and he looked forward to inhabiting that place. Hebrews 11:16, said, again, as we've read, "They desire a better country than that land of Palestine – a heavenly one, and God is preparing for them just that kind of city." In John 14:2, the Lord Jesus told His disciples that He was going back to heaven, and during the period of the church age when He was gone, He was going to be occupied with working on the New Jerusalem – preparing that city for our arrival.

The apostle Paul also referred to the New Jerusalem when, in Galatians 4:26, he spoke of the Jerusalem which is above. Paul says, "But Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all." What's he talking about? "Jerusalem, which is above" is the Jerusalem described in Revelation 21.

The apostle John, now in the Revelation, is given a vision in some detail of this city – the most detail that we have of this anywhere in the Bible. John sees a Jerusalem which is in contrast to the old sinful Jerusalem on earth – the New Jerusalem.

**The Nature of the New Jerusalem**

So, now let's look at the nature of this New Jerusalem. The term "New," we've already pointed out to you, means different in nature rather than recent in time. It is one that is not just brand new (recently built) when it arrives. It is already in existence. Jesus is working on it, but it is different from the earthly Jerusalem that it is opposite to. The city, we find, comes down to the new earth out of the third heaven. In fact, this New Jerusalem in all likelihood, will be hovering as a satellite city over the millennial earth. It may actually come down (after the new earth has been created) onto the earth, or it may always be a satellite city around the planet earth. John compares the city to the loveliness of a bride on her wedding day.

In the Old Testament, God dealt with his people in the tabernacle and in the temple, and His presence was indicated by the visible Shekinah glory. In the New Jerusalem, God will be present again among His believers. So, in Revelation 21:3, John says, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God.'" There will be unmarred fellowship with God and His people. There will be no more of this laying a claim to being related to God by religious people who actually reject everything that this God has revealed to us and has said to us. There is going to be no more associating of non-born-again people who are religious and who make claims about God, though they are totally unrelated to the person of Jesus Christ.

God removes all sorrow and suffering from the New Jerusalem. Verse 4 says that, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." There'll be no more regrets for the choices we have made (these tears). There'll be no living in terms of the fact that there's a termination point down the line in the form of death. There'll be no physical suffering. There'll be no physical defects. There'll be nothing but uninhibited, absolute happiness.

In the New Jerusalem, we will live as the heirs of the Living Creator God. Revelation 21:7 says, "He that overcomes (those who are born again) shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." If you're not a child of God, you will not be in the New Jerusalem, and you don't become a child of God on your own terms. You become a child of God on God's terms. You become a child of God through the vehicle of the gospel that explains the death of Christ to pay for your sins. Accepting that in your behalf permits you to be born again spiritually into the family of God. So, let's put that right up front.

We're talking about someplace that the world loves to talk about. The world loves to talk about those wonderful streets of gold up there, and those pearly gates, and we're walking around, and God's children having shoes to walk around God's heaven. They make a lot of wonderful catchy tunes about that. The Marine Corps likes to talk about the streets of gold being guarded by United States Marines. Well, while that would be a reasonable arrangement, it isn't the way that God has worked things out. The truth of the matter is that unless you're in the family of God, all of that is Bunco. It's hocus pocus. You have no relationship to it unless God is willing to call you His Son or His daughter. So, that is absolutely essential.

**Illumination**

Let's get into the appearance of this New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem has a lighting system. ... We read about it in Revelation 21:11: "Having the glory of God, and her light was like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." The glory of God provides the light for this city. Therefore, there is no power shortage, and there is no energy crisis whatsoever in heaven, because the light of it is God Himself. You are going to see in a moment that the materials out of which this New Jerusalem is made (and it is made out of materials) are all of a transparent nature. There are various kinds of elements used, but they're all transparent. So, the glory of God is just shining through this like the sun shining through the brilliance of the crystal of an icicle on a bright day. Wherever you are, it permeates the whole structure.

So, the New Jerusalem, first of all, is illuminated by the glory of God Himself. It is the radiance of God's holiness that is illuminating this city. So, it is ablaze with the brilliance as from a precious jewel. The crystal clear is here described as a jasper. We do have some problems of identifying entirely these precious stones (these gemstones) that we're going to be reading about. Some are clear. For others from ancient times, we have to go back to ancient writers who describe these stones, and for some of them, there is a little bit of question. One of the things that we're interested in about these is their color. But here is a stone which is called a jasper gemstone. It is crystal clear. The city is ablaze as light reflecting on such a jewel. We might almost think in terms of something like a diamond. The city is built of transparent materials so that it will transmit, unhindered, the glory of God.

**A Wall**

This city, we're told, has a wall around it. This wall is 200 feet high. Revelation 21:12 tells us that: "And had a wall great and high." This wall, we're told in verses 17-18 is 200 feet high: "He measured the wall of it: 144 cubits according to the measure of a man (that is, of the angel). And the building of the wall of it was of jasper, and the city was pure gold like clear glass." This wall, again, is transparent, and it is again compared to this gemstone, the jasper. It is 200 feet high. That seems like a very high wall to us. But as you're going to see, it is not really in comparison to the size of the city. It is really a token wall. That's all it is, because, obviously, the city does not need a wall. What this city is faced with is not potential enemies who are trying to get in, because there will be none to threaten heaven. All the potential enemies at this point are in the lake of fire. This is eternity we're talking about. This is after the millennium that we're talking about.

The wall symbolizes, rather, the exclusive relationship to God of believers who inhabit the New Jerusalem. Not everyone has God as Father. So, not everyone belongs in heaven. And the wall, even though it's a very short wall compared to the size of the city, is simply a token symbol of the fact that not everyone is in the family of God. Not everyone is going to heaven. The old sin nature, and man in his human viewpoint, likes to pretend that everybody is somehow in some favor with God – that everybody somehow is going to make it with God, and that's not true. There is a wall that separates those who are in, and those who are out.

There was once a wall that separated all of us from God. But reconciliation removed the wall separating God from man through the death of Christ, so that now all you have to do is cross over the line and accept God's provision. But out in eternity, there will be a wall that indicates that some people are excluded from the heaven that God has prepared. This is the symbol of the eternal separation of overcomers from non-overcomers in eternity – these people who have totally different world views, and have resulted in totally different destinies. The arrogance of the sin nature always thinks that somehow God can't exclude anybody from His New Jerusalem heaven, because they think that God cannot be guilty of discrimination. Certainly that is discrimination. But I'll tell you for sure, on the basis of the Word of God, that the wall tells you one thing: some people are going to be in heaven, and some people are going to be out of heaven. The decision is made on God's basis.

**The Names of the 12 Apostles**

This wall rests on 12 foundation stones which are inscribed with the names of the 12 apostles. Revelation 21:14: "And the wall of the city had 12 foundations, and in them the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb." So, you have something like the number of these layers of the wall that are built as foundation stones. These foundation stones have upon them the name of the 12 apostles. That is very fitting because Ephesians 2:20 tells us that the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. For this reason, since the church inhabits the New Jerusalem, these 12 levels of foundation are fittingly inscribed with the names of the apostles who were the basis upon which the New Testament church was formed.

What the Bible indicates to us about the New Jerusalem is that it is a thing of great beauty to look at. It just is a site that is difficult to describe in words. As you read this, those of you who have perhaps seen some of these recent space movies where they do some fantastic lighting effects with brilliance of colors and of white light, this is the sort of thing that you get the feel is taking place. I always had the feeling that they read the Bible and got that idea there, because they're able to manipulate lights in such a way that they're just awe-inspiring to look at. Well, what you have here is a series of foundations that are decorated by various colored stones. In fact, the whole foundation may be just blocks of these various gemstones. They have 12 levels. The Bible tells us what these various stones are in this foundation.

**The Stones of the Foundation**

In verse 19, we're told that, "The foundations of this wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper." Jasper was clear, but in some respects, it seems to have a gold cast to it. Nevertheless, it is a transparent gem. The second level was adorned with sapphires. Sapphires are as hard as diamonds, and they have a blue color. The third level was decorated with chalcedony which is an agate, sky blue in color, and sometimes with streaks of other colors in it. The fourth level was decorated with emerald gems. These are bright green in color. The fifth was the sardonyx which is a red and white stone, the sixth level is decorated with sardius, which is reddish color. The seventh level was the chrysolyte which, again, is transparent, and in the ancient world, was described as having a golden color. The eighth level is decorated with beryl which is a sea-green-colored gem. The ninth level was a topaz – transparent yellow green in color. The tenth level was a chrysoprasus which is another green-colored gem. The eleventh was a jacinth which was violet-colored. The 12th level was decorated with amethyst which is a purple gem.

Well, you can see, as you run your eyes over these colors, that you have the spectrum of the rainbow. That, I imagine, is exactly the impression that you get, because all of these foundation levels under the wall are transparent. The glory of God is pouring through. You can imagine what a sight that's going to be to see the brilliance of these colors bursting forth from the city or the New Jerusalem, reflecting the glory of God. It shines through – the dazzling beauty. Perhaps it is speaking of God's holiness.

**Gates**

The Bible says that the city wall itself has gates, and we find that on each side are three gates (on all four sides). So, there are 12 gates. Revelation 21:12: "And had a wall great and high and had 12 gates. And at the gates were 12 angels, and the names written on the gates, which are the names of the 12 tribes of the children of Israel: on the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and, on the west, three gates. These gates are divided on all four sides of the city, and the names that are above each of the gates of the tribes of Israel are probably in the order given in Ezekiel 48:31-34. Ezekiel describes the temple, and he describes the names of the gates.

**Angels**

At each gate stands an angel. What's he there for? Well, he's probably there, first of all, as an honor guard – as an agent to welcome those who come in and out of this city. But he is also there as a security symbol, because it indicates that there is no unauthorized entrance into this city, though there will be none to try to make such an unauthorized entrance. Yet, the very presence of the angel reflects both honor as an honor guard and a security guard. He symbolizes, in effect, the absolute exclusion from heaven of unbelievers and all of their evil.

Revelation 21:27 stresses that to us: "There shall in no way enter into it (the city) anything that defiles, neither he that works abomination or makes a lie, but they who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." Unless your name is written in the Lambs Book of Life, you still have a dominating old sin nature. Therefore, you defile – you, by nature, are a person who defiles. You are a person who works abominations in God's sight. You're a person who is a liar. All of these factors are true of people who are not born again.

Once you have come into this position in God's presence, where you are in the presence of Jesus Christ following the rapture, you will have been transformed into the perfect image of Christ. Therefore, none of these things will be possible for you to do. Therefore, you are qualified to enter into God's heaven. The honor guard angels indicate that there's not going to be any hypocrisy in the New Jerusalem. There's not going to be any conning of the guards, because they have the Lamb's Book of Life to check to see who has the authority to enter.

**The Names of the 12 Tribes of Israel**

On the gates are written the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. This, again, is fitting because the Lord Jesus, in John 4:22, pointed out that salvation is of the Jews. If it wasn't for the Jewish people who had been drawn off as a tributary from the mainstream of humanity by God, there would have been no basis of salvation. They were the channel (the vehicles) of eternal life. So, we have seen that the name of the 12 apostles are on the foundations of the wall. That tells us that the church is going to be inhabiting the New Jerusalem. When we see that the gates into this city have above them the names of the 12 tribes of Israel, that tells us that the Jews who are born again will also be inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. So, it is appropriate that their names are there.

These gates show that the believers who are living in the New Jerusalem can go out in and out of the city to other parts of the new heaven and the new earth. That's going to be one of the great things. The idea is not that you're on a cloud, and that's where you're going to float forever. You are actually in a city, and you have access to it, and there are 12 gates for you to go in and out of. You can do that. The whole universe now is a place of holiness. It's a place of restoration compatible to God's integrity. You will be going in and out, because heaven (that you will enjoy) will be something of great activity.

When somebody dies, some people waste their money buying flowers for the person, and then they even waste their money more by putting a little ribbon across it that says, "Rest in peace." The idea is that to die and to go to God is to rest in peace. That suggests that now you're going to sit around and grow old and fat, and just continue what you've been doing here. But the thing is not going to be that way. It is going to be a whole restoration of an active life. I don't care what it is that you like to do; what you like to pursue; and, the things that you're interested in – you will have all the opportunity in the world, in the new heaven and the new earth, to engage in those things. The city, which is your basic dwelling place (your anchor point), will be such that you are not in a prison, but one that you have maximum in-and-out egress and ingress into.

**Pearls**

So, these gates are very significant because they tell us something about the nature of the city. Each gate, we are further told, is made up of one single giant pearl. Revelation 21:21: "And the 12 gates were 12 pearls. Each one of the gates was of one pearl." One single pearl makes up each gate. This again is significant. As you know, the Bible is full of types and full of symbolic indications. This one, I think, ties back to Matthew 13:45: "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant man seeking fine pearls." This particular part of Matthew is describing the kingdom of heaven in its mystery form; that is, in the form without the Messiah here to execute the Davidic kingdom. It is talking about how the Kingdom of God is functioning during the age of the church today: "It's like a merchant man (who here is Jesus Christ) seeking fine pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and he brought that pearl."

**The Church**

What this is referring to is the church. The church is the pearl of great price. The church is what Christ gave everything for in order to purchase. The Bible indicates to us that the church develops believer-by-believer. One believer is added to another believer, and the church is constantly expanding, developing, and growing. That's kind of interesting with the symbol of the pearl, because you know how a pearl develops. A pearl gets into a living organism. You don't get pearls out of the ground like you get these gemstones. A pearl comes from a living organism. This is very fitting, as the church comes from the living person of Jesus Christ. What happens in an oyster? You get a piece of sand, a little piece of dirt. It becomes an irritation, and the oyster begins to put one excretion after another in it, trying to insulate itself against this irritant. And this irritant then comes out a beautiful, fabulous pearl. That's kind of an interesting analogy that here we are, all of us, just little pieces of dirt – irritants in the holiness of God. What does He do? He comes along and He covers us with His righteousness, and He makes us into the beautiful pearl of great price, as He adds one piece of absolute righteousness possessor to another, creating what He calls here the pearl of great price.

So, this pearl, coming from a living organism, is described for us in Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." That's exactly what happens in the developing of a pearl – a thing of beauty out of something that was an irritant to begin with.

These gates are cut (formed or developed) out of a single pearl. Please don't come and ask me where they get oysters that big. I don't know the origin of this pearl, but it is large enough to form a gate in itself out of one single piece in this wall. The pearly gates are, of course, a fitting entrance into the New Jerusalem because, again, the church reigns here with her bridegroom, Jesus Christ. The church is God's agency of testimony on how to enter this New Jerusalem. It is Jesus Christ who is the center of attraction. He is the celebrity in the New Jerusalem, and we, who form the church as His bride, are associated with that celebrityship. Therefore, we hold a fantastic position of prominence. Therefore, it is fitting that people enter into this city through the pearly gates, which so amply picture the church of Jesus Christ.

**The Gates are Never Closed**

Now these pearly gates of heaven are never closed. Revelation 21:25 says, "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there." There is no enemy, of course, to fear. So, you don't have to shut the gates against that. There is no night, when gates are usually closed for cities to be on guard. There is no night at all. All the enemies and all the potential night sneaks (the night stalkers) are all in the lake of fire at this point, as we see in Revelation 20:15. This open gate policy again reminds us that we all have free access into God's presence in eternity. So, the gates are there; they symbolize the beauty of the church; but, they are never closed.

It's interesting that we have in the New Jerusalem the inclusion of the 12 names of the tribes of Israel and of the 12 apostles, which indicates that both groups of these believers reside in this city. But I think it indicates something else that we ought to note. The inscriptions of these names are memorials to the elective grace of God. Why in the world are these 12 tribes of Israel inscribed in the New Jerusalem, which is in effect what we mean by "heaven?" When we talk about heaven; when we talk about the glory land; and, when we talk about going over into the presence of the Lord, we're talking about the New Jerusalem. Actually, for a while we're going to be in God's third heaven, but they're going to move the New Jerusalem out of the third heaven, and we're going to move with it into the place in connection with the new earth.

Why, in such a magnificent place, should the Jews have their tribal names inscribed upon it? In part, it is to demonstrate again that it is God's sovereign choice that enabled them to be in that position of honor. This is what Moses reminded them of in Deuteronomy 7:6-8, when he said, "For you are a holy people onto the Lord by God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a special people unto Him, above all people who are on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people, for you were the fewest of all people. But because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, has the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage from the hand of Pharaoh, King of Egypt."

So, Moses reminded the people that they were an elect company. Why? Just because God said so. The same thing is obviously true of you and me as church-age believers, because we too are simply the sovereign elected choice of Almighty God. You didn't come to eternal life because you wanted it. You didn't come to eternal life because you had the good sense to pursue it or to seek it. The Book of Romans has made it very clear to us that nobody goes seeking after God. It was because God sovereignly said, "I want you in my New Jerusalem." Ephesians 2:19, therefore, says, "Now, therefore, you are no more strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints and with the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." Here, it is describing what God is going to do with the church, the habitation of God. And He is doing it. Throughout the Scripture, we read these terms that "you have been chosen;" "you have been called;" and, "you have been elected by God." So, it's fitting that the apostles' names should be on this city as a memorial to the sovereign electing grace of God.

Out of the Jews and gentiles, God brings together a new body in the church. Ephesians 2:14 says, "For He (Jesus Christ) is our peace, who has made both one." Both what? Jew, and gentile. The Jew and the gentile are diametrically opposed in all other dispensations, but they are suddenly brought together into a unified body: "They have broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, to make in Himself of two (Jew and gentile) one new man, so making peace. And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby, and came and preached peace to you who are far off and to them that were near. For through Him, we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." So, again, it is fitting that the name of the apostles be there, because there is no dividing wall in the New Jerusalem. They have been brought together, Jew and gentile, in one body – both groups of saints are in the New Jerusalem, in fellowship with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

One thing that is fascinating is the shape of this city. Revelation 21:15 tells us about the shape: "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates of it, and its wall. And the city is laid out as a square. The length of it is as large as the breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: 12,000 furlongs – the length and breadth and height of it are equal." And I think what this clearly describes for us is that this city is foursquare, and that it is in the shape of a cube. That would be fitting, because this city represents the dwelling place of the believers. It is God's temple. It is the place where God's presence now will reside in eternity. Remember that the holy of holies in the tabernacle, and in the temple, was a perfect cube in the same way. So, I don't think it's a pyramid. I think it is clearly in the shape of a cube, as 1 Kings 6:20 tells us the tabernacle was.

Now, translating Biblical measurements, this city is about 1,340 miles on a side, or, say, 1,400 hundred miles. It is something between 1,340 and 1,360, translating into modern information. Let's get the idea. The base is foursquare. How far is that? Well, if you had a city that was about 1,400 miles in base and width, that would go from the Atlantic seaboard to the Mississippi River, and it would go from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada. That's just the base upon which the city would sit. That is quite a metropolis. That is the size that the New Jerusalem is going to be. You can see that it is of sufficient size to house all the believers of all ages in complete spaciousness. Can you imagine what it's going to be like? Suppose that you're up on the 1,300-mile level, and you look out the window: what a sight is that going to be? Can you imagine what it's going to be like to look out a window out in space like that? That's absolutely fantastic! It's just a little way that the Bible describes here, perhaps, to get a handle on the fabulousness of this place that you're going to be living in.

Now, it has, as we said, this rather short 200-foot wall (which isn't much) around it. And it has all these foundations upon which it's built. And it has all these gates all around. As we shall see, some place here at the top sits the throne of Jesus Christ. From it, radiates all the glory of God, illuminating all of the brilliance of all this that constitutes the appearance of the city. From here, as we shall see, comes the water of life.

**Streets of Gold**

The streets of the New Jerusalem are made of gold. Revelation 21:21: "And the street of the city was pure gold, and it was, as it were, transparent glass." Here is a gold which is of such quality and purity that it is transparent. Gold in the Bible is a symbol of God's holiness. It is fitting that the street (singular) in the city of the New Jerusalem should be paved with this kind of transparent gold, because nobody is going to walk in this city on this street who himself does not possess the absolute righteous holiness of God. Therefore, it is fitting that you walk on a symbol that reflects the glory of God.

How do you have one street? It probably goes around the outside, and then it circles around up as one continuous street. That's where we got the idea for these multi-level parking garages where you drive around and around and around. They got it from reading the structure of the New Jerusalem – one street. Undoubtedly, they will have to have markers on here to know which floor to get off on. I could see how you could really get lost on a street like that, as to where you reside in this particular magnificent structure.

This New Jerusalem has no temple in it. Revelation 21:22: "And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb were the temple in it." God Himself (His presence) is there. The temple is for the presence of God. The sun, the moon, and the stars are still there, but they're no longer needed to illuminate the new earth, because there's never any darkness. The New Jerusalem is always bathed in the light of God's glory. Revelation 21:23: "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it for the glory of God did light it. And the Lamb is the lamp of it." The Lamb of God is the source of the light. God's glory illuminates the city. The real source of life will illuminate this city – not Nimrod's sun-god. That's going to be kind of a blow here – almost symbolic. God is just wiping out the sun as a source of light that Nimrod's religion has been pointing with the phallic cults worship toward. God says, "I don't need that thing that I created anymore." There will never be any night, and it will always be day. God is light. Believers now, therefore, are called upon by the Holy Spirit to walk in the light as revealed in doctrine (1 John 1:5-7).

Gentiles who were rulers on earth, and are now believers in eternity, will take that glory and the honor which they possessed here on earth, and they will subject that glory to God's glory. Revelation 21:24-26: "And the nations (and you should translate that better as 'the gentiles') of them who are saved (those gentiles who were born again) shall walk in the light of it (this city), and the kings of the earth to bring their glory and honor into it." Those who were famous personalities, and those who were great rulers, and who did go out into eternity as believers, and with great honor and dignity – they'll bring that, and subject it to the Lord's glory: "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there, and they shall bring the glory and honor of the gentiles into it." The gentiles will bring their glory, in contrast to the glory of Israel and the glory of the church.

The New Jerusalem will be a perfect environment. Verse 27, that we've already read, said that it will be free forever from all evil. Human beings are able here to fully reflect the image and likeness of God at this time. People will be sharing God's eternal life with uninterrupted holiness. Believers with glorified bodies will not need to rest. They will not need to eat. Their lives will be full of activity. So, what do you like to do now? Do you like to play racquetball? Do you like tennis? Do you water skiing? Do you like snow skiing? It's all going to be there. You're going to be fully capable of all kinds of activities. Some of you might even like to read books and learn something, but it'll be an eternity of activity. It's not inactive. It is very wrong for you to view heaven as some place where everybody can become a big dumbbell.

**Angels**

Now, who's going to be there? Let's close with Hebrews 12:22: "But you are come unto Mount Zion" (which here is another code word for the New Jerusalem). Having come there, whom do you find there? "Unto the city of the living God" (the New Jerusalem). Here he calls it the heavenly Jerusalem: "But you are come unto Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, there to an innumerable company of angels."

So, the first thing in the New Jerusalem, you're going to find angels all around. You're associating with angels all the time now. The only difference is you can't see them, which is probably fortunate, in order to keep us all stable from getting too overwrought. But the angels are constantly in your presence. You've got one that's tagging around with you all the time as your personal agent of protection. You have angels who are gathered in this room right now observing and listening to what we say and do, and delighting in our grasp of doctrine (our love of doctrine), and our thereby glorifying of Jesus Christ. The highest moment of human worship is when a human being takes doctrine (God's divine viewpoint) into his soul and goes positive toward it. That is the greatest expression of glory to God. That is the greatest expression of a hallelujah chorus – when doctrine is taken into the mind and received with positive volition response. This group of angels rejoices when they see that happening.

**Christians**

Secondly, there's a group called "the general assembly and church of the firstborn." It's obvious who that is. That's you and me, the church-age saints.

**Jew and Gentile Believers**

Then, "Who are written in heaven, and to God, the judge of all." God is going to be there in His Triune Person. "And to the spirits of just man made perfect." That refers to all those Jews and gentiles who also are believers, but who are not part of the body of Christ. Remember that you are a unique group. You will be part of the close, intimate association with Jesus Christ as His body. These other Jews and gentiles will not be that.

**God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit**

And verse 24 says, "To Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant." So, the Lord Jesus Christ will be there. God, the Father will be there. God the Son will be there. God the Holy Spirit, who is the energizer of all of this structure, will also be there.

So, there is the fantastic future which is ours – the glory of the living God shining through the New Jerusalem where you're going spend eternity. The Bible doesn't really say too much. It gives us just enough to try to realize that this is for real, and this is going to be absolutely unbelievable. Perhaps part of our rewards will be the kind of apartment they issue in the new city. I don't know if that's true, and I don't want to get anybody nervous, but I'm sure that those of you who helped expand classrooms will probably have a better place to live in heaven, up there in the New Jerusalem than those who do not. Nevertheless, this place, in some way, is going to reflect the difference of the quality of your eternity, and of what you are going to be able to enter into.

We've pretty well covered Revelation 21, but we still have the final verses in Revelation 22:1-5, which now tell us something about the blessings of the New Jerusalem, and we shall take that up next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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