

The New Jerusalem – Dwelling with God

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Brethren, as an introduction today, I'd like you to envision a scenario in your mind and walk through this. This will make sense as we get into. Envision a scenario of a young lady on her wedding day. Like many young women, she has dreamed since she was a little girl about her wedding day, what this event would be like, how the details would play out. Particularly over the last couple of months since her fiancée proposed to her, she's been in planning mode. Trying to get all the details right, she's gone from store to store to find the perfect dress. In fact, preparing for this day, she went to the salon and she had her hair professionally done, her makeup and her nails done just right. She wants everything to be perfect and just right for her photos today. She really wants to make this a memorable occasion.

When it's almost time for the ceremony to start, her father comes up to her. He's going to walk her down the aisle when the music starts to play. He looks at her and he says, "Honey, you are so pretty today. I just want you to know, you're as pretty as New York City." She thinks, "This is an odd comment to make to me." The music starts to play and it's time to walk down the aisle. Her father takes her by the arm and walks her down the aisle of the church. Of course, her fiancée is standing in front of the church with a big smile on his face watching her walk down. As soon as she gets there, her fiancée takes her by the hand and he says, "Honey, you are so beautiful today. I just want you to know, you're as pretty as Los Angeles."

Now, imagine what this bride is thinking during these kinds of comments. I'm sure at a minimum she's thinking, "That is very strange," if she isn't downright offended at this point for these men to making that kind of comparison to her on her wedding day. As some of you will probably guess, I'm using this particular introduction as the Bible makes exactly this type of comparison. The Bible compares a bride to a city.

The Bible talks about the New Jerusalem and, in Revelation 21, it tells us that New Jerusalem is the Bride of Christ. So, scripture refers to the Bride as a city. That's a strange comparison that we don't normally think of in that context. We would never think of telling a bride on her wedding day, "You're as pretty as New York City." That's not something we would connect. What we're going to do today is look at this particular subject. The key to understanding what Revelation 21 and 22 are talking about and why it compares the Bride of Christ to a city is to understand the concept of dwelling with God. We're going to see this is a theme throughout the Bible. It's important to understand the concept of dwelling with God to understand why scripture uses this comparison. If you'd like a title for this sermon, it is:

The New Jerusalem – Dwelling with God

As I mentioned, the Bible talks about this theme throughout. Let's first notice that the Bible makes this exact comparison, which to our minds seems rather strange—comparing a bride to a city. Let's start by turning to Revelation 21 to first notice the Bible makes this exact comparison. Revelation 21, we'll start in verse 1.

Revelation 21:1. *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. (NKJV)*

This is because we're talking about a spiritual plant at this point. They don't need the ocean. The plankton in the ocean provides about fifty percent of the oxygen supply for the planet. There is no sea here. We don't have physical human beings. We don't need oxygen. That's what is happening here. Notice verse 2.

2) Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (NKJV)

Notice scripture makes the exact comparison that seems strange to our way of thinking. I want you to notice something here. It says, "The New Jerusalem is like a bride." It doesn't say that the New Jerusalem is the town that the Bride lives in. It doesn't say that. It directly equates the New Jerusalem with the Bride. As we will see here, oftentimes we make the mistake—I've personally done this myself in the past—of thinking, "This is the home town where the bride lives." That's not what the Bible says. The Bible makes a direct comparison between the New Jerusalem and the Bride. As we're going to see, they are one and the same. What scripture portrays in these two chapters (Revelation 21 and 22) tells us about the Bride. This is primarily a figurative analogy that teaches us about the Bride. We will get into that in more detail later in this sermon.

Now notice verse 3 because this is the actual key to understanding this whole concept.

3) And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. (NKJV)

Notice verse 3 talks about God dwelling with man. The tabernacle of God is with men and they dwell together now going forward for eternity. This is the key to understand the picture here in Revelation 21 and 22. You have to understand the context of dwelling with God throughout the Bible to understand fully why scripture compares Christ's Bride to a city.

Before we go further, also quickly look over to verse 9 of Revelation 21. I want you to notice again that the description here directly says the New Jerusalem and the Bride are one and the same. The New Jerusalem is not merely the hometown where the Bride lives. It is important to understand that. Notice in verse 9.

Revelation 21:9. *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." (NKJV)*

Notice the angel said, "I'm going to show you the Bride, the Lamb's wife." Now, what does the angel show the apostle John? Read the next verse.

10) 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, (NKJV)

Notice the angel didn't start by saying, "I'm going to show you the town where the Bride lives." That's not what the angel said. He said, "I'm going to take you to show you the Bride," and then the angel shows John the city. The most of the rest of the next two chapters are a detailed description of the city. This analogy teaches us about the Bride. We will see later today this not only defines the Bride for us but it tells us who is included and who is not included. It also teaches us how those included wind up in this group. There are many spiritual lessons this analogy reveals to us. To understand this analogy, we have to grasp the concept of dwelling with God and how this is a theme throughout the whole Bible and we have to grasp how God works with mankind.

Many other scriptures simply touch on this subject, more than we have time to cover today. In developing this sermon, after I originally made my notes, about a week ago, I looked at my notes and said, "There is no way I can cover this in seventy-four minutes!" I had to start cutting things out because there are more scriptures that touch on this subject than there is time to address today.

Before we begin looking at this throughout the Bible, let me set a foundation for this picture so we have a broader context to look at this. Looking at this from a broad standpoint, what is a city? How do we define a city? What makes something a city? Again, in a broad general context, a city is a sizeable group of people living within close proximity with each other.

Let me give you an example that paints a picture of this. I'm sure many of you hearing this sermon are aware of the fact that I live in the greater Dallas, Texas area. I actually live in a suburb on the outskirts of the Dallas Metroplex, but I live in that area. And, I'm going to use the Dallas-Fort Worth area as an illustration to help you understand this concept. Dallas, Texas and Fort Worth, Texas are fairly close to each other as far as major cities. Yet, there are also numerous suburbs built all around both cities. As you're driving through it, it's city after city like one huge metropolitan area. Oftentimes it's referred to as the DFW area because it's often treated as one huge city. For our illustration purposes today, that's how we'll look at it. Technically, it's numerous cities if you look at the area from a legal standpoint but let's just look at the complete metropolitan area as a unit.

To get an idea of the size of this—realize I'm oversimplifying numbers here for the sake of the illustration. If we were to measure from the far eastern suburbs of Dallas to the far western suburbs of Fort Worth, it's roughly about fifty-five miles across from one side to the other. If we measure north and south the same way—and I'm doing this from the Dallas side because it's larger than the Fort Worth side in order to oversimplify. If you start from the far northern suburbs of the greater Dallas - Fort Worth area to the far southern suburbs, it's again, approximately about fifty-five miles in that direction as well.

If you think about DFW as one large square, there are approximately seven million people living in this area. As you can see, we have a large number of people living in close proximity with each other. My point is that we think of that as a city or a metro area because people are clustered together. If we took that same number of people and scattered them over an area the size of the entire state of Texas, we could probably place them all in rural areas far away from each other and we wouldn't call that a city. We call the DFW area a city because the people are more clustered together and what they develop together in that cluster is what we think of as a city.

Now, think of this. What we've talked about here is the concept of what I'm going to call proximity. In other words, the people are physically close to each other. None of this speaks to the issue of relationships. All these seven million people live very close to each other because they live in a fifty-five square mile area. Yet, that doesn't mean that they're of like mind with each other. It doesn't mean that they think the same or view life the same or that they even get along with one another or like one another. Many of them may hate each other and want to fight or go to war with one another. They just happen to live in the close area around one another.

The reason I mention that is because this concept of dwelling with God deals with much more than the issue of proximity. More importantly, dwelling with God deals with the issue of relationship because we will see that both of these concepts have some bearing on the idea of dwelling with God.

As I mentioned, many more scriptures touch on this subject than we will have a chance to address today. What we will do is look at this theme as it develops throughout the Bible to form a foundation before we return to the ending chapters of Revelation to start understanding the picture of the New Jerusalem. To begin with, let's turn over to Leviticus 26.

Let's cover some background and set the scene. We're all aware of the fact that Ancient Israel was in slavery in Egypt and crying out to God for relief. God sends Moses to Egypt, who delivers them. God through Moses takes them across the Red Sea and brings them out in the wilderness. Then, God makes a covenant with Ancient Israel. In Exodus 19, at Mount Sinai God approaches Israel and proposes a deal with them. "I'll be your God. You'll be My people. We'll make a covenant. If you will obey Me and follow these rules, I'm going to make life good for you. I will make life very physically comfortable for you if you'll play along and obey the rules." Once

established, we oftentimes see that covenantal relationship spoken of in terms of "dwelling together with God."

We will see here not only does this covenant speak to relationship, but the issue of proximity also comes into this as well. Leviticus 26 is one of the chapters we oftentimes refer to as the blessings and the cursings. The first half of the chapter speaks to all the positive blessings, good things that would happen to Israel if they regularly obeyed God while the second half refers to all the trouble Israel would have if they flagrantly disobeyed God. We're going to break into the context in verse 11. Notice what God says.

Leviticus 26:11. *I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you.*

12) I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. (NKJV)

Notice God is talking about the relationship He wants to have with Israel—"I will be your God and you will be My people"—and He gives them rules around that. God also mentions, He "will walk among" Israel and "will put My tabernacle" with Israel. I mention that because we will see here the tabernacle literally was a place where the presence of God dwelt in the camp of Israel. It was a literal, physical designated spot, which is why I referred to proximity. God said, "Make this tabernacle. My presence is actually going to come and dwell among you." Again, this was not only a relationship of Ancient Israel being God's people and God being their God. It also included God literally having His presence there among them because there was a designated spot for the tent, the tabernacle, and God's presence literally lived there.

To see this more, let's turn over to Exodus chapter 25. Again, to set the scene, as I mentioned before, in Exodus 19, we have the story where God initially approaches Ancient Israel to make a covenant with them. "If you will obey Me, I will be your God. You will be My people. Life will go well for you." In chapter 20, God gives Ancient Israel the Ten Commandments. In the following chapter, God sets forth a number of the statutes and judgments He wants them to abide by. Chapter 24 is where you might say that the marriage ceremony occurs because here the people agree to the covenant saying, "All that the LORD has said, we still do." This is the "I do's" in a marriage. Then, you have the account in which Moses takes the blood of the sacrifice, sprinkles it upon the people, and they ratify the covenant.

Now, there are additional instructions starting in chapter 25, where God begins describing for them building the tabernacle. The tabernacle is a designated area where not only the presence of God would live and dwell among Israel—He will actually used that exact terminology—but this was also the place where the people would come to worship God, to sacrifice to Him, and to receive instructions from God. We're going to see all of this stated. Let's now look at Exodus 25:8.

Exodus 25:8. *And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.*

9) According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it. (NKJV)

In other words, God instructs them how to set up this tabernacle and He says, "This is the designated place where I'm going to dwell among the camp of Israel." That's why I say this speaks not only to proximity but also to relationship. There is a designated spot where the presence of God will literally dwell in a tent that the people can see.

Now, turn over to Exodus 29 and we'll see more detail. Again, the tabernacle was also the place where the Israelites would come to sacrifice before God, to worship him and to receive His instructions. This is in Exodus 29 verse 42.

Exodus 29:42. *This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet you to speak with you. (NKJV)*

This is where God would give them His instructions because they would come to the tabernacle to worship God.

43) And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory.

44) So I will [sanctify] the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also [sanctify] both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests.

45) I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God.

46) And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the Lord their God. (NKJV)

Notice God mentions several times this idea of dwelling among the people. Again, this speaks to two things. Not just the fact that God says, "Set up this tabernacle. This will be the designated location where you will worship and My presence will dwell there." It's also about a relationship. That's the more important issue here—the relationship with God. God lays out His law and as long as Israel obeys God, He has this relationship with them. "I'll be your God. I'll take care of you. I'll make life very good for you if you follow the rules and do what I tell you to do."

Notice also after Ancient Israel set all this up, literally the very presence of God came and dwelt there in the tabernacle. Let's turn over to Exodus 40 and verse 34.

Exodus 40:34. *Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.*

35) And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

36) Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys.

37) But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up.

*38) For the cloud of the Lord was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.
(NKJV)*

As we just read, the very glory of God came and dwelt there and, as we're going to see, specifically in the most holy place. That was the designated spot in the tabernacle where this would happen. It mentions here how the cloud would be present by day and the fire by night and the times when the cloud would remove because there were strict rules concerning access to the most holy place. Even though the presence of God was there, there were strict rules dealing with this area. Only the high priest could go into the most holy place and only once a year on the Day of Atonement under strict protocol. Anything else resulted in death. If anybody else tried to violate that or if the high priest tried to go in there some other time or failed to follow the protocol, that individual didn't live to tell the story. God made it very clear that if they violated this, they were going to die.

Notice something else here which will make sense a little bit later. When it talks about Ancient Israel actually seeing the cloud and the fire, we're going to see what I'll call "the degrees of separation." As we follow this concept through the Old Testament with Ancient Israel and through the New Testament with the church this concept of dwelling together with God in relationship and proximity, we will look at how the degrees of separation change as this relationship develops under different circumstances.

What Ancient Israel saw above the tabernacle was a cloud and a fire that indicated the presence of God was there. They did not see God's face. The reason I'm making a point of this is we will see in Revelation 22 when we get to the picture of the New Jerusalem, it literally says, "They shall see the Father's face." They will be directly with Him. Notice that as we go through this.

As I mentioned, there was the concept of degrees of separation. Even though there was a designated spot where the presence of God would dwell within the camp of Israel, the people still could not come up and directly interact with Him. That's not how it worked. Turn over to Exodus 26:31 and we'll see how this played out. Let me summarize some details before we read this exact scripture.

As I mentioned, the way the tabernacle was set up there was a holy place and there was the most holy place. The most holy place contained the Ark of the covenant with the mercy seat covering it. This is where the high priest would come in on the Day of Atonement. This room was set up to represent symbolically the actual throne of God the Father in heaven. Later, at the death of Jesus Christ when the veil in front of the most holy place was torn, what did that picture? That pictures us being able to have access to the Father. This room was set up as a representation of God the Father's throne in heaven and this is where the presence of God dwelled.

As I mentioned, there are degrees of separation here to keep the people at a distance. Let's notice in verse 31 of Exodus 26.

Exodus 26:31. *"You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet [yarn], and fine ... linen (thread). It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim.
32) You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Their hooks shall be gold, upon four sockets of silver.
33) And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the ark of the Testimony in there, behind the veil.... (NKJV)*

Realize this is the most holy place where the Ark of the Covenant was. A veil separated the most holy place from the rest of the tabernacle.

33b) ... The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the Most Holy.

34) You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy.

35) You shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand across from the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south; and you shall put the table on the north side. (NKJV)

Notice what is happening here in terms of degrees of separation. Here the very presence of God dwells in the most holy place in the camp of Israel. All the Israelites can say, "Over in that tent there, that's where God dwells." They could see the fire by night and the cloud by day.

However, the people could not directly access the most holy place because the veil was in front of it. Only one person was ever allowed to go beyond that veil and that was only one day of the year under strict protocol. So, there is a separation. Even though God's presence is there, the people cannot directly approach Him.

Also, the Levitical priesthood acts as mediators between God and the people. When the people come to sacrifice, they have to go to God through the priesthood. So, there are these degrees of separation holding the people back. Think of this in terms of proximity—how close they can get to God—but also in terms of relationship.

Realize also, as we know, in the Old Covenant, Ancient Israel had a physical relationship with God. "If you follow the physical letter of the law, I'll make life very physically good for you." God did not offer salvation to Ancient Israel. Nor did God offer them the holy spirit to affect their minds directly in order to change their nature to be like God's nature. Again, there is a relationship there, but it is a limited relationship.

What I have described here with the tabernacle also played out very similarly later on with the temple of God. Later King David got the idea by looking at the tabernacle. He said, "I'm the king and I live in this nice palace. I have this wonderful house, and the presence of God lives in a tent. This isn't right. I need to make God a temple. I need to make Him a palace to live in." God decided, "You've got too much blood on your hands, David. I'm not going to let you do that, but I will let your son do it. I will let Solomon build one. Your desire will be fulfilled through your son when he reigns after you." So,

God allowed Solomon to do that. Let's turn over to 1 Kings 6. We pick up the story and see that the same concepts we've talked about with the tabernacle play out with the temple. The temple is a permanent building rather than a movable tent, but the same basic concepts of dwelling with God apply (in terms of relationship and proximity) as with the tabernacle. Notice in 1 Kings 6 verse 11:

1 Kings 6:11. *Then the word of the Lord came to Solomon, saying:*

12) "Concerning this temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father David.

13) And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel."

14) So Solomon built the temple and finished it. (NKJV)

Notice a couple of things here. Once again, God says, "In the most holy place, My presence will come and dwell there and I will live amongst Israel." And, again, we have this issue of proximity. The same set up existed here with the temple as we saw with the tabernacle. The most holy place has a veil in front of it. And one person can only access it one time a year. There is a Levitical Priesthood to mediate between the people and God. There are degrees of separation. There is a relationship with God but it's not an at-one relationship with God.

Also, notice here how important the concept of relationship was. God goes through the requirements saying, "If you follow Me, if you do what I tell you to do and you're faithful in doing this, then we will have this relationship. I will dwell among you. I will be your God and you will be My people." Yet, the relationship is contingent upon the obedience of the people to do their part in obeying God. The relationship depends upon Israel obeying God and striving—as much as they could in a physical environment—to be more like God, to follow His rules, to try to have His mind, and to follow His instructions.

If you look at the concept of dwelling with God, as I mentioned there are two basic ideas here. The most important is relationship, the other is proximity, but the most important is relationship. As we will see here, relationship is a concept involved not only in the Old Covenant environment with Ancient Israel, but the New Covenant church and, ultimately, in the Kingdom of God (which we'll see is pictured by the New Jerusalem). The goal is for mankind to be able to dwell with God at one in relationship and in proximity. The most important thing required to accomplish this goal is always relationship. That's how we obey God and how we apply His rules in our own lives.

If you will, turn to Psalm 15, which focuses specifically on the idea of dwelling with God. Psalm 15 also lays out the character traits required for us to live by today in order to fulfill our Christian responsibilities in the New Covenant relationship with God and have Him dwell within us. Yet, more importantly, these character traits are required in order to dwell with God permanently in the picture of the New Jerusalem in the Kingdom of God. To do that we must develop the character traits we read in Psalm 15.

Psalm 15:1. *Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? (NKJV)*

Notice David gives the criteria required to dwell with God. Verse 2:

- 2) *He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart;*
- 3) *He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;*
- 4) *In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the Lord; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;*
- 5) *He who does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved. (NKJV)*

David lists the character traits needed in order to have the mind and heart of God that we need to develop within us. Again, these traits are required not just to fulfill our responsibilities today as a Christian. Ultimately, we must develop these character traits in order to dwell with God and Jesus Christ for all eternity and be in a situation where we are not only one in relationship but we are also at one in proximity. We can be right before the throne of God to see the Father and look into His eyes. That is what we'll see described in Revelation 22.

Now let's look at how dwelling with God comes about in the New Covenant environment because, as we mentioned, God's Old Covenant relationship with Ancient Israel was simply a physical contract. "If you obey the letter of the law and instructions I'm giving you, I will make life good for you. I will be your God. I will protect you. I will make life physically very good for you." Yet, God did not offer salvation to Ancient Israel. They were not given God's spirit to dwell within them to change their minds. As we saw here in the Old Covenant relationship, the concept of dwelling with God dwelt around a tabernacle and, then, later a temple—in other words, a designated physical place where the presence of God would go and actually dwell. Then the people could go to that physical location to worship God, to sacrifice to Him, to receive His instructions, but there were degrees of separation to keep them at a distance, back from God.

As we know, in the New Covenant environment there is no tabernacle or temple. Those physical things don't exist in the New Covenant church. Now what happens is God dwells in us through His holy spirit. This same concept of dwelling with God is very much a theme in the New Covenant church as well. Let's turn over to John 14:22.

John 14:22. *Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"*

23) *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

24) *He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me. (NKJV)*

Notice what Jesus is saying. "The Father and I will come and make our home with him. We will dwell within him. We will dwell together." That's the concept of what Christ says. No longer is the issue, "In your camp, I'll have this tent in this physical location where My presence will dwell." Now, "Instead of a tabernacle or temple, I'm actually going to dwell in you. I'm going to dwell in your physical body through the spirit and have a relationship with you."

Not only does the proximity change now to a closer, more intimate one, the relationship changes as well. Now, it's not just about the letter of the law. It's about the spirit of the law and developing your mind to be like God's mind.

It's also God dwelling directly in you. And, now we have access to the Father. As we saw when Jesus Christ died, one of the things that happened was the veil before the most holy place was torn. That veil symbolized access to God the Father. Now, some of the degrees of separation change here. The Levitical priesthood no longer serves as a mediator to access the Father. Jesus Christ fulfills that role as our High Priest. Through His sacrifice, He enables us to go before the Father. We can now pray to the Father. We don't literally go before His throne and look Him in the eye, but we can approach the Father, pray to Him, and have a direct relationship with Him. Jesus Christ enables us to have this relationship. The same concept of relationship occurs in the New Covenant but now the degrees of separation are minimizing. It's a closer, more intimate association in proximity and in relationship.

Let's notice how this happens. Turn over to Ephesians 3:14.

Ephesians 3:14. *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

15) from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16) that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, (NKJV)

In other words, this is how God the Father directly dwells in the person now, and in their minds.

17) that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

18) may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height —

19) to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20) Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, (NKJV)

Now verse 21 out of the King James:

21) Unto him be glory in the church [of] Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (KJV)

Notice what Paul says here. Now, Christ dwells in us through the holy spirit. He lives in our minds and in our physical bodies. Again, this creates a deeper relationship than what Ancient Israel had in the Old Covenant. No longer is it "Just follow these physical rules and I'll make life physically good for you." The New Covenant goes beyond the simple physical obedience to understanding, to developing the mind and character of God, to becoming more like Him and in His image, and to having a closer relationship with God.

Again, our proximity has changed because now the presence of God doesn't dwell in a physical location—in a building or in a tent. The presence of God dwells in people. So, it's also a closer relationship. We're going to see, as this concept develops, the proximity moves closer and closer together. We'll see in the picture of the New Jerusalem that we are at one in both relationship and proximity. We can be right before the throne of God and see the Father's face.

The New Testament tells us numerous times that no one has seen the face of God. Even when Moses was talking to God on Mount Sinai, he said, "I want to see You. I want to see Your face." The answer Moses received was "You can't do that and live to tell the story. You'll die if that happens. We can't allow that."

What we see in the picture in Revelation 22 of the New Jerusalem is literally being able to be face to face with the Father and to look Him in the eyes. We will be at one in proximity and in relationship. As I mentioned before, in the Old Covenant, we have the tabernacle and the temple, physical locations where God actually dwelled. We don't have that in the New Testament church. In the New Covenant, that concept doesn't exist. The reason being is that now we are that temple. We are the designated place where the presence of God is going to dwell. God chose us to replace the tabernacle and the temple. So, there is no longer a physical building for the presence of God and we have a closer relationship with God. If you turn to 1 Corinthians 3:16, you can see this directly stated.

1 Corinthians 3:16. *Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (NKJV)*

Now God dwells with us by directly dwelling within our physical bodies and in our physical minds.

17) If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. (NKJV)

We don't need a physical temple anymore because when we become converted, we are that temple. We are the designated spot where the presence of God dwells. Again we have a closer relationship with God because His spirit enables us to understand more

fully His way of life, start to develop His character and His mind, and to develop a more intimate direct relationship with Him. That's how He dwells together with us.

As this concept started off, initially the presence of God dwelled in a physical location with multiple degrees of separation from being able to contact the Father, and, again, it was a more limited relationship. Beginning in the New Covenant, several degrees of separation are removed and the relationship becomes closer and more intimate. Ultimately, dwelling together with God culminates in a situation where we can be one with God. We will live directly with God the Father and Jesus Christ in a relationship being one in mind and purpose—being like-minded. Also, we will be directly with God the Father and Jesus.

Our ultimate reward is pictured through this same concept. That's why it's pictured as a city. Think about it. What is a city? It's a group of people dwelling together. The concept of dwelling together is expressed here. This is why the heroes of Hebrews chapter 11 look forward to their reward and spoke of it in terms of a city. Oftentimes we think of Hebrews 11 as the faith chapter, which is a good way to describe it. That chapter talks about many of the heroes of faith. Yet, Hebrews 11 can also be accurately described as the spiritual hall of fame. The heroes of the Bible are discussed and the deeds they accomplished through living faith and looking forward to their future.

Hebrews 11 also tells us that all these people died not having received the promises. The promises that the heroes of Hebrews 11 were looking for were promises of the Kingdom of God. These people looked forward to their salvation in the future. Let's notice how this is expressed and how Paul describes this concept in Hebrews 11. Turn over to Hebrews 11:8.

Hebrews 11:8. *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he (afterwards) would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.*

9) By faith he [sojourned] in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;

10) for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (NKJV)

Notice Abraham looked forward to his reward, to be part of the Kingdom of God, which Paul described as a city, a city whose builder and maker is God. This refers to the New Jerusalem. Abraham looked forward to ultimately dwelling with God, at one in relationship and in proximity for all eternity. And, it's not only Abraham. Skip down to verse 13, which speaks in general about everyone in this chapter.

13) These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14) For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.

15) And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.

16) But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (NKJV)

Notice Paul describes their reward in terms of a city. Again, this refers to the New Jerusalem. It's ultimately being able to dwell together with God the Father and Jesus Christ for all eternity.

With this foundation in mind, let's go back over to Revelation 21 and we can start looking in detail at these two chapters to understand exactly what they say. From this point forward we'll go to different parts of the Bible, but we'll keep coming back to Revelation, as we understand all of the symbols described in these two chapters.

As I mentioned, we start in Revelation 21 with a picture of a spiritual planet—a new heaven and a new earth. The physical has been done away. Let me set up the context that leads up to this. You will understand why I'm doing this in a minute. Chapter 20 portrays the fulfillment of the fall holy days. This chapter begins describing the binding of Satan, which we know is Atonement followed by the one thousand year reign of Jesus Christ and the firstfruits, the Feast of Tabernacles, pictured as the Millennium. Then, we come to the Last Great Day and the release of Satan. The Bible doesn't tell us exactly how long that time period lasts. We can speculate but we don't really know. We do know that this is the timeframe when the second resurrection takes place and everyone who has ever lived will be resurrected to physical life and offered his or her opportunity for salvation.

If you look at the very end of chapter 20, verses 11 through 15 and compare these to the latter part of Matthew 25, you will find a strikingly similar scene in both passages. What it describes is the final judgment at the end of the white throne judgment period. Matthew 25 tells us the Son of Man is on the throne. The sheep are on the right; the goats are on the left. "Well done you good and faithful servant." "I never knew you. Go in the lake of fire." It divides who is making it into the Kingdom of God and who is not going to be there. Once this is finished, the physical universe, the entire plan of salvation as we understand it for humans, is done at the end of chapter 20.

I want you to notice particularly verses 14 and 15, which will become important shortly. Verse 14 of chapter 20 reads:

Rev 20:14. *Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

15) And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (NKJV)

I'm making a point of this because clearly beyond this moment in the timeline (at the end of chapter 20), no one exists who did not faithfully obey God, have their name written in the book of life and become part of the family of God. Anyone who refused to

go along with God's way of life has been thrown in the lake of fire. They're out of existence.

I emphasize this because looking at the next two chapters, we'll look at two passages describing the city listing those individuals kept out of or not allowed to enter the city. One set of scriptures describing the wall around the city records those who are inside the wall in the city and those who are on the outside. The passage calls those on the outside "murderers, liars, the sexually immoral." Those people listed in verse 15 don't exist anymore because they were thrown in the lake of fire at the end of Revelation 20. We'll even see a reference talking about those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. Only those in the Lamb's book of life are allowed to enter the city, and those whose names are not written in the book of life are kept out of the city.

Logically think about this. If we were to look at these passages literally—in other words, take everything described here from a literal standpoint—what sense would it make to say, "We want to make it clear, so that you understand, those people who don't exist anymore, We don't allow them in the city." What logical sense would that make? It's not even a question. People who don't even exist anymore? Of course, you don't let them in the city. They're not around anymore. There's no point in keeping them out, because they're not here.

What you see here is a figurative analogy of what the New Jerusalem is. It's defining the Bride for us. It tells us who is included, who is not, and how they get to be part of the Bride. This analogy we're going to go through teaches us about the Bride. If you think of this as very literal, logically, you have to ask the question: Why would you repeatedly point out why you don't allow these people into the city who simply do not exist anymore? That doesn't make sense, but if you're defining this from the standpoint of a figurative analogy and you're defining the Bride, telling us who is included in this picture of the Bride and who is not, it makes total sense to make that clear.

With that in mind, let's start again in Revelation 21:1.

Revelation 21:1. *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. (NKJV)*

Again, obviously the physical creation is gone. We're talking about a spiritual planet here. Everything is spiritual at this point forward. We don't have physical human beings anymore. Verse 2:

2) Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (NKJV)

Once again, let me point out that it doesn't say, "I'm seeing the city where the Bride lives. I'm seeing her home town." That's not what it says. It says, "The city that is coming down is like a bride." There's a direct comparison between the two. And, in verse 3, we find our key in understanding this.

3) And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. (NKJV)

Again, we find this concept of dwelling together with God, but now it's totally at one because those who still exist at this point are composed completely of God's spirit. They've been born into His family. They can't sin anymore because someone made totally of the nature of God can't even be tempted with sin anymore as the epistle of James tells us. So, that's what takes place here. The analogy pictures what it will be like to be in the setting of our ultimate reward. Notice in verse 4:

4) And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (NKJV)

In other words, we're dealing with a utopian situation here. All our physical problems and all the things we can worry about in this life are all irrelevant at this point. Now, we have a spiritual world. Sin has been abolished and all sinners have been destroyed. Everyone is now a God-being. It's a perfect world going forward. Now notice in verse 5:

*5) Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."
6) And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. (NKJV)*

It is done. The plan of salvation as we understand it explained by the holy days is all wrapped up. We've already finished the Last Great Day. All the holy days have been fulfilled.

Next, notice verses 7 and 8. This is one reference that talks about who is included and who is not included.

7) He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. (NKJV)

But notice verse 8.

8) But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (NKJV)

We know that happened in terms of the timeline in Revelation 20:14-15. That has already taken place. Again, this tells you who makes it into the kingdom of salvation and who does not.

Keep your finger there and quickly glance over at Revelation 22:14. I referenced this passage earlier concerning those who are outside the wall. I want you to think about this. It is obvious this passage speaks figuratively because it wouldn't make sense otherwise.

Revelation 22:14. *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. (NKJV)*

Notice, these individuals are allowed to be a part of the city, but notice verse 15.

15) But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. (NKJV)

Now think about it. We know the wages of sin is death and the ultimate punishment for those who are rebellious and won't follow God is to be thrown into the lake of fire. That's what happened at the end of chapter 20. As we're going to see, this city has a wall around it and we're given an elaborate description of the wall. Everyone inside the city is all spirit-beings. What sense would it make if we have rebellious, physical human beings living outside the wall on this spiritual planet and they are in blatant rebellion against God because they're liars and they're murderers and they're sexually immoral?

We know all those people were burned up in the lake of fire. They don't exist anymore. So, this analogy is not a description of a literal city where outside the city wall physical human beings still live in rebellion against God. No, those individuals have been thrown into the lake of fire and have been burned up. Instead, this passage defines for us who is included and who is not included. It's a figurative picture defining the Bride for us. Now, let's turn back to Revelation 9:21.

Revelation 21:9. *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." (NKJV)*

Notice the angel says that he will show the apostle John the Bride. What does the angel show John? Verse 10:

*10) 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,
11) having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. (NKJV)*

Notice the angel did not say, "I'm going to show you the Bride's hometown." The angel said, "I'm going to show you the Bride." Then most of the next two chapters are an elaborate description of this city. The angel described the Bride just as he said he would do. Let's just let the Bible interpret the Bible to understand the symbols and understand what this passage says to us. Now, pick up in verse 12.

12) Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

13) three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. (NKJV)

Let's ask a logical question. Why do you put a wall around a city? You do it for protection. Right? What that protection provides is your ability to control who you allow to enter the city and who you do not allow to enter the city. I'm sure if you've watched the news at all in the last few months, you've heard the talk of President Trump wanting to build a wall on the southern border of the United States. Why? To have the ability to control who comes across, who enters the county, and who doesn't enter. You put a wall around that and you put gates in it. You want people to have access to come in and out, but you want to have control over that and be able to enforce a set of rules as to who gets in and who doesn't. That's the whole logic of why you put a wall around the city and then put gates in it. So, there is access, but you can control that access.

Notice what it says here concerning the twelve gates. What are they? They're all named after the twelve tribes of Israel. And this describes what? The Bride, the Lamb's wife, just like it said. Ephesians 5 tells us that the Bride of Christ is the church. In chapter 5 of Ephesians, Paul describes the roles of husbands and wives, specifically how they should interact with one another. At the end of that discussion, Paul says:

Eph 5:32. *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (NKJV)*

The *ekklesia*, that's who Christ marries. What is the church also described as? Spiritual Israel, because when you are baptized and become converted, you become a spiritual Israelite regardless of your physical nationality. That doesn't matter. In the Old Covenant, God's relationship was with physical Israel. God made a marriage covenant with Ancient Israel. In the New Covenant, it's spiritual Israel and the church is spiritual Israel. That's what this tells us.

Keep your finger here in Revelation but quickly turn over to Romans 2:25.

Roman 2:25. *For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.*
26) Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?

27) *And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?*
28) *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;*
29) *but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God. (NKJV)*

Paul tells us that when someone becomes converted and receives the holy spirit, that person becomes a spiritual Jew, and becomes part of spiritual Israel. Paul also identifies the church in his epistle to the Galatians as "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16). This is how Paul describes the church. So, turn over to Galatians 6:14.

Galatians 6:14. *But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

15) *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.*

16) *And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. (NKJV)*

Notice here the church is referred to as the Israel of God. They enter the city because the city is the Bride, the Lamb's wife. That's what Revelation 21 said. And to be a part of it, what do you have to do? Come through one of the gates that are named after Israel. You enter the New Jerusalem by becoming a spiritual Israelite. That's what this analogy says.

Turn back over to Revelation 21 and we'll pick up the narrative here in verse 14.

Revelation 21:14. *Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (NKJV)*

Notice this wall had twelve foundations, each named after one of the twelve apostles. What else does the Bible directly tell us has the foundation of the apostles? Turn to Ephesians 2:19.

Ephesians 2:19. *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,*

20) *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,*

21) *in whom the whole building, [joined] together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,*

22) *in whom you also are being built together [as a habitation] of God in the Spirit. (NKJV)*

Here in Ephesians, we're getting the same picture. Spiritual Israel is the church and you become a member when you enter it by being baptized. And what is spiritual Israel built

upon? The foundation of the apostles. This is the same consistent picture defining the Bride for us.

Turn back to Revelation 21:15.

Revelation 21:15. *And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall.*

16) The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. (NKJV)

If you look this up in Biblical commentaries, you'll find different opinions on the length of a furlong. They don't all agree on the exact measurement. So, of course, when you calculate 12,000 furlongs you get different figures. One of the common answers for this is that 12,000 furlongs is approximately 1500 miles. So, to paint a visual picture, what you're talking about is an area a little farther than the distance between Los Angeles, California and Dallas, Texas. That's about one-half of the United States.

Notice the city is described not just as a square, but as a cube because the city doesn't just have the same width and length, the height is the same as well. I introduced this sermon by giving you some dimensions of the Dallas-Fort Worth Area. I mentioned it was fifty-five miles east and west and fifty-five miles north and south. Notice I never said fifty-five miles high because no one describes a city like that. That is a very bizarre way to describe a city because cities are never as tall as they are in length and width. So, what do these verses tell us?

Remember our foundational concepts here. What is this? The angel is describing the Bride, the Lamb's wife and the angel shows the apostle John the city, which is a picture of the Bride. The city is all about dwelling with God. What else in the Bible has a direct correlation with this concept with God is described with the dimensions of a cube? Turn over to 1 Kings 6.

I mentioned before the most holy place was the location where the actual presence of God dwelt. And, again, there were degrees of separation in the temple that kept the people back at a distance from this. Yet, to apply a physical concept to this, the most holy place is where you could say God dwelt. Let's notice how this area is described, in 1 Kings 6:16.

1 Kings 6:16. *Then he built the twenty-cubit room at the rear of the temple, from floor to ceiling, with cedar boards; he built it inside as the inner sanctuary, as the Most Holy Place.*

17) And in front of it the temple sanctuary was forty cubits long.

18) The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with ornamental buds and open flowers. All was cedar; there was no stone to be seen.

19) And he prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple, to set the ark of the covenant of the Lord there. (NKJV)

This is the most holy place where God dwelt.

20) The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high. He overlaid it with pure gold, and overlaid the altar of cedar. (NKJV)

In other words, the actual physical location set up to be like the throne of God where God dwelt among Israel on earth was a cube. What Revelation 21 describes for us as the New Jerusalem is a giant most holy place because not only does God dwell there but God the Father and Jesus Christ and all the new God-beings, all the other members of the family dwell directly with Them because there are no levels of separation anymore. We are at one with Them in that relationship.

Let's turn back over to Revelation 21:17.

17) Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. (NKJV)

Remember what this analogy has already told us about the wall. The wall has twelve gates that are named after the twelve tribes of Israel. Additionally, the wall has twelve foundations named after the apostles. Summing it up, twelve times twelve (12 x 12) equals what? One hundred and forty-four (144). That's what this verse sums up for us.

Now, pick up in verse 18.

18) The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

19) The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: ... (NKJV)

The rest of this verse and verse 20 describe all these precious stones. I'm going to save you from having me mispronounce all of them. I'm reading this from the New King James. However, if you read this in the New Revised Standard Version, what you'll see is it doesn't use the words "precious stones." Instead, the NRSV says "jewels"¹. With that in mind, keep your finger in Revelation 21 and quickly turn over to Malachi 3:16.

Malachi 3:16. *Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, And the Lord listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the Lord And who meditate on His name.*

17) "They shall be Mine," says the Lord of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels.... (NKJV)

Notice God describes Christians, that He has appointed part of His family, as being His jewels on the day they are made a part of His kingdom. That's what Revelation 21 describes—being God's jewels. That's the picture.

¹ **Revelation 21:17.** *The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every jewel; ... (NRSV)*

Notice in verse 21 of Revelation 21.

21) The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl.... (NKJV)

Notice that wording, "one pearl." For the sake of time, I'm going to summarize some of this rather than turn to every scripture. Put in your notes that in Matthew 13, you'll see the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price (Matthew 13:45-46²). It says, "The Kingdom of God is like a merchant seeking great pearls. And, he found this one pearl..." That's the same wording in Revelation 21 verse 21. "The pearl was so valuable to the merchant that he sold everything he had to buy it." The Bible repeatedly tells us that God's kingdom has to be more important to us than anything else in our lives is and we're willing to forsake anything to get to the kingdom. That's what the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price tells us—the Kingdom of God is the pearl of great price.

Now, skip down to verse 22 for the sake of time. It says:

22) But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. (NKJV)

Because there are no degrees of separation here, everyone is dwelling together with God in what is essentially a giant most holy place. There is no separation. There is no need for that. Verse 23:

23) The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

24) And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. (NKJV)

Here is our definition of the Bride—the nations of those who are saved. This means all those who have become part of God's kingdom. It doesn't matter what their physical nationality was because they became spiritual Israelites when they were converted. The picture here is when they are born into the family of God, of being able to dwell with God for all eternity.

Verse 25:

25) Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). (NKJV)

In other words, the gates are never closed. Verse 26:

26) And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.

² **Matthew 13:45-46.** "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, 46) who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (NKJV)

27) But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (NKJV)

Remember at the end of Revelation 20 all those not written in the Lamb's book of life were destroyed. Now, this clarifies that only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life are allowed in the city. Note verse 27 can't be taken literally. Why would this even be an issue? Those individuals whose names are not in the book of life are no longer around anymore. What these verses say is you have to be converted, you have to endure to the end, and you have to become part of God's kingdom.

Now, we'll pick it up in Revelation 22, verse 1.

Revelation 22:1. *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

2) In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (NKJV)

For the sake of time, I won't turn to John 7, but read John 7 verses 37 through 39³. Here Jesus Christ stands up at the Last Great Day and says, "If any many thirst, let him come unto me. Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water." Verse 39 explains that Jesus referred to the holy spirit.

Don't look at that literally. I never have seen anyone just converted having received the holy spirit that blew apart and a big river came flowing out. These verses give a figurative description of the power of the holy spirit and how it affects the converted person. This river of life is the same figurative description. Notice this river flows from God the Father and Jesus the Christ. They are the ones from whom we receive the holy spirit. From the Father through Jesus Christ is how we receive the holy spirit. These verses talk about the healing power of what the holy spirit does in our lives.

Continue in verse 3.

3) 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.

4) They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. (NKJV)

Notice they are with God the Father because they can see His face. They are one in proximity and relationship. That's what these verses describe.

³ **John 7:37.** *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.*

38) He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

39) But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (NKJV)

5) 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. (NKJV)

Brethren, the key to understanding this picture of the New Jerusalem is understanding the concept of dwelling with God. As it tells us in Revelation, what is being described here is the Bride, the Lamb's wife. It teaches us who are included in the Bride, who is included and who is not, and how they get there. The picture it gives us is being able to dwell with God for all eternity with God the Father and Jesus Christ directly there with them essentially living in the most holy place. That's why it's described as a giant cube.

We have a direct relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. There are no degrees of separation anymore. That's why when we look at our ultimate reward, we need to understand the New Jerusalem. This is not the city where the Bride dwells. This describes the Bride. It defines for us who the Bride is, who is included, who is not, and how you go about being included in this group.

So when we look forward to this, let's understand that our ultimate reward is dwelling together with God for all eternity. The Bible explains this to us through the analogy of a city—the New Jerusalem, the city whose builder and maker is God.