



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 21 & 22

"The Eternal State"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] ...help us to not only to know the plan and the program of the ages, but also to know Thee better through Christ, for we ask it in his name. Amen.

[Message] Now, tonight we are coming to the thirtieth lesson and our subject is the eternal state. And this is the end of the series, and the end of the bible. But, I hope you will not finish; I hope this is not the end of your study of the bible just because we have come to the last two chapters of it.

We have been following along and the major events of the future are the rapture of the church which is eminent, that means that it may come at any time. But, when we say eminent we do not mean he is coming tonight or tomorrow or the next day or within the next ten years; but he might, and that is the force of eminent. Then, there will be the great tribulation period, a period of time of seven years which will be shortened slightly. Matthew chapter 24 says at the end; because of the greatness of the judgment within it, during this time, the nation Israel shall be brought back to faith in Christ, and so all Israel shall be saved, as Paul says. By the way, that does not mean every Israelite, but the nation as a whole, all Israel, just as we might say all America, and so and so, we mean the nation as a whole. Then the Lord Jesus will come to the earth in his second advent to

establish his kingdom. He will conclude the tribulation period with judgment and also bring those who have looked for him into the Kingdom period. And with him shall come the church, which has been raptured. And so the church and our Lord shall rule and reign upon the earth with Israel, the head of the nations, and no longer the tail.

Then at the conclusion of the Kingdom; remember, there will be a rebellion because Satan who had been bound at the beginning of the Kingdom is loosed for a little season. He goes out to deceive the nations. And our Lord, in one last final exhibition of his power to judge, destroys the final rebellion. And the great white throne judgment takes place and the eternal state follows.

[Comment] Oh, [Indistinct] thanks, but I don't think I'm going to need it now.

So tonight, we're going to look at Revelation chapter 21, verse 1 through chapter 22 and verse 5; for in these verses we have a description of the eternal state, and the eternal state is essentially bound up in a new heaven, a new earth, and a new city; a new Jerusalem so I think we will begin by just reading verses 1 through 8:

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 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. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the

fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

Message] Now, I think that we can see from these verses which we have just read, that the purpose of the ages is now becoming clear. God's purpose from the beginning has been that he might dwell with human beings as their God and they with him as his people. And so this is the purpose of the of the ages, it is not to tickle our ears, it is not to just give us some sensational for-view of the future so that we have some knowledge that others do not have; but, essentially the promise or the purpose of the ages is expressed for us in verse 3, "and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." And when this particular time, which is described here in Revelation chapter 21:1-8 comes to pass, then this becomes a reality as we read in the sixth verse, "it is done." The problem as we read these verses is where is this which John is speaking about in these chapters, and the passage which we will read and go through reveals this, he says this fellowship that we shall enjoy with God is to be in a new heaven and a new earth.

You know it's an interesting thing in the bible, but this is true; that we know a lot of heaven but we know very little about heaven. We know there is a heaven and we know that it is a place; and we have heaven referred to many times, but we have very little said in the bible about heaven. Very little description is given of the place. And so as Eric Sours [ph 7:05] says in one of his book, "Here we bow before the Infinite and confess our ignorance."

Many years ago there was an evangelist by the name of John Zoller, he was preaching in a Baptist church in, Macon, Georgia, and there happened to be in the congregation an old woman, who had just been converted, and she was of the lowest class in the city, and she was just full of the fact that God had saved her. And Mr. Zoller,

who was a well known evangelist, was preaching along on heaven, and so in order to describe the glories of heaven he began to describe the glories of nature; and he began with the Grand Canyon, and he spoke about the greatness of God's nature. And as he went from peak of oratory to oratory speaking about the beauties of nature in order to contrast the beauties of heaven, he stopped. And this woman who had just been saved couldn't stand it any more and she just blurted out, “where is that place?” [Laughter] So there are lots of things about heaven that we know are true, but we know very little really about this place.

Now, these two chapters do give us some information about the place and from this particular revelation I'm sure that we would come to the conclusion without any shadow of a doubt, that there is a heaven. But, even when we read these verses we're going to see, that again, while verses are given us, and information is given us; as far as, understanding it all is concerned, I'm sure that most of us will have to admit that we do not understand a whole lot about heaven even after we have this, and the reason is obvious as we shall see, it's because we don't have the capacity to grasp it as we are now.

Bob Theme [ph 5:13] is this pastor in Houston of the Baraka [ph 5:14] church, it's a very fine church, a very fine church, and Bob has a little boy who is now about thirteen years old, but about ten years ago; one day he did something that Betty, his mother, did not like and so she spanked Bobby. And when Bobby got his spanking he looked up at his mother and he said, “Mommy I'm going to tell daddy on you.” And so he tromped out of the bedroom into Bob's study and walked up to his desk, and he told daddy what had happened to him. And much to his chagrin, daddy agreed that mother was right, and that he should have been spanked. And so he curled up his lip at Bob and he said, “I'm going to tell God on you both.” [Laughter] And so Bob says, “Alright, go on in your room and pray about it.” He says, “Oh, no, I'm not going to pray about it now I'm going to tell him on you when I get to heaven.” [Laughter] See, he knew he was going to be in heaven some, day but he didn't know a whole lot about heaven. And I think most of us are like

that when it comes to heaven, we know there is a heaven but we don't know a whole lot about it.

Well, now, let's look at these verses here. The first thing that John does is to describe the vision of the new heaven, the new earth, and the New Jerusalem. He says, “I saw a new heaven and a new earth,” and there could hardly be any question that this is a designed contrast with the old heaven and the old earth; in other words. Here, now, we're going to read about paradise lost, which has become paradise regained. There is an obvious design in these two chapters to compare them and contrast them with the opening chapters of the bible. And you will notice such things as, the garden, the tree of life, and these things here in the last two chapters. So that which man lost when he sinned in the Garden of Eden is looked at here as not only regained but regained in a greater way than it was ever possessed before.

So he says, “A new heaven and a new earth.” And this, I think this word, “new” there is also I believe a designed comparison with the new creation. Just as we, who are lost in sin, when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ become a new creation so here, there is prepared for the new creation a new dwelling place, a new heaven, and a new earth. “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” This is the metropolis of the new creation; it is a literal city, apparently because the heavens and the earth are surely literal heaven and literal earth. So this is most likely a literal city. But now, when we say that it is a literal city we do not say it is a city like, Los Angeles or Dallas or Fort Worth; we mean it is a real dwelling place, a real habitation, but not necessarily a city as we know a city with the same kind of material construction, with asphalt, and bricks, and wood, and so on, arranged as we know they are arranged. In fact, I think this is one of the blessings of heaven that it's not going to be like some of the cities that we have to live in. But this is a literal city, that is, it is a real city, and a vital place, and a definite place where we shall

live. So the other side becomes this side, and eternity transfigures time; but, nevertheless, there is reality in it.

And then we go on and read in verse 3 and through verse 8, of some of the things that are true of this new creation. He says, “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying behold the tabernacle of God is with men.” This is the perfection of divine fellowship.

I don't know whether you remember or not but when we studied the tabernacle I emphasized the fact that in Exodus chapter 25 and verse 8, Moses was told that the tabernacle was designed to be a place where God might meet with Israel and fellowship with them. This was the purpose of the purchase of the worship of Israel; that in this there might be a realization of fellowship with God, Exodus chapter 25 and verse 8. And then through the old testament we have this realized in certain measure, by type and by example, we have not only the tabernacle, but we have the temple, and this too, with the Shekinah Glory over it, was designed to represent the presence of God and how men might dwell with God. Then there came a time when the Lord Jesus who was the son of God took to himself human nature, and John says in John 1:14: “And the word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Now, in the Greek it is the word *skēnōma*, which in Greek simply means to tabernacle, so the word of God, “The word became flesh and (tabernacled) among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth.” When Jesus Christ was here, on the earth, in the flesh, God dwelt in a man. Jesus Christ was God, and the Father and he, and the Spirit and he were one so that God dwelt in a man.

Now, the Lord Jesus has ascended to the right hand of the Father and as a result of that which he has accomplished on the cross at Calvary there has been created a group of people who make up the church of Jesus Christ. They are redeemed people; they form a new creation corporately, Paul tells us in Ephesians chapter 2. And the church, the true church, I'm not talking about the Presbyterian church or the Baptist church or any

individual church. The corporate body of Christ is the dwelling place of Christ. For Paul says, that we have been made an inhabitation of God in the spirit, but also individually we are the dwelling places of God. You see; every single individual who believes in the law of Jesus is a temple of God. We have talked about this before.

So here God in measure realizes his aim and design to tabernacle with men, but as long as we are in the flesh and have the old nature, this dwelling, this union between God and man is an imperfect thing. It will always be imperfect until God is able to dwell in us, in our resurrection bodies. Until then we can never realize the fullness of divine indwelling. And corporately we cannot realize the presence of God until we are redeemed as a people, body, as well as, spirit. So here in Revelation when he says in verse 3, that: “The tabernacle of God is with men.” He means that we have reached here the final instance of the fellowship of God with men.

We often use to sing a hymn in chapel at Dallas Seminary, we never sing it anymore; I don't know why, perhaps, it's not in the new hymnal. I haven't checked to see but we use to use an old hymnal that had this particular hymn with this stanza, and it went this way: "Jerusalem the golden with milk and honey blessed, beneath thy contemplation sink heart and voice oppressed, I know not, oh, I know not what joys await me there, what radiancy of glory, what bliss beyond compare.

Well, these are some of the things that we are reading about here the tabernacle of God is with men:

“And he will dwell with them and they shall be his people, God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

Now, is there anything unique about this verse, as you look at it is there anything that stands out to you? What about it; let me read it again: “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain: for the former things are passed away.” What is there unique about this, right in line with what I’ve been saying to you? [Chatter] Well, there is not death, right? [Chatter] All things have passed away, all what kind of things? [Comment] Sinful; things yes, things that have touched by earth and the defilement of the earth. What is positively stated? [Comment] But that’s not actually said in this verse, although, what you have said is true. What is said here about heaven? [Comment] That’s the reverse, isn’t it? But actually look at it again and notice that just as I’ve been saying, everything is somewhat negative, in other words, there is not this, and there is not that, and there is not this, and there is not that, things that have to do with our sin, things that have to do with the sorrow, the sadness, the kind of life that we live because we’re not redeemed.

Now, take your bibles and turn with me to 1 Peter chapter 1. And now, Peter describes, and I ought to put this in quotes, he describes the inheritance here; he says in verse 3 of 1 Peter 1:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Jesus Christ which according to his abundant mercy have begotten us again unto a liveing [Laughter] (I was trying to say lively and living at the same time) a living hope (cause this is the Greek) a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”

[Message] What kind of an inheritance is it? Well, it’s not like things down here on the earth, that’s all Peter really tells us isn’t it. He doesn’t tell us anything about the inheritance, he just says that it is incorruptible, it does not corrupt like things on the earth,

it is undefiled, it is not defilable, and furthermore, it does not fade away like things on the earth. But he doesn't really tell us positively what the inheritance is, and John is doing the same thing here in this vision: “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.” But he doesn't tell us about the things that will replace them: other than, to say that we are dwelling with God.

So you'll notice that in all of the descriptions of the glory that awaits us, our inheritance, the city, the blessings that we are to enjoy there, the things that will be true about it, it's almost as if God has very carefully drawn a veil over them because we could not understand them, and this may be the reason why Paul, in 2 Corinthians chapter 12, when he says that he was caught up into heaven he heard things he said that it was not lawful for a man to utter, that is, we could not understand them. And so here, we're just told it's not like earth, now, of course, that's enough to encourage us [Laughter] but it really doesn't tell us a whole lot about what it shall be. Let me give you one other passage: 1 John chapter 3, and verse 2; 1 John chapter 3, and verse 2, John writes:

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God (most of the better Greek manuscripts add here, the words, “and we are” “and we are”) behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God: (and we are) therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be (see, doth not yet appear what we shall be) but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

[Message] Now, while Paul tells us in Philippians 3, that when the Lord Jesus comes and we are resurrected and we're going to have a body like his own glorious

body. Even Paul doesn't tell us much about the resurrection body; he just says it's like Christ's body. And when you turn over to 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and you read the description of the resurrection body that the gives, if you will study it carefully, you will discover that he doesn't tell us anything about the body there he just says it's heavenly, it's not earthly and so on. So that never are we really given a description of the resurrection body, and never are we really given a description of heaven, the reason being we could not understand it if we had it.

So this is very striking I think; by the way, don't misunderstand this passage in 1 John 3 when it says that, “we shall be like him.” What do you think it means? Do you think it means we shall be like him physically? Oh, no, this isn't what John is saying, have you read the third verse: “Every man hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” That's what he is, and we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All John is saying is, that we shall be like him in purity, he is not saying that we shall be like him in bodily presence. He is saying we shall be like him in purity. In other words, we shall have the same character and nature of purity that the Lord Jesus Christ has. John doesn't say anything about the kind of a body we're going to have at this point. This text has been very much misunderstood and man handled, because the context is not studied and if there's one thing you ought to have learned through our thirty lessons it is this, that you must study the context if you're going to understand the bible so we shall be like for we shall see him as he is, and he is pure. That means we shall be like him in purity; you see.

Well, now, coming back to Revelation chapter 21, John, now, in verse 5 describes some pronouncements that are made by the one on the throne, the fifth verse: “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. (‘New’ as over against the old heaven, and the old earth, and the old creation) And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me it is done.” I think this is a very interesting word, “it is done.” Ant it reminds me of some of the words that are stated in

the bible, with regard to the works of God. Remember the Lord Jesus Christ was hung upon the cross. In the fifth statement or the sixth statement that he made; what did he say? [Chatter] He said, “It is finished.” And he meant the redemption is finished; that is, the work of redeeming men has now seen the bases established, and from now on all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are guaranteed eternal life because the redemptive work has been finished.

Then in Revelation chapter 16, turn over there; verse 17, as John describes the series of judgments that are to be poured out upon the earth in the tribulation period here. He comes to the last of the judgments, and in the seventeenth verse we read: “And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne saying, it is done.” That is, all of the judgments that God has designed to take place during the tribulation period reached their conclusion with that seventh vial, which is the last of the three series of judgments poured out during the tribulation period. And now, again we read: “And he said unto me it is done.” What does he mean? If the, “it is finished” refers to the completion of the bases for pardon from sin, and if the first, “it is done”, has to do with the completion of God’s program of punishment for rejection of Jesus Christ that is on the earth, this, “it is done” is a reference to the completion of the purposes of God in the whole plan of the ages, and so we find, “it is done.”

“I am alpha and omega the beginning and the end,” by the way this is just a way of saying that Jesus Christ is omniscient. You know, if you were to go into the Library of Congress in Washington, you probably would be going in to the finest library that we have in the United States. And most libraries have catalogs, and you know if you want to find anything in a library you go to the card catalogs and you begin to look at “A” and you look all the way through “Z” and when you have gone from “A” to “Z” you have covered the library because all of the library is contained within “A” to “Z” and when the

Lord Jesus said, “I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last,” it’s just his way of saying that everything is comprehended in him; you see.

So this is the guarantee for these statements that are made. “I am the alpha and omega.” Do I have to tell you that alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and omega is the last, this is, I am the “A” and the “Z” he that overcometh --woe, let’s don’t go too fast here. “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life (providing they are baptized.) [Laughter] Now, that just doesn’t sound like Scripture does it; you see. He says, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of the fountain of life freely,” that’s without a charge, freely.

All through the bible the redemption is described as free, and there is a tendency in human nature to think that God requires something; you know. And even as Christians, by the way, it’s very difficult to get away from this because I believe; frankly, that nine out of ten Christians, believe that they are blessed by God, because of what they do, in pleasing God. That’s not true. You see; if we are saved by grace we must not abandon grace after we’ve been saved by grace, but the human mind is legalistic from beginning to end. It thinks first of all that it must please God by what it does, and so it seeks to please God by things that it does -- it’s religion, it’s good works, and so on. But once we become Christians we don’t lose that, we still have the old nature and there are Christians who want to be under the law, even if they’re not put under the law by some of us who are preaching. They want to be under the law, and they think that they gain God’s good favor by pleasing him, by the things that they do. We need to learn that after we are Christians we cannot please God by the things that we do; you see. So from beginning to end God’s dealings with us are on the bases of grace and our pleasing of God is not by what we do, but simply the response to the loving grace of God, the gratitude which flows out in works that are done by him, rather than done to please him, and there’s all the difference in the world. So here: “I will give unto him that is athirst of

the fountain of the water of life freely.” And the guarantee of this is that he is the alpha, the omega, the beginning, and the end; who speaks these words.

Well, now, having said this he goes on and says that, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” Here is the division, the believers are they who overcome, for it is faith that overcometh the world, and then the unbelievers are those who are lost, who are cast into the lake of fire, as we read in the last chapter with the great white throne judgment.

Now, John begins to describe the New Jerusalem in detail this is the final home of the redeemed and I said it was a literal city on the earth, but let me also say another thing or two about it which might help you to understand what John is saying here. And I hope you won't get mad at me at what I'm going to say, but let me put it this way; there is a parallel between the New Jerusalem, and the new heaven, and the new earth, and the new creation.

Now, when I am as an individual converted, my spirit is redeemed, and right now, as I look at you if you are a believer, and you look at me, you are looking at a person who is a new creation in Christ, not, outwardly just the opposite, day after day as I look into the mirror I see evidence that I am an old creation and getting old, older and older, and we all have this experience, and soon we begin to notice the lines in our faces; you know, and the other things. Well, I'm not going to try to make you say it tonight [Laughter] This really shouldn't make you say it, it should make you happy really, because this means you will be with the Lord that much sooner; but, nevertheless, we are redeemed even though we have unredeemed bodies. So we were lost, and then we are redeemed, and then when Jesus Christ comes if we have died, we hope we do not die. But if we have died our bodies are placed in the grave and when the Lord comes we are caught up to meet him in the air our bodies are resurrected. Now, that means that these

bodies which we see are so transformed that they are utterly different and yet, they are the same body, from the body that was ours when we were unredeemed. There is an identity between the two, I will know you and you will know me, but my body will not be anything like this body. Yet, there is identity, it is the same body Paul says, but it's so different. It's the difference between the earthly and the heavenly.

Now, then there are these three stages, there is the stage when we are unredeemed, and then there is the stage when we are redeemed with a redeemed spirit, and unredeemed body, yet the glory may shine through. And then there is the final stage, the resurrection the completion. Now, with regard to the creation, which was God's original work in Genesis, man fell and as a result the creation came under the curse; did it not? Thorns and thistles it would bring forth. So today the creation is a creation that is unredeemed. Paul says in Romans 9 we await the redemption, that is the adoption, that is the redemption of the body the creation still brings forth thorns and thistles it has not experienced redemption, but it groans and travails together in pain until this time, when the resurrection is completed, and the church has not only been resurrected but Israel has been resurrected. And so during the time of the kingdom age there will the redemption of the creation, redemption mind you, and the desert shall blossom as a rose and so on. You remember the description in the bible of the kingdom age; Isaiah chapter 35 is one good place.

So here we have the creation up to this time is unredeemed, but when the whole created body of men are redeemed and in our Lord's kingdom, the Kingdom itself will witness a glorious transformation in nature, but that's not the last stage of nature. Just as in my stage I have an unredeemed, I am unredeemed, then redeemed and resurrected so in the creation there is the time when it is unredeemed. Then there is a time when it is redeemed and then its resurrection, when it is just as different from the kingdom age as my resurrection body is from my present; you see.

So this is I think, the reason why we read in the book of Revelation here, as we describe the city of streets of gold, and gates of pearl. These are just human ways of expressing things that cannot be expressed for this is a city in resurrection, and this is a creation in resurrection, and this is why the bible cannot tell us anything about the new heaven, and the new earth, and the new Jerusalem so any time you ever here someone expounding Revelation chapter 21 and making all of this literal gold and pearl and diamond so on well, then you just put a little question mark in your mind because this, I do not believe, is the intention of this passage. John is given a vision and this vision is designed to say in human language things that cannot really be described.

Now, you will probably weed me out as a heretic for saying this, but that's alright, when we get there I'll say I told you so. [Laughter] And we have no question; by the way, about the reality of this, no question about the reality of it, probably all expositors will have to apologize to each other in that day, seriously. [Laughter] Now, let's read it:

"And it came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, come hither, and I will show Thee the, bride, the Lambs wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."

[Message] Now, the New Jerusalem is described as the bride here and this seems strange at first, he says, "I want to show you the bride the Lambs wife." And what might we expect if we were not looking ahead? Well, we might expect to see the redeemed wouldn't we, because the church is called to bride of Christ. "What does he mean hear when he calls the city a bride? Well, it so happens that oriental terminology will help us a lot here because when a king ascended a throne or a prince ascended the throne for the first time it was often said that he was at that moment becoming married to his country,

and this is the imagery that John uses here, when he says the bride and points to the city, he is using this oriental imagery, that is, that here the city is united to the Lamb and this is the place where the Lamb shall rule and reign, he will be the King. So this is the point, the Lamb's wife is the city; of course, the bride of Christ is the church, having the glory of God. Now, let's read through it:

“...her light and her light was like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve 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. And the wall of the city had the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (You know, it's always been somewhat interesting to me that even such insignificant persons as Nathaniel, for example, shall be there and shall have his name on the foundation.) And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. (By the way, this is a very large city and undoubtedly the reason it is described in these terms is to express the fact that many shall be there.) And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four 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 unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; and the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; (this is an unusual, this actually should be called a chrysopras, but the Greek word somehow or another managed to get itself into English transliterated here) the eleventh, a jacinth; and the twelfth, an amethyst. And

the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: (now, I would love to have a pearl like that right now, wouldn't you not?) and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.”

[Message] Now, this is the description of the city, with this, and again I repeat that I think that John is given this vision in order to show us that this is a wonderful glorious city that cannot really be described according to human understanding at the present time.

Now, he goes on to describe the light in the city and this is different:

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 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 honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (And you can notice the comparison between of the opening chapters of Genesis and these last chapters. For God is showing that that which was destroyed in the beginning is now being reconstructed, and yet in a more glorious way.) 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: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night

there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

[Message] Let me just list some of the things that you can see will characterize the light of this wonderful city. In the first place: those who are there, shall have a perfected character, they shall see his face. Now, this is more than just the outward look upon the face of our Lord. Herbert Spencer once said of heaven, that heaven is a perfect being in a perfect environment. Heaven is more than that, of course. But in the beatitudes we read this: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Now, the meaning of that is simply this; that we cannot really understand God if we are not like God so we must be pure if we are to understand purity. And when this text says they shall see his face, this means more than just they shall look upon his face, this means they shall be like him in purity. They will have perfection of character and thus they are able to understand and approach him who is perfect in his character so they shall see his face, perfected character. Then there is the perfected environment; there is be no curse there, there shall be no curse, verse 3: "there shall be no night there," they are at home with the Lord. The bible says to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, and we shall be with him, there shall be no night, there shall be no curse because there is a perfected environment. Mr. Moody; you know, use to say, I think I sit and told you this once before but I'll tell you again, he use to say, "When I get to heaven I'm going to spend one thousand years in the presence of the Lord Jesus just looking on his face, and then at the end of that time I'm going to say, 'where is Paul?'" [Laughter]

And so when John says that they shall see his face, he means they shall know him. And when they say they are in this perfected environment, well, he means that this is going to be wonderful: with no curse, no night. They are also perfected in knowledge, for in being able to see his face and have his name in their foreheads they know him. "Then we shall no longer know in part we shall know even as we are known," Paul says.

Often people say are we going to recognize our loved ones in heaven? I've forgotten who it was who use to say this, but he said, "it seems to me that we are bound to know those whom we have known and loved in heaven." Surely we will have as much sense up there as we have down here. But it is true, I think, that it is true, that we shall recognize our loved ones in heaven. We shall know even as we are known so there shall be a perfected knowledge of God; there will be perfected worship too.

We read in verses 3: “and his servants shall serve him, (serve him)” this is not just the time for servants now.

Do you mind if I engage in just a little imagination? Now, this is imagination, hope this gets on the tape too. Don't say I taught this [Laughter] I'm just suggesting this there are some parables that the Lord Jesus tells which seem to imply that our future service is based upon faithfulness in the present time. And it just seems to me that it might be possible that in the age to come when we are in the new heaven, and the new earth, God is going to give us all kinds of work to do, dependent upon or capacity. Now, we are to be rewarded in accordance with our cooperation with God, all of us will be equally blissful in eternity, if for example, Bob has a greater reward than I, and he might just well have it; you know, because rewards are based not upon how many times you have preached, but about how faithful you have been in that which has been committed to you.

Now, I will not envy him in heaven because he has a greater reward than I, because my capacity is limited and so I am able to be in perfect bliss even though I do not have the job to do that he might have to do. Our capacities are tailored to the rewards that we have so that there is no distinction in bliss, although there is distinction in service. And it just might be; now, this is going to, this is really imagination, but it just might be that God is going to say to us in eternity, with all these worlds about us, it just might be that he is going to say, “Now, I would like to see what you would do with a world.” What will you do? Now, that's sort of far fetched, isn't it, but it does say that we

shall serve him and if we're going to serve him we're going to have things to do, there must be projects, and plans, and programs throughout all eternity. And it just might be, that we will have to do with a world in similar fashion to that which has been done.

But we better stop there because we're human and we cannot imagine these things; you know, it does say we're going to serve him though. Donna, I don't think your going to be playing the piano there. You're going to be doing something even more enjoyable than that, at that time. Not only is there perfected service, but there is perfected rule, verse 5: “And there shall be no night there they need no candle neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

Now, isn't this striking, we're going to serve him, but we're going to reign for ever and ever. How can you be a servant and a king at the same time? Well, you can be a servant and a king at the same time if you are in perfect harmony with the King and so we are going to reign when we serve him because we are in perfect harmony with him; and it is not the service of slavish obedience against our will, it's what we want to do. And so we reign while we serve, of course, our Lord wants us to experience a measure of that down here now. He doesn't want us to serve him out of a slavish desire to please a father or a son who is going to beat us with a whip if we don't he wants us to take joy in service, to be so united with him that we're able to reign with him even when we're serving him.

But then we shall do it, and, of course, there shall be permanent life. This expression in verse 2: “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which gave or bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded a fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations,” has caused a little bit of a problem for some because it seems to imply that there is sin there, but I don't think this implies that there is sin there, anymore, than it does when it says that God shall wipe away all tears. This does not mean that there're going to be tears in heaven and that he is going to wipe them away, but rather, he will wipe away tears which have come

because of the things that have happened upon the earth. And so the tree of life is placed in this new Jerusalem in the new heaven, and in the new earth, in order to preserve the life that Jesus Christ has given. And so as in the beginning of the bible men were prevented from going into the garden and an angel guarded the way to the tree of life.

So in the new heaven, and the new earth, in the new city, there will be the tree of life and men who have believed in Jesus Christ will have access to it. And through this there will be preserved the life that we possess. This just might be that this is something of a sacramental thing, and all throughout eternity we shall be partaking of the tree of life to remind ourselves of the fact that we are there, because of redeeming work of the Son of God. We'll never forget that throughout all eternity just as he has been the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. So throughout all eternity we will be grateful to him who shed his blood for us.

Well, Revelation concludes and our time is up with a series of the testimonies here; there is the angels testimony who is giving this revelation to John, he emphasizes the fact that there is to be a speedy consummation; then there is the Lords testimony in verses 16 through 19. I put these, by the way, in the notes so you do not need to notice them in detail now. He emphasizes his coming and there is also an emphasis upon our coming. And finally the authors testimony at the end, “He which saith these things saith, surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.” So the Lord emphasizes his coming and John says even so come quickly Lord Jesus.

So the book of Revelation ends up on the note of the second coming of the Lord Jesus, one of the great doctrines in the bible, of course. Well, I think with this we will close, let's have a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Heavenly Father we thank Thee and praise Thee for thy wonderful word and while we do not understand, Lord, all of the things that have to do with the new

heaven, and the new earth, and the New Jerusalem, we thank, Thee, for the reality of them, and the things that they represent. The things that they will be in the future, and may, oh, Lord, as we live in the light of that future may the hope of the second coming be bright in our hearts and may we be servants now, who are pleasing to Thee by the Holy Spirit and by thy grace. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Johnson] Now, if you have a question or two, I'll be glad to [Unintelligible 57:03]

[Question from audience]

[Johnson] 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 8, I believe, but let me check just to be positive.

[Question from same audience]

[Johnson] I think that's first--

[Question from same audience]

[Johnson] Yes, that's 1 Corinthians chapter 13 and verse 12, I believe, yes, that's 13:5-8 and 13:12, right, "then I shall know even as also I am known."

[Question from audience]

[Johnson] 2 Corinthians 5:8. Any other questions?

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] she sounds like a reporter for the Washington Post [Laughter] "President Kennedy" [Laughter] doesn't she [Laughter]

[Questions from same audience]

[Johnson] Not yet, you mean. [Chatter] In the Kingdom.

[Question from the same audience]

[Johnson] Well, is a difficult thing to understand and, of course, that is one of the problems that we face with the revelation which is given us in the bible the plan of the ages. I think, however, it's not an insurmountable problem because if you just remember that the Lord Jesus fellowshiped with the disciples in his resurrection body. Remember in his post resurrection ministry, [Comment] he was in his resurrected body and so they were able to see him and to observe him, although his body had capacities and qualities that their bodies did not have; remember, he was able to go through a door, and in other words, there seemed to be another dimension for the resurrection body. And in measure this is true during the time of the Kingdom, they know the redeemed as redeemed, just as they will know the Lord and he will have a resurrected body too, remember, reigning and ruling.

So just as in this forty day period our Lord and in the resurrection body could still fellowship with his disciples so will we during the time of the kingdom age will also be able to have fellowship with those who are upon the earth. But it is my own personal opinion that when it says that the Lord rules and reigns, upon the earth that he is not always upon the earth necessarily walking the streets of the earth during the kingdom age. I just might --and we are, by the way, very closely associated with him-- it seems to

me that most likely our Lord rules and reigns and we rule and reign with him. We are associated, but there is a distinction between Israel, and the redeemed, and the Lord during this time. And that's all, that's as far as I know to go.

[Question from same audience]

[Johnson] Right, right, they are. Well, just like there are those who heard our Lord preach and yet they were unbelievers and they were told about the resurrection and they were unbelievers and if you remember, the Lord said when Abraham asked that some to go and tell his family about the Lord the Lord Jesus said they have Moses and the Prophets let them hear them, if they believe not; you know. He said in other places you do not believe Moses writings how will you believe my words and so physical sight never produced faith. When our Lord performed his mighty miracles many people did not believe. Faith comes by the word of God, accepting the word. So even though there is this personal rule of the Lord Jesus upon the earth, men shall be deceived when Satan goes out to deceive them because they still have their old nature. And this, of course, was designed, remember, to show how sinful men really are. This is the last age and man has every opportunity that he could possibly have here with the Lord Jesus ruling personally, and yet, they're willing to turn against him. So this shows us how sinful we are, and this is why the bible says Satan must be loosed for a little season to prove to man the ultimate, in the [indistinct] of sin.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] revelation [laughter] [comment] listen; you know, Saturday night, I was in Palos Verdes, California, and we had a wonderful group in a home there in which overlooked the Pacific Ocean and we had about, I suppose, there were about fifty people

in the living room of this large home, and I was talking about the bible, and lot's of people there who were not Christians. I was just giving a brief review of the bible, imagine that [Laughter] imagine that, and so I start at -- and I came through the Revelation, and when I got there I said this is the book of Revelation singular not Revelation...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]