

Revelation 06-03-17b

Let's resume our study now in Revelation chapter 21 via Isaiah chapter 25 and 26. These chapters are talking about this same period of time from Israel's perspective. Isaiah is a prophet to Israel.

He's telling them about it. Now, if you're an Old Testament Israelite and you hear Isaiah stand up and prophesy forth on these things, you could say, well, maybe that'll be helpful to me a thousand plus years in the future, but why are you telling me this now? I'm slogging around here in my sandals trying to keep from being killed by the Philistines or the Assyrians or whoever the enemy du jour is, and people within, people without, trying not to fall into idolatry, and here you are giving me this stuff about how God's going to build a fortress and drag down cities. Well, so what? And we could ask ourselves the same question because we are a thousand plus years away from these events as well.

But this, I think, is the key. It's one of the major keys of interpretation. We've referred to it time and again in the book of Revelation.

It's not that different looking at future history than it is looking at past history in terms of observation, interpretation, application. Israel becomes symbolic to us. God's dealing with the nation of Israel, for us, is a way of communicating God's policies, God's character, God's desires, God's requirements, God's grace, God's provision, God's long-suffering, God's justice.

So many different aspects of His character are revealed in His dealings with Israel in the past. God's character and God's grace and God's provision and God's compassion are also revealed in what God is going to do in the future. And why does God even bother to tell us these things? We'll know when we get there, won't we? We'll see it happen and we'll say, Oh, well, there went the beast, there went the false prophet.

Oh, look, it's the millennial kingdom. There's David. And I'm up here in the heavenly realms.

Praise God. Why are we told about it in advance? It's not like if we fail to memorize this, we'll miss the bus or something. I mean, we're going to be there.

But it is primarily for observation, interpretation, application. Now, it's a challenge. I think it's a challenge to figure out.

It's a lot easier for me to look at David and say, David was challenged, I'm challenged. David faced bad odds, I faced bad odds. There's a lot of grist for the mill there in a more or less one-to-one correspondence.

But I haven't been in a utopian environment for a thousand years. I haven't been assaulted by angelic hosts from on high and people surrounding my camp like the sand of the sea and so on.

So it becomes more of a challenge.

And I would submit to you that prophecy, like history, is a way of communicating truth to those who have an ear to hear, an eye to see, and a heart to understand. Prophecy is not the first thing you would teach in Sunday school. It's not the first thing you would cover in Bible class.

You have to have a good foundation to be able to discern and observe what it is God is saying. This is Algebra II, not fourth grade math. So as we look at this, and we look at Isaiah chapter 26, this song that is going to be sung in the land of Judah, this is, I think, the celebration song similar to what Miriam did right after the horse and his rider were cast into the sea when the Egyptians were washed away in the Reed Sea, the Red Sea, you know, Cecil B. DeMille crushing together the water, floating away the chariots and horsemen of Pharaoh.

This song will be sung in that day in the land of Judah. Why in the land of Judah? Where does Satan assemble all of the disaffected hordes when he is released from the bottomless pit? They surround the camp of the saints. Where is the camp of the saints? It's in Judah.

It's right there in the midst of Israel. That millennial division of the land we saw in Ezekiel, there they are. They sing this song, we have a strong city, as they see these vast assemblages surrounding the camp, we have a strong city.

Salvation is appointed for walls and bulwarks. They say, we have a strong city, yes, but it's our deliverance from God that is our real wall and our real bulwark. We're looking beyond the physical.

These people are counting on their numbers, they're counting on their technology, they're counting on their anti-Jerusalem, their walled city that they've built up over the thousand years. Open the gates that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in. This is a city you can get to if you're righteous.

Thou will keep him in perfect peace. That's one of our memory verses. You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts in you.

One of the reasons we can use this legitimately as a memory verse, look at the context of this. We're looking, I think, at the end of the millennium. In that day, it's certainly well beyond the Old Testament age and after this age, it's either at the beginning or the end of the millennium.

You could say some people try to tie it to Armageddon and so on. I think this is beyond that even because of the no more tears idea. But, thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.

It is just as true at the end of the millennial kingdom as it is true now as it was true in Isaiah's day 2700 years ago. God will keep a believer in perfect peace when that believer's mind is founded and grounded on him. Now, what is the logical next question? How do you found and ground your

mind on God? There is a publication very widely known in Christian circles.

It's been around for 50 years. I have some truck with them because they've done some things related to Dr. Criswell recently. I got a disc in the mail from them and it's got one of Dr. Criswell's sermons and it has somebody else.

It's a real Colson moment for me to hold my hand over that flame and see how long I can last listening to some of the sermons that are done in the modern day. This sermon began with a story of a man who visited an island and on this island there was a man named Gabriel. Gabriel got drunk and got in a canoe, stole a boat and started paddling away from the island.

But, he was so drunk he fell out of the boat and then he had to climb back into the boat. By the time he got through all of that, the current had taken him away and he spent the next seven hours drunkenly trying to paddle his way back to the island and then the whole sermon was a thought experiment on how believers can get in the canoe and paddle away or something. This is scripture.

We don't really have to appeal to an analogy. How do we stay our mind? It's not by clever words. Paul the Apostle said, when I came to you, I gave you the Word of God.

I didn't give you grandiose verbal presentation. I didn't stun you with my elocution and my verbal gymnastics. I just gave you the Gospel of Christ.

To the Jews, it's a stumbling block. It's foolishness to the Greeks because the Jews are looking for something else. They're looking for a sign.

It's not what they're looking for. The Greeks are looking for wisdom and it sounds foolish to the Greeks. Jews are looking for the rock of Zion or something and instead this becomes a stumbling block.

Well, look at this. You will keep him in perfect peace. Perfect in this sense is complete.

It's not a little bit of peace. Are there degrees of peace? To me, you're either peaceful or you're not. You either are content and coping or you're not.

It's not like, well, I'm a little peaceful. It's kind of like saying, well, I'm only a little bit pregnant or I'm only a little bit dead. My computer sort of works.

It either works or it doesn't. You're either in peace or you're not. Complete peace.

You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you. How do we stay our mind on God? It says it in the very next line. Because he trusts in you.

Trust in the Lord forever for in Yah the Lord is everlasting strength. He is going to deal with the

enemies. Look at verse 7. The way of the just is uprightness.

O most upright, you weigh the path of the just. Yes, in the way of your judgments, O Lord, we have waited for you. The desire of our soul is for your name and for the remembrance of you.

With my soul, I have desired you in the night. Yes, by my spirit within me, I will seek you early. Seek God how? By works of righteousness which we have done? No, it's by my spirit within me.

We choose to meditate or not. Psalm 1. When your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. This is the name of the game in the Millennial Kingdom, isn't it? God's judgments are in the earth and the people in the earth learn righteousness.

The problem is not everybody likes righteousness. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Look at verse 10.

Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness. This is the definition of God's purpose in the Millennial Kingdom. Grace is going to be shown to the wicked, but they will not learn righteousness.

God's judgments are in the earth, but they will not learn righteousness. In the land of uprightness, he will deal unjustly. You've got a whole kingdom, you've got a whole planet where uprightness is the policy, is the law.

It's effectively administered. And yet, in the land of uprightness, he will deal unjustly. What does this tell you about reforming society? What does this tell you about the likelihood of success if you just create a good environment? If I create a good environment, people will be good.

If I can end poverty, crime will go away. If I can make everybody happy, addictions will go away. Because people get addicted because they're unhappy and they're looking for happiness.

That's why they do drugs. That's why they get drunk. That's why they smoke.

That's why they carry on and are lascivious and so on. It's because they're unhappy. Make everybody happy, and they won't be motivated to do evil.

Make the environment good enough. This is the Star Trek fantasy. Oh, we've got world peace.

We solved world hunger. We don't use money anymore. Everybody just gets what they want, and there's no greed, and there's no avarice, and there's no power grabbing, and there's no coups.

We've got the utopian society because we've taken away all the bad stuff. What does God say? In the land of uprightness, He will deal unjustly. Perfect justice, perfect grace.

He will not behold the majesty of the Lord. This is the problem. People either appreciate and respect and seek the majesty of the Lord, or they don't.

Lord, when your hand is lifted up, they will not see. But they will see and be ashamed for envy of people. Yes, the fire of your enemies shall devour them.

Now, this sounds like God's enemies have a fire, and somehow that fire is going to devour them. I think a better translation here is, the fire for your enemies shall devour them. And this is that flash of fire that comes down at Gog Magog, and consumes and incinerates the entire assembly.

Lord, you will establish peace for us, for you have also done all our works in us. O Lord our God, masters beside you have had dominion over us, but by you only we make mention of your name. They are dead, they will not live.

They are deceased, they will not rise. Now, all of the rulers of the earth, those who have pursued rulership, principalities, powers, whether they are angelic rulers or earthly rulers, who are using the power inherent in the world, they are dead, they will not live. They are deceased, they will not rise.

And I think that this speaks, all of these powers, these people who built this city and the kingdom, and who rallied to Satan when he was released from the pit, when they are incinerated, they are not coming back. I don't think they get raised at the judgment seat. Their judgment speaks for itself.

It would be pretty silly for God to incinerate them, and then pop them right back up and say, oh by the way, you are sinful, and I don't find you written down in my books, goodbye, and then incinerate them again. That is their judgment. They are dead, they will not live.

They are deceased, they will not rise. Therefore you have punished and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish. There was some speculation during the break that maybe people could be in the lake of fire, or be obliterated in the lake of fire, and then there is a school of thought that says, well God will just wipe our memory away, so that we won't really remember that there were unbelievers or loved ones who rejected God.

What is it talking about here? Made all their memory to perish. This means any monument, any legacy, any remaining work. The memory of the Egyptians is their pyramids, their sphinxes, their accomplishments.

The memory of the Romans is the Colosseum. All of their work, in other words, perished. Anything that they did that would bring them to mind is obliterated.

You have increased the nation, oh Lord, you have increased the nation, you are glorified, you have expanded all the borders of the land. What is going to happen at the end of the Millennial Kingdom? You no longer really have a distinction based on nations, earthly nations, outside the land, and then the nation of Israel inside the land. It is greatly expanded.

And you are essentially going to have a single set of overcomers who have access to the New Jerusalem and so on. Lord, in trouble they have visited you, they poured out a prayer when your chastening was upon them. As a woman with child is in pain and cries out in her pangs when she draws near the time of her delivery, so have we been in your sight, oh Lord.

We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have, as it were, brought forth wind. So, the woman was in labor, but it turned out to be gas. I mean, that's what it says here.

I'm just giving you the literal meaning. It was an excruciating pain, but it was just not a baby on the way. It didn't produce any meaningful fruit.

We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, nor had the inhabitants of the world fallen. Not only could we not deliver ourselves, but we could not defeat our enemies. We went through all of this agony.

We went through the pangs of birth trying to save ourselves and trying to defeat our enemies. And we gave birth to wind, and none of the inhabitants of the earth fell. But God says, Your dead shall live.

Then it says, Together with my dead body, it's not my dead body, this is their dead bodies, shall arise. Your dead shall live, their dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust, for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

This is the final resurrection at the great white throne, end of the millennial kingdom. The sea gives up the dead that's in it, the grave shall give up the dead that are in them. Then it says in verse 20, Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you.

Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment until the indignation is passed. This, I think, is a reference to the great white throne judgment. This is the fiery obliteration of those unbelievers who are raised.

For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The earth will also disclose her blood and will no more cover her slain. In that day, the Lord with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan, the fleeing serpent.

Leviathan, that twisted serpent, and he will slay the reptile that is in the sea. This we've seen in Revelation, where Satan himself is cast into the lake of fire. Now, that's where I was going to stop, but during the break, Patty pointed out that if you go back to chapter 24, in verse 20 and following, it's actually right in the middle of chapter 24, it says, The earth is going to reel to and fro like a drunkard, will totter like a hut.

The transgression will be heavy upon it. It will fall and not rise again. It shall come to pass, verse 21, in that day, that the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones.

Now, I've asked the question a couple of times, when do we see the demons dealt with? We don't see it in Revelation, but it says here, The Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones, and on the earth, the kings of the earth, they will be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and will be shut up in the prison. After many days they will be punished. Then the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed, for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before his elders gloriously.

So you get a hint there that these powers of the heavens are going to be gathered together and ultimately judged. Well, all of this is taking place in the gap here between chapter 20 and chapter 21 of Revelation. A new heaven and a new earth.

The first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Now, the sea of interpretation around this has been deep. There's been a lot of disagreement, a lot of discussion about the future.

Is there one kingdom? Are there two kingdoms? I have often recommended to you as the one other book, if it's the only one you could take besides the Bible, to your desert island castaway scenario to be the New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge, a fellow named Jerome Smith greatly revised, updated, and enhanced the old Treasury of Scripture Knowledge, which has been around since about 1836. And it was in turn based on Scott's commentary on the Bible and so on. But, thousands of updates, corrections, enhancements, and additions have been made to the new Treasury of Scripture Knowledge.

And I highly recommend it with this caveat. Jerome Smith does not understand dispensations. The cross-references are superb.

But, he cannot resist putting in notes in the new Treasury of Scripture Knowledge. And some of those notes are incorrect. We have such a note here at Revelation chapter 21.

Let me read you a little bit of what Jerome Smith says. By the way, he annotates in the back of the book which notes he himself wrote and which ones are original to the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge. And this is one of the ones that he wrote and added in.

He says this, Most interpreters understand the new heaven and new earth to be post-millennial, after the millennium, as this description succeeds the account of the Last Judgment. Makes sense. John sees the great white throne and everything in the Lake of Fire.

New heaven and new earth. He says, It is necessary, however, in interpreting prophecy to take into account all that the rest of the prophets have written. If this is done, it will be seen that the new heaven and new earth are distinctly revealed to be pre-millennial.

And that this is an extension of the same kingdom. This is just an extension of the kingdom of Christ. Now, is this a view that will fly? I mean, it's published.

So, maybe it's right. He cites, in support of this, two passages in Isaiah. One of them being Isaiah

65, verses 17 through 19.

And he says that the new heaven and new earth are revealed to be pre-millennial in this passage. Because these Old Testament passages contain the prediction of that kingdom. Well, what does it say in Isaiah 65, 17 through 19? God says, Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.

And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create. For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing and her people a joy.

I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in my people. The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. Another reference to our no more tears.

Now, do you see anything in Isaiah 65, 17 through 19 that makes this have to be the millennial kingdom? Jerome Smith says, Well, this has to be the millennium. But this is the new Jerusalem. This is the time of no more weeping, which explicitly is said in Scripture to be after the thousand years are complete.

After there's no more death, there's no more weeping. So, I don't find that passage which he cites, in support of his view, compelling. The other passage he cites is Isaiah 66, 22.

God says, As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, says the Lord, so shall your descendants and your name remain. I don't find that compelling either. Those are the only two verses that he says make it clear that there's only one kingdom.

He goes on to say, Every student of prophecy knows that there are numerous instances of prophecies given out of their chronological sequence. We know this to be true. We saw that the seals, trumpets, and bowls are not sequential in the book of Revelation.

We know that Genesis 1 and 2 are not strictly chronological. You have 1 and then 2 backtracks. We've seen this backtracking many places.

So, that's a valid point. But, the fact that Scripture does that in some places doesn't mean that it's doing it here, in Revelation 21. He says, The order of events must be determined by careful comparison of all the related Scripture.

I agree. Many times in Scripture it will be noticed that a succeeding prophecy is relieved of further explanation, elaboration, or expansion, etc., etc. We skip on down, and he says, If the contrary view is insisted upon, that's our view, we're the contrary view, as usual.

If the contrary view is insisted upon, holding that the first heaven and earth are passed away in a great conflagration which destroys all natural life and all spiritual life continues in the new heaven and the earth after the millennium, then such a view contradicts the oath-bound covenants and the promises of God that Christ will reign personally on this earth forever upon the throne of

David. For the earthly kingdom of God ruled by Christ is to last forever. What's the problem with that argument? Misunderstanding la olam.

Because there's one kind of time and one kind of age on this earth, there is a different kind of time and a different kind of sequentiality, if I can coin a term. I haven't done that in a while. I haven't made up a new word lately.

Sequentiality. Sequentialness. Sequentitude.

One thing following upon another. In the eternal realms. So, when it says that the earth is to be the eternal inheritance of the saints, or the everlasting inheritance of the saints, and it's talking to Israel, that inheritance is going to last as long as this earth does, and then there is a new economy.

Well, he has a related note. This is the note on Revelation 21. But in 2 Peter 3.13, he says this.

Remember, 2 Peter 3.13 talks about the earth being rolled up like a scroll and the elements melting with fervent heat. Make sure I'm quoting that correctly here. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise.

This is 2 Peter 3.10. And the elements will melt with fervent heat. Both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and obedience, and so on.

That's what he's talking about. And he says, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Well, Jerome Smith says, Peter specifically states these predictions are according to his promise. To properly understand the predictions, we must consider the promise to which he refers. He goes back to this idea in Isaiah 65 and 66 that the new heavens and the new earth are preceded by destruction of fire.

Interpreters differ widely in their understanding of these predictions. Why are we going through all of this? It makes a huge difference if there's one kingdom coming that is going to last forever, and a thousand years is just sort of an expression of infinitely long time, or if it is going to last a thousand years, and then it's going to be completely consumed and destroyed, and a new heavens and a new earth are going to appear. The literal interpretation of Scripture is the latter view.

This, and many, many scholars agree, is the utter view. What's the problem with this? Well, it's kind of like, how do I love thee? Let me count the ways. How many problems are there with it? I

can't even count them.

For one, look at our verse, 21.1 of Revelation. There is no more sea. How are you going to have the earth with no sea? Clouds, rainfall, rivers, evaporation, salt.

There is no sea? That alone ought to tell them there is a problem with the view. What they say is, it says, Some advocate a post-millennial conflagration which totally destroys the earth. That's us.

Supposing that after the millennium, God will create a new heaven and a new earth which will exist forever in the eternal ages which follow the millennium. Right? That's what we understand scripture to say. He says, This view is radically defective in a number of points.

First, the conflagration is placed by Peter and by Isaiah prior to the millennial reign of Christ. For the wicked and the scoffers continue right down to this time of destruction. What's the problem here? There are wicked and scoffers in the millennial kingdom.

If you understand the principle of the tares amongst the wheat and the bad fish amongst the good and so on, if you understand the Gog Magog rebellion and that there are scoffers and wicked as numerous as the sand of the sea that are drawn together by Satan when he comes out of the pit, then you can't make this argument hold water. So, Second, Scripture declares that this earth will last forever so it will never be totally destroyed. And he cites Ecclesiastes 1.4 All things continue as they have from the beginning.

Well, Duh! I can't even take time to address that. We know that this earth, by definition, does not last forever and unto the ages lasts as long as there are ages. Third, he says, Christ's kingdom is established upon the earth.

The saints are to inherit the earth and this kingdom and this inheritance are to last forever and will never be destroyed. He cites Daniel 7.14 in this regard. What does it say in Daniel 7.14? Then to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people's nations and languages should serve him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed. Now, is the dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ everlasting? Is he ever not going to have dominion? In the kingdom of the Father is Jesus no longer going to have dominion? What is the light of the eternal kingdom of the Father? The Lamb is the light. If you don't have him, you don't function.

So there's no problem with everlasting dominion. His dominion will not pass away. All of that is true.

Then it says his kingdom is one which shall not be destroyed. Is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ in the millennium destroyed? No. It's retired.

It's not destroyed. His kingdom is not destroyed. What is the typical model? What happened to the kingdom of the Babylonians? It was taken over.

Right? The kingdom was not destroyed. That's why you have one solid image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. It doesn't say you are the head of gold but then the head of gold is chopped off and destroyed and then we have these... I mean it's all one entity.

The head and you're moving down in terms of height and grandeur and authority and quality but it's all one vision. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was superseded. The kingdom of the Medes and the Persians was superseded by the Greeks.

The Greeks were superseded by the Romans. The Romans are going to be superseded by the revived Roman Empire. The kingdom of Christ is not destroyed.

The Roman Empire was eventually destroyed. The Ottoman Empire was eventually destroyed. The kingdom of Christ is not destroyed.

This is the idea of destroyed by an enemy, of set afire. If you leave something behind, if you move to a new place, you're not... It doesn't mean that it isn't going to melt with fervent heat but it's not destroyed in the sense that it is not overcome. This kingdom is never overcome by an enemy.

It is never done away with by an opposing force. That's the sense we have here when it says it's not destroyed. So, this is not really a compelling argument.

His kingdom is not destroyed. Does anybody say, well, you know, the Millennial Kingdom is going to be destroyed? We don't say that. It's going to end.

It's going to be rolled up and done away with. But, in the classic sense of a kingdom's destruction, it's not destroyed in that way. So, he goes on, Jerome Smith goes on to say, to suggest that the earth will be destroyed at the end of the millennium is to contradict the oath-bound covenants and promises of God.

The end of the millennium does not mark the end of Christ's kingdom but marks the duration of the binding of Satan and the time before the resurrection of the rest of the dead. The time of the conflagration is therefore established as premillennial. The time of this fire corresponds to the harvest when the tares are burned up.

This occurs at the seventh trumpet of the millennial age. The extent of the conflagration must not be understood to be such as to make this present earth uninhabitable or to totally destroy all animate life on earth. Peter says, the elements are going to melt.

That the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Now, he says, well, we should take this with a grain of salt. It doesn't really mean that it is destroyed.

It doesn't really mean the kingdom is not destroyed but the earth upon which it sits is destroyed and so that kingdom is no more. So, he says, Peter's language if taken apart from other predictions in scripture may appear to be universal in its scope. And then he tries to tap dance around that.

So, here's the point. The vast weight of scripture in Isaiah, in Ezekiel, in Daniel, in Revelation, in Matthew 24 and so on tells us and in 2nd Peter tells us that earthly things have a duration. And, if you make a treaty with the Indians and say, you can have Oklahoma as long as the grass grows and the river flows.

Well, if the grass keeps growing and the river stops flowing then the Indians don't have the territory anymore. In fact, it ended well before that. In the same way, La'olam, unto the ages, has a frame of reference.

And that's as long as time goes on the earth this is going to be the inheritance. Well, time is going to end on the earth. The kingdom is going to end.

The whole scenario is going to end. So, this is a much more consistent way of viewing what scripture says and we don't have to belittle Peter's words. Look at verse 2 of chapter 21.

Then I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Now, you remember I said in the beginning that how and we reminded ourselves of how compressed and generalized the account of creation of this heaven and earth is in Genesis chapter 1. In the same way, we have to allow a bit for our limitations of understanding when we get to this chapter. Do cities made out of mortar and brick or even out of gold and silver and precious stones come drifting out of the sky? This is a new heaven and a new earth.

You can imagine there are new laws of physics. There are new dimensions. This is going to be stylized in symbolic type language.

When it says the city is adorned like a bride, how do you adorn a city like a bride? You put a veil on it. You stick a train on the back of it. How does a city become adorned like a bride? I would submit to you that this, I'll say this for Dan's benefit, this is a veiled reference to the bride of Christ.

The bride is adorned with her veil, so it's a veiled reference. This is, I think, a reference to the church. It comes down out of heaven.

Where has the church been for the last thousand years? In the place that Christ has prepared. So this is not a newly occupied city. This thing has already been inhabited by the church.

And this comes down out of heaven. And this tells us, when it says like a bride adorned for her

husband, 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 He will be their God.

This word tabernacle is skene, S-K-E-N-E. And skene, they get the word for tent from this. God is going to tent, dwell with.

People dwelt in tents. That was the standard dwelling in the ancient world. And God is going to pitch His tent with His people.

He's going to be in their midst. Right now, God is in the third heaven. We don't have access to it.

In these days, God is going to dwell in their midst. And God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

He who sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. He said to me, Write, for these words are true and faithful. I make all things new.

The bride comes down out of heaven, and you have this new Jerusalem. It is now going to be described in great detail. When we pick up next week, we're going to see that there are three new things.

And there are three gifts that God gives to His people coming up in this chapter. But the point is, are we ready? Are we qualified to partake of these things or not? That's the decision that we make day by day. When we look at Isaiah 25 and 26, are we those who desire God in the night hours? Are we those who are seeking and ready, anxious to see these days come? There are people who will, and there are people who won't.

Even when righteousness is revealed, they're going to hate it. Even when justice is on the earth, they're going to chafe under it. And there are only two kinds of people, those who look forward to God and those who don't.

And we decide day by day how far into one camp or the other we find ourselves. But we have to close for now. We'll pick up in chapter 21 next week.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word and the graphic way it is illustrated in these prophetic scriptures. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress them on our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.