

Rev 26-07-26b

We're in Revelation chapter 21, and we are looking at verse nine, and we've seen that every detail counts. If God says, I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, and he refers to his role as creator and making things new, we can think about that and make an association and contact with our own lives and our own circumstances. You can literally open your Bible to a page and put your finger down on a verse.

People used to try to do this for divine guidance. I don't recommend that. What I do recommend is looking at scripture from the standpoint of application.

Try to answer the question, in my life, my circumstance, my opportunities in the Lord Jesus, how does this reflect meaning and purpose for me? And if you put your finger down on verse six, the fountain, God the Father will give the fountain of the water of life, not just a cup, not just a dipper, not just a pitcher, the fountain itself. And I personally think that this is another reflection of close, intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of eternal life for us, and he is the fountain of living waters.

The overcomers inherit all things. God will be our God, and we will be his child. What an opportunity.

How do you top that? Better than being a seraph, better than being a cherub. The angels are never related to God in a familial way. He makes his ministers and his spirits, servants and flames of fire.

They are ministers, they are servants, they are messengers, they are operatives, but no angel is ever called a child of God. That's our privilege, that's our opportunity to enter into the fullness of that relationship. We see the alternative, and in the same way that the seven plagues bowl angel introduces John to the vision of Babylon, the scarlet harlot, that angel introduces him to the new Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the bride, the lamb's wife.

And we have that contrast. It is a choice. It is obedience or disobedience.

It is faithfulness or unfaithfulness. And we see that in verse eight, contrasted with verse seven. There are two destinations.

Are you inside or are you outside? Are you privileged? Are you near? Are you involved? Are you in the sphere of one another love with God himself? Or are you outside, which puts you in God's sphere of neighbor love? You're nearby. You're on the other side of the wall. More about walls upcoming.

But we saw this in verse nine, one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues. That's an advance, by the way, on 17 one of Revelation, where there were

only two sevens. He was one of the seven angels with the seven bowls.

Here, the seven bowls, which contained the seven plagues. This is the finality and the perfection of God's judgment that is in view. It is the judgment of God, which is necessary.

I think this is one of the reasons that tears will be wiped away and sorrow and grief and bereavement will not be a factor because we will fully understand the necessity of God's judgment that has removed evil, removed Satan, removed the demons, and removed unbelievers from future existence. It is necessary. And when we fully understand the necessity, it's like surgery.

We can dread surgery. We don't like the experience. We're uncomfortable during the recovery, but when it achieves its purpose and we are fully healed up, we are reconciled.

It was pain, but it was necessary pain. It was hardship, but it was necessary hardship. It was physical therapy and recovery and a process of coming back to full strength, but we recognize the necessity if we want to be restored to fullness and to function.

And we are reconciled. It wasn't pleasant, just as no discipline that comes from God on ourselves is pleasant, but it afterward yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness. This is the culmination of God bringing into permanent existence the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

So, come, I will show you the bride, the lamb's wife. He carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me. Verse 10, chapter 21.

He carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain. This sort of rings a bell, doesn't it? We've seen this throughout the scriptures. You can go back to, and we should do this.

I love the flipping of pages in scripture. If you're doing it digitally, see if you can turn on a sound of flipping pages. Genesis chapter 13.

Genesis chapter 13. This is Abram in the hills near Bethel. Remember, Genesis 12 is where Abram is introduced and begins his journey from Ur of the Chaldees.

And we get to Genesis 13, 14 through 17. The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are, "northward, southward, eastward, and westward." This four-sided perspective, as you know, is coming up in the new Jerusalem, the city built four square. So, as early as Genesis 13, 14, you have this idea.

Abram is on an elevation. He is on a hilltop near Bethel, and he can see in all four directions. "All the land which you see, "I give to you and your descendants forever.

"I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, "so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, "then your descendants also could be numbered. "Arise, walk in the land throughout

its length "and its width, for I give it to you." "Abram moved his tent and went and dwelt "by the terebinth trees of Mamre, "which are in Hebron, "and built an altar there to the Lord." And Mamre is, the Oaks of Mamre is one of those things, much like Gilgal, that occurs over and over again in scripture with great significance. But we saw this, this is one of the first occurrences where God takes an individual to an elevated perspective, and you look around, look in all four directions.

Exodus chapter 24, you know, just from the chapter number, we start getting the law at Sinai in chapter 20, the 10 commandments and so on. Exodus chapter 24, verses nine through 18. "Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, "and 70 of the elders of Israel, "and they saw the God of Israel.

"There was under his feet, as it were, "a paved work of sapphire stone, "and it was like the very heavens in its clarity." A lot of this is anticipating, and I know that you know this already, you've read chapter 21 and you've read chapter 22, the description of the new Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven. And these things should resonate when you hear terms like clarity and references to precious stones like sapphire. "On the nobles of the children of Israel, "he did not lay his hand, "so they saw God and they ate and drank." This is an exception to the rule that no man can see God and live.

They see a representative view of God. And it says, they saw the God of Israel in verse 10, and they see his environment, this paved work of sapphire stone, like the very heavens in its clarity. "But the nobles of the children of Israel, "he did not lay his hand, "they saw God and they ate and drank." They were relaxed enough, once they realized that they weren't going to die, to enjoy this meal.

This is a fellowship meal. In the feasts of Israel and in some of the sacrifices, you would partake of the sacrificial meal in the presence of God. "The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and be there.

"I will give you tablets of stone, "the law and commandments which I've written, "that you may teach them." "So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua. "Moses went up on the mountain of God. "He said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back for you.

"Indeed, Aaron and Hur are with you. "If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them." There is structure, there is authority, there is a way of dealing with problems that is based on this kind of designated authority. This is true all through history.

It is true in marriage, it is true in families, it is true in nations. "Moses went up in the mountain, "a cloud covered the mountain. "The glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai.

"The cloud covered it six days. "On the seventh day, "he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. "The sight of the glory of the Lord "was like a consuming fire on top of the mountain "in

the eyes of the children of Israel.

"So Moses went into the midst of the cloud "and went up into the mountain. "And Moses was on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights." Notice he had to wait six days before God spoke to him. The metaphorical time of human history of six days or 6,000 years and the Sabbath is when it is the day of rest, the day of God, the day of communication, the day of revelation.

A lot going on there in chapter 24. But this is another case where someone is taken up on a height and then is given revelation. God brings Moses to Mount Nebo in Deuteronomy 34, one through four.

And he sees the whole promised land that he at that time is not able to enter. 34, one through four of Deuteronomy. I'll go quickly through some of these others.

Elijah on Mount Carmel. The glory of God is revealed on a mountain, Mount Carmel. This is 1 Kings 18 and God's demonstrated power in contradistinction to the prophets of Baal and this false, empty God.

Ezekiel 8, verse three. Ezekiel says, the spirit lifted me up and he is transported in the spirit to Jerusalem and to the temple. And he sees the abominations.

What a tremendous time we had studying Ezekiel and seeing these transportations and these revelations of the glory of God and those who despise it and have no use for it in contradistinction to those who appreciate it. The most cogent and relevant comparison is what I want you to turn to. And this is Ezekiel chapter 40.

I think there is a very conscious connection between our passage and Ezekiel chapter 40. You cannot help if you're familiar at all with thinking of this passage. Then the 25th year of our captivity, beginning of the year, 10th day of the month, 14th year after the city was captured, on the very same day, the hand of the Lord was upon me and he took me there, i.e. to the city that he just mentioned.

In the visions of God, he took me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain. On it, toward the south, was something like the structure of a city. He took me there and behold, it was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of broads.

He had a line of flax and a measuring rod in his hand and he stood in the gateway. We're going to see a measuring rod before we finish the revelation here upcoming. So in visions of God, he's taken to a very high mountain and he sees the future millennial temple and its dimensions are given and so on.

You will recall in Matthew chapter four, verse eight, the devil took the Lord Jesus during the temptations to an exceedingly high mountain and shows him the kingdoms of the world. And once again, you see a contrast, Babylon to the new Jerusalem. One is a harlot, one is a bride

adorned for her husband.

You see Satan taking the Lord Jesus to a high mountain to show the kingdoms of the world. Now, a bowl angel takes John to a high mountain to see the future kingdom of God and its capital city, the new Jerusalem. And with that, if you're keeping track and want to make a complete list, you can put Revelation 17 three, which we've looked at in detail, carried away in the spirit to the wilderness to see the mystery, which is Babylon, the scarlet harlot.

And now in chapter 21, verse 10, John is carried away in the spirit as he was in chapter 17 to a great and high mountain to see the new Jerusalem. What's interesting to me is it's possible that there is a mountain in the new heavens and the new earth. And if you're in Jerusalem, you can look in a particular direction and see this mountain.

If you've seen the wallpaper that I often post for my appearance here in our group, you see John sitting on the mountain and writing on a scroll what he sees as he looks out toward the glowing new Jerusalem. That is the vision that we have here. So we see this deliberate contrast between the scarlet harlot, everything associated with Satan, with self-centeredness, self-gratification, the allure, the false promise, the seduction that ends up in abominations and disloyalty, unfaithfulness, corruption, defilement, everything awful is in contrast with the new Jerusalem, which is God's eternal dwelling with the river of life, the tree of life, no curse.

So the harlot, Babylon, corruption and judgment, it's no accident that a judgment angel is the host in the new Jerusalem. John sees the bride, holiness, and glory. He's not in the wilderness looking at Babylon.

He is on a high mountain looking at Jerusalem. Not a harlot, but a bride. Not judgment, but eternal blessing.

Not the beast, but the lamb. Not earthly wealth and merchandise, but divine glory. This is as stark a contrast as you can make.

The mountains that are in view here, I can name seven mountains if I wanted to conform to the pattern of sevens. You have Mount Sinai with the law and Moses that we just read about. You have Mount Horeb with Elijah.

You have Mount Zion, the earthly Jerusalem. You have Mount Carmel. You have the Mount of Transfiguration with the Lord Jesus.

You have the Mount of Olives associated with the second coming. And you have this great and high mountain. And in all of these cases, we need to be elevated.

We need to rise above in order to see. And this is what the word of God does in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is lifts us up and gives us a higher perspective. We are able to see more

and see the context in which things exist.

So often we need to be lifted up out of immediate circumstance, immediate pressure, immediate hardship. This takes a moment of reflection. It fascinates me, and I haven't seen anybody mention this, but it so often says, I was carried in the Spirit.

I was taken by the Spirit to this elevated perspective. And the time of transportation is suggested there. It doesn't say, I was suddenly on a great and high mountain.

It says, I was carried. It's a process of going from where you are to get to the top of the mountain. I was carried in the Spirit.

I was taken by the Spirit. Remember in one cases, I was lifted up by the hair of the head and taken. And it is a process for us.

And it can take a little bit of time to be lifted up and set down on God's mountain, with God's perspective on things. And we need to cultivate that process. Take a little time.

First thing in the morning, take just a couple of minutes and just stop and remember, who am I? Why am I here? Middle of the day, you get a lunch break, you get a short respite, and just stop and evaluate. Well, how did I do in terms of representing the Lord Jesus Christ, reflecting His glory by being outward looking, laying hold of promises by faith, not letting the pressure get to me, not letting the failures and the hardship created by people get to me. Stop and take stock.

I think this is why the Psalm says, evening and morning and at noon, I will pray and cry aloud and the Lord God in heaven will hear my voice. Psalm 55, 17, evening and morning and at noon, Daniel, with everything he had to face, prayed three times a day. We want to get the mountain perspective.

We want to see things in context with a godly view. What concerns our Father? What does the Lord Jesus decide when He is taken to a great and high mountain and shown the alternative, the kingdoms of the world, all these can be yours? The Lord Jesus says, no. There is a different vision to be had from a great and high mountain.

So this is our perspective. This is what we want to see. So what does He see from this great and high mountain? He showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, descending from God and having the glory of God.

It reminds you of Moses descending from Mount Sinai with the glory of God still shining from His face. It is descending. There is still a distance between the throne room of God in heaven and where we can dwell.

We are never going to set up shop in God's throne room. God will always have that sanctuary,

that inner sanctum for Himself. But He sends this meeting place.

It is intermediate between heaven and earth. And a fascinating detail here is it descends out of heaven. It is never said to plant itself on the earth.

This is why in many artist representations, you see a cube city floating above the new earth because it's never said to land. John sees it descending out of heaven, but it doesn't say, and it rested on the earth. So is it suspended? I personally don't think so, but it's curious that the landing is not mentioned.

But it descends, and there will always be a distance between creature and creator. It's just a fact, and it's nothing to worry about or have a problem with. But it does tell us that unlike some belief systems, we are never going to be gods.

We are never going to be equal to God and able to go everywhere God goes and live where God lives. We are creatures. We are created.

We are redeemed. And the level to which we are able to draw near to God is grace, and it is a blessing, but it does not close the gap between creature and creator. And there are some belief systems that think, well, you'll eventually be a God yourself, and you'll go create a heavens and an earth, and you'll be a savior, and you'll do all these things.

And it's some sort of weird spiritual reincarnation picture or a pyramid scheme like Amway or some other chain letter kind of a thing where you started out as a creature, and now you're gonna be a creator. No, this comes down out of heaven from the one and only creator, God. And we are never said to be creators.

We are a new creation, and we will dwell in a new creation and be very grateful for it. So, this city has the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

The word here for light is an interesting choice because it is not light in the sense of a photos. This is the word that is used for a light source, like the moon and the stars in Genesis 1, verse 14. It is a light source.

And so, her light source then is the idea. The normal Greek word for light is pho. That's where we get photon, photograph.

But the lights of heaven are phostere. Stere, like aster, has to do with a star. Something that is in the heavens.

So, phostere is the normal word used for the lights of heaven. Phostere applies to the sun, to the moon, to the stars in the Septuagint of Genesis 1, 14. So, does it mean that there is some sort of glistening crystal sun, like a light source? No.

No. The city itself is its own light source. So, the city itself is a phostere.

And her light was like a precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Remember the promise of God back in verse six? Six, I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely. The Lord Jesus said, out of our own innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

And it becomes sourced within us. This new city, the source of light in the city is the city. It glows with light from God, with glory from God.

Every object glows. It doesn't need a sun. It doesn't need a moon or stars.

It doesn't need to reflect light because everything in the city is a source of light. This is what we hope for. In our lives, we don't want to just merely be a reflection.

We want to be a source of illumination. The glory comes from God, but the Lord Jesus didn't say reflect the light of God so that others will see it. He said, let your light so shine before men that they see your good works and glorify your father.

You become the light. Paul says the same thing. You shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

You shine, you are a source of light, not just a mirror reflecting a light, a source. And this city exemplifies that, embodies that. Everything in the city glows with the glory of God, shines.

So the word there is not phos, but phostere. Her light, her light source was like a precious stone, like a Jasper stone, clear as crystal. Verse 12, also, she had a great and high wall with 12 gates, 12 angels at the gates.

And on them are the names of the 12 tribes of the children of Israel. This is fascinating because if you remember, I won't go into detail, but back in Numbers chapter two, when the 12 tribes of Israel are in the wilderness and they set up camp, in the center of the camp is the tabernacle, pillar of cloud, pillar of fire, and the Levites, they live in the center. And you recall, you can go back and review this study, that the layout of the camp is such that you have Judah on one side, you have Ephraim on another, and the banners of each, Judah is the lion, Ephraim is the ox, and the four signal tribes, the four primary tribes in the camp have an animal corresponding to the four faces of the cherubim.

And if you look at the population and imagine these groups laid out in a rectangular fashion and you look at it from the air, it makes the shape of a cross. You can go back and review that, we've covered it a few times. But the populations are roughly equal to the North and to the South.

It is shortest on the Judah side and it is longest on the opposite side. And from the air, it looks very much like a cross centered on, at the heart, the priestly tribe of Levites surrounding the tabernacle and the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. So you think, well, I wonder what the

disposition is going to be here in the New Jerusalem.

In Ezekiel chapter 48, we're also shown the city of Jerusalem with gates on each side, named after the tribes, three to a side. So what is the disposition? Well, in Numbers chapter two, the disposition of the camp of Israel in the wilderness on the East has Judah as the primary tribe with Issachar and Zebulun. That was on the East, the sunrise side.

And if you're thinking of the pattern of the cross, that would be the head of the cross. The cross has its base West and its head East. To the South, you have Reuben along with Simeon and Gad.

To the West, this is the long side, you have Ephraim and Manasseh, the two Joseph tribes and Benjamin. So these are the Rachel tribes all together on the West. And then on the North, you have the tribe of Dan along with Asher and Naphtali.

That was the disposition in Numbers chapter two. And you can't help but see the cross when you draw this out. Levites in the center.

Now in Ezekiel chapter 48, interestingly, to the East, this is the sunrise side, you have Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph, now Ephraim and Manasseh combined. Joseph, Benjamin, those are the Rachel tribes.

They have changed from the West to the East. And Dan is included. The tribe that was missing in our 144,000, 12,000 from each tribe listing a few chapters back, Dan has returned.

And so the gates in Ezekiel chapter 48, on the East, you now have Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan. Hang with me, once I get these listed out, you'll see why I'm taking the time. To the South, you have Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun in Ezekiel 48.

God gives us these things for a reason. It's not idle detail. So to the South, Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun.

If you're writing these down, just put Iss and Zeb. You can fill them in later. To the West, where we used to have Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, you now have Gad, Asher, and Naphtali.

And to the North, you have the three most head-like tribes. Remember the sides of the North and the dwelling place of God. To the North, you have Reuben, Jacob's firstborn.

You have Judah, the rulership tribe, and you have Levi, the priestly tribe on the North side. So completely different disposition. And it is a reminder that in the future kingdoms, old things are passed away and all things are become new.

We are now not anticipating the cross, anticipating redemption and the priestly function that is at its heart, and God tabernacling with men. Now, Ezekiel's arrangement is a deliberate reordering.

It's no longer about marching through the wilderness and military organization.

There is equal access from every direction. The tribes are now scrambled. Now Levi is assigned a gate, not in the center as before.

Why is this? There's a new priesthood now. It's the Melchizedekian priesthood. It's the priesthood of the Lord Jesus that is at the heart of the temple worship.

And the Levites are like any other tribe. They are given a gate. So Joseph is reconsolidated.

Ephraim and Manasseh become the tribe of Joseph and Levi is one of the 12 assigned a gate. Okay. So what's interesting is the 12 gate names, as I gave you before, Reuben, Judah, and Levi, Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali.

So what is curious is what defines this new order? Is it the birth order? No. The birth order, and you can look this up, is in Genesis given to us, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, and so on. Ezekiel doesn't have them in birth order.

So the birth order is of the old days, the old ways, the old covenant. It isn't associated with the wilderness encampment as we've just seen in detail. It doesn't conform to the land allotments in Ezekiel.

The tribal territories are also given in Ezekiel 48, and they're given north to south. And you can look this up or you can go back and review this and slow it down and write these down. But from north to south, it's Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad.

That is not the gate order either. One of the more fascinating ideas, and this comes more from Jewish tradition than from scripture, is that there are constellations associated with the tribes of Israel. This is the Masoroth idea.

It has to do with what you might call astrology, looking at the constellations. What sign were you born under? Capricorn and Gemini and so on. But the leadership tribe in the Numbers 2 encampment, Judah is the lion, lion of the tribe of Judah.

That's scripture. Reuben is a man or a head of a man. He's the first in birth order.

Ephraim is the ox and Dan is the eagle or it transfers. It starts out being a serpent. Then it's a serpent being snatched up by an eagle and then it becomes an eagle.

And interestingly, the Dan tribe is characterized by some of the worst corruption, so much so that it's not reflected in the 144,000 listing, and yet it reappears. And it is as though the influence of the serpent has been overcome by the eagle who swoops down and takes the serpent in its claws and devours it and feeds it to its young. And the serpent is supplanted by the eagle.

You go from the base eating of the dead to the base of the dust of the earth to mounting up with wings as an eagle. And this is the trajectory of the tribe of Dan in many ways. So the four living creatures that you see in Ezekiel chapter one and Revelation chapter four, these four faces are curiously represented by the primary tribe in that wilderness disposition.

And you get the idea that the presence of God in the wilderness with these banners at the Northeast, South and West is a reflection of the heavenly situation where the throne of God is surrounded by the cherubim, each of which has these four faces. And as you view the throne, you see each of the four, depending on which cherub you look at. This Zodiac idea where Judah is Leo the lion, Dan is Scorpio and so on, this is really very late.

You'll find some people, Chuck Missler and a few others have made much of these Zodiac associations, but there's very little scripture for that. There is more scripture under the animal associations for the tribes. So if you look at Jacob's blessing in Genesis 49 on his sons and Moses blessings in Deuteronomy 33, there are animals associated with the tribes.

Why are we looking at this? Scripture tells us these things. It tells us the names of the tribes on the four sides of the city. It tells us that there are three gates associated with the tribes on each side.

Why? We wanna understand it so that we can figure out its pertinence and application to us. So bear with me, we're almost finished with the background work here. But if you look at Genesis 49, Jacob's blessing on his sons, you look at Deuteronomy 33, Moses blessings on Israel by tribe, here are the animal assignments.

Judah is the lion. Benjamin is the wolf. Issachar is a donkey.

Dan is the serpent. In Deuteronomy, Moses calls him a lion's whelp. And you get the idea that eventually, the lion of the tribe of Judah is gonna whip the tribe of Dan into shape from being a serpent into being the product of the ministry that comes from Judah and will eventually enable him to be the eagle tribe instead of the snake tribe.

Naphtali is a hind, a fleet four-footed creature like a deer or an antelope. Joseph is the bull or the ox. This is where Ephraim inherits this identification, a bull or an ox.

Gad, this is a troop, Gad is a troop. This is military soldier imagery. Zebulun is associated with ships.

You notice that we're getting away from animals and into human organization, whether on land with a troop or travel in ships. So you can't group the animals by being predators or wild animals or domesticated or whatever, but the final distribution is the animals something new. We've eliminated all previous associations with these tribes and their assignments.

It is manifestly still Israel. And there is an order that is assigned by God that makes sense on its own. It doesn't have its roots in the past.

You can draw deductions. I find it particularly significant that Reuben, Judah and Levi are all on the same side and it is the North because God is pictured as dwelling in the sides of the North. They are the leadership, both in terms of origination, in terms of kingship and in terms of priesthood.

The Lord Jesus is a Jew. He is a son of Jacob in that sense. He is tribe of Judah and he is a priest.

So the ideas of sonship, Reuben, of kingship, Judah and of priesthood, Levi are all grouped together. But it is not a Levitical priesthood and it is not a Judah related kingship and it isn't a Reuben related sonship. But those concepts are represented by those tribes and you can make a similar study for the other three sides.

I don't wanna dwell on this too much, but it is new and yet it has its roots in origins. The origins of Israel are these 12 original tribes, not even Ephraim and Manasseh, the original 12 tribes. They are equal.

They are grouped in terms of some future significance that doesn't have its roots in the wilderness, doesn't have its roots in birth order, doesn't have its roots in the old constellations in the sky or any other traceable pattern. It is new and yet it is constituent of Israel. And immediately with that, we find that this city has constituency of the church, the origination of the church.

The 12 original tribes start Israel in existence. The apostles of the Lord Jesus, regardless of their actual recorded activity, they are the origination point for the church. And we're not even given their names, which three are on a side, is Judas gone and Paul amongst them? It says the 12 apostles.

I personally think that that substitution does take place. If we get to read the signage on the New Jerusalem foundation stones, I think you will see the apostle Paul. I think you won't see Judas.

He lost his place. But these walls of the city have 12 foundations. On them are the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

And what this shows us is convergence. Now the city is equally composed of Old Testament and New Testament covenant participants. The city is just as much church as it is Israel.

It is just as much Israel as it is church. This is the ultimate destination. We have unique privileges in the church age.

Israel will have unique privileges in the millennial age, but those things will be rolled up and eliminated. And in the new heavens and the new earth and the New Jerusalem, there is no

separation. This is truly where it is fulfilled that there is neither Jew nor Greek.

There is neither slave nor free, neither male nor female. They are all one as overcomers in the city. God has a purpose.

The details of our lives are created and organized and calibrated to give us opportunities to prepare for this significant, real, eternal future. What will we do with those opportunities? It is a decision we make every day, every hour, every new circumstance, every fresh challenge. We decide, are we partaking of the old that will be done away, or are we investing in the new, which will be eternal? That's the challenge, to remember who we are, why we're here, and where we're going.

Father, we thank you for these wonderful revelatory truths and the motivation that it provides for us in terms of our hope, that by your grace and in your strength, we can be partakers. We can be overcomers. We can accompany the Lord Jesus now in the millennial age and in your future kingdom.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress these truths on our hearts in a meaningful and actionable way so that we can redeem the time and make the best possible use of the opportunities that you provide to us. We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.