

Rev 06-04-21a

This is Friday, the 21st of April, 2006. We continue and, Lord willing, conclude our study tonight in the Book of Revelation. We pick up tonight at the tail end of Chapter 21 and we'll move into Chapter 22.

Let's take a moment as we begin to prepare our hearts, clear our minds, and acknowledge the role that God's Holy Spirit plays in our learning and understanding of the Word of God. Father, what a privilege it is to lay aside the concerns and the cares of this life and concentrate on the milk, the meat, and the manna that is found in your Word. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ who has bridged the gap between us as fallen and separated from you, has enabled us to not only be saved but to be entered into a life of great potential and great purpose with a bright future.

We pray that our study this evening will help prepare us to be fruitful in every good work and to be those who will be qualified to serve not only in this life but in the next. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

We looked last time at the content of Chapter 21 in particular, the description of the New Jerusalem, the obvious metaphorical and symbolic description that is sort of language of accommodation for us. It is clear that there are things that are sort of beyond comprehension. You can't make a gate in a 216 foot high wall out of one single pearl and yet that's what's described.

A city that is as high as it is wide and deep is a little bit difficult for us to comprehend. I continue to see representation after representation of the New Jerusalem as a cube. But my question is the wall that surrounds the city, if it's a cube then the city goes straight up from the wall so that those gates must be like elevators or something where you go in and then immediately go up where it makes more sense to me that it might be pyramid shaped assuming that it's in three dimensions where you would go in and then perhaps ascend or get on a spiraling upward type of highway.

But we looked at all of this. We saw the, and I glossed over a bit, verses 19 and 20 that list the gemstones that comprise the wall of the city or at least the adornment of the wall. And we talked about these primarily as possibly designators of sectors in the city or sections of the city.

I remember when I used to go to summer camp they would divide the campers up into teams and one year we would be different kinds of trees and you had the oaks and the maples and the aspens and so on and then the next year they would be different kinds of animals and then the next year they would be different kinds of whatever, birds, the wrens and the owls and so on. And this was a convenient way to address people just as in Israel, the 12 tribes were a convenient way to organize and subordinate and set up a hierarchy within the nation and have levels of accountability and levels of administration, levels of judicial function. And I believe that the 12

foundations of the apostles, the 12 gates of the 12 tribes of Israel and these 12 angels who stand at those gates and then these gemstones, these 12 kinds of gemstones are going to indicate perhaps administrative districts within the New Jerusalem and that this will be the equivalent of our metroplex here where we're all sort of in the Dallas metroplex but there's Plano and there's Richardson and there's Garland and there's North Dallas and so on.

Arlington and Grapevine and Addison and Grand Prairie and all of these are subsets of this large city. And once again remember the base of the city being some 1,400 to 1,500 miles on the side. If you superimpose this on a map of the United States, the lower right-hand corner of this city would be at the southern tip of Florida and the upper right-hand corner is going to hit somewhere up around the latitude of Maine depending on the kind of map you use.

It's going to hit right there at the eastern end of the Great Lakes. And then the upper left-hand corner is going to hit about halfway, right on the border between Wyoming and Montana, right about halfway. And then the lower left-hand corner is going to hit right in the heart of Mexico.

That's how big just the base of this city is. I mean it covers more than half the United States easily. It tells us in verse 21 of that chapter the 12 gates are 12 pearls.

Each individual gate is of one pearl. This speaks not only of value. Jesus told the parable of the pearl of great price for which a man sold everything he had so that he could buy the field in which it was hidden.

But it speaks of indestructibility. These gates are never going to be closed and yet it is still a gate. There is still access that is granted or denied evidently by the angel that stands at each of these gates.

It puts us in mind of what we saw in Isaiah and Ezekiel, referencing the throne room of God, the dwelling place of God in eternity past, where Lucifer or Satan was originally the angel of the stops and goes, of the passes and the prohibitions. When it talks about his pipes and his chimbrels, it's the stops and goes. He was the security guard.

He was the final security on who could approach the immediate presence of God and who could not. Here in the New Jerusalem with God at the center, at the pinnacle probably of this city, the throne of God and of the Lamb, you have angels at those gateways doing the very same thing that angels have ever done, guarding the holiness of God, granting or denying access. It's angels who stop the gate of Eden once man fell and was expelled.

It is angels that surround God's traveling throne that we saw in Ezekiel chapter 1 and so forth. So this gate of pearl, it speaks of not only great beauty and great value, but also great stability and this angel standing in the gate means that not just anyone is going to get in. There are going to be many people in the nations who will not be granted access.

We've already seen those who are outside. Then the very last thing it says in that verse is, the streets of the city were pure gold like transparent glass. What I find interesting about this is that it literally says, the plateia, P-L-A-T-E-I-A, which means the broad way, the wide road or street of the city is gold.

And then it says, catharon, and this means clean. Catharsis, you have an experience and it's a catharsis, it's a cleansing, purging experience. The Greeks used to think that going to plays and watching a drama unfold, a Greek tragedy or something, going to watch Oedipus or one of these would purge the soul through this artistic performance and their observation of it.

Well this says, the street of the city is gold, clean as clear glass. So this clarifies it for me a little bit in the sense that it doesn't necessarily mean the gold is transparent. It is as clean as glass that has been cleaned so much that it's totally transparent.

I'm sure you've had the experience I've had of putting a new piece of glass in a storm window or something and it's so clear you forget that it's there and you bump into it or walk into it because there's no indication, scratches and dirt allow you to see it. So the golden streets of the city are so clean, they're as clean as a brand new transparent piece of glass. And this speaks of purity.

We've been told that nothing is allowed to enter the city that defiles or creates any sort of uncleanness. Further down in verse 27, nothing that defiles, nothing that causes an abomination or a lie, only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. And they of course have washed their robes, they are clean, they are righteous.

So I just wanted to point out those things before we get into chapter 22. The last thing we were told in 21, there shall by no means enter anything that defiles or causes an abomination or a lie, only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. This is true of the New Jerusalem, this is true of the city.

It doesn't say anything about the surrounding New Earth. Out in the New Earth there are those who need healing. Outside the city are those who have loved and practiced a lie and that sort of thing.

The implication is that the precincts of the New Jerusalem are going to be equivalent to the sanctification that was in place surrounding the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place and the Tabernacle and later the Temple in Israel, where the dwelling place of God had a higher standard of holiness and sanctification than the surrounding camp of Israel. And all the Israelites were supposed to be holy. If you were defiled you had to go outside the camp.

The camp itself was to be a clean place, but there was an even higher standard within the curtains of the Tabernacle, within the walls of the Temple. And that is going to still be the case even in the eternal future where the New Earth is cleansed and purified and yet it is not as holy as the precincts of the New Jerusalem. Now, only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life

will be allowed to enter the city.

The idea being that the majority of people who live outside that city are not written in the Lamb's book of life and yet they are saved. We saw last time that the Lamb's book of life appears to be the list not of the saved, but of the overcomers in every age. The overcomers in Israel, the overcomers in the age of the church.

And this is the roster, this sort of puts me in mind of what it talks about in the Old Testament with regard to David and his army. And then within his army you have the roster of the mighty men and their names are listed. Here are the mighty men of David and each of their names is immortalized for all time and all eternity in Scripture.

And the Lamb's book of life appears to be the roster of the mighty ones, the heroes of the faith, the overcomers, who persevere, who endure until the end, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Now chapter 22. He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal.

Now we had a word that meant transparent. The streets, the golden streets of the New Jerusalem are clean like transparent glass. That was one word.

This is a different word here. He showed me the river of the water of life and it doesn't so much mean clear as bright. The word here is lampron.

You know what English word we get from that. Lampron, a lamp, is something that puts out light. This seems to be glowing water.

One of the things I love is to go out at night and turn the lights on in the swimming pool. It's dark outside and the stars are out. But you flip on those lights at each end and the water just seems to glow.

And it's a surreal sort of experience when you're not used to it. I remember the very first time I put our above ground pool in down there in Garland. And I installed the lights in each end and got it all fixed up.

And then it got dark and I turned those on. And the water itself looked like it was almost liquid light. And the refraction, whether you're above it or below it, it's just fascinating.

Of course, maybe I'm easily amused, but I found it very entertaining to look at. Well, this pure river of the water of life is glowing. It is lampron, like crystalline.

Our word crystal is just a transliteration of this word. It is a glowing, crystalline water. It's a supernatural water.

It's the water of life. It proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb. And this sort of makes

sense because in the New Jerusalem and in the New Earth and in the New Heaven, God and the Lamb are the light.

There's no need of the sun. There's no need of the moon. Because they provide the light.

And this water of life that flows from them embodies and is imbued with this energy, this light. It's a beautiful picture that gets painted in our imagination. In the middle of the street, and once again, this is the plateau.

We get the word plateau and so on from this. The plateau of your piece of real estate comes from this word. It means a wide place.

These wide places didn't have buildings and didn't have fountains and didn't have structures. Those were the streets. Those were the places you could traverse.

So in the middle of the wide place of the street and of the river, here and there, on either side, was the tree of life, yielding, this is literally making, twelve fruits by each month. Each month giving off this fruit. Giving forth this fruit.

Apodytomy, to give out. It makes it and it gives it out. It produces it and presents it, is the idea.

Now think about this. We begin the Bible with two trees. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Right at the center of human history, at the pinnacle and the crisis point of human existence, we have another tree. It's the cross. It's foreshadowed by this tree that we've seen in Esther that Haman makes.

This giant, they call it a gallows, but it's an upright with a cross piece, 75 feet high, on which righteous Mordecai is supposed to be executed, but upon whom ultimately evil Haman, the enemy of the Jews, and his ten sons are all executed. And now at the end of history and into the perpetual eternal future, we once again have this, and it's the very same word, it's the very same word, which is the word wood. It's zulon, and a U becomes a Y when you bring it over into English, and this is the root of the word xylophone.

You know what a xylophone is? You've got wooden sticks and phone is the sound. It's wood sound. A xylophone is a wood sounder.

You plink away on those things with a mallet, or I don't know what they call those little sticks with a rubber ball on the end. What do you call that? It's a xylophone stick. Anyway, you hit those wooden things and it makes a sound.

Xylophone. This is wood sound. And that's the word we have here, zulon.

Zulon zoes. It's the wood of life. It's the tree of life.

And this is the same word that is used of the cross. Cursed is everyone who hangs upon the wood. And it's the same as what you had way back in the garden.

The difference is, here we have only the tree of life. There's not also a 13th tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, is there? We just have all of these trees, and not just a single tree. On each side, lining the street, up and down the river of life, you have multiple specimens of this species of tree.

We don't have any other tree mentioned in the New Earth. It seems as though every tree that grows in the New Jerusalem is the tree of life, and it only grows in the New Jerusalem, because the leaves are taken forth from here for the healing of the nations. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

And the word here for healing is the word from which we get therapy. This is therapeia. It's therapeutic.

It serves. Therapy literally means service. It's for the service of the nations, but therapeutic comes to mean healing, building up, restoration of the nations.

And look at this in verse 3. There shall be no more curse. The first tree in the garden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, brought with it a curse. The tree upon which the Lord Jesus hung is associated with a curse.

Cursed is everyone who hangs upon a tree. And yet in the New Heaven and in the New Jerusalem, this tree has no curse. The curse has been eliminated.

There shall be no more curse. This seems a little bit of a non-sequitur when you're reading through here. There shall be no more curse, but it's associated with the idea of the tree.

Always before, when you had the trees, there was this either implicit or overt idea of a curse. And that's gone. Now the tree is only therapeutic.

It's only associated with the river of life. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. Notice, even in the eternal future, there is service.

There is work that is done. There is productive, fruitful endeavor that is accomplished. There is activity.

There is progress. There is forward movement. There is momentum.

There is accomplishment. It's not static. It isn't frozen.

It's not dead. It's a living, growing, ever new existence. They, His servants, shall see His face.

Notice, this is a privilege reserved for those who dwell within the walls, who are inside those gates of pearl. It's kind of typical of our distorted popular view of heaven and so on that we think of dying as a believer. We're going to heaven and St. Peter is standing at the pearly gates and letting us in.

And if you're inside the pearly gate, you're saved. Most of the saved, most of those who will dwell in the eternal future, will never enter the pearly gates. Entering the pearly gates is not a synonym for salvation.

It is a synonym for overcomers. To be an overcomer is to have the privilege of entering the pearly gates. And those are the ones who will see His face.

They are the ones who will have His name on their foreheads. What a privilege. And remember, this is one of the promises to the overcomers.

I think it's back in Revelation 3 and around verse 12, where Jesus says to him that overcomes, I will do this, I will do that, and I will write on him my new name. I'll write on him the name of the new Jerusalem and my new name. It's written in the forehead.

And once again, this harks back to the beginning. The first curse that was placed on a human being, specifically, was Cain. And the mark of Cain was in his forehead.

And the mark for those who sighed and cried over Jerusalem in Ezekiel's vision was in the forehead. And the mark of the beast is in the forehead. And now the mark of the overcomer is in the forehead.

It's there where it can't be missed. This is why military insignia, and you can travel the world over, but everybody that's got a military and has a uniform, where do they put the rank insignia? It's up on the cover. The insignia of your service is right there on your forehead.

You can instantly look at any officer in the U.S. military service, and if you look at his forehead when he's got his cover on, you can see if he's Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard. You can tell right away. As soon as you look at them, it's on their forehead.

You can't miss it. And then it's also on their shoulders and on their sleeve. If it's Army, they're crawling with stuff.

They've got every which way. You can't tell what they are sometimes because they've got so many little attachments. They lost the concept of simplicity.

I love the Marine Corps uniform because it's simple. At least it used to be. It's kind of gone Army here in more recent days, but I can't help that.

They shall see his face and his name shall be on their foreheads. And remember also that if

you're seeing God's face, the reverse is also true, right? And lest you have any trepidation about gazing at God and seeing his face, you have, as it were, the security and the protection of this mark. It's like the vessels that were used in the tabernacle and in the temple where they were emblazoned in Hebrew, Holy to the Lord.

And that's going to be on the forehead of those who are qualified to live in the New Jerusalem. His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there.

They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light, and they shall reign forever and ever. Now, I've been puzzling on this because I went back in Revelation chapter 20 and verse 10, looking at the devil who deceived them being cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Now, I looked at this forever and ever, and this is the same forever and ever that talks about the glory that belongs to God.

There are so many doxologies in the New Testament, you know, praise, honor and glory be unto the Lord forever and ever. Amen. Well, it's the same forever and ever.

This isn't something that terminates. This goes on as long as the glory of God goes on, as long as the rule and reign of God go on. Speaking of God and saying may He be blessed forever and ever, I mean all of these forever and ever, *ais aionos aionu*, unto the ages of ages.

Well, so if the devil, the beast and the false prophet are in the lake of fire and they're tormented, by the way, tormented is used for a lot of things. It's used of the disciples on the sea where the sea was greatly troubled. It's used of the people on earth in the 70th week of Daniel during the tribulation when the two witnesses of God are prophesying, who I think are James and John, and the people on earth are tormented.

This is *basanizo* in the passive, *basanizentes*, and it depends on if it's a participle and so on. But *basanizo* is the root, and it means to trouble, to stir up, to inflict discomfort or torment, to disturb. It's an unpleasant thing any way you slice it.

So, this is my question. If the devil and the beast and the false prophet are troubled and tormented in the lake of fire onto the ages, day and night, then day and night have to go on forever and ever, right? And yet in this passage, it tells us that there is no night, there is no lamp nor light of the sun. The Lord gives them light and they shall reign forever and ever.

So, which is it? Is there no night or is there night? In the lake of fire, there's day and there's night. So, we have to look a little more closely here at our passage in Revelation 22. What is the context? His servants who dwell in the New Jerusalem shall serve him.

We are specifically talking about people inside the walls, next to the pure river of the water of life that glows like crystal. There shall be no more curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be

in it, the New Jerusalem.

And his servants in the New Jerusalem shall serve him. They are the ones who see his face. There are people out in the far distant nations who don't see God's face.

Anybody outside those walls doesn't see the face of God. It is sort of like the privilege of the high priest who could go in once a year into the Holy of Holies and see the Ark of the Covenant, see the throne of God. Well, all of these who dwell in the city evidently are going to have this privilege.

They shall see his face. His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there.

So, the whole question turns on what is there. And I would submit to you, there is in the New Jerusalem. So, I think there is night outside the New Jerusalem.

But this is like the city that never sleeps. You know, you get that New York, New York, the city that never sleeps. Well, the New Jerusalem is the city that never sleeps.

It is perpetual day there. There is no night and there is no darkness. And there is no need of the sun and the moon in the New Jerusalem.

Because the Lamb is the light. God is the light. The river of life is the light.

There is just light everywhere. You have got these incredibly clean streets. Nothing that defiles.

Nothing that causes an abomination or a lie is ever allowed to enter there. It is the super holy precinct. And it is always day there.

But I would submit to you that there is day and night. And it gets darker at night the further you get from the city. Even in the eternal future.

And somewhere on the far distant horizon from the New Jerusalem, just where you can see the smoke of torment ascending forever and ever, is the lake of fire. Where at a minimum, the devil and the beast and the false prophet are tormented. Laolam.

Aionas. Aioniu. But in the city there shall be no night.

And they, the servants of God, need no lamp. They, the servants of God, need no light of the sun. For the Lord gives them, those servants, light.

And they, the servants, shall reign forever and ever. You can't very well have all chiefs and all Indians, can you? If everybody is ruling, who is being ruled? And they are the same all the way through. So, to quote and modify Shakespeare a little bit, Citizenship in the New Jerusalem is a condition devoutly to be wished.

This is something we are or ought to be greatly desirous of. It is couched in terms that are nothing but superlative. What can you imagine? What can you put forward that tops citizenship and life within the walls of the New Jerusalem? It is the ultimate.

There is nothing better. There is nothing more desirable. And it all depends on decisions that we make now.

It depends on the level of dedication we have now. It depends on the priorities and the goals and the values that we establish for ourselves now. When the Lord Jesus comes back, and that's as soon as our last heartbeat and our last breath, our opportunity to qualify ourselves for this privilege ends.

Because, absent from the body is face to face with the Lord. That is the time of the judgment seat of Christ. That is the time of distribution of rewards.

That is the time of distribution of discipline and loss of reward. And the only time we have left to move ourselves into or out of this great gift that God holds out to us is right now. Today, tomorrow, however many todays and tomorrows are left to us, this is it.

This is the time to choose our eternal dwelling place. The messenger who brings this vision and these truths to John says to him, these words are faithful and true. This is the third time we've seen this remark made, isn't it? We saw it earlier on, we saw it in the last chapter, and now we see it again.

These words are faithful and true. Why would God say this? Why would God send a messenger to say this? Well, the word faithful is pistoi. This ought to be the object of faith.

Pistis. Pistuo is the verb. Pistis is the noun.

These words ought to be the object of our faith. They are that which is given to us to be believed. We either believe it or we don't.

We either trust in it or we don't. We either are transformed by it or we're not. We either act upon it or we don't.

It is worthy of trust. It is pistoi. This is what you act upon.

This is what you treat as reality. And it is alefinoi. They are alefinoi.

They are truth. They are that which is to be trusted, and they are truth. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angels to show his servants the things which must shortly take place.

This, I think, is kind of ironic. We've just seen this great description of the life of the servants of God inside the walls of the New Jerusalem. Who is it that's going to catch the truth of the book of

Revelation? Who is it that's going to hear and really perceive and understand the message that has been given through this prophetic book, through the Apostle John, through these angels? Who's going to catch it? Only the servants of God.

He that has an ear. What did Jesus say at the end of every letter to the churches? He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. It's the servants of God who will have that ear to hear.

And we choose if we're a servant or not. The Lord God of the holy prophets has sent his messenger to show his doulloits. This is the same word that Paul uses of himself.

Paul, a servant or a slave of Jesus Christ at the beginning of many of his epistles. Very same word. To show his servants what must become, what must take place in suddenness.

This is n-taxe, T-A-X-E-I. And this is where we get tachometer. This shows you how rapidly your engine is turning over.

We just call it the tach for short. Well, it comes from tache here. Showing his servants the things which must take place shortly.

Very soon. Immediately. And, behold.

If you've got a new King James, this will be words in red. Behold, ercomai taxu. Very same word in a different form.

Tache taxu. Indu, behold. Ercomai taxu.

This is what Jesus says. I am coming quickly. This is the present middle indicative.

Ercomai, the O-M-A-I. That's the sign of the middle a lot of times. It's middle in form, active in meaning.

I am coming quickly. And it's a present tense. It means this is an action that is in progress.

I am coming quickly. Blessed, makarios, is the one keeping. This is from tereo.

It means to keep or to guard. It means to treat as valuable. To protect.

To honor. To place a hedge around. To station troops around a thing.

Tereo, to guard it. To consider it worthy of preservation from attack or theft. Blessed is the one who guards.

Who values. Who treasures. Who protects and defends the words of the prophecy of this book.

Now, this had to really startle John. Don't you think? What book? Blessed is he who keeps the

words of the prophecy of this book. Isn't John in a visionary state here? He's in the process of writing.

So, when the Lord Jesus says, Behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. You can imagine Jesus pointing to the thing in John's hand.

John has got this prophecy that he's in the process of writing. And Jesus is already referring to it as this prophetic book. I think John must have sort of jumped when Jesus referred to the thing that he's in the process of creating.

Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if the fruit of our lives as believers is something that the Lord Jesus can refer to and say, This is something real. This is something tangible. This is something holy.

This is something that needs to be kept and guarded. Now, John is fixing to wrap up and he says, I, John, the one hearing, the one seeing these things. And when I heard, and when I saw, I fell to worship in front of the feet of the messenger of the one showing to me these things.

He said, see that you don't. I am a sundoulos. I am a fellow servant.

Now, who are the citizens of the New Jerusalem? What are the components of that population? Overcomers from the age of Israel, the age of the patriarchs, etc. Old Testament saints. Overcomers from the church.

And who else? Unfallen angels. Not just any unfallen angels, but faithful servant unfallen angels. This angel isn't necessarily saying he's human here.

He says, I am a sundoulos. I am a servant of God just as you are. Even though he's an angel, he makes his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire.

They serve God. Now, he's not saying I am of your brethren, the prophets. He's saying I am a fellow servant of you.

I am a fellow servant of your brothers, the prophets. Your brothers, the prophets are servants. You are a servant.

I am a servant. He's not saying he's a human prophet. And I am a fellow servant with those who keep the words of this book.

All of us are going to end up in the same place. If we guard, if we are motivated, if we make the object of our faith and our practice, the principles and the truths and the hope that is offered to us in this book, we will be dwellers in that great city. Inside the walls.

Next door neighbors with angels. And Old Testament overcomers. And New Testament overcomers.

He said don't fall down in front of me. I am a fellow servant of yours. I am a fellow servant of your brothers, the prophets.

I am a fellow servant of all of those who keep the words of this book. And once again, he says this book. Because they're already referring to John's writing as a completed entity.

This Biblos. Worship God. Proskuneo.

Proskuneo literally means to... Pros means in front of and kuneo means to prostrate yourself, to kneel, to acknowledge before someone. And verse 10, he said to me, do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book. If there's any doubt that what they're talking about in terms of the book is John's book, he says don't seal it.

Now this is in stark contrast to what we see in Daniel, where God tells Daniel, seal up the prophecy until the time of the end. John is told don't seal up the words of this. Well, what is the significance? That's what we'll look at when we come back from our break.