

New Jerusalem – Dwelling with God

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Brethren, as you all know, we are here to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. The concept of dwelling with God is very much a part of these Holy Days. There are actually three different concepts involved in dwelling with God. All three of these are involved in these Holy Days. All three levels with the ultimate one being dwelling with God together in New Jerusalem, which is basically, dwelling directly together with Him in the spirit realm.

To start off today, if you would like a title for this sermon, it is...

New Jerusalem – Dwelling with God

We will see in all of God's Covenant relationships, the concept of dwelling with Him is very much fundamental to all three levels. It is not like a side-note. It is very much what they are all about—God actually dwelling with His people. That is very much part of His plan to want to dwell with His people and there are progressive levels with this. Starting with the physical level of the Old Covenant, then going to conversion and then going to the actual fulfilment of salvation. All of them have this concept of dwelling with God inherently a part of them.

Exodus 25:8 *And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. 9) According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it. (NKJV)*

Part of what the covenant was about was not just establishing a relationship between God and the nation; it was for God to literally dwell among the people. This is the purpose of what the tabernacle was about. He actually had a specific tent that was built and later there was a temple—a formal building. Part of the purpose here was not just to be able to do sacrifices and such, it was for the Presence of God to literally dwell among His people. It was the whole purpose of it. He said, *I want to dwell with you*. You can also see as mentioned, it is a part of the covenant relationship. The key to understanding the Spring Holy Days is following the details of the original story that they are all based upon.

Unleavened Bread is about the exit out of Egypt—that is, coming out of the sinful environment of Egypt to get to Mount Sinai. At Mount Sinai they enter into a covenant relationship with God. That is basically when they received the Law and they agreed to be His people. A part of this is the concept of building the tabernacle so that God would actually dwell with them. His actual presence would be among the people. Again, this is not a side-note. This is fundamental to why He brought them out of Egypt. We see that in Exodus 29:43. In the context here, between Exodus 25 and 29, you will see a lot of the details recorded about how to build the tabernacle, all the objects that would go into it and how the priest would dress. All of those details are discussed. This is in the middle of the context of the tabernacle.

Exodus 29:43 *And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the*

tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory.

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

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

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

One of the purposes of bringing them out was so that God could dwell with them. That He was able to live with them was fundamental to the covenant. This was why I was commenting to Rick about how appropriate that poem was, that was read before the sermon; look at the picture created—a house together with a porch. People are dwelling together and that is fundamental to what this whole picture is. What we will see, is basically three different levels—a kind of a progression of dwelling with God. In the Old Covenant environment, either God dwelt in a tabernacle or a temple. It was a concept of God's Presence is in that building over there. Everyone knew that in the center of the camp there was God's Presence dwelling in a physical building. He was actually in the Most Holy Place separated from the people by a veil.

Later in conversion, it becomes a more intimate relationship. When you are offered salvation, then we are the temple and God dwells within us. Ultimately, once we receive salvation in New Jerusalem, we will see why it is pictured as a city. Then we will be dwelling directly together with God in the spirit realm where we can literally see His face. Throughout the Bible you can't see God's face just like with Moses when he asked to see Him—God said, *“No you can't do that and live to tell the story”*. That is just not possible for a human. In the spirit realm, we will be able to see His face, dwelling directly together with Him.

We started off with the tabernacle. Later the tabernacle was replaced by the temple. In 1 Kings we will see that this is also directly connected to the purpose of the temple.

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

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

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

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

You can see the same concept is directly attached with the temple. You also see another important concept to this verse as well—obedience to God's commandments and to all the rules He gives us. This is a fundamental requirement for dwelling with God. That will apply to all three levels of this. If you remember Israel's history, they kept rebelling against God. They kept going into sin, always forsaking His commandments. Later, as a result of this, His Presence leaves the temple and does not come back. That was as a result of their continued rebellion against Him. The reason being, obedience to God is very much a requirement for us to dwell with Him.

We can't expect to dwell with Him if we want to do our own thing. We have to conform to His rules and to diligently obey Him if we want to dwell with Him. That is not only on a

physical level—but also on a spiritual level. When you receive the Holy Spirit and if you don't yield to that Spirit and you keep rebelling, eventually He takes it away. He stops dwelling within you. If we want to dwell directly together with Him in the spirit realm, again the same thing. We have to diligently obey—we have to endure to the end because obedience to Him is a fundamental requirement for dwelling together with God.

In Psalm 15 you will see what is required for us to dwell with God.

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

We are about to see what the requirements are for dwelling together with God.

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

In other words, to dwell together with God, one of the things as a requirement for this type of relationship, is that we are diligently obeying Him. This applies to all three levels whether it is an Old Covenant relationship where God dwells in that building over there, but He is physically blessing us for our physical obedience. Or whether it is through conversion and He is living inside us. Or if when we become a spirit being and are dwelling directly together with Him. All of these timeframes requires faithful obedience to Him.

There are basically three levels of dwelling with God.

One is an Old Covenant relationship where God dwells in that tent or building over there and is more of a physical relationship. He is in the Most Holy Place behind a veil separated from the people.

The next level of this is when we have conversion—when He actually can live within us through His Holy Spirit. We see this in John 14:22.

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

23) Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. [In other words, we will dwell with them.]

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

Again, we see this concept that if you want this to happen and you want Them to dwell with you, obedience is a requirement. One of the things we have to do to even start that relationship is we have to repent. We have to do everything we can to start turning away from a life of sin and make striving efforts to obey and change our lives. That is required before we can even be baptized and have them live within us. If we want to maintain that

relationship, we have to be continually striving to obey Him and to yield, otherwise there comes a point where He will be very patient and merciful with us but a point where, if we keep rebelling, if you go that way then they leave. The Holy Spirit departs from us, if we continue to rebel.

This is why the Bible refers to us as, *we are the temple*. We are dealing with a spiritual analogy here.

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

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

Notice here that if we defile that temple, God will destroy us. It is that same concept if we want to have God dwell with us at any level of the three stages, obedience to Him is a fundamental requirement. We can't do our own thing and want to go our own way and expect that relationship to be a part of it. That is just not how this works. Look at how He describes us as a temple. What we are dealing with is a spiritual analogy to get a concept across to us.

I'm just being a little ridiculous here by asking, "Is he saying there is a table of Showbread inside of us? Is there is an altar and other objects?" Obviously not. That is not what He is trying to say here. He is trying to get across a concept. If you are talking to an audience of people who are used to the concept of—in that building over there that is where the Presence of God lives and we call that building a temple. Now you tell people, "*You are the temple*", the concept to get across is that now God does not dwell in that building over there—now He will dwell inside you. His Holy Spirit will be within you—that is the concept we are talking about. If you are talking to an audience who is familiar with the idea of that temple/building over there—that is where He dwells and you tell them *you are the now temple*, you are expressing the concept they are going to understand. Now the reason I make a point of this is that when we get to the promise of the inheritance of salvation, it is referred to with the analogy of a city—New Jerusalem. We are going to see today why that is the case.

What is a "city"? A city is a large number of people dwelling together in close proximity with one another. That is basically the concept of what a "city" is.

To illustrate this point, I'm going to use the area where I live as an example. As you'll see, I'm going to oversimplify things to make a picture of this but I think you'll get the idea. Many of you are aware that I live in the greater Dallas, Texas area. I live in a suburb in the most southern end of the Dallas/Metroplex area. If you are familiar with the area, you know there is Dallas and a Fort Worth and years ago you might have thought of those as separate cities. But now there are so many suburbs all around connecting them, it's just an area referred to, for the most part, as the DFW Metroplex. You're just driving city after city and the only way you know that you have left one and are in the next, is that you pass a sign. Everything else is all built up and established.

I will give some general measurements and you'll see later why I'm making this illustration. I'll be up front, I'm oversimplifying the picture, but if you think of it like a square and look from the eastern suburbs of Dallas, all the way over to the edge of the western suburbs of Fort Worth, it is approximately 50 miles across. If you go north and south—this is truer on

the Dallas side than the Fort Worth side because it's more developed on the Dallas side—you do the same thing. From the southern end of the suburbs to the northern end, you have 50 miles north and south. Think of it as a square that is 50 miles north and south and 50 miles east and west. In that square you have about 7-8 million people who live there.

So, it's a major metropolitan area. You could take that same 7-8 million people and spread them over an area the size of the entire state of Texas and they would all be living rural away from everybody and by themselves. Nobody would refer to that as a city. You would think all those people live in rural country areas. The reason it's referred to as a city is you have a large number of people dwelling together in a close proximity with each other. As you go through this in detail, this is why the reward of salvation is referred to as a city. The picture being created is that all those who obtained salvation—born into the Kingdom of God—get to dwell directly together with God the Father and Jesus Christ for all eternity. It is the ultimate fulfillment of this concept of dwelling with God.

It starts with an Old Covenant relationship with God in that building or tent over there. His Presence is there in a part of the community. Then it gets closer where He dwells "in you" through His Holy Spirit. Then as a spirit being, you get to dwell directly together as a big family for all eternity. This is why I referred to Rich's point being so appropriate, because he was laying out this picture of this porch and a nice big house and all your family is together. That is exactly the concept of New Jerusalem dwelling directly together with the Father and Son. In Hebrews as throughout the Bible, the reward of salvation, the resurrection to eternal life is basically pictured multiple times, as a city.

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

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

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

Now notice the reward he is looking forward to, is pictured as a "city". We will see this numerous times throughout the Bible.

Continuing ...

11) *By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.*

12) *Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.*

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

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

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

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

for them. (NKJV)

We see repeatedly the ultimate reward of salvation of receiving the resurrection to eternal life is pictured as a city. We'll see this numerous times. When we get into Revelation 21 we can really see in detail what exactly it is talking about. The fundamental concept is the idea of us dwelling directly together with the Father and Son in the spirit realm for all eternity. In Hebrews 12:22; we'll see another reference to this.

Hebrews 12:22 *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23) to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24) to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.* (NKJV)

Again, it is referring to conversion—pursuing salvation—getting to heavenly Jerusalem, to New Jerusalem being the ultimate reward. Jesus Christ said this as well in Revelation 3. He refers to this again as the reward of those who overcome.

As a side note, as we're looking at this, if you go through Revelation 2 and 3, there are seven letters to seven different churches here. At the end of every one of them, you will see a statement of "*he who overcomes*" and a promise being made. Oftentimes people kind of myopically look at this and think this promise is just to this one particular church or this one particular era. If you read through every one of those you will see consistently that it is basically getting at the reward of eternal life and salvation and New Jerusalem. The same basic idea to every one of them. It is not like it being a letter such as the one below to Philadelphia and saying that this only applies to that church—each description is for each one of them achieving salvation and making it into the Kingdom of God.

Revelation 3:12 *He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name*
13) *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*
(NKJV)

Again, here is Jesus Christ saying, *he who overcomes*—in other words, the person who endures to the end—who makes it into the Kingdom of God, will receive the resurrection to eternal life. How is their reward pictured? It is pictured as the "city". Once again the concept here being talked about is just dwelling together as a big family with God the Father and Jesus Christ directly in the spirit realm. We see this in a lot more detail in Revelation 21.

The first thing we are going to have to address with this Chapter is clarifying the timing, because that very much muddies the subject on understanding what Revelation 21 and 22 are talking about. There has been a common misunderstanding in the Church of God. I absolutely plead guilty, because for most of my life, I have stumbled on the same things everybody else did. We take a couple of statements that are made in the first four verses of Revelation 21 and say that these statements mean there are no more physical human beings at all – this is totally just in the spirit realm—and this is after the whole plan of God
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has been fulfilled.

The problem you are going to have with that, as you go through these verses in these two chapters, there are multiple times when there are statements that are made here which make it very obvious physical human beings are still in the picture. Then you have to do some mental gymnastics to try to get all of that to work. I have absolutely been guilty of doing that myself. What you have to realize is that there are two different concepts that are taking place at the same time. You are going to talk about New Jerusalem and the Bride here, the Father, the Son and all the Firstfruits who have been born into the Kingdom of God. They are being discussed but what is the role of this group during the Millennium and during the eighth day period? Well, they are working with the rest of mankind. They are working with physical human beings—that is the job that all of us are going to have at that time. Both of these concepts are going on in these two chapters. You see a lot of descriptions of the Bride in New Jerusalem—the spiritual concept of all these spirit beings together—but you will see a number of statements that are obviously about physical human beings. It is even going to talk about the offering of salvation to physical human beings and the second death in the Lake of Fire for those who don't make it into the Kingdom of God. These statements don't make any sense whatsoever, unless we realize physical human beings are still a part of this picture.

First of all, let's just clarify the timing of this before we go any further, because that is typically the stumbling block that we have been tripped on and until the last few years, I was one of these people as well who were tripped up on the statements here. Let's just read the first four verses, then dissect this and clarify the timing.

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

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

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

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

There are two main statements here in those four verses, that we misinterpret and then we totally insist that the timing here has to be after the plan of God for mankind has been completely fulfilled. There are no physical human beings any more and then we have to do a lot of mental gymnastics to get around the statements in the rest of the chapter that directly refer to physical human beings. Here are the issues that are at work here.

Start with verse one:

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

One of the biggest things we stumble upon here is that "*there is no more sea*". We

assume this is referring to bodies of water. Also we have to keep in mind we are reading the Book of Revelation here—this is a book that is absolutely full of symbolic language. As you go through the Book of Revelation, there are statements that you can just read in a straight forward manner because they are very literal. But there is a lot of language that is very symbolic. It takes discernment to determine which is being talked about and how we should apply things. We always have to consider that there may be more than one way of looking at things. Now one of the “tip offs” here, and I will only summarize this, as I gave a sermon on this subject last year at the Feast, is what “new heaven and new earth” means.

If you read Isaiah 65 and 66 that is when you first read “*new heavens and new earth*” being referenced. Reading through those chapters, you will also see there are physical human beings who are planting vineyards, building houses, keeping the Sabbath, offering sacrifices and doing all of the things that physical human beings do. It is very obvious that those chapters are referring to a Millennial time frame. Why would spirit beings be planting vineyards, living out their lives with their children, and building houses—that just wouldn't work.

What the “new heaven and new earth” is, is the replenished earth after the destruction of the Day of the Lord. After the Day of Lord, the earth will have been destroyed. To be able to have this beautiful Millennial setting that the Bible tells us about in great detail, God has to supernaturally heal the earth and replenish it back to this beautiful environment. Not only to make the Millennial setting, but also to make the earth capable of sustaining the physical life which would be required. Seeing every other reference to *new heavens and new earth*, that's very obvious. But we get to Revelation 21 and get tripped up. We see no more sea—that means no more bodies of water. Lets consider another possibility for this.

Thinking of this as a possibility of symbolic language, think about how Satan is described, particularly in the Book of Job. He is described as Leviathan—he is like a sea monster. Not only in the Book of Job, but multiple times in the Old Testament, Satan is pictured as Leviathan and it talks about the sea being his domain and where he operates and what he rules over. Is Satan literally a monster in the sea? No—it is a symbolic picture—he is a spirit being who was originally an angel, a righteous angel, and then rebelled against God. He is a spirit being but how is he pictured? He is pictured as this monster who rules the sea. How is the Beast Power pictured in the Bible? As animals that rise up out of the sea? Are they literally animals that come up out of the sea? No—these are world-ruling empires throughout time that have been under Satan's sway, with him directing them. But how are they pictured? In both the Book of Daniel and Revelation they are animals rising up out of the sea. The sea is Satan's domain. What is one of the things that happens before the Millennium starts? The fulfillment of the Day of Atonement. The binding of Satan. He is put away for 1,000 years. The “*new heavens and the new earth*” is the earth that is replenished at the beginning of the Millennium. John's vision of seeing this new earth at the beginning of the Millennium, what would also be true at the beginning of the Millennium? Satan would be out of the picture. No more “sea”. Satan's domain has been removed. That is what we are talking about here. This will become even clearer in Verse 3. Just read through this again.

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

As you will see here, if you look in Revelation 14, you see the resurrected Firstfruits before the throne of God the Father. This is happening during the Day of the Lord. Obviously, what would have to happen before the beginning of the Millennium, Christ, the Father and the Firstfruits have to come down to earth. That is what this is talking about—these descending down to earth. Notice in verse 3 where we have an obvious reference now to physical human beings.

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

There are three different degrees of God dwelling with His people. The first one is God dwelling in a physical building separated from the people by a veil. In the Millennium you have a physical temple—God's presence is dwelling there. This is the first level that we are going to see here.

The reason we know that these are physical men—the definition of the Greek word as *men*—it says the tabernacle of God is with *men*. That Greek word is transliterated as *anthropos* Strong's Number 444. The definition is from *The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament* by Spiros Zodhiates.

"Man, a generic name in distinction from gods and the animals in the New Testament used to make the distinction between sinful man whose conduct, way or nature is opposed to God. A man or woman, an individual of the human race, a person, spoken in reference to his human nature, a man ie. a human being, a mortal. Here is included the idea of human infirmity and imperfection. Especially when spoken in contrast to God and divine beings."

In other words, this word refers to physical man as opposed to spirit beings.

When I was first presented with this concept, I was pretty resistant. I purposely looked up this word and went through all of John's writings and looked at every single time he used it, as I was trying to find a reference where he would use it figuratively. Where he was referring to former, physical beings who were now in the Kingdom of God—he has that opportunity in Revelation chapters 7 and 14 and he does not do it. There is not a reference in any of John's writings where he ever uses this word when he is referring to spirit beings. He is referring to physical human beings here. This tells us the timing that we are talking about here. This is a Millennial timeframe—we are not talking about when there are no physical human beings around.

Verse 4 is another one of the ones that always trips up the issue of timing here.

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

This verse is often interpreted—I've been guilty of this myself—where you say "*no more*

death". If there is no more death then it means that you can't have any physical human beings—that would be a problem. If we read the next three verses after this, what you are going to see is him offering salvation to mankind and directly saying to all those who rebel and don't obey God, what they are going to face—The second death and the Lake of Fire. Again, if *no more death* means absolutely no death in any way whatsoever, we have a direct contradiction here. What are you going to do with that? I think one of the keys here is, to notice the pattern of themes that are talked about here. What are we seeing here in the first four verses? What do we have? A new heaven and a new earth being mentioned which again is the restored earth at the beginning Millennium from the destruction of the Day of the Lord – sorrow and crying being removed—then we see this concept of no death. Let's notice a direct parallel in Isaiah 65 of the exact same theme. It clarifies how we can interpret better this concept of no death to actually match the rest of the chapter without having a direct contradiction. In Isaiah 65 I want you to see the exact same pattern here, but it gives us an explanation for "*no death*" that is going to work better with the overall context and not create direct, blatant contradictions.

Isaiah 65:17 *For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; [We start with new heaven and new earth, like we start with in Revelation 21] And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.*

18) But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy.

19) 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. (NKJV)

Notice again we have *new heavens and a new earth*, crying and weeping going away—so we have the same pattern now that we have in Revelation 21. Now notice verse 20. First I am going to read this to you out of the New King James Translation and then we will look at the New Living Translation making it a little clearer.

20) No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. (NKJV)

Now again, we are referring to very long life spans here. It is worded a little more clearly in the New Living Translation.

20) No longer will babies die when only a few days old. No longer will adults die before they have lived a full life. No longer will people be considered old at one hundred. Only the cursed will die that young. (NLT)

In other words, people are going to have very long life spans and the exception with that will be those that are accursed. How I look at this is that there are always going to be people, even in a perfect utopia, who will say, "*No I'm just going to do my own thing and I'm just not going to follow somebody else's rules*". There is going to be a point here—in an environment of not having to overcome the temptation of Satan—if you can't overcome in an environment like that, and obey, there is a point where God says: "I have had enough of this and we are just going to have this person die". They have already proven that they are just not going to obey. They can't even obey in a perfect utopia—they are just rebellious. I think that is what He is referring to when He says, *only the cursed will die that* New Jerusalem – Dwelling with God

young.

But realize that what is being talked about here, is the concept of death as we understand it today. Think of it how we understood it through all the periods of history. What is the norm? People live a few decades, maybe even one hundred years or more and then they die—that is the normal course of life. If you are in an environment where death is not the norm any more—death is the exception—because people are living enormously long lives, how might you describe that? No more death? At least not as we have understood it. Again you see this exact same pattern—if we turn around and say that the concept of death simply no longer exists in any form in Revelation 21, we have a direct, blatant contradiction with the next several verses. With that in mind, look at Revelation 21 again and I'll show you exactly what we're talking about; pick up in verse 5.

Revelation 21:5 *Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."*

6) *And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. (NKJV)*

Now we are going to come back to that statement, as we will see we can interpret that directly from John 7, it is very clear he is talking about the Holy Spirit.

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

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

If the concept of death didn't exist in any form anymore, then we have a blatant, direct contradiction. If we just said that if there is no more death in any way, shape or form, and then turn around and say, "oh, but we are going to have people facing the second death?" What? How would you reconcile those two with each other? It makes a lot more sense to say that the concept of *no more death* is similar to what Isaiah 65 is saying. Very long life spans and death is the exception rather than the rule during this because you have people living centuries long and it is a totally different concept. Even to say, *he who overcomes*, you have to have physical human beings now—if we are in the spirit realm and it is just God beings that exist and all those who rebelled have already been destroyed, who still needs to overcome? It doesn't logically follow. Obviously we are talking a Millennial timeframe and what you are seeing here is the progression. Remember, there are three different stages of dwelling with God. You start off with God in a physical building and the Most Holy Place separated from the people by a veil. You have an Old Covenant relationship there but then that progresses to God offering salvation, now He can live inside you through the Holy Spirit. We can interpret directly what is referred to here, in the latter part of Verse 6.

6 continued) *... I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. (NKJV)*

We can very easily interpret this from the Bible; turn to John 7 and we will see an announcement that Christ made on the eighth day and the language which He uses makes it very clear exactly what we are talking about by “living waters”

John 7:37 *On the last day, that great day of the feast, [This is where we get our term "The Last Great Day". The Old Testament refers to it as the eighth day, but we get the term "The Last Great Day" directly from this verse] Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38) He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."* [Again, here we have that reference to rivers of living water – now we don't have to guess in any way as to what he is talking about – all we have to do is read Verse 39]
39) But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (NKJV)

So it tells us He is talking to an audience who has not had their opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit yet and He is making an announcement to them saying, “Now you can come to me and receive the Holy Spirit”. When we read there in Revelation 21, He is going to offer *the rivers of living water*—this is what He is talking about. He is saying, “I am going to offer salvation to these people” That is why the very statements that come right after that is “*He who overcomes will receive salvation—he who rebels and doesn't conform, is going to end in the second death, in the Lake of Fire.*” What we are seeing here again, is a picture of New Jerusalem referring to the spirit realm. The Bride dwelling with the Father and the Son. What are they doing during this timeframe? They are working with the rest of mankind to offer them the chance to also receive the ultimate form of dwelling with God as well. To join the city to obtain salvation. We will continue with the story in Revelation 21.

Revelation 21:9 *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."* (NKJV)

Keep that in mind as we go through the rest of this—he is showing him the Bride, the Lamb's wife—but notice what he also shows him.

10) And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11) having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. (NKJV)

He says he is going to show him the Bride, the Lamb's wife, but what is he showing him? He shows him the city. We are talking about a spiritual analogy here of the Bride basically dwelling directly in the spiritual realm with God the Father and Jesus Christ. As we go through the rest of this, in many ways we can interpret a lot of the symbolism that is here from other scriptures and get a clear picture of what we are talking about.

Let me put a disclaimer into all of this. A very good friend of mine, he is deceased now and has been dead for several years, but was one of my mentors and I knew him very well.

Years ago, we were talking about these couple of chapters—about the spirit realm. He gave an important disclaimer I think is good to mention in this concept as physical human beings. To understand the analogy he used, realize he was in his sixties, a grandfather and his two youngest grandchildren at the time were three-year-olds. He had said that as physical human beings trying to conceptualize and understand the spirit realm, and explain it in our physical minds, he said that we would be like a couple of three year olds trying to explain what our dad does for a living. If you have ever listened to a little child trying to explain what daddy does for a living, the answers they give are kind of humorous because of how they try to conceptualize it. I think sometimes that is important to realize. In the same way my good friend mentioned this, he joked about himself and said, “I’m a sixty-six-year-old man and my BFFs (Best Forever Friends) are a couple of three-year-olds,” referring to his granddaughters. Going through this we can obviously get a good idea of what is being talked about. We can see from scripture what most of the symbols here are about.

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

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

He is creating a picture of a city here and mentioning a wall around it and gates. Think logically about this and ask why do you put a wall around a city? To control access as to who gets in. That was the whole idea, going back in our history of the U.S., trying to build a wall at the southern border, what was the purpose? To control who could come across and who couldn't. When putting gates into a wall, again to allow access and control who can come in and who doesn't. How is this pictured? We are getting a picture of Israel—the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Describing the Bride, the Lamb's wife and he is showing the city. What he is telling us, is that this is spiritual Israel we are talking about here. In Romans 2 we are going to see here that the Bible very directly tells us that the New Covenant Church is referred to as spiritual Israel.

Romans 2:25 *For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.*

26) Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?

27) And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?

28) For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;

29) but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God. (NKJV)

We're talking about not being a physical Jew or physical Israelite, but a spiritual Jew or a spiritual Israelite, that is, being converted. Because again, the New Covenant Church is referred to as spiritual Israel. Turn to Galatians 6, just to cover this a little more. We'll start in verse 14.

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

15) *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.*
16) *And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. (NKJV)*

Notice again, what is the New Testament Church when we become converted? We become a part of the *Israel of God*. When you see this picture he is describing the Bride—the Lamb's wife. He gives a picture of the city and all the gates—it is all about Israel. We are talking about spiritual Israel. So now back to Revelation 21; we're going to see the same concept again.

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

Again the New Testament Church is described the same way with the foundations of the apostles. Notice Ephesians 2:19.

Ephesians 2:19 *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,*
20) *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,*
21) *in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,*
22) *in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (NKJV)*

Again, you see the same concept. Basically what is being described in Revelation 21 is a spiritual picture of the Bride, the Lamb's wife, and seeing it in the form of a city—why? Because what is a city? People dwelling together in close proximity with each other. Now go back to Revelation 21:15.

Revelation 21:15 *And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall.*
16) *The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. (NKJV)*

Now pay particular close attention to that. What he is saying is, it is a “big giant cube.”

When I started this sermon I used an illustration of the Dallas, Fort Worth area to illustrate the concept of a city. I was oversimplifying the measurements because it was not the perfect square that I laid out. I said it was 50 miles east/west and 50 miles north/south. I never said that it was 50 miles high as well. No one ever describes a city like that. No one ever says it is the same number of miles "up" because cities aren't like that. It is a whole different concept we are getting at here. What is this as a picture? A picture of the Bride, who has already received salvation—they are now spirit beings and they are dwelling together with God the Father and Jesus Christ. Notice what else in the Bible is referred to

as a "cube" that is directly tied to this concept. 1 Kings 6.

1 Kings 6:16 *Then he built the twenty-cubit room at the rear of the temple, [Basically referring to the measurements of the Temple here is what we are talking about] from floor to ceiling, with cedar boards; he built it inside as the inner sanctuary, as the Most Holy Place. (NKJV)*

Remember the Most Holy Place was the section of the Temple where the Presence of God the Father dwelt—the veil was torn when Christ died—they could only go in on the Day of Atonement beyond that veil because that is where the Presence of God dwelt. Lets notice how it was measured.

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

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

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

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

The Most Holy Place, the place where the Presence of God the Father dwelt, was shaped as a cube. Length, width and height were the same. How do we describe New Jerusalem where the Bride dwells with God the Father and Jesus Christ? A big, giant cube—it's the same concept. Saying we are going to be dwelling with God the Father directly in His dwelling place as a family there all together. This is why it is pictured as a city because when talking to human beings, they understand the concept of a city—a large group of people dwelling together in close proximity with each other. If not in close proximity, we don't call it a city. Being all together is the picture that is we are painting here. Back to Revelation 21 again and pick up in verse 17.

Revelation 21:17 *Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.*

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

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

To spare all of you, I'm not going to read the names of the stones because I always butcher the pronunciation. It is a variety of types of stones we would refer to as "treasure". That is a concept we are going to come back to.

Continuing in verse 21.

21) The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. (NKJV)

Notice all of the ornaments it is talking about here—all the details of these precious jewels. It is gold, pearls – that which we would refer to today as “treasure”. A treasure chest with all this in it. The reason that is mentioned is because there are three different levels of dwelling with God. It starts with the Old Covenant relationship where God is in that building over there with ancient Israel—then basically when He offers salvation/conversion He then dwells inside us then it goes to New Jerusalem. We can see from the direct references in the Bible, He refers to those first two groups directly as the individuals He is going to dwell with, to be His special treasure.

In Exodus 19 when they first get to Mt. Sinai and God is introducing the concept of making a covenant with them—they arrive in the third month of the year. Mt. Sinai is where the concept of dwelling with Him and making a covenant and all of that is introduced. Notice particularly in verse 5 and 6.

Exodus 19:5 *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure [He is referring to them as his special treasure] to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6) And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.” (NKJV)*

As you know He doesn't directly mention the concept of dwelling with them here but later in this same account, He talks about the Tabernacle and He is going to dwell with them. This is all a part of that covenant relationship. How does He refer to the people that He is going to make this covenant with and dwell with? They are His “*special treasure*”. If they will continue to obey Him. That is how He sees them.

This verse is referred to in 1 Peter 2, this is in the context of those offered salvation. Now we are at the second level of dwelling with God and we will see this same verse quoted here again.

1 Peter 2:9 *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, [They are his special treasure] that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10) who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. (NKJV)*

Obviously he is talking about the New Covenant church here and these who have had their sins forgiven—they have received the Holy Spirit—if they continue to endure to the end, they will make it into the Kingdom. Notice again, these first two groups, these first two stages of dwelling with God—those people are referred to as a “*special treasure*”. How are they then pictured when they are in the spirit realm, directly dwelling with God? Referred to as jewels and gold—a special treasure is how they are pictured. Back to Revelation 21 and pick up in verse 22.

Revelation 21:22 *But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23) The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.*

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

Now verse 24, I am reading from the New King James Translation—if you have this translation, you will see there is a little number "1" right after the word "nations". If you look at the margin, it basically says that most translations don't have the words in there "*of those who are saved*". Let me read this to you from the New Revised Standard Version—it renders verse 24 as:

24) The nations will walk by its light and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. (NRSV)

In other words, as I mentioned, New Jerusalem is a picture of the Bride, the Lamb's wife—all those who have been born into the Kingdom of God dwelling together with the Father and the Son directly. But what is their purpose during this time? It is to work with the rest of mankind. They are providing light to the nations and showing them the way. They are instructing them on how to pursue salvation themselves and they also, then, have the opportunity, if they endure to the end, to join this picture. They can become a part of the city and also dwell with the Father and the Son themselves if they successfully endure to the end.

Continuing...

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

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

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

Again we have that concept of, you have *to endure to the end* to be a part of this. To faithfully obey and be in the Book of Life. If you are going to rebel and be a sinner, you are going to be rejected. You will not be able to be a part of it. By the virtue of the fact that this discussion is even happening here, we have to have physical human beings.

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

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

Again, the Tree of Life is the opportunity for salvation. The Book of Life is the record of salvation—the Tree of Life is the opportunity. By virtue of it being mentioned, we have to have physical human beings. Also, notice the last sentence—*and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations*.

If you only have a picture of God beings who have already made it into the Kingdom of God, and there is no physical any more—everything else has been destroyed—why would

God beings need healing? What would they need healing of? They are already perfected. By virtue of the fact that we are talking about healing the nations, you still have physical human beings around. Again, what is the picture of what is happening here? A picture of the Bride, the Lamb's wife, all of the Firstfruits who have made it into salvation. They are dwelling together with God the Father and Jesus Christ, but what are they doing? They are working with the rest of mankind. They are providing light to them, offering them salvation, giving them the opportunity to join the city as well, if they successfully *endure to the end*.

To understand these two chapters, you have to realize that both of these concepts are happening together. One of the mistakes, and I did it myself most of my life, is you assume this is totally spiritual—nothing physical any more. You try to make everything spiritual and then you have to do some mental gymnastics to get through this. If you try to go the other extreme and make everything physical, you are going to have problems either way you go. If you realize that both concepts are existing together—and realize you have a lot of symbolic language here and let the Bible itself interpret that language—then you can sort out the picture. This symbolic language can get complicated, but it is like a lot of the rest of the Book of Revelation—sometimes the symbolic terminology gets complicated, but once you sort it out, oftentimes the picture that you are seeing, is pretty simple and straight forward and easy to understand.

It is shaped like a big cube. The Most Holy Place was a big cube. Dwelling directly together where God the Father dwells and He dwells in the Most Holy Place. It is basically a picture of a big family, kind of like Rick's point—a big family in a house with a big porch and all together as a big happy family. That's the basic idea. What is this family doing? They are working with physical human beings to offer them the chance of salvation. You have both of these concepts going on and when you put them together, you can properly understand these chapters.

continuing ...

3) And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.

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

5) There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. (NKJV)

Obviously, it is the spirit beings who would *reign forever and ever*, but notice it says *they see the Father's face*, and that is a big key there. One of the things that oftentimes trips people up when reading the Old Testament, is when it refers to Moses saying that he talked to God face to face. You have to understand that is a Hebrew expression for direct communication. When we say face to face, we typically mean we are looking in the whites of each others eyes. But that is not what the Hebrew expression means. If you follow Moses's story, what does he do at Mt. Sinai? He is telling God that he actually wants to see Him. What is God's response? He tells him he cannot do that and live to tell the story. Obviously, by the virtue of the fact that it is mentioned and it saying that he talked to him *face to face*, they are not looking at the whites of each others eyes. It is an expression of a direct communication they are having. It is a Hebrew idiom. There is a paper on our website called [Seeing and Hearing God](#) that explains the nuances there.

In this particular verse it is referring to, they actually "see" the Father's face because again, we are talking about spirit beings who have made it into the Kingdom of God. They are dwelling directly with the Father and the Son—like a city—a large number of people in close proximity with each other. They are essentially in a big giant Most Holy Place because they are dwelling directly with God the Father and His Son. What are they doing? They are working with the rest of mankind to provide them light to offer them salvation—to give them the opportunity to enter the city.

So you see Brethren, as we keep the rest of the Feast of Tabernacles in the eighth day here, we can look forward to the time when the concept of dwelling with God, is going to play out in all three forms. We are going to start off in a physical relationship. God is in a physical temple working with people to mentor them along. Then He offers them salvation. They have a chance for the Father to live within them. If they overcome, they get to be a part of the city. If we have successfully overcome, we will be a part of this picture of New Jerusalem working with the rest of mankind to offer them the opportunity to dwell with God the Father and Jesus Christ for all eternity.