

The Contender

"CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS" JUDE 3

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Exploring Eden, Part 2



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WE ENDED PART 1 OF THIS MESSAGE, AFTER DEALING WITH THOSE VERSES IN THE 12TH CHAPTER OF HEBREWS, WHERE PAUL WROTE OF THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD; THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM. THEREFORE WE WANT TO PICK UP THE THOUGHT RIGHT WHERE

WE LEFT OFF, AND EXPLORE THAT BEAUTIFUL CITY. EVERY TIME WE DO THIS, SOMEONE LOSES THEIR IVORY PALACE AND THEIR STREETS OF GOLD; BUT WHAT IS TRUTH FOR: BUT TO GET RID OF ALL THOSE OLD HAND-ME-DOWN TRADITIONS THAT ARE COMPLETELY CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD. WE WILL LOOK AT THE FOUNDATIONS, THE WALLS, THE STREET, AND ALL THE REST OF IT, AND TRUST THE LORD TO GIVE A REVELATION TO SOME WHO HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF THIS CITY AS A LITERAL CITY. WE WANT YOU TO SEE WHO MAKES UP THAT CITY, AND HOW THEY GOT THERE, AND WHAT IT ALL REPRESENTS IN THE TOTAL PLAN OF GOD.

FROM A GARDEN - TO A CITY

I take no particular pleasure in tearing up your golden streets, just for the sake of wrecking something; but for too long people have written songs and painted pictures portraying this city of Revelation, chapters 21 and 22, as such a literal thing; it is time for true saints of God to see it for what it really is. Dottie Rambo wrote a song, Build My Mansion Next Door to Jesus; and someone else wrote one, Build Me a Mansion in Gloryland, and people think like that, when actually we are the mansions, and God dwells in us. Adam did not dwell in a city, and my honest opinion is; If man had never sinned, there never would have been a city. But through time, cities have become a very real part of man's life on earth. Therefore what God portrayed as a garden, in the beginning, is portrayed as a city, in the last chapters of Revelation. I do not know what Cain had in mind, when he built the first city; but as time moved on, cities became recognized as places where people grouped together for protection against outside forces, and eventually the Israelites, which had been nomads, began to possess houses, villages, towns and cities, as they came into the land of Canaan, and then God chose one particular spot in that land, where He would put His name. That is the spot we know as Mt. Zion today. But

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prior to King David's time, it was a Jebusite city. I might say also, This is the mountain where Abraham brought Isaac: to offer him up as a sacrifice to God many hundreds of years before that, so this mountain and the city that stands atop it, is not just there by chance; it was all in the plan and purpose of God. David conquered the city when the Jebusites occupied it, and set up his palace there. Then God revealed to him that there was to be a temple built, a place where He would put His name, but He would not let David build it, because he was a man of war; therefore it fell Solomon's lot to build the house of God there, after he succeeded his father as king. He built the first temple on that spot of ground, and God filled it with His Shekinah glory, and it became sacred to the Jewish people from that day on. In the 6th century before Christ, when the Israelites began to forsake God's laws and ordinances, He brought the Babylonian army against them. They came in three separate periods, each time taking slaves and destroying parts of the city. But the third time, they completely destroyed the city, and the temple; leaving everything in total ruins, and took all the healthy people captive. That is when the seventy years of their captivity actually started, and it was after that seventy years, that Zechariah and Haggai were allowed to

take workers and reconstruct the temple. When you read the description of its dimensions though; you find that it was a much smaller building than the one Solomon built; yet those who built it, were hoping that it would be the temple their Messiah would come to. Well it was the one that was standing on that sacred spot of ground, at the first advent of Christ, but we all know now, that the one their Messiah (and our Lord and Savior) will sit in, has not even been built yet.

RENEWED INTEREST IN TEMPLE MOUNT

About 40 some years before the first advent of Christ; there were Jews that began to put pressure. They felt that they were living just before the coming of their Messiah, so old King Herod seized that opportunity to play politics with them. He set about through a period of high taxation, and in an effort to appease those Jews, to add to, and beautify the temple. He had it turned into a monstrosity of a building, and decked it with all sorts of finery. That is what the disciples of Jesus was looking at that day, when they showed it to Jesus. They called His attention to the beauty of it; but, you know what He said to them: Tear it down, and in three days, I will raise it up again. That should have let those disciples know that that was not the house He was going to sit in. It was beautiful, of course, but it was not the one the Messiah would rule and reign from.

Now brothers and sisters: You may wonder why I am saying all of this, but I was reading in the Jerusalem Post, that a group from the Israeli Knesset, had wanted to go over on the temple mount and explore the possibility of finding a place where the orthodox Jews could go, to read and pray. They reverence the ground as a sacred place, because they know it is the place where their original temple stood. Naturally the Moslems did not go for their ideas, for they thought they were just coming to make trouble. It really did turn out like that, when there was a clash between some of those that went along to guard, but it was not planned like that. Nevertheless, now that the issue has gained attention from both sides, some of the Israelis are now saying, The whole temple mount belongs to Israel. That is the truth, scripturally, but it will take some kind of conflict for it to become a reality, because the Moslems now have possession of it. I find all of this very interesting though; for now they are even considering the possibility of building a large synagogue on the eastern end of the temple mount area. I feel that if those Jews are beginning to get that kind of feeling about that temple mount, we could be getting close to the hour of the coming of Jesus. Because the scriptures verify the fact that when He does come back to earth again, a brand new temple will be sitting there waiting for Him. Jesus will not have to stand around waiting for it to be built. Remember: The Antichrist will

desecrate it, before Jesus ever gets to it. Now that does not mean that he will mar the construction of the building; it is just the fact that he sits in it for three and a half years, projecting his ungodly deeds, and at the same time claiming to be God. When Jesus comes; it will be re-dedicated before He enters it. But my point is, We Gentiles need to take note of the fact that Jews are beginning to feel like that about the importance of them being allowed to worship and pray, and read their scrolls, on the temple mount. That does not mean the synagogue is going to be the temple. It just lets us know that in their natural way of thinking, they are wanting to get on that ground. They are going to ask Jews all over the world to contribute to a fund dedicated to that end. But the whole thing also lets us know, that those who do believe in the coming of the Messiah, do not really know their scriptures, for it was stated that they hoped their Messiah would come before it was completed. I just have to say this: If in the eyes of God, it is getting close to the time, they will not have to put pressure on anyone to help build a synagogue there; God will let them have their temple ground, without that Moslem mosque standing on it. He will see that it is destroyed in a war of some kind. World sentiment would never allow that thing to be torn down, so I am persuaded that this is how it will be accomplished. When it happens like that; then the Jews will have possession of their temple ground, and they will not have to let

any Moslems claim any rights to it, ever again. Is that not how they got possession of the western wall, and other parts of the city? God uses this sort of thing to fulfill His word, when the time is right.

A LOOK AT PARADISE

Let us go back now, to the 2nd chapter of Revelation, where we read that one verse already. This is the portion that was written to the church at Ephesus, in that first age of Christianity. The church itself was in Asia Minor, in an area which today is known as Turkey. But the thing we are most interested in here, is the word paradise, mentioned in this way, for the first time in the New Testament. This paradise is what made the garden of Eden stand out, in the story of man's beginning. God chose to place the man He created, in this atmosphere, for he was created without sin, and completely innocent. Therefore it was no strange thing that he should dwell in eternal life, for what ever purpose God had created him. But sin disrupted God's plan right at the onset, causing man to be separated from the spirit world that he had been privileged to have access to. After that separation, no mortal man has ever been allowed to press himself back into that realm again. But God's plan of

redemption, ordained from before the foundation of the world, is so designed to restore us back to what that paradise relationship was. Redemption gives back to repentant mankind, the eternal life that Adam was removed from. As I have already said, Eating of the tree of life is not what gave Adam and Eve eternal life; it was the fact that they lived in the garden, (paradise) which was the very anointing presence of God, their Creator. The very fact that they lived in that environment, gave them eternal life. Of course some people will say, If a person had eternal life, how can they die? Well there are two things to consider; God is that eternal life that we speak of; and when He comes into our lives by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that is our seal. That is our assurance that we have eternal life according to Romans 8, and Ephesians 4:30. Adam lived in that eternal presence on the condition that he obeyed the commandment of his Creator; therefore what happened to him was a result of his own choice. But we have not received this seal of eternal life on any such conditional basis; for we had to meet the conditions before we received it. That is why we can rightly speak of eternal security; because God only gives that measure of His Spirit to those whom He has foreknown, so it is not a hit and miss situation. Therefore as we come back to Adam, we must realize, he did not have that eternal life given to him as a seal: he had to be tested, and when he was tested, he failed. That is why I

said, Eating of the tree of life, is not what gave them eternal life: it was just the fact that they were dwelling in the presence of Him who is eternal life, until they were driven from that presence because of sin. Because they had chosen to do so, they were left to eat of the tree of knowledge, and produce offspring outside of paradise. Therefore all of their offspring were born into the world, without, or outside of that eternal life realm, and it has remained so ever since. But in Revelation 2:7, we find those words written to the church at Ephesus, over 1900 years ago, in that first age of Christendom. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh." Let me say this before reading the rest of that verse; In every age and hour, there has always been something of a predominant nature, that God has worked through, to perfect His purpose in the lives of those who were to be heirs of eternal life. There has always been something of a testing or trying nature, that believers have had to overcome. But what people have had to overcome in one age, may not necessarily have been the predominant thing that saints of another age would have to overcome. Every age has its own trials and tests, but God's grace in every age, has always been sufficient for those that trusted Him. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, (where is that tree?) which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Saints, we must realize that to eat of

the tree of life now; is not an act; it is an experience. The act of reproducing has already been performed, but it did not bring forth eternal life. Therefore no wonder Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again," and "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," for that Spirit is the life of that tree. That tree is only symbolic within the paradise, which is the realm of the Spirit of God. Therefore the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is the overcomer's promise, and it is his assurance that he has received the essence of what the original fruit would have been, which would have been eternal life.

Without the Spirit of God, there is no way we can live forever, and neither can we please God; because we do not have a nature in us, to know how to please God. But by that Spirit in us, (the Holy Ghost) God is slowly leading us back into His presence, back into that realm where He abides. No, we do not have a full measure of His Spirit, but the measure that we do have is our sufficiency for the journey ahead. If we should die, and our bodies go into the ground before our change comes, then that measure of the Spirit that we have, is all that it will take to get our bodies up out of those graves, and clothe them in immortality. Then we will have the fullness of that same Spirit, that will

enable us to fulfill whatever our purpose is, in the Millennium. Right now though we are looking at paradise, so let us take a better look at it. As I have said, Artists have tried to paint what they believed paradise should look like, and others have had all sorts of imaginary pictures in their minds, but none of them could ever really express what paradise was really like. Adam and Eve were the only humans that have ever been able to tell what it was really like, and we have no record that they ever did so. One thing is sure though; it takes more than just beautiful trees and flowers to express the true picture. Paradise opens up another dimension, another world: that becomes just as accessible as the natural world we now live in. It is a realm where it is just as common to see angels moving about, as it now is to see birds flying around from tree to tree. Through the ages, God has given certain patriarchs, and certain individuals, a little glimpse into that heavenly realm, but none of them have ever seen the full scope of what it really is. You remember how Jacob laid his head down on a rock one night to sleep, and while he was asleep, God let down a ladder from heaven, and he saw angels ascending and descending. Oh it all looked so real to him, as he saw those angels going back and forth with such ease. That experience caused him to say, (when he awoke), Truly

this is the house of God, for I met the Lord face to face. In other words, God just pulled back the curtain, and allowed him to have a little glimpse, and he told about it the best he could, like others have. Yet if we should take all of these stories and put them together, we would still not be able to explore paradise for what it really is, for I am sure that there is yet much of it that mortal men have not yet been privileged to see. But the point is, God can lift us up in the Spirit, and let us see anything He chooses to. That is how various scripture writers were able to describe so vividly, certain pictorial scenes they were privileged to view. Just suppose John: when he was taken up into heaven; saw only a great halo of light; how would he have known what to write? But what did he say? (Rev. 4:2) "I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." You can read it all if you want to, but God showed him all of that great heavenly scene, in order that he might be able to record it for later generations to read, showing the relationship of Jesus, to the great eternal Spirit which is the Father of all things. Now brothers and sisters: what I am trying to show you, is that when you are dealing with paradise, you are dealing with the spirit realm; so you have to get your eyes off of natural things. Oh yes, in the beginning, the natural, and the

spiritual were all seen together, and what a beautiful picture that must have been, but when we talk about paradise today, we have to keep it on the spirit side, in order to properly express it.

OVERCOMERS ARE PILLARS

Let me go now, to the third chapter of Revelation, where we will see some more of this language of the Spirit identified with natural things that man is familiar with. We read where Paul wrote to believers, how that we have come unto Mt. Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven. That is what we have come to; but it is not a geographical location: It is pointing to a spiritual reality, that which we have obtained in the Spirit. So let us read, starting here in verse 12 of the 3rd chapter of Revelation. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God." What does that mean? Do you know what a pillar is? Are we going to literalize it, and say that God is going to turn us into columns of concrete or stone? That is what a pillar is, you know. A pillar is a support column for a building or structure, and the only natural building

God is interested in, is the temple that shall be built in Jerusalem, in which Jesus will sit and rule during the Millennium, and I am sure God is not going to make us literal columns in that building; so what is John actually writing about? As we have already said, The true Church, the bride of Christ, is going to be changed into immortality before the Millennium starts; and rule and reign with Jesus during that one thousand years. That is why John said, We know not what we shall be like, but we know this, when He appears we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is. Therefore knowing that He is immortal we know that we will be immortal also. He is the Bridegroom, and the true Church is His bride. For what purpose? To rule and reign with Him for one thousand years, of course. Therefore to be a pillar in the spiritual sense, is to be a person of spiritual support, capable of holding up the weight of responsibility and obligations in the body of Christ, that the Church has to stand for, while the gospel is being offered to lost humanity in the world all around us. In the book of Acts, we read where it mentions Peter and James, and those who were esteemed to be pillars in the church. Well you certainly could not say that they were concrete, or stone, in the literal sense; but they truly were spiritual posts that held up a lot of weight, as the church moved out, in that first age. Their responsibility was great. Notice now, as we read some more of that verse, for we are looking

at spiritual applications. "And he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God." Here again, that writing is only figurative; for it actually means, I will give him a revelation. You will find that same terminology used in the 14th chapter of Revelation, concerning the 144,000 Jewish servants of God, that are sealed in chapter 7. When John saw them; they were standing atop Mt. Zion with the Lamb, (which is Christ, in symbolic language) having His Father's name written in their foreheads. That simply means, that by divine revelation, they knew Jesus who was the Christ, carried the revealed, redemption name of Jehovah. In other words, It was written in their minds, as surely as if it was written right across their foreheads with an indelible ink, who Jesus is, and what He is. It is a revelation that cannot be taken away from them. Alright, "I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is the NEW JERUSALEM, which cometh down OUT OF HEAVEN from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." Overcomers will not only have a revelation of the redemption name of God; they will also have a revelation of the city of God, the New Jerusalem, that John saw coming down from God out of heaven, and lastly; they will know the new name that Jesus is to be called by. Yes, when Jesus comes to rule and reign on earth for a thousand years, He will be called by a new

name. But do not be deceived by those who claim to know what that new name is; for no one knows it yet. There are some who will eagerly tell you, that Jesus' new name is William Marrion Branham, but they speak by the spirit of Antichrist, for that name will not be revealed to any of us, as long as we are in this mortal flesh. That name will be imparted to us, when we are changed into immortality. That new name will not be in use until the Millennium age. Men of this age would desecrate it, if it was known to them. God has allowed these serpent seed type of individuals to hear, and carry many precious revealed truths, in the past twenty some years, but there are some things that they claim to know, that they will never know, because they are reserved for overcomers. Furthermore; being able to transmit a revealed truth is one thing, and having a revelation of that truth is something else altogether. You can certainly confirm that, by taking note of where some of these followers of Bro. Branham are today; and what they are doing and saying. A true revelation would not allow a person to do what some of them are doing today.

THE NEW CITY

Let us leave the point we are on now, and go to Revelation, chapter 21, where we can really begin to explore

this new city we have been mentioning. We have sung about a city foursquare, with streets of gold, and ivory palaces; but how many of you will admit that these streets of gold and ivory palaces, are all illusions from traditional interpretations; with no scriptural foundation? When you look at the Bible, you discover that the street of gold is singular, and that ivory palaces are not even mentioned. But regardless of what you may say; there are some who will always visualize this city to be a literal, tangible city, and they will still be looking forward to living in an ivory palace somewhere within it. Well all we can do is present the truth; we cannot force people to receive it. To you who do have an ear to hear: let me say this though, The city we are looking at, is not a picture of the Millennium. The Millennium is over when this picture comes into focus. In the Millennium, Jesus will rule and reign, from the natural city of Jerusalem there on Mt. Zion, in a literal temple built by men. That temple is yet to be built, and it will be only for the Millennium, so let us now look closer at the city John wrote about here. Remember, all scripture of the Bible has to link together, regardless of what some men may be trying to teach. God's wrath will be poured out upon ungodly mankind, at the end of the great tribulation time, and there will be an element of natural people left alive that will be judged worthy to live during that Millennium reign. This is who Christ and His bride will rule over

during that time. Then when the Millennium is over, and all the ungodly people from every age have been resurrected and cast alive into the lake of fire: (In other words, all whose names were not found written in the book of life, at the great white throne judgment.) the next thing to be inaugurated is the eternal age. That is when the new city actually comes into the picture, so let us begin reading in verse 1 of chapter 21, and see what the Bible actually says about it. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." Now brothers and sisters: This is not talking about a new paradise: (the habitation of God, or the third heaven, as Paul referred to it in 2nd Corinthians 12), it is talking about the immediate atmosphere around the earth, which at present is filled with all sorts of satanic spirits. The Bible tells us that Satan is the prince of the power of the air. He is the god of this world, of all the ungodly forces that affect man. It is those satanic forces that create havoc, and all the sin, turmoil, and strife that we see out here today. But when redemption is completed, in the earth; this will eliminate all the opposing forces of evil from the atmosphere around the earth also. All of that will be destroyed in the lake of fire; so this will then leave the earth and the atmosphere around it clean. There will not be another planet earth; that is new; it will be the same planet. But it will be cleansed, and redeemed back to God,

the great eternal Spirit, and sin will never be allowed to mar the picture ever again. As for the new heaven: do not ever think that the devil has been allowed to clutter up the habitation of God. The domain of God, called the third heaven, does not need to be made new, or cleansed; there is nothing wrong with it. That realm called paradise, has been kept free from Satan's evil influence. The rich man was told that there was a great gulf between where he was, and the paradise that Lazarus was in, so that one could not pass from the one to the other, and that also included the devil. When Lucifer (now called the devil) was cast down to earth, his evil influence has been limited to the earth and its immediate atmosphere ever since. That is why it has to be cleansed and made new again. The Methodists look at this verse, and at that scripture in 2nd Peter, that speaks of how the heavens and the earth shall melt with fervent heat, and they say, The planet is literally going to burn up. That is what the Bible says; they will tell you. Well that is what the words in the Bible sound like they mean; but when you line them up with the rest of the Bible, you get an entirely different picture. It is the same with that part that says, "And there was no more sea." That should not give anyone the picture that there will be no more water; for as long as there is any kind of plant life growing, there will always be water to water it. That just simply points to the fact that the earth will no longer be two

thirds covered by water. I believe, if we will read Genesis right, we will discover that this planet did not have large bodies of water like the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, before the flood. There were lakes and bodies of water; but every continent was connected together one with another, by land linkage, and there was more land of the earth's surface exposed, to eventually be inhabited, rather than what we see today. You can read the first chapter of Genesis, and you will see that before the flood, when the earth was closer to the sun, God had those waters gathered together in a way that they served as a filter, to filter the rays of the sun. That is what gave the earth a perfect climate the whole year around. In all probability, it would never have rained as you and I know rain, for the earth was watered by dew. In other words, When the earth sweats, you can get your feet wet in the morning. But what all of this terminology really means is that John was seeing the earth in its redeemed state, after everything has been restored back to its original beginning, so let us read on. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, (Remember now, what we read, in chapter 3, about those that overcome: I will write upon them the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God. To that point, it is the same language, but notice the rest of this verse.) prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." What is this

actually saying? This is none other than a pictorial representation of the way God has displayed paradise again, for its connection back to earth.

WHERE ETERNITY BEGINS

Man was driven from paradise in the beginning, because of sin. But now the earth has been redeemed, and paradise is being restored back to earth again, for its eternal purpose. Eternity begins here, and continues throughout the endless ages, wherein time will no longer be calculated. Why do I say that? Turn with me to the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians. The apostle Paul is writing a revelation, and here is what he states, starting in verse 22. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Because of Adam's sin every child born into the world has that imputed death sentence hanging over them. That is what he meant by, all die. But let us not interpret the last part of that verse to mean that in Christ all are made spiritually alive, nor eternally alive. God has invested in Him, power of death, hell and the grave, therefore He will be the means by how all will be brought forth, to eventually be placed somewhere, even if it is the lake of fire. "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." As time draws near for the

age of the Millennium, Christ will literally take from the earth every redeemed overcomer. Those who have died will be resurrected, and with the living element of overcomers, will be taken to glory, until such a time as the Millennium rule is ready to be set up. At that time, they are seen coming back to earth with Him, and will rule and reign with Him for a thousand years. Martyred tribulation saints will also be resurrected to rule with Him during that time. "Then cometh the end (the end of what? The end of the Millennium.) when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Now right here is where we could go into the Godhead. For there are a lot of people, especially in oneness Pentecost, that just have to sort of scoot through this verse, because their limited revelation keeps them from being able to handle this verse. Jesus the man, has been invested with the power and authority of Jehovah; the invisible God which is Spirit, and that investment has enabled Him to rule and reign until He has accomplished the purpose and mind of God. After that, there is no longer any reason for Him to continue to rule as King, as He has done throughout the Millennium. That is why it says, "Then cometh the end, the end of the Millennium. "When He shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last

enemy that shall be destroyed is death." That takes place at the great white throne judgment. (Rev.20:11-15) That is where everything that still pollutes the earth is burned. Alright now, verse 27 says, "For He (meaning God) hath put all things under His (Jesus') feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He (the Father) is excepted, which did put all things under Him (Jesus). And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, (Christ Jesus) then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (the Father, the eternal Spirit) that put all things under Him, that God (the great eternal Spirit) may be all in all." Brothers and sisters: That takes you right back to Revelation 21, verse 3, right where we left off. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men." What does that mean? It means that God has accepted his redeemed family of humanity, and now He is placing Himself back on earth, in the fullness of what paradise was in the beginning. Actually what it amounts to is that the spirit world, and the natural world is coming back together again. Do not look at the word tabernacle, in this usage, as a building. God does not need a building. You are the only building He ever really wanted to dwell in. So notice the rest of that verse. "And He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Saints: Just think of that. It is describing the eternal picture and

objective that God has been bringing mankind back to for the past six thousand years. It is like He infuses Himself into His redeemed family to start the eternal age of time without end. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." Of course we realize that all things are made new as a result of God's process of redemption, and not because of an act of creation. Rather than creation, it is an act of restoration, whereby all things are returned back to their original state. "And He said unto me, Write: For these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Now why would He use the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet here? It is because all things had their beginning in Him, and anything that has an end, will end because He has decreed it to be that way. He is the originator of all languages upon the earth; for we have read how He came down, when all men were of one language and one purpose, building a tower to reach into heaven, and confused their language. But as for the Alpha and Omega usage here: He is simply using terminology from the language of the Bible; to say that everything that exists, had to have its origin in God, and He is the one that will terminate whatever is to be

terminated. Anything that does not pass through His plan of redemption and gain His acceptance, is definitely going to have an end. Well after He spoke of being the beginning and the end He said, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." We would not want to put that statement all the way out in the eternal age; for that is what He has been doing right on through the ages. This was written in a letter, and given to the churches; therefore certain things of the contents of the letter has been for the present day, in every age. It is just like that first verse of Revelation 22, where John saw a river of pure water proceeding out of the throne; we know that it not a literal river. It is the same water Jesus was talking about in John 7:38. He had said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Then He said, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Verse 39 goes ahead and tells that He was speaking of the spirit that believers would receive, and we know that on the day of Pentecost, after Jesus had resurrected and ascended into heaven, those believers that were assembled in the upper room waiting for the promise of the Father, truly did receive that Spirit, and the living water started to flow. Ever since that day, thirsty souls have been able to drink from that fountain freely.

THE WATER OF LIFE

It is God's purpose that every redeemed child of God should have something flowing from that life, that would cause others to want to drink from that same source. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, He that drinketh of the water that I shall give, will never thirst again. The very fountain of that water of life, was standing right there by that natural well, where the woman had come to draw water. So the woman said to Him, Sir: Give me this water, that I thirst not, and neither will have to come here to draw. Well she later did drink of that water, the same water that is offered here in verse 6. Therefore with these thoughts in mind, let us try to picture the language that is being used here, as we proceed. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; (That is still an admonition for you and I, in the hour we live in.) And I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Verse 8 is a warning to all who read it, or hear it, of what will become of those who are guilty of such things, but the actual event does not take place until the end of the Millennium. However, it does take place before the eternal age begins, so we need to pay attention, and get these lined out in our minds. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire

and brimstone: which is the second death." All of this is to give the lost sinner an opportunity to prepare for that glorious event which is ahead; for once that hour arrives, God will not allow anything to disrupt it. Satan will never enter the picture again. Therefore if we can correlate the verses we read from the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, and what we are reading here in Revelation, we see Jesus invested with these attributes of the Father, until such time as He delivers the whole redeemed creation back to the Father, and then, He will be known to us as our elder brother.

JOHN SEES THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

As we go into verse 9 and 10, we see God manifesting Himself in a way that allows us to actually see with the eye of our spirit, the paradise that Adam and Eve were driven away from. It is not of tangible substance, that scientists can explore; but the spiritual eye of God's redeemed can see a beautiful sight here. Let us pay close attention to the language used here; for it is important to our revelation. "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." John

had already seen the bride saints coming to earth on white horses, following Jesus, in chapter 19, and judgment was set up, and they have ruled with Christ a thousand years, throughout the time known to us as the Millennium, and now we find this angel saying to John, Come hither, and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife, so notice now, "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God." Here we see a manifestation of the omnipotency and glory of God Himself. You will remember the words of Jesus in John 14, where He said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me. (This is the English translation.) In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you." Now as I said earlier, God does not live in a house, and He is not reserving a mansion for you either: not a literal house. Another translation of John 14:2, reads like this, "In my Father's domain, there are many resting places." Resting places for what? The soul of man. I feel like this translation brings out the true thought a little better. But let us look closer at this city John saw descending out of heaven from God. "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Now women who love fine dishes and glassware will better understand my illustration. They love to go into a store that specializes in this

kind of thing, and inspect the china and crystal. You can take a piece of crystal glass, and let the light strike it just right, and it will reflect light and sparkle just like a diamond. But what is glass made out of? It is made of sand, an element of the earth. It takes a very special refining process to change that sand into something so beautiful as pure crystal. But that is my illustration of what we are looking at here in these verses. We are looking at a description of something that has been refined, made pure just like fine crystal. There is not a blemish to be found. It is clear as crystal, (Now verse 12) "And had a wall great and high, (Now we are looking at a beautifully constructed wall around that city.) and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations; and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Alright, there is twelve gates giving entrance into the interior of what that city is as a means of habitation. You do not live in a wall; it is only a symbol. A wall is a protection bulwark for whatever is inside it. Imagine going through a gate, in a wall, and when you get inside it, there is nothing there. Well the wall is significant though, for it symbolically speaks of God's plan of salvation. In other words, Unless man

comes God's provided way; he in no way will enter into that habitation with God. Alright now, there is twelve gates in the wall, and they were strategically placed. In ancient times, as cities grew, and became recognized as places for habitation, protection, trade, commerce and communication, their gates had to be strategically set, they did not put them just anywhere. Their position was determined by the lay of the land, and the accessibility in and out of the city. The gates were set first; and that has significance spiritually; for we see all through the New Testament, that God's plan of salvation and redemption for mankind, was set up first through the children of Israel, under the law dispensation. When you go back through Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy and take into account all of these sacrifices, feast days, and so forth, and see what they pointed to, you eventually come up with the revelation that every one of them pointed to Jesus Christ, and what God would minister to the soul of man through Him. It was all introduced through types and shadows, under the law dispensation. That was the entering into, of this great plan of salvation. Under the law, God established these gates, that are actually what gives entrance into His great plan of salvation.

THE WALL'S FOUNDATIONS

After the gates are established to a natural city, then comes the process of building the wall, which is that part between the gates. As they closed in, between the gates, that is what became the wall. But notice what is strange about the wall of this city: it had twelve foundations, which today we call the footing. In the natural, you do not build a wall to show the footing, or foundation. But a proper foundation is necessary, if you want your wall to stand. If the foundation is not good, sooner or later, the wall will tumble. For most foundations, they dig a deep trench, and in it they pour concrete, and when you look at it, there is nothing beautiful about it. Then once it has hardened, they start the building upon it and before long, they throw dirt against it, until it is seldom seen at all after that. You only see what is built upon it. But what is strange; the foundations of this wall is exposed, and the reason it is exposed is because God wants you to know what your salvation is built upon. It is not built upon denominational traditions; it is built upon the revelation and teachings of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. It started with their revelation, and in process of time, the true children of God will wind up with that same revelation they had. God has never changed, and His word has not

changed. It is man that has changed, and it is God's restoration work that will bring us back to that original revelation. Praise His wonderful name. But even still, as we look at this wall; it has not just one, not two, or three, but twelve foundations, meaning 12 layers. Let me remind you of something though, in ancient times they did not pour concrete foundations. Here is what they did, especially in the Middle East, where they have a tremendous amount of rock formation deep within the soil. Wherever the corner stone was to be; they would dig down to bedrock, which is that solid layer of rock beneath the soil, and all other rocks. Now finding bedrock was one thing, but preparing it to lay other stones upon was something else completely. They had to chisel them, until they were level, for many times they would be slanted. Then in order to prevent slipping, they would chisel a niche in the rock. In other words, a slot in which they would lay the stone. Then, no matter how much weight is put upon it, there is no chance of it slipping from its position. In order for your building to come out right, the corner stone has to be perfectly level. Brothers and sisters: Somewhere on Mt. Zion, deep down beneath all that rubbish, when those Jews get a chance to dig down to bedrock; they are going to find that original cornerstone: that King Solomon laid, about a thousand years before Christ. Yes it is still there, ready to be cleaned off, and the Millennial temple built on it. But the

point is, that corner stone is anchored and leveled, and every other stone that goes into a foundation has to be leveled the same way. They chisel down until each stone is level, so actually it could look just like stair steps down there. But there has always got to be one spot that everything else is lined up with.

THE CUBED CITY

I was reading about the great pyramid Keops, when the English archaeologists dug down to find those foundation stones. They took pictures to show how the builders of that monstrosity of rock formation had chiseled out notches at all four corners of the foundation, and set those stones in such a way that they could not possibly slip, no matter how much pressure was put upon it. The cornerstone sat right there in that niche, holding the line, through all of those centuries. Well the reason I wanted to explain that, was because we know that Jesus Christ, the chief cornerstone of our building, is holding a true line, and the building is being erected exactly according to God's plan. All of this just lets us know that what God builds is built exactly according to specifications, as we have in His word. Denominationalism has tried to throw up a spiritual building, but it is built of faulty material, and

God will not accept any of it. The only thing God will accept is what is built upon this foundation right here, with Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. The revelation of those twelve apostles is what the whole plan of salvation for the New Testament Church is built upon. That is the only way you can look at this, and come to any conclusions as to why you are looking at the foundations, and not at the wall itself. The wall speaks of your salvation, but God wants you to know what it is built upon. Therefore the completed structure gives us shelter and protection, but it is all based upon the fact that God invested some men with an understanding of how the word of God was to be applied. However when you have really reached out and accepted the Lord by faith, according to the way His word declares you should, and your life is secure in Him, the devil will still throw a lot of things against the wall, to test your particular, individual experience. But listen to me saints; the devil is not going to be able to destroy you, nor take your salvation away from you. He can only rattle around, make a lot of noise, and try to convince you to doubt your salvation, but he can only go as far as he is allowed to, and that is for our testing. Not our destruction. Let us go on now. Verse 15 "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. (We are reading scripture that creates great questions in the minds of people, but we want to try to see what

is symbolized here, as we look at the whole thing. This angel had a reed to measure the city, the gates, and the wall.) And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." I want to explain something here. When Bro. Branham preached the message titled, "The Future Home of the Earthly Bride and the Heavenly Bridegroom," he read these scriptures, and made the statement that this city did not necessarily have to be something that was square. He said it was more like a pyramid, and people all around this world today, because of his statement, are saying that this city, when it comes down, will be like a pyramid. You need not try to convince them otherwise; for their mind is settled on it. But I happened to know Bro. Branham better than a lot of them, and I knew what he really believed about a lot of these things that they are so far off base with. Many times, if you know how a person thinks, you will better understand what he means when he says certain things a certain way. I did not get the education that some of you have, but I do know one thing for sure: you cannot take the wording of verse 16, and get a pyramid out of it. The only part of a pyramid that is square is its base. All the other angles are strictly triangular, so you cannot possibly fit these dimensions into a pyramid. The only thing you can say is that all four

sides of it are equal, which no doubt was the comparison Bro. Branham was making. All four sides of it are equal with each other; but you certainly cannot say that the length, the breadth and the height of it are equal. That is terminology that belongs only to a cube. When you make the length and the breadth of something the same you have squared it, and then if you make the height of it the same as the length and breadth, you have cubed it, and there is no possible way to make a pyramid out of such dimensions. You will find no triangles in a cube, for every side is completely square, and if you uncube it, you change it's dimensions. If something is foursquare, and you take one inch off of it anywhere, you have uncubed it, and it will no longer fit the description of what we have here. This just lets me know that you cannot take one thing away from this, nor add anything to it. It is the Church of the living God, in her complete restored relationship to Him, and there is not one thing that anything can do to alter it. You cannot change the word of God, just to make it fit your carnal ideas, without taking away from the revelation of it, the very thing that makes it a reality. What I would say to you is, Do not get so taken up with the size and shape of this city, that you fail to see what is being portrayed. In other words, When God places the fullness of His presence back on earth again, everything will be perfect. There will be no need for anything to be added, nor taken away.

Paradise will cover the whole planet, just like it eventually would have, if Adam had never sinned.

WALL OF JASPER - CITY OF GOLD

All right now, we are going to look at the wall of this city in this next verse, but please take note of the fact that the city is one thing, and the wall is something else. They are not to be thought of as the same thing. "And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass." Brothers and sisters: What does that tell you? It lets us know that the substance of what the city itself is, does not compare with earthly gold. It is that gold that is characterized in the New Testament as an impartation of the faith of God, that He puts in us. It is not your faith, and my faith, that brings us to God; it is His grace, working through a revelation that He imparts to us, so that we can truly say, He is a God of mercy and grace. He first has to enable us to recognize the fact that He is reaching out to us, and no one can appreciate that more than I do. I wrestled with

life, with the Bible, and with salvation itself. I did not want to get too fanatical about anything in that way. As for the Bible, I thought everyone ought to have one, but I did not want to get too close to it. I was bound by a cigarette habit, and did not know how in the world I could ever get free from it. Oh yes, people will tell you, Whatever you want or need: just take it by faith. But I say, By whose faith? When I was wrestling with all these things, I had no faith. Yet when the time was right, I felt something come into me: that gave me the ability to come and believe and accept the grace of God. That little spark of genuine faith ended all of that wrestling I had been doing. God has to impart that little measure of faith to us, in order for us to even be able to reach out and accept what He has provided for us. It gives you a completely different outlook on how to approach God, and that is why it is of more value than any earthly gold. I would not trade it for all of the riches this world has to offer. Yet there are professing Christians everywhere that measure everything by the amount of this world's riches they possess. No wonder the Lord said to Laodicea, which actually portrayed this age of materialism, you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. His counsel was, Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich. Well, that is the kind of gold we see here in verse 18. To buy this kind of gold, is to make an eternal investment, for that investment is in heaven itself. You will

not be able to go to any of these earthly banks and buy this gold, for it is something that comes only from God. He gives us that first little measure of this gold, to enable us to come to Him, and then He gives us many opportunities to invest it and receive increase. That is what our experiences and trials accomplish for us, in this life. In every moment of weakness, God always gives us whatever we need in order to overcome. Therefore every trial we prove ourselves faithful through, we come out of them with an increased measure of faith, because God always imparts to us whatever is needed, in order for us to be able to meet His standards, and that is the Bible definition of gold that is pure like clear glass. Therefore it is impossible for you to take your Bible, and prove that this city is to be a literal city of earthly gold. No. It is an environment like unto that which Adam and Eve knew in the very beginning, before they let the devil rob them.

WHAT THESE PRECIOUS STONES SYMBOLIZE

Verse 19 takes us to the foundations of the wall of this foursquare city, so notice what it says. "And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones." Remember, it is in the

foundations of the wall, that the names of the twelve apostles of Jesus are found, and here it speaks of how the foundations were studded with all manner of precious stones, so we need to see the significance of all of this. It lets me know that it is not just the great dimensions of the wall that we are to dwell upon, but the quality of the material that the wall is built upon. Have you ever wondered why the foundations are so beautiful, when in the natural you do not even see the foundation? To me, it says that God wants us to see and recognize the quality of the spirit of the men who resisted the devil and fought the battles to bring this gospel of salvation to us. These precious stones speak of those faithful soldiers of the cross, who laid their lives on the line, to stand for the truth of God's word. People who know about these particular stones will tell you that they came from such and such a place, and of certain rock formations that in the ages past, had been subjected to tremendous pressure or heat. So when you transpose this thought to the lives of those men whose names are in these foundations, it lets us know that God not only gave them a great revelation, but He also gave them the virtue to be able to stand the pressure, and the persecution that went along with such a revelation. Just remember first of all, that Christianity was new; so there were no allies to fall back and fellowship with. They were right in the midst of Judaistic Jews and Gentile pagans, all of which were

against them. Therefore the character and determination that their lives reflected, caused them to be compared with the beauty and value of these precious stones which we are going to look at right now. "The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst." We have a man right here in the congregation that can tell you about these stones, how they are formed and everything. But the point is, these stones speak of the character and revelation and durability of those who laid the foundation of our faith. God is using this city terminology to describe the paradise that He is bringing redeemed mankind back to. Chapter 21 lets us see it from an external viewpoint, but when we get to chapter 22, we will see it from an internal position, the throne of God, the river of water of life, the tree of life, and everything that paradise truly is. He who sits on the throne there, is not to be thought of any longer as a mediator, nor a king, for this setting is on out past the Millennium, when Jesus the Christ is seen as our elder brother. That will be his position throughout all of eternity, after redemption is completed.

TWO TYPES OF PEARLS

We are looking at a city that for too long, has been looked at only as a natural city, just like the garden in Genesis has been seen only as a beautiful natural garden. When God really began to deal with me on this, I could see that they were driven from paradise; but I also noticed that God did not say: Now Adam, Be sure you take the tree of knowledge with you, yet we know that the tree of knowledge has been with man ever since. Therefore seeing that the tree of knowledge was not a tree that had to be dug up and transplanted, we understand that the tree of life was not plant life either. Neither of these trees were plant life trees, but spiritual laws by which mankind would have to live. He would eat from one or the other, but not from both of them. Therefore paradise was more than just a beautiful garden of trees, shrubs, and flowers, and this city that we are looking at is God's way of showing man that paradise is coming back to earth again. When? After the redemption is completed. After the Millennium has run its course, and the great white throne judgment has removed every defiling thing from the planet. As I said earlier, This is not a city of great castles and ivory palaces, as natural minds have imagined it to be; it is a spiritual realm, where God's full presence will once again dwell. It is a

city; but it is not the kind of city you thought it was going to be. It is a beautiful, glorious, blissful atmosphere, where God's presence is back on earth again, as it was before the fall of Adam. Therefore this message is not just to tear up your streets of gold, and pull down your ivory palaces; it should help you better understand what God's plan of redemption is moving toward. It does tell us that the twelve gates were twelve pearls, but let us try to get a better look at what those gates are significant of: being called pearls. There are two types of pearl. One is called "Mother of Pearl," and it's existence is brought about in a completely different way than the jewel pearl. A jewel pearl is formed from a grain of sand inside of an oyster shell. As that grain of sand causes the body of the oyster to become inflamed; it begins to secrete a mucus-like fluid that gels around that grain of sand, to prevent it from going any deeper into it's body. The oyster keeps supplying that, until over a period of time a pearl is formed around that little grain of sand. These are beautiful; but I am sure that the gates of pearl we are reading about are not pearls that have been formed inside the shell of an oyster. These are surely mother of pearl; because mother of pearl was used in ancient times, for the beautification of important buildings. You see a lot of it in Israel. They cut it into little squares and use it like ceramics, and it is beautiful. This kind of pearl is solid,

and I believe it fits into what we are reading about here in Revelation 21:21. These gates were of solid pearl. Really, as we read this 21st chapter, we are finding a unique description of what is called a city. It has a wall great and high which has twelve foundations, with the names of the twelve apostles of Jesus in them, Then we see that there are twelve gates, with twelve angels standing by, and the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel written thereon, and the foundations were garnished with all manner of precious stones. Well in ancient times, cities were built with walls for defense purposes, to protect it's inhabitants from invasion by various forces from without. The foundation of those walls were not even exposed, like these we see here. They were underground, and strictly for the support of the walls built thereon. Therefore this description here is very unique, for the foundations are exposed. Furthermore they have the names of the twelve apostles of Christ written on them, so when we consider the whole thing: we have to realize that anything of these walls that would be named after the twelve apostles, could not be interpreted in a literal, materialistic sense. They never sent one truck load of any kind of earthly building material to heaven, to be added to the foundations of a literal wall. What we must attribute to them, has to be considered in the spiritual realm, and it will be in connection with what they accomplished in preaching

the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore the foundations here, has to be in relation to the revelation those apostles had of the plan and purpose of God, and how they first laid that foundation to be built upon, for the next two thousand years by others that would be called of God, and revealed. The city is foursquare, and the wall measured 144 cubits. Well, when you consider the sum of 144; it is the number 12, squared. So when you look at this city, its wall, and the gates of it, you are looking at something that is to be understood as relative to the salvation of your soul, and your personal relationship with the Lord. It pertains to every redeemed person that will be allowed to dwell inside of it, in the eternal age. In other words, your salvation and experience with God, is all based upon that which was preached by those twelve apostles, and we are built up, a spiritual building, an habitation for the Lord. But as I see it; these numerical measurements given here, are more for the purpose of concealing the truth from natural minds than anything else, for the natural mind will always take this kind of thing to dwell upon. The spiritual reality of what is symbolized is not even important to carnal minded people.

CLEAR AS CRYSTAL SPEAKS OF PERFECTION

What we are really looking at, is paradise, as it is restored back to God's earthly family, and the literal measurements that we see recorded here in these verses, could not come anywhere close to encompassing all that is in the full scope of this great scene. I say that for this reason; paradise, in Genesis, was associated to a geographical area, but it was not a geographical area in itself, for it pertained to the anointing presence of the great Creator. Therefore I say to you; whatever Eden was in it's original beginning, if sin had not entered in, would have been worldwide today. But because it did not reach that worldwide scope, it is hard for man to understand the language of the word of God that symbolically shows us what God is moving us toward. No matter how you look at a cube, you are looking at something that is perfect. In other words, if it were not perfect, it would not be a cube. As I said earlier, If you add to or take anything from a cube, you no longer have a cube, so when God gets through with this spiritual building, it is going to be that perfect. No matter what side of a cube you look at, you see exactly the same thing, so God just let this be worded like this, to scramble up theological minds and drive them crazy. They get completely taken up in technicality of why this?

why that? and why would God do so and so?; that they miss the whole truth of what is really projected. They take this spiritual city, and try to make a literal city out of it. But saints, in this city, you do not need a roof over your head, nor air conditioning to keep you cool in the summertime. God displays Himself in this beautiful environment so that His redeemed family can live and walk in this beautiful atmosphere throughout eternity. Talking about the city, verse 16 says, "And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." That lets us know that it is cubed, and it is no accident that this sort of terminology is used here, for you cannot change one thing about a cube, and still have a cube. So it speaks of the fact that every revelation of the scriptures is understood according to the perfect plan of God. Every scripture fits right into its place, and nothing can be changed. God's plan is perfected. "And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel." In that wall is represented two sets of twelve's. Twelve apostles in the foundation, and twelve gates with the names of the tribes of Israel, but you do not say twelve plus twelve, for the revelation of God's perfection is in twelve times twelve, which makes a perfect cube. So we are going to see what all of this

adds up to here in a minute, for both the gates and the foundations are relative to the wall. "And the building of the wall of it (this speaks of the substance of what the wall was composed of) was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass." First we take note of the fact that this jasper, in its substance identity, does not even have a color to it. Let us go back to verse 11, where John saw this beautiful city coming down from God out of heaven. It says, "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, (In other words, like the reflection of it) even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." That lets us know that even though jasper stones, as we know them today, are of a variety of colors, much emphasis was laid upon the fact that this one was clear as crystal. That speaks of something in its most refined, purified state of being. But the point we want to emphasize is the fact that something that clear would cause no obstruction to the sense of sight. You can see through it, but it reflects something, and in this case, what is reflected is the glory of God. You all know what happens when you set a piece of fine crystal out here in the sun. As the sun strikes it, you see a most beautiful sight. It sparkles just like a diamond. But the emphasis is upon the clearness, and the reflection. The wall was of jasper, and the city was pure gold, but each substance mentioned is as clear as glass. It makes you wonder where people ever got their ivory

palaces, and their brass door knobs, from the description we see here. Tell me, where do people get such ideas? It certainly does not come out of the Bible. Brothers and sisters, we are exploring a city you can see through; every bit of it is of clear substance. The only thing about any of this, that speaks of any color whatsoever, is the precious stones the foundations of the wall are garnished with, and that has to be because the stones, in their particular identity, are characteristic of the life of the apostle they each represent. It has to do with the revelation they each cherished in their hearts, and how they toiled through the heat of the battles and pressures that were put upon them, to preserve that revelation, in order that others might be able to build upon their experience and teaching. If you would study up on the origin of these particular stones, you would find that they come from different parts of this old earth, and that they were formed in ancient times by tremendous heat and pressure, and they are not found just everywhere you might go; they are only in certain places. The Creator designed it that way. Whether we realize it or not, everything fits into a purpose of the Creator.

WHERE FAITH COMES FROM

Now saints, do not think for even a minute that this city we are reading about is made of any gold that is associated to this planet earth. The gold taken from this planet is not clear as glass. I have a little watch here, and certain parts of it have been washed in gold; but I want you to know, it is not gold that is clear like glass. Earthly gold can only be made so pure; and it is never that pure. It is never so pure that you can see through it. This gold that is so clear you can see through, speaks of the faith and the revelation of the saints of God. Let me try to help you see that. In our fallen state, we have nothing with which to approach God with. There can only be something in us, crying out, until such a time as the Creator see fits to impart to us something that we can approach Him with; and that is not something tangible, that can be measured with earthly instruments; it is that measure of faith that only God can measure. It is referred to in the Bible as grace. Just for an example of human nature in its fallen state, take an old drunk that has spent a fortune, neglected his family, and actually made himself a bum. Many times when he is sober, he will say, "Never again". But when Saturday night comes, it is the same thing all over again; he has no power over the stuff. Well it is the same in other areas of life. You can get so miserable you wish to goodness you could change your situation; but inside of you there is something that just keeps driving you on down the road of life. You can

turn over a new leaf, and try your very best; but until the grace of God touches your life, you just keep right on stumbling along, wishing things were better. Then one day the hand of God reaches down and imparts that measure of grace. Hallelujah! From then on things begin to change. You cannot see what He has imparted to you; but you know there is something inside of you that is making a difference. It is a gift from God, and it is called grace (unmerited favor). You may be a millionaire; but this imparted grace is worth more to you than all the money in the world. Why? Because it can give to you something that money cannot buy, peace of mind, and peace with God. It can change you from what you once were, to what you want to be. Yes, it is gold; but not the kind you can lock up in a steel vault and boast about. This gold comes from the realm of deity, and cannot be handled with our hands. That is why there is no color to it. Faith is what we are talking about; and grace is how we get it. You have probably heard people say, Oh I have all kinds of faith; but that is not right. Faith is not something we store up, and brag about having it; but it is something we live by, and it does return dividends, when we invest it wisely. Our faith should keep increasing; but it should never make us boastful, for it is all a gift from our Creator, and we merited none of it.

SPIRITUAL GOLD

I just have to praise God every time I think of how He has dealt with my life. When I was growing up I would read these last two chapters of Revelation, and could not see anything other than a literal city. That is what you see with you natural eyes; but when a revelation comes, it makes that faith have a far greater meaning to you. It lets you know where you are going and what you are looking for. So this gold is the most precious possession we can have. It was James that said, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." We all need patience; but most of the time we do not like to look at it this way. We like to look at our trials and tests as problems. Well they are problems; but they are temporary. These problems are not going to last through your whole lifetime. God allows problems and tests; because in them, He can school us, so that our faith is not based upon someone's little church program. Praise God! We see things today that we did not see twenty years ago, things that we have by faith. I just have to cherish it as something valuable, knowing the source from whence it came. Some things we learn by the Spirit revealing them to us, but other things are learned as we come through a hard trial; and anything we learn like that, always serves to make

us more determined to walk with God. In his first epistle; Peter spoke of how the trial of our faith is much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire. Well what did the Lord say to the Laodicean Church, which also applies to the Laodicean age? "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." We all know good and well that this is not talking about materialistic gold. He is talking about true revealed faith, something that will stand the test, anchor your soul, and establish you in a true relationship with God. Yes this gold only has spiritual significance; but it is of greater value to us than anything else in the world. That is why this city of gold reflects so beautifully; it is all of spiritual value, imparted to us by the one who is the giver of all good gifts, the Creator. The scripture says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: (God) for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Therefore any way you look at it, faith that lays hold of the word of God, is the most precious thing there is, and that is why it is referred to as gold.

THE URIM AND THUMMIN

Alright, we have a city of gold and a great wall about it, and that wall has twelve foundations, in which are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. My, my, if we could just read the autobiographies of those twelve men. They were locked up in prison, stoned, beat and ridiculed, all because of the revelation they carried in their bosom. Maybe some were even burned at the stake; but do you think any of that could change the revelation they had? Of course not. If they had compromised, we would not have the gospel message today. No wonder their names are in the foundations of the wall of that beautiful city. The whole thing is built upon the revelation they stood for. Paul wrote to Timothy, That ye may know how to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. The Church of the living God has never been a denomination. There was a time when the Spirit of God worked in those systems; but you have to go all the way back to the beginning of the particular systems in order to find when the Spirit of God worked in them. You will not find Him in any of them today. God will always be found where His word is; and for the Church, it was the word those apostles preached. No wonder their lives are represented by those beautiful stones. When you go back into the Old Testament and see how God worked through twelve beautiful stones, set in the breastplate of the priest, to confirm truth, and give

judgment, you will better understand why they are so significant here in the foundations of this wall. When any problem came up, or anything the priest had to be confronted with, they conferred with the Urim and Thummin, which was the breastplate he wore. The Spirit of God would cause light to strike those stones, to vindicate truth. Well if the Urim and Thummin was important to them in those days: I believe this is the Urim and Thummin of the word of God in His total revelation and plan of salvation. Brother: When the Spirit of God strikes these and they all reflect at once, you can rest assured God puts His approval upon that. These things are not here just to take up space in the Bible; they all speak of something beautiful. It has always been the responsibility of apostles to hold a line on the word of God.

GATES OF PEARL

Let us look now at the twelve gates of this city. Verse 21 says, "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate (each gate) was of one pearl." Now saints: If this is a spiritual city, (and we know that it is) we have to ask ourselves: just what do those gates represent? We know they represent something pertaining to the twelve tribes of Israel; but what? Well

I will try to explain it, so follow my thought: so you can catch the whole picture. We have already said that the city itself is that glory and presence of the eternal Spirit, descending out of heaven with all the immortal saints of the ages, coming back to earth for the beginning of the eternal age. God will once again dwell fully in His true people. He cannot have two brides; for that is polygamy, and even though we read of a lot of polygamous marriages in the Bible; God is against such a practice. His pattern was one man and woman, becoming one flesh, just like He started them out in the garden of Eden. So according to verses 9-11, this is the bride, the Lamb's wife, descending with the glory and presence of God. The Bible teaches that Jesus will rule and reign for a thousand years, with His bride, in a rule of righteousness, before this scene here in chapter 21 becomes a fulfilled reality. Who is the bride? It is people that have been redeemed through the ages of time, and have overcome the enemy of their souls. What will they do in the Millennium? They will rule with Christ, over all nations, with power and authority. Remember, the Millennium is not yet the perfect age. Therefore we will be in a capacity for one thousand years, that we will not be in, in the eternal age. In the Millennium we will have power and authority, to bring all things under subjection, that we will not have in the eternal age. Our authority to rule will terminate when the kingdom is handed

back over to the Father, as Paul wrote in 1Corinthians 15:24-25. The earth and all things therein will then be fully redeemed, and the Creator will then dwell fully, once again, back in His creation. That is how it started, and that is how it will end up, when redemption is finally completed. So as I have already said, This is paradise coming back to earth again. God had to show John something in order for him to be able to write what he saw; but only those that are anointed to do so, will ever be able to understand what he wrote, for the natural mind will always literalize everything. In chapter 19 we are seen descending from heaven with Christ, on white horses, to complete Armageddon, and set up the millennial reign. But saints: Listen to me, when Armageddon is over with, and everything is fully subdued, you will not have to hand that horse over to anyone and tell them to go feed it, for that horse is only a symbol of power and authority that we will have, to rule with Christ here on earth. Do you understand that? We have to be able to see these things as spiritual realities, rather than natural things, so with that in mind, let us explore these gates of pearl. When Moses was taken up on Mt. Sinai, and instructed to build the tabernacle, his own testimony was that the Lord had cautioned him to build it, or design it, after the pattern of the heavenly. That tells me that God let Moses see something. He saw God's blueprint, which was none other than this city described here in Revelation

21 & 22. This was the city Abraham looked for, an eternal city, not made with man's hands. Well if we are looking at a city, that was not made by the hands of men, it just stands to reason that it would have to be a city of spiritual qualities. So what are the gates significant of? They are significant of the Old Testament law, that was given to the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, through which we find this great plan to salvation laid out, in types and shadows. A gate is something you enter through, right? You do not climb over a gate; you enter through it. Therefore what this actually speaks of, is the fact that this great plan of salvation was revealed to mankind, for its future application, through the law of Moses, in types and shadows. As I said earlier, walls are never constructed without first deciding where the gates will be located. The gates will always be set at strategic points for the most advantage in entry. God did not make this plan of salvation hard for us to enter into, but we do have to enter into it through His provided way, and that way was first revealed through those various types and shadows set forth in the law given to the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. They had that law for 1400 years before God manifested what those types and shadows were pointing to. Now some will ask, "does that mean that all the Old Testament Jewish saints are in the bride?" No. Not at all. But you must remember; that when the time came for the covenant to be

changed from law to grace, it was Jews who first entered in. In other words, the first race of people to ever enter into this city, this spiritual habitation, was Jews. Did not the apostle Paul say that the gospel was first to the Jew, and then to the Gentiles? Even though God ordained that eventually Gentiles would make up the major part of the body of the bride, the Jews were the first to partake of this glorious salvation. Now in the homeland, at the time when the gospel first went forth, were represented mainly the two Southern tribes of the children of Israel, so what about the other ten tribes? We know according to the scriptures, that they will never be back there, to be dealt with by the Spirit of God, until the last days, so does that exclude them from having any part in the body of Christ? Absolutely not. When Paul and the other apostles went into other nations, preaching the gospel, who do you think were the first to hear them? Those Jews of the other ten tribes, which were scattered in dispersion, were the first ones they preached to. The apostle Thomas went all the way into India preaching the gospel. That is where he was killed; there in one of the strong holds of the Hindu religion. Yes, they always sought out the Jewish element of people to preach to first, wherever they went preaching the gospel. There was a dual purpose in that, of course. Not only were the Jews to be the first to hear the gospel preached, but from among them, God would always raise

up someone to interpret the apostle's message to the Gentile element in every place. They could preach to the Jewish element in their mother tongue, but when they preached to the Gentiles, the message had to be heard in their native language, whatever it happened to be, so that gave them a twofold purpose in preaching to the Jews of each area first. But the point is, there will be Jews from all twelve tribes, in the bride of Christ, which will be represented in the total makeup of this city we are exploring. God knew where they were, and what it required to reach them, and therefore the gospel message reached all that were foreordained to hear it, in that first age of Christendom. The epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, was an epistle written to the Jewish Christians in dispersion, for the term Hebrew, means stranger-or foreigner. When Abraham first went into the land of Canaan, the Canaanites called him a Hebrew, because he was a foreigner, and that is what those Jews in dispersion were to the native people of these various areas. Well what we are saying is that Jews were the first to enter into this spiritual habitation called a city, through these twelve gates of pearl, and Gentiles came in later, and through the ages since, this spiritual city has taken on some huge dimensions, but none can be measured by the means of natural mankind. Now the gospel will once again be presented to the Jews, when the two prophets of Revelation, chapter 11, come upon the scene, but that will not be for the

purpose of adding another bunch of them to the bride of Christ, for the total element will be in heaven with Jesus the Bridegroom, before they all hear the gospel. Therefore we need to understand that God is gathering another element of Jewish people to be dealt with strictly upon a different basis. As an indirect result of their preaching, or prophesying, there will be a great multitude of martyrs come out of the great tribulation, having washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. These are seen in the last half of Revelation, chapter 7, worshipping and giving glory to God, and they will reign with Christ in the Millennium, along with the bride, but they themselves are not a part of the bride. Now those types and shadows were all right there in the law of Moses, pointing to the one who would one day come upon the scene in Israel to perfect God's plan of salvation, but none of them actually gave any clear promise to the Gentiles. Only what God spoke to Abraham, saying, In thee and thy seed, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, actually gave a definite promise to the Gentiles, and who then knew what that meant? Hallelujah! I am glad and thankful to be among those that are so blessed, for except for the grace and mercy of God: I could be on my way to hell, with this great multitude of degenerates we see out here in the world about us.

STREET OF GOLD--SEA OF GLASS

Alright now, as long as we are in chapter 21, we are only looking at this city from an external viewpoint; we have not yet seen the inside. Chapter 22 is what takes us inside, where we see the internal description of this beautiful city, which is none other than paradise, back on earth again. Verse 21 of chapter 21, speaks of the street (singular) of that city, being pure gold, like transparent glass, but chapter 22 is what begins to give a description of it, from an internal viewpoint. As for the street, singular, of it: we know that a literal city of these dimensions has many streets, so there has to be a reason why this one street stands out, a street that is pure gold, and is as transparent glass. What does such a description add up to? We know that literal gold, no matter how much it is refined, never appears like that, so we have to look beyond the natural for our answer. In chapter 15, a sea of glass is seen in heaven, and standing upon it, are those that have gotten the victory over the beast. (When? In that dark tribulation hour.) And over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name. In other words, That is the martyrs of chapter 7 that have been killed because of their faith in God, during the reign of the beast in the 3 1/2 years of great tribulation. What they are standing upon, speaks of

the faith they had, that made them willing to die, rather than deny their God. Yes there is going to be a great multitude of both Jews and Gentile foolish virgins, that will be faced with martyrdom in that hour, and all they will have to stand upon will be their faith in God. Verse 3 says, "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." That speaks of two elements of people, the Jewish saints will sing the song of Moses, and the Gentile foolish virgins will sing the song of the Lamb. Now as to what they are standing on, just consider this; glass is a substance made from sand, and sand is an element of the earth that has to be put in the fire, and be melted down before it can be turned into clear glass. So this sea of glass, speaks of something that has been through the fire, and been purified, and when you consider our faith, that is exactly the case. It is made pure by the fires of persecution, and by the various trials and tests of life itself. But the key as to the identity of these who stood upon this sea of glass, is what they had gotten the victory over, and when we know what they had gotten the victory over, we can better understand what the sea of glass they are standing on represents. So we will say this, The sea of glass is figurative, and temporary, for when God resurrects them, the sea of glass will pass out of existence. It will no longer be needed.

SPIRITUAL HOUSE **FORESHADOWED**

In the 16th chapter of Revelation 21, the city was measured and found to be of equal length, breadth, and height, so let us go to Ephesians 3:14-19, and see how the apostle Paul used that same terminology. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That He would grant you, accordingly to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, (watch this 18th verse now.) May be able to comprehend with all saints (to comprehend is to understand) what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." Paul is speaking of a faith and love that measures in all directions, and that is able to comprehend all things. A person who truly loves God cannot help but come out knowing more than he did, when he started out, but the true love of Christ in our hearts, far surpasses all the knowledge in the world. When you hear a lot of people talk, you know that everything they are saying is coming right out of the top of their head, and that kind of knowledge is not worth two cents, spiritually. That

kind of knowledge possesses very little of the love of Christ. Yet carnal people use that head knowledge to try to make everyone else look like a bunch of idiots. Brothers and sisters: I thank God for a revelation and for a love that runs deeper than just this outer shell. That kind of love will not cast precious pearls before the swine of this world. Jesus never spent time messing around with know-it-all types of characters that just wanted to make a show of what they knew. But the point is, Paul used terminology like this to speak of our growth in Christ. Alright now, I mentioned the epistle to the Hebrew Christians. Some scholars dispute about Paul being the author of that epistle, but I have no doubt whatsoever that Paul was the author of it, for I see Paul all through it. Furthermore he was not excluding the Gentile Christians in any way, but the things he had upon his heart to write about, were mostly things that only Jewish people would understand back then, when Gentiles were fresh out of paganism, and would not have known anything at all about types and shadows and ordinances of the law of Moses. Only Jews would relate to terminology such as this, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, (what Gentile would have been familiar with that terminology?) Hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things." Gentiles at that time, might not have even used the term, fathers, in referring

to their elders, and certainly they were not familiar with the law of Moses, and the writings of the prophets. So now, let us go to chapter 3 in Hebrews, and let us pay attention to the references pertaining to a house. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; (He is bringing out the Jewish side of this.) Who was faithful in all his house." What kind of house was that? Well, you go back to Exodus, Numbers, and Leviticus and you will see it there. But remember, as Moses came off the Mount, his testimony was that God had told him, See that thou build it after the pattern of the heavenlies. That is why I said, Moses saw something while he was up there. God had to let him see the blueprint for the true church, the bride of Jesus Christ. So pointing to Jesus, Paul continues, saying, "For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath built the house hath more honor than the house. For every house is built by some man; be He that built all things is God." Here Paul is pointing to the fact that there is another house, which was foreshadowed in the law, by a house built by man. But the house it foreshadowed, is a house built by God Himself. Moses built the tabernacle in the wilderness, which foreshadowed the house we are reading of, in the 21st chapter of Revelation. Verse 5, "And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of

those things which were to be spoken after; (meaning, coming on later) But Christ as a son over His own house; whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Praise the Lord! Saints, this is why we are looking at this city from it external description; what we are seeing is a preview of the anointing presence and glory of God, as He has chosen to display Himself, when He comes upon the bride Church people for the eternal age. Actually though, inside, it is the same paradise that Adam and Eve were in. It is just that, as the centuries of time have come and gone, God has let it take on the image, or description, of a city, instead of a garden. But we must keep in mind above everything, that we are not dealing with a materialistic, tangible substance; for when you have an immortal body, you no longer need literal walls, air conditioning, umbrellas nor stoves. We will have no use for any of these things in that eternal age. People have talked about living in a mansion, and living next door to Jesus, and all such things as that; all because of what Jesus said in John 14, "In my Father's house are many mansions." Almost every denominational church type funeral will have that scripture included in it. But the truth of the matter is; we are the mansions of the house of God, for He dwells in us. Different translations of the Bible have different wording of those verses, but the important thing is

to be in God, and have Him is us. We rest in Him.

THE TRUE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

There is yet one more point of language application that we want to look at here in the book of Hebrews, so let us turn to chapter 8, verses 1-6. We get the similarity of the language used here. "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: (He is going to sum up what he has been dealing with in prior chapters.) We have such an high priest; who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Well, if the Lord pitched it; what did He pitch it for? It was so He Himself can dwell in it. Therefore we must realize that God is not coming to earth to dwell in a natural building. He does not need a natural building; and neither will you. Therefore our purpose now is to understand what paradise really is. Is it another glob of earth with more trees, flowers, and such like? Mankind has been searching for paradise, for the tree of life, and the fountain of youth, ever since Adam and Eve were driven from the garden

of Eden; but what they do not know: is that God is every bit of what they have been searching for. It is hard for a carnal mind to visualize God as being all of that. Verse 3, "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man (Jesus) have somewhat also to offer. For if he (Jesus) were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when He was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, (God) that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount." Brother, Moses was up there with God for 40 days and nights, while that great display of His power so terrified the children of Israel at the foot of the mountain, that they turned their backs to the mountain and said, Let Him speak to Moses. Not even an animal could come close to the mountain without being stoned. God made the old mountain a holy place while He was revealing Himself to Moses. God just kept moving from scene to scene, instructing Moses specifically, on how to set certain things pertaining to the tabernacle, and the ordinances the congregation was to observe. Those Jews came on the scene, lived their lives, and died, for centuries, fulfilling all those ordinances, without ever really knowing what they pointed to. We, here at the end time, are able to look back and know that they pointed

to what God was going to do through His only begotten Son Jesus, the Christ. Jesus was the fulfillment of what every one of those sacrifices in the law pointed to. So verse 6 says this, "But now hath He (Jesus) obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." Of course we all know that the covenant, was a covenant wherein He would give eternal life to mankind, and that eternal life was actually God giving a gift of Himself to that of the believer. As we have said already, God is a spirit; and it is a measure of that Spirit which He is, that he imparts to every true believer, through His only begotten Son Jesus, the Christ.

GOD HIMSELF IS LIGHT

Having made these points from the writings of the apostle Paul, let us now go back to the 21st chapter of Revelation and pick up where we left off. "The street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." That is how John saw it. Now in verse 22 he says, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." We know that the word temple, in our earthly usage, is always related to a particular kind of building, constructed for the sole

purpose of man meeting God therein. This is where man goes, to approach God, and worship Him. That is why, under the law, King Solomon was instructed to build that beautiful temple, and told exactly how to build it, and what a magnificent building it was. But we realize today that this natural building, with all its splendor, was only a type of the true temple of God, that you and I are. That is why Jesus said to His disciples, (when they said, Look at the beautiful building), Tear it down and I will raise it up again in three days. He was speaking of the temple of His body; but they did not know that, then. In a natural temple, there is a cornerstone; we have already talked about that. But in God's spiritual temple, Jesus Christ is the architect, the administrator, the high priest and also the chief cornerstone. This building starts with Him, and it has to end with Him. We cannot say that there is going to be a certain place inside this building, where the presence of God will be manifested, because the whole thing is the presence of God, as He has come down to earth to dwell with His redeemed creation. Notice this next verse now, but do not let it confuse you. "And the city had no need of the sun, (That is true, because the whole thing is light. Do you understand what we mean by that? God Himself is light, and He can either illuminate your pathway, or completely blind you, which ever suits His purpose. I will never forget the time when I received the Holy Ghost:

When I got up, all the lights in that building looked like one gigantic light, and everything was so light to me, it seemed that if I opened my eyes wide, I would be completely blinded by that great light. Therefore God Himself being light, this city has no need of any other light, so we will continue reading the verse.) neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Now saints, there is no contradiction here; we just have to let some other scriptures reveal to us what is meant here. Jesus, the anointed One, that took our place at Calvary, was crucified, buried, then arose from the dead, and has been high priest ever since, will come back to earth with His bride saints, and rule as King, with all authority, for one thousand years. But when that is over, and redemption is completed, and the earth has been cleansed of that stain of sin: and all the wicked dead have been resurrected and cast alive into the lake of fire, and there is no more trace of sin: the whole redeemed kingdom will then be delivered back up to the great eternal Spirit, the Father of all creation, and He will then come back fully into His creation. That begins eternity, and that is when this city will be a reality. Not naturally; but spiritually. It just simply points to the fact that the great eternal Spirit is back on earth, fully dwelling in His redeemed family, as He did in the beginning. But it says here that the Lamb is Jesus, the Christ, referred to in Paul's writings, as the firstborn, and the

first begotten from the dead. Therefore let us realize that if He is the first begotten from the dead: He is the beginning of the redeemed family of God, and brother: in ancient times, the law of God declared that the elder son stood in line to inherit the father's birthright. Therefore it was to him many times, that the younger children had to look for whatever they might benefit from the father's inheritance. Of course we realize that many of those firstborn sons forfeited their birthright, but Jesus is one firstborn son that did not forfeit it, and because He did not, we are going to know Him in eternity as our elder brother. No longer will He be Prophet, no longer will He be Priest, nor King; but we are going to see Him strictly as the elder brother that loved us enough to take our place at Calvary. Every time we see Him, we will be reminded of the fact that He shared the Father's inheritance with us. Hallelujah! There will be no selfishness, nor jealousy. All of the redeemed children of God are going to be so grateful that they will gladly give Him that recognition as head of the family, even though we are all equal, then. Every redeemed soul will know his or her relationship to the Creator. There will be no one elbowing, trying to get ahead of anyone else. All of that kind of stuff is attributes of the devil, and he will be completely out of the picture, then. Now as we consider the great host of angels that have been loyal to the Creator; we realize that some like

Gabriel and Michael have been greater than the others, so do you not think it will be the same way in the family of the redeemed? Some will be greater in the quality of what they are, as a person; but they are not going to be lording it over one another. Each individual will know within his capacity, how to conduct himself, or herself, as the case may be.

WATER IS A FILTER

There is another point I want to make here in connection with what verse 23 says, about there being no need for the light of the sun or moon in that new city. It just reminds me of a verse in the 30th chapter of Isaiah, but before we read it, let us go back and read Revelation 21, verse 1, which says, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." Now it says that there is no more sea; but you believe me: there is still going to be just as much water as there has ever been; it will just be as it is today. So now let us look at Isaiah 30:26, which says, "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Brother when

the sun comes out seven times brighter than before: you had better have something between you and it, to serve as a filter, or you will burn to death. That is why I say, God will take the water from those huge oceans and seas and put it right back out there in space, where it was before the flood of Noah's day, and it will once again serve as a filter between the sun and the earth. Now in order for the sun to be that bright, the earth would have to be brought back closer to it, and that is exactly what will happen. Instead of it taking 365 1/4 days for the earth to go around the sun, like it does now; it will be brought back, to a perfect circle of 360 degrees or days, as it was before the flood, and that extra water that we have had here ever since then, will once again be back, serving its original purpose. Well when you get the sun shining 7 times brighter than before, and on the night side, the moon shining as bright as the sun: there will be no more night. There will be no night on the planet earth. I doubt if there will be much sleeping going on then; but we will leave that to eternity, and get back to the 21st chapter of Revelation, and continue on.

WHAT FOLLOWS THE MILLENNIUM?

As we continue looking at this city of gold, verse 24 says, "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." Now who are these people, and where do they come from? This is absolutely the natural people that have come through the Millennium period. In Matthew 25, we see Jesus separating two elements of people that have survived the great tribulation. One group is ushered into the Millennium, and the other group is reserved for the lake of fire. Those who are spared will be people from every nation, that will repopulate the earth during that thousand year reign of Christ and His bride on earth. This of course, is what Zechariah 14:16 is pointing to, for it says, "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, (The King is Jesus) the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." This then, lets us see that there will be people from all nations that are spared, and they will have children born unto them, and from that vast number, a large element of them will pass right on into eternity. Now since I have led into this, let me say a little more about these natural people that are spared, and ushered into the Millennium. The Creator never goes contrary to His word, nor His purpose; therefore He sees that there is a remnant saved from all nations, that is, left alive, saved from

destruction. These are the ones Jesus and His bride saints are going to rule over for one thousand years; them and their offspring, as it says in Revelation 19:15, with a rod of iron. Satan will be bound, during that time, and will not be around to instigate trouble, but you have to realize that these mortal people still have that old Adamic nature, (fallen nature) and therefore have to be ruled over with a rod of iron until that old nature is brought under control. Isaiah 65 tells us that longevity of life will be restored then, so a person born at the beginning could still be living a thousand years later. God would be unjust to allow those people to pass into eternity, having never been tested by evil, so that is why Revelation 20:7-15 tells us that Satan will be loosed out of his prison, and allowed to go out and deceive as many of those mortal subjects as he can. Now Bro. Jackson: Do you really mean that the devil is going to deceive some of them? Absolutely. The Bible tells us that the number he deceives, is as the sand of the sea. You must remember; they have only known what it was to live under a righteous rule. They have never had a spirit coming to them in the wee hours of the night, giving them thoughts that were completely contrary to the will of God. Therefore when the devil does get his chance at them, a great multitude are deceived, and gathered into a great army to battle against the true saints of God. What is Satan's motive? He wants to get back in control of this planet. It says in

chapter 20 that his great army compassed the camp of the saints, and the beloved city which is natural Jerusalem, where Jesus has ruled as King for a thousand years. God will let him (Satan) gather an army, God will let him have a motive, and He will let all of those deceived ones have a motive with him: to get control of the planet, but then notice what it says in verse 9. Once they are all in position, as though to take over headquarters, fire drops out of heaven and devours them. The whole deceived mass is consumed with a supernatural display of fire from God, and the devil is then cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet already are. When it gets to that point; God does not play around with them. What is left of the mortal people after that, will be those who were tested by Satan, but were not deceived. Their names will be in the book of life, and they will pass on into eternity with Christ and the immortal saints. But before the eternal age begins; the great white throne judgment has to be set up. This will be the last time Christ will sit on any kind of throne, for when this is completed, all things are then delivered back to the Father, according to the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, and we are in eternity, and Jesus is known as our elder brother. But this great white throne judgment is what we see described in the 7th chapter of Daniel. He saw the judgment set up, the books opened, the wicked destroyed, and the kingdom given to the saints of the Most High,

just like we see here in the 20th chapter of Revelation. Let us read a few verses from Revelation 20, starting with verse 11. "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Brother that is going to rid this old planet of all traces of sin. No evil or corrupt thing will be left in it. Only the righteous saints of all ages will remain. One thing you might take note of, in those verses we just read, is the fact that no dead were given up by space. The sea, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; but none came from space. I do not know how all of this is going to work out, if they keep pushing this space program; but I do know this book (the Bible) has to carry through exactly right, regardless of what man thinks. I was just thinking about that space ship Challenger that blew up. If it had blown up just a little later, it

would have been out of earth's gravity pull, and those bodies would have been sprinkled around out there in space. But as it is, they are back on earth, lying out there in a grave of water, awaiting their time to be resurrected.

INSIDE THE CITY OF GOLD

Well saints, I told you when we started this message that it would lead off into many different directions before we finished it, so I imagine you can see by now what I meant. I felt like we should try to give it full coverage though, while we were on it. The city we are looking at is only for the redeemed, so that leaves a lot of people to be accounted for, that have lived on this old planet in the centuries since Adam's fall. But the great white throne judgment takes care of all of them; therefore let us get back to verse 25, in the 21st chapter of Revelation, and complete the message. "And the gates of it (the city) shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." Now these nations of people are those mortals that lived on earth during the Millennium, whose names were found written in the book of like. Let us go back and read verse 24. "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor

into it." There is a place for those nations of people that were saved from destruction, and they are going to dwell right here on this planet in the eternal age. They are not bride saints; they are going to be subject nations. They will be more like servant type people, even though they have eternal life. They will be the vine dressers and caretakers of the earth. That is the best I can explain it, for the scriptures do not give a detailed account of what their responsibilities will be. Remember though that the gates of this city speak of the entering into, of the plan of salvation. So it says that they shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. Then verse 26, still speaking of the nations, says, "And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. (the city). And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." That brings us to the point where we can go inside the city now. Everything we have seen this far, has been seen from an external viewpoint. We sing the song Inside the gate, Inside the gate, so let us see what it looks like inside the gate. Let us see if there are any ivory palaces, or any brass door knobs. No. You are not going to see any of that; for all of that has come from traditions, and not from the scriptures, because this city is as clear as glass. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal,

(Brothers and sisters: Everything in this city is clear. Surely after studying this, our spiritual vision ought to be a little better.) proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Yes, saints, inside this city, God is going to be the central figure, or we will say, the central source of attention. So notice this next verse, as we are looking at that throne position. "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month." It says, In the midst of the street, so what are we looking at? We are looking at a boulevard. Let me describe it like this, as we enter into this city, we can see somewhere in front of us, such a display of the majesty and glory of God. The way He has manifested His presence: He draws all attention and respect from His creatures. But notice: we enter the city on a divided street, because the river of water of life from the throne of God, comes right down the middle of it. Of course this is all symbolic, but that river of life speaks of the ever flowing presence of the Spirit of God: flowing to the soul of man. It is not a natural river at all. It is not a river that gives life to the natural trees that are growing; it is a river of the eternal presence and moving of the Spirit of God, which is the water of life that Jesus referred to. So as we think of the street here, let us visualize a divided highway, with a body of water as a median, for here: is symbolized how we approach unto, and depart

from the presence of God. In other words, it is not just a mingling; all coming up and down on the same pathway. On the road from here to North Carolina, as you approach one city, there is a body of water between the two sides of the highway. You go into the city driving on one side of the body of water, and you leave the city driving on the other side, and this little lake, or whatever it is, is lined with beautiful trees. Just thinking in the natural, I used to think of this setting right here in chapter 22, when I would pass there, for it is just exactly what we have pictured right here in this spiritual setting. Just remember: the street is pure gold, clear as glass, and the river of life as clear as crystal, so if the street is divided: the river is the median that separates the approach and departure to and from the presence of God. Therefore brothers and sisters: that kind of picture is going to take up the major part of what is seen inside this big beautiful city of gold. Alright now, in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life. In other words, the trees are plural here. It is no longer just the one, that started out in paradise where Adam and Eve were. Here we see rows of them, and they are not standing on each side of the street; they are on each side of the river. "On either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month." Notice here, it is in the female gender. In the original paradise, there was one tree,

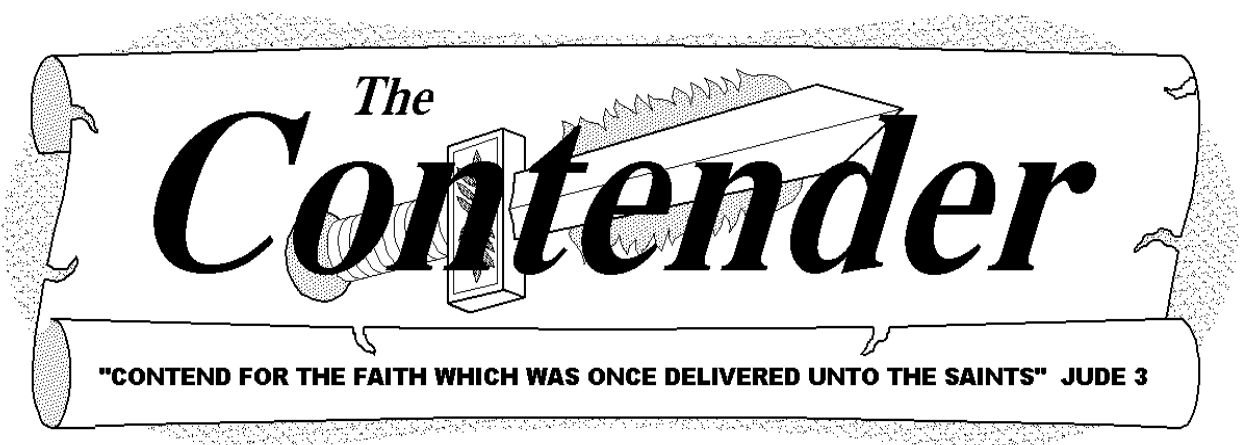
by which, if man had not sinned, every son and daughter of God would have been born off of the life of that tree. Then as they multiplied themselves in relationship to that tree, it would have become many trees; because the fruit of it is all figurative of the offspring of the law of it. But because of sin, Adam and Eve were driven from paradise, and the tree of life, until Jesus Christ came, who was the righteous branch grafted in. Hallelujah! This was not a fruit born by natural process, off of that tree. So we see here that the tree of life is still in paradise, but in plurality, and in the feminine gender. There it was masculine; but here, it is feminine, because it is to signify, or point to the Church, the family of God which is now positioned in relationship to God, and His plan. If you can understand the spiritual language, the leaves are figurative of the nature and attributes of God, when He dwells in His creation, in the fullness of His substance. The fruit then, is not something that is to go on and bear offspring. It is speaking of the nature that the redeemed family manifested in this present life, while still in this natural body of flesh. Now we speak of nine fruits of the Spirit, and this speaks of twelve, but we will not be able to bear the other three until after we take on immortality.

NEW NAME FOR OVERCOMERS

Let us look at two or three more verses, and then we will consider this message finished. Verse 3 says, "And there shall be no more curse: (of course not, for redemption has ended the curse.) but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; (the city) and His servants shall serve Him: (servants here, speaks of the nations that have been preserved out of the Millennium and brought over.) And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." Some will ask, What does that mean? There would be one of two things that it means. Either it is a word that means, every true, redeemed child of God, that has been fully restored to that full relationship to the great eternal Spirit; now understands fully what God is to them, or it means that the redeemed people of God, who are no longer subject to sin: that has separated them from their Creator, are now lifted up in full relationship to Him, and He can now fellowship with them as He did in the beginning, with Adam and Eve. It has something to do with the way God will manifest Himself to His fully redeemed and restored family, but to try to pin it down exactly would be going a little too far. After Jacob wrestled with the Lord all night, he said, I have seen the Lord face to face. But we know it was really an angel that he wrestled with,

so we just have to leave room for this figurative language, and know for sure that if we are true children of God, we will understand all we are supposed to, when the time comes. So, "They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." It was said to those of the Philadelphia age, concerning the overcomers, I will write upon him my new name. Well it says more than just that. Chapter 3, verse 12, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I WILL WRITE UPON HIM THE NAME OF MY GOD, AND THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD: which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from God; and I will write upon him my new name." This is a promise to overcomers; but rest assured: you are not going to have that, while you are still walking in mortal flesh. It is only there: that this new name is going to be a reality. "And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun." Why? Because inside this city, they are walking in the presence and glory of the creator Himself, who is light. That is why there will be no night; the Creator has brought paradise back to earth. "For the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." There will be just as many beautiful trees and even more so, as there is now, and there is going to be natural water flowing. There will be fountains, streams, springs and lakes, but there is not going to be large oceans like we

have now, for all of that excess water will be restored to its original purpose also, the purpose we have already mentioned. "And he said unto me, "These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done." Brothers and sisters, Five hundred years into the Millennium, we will know a lot of things that we do not know now. Living here, just before the Millennium starts, we can sure see the need for it. How many of you really can see the need for the Millennium? Of course you can. We can see and understand things about it today, that people living 500 years ago could not understand. It was just a fantasy to them; but it is more than that to us; it is a necessity. Therefore if that be true: I say this, by the time we are 500 years inside the Millennium, we will understand the eternal age. Why do I say that? Brothers, this mortal flesh is a handicap, when it comes to understanding spiritual things; but after living in immortality for 500 years, we are going to know and understand things that this old flesh could not now stand to know. Hallelujah! Praise His name. I do pray that this has helped you though, and I believe it has. Amen.



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