

The New Earth is the Temple of God **Revelation 21:22-27**

Well let's turn in our Bibles please to the book of Revelation chapter 21. The subject of our study today will be verses 22 through 27. Revelation 21: 22, regarding the new heavens and the new earth, John says:

“²² And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. ²³ And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. 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. ²⁵ And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. ²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

There is an old hymn that says, “This world is not my home. I'm just a-passing through. If heaven weren't my home, O Lord, what would I do? The angels beckon me from heaven's open door, and I don't feel at home in this world anymore.” This hymn and hundreds of others just like it express the discontent that Christians have with this life and this world, and the interest and the excitement and the anticipation that they have with the next life and with the world to come.

Christians are fascinated with what life will be like in the eternal state, where there is not only no more death or sorrow or crying or pain, but where they also experience the immediate presence of God and personal fellowship with God. It is exciting beyond words to contemplate being in a world where sin and all of its effects are completely eradicated, and where being in the immediate personal presence of Christ is our daily delightful experience.

This is why these last two chapters of the book of Revelation are so delightful to contemplate, because they open a window into what our future eternal life will consist of, and what it will look like. As we have proceeded through 21, we have seen where we are going to live, we have seen the blessings we will enjoy, and we have seen the deliverances that we will have, from all of the things that trouble us so much now in this life.

Our future is paradise restored, our future is paradise perfected, and our future is paradise as our eternal home. That is a glorious future to contemplate. This paradise will be inhabited by a perfect church made up of perfected believers in Christ, who are pictured and symbolized as the bride of Christ, and who are pictured and symbolized as the holy city, the new Jerusalem.

Now last week, we examined verses 9 to 21 together, and there we saw the appearance of the city, and we saw that the city, the new Jerusalem, shined with the glory of God. It was

surrounded by salvation, and that salvation was brought to us through the twelve tribes of Israel, as they brought forth, humanly speaking, the Messiah for our salvation.

That salvation, we saw, encompassed people from every point on the globe—north and south and east and west. That salvation was proclaimed to the whole world by the apostles in their writings and by their evangelistic efforts, which form the foundation of the worldwide church as we have known it for the last 2,000 years.

We then saw, not only the appearance of the city, we also saw the measurement of the city. And we saw that God has marked out His church for His eternal protection. We saw that like the Holy of holies of the Old Covenant Jewish temple, the church will be indwelt by the presence of God forever, because like the Holy of holies, it was a perfect cube. So this perfect church is symbolized as being that perfect cube of the Holy of holies in which God now dwells forever.

We also saw that the church is vast in size, made up of a multitude which no man can number, and we saw that the church is perfectly complete—not one believer is missing from it.

Finally, having seen the appearance of the city and the measurement of the city, we considered together last week the material of the city. As we looked at the construction materials used to build this city, we saw a message about the beauty of the church, we saw a message about the purity of the church, we saw a message about the value of the church, and we saw a message about the permanence of the church. These valuable and precious building materials spoken of here tell us that the church is of great value, it tells us that the church has intense beauty, it tells us that the church has endless longevity, and it tells us that church has flawless purity.

All of this glory the church possesses and displays in her appearance and measurement and material is the result of the glorious work of Jesus Christ, who is the pearl of great price, and as the pearl of great price, provides a door of entrance into the kingdom of God; and who, as the street of gold, provides the pathway to God.

But John is not done with his description of the new Jerusalem and the blessedness that the people of God are going to enjoy in the new earth. He now greatly expands and explains the chief blessing that the redeemed will enjoy in the new earth, which is the presence of God in our midst. John told us that God would dwell among us, you remember, back in verse 3.

It says in chapter 21 and verse 3, “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.” We saw in verse 16 of this chapter that the church on the new earth is the eternal and final Holy of holies. But now in verses 22 to 27, we see that God’s presence fills the entire church, and no place exists, where God’s special personal presence is not found.

So what we want to do today, is to consider together the glorious habitation of God in the new earth, and we want to see the temple of God in which we will dwell for all of eternity.

So in the first place then this morning, let's consider together the nature of the temple. Notice if you will verse 22. Verse 22 says, regarding this new Jerusalem, this holy city: "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

Now in verse 22, John makes a remarkable statement when he says of the new earth, that there is no temple in it. And the reason why that is such a remarkable statement is because the temple had always been the center of the religious life of the people of God, both in the Old Covenant community, and also in the New Covenant community. It has always been the case that for the people of God, the temple is a unique place unlike any other place on earth. The temple is the place you go in order to experience the special presence of God, because God manifests Himself in the temple in a way He does nowhere else on earth. Here on this earth, when you want to draw near to God, you go to the temple.

Now during the Old Covenant period, you went to the Jewish tabernacle or temple where the Holy of holies was, and there in the Holy of holies dwelt the special presence of God, and that is what you traveled to, when you wanted to draw near to God and be in the presence of God.

During the New Covenant period, the local churches are the temples of God, in which believers are both the living stones that make up that temple, and believers are the priests who minister within that temple.

The local church is where Christ then manifests His special personal presence on earth, which He made clear when He said regarding the local church in Matthew 18 and verse 20, that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." We must take note that this was a promise made to the gathered local church, not to a group of Christians getting together on a Thursday night for a Bible study in somebody's home.

The special presence of God is now manifested in the New Covenant temple, which is the local church, in a way in which it is manifested nowhere else. And the church is what you travel to when you want to be close to God, to be in the temple of God, and experience the special presence of God, which Christ has promised to His church, and which is something above and beyond His general omnipresence that is with us all of the time.

But we see a progression here, don't we? Under the Old Covenant, the special presence of God was manifested in only one place on earth, and that was the Jewish temple. Under the New Covenant, the special presence of God is manifested in many individual places all around the earth, wherever a biblically functioning church gathers. But in the new earth, the special presence of God will be manifested in every place, because the whole earth is now the temple of God, and His special presence is now manifested to every believer at every moment, wherever he may be on the face of the new earth.

In the new earth, the special presence of God is everywhere. It is not limited to a particular location that you need to travel to. You do not need to travel to the temple when you live within the temple; that is, when you live within the special presence of God already. So this is why the church in the new earth was symbolically described in verse 16 as a cube, the shape of the Holy of holies, because the special presence of God, that is, His Shekinah glory, dwells in the midst of the church on the new earth. In the new earth, there is no place to go in order to become closer to God, or in order to draw near to God, because God's omnipresence, has now become His special personal presence. God's omnipresence and His special personal presence have now become one.

This is why verse 22 says there was no temple *within* the new Jerusalem, because the new Jerusalem itself, in its entirety, is the temple. The Lord God almighty and the Lamb fill the new Jerusalem with the fullness of their presence. There is no place you will be able to go to get more of God, because all of God will be manifested everywhere in the new earth, all of the time.

Revelation 7 and verse 15 says of the believers in the new earth: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night *in his temple*: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." Revelation chapter 3 and verse 12 says, as a promise to the church at Philadelphia, "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 my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

So when Revelation 21 and verse 22 says, "And I saw no temple therein," it is not saying that there is no temple at all in the eternal state. It says that there is no temple therein, that is, inside of the new Jerusalem, because the new Jerusalem itself is the temple. Now I want you to notice Revelation 21 and verse 3. Look at it please. It says, "I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is *with* men, and he will dwell *with* them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be *with* them, and be their God."

So three times, God emphasizes in Revelation 21, verse 3, I will be with them, I will be with them, and I will be with them. And what that "with them" looks like, is that when they dwell on the new earth, they will not have to go someplace to find the special personal presence of God, but that special personal presence of God will surround them, wherever they are on that new earth.

Turn please with me if you will to Zechariah chapter 2. Speaking prophetically of the new Jerusalem that's in the new earth, Zechariah says this in chapter 2, verses 1 to 5: "I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand." And you remember that in Revelation 21:15, there was an angel with a measuring rod in his hand.

“² Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem,”—that’s the new Jerusalem—“to see what is the breadth thereof.” You remember when it was measured, it was twelve thousand furlongs by twelve thousand furlongs by twelve thousand furlongs. “³ And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, ⁴ and said unto him, Run, speak to this young man,” that is, to Zechariah, “saying, Jerusalem”—once again, this is the new Jerusalem in the new earth—“Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein.”

When you have a great multitude which no man can number, of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation in the new earth, you don’t build a literal physical wall around it. You can’t contain that many people within a wall. But notice what the wall of protection will be, verse 5: “for I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about,”—now here it is—“and will be the glory in the midst of her.”

What God is saying is, I’m the wall of protection around this city, and within this wall of my protection will be my presence. My glory will permeate, will saturate, will completely envelop everyone in this new Jerusalem. So God will be with them, and what that means is that His glory, His unveiled glory, will be manifest among them everywhere within that new Jerusalem.

Now turn please to Jeremiah chapter 3. In Jeremiah chapter 3, Jeremiah here is prophesying about the new heavens and the new earth as well, and notice what he says about them. Jeremiah 3:16 and 17:

“¹⁶ And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. ¹⁷ At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.” Now verse 17 is clearly talking about the new Jerusalem that is in heaven.

Therefore, when verse 16 says there’s not going to be a temple there anymore, there’s not going to be an ark there anymore, of course he’s talking to Old Covenant believers who understood it to be their temple and its central object involved in the worship conducted there, which was the ark that was in the Holy of holies where the Shekinah glory of God dwelt. So Jeremiah 3, verses 16 and 17 describes the new earth, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, and the fact that there will be no more temple to visit in that day, because the whole city, the whole earth, will be the temple of God.

So in the new earth, you cannot go visit a temple. You cannot travel to a temple when you are already living inside of the temple, and everywhere is the temple. There will be no need to go to church, because you will be living within the church, 24/7, for eternity. And this is why those

who despise the church, and want nothing to do with the church, and who never attend church even when they could, will not be in the new earth.

If you want nothing to do with the temple of God here on this earth once a week, how could you bear to live within the temple of God all day, every day, for eternity? And if you avoid the worship of God now, how could you endure worshiping God as your primary activity for all eternity? And if you are glad to avoid the special presence of God now in the local church by absenting yourself from meeting with the saints there, then how will you bear being in the special presence of God every moment, forever and ever?

Now to be sure, there are people who are providentially hindered from attending a local church, the temple of God on earth now, by age or by illness or by distance. But if you could be there, you would be there. These remarks I am making are not directed at such people. But know this, that if you want nothing to do with attending a biblically functioning church now, do not think you will be received into heaven as part of the church then. If you want nothing to do with the temple of God now, you will certainly not be living in it in the new earth.

A Christ-centered Christian is a church-centered Christian, because Christ loved the church, and Christ died for the church, and Christ is building the church, and Christ indwells the church with His special personal presence. And those who love Christ, love what He loves, and Christ loves the church, and so do they. Those who love the temple of God here on earth, are those who will live in the temple of God there in the new earth.

That brings us then to our second major point. Having seen the nature of the temple in verse 22, turn back please to Revelation, and notice secondly, the illumination of the temple in verse 23. Notice if you will verse 23: “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Verse 23 tells us that the new Jerusalem, which has no temple, because it is the temple, is filled with the light of the glory of God.

Now the fact that this would be the nature of the temple in the new earth is prophesied in Isaiah chapter 60. Turn please in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 60. Isaiah chapter 60 is a really important chapter, and I want you to take special note of it. Isaiah chapter 60 has numerous parallels with Revelation chapter 21, and a great deal of what is spoken of in Revelation chapter 21 is a fulfillment of the prophecies in Isaiah chapter 60. The entire 60th chapter of Isaiah predicts the blessedness of the new earth and the new Jerusalem.

I want you to notice Isaiah 60, verses 19 to 21. Speaking of this new Jerusalem, in verse 19 it says, “¹⁹ The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. ²⁰ Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. ²¹ Thy people also shall be

all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.”

Now in verses 19 and 20, twice the Lord is said to be the everlasting light of the new earth, and the sun and the moon will not be needed to illuminate the earth. Now I’m not suggesting there will be no sun or be no moon, but they will become irrelevant as the source of light in the new Jerusalem and on the new earth. It will be light, 24/7, for eternity. He’s saying that the light will be like the sun never goes down. That’s the consistency and the continuous nature of this light. And twice it says that God is the source of this everlasting light.

Now you’re in Isaiah 60—turn back to Isaiah 24. We’ll see the same thing said. In Isaiah chapter 24, verse 23, it says, “Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.” The light that the sun and the moon put out are going to be like a tiny spark, in comparison to the brilliance of the light of the glory of God. So the light from the sun and the moon will be utterly irrelevant in comparison with the brilliance of the glory of God that is going to fill the new earth in every place continuously for all eternity, without any remission.

God’s glory will provide constant light to the new earth so that there shall never be any period of darkness or any night-time ever again. Just as God’s universal presence removes any need for a localized temple in the new earth, God’s universal presence also removes the need for a localized source of light in the new earth. Since His presence illuminates everything, everywhere, all the time, there’s not going to be any dark spots into which you’re going to need to shine a flashlight.

Here will be the ultimate fulfillment of Psalm 139. Turn please to Psalm 139. You’re very familiar with this psalm, if you’re familiar with the Bible at all, because this is the psalm that exalts the omnipresence of God. And notice Psalm 139 verses 7 to 12. The Psalmist says:

“⁷ Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? ⁸ If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; ¹⁰ even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. ¹¹ If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. ¹² Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.”

Now there is a great deal of application to that right now in our personal lives, but there is an ultimate application of that in the new earth, in that wherever we are, God’s presence is and God’s light is, and never again will there be any darkness, and you will not be able to go away from the presence of God. On earth, you can go away from God. You can go away from the special presence of God. Just stay out of church. But in the new heavens, every place will be the church, and there will be no place to go to be away from the special presence of God.

And of course, we won't want to be, and that's the comfort. The Psalmist is saying, It's a huge comfort to me that everywhere I go is the presence of God, and the light of God, and it doesn't matter how high I go up, or how low I go down, or how far to the east, or how far to the west—wherever I go, you are there with your presence and with your light. And the ultimate fulfillment of that is going to be in the new earth.

Turn back please to Revelation 21. Revelation 21 and verse 23 makes it clear that both the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb share an equal glory, because both of them are an equal source of this universal light of glory in the new earth. Notice verse 23: “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon”—it doesn't say they're not going to be there, it just says they're completely unneeded, entirely eclipsed by the brilliance of God's light. “The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it,”—notice—“and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

Both the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb shine out an equal glory, because both of them are the source of this universal light in the earth. And the reason why they shine out an equal light of glory, is because they share an equal essence. Both of them are fully God.

Now you remember Revelation chapter 5, verse 13, right? If you don't, turn back there for a moment. This scene describes the throne room of heaven and the gathered saints in the presence of the enthroned God and the Savior Jesus Christ, who has taken the book out of His hand, as you recall. Now notice the praise and worship that flows. Revelation 5:13: “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, *and* unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

In other words, the Lamb receives the exact same praise and worship as the Father on the throne receives. You remember when John fell down to worship the angel, the angel said, Don't do that! Worship God! And here we see the whole host of heaven worshiping Jesus Christ. And not only are they not rebuked, as if Jesus is something less than God, but they are commended for that worship and praise, because Jesus Christ is God.

Jesus said of Himself in John 8 and verse 12, “I am the light of the world.” And this is spiritually true now, but it will also be physically true then, in the new earth.

We see this also spoken of in Luke chapter 1, verses 76 to 79, when Jesus was born. Here Zacharias, John the Baptist's father, is prophesying, and he says in verse 76: “And thou, child,”—you, John the Baptist—“shalt be called the prophet of the Highest:”—that is God the Father—“for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord” — that is Jesus Christ — “to prepare his ways; ⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, ⁷⁸ through the tender mercy of our God;”—now here it is—“whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, ⁷⁹ to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

So when Jesus said, “I am the light of the world,” this is what was being spoken of. He brought the light of the truth of the gospel spiritually to the world that was in the darkness of sin and damnation and depravity, and ultimately along with that spiritual light, He will bring physical light to fill the new Jerusalem and the new earth.

You see, without the light of God’s presence, the Holy of holies in the Old Covenant tabernacle would have been totally dark. The lampstand was out in the Holy place, but the Holy of holies had no source of light. But if you went in there, it wasn’t dark, because it was illuminated with the Shekinah glory of God.

In the same way, the entire new earth will be filled with the light of God’s glory as well. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all, and therefore there will be no darkness at all in the earth, either spiritually or physically.

You recall the story of the Mount of Transfiguration. When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain, the brilliance of His face, it said, did shine as the sun, and His raiment was as white as the light. He shined with the Glory of God. And we will live forever not only in the presence of that pure, beautiful, spiritual light, but also, in that pure, beautiful, physical light of His blessed presence and His infinite love, forever and ever in heaven.

Now I have to ask once again—What is your attitude toward that light? In John chapter 3, verses 17 to 21, Jesus says, “¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

“¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. ²¹ But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”

And you see, if we flee from the spiritual light that Jesus brings now, we will never dwell in that physical light that He provides later. Those who love darkness now, those who flee from the light of the truth of the gospel, will never be able to bear the light of God’s presence and God’s truth in the new earth. Those who prefer darkness now will live in outer darkness forever, where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. So if, when the light of the gospel comes to you, you embrace it, you may expect to also enjoy this blessed light of the new earth and dwell in it. But O, if you hate the light now, you will really hate the light then. And you see, it’s the nature of the damned and the depraved that they prefer darkness over light.

So how can you tell if somebody’s going to wind up in the new earth? Do they love the place of God’s special presence here on this earth? Do they love the spiritual light of Christ’s teaching

here on this earth? And if they love God's temple here, and they love God's light here, they will dwell in God's temple there, and they will dwell in God's light there. For heaven is just a continuation and a perfection of the trajectory that we have begun here on earth. And do not think that you can live like hell on earth, and wind up in heaven in the end.

That brings us to our third and final point. Having seen the nature of the temple in verse 22, having seen the illumination of the temple in verse 23, in the third and final place, consider together the occupants of the temple, in verses 24 to 27. Now turn back to Revelation 21 if you're not there, and let's read together verses 24 to 27. It says:

“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. ²⁵ And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. ²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

Now here in verses 24 to 27, we are told who will be included and who will be excluded from the temple of the presence of God in the new earth. Notice first of all, those who are included in the temple of the presence of God in the new Jerusalem are the saved of all the nations. Notice verse 24: “And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it.”

Who's in the new earth? Those who are saved. God's saving purposes are not small, God's saving purposes are not narrow, and God's saving purposes are certainly not confined to one ethnic group or one nationality of people. God promised Abraham in Genesis 17 that he would be the father of many nations. And here in the new Jerusalem in the new earth, we see the fulfillment of that promise when it says, “And the *nations* of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it.”

So God has saved a multitude of people no man can number out of the nations of the earth, we saw last week, from the north, the south, the east, and the west. And that's why this city is symbolically pictured as that square with those orientations. Now these people who are saved through faith in Jesus Christ are gathered together in the presence of God to live with Him forever. And guess where this might be prophesied of—Isaiah chapter 60. We've only turned there time and again this morning, have we not?

Turn back again, please, to Isaiah 60, verses 1 to 5. Here we see being gathered into the new Jerusalem the nations of the earth. God isn't going to just save the Jews, He's going to save all peoples of every class and category, and of every nationality and race. Notice chapter 60:

“¹ Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.” There's the light of God in the new earth. “² For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people:”—that's what we have now—“but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.”—here it is—“³ And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and

kings to the brightness of thy rising. ⁴Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. ⁵Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.” The sea symbolically represents the Gentile nations, and that’s why it says in Revelation 21:1 there shall be no more sea. In other words, it means that there will be no seething mass of unsaved Gentile nations in the new earth, not that there won’t be a literal ocean.

So this is exactly what is described in verse 24 of Revelation—“The Gentiles shall come to thy light.” And what is the light that they come to? It is the light of salvation that Christ brought at His first coming, and it is the light of the blessedness of living in the eternal temple in the new earth that is spoken of in Revelation 21.

Now turn back please to Revelation 21. When it says in 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,” and in verse 26, “And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it,” this is exactly what Isaiah is talking about when he says, “And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” Jew and Gentile will, as it says in verse 5 of Isaiah 60, flow together into one people, who are the citizens of the kingdom worshipping God forever and ever. This salvation of the nations occurred in a very small and a very limited fashion prior to the coming of Christ. We see Ruth the Moabitess, we see some people from Ninevah saved, but it was very small; it was very limited.

But the salvation of the nations exploded on the Day of Pentecost, in which representatives of a multitude of nations that are listed there in Acts chapter 2 heard the gospel. And it spread rapidly to the uttermost parts of the earth in the following centuries. Hundreds of millions of people from all the nations of the earth, and kings of many kingdoms have been saved by Jesus Christ, and will inhabit the temple of the new earth.

You’re in Revelation 21—turn back to Revelation chapter 7. In Revelation chapter 7, here we have a very brief summary of Revelation 21, for you recall that the book of Revelation is written in a cyclical, not in a linear fashion, so that we are brought time and again to the eternal state as we proceed through this book. And notice what it says in Revelation 7 and verse 9: “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; ¹⁰and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

So what we see, is that these kings of the earth mentioned here in Revelation 21:24 followed the counsel of Psalm 2, verse 10, where it says, “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. ¹¹Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹²Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all

they that put their trust in him.” The kings of the earth who followed the counsel of Psalm 2, verses 10 to 12, will bring the homage of their glory and honor and lay it before the enthroned Christ in humility and worship, and the people of the nations will do so as well. As it says in Revelation 21 and verse 26, “And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.”

So who’s going to be in heaven? All the people who are saved. Is it just going to be Jews? No, it’s going to be all the kings of the earth and all the nations of the earth who repented of their sins and received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. They will be those who inhabit the new Jerusalem on the new earth, and who live in the temple of God, and in the light of illumination provided by the glory of God.

Now there’s an interesting statement in verse 25. Notice it says, “And the gates of it,” that is, the gates of the new Jerusalem, “shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.” Now that’s a significant statement, because earthly gates of earthly cities were always shut at night time, because night time was a time of vulnerability and danger from enemies. But in the new earth, there will be no night. And in the new earth, there will be no enemies, because they have all been cast into the lake of fire. So there will be no need to shut the gate, because those who live on the new earth dwell in perfect security and total safety.

It would be like you living in your house, and not only not locking your front door, but just leaving it open all night long. Have you ever done that—just open all the doors of the house and go to bed? Ha! You wouldn’t think about doing that, would you? You would shut those gates by night, because you’re afraid of what’s out there and what might come in.

But in the new heavens, we will have such perfect safety and such total security that we will have no fear of anything ever harming us ever again, and therefore we can be entirely careless about our safety, because there is no danger. All the enemies of the people of God have been vanquished and cast into the lake fire, and so it is impossible that the city could or would ever be assaulted at any time by anyone for any reason.

Now we’ve got to go back to Isaiah 60 again. It should just fall open for you by now. Isaiah 60, notice verse 11: “Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces,” or the wealth, “of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.” So there’s coming a day, Isaiah says, when you won’t even need to shut the gates of Jerusalem. And all the Gentiles are going to come, not to attack you, but to bring themselves and their treasures to lay them down in homage at your feet.

The idea behind Isaiah’s prophecy is that the Gentile nations will bring their strength. That’s why it’s translated “forces.” The question is, what kind of strength is it? Is it military strength, is it economic strength? Well, it could be either, and that’s why some translations translate it “wealth” instead of forces. But whatever power—economic, military, personal, political—that the kings of the earth have, they’re going to bring them all, and they’re going to lay them down at the feet of Jesus.

And so just like the three kings from the East came and brought their gifts to Jesus and laid them down at His feet, that is a foreshadowing of how the nations of the earth are going to bring all that they have and all that they are, and lay them down at the feet of Jesus. And the nations of the earth and the kings of the earth have been doing that for the last 2,000 years. Now not all of them, but all of God's elect, of which there is a multitude which no man can number, of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation. All that the kings and the nations represent will be laid at the feet of Christ. It says in Psalm 86 and verse 9, "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name." So this, then, is the description of the occupants of the temple. They consist of the nations which are saved.

But notice secondly the description of those who are excluded from the temple of the presence of God. Revelation 21 and verse 27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

And so here is a description of the character traits of those who are not saved, and the behavior they practiced and were involved in during this life, and which they will be confirmed in for all of eternity, as Revelation 22:11 says.

Here in verse 27 is what those who are *not* written in the Lamb's book of life behave like: They are those who practice morally defiling behavior, they are those who practice the abomination of idolatry and the worship of false gods, and they are those who practice deceit and dishonesty, and embrace and teach lies that are contrary to God's truth—those are they who will not enter in to the new Jerusalem and the new earth and the presence of God. You recall that Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

And so three vices are mentioned here in verse 27. One cannot practice immorality, one cannot practice idolatry, and one cannot practice deceit and be a saved person. Saved people repent of such behavior, and saved people depart from such behavior, and saved people do not practice it or defend it or persist in it. Now, a believer may fall into such sins, but he does not continue in them, and he does not defend them or justify them. He repents of them, and they do not characterize his life.

Well then, this is the nature of the temple—it involves the entire world as being a place where the special presence of God dwells. This is the illumination of the temple—the light of the glory of God is the light of this new earth. And these are the occupants of the temple—those who are saved from sin, but *not* those who persist in sin, and practice it, and defend it, and justify it, and are characterized by it.

Being in the temple of God's special personal presence for all of eternity is the greatest blessing that salvation brings to us. There is no higher blessing than that. And this is what every believer

has always aspired to. It's not health, and it's not wealth. It's drawing near to God and being in the presence of God and having nothing standing between God and our souls. That's what we long for.

David says in Psalm 27, verses 4 to 6: "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. ⁵ For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. ⁶ And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD."

Now if that doesn't resonate with your heart at the deepest level, I wonder how it is that you can be a saved person. Because the heart of every saved person is that "I would dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple."

And that's what we're going to be doing for eternity. We're going to be in His house, we're going to be in His presence, we're going to be looking upon the wonder of His person, and we're going to be conversing with Him and inquiring of Him all the things we ever wanted to know and desired to know, regarding Him and His works and His glorious person, and we shall see Him, and He will talk with us.

And that is the pinnacle of the blessing of salvation. And that's where we're headed, and that's the destiny Christ is bringing us to, and that's the heartbeat of every believer in Jesus Christ—to be with Him and to love Him and to follow Him, and to never have anything be between us and Him. May the Lord cause us to have such a heart and to seek Him with all of our heart. And He says, If you do, I will be found of you. Shall we pray together.

Father, thank you so much for this blessed book, and for the wonderful glorious future that it describes for us, which we shall certainly have if we are saved, if we have repented of our sins and embraced Jesus as our Savior, and are following Him. And yes, we stumble in that following, but O, we turn from it, and we get up and we follow on to know the Lord—to know Him better, to know Him more fully.

And so Lord, be pleased to bring us into that great and glorious temple, where we dwell in your presence and in your light forever and ever, and where we enjoy the fellowship of all the nations of the saved, and where we have that perfect safety and security, and where we never need to worry again about being defiled by sin, or being around the defilers who so try to pull us away from you now.

O Father, may all of our names be found in the Lamb's book of life in that great day. For we have repented, we have believed in Christ as our Savior, we have embraced Him as our Lord, we follow Him by His grace. Father, have mercy on us we ask. In Jesus' name. Amen.