

April 9, 2017

## **The Blessedness of the People of God Revelation 21:2-4**

Well let's turn in our Bibles please to the book of Revelation chapter 21. I want to read chapter 21, verses 1 through 8; however, the focus of our study today is going to be on verses 2 to 4. Revelation chapter 21:

“<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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.

“<sup>5</sup> And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. <sup>6</sup> And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. <sup>7</sup> He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. <sup>8</sup> 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.”

The conclusion of the book of Revelation sets before us the glorious triumph of Christ over Satan and over all of his works. Satan and all those who served and followed him are forever punished in the lake of fire, and are forever removed from Christ's kingdom and from Christ's people. Never again will Satan and his people be able to tempt us or to persecute us.

But the conclusion to the book of Revelation not only sets before us the glorious triumph of Christ over Satan and all of his works, the conclusion of the book of Revelation also sets before us the glorious future and the dwelling place of the people of God. Christ provides us with a new heaven and a new earth that is as pristine and pure and perfect as the heaven and the earth were before the Fall of Adam.

In Revelation 21, paradise is restored, and the restless sea of humanity that lived in rebellion against God will never again inhabit the earth. This new heavens and this new earth is the eternal home that Christ has provided for those that He has saved from their sins. It is a place of permanent purity and holiness, a place where sin can never enter ever again.

There we will have eternal life, there we will have eternal happiness, and there we will have eternal peace. There we have perfect fellowship with God, and there we have perfect fellowship with one another. Sin can never again degrade and ruin our fellowship with God or with each

other. This, then, was the description of the dwelling place of the people of God that we saw last week, as we considered together verse 1 of Revelation 21.

Having seen last week the dwelling place of the people of God being the new heavens and the new earth in verse 1, this week we want to consider together two more glorious truths. First of all, we want to consider together the description of the people of God, in verse 2. There they are described as a holy city and as a bride. And then secondly, we want to consider together the blessedness of the people of God, in verses 3 and 4. And that blessedness consists in the presence of God being with them in verse 3, and in the absence of the curse from them, in verse 4.

The glories of the home Christ has prepared for us and the blessedness of the life that Christ has promised to us is almost incomprehensible to our fallen minds. The contemplation of our eternal state fills us with wonder and awe, and leaves us overwhelmed with amazement and gratitude as we read the verbal description given to us here, that seems entirely inadequate to convey the full reality of all that God has prepared for those love Him.

As we stand today at the edge of the shore of a vast ocean of blessing that God has provided as our eternal inheritance, let us wade out as far as we can in our mental understanding, knowing that we only grasp a tiny part of all that God has laid up for His own dear children in that new heavens and that new earth. Our eternal destiny will be something in which the reality that we experience will far surpass the expectations that were raised by the promises that were given. Heaven will not fall short of our expectations; instead, it will infinitely surpass them.

How often has someone told you about something, or promised you something, or sold you something, and said it will be this and this and this, and it will do this and this for you—and then after you received it, you were disappointed. It was less than what you expected, and less than what you were promised.

Well God comes along and He says, Heaven is going to be like this and this and this, and it's going to do this and this for you. And when you get there, you're going to say, I wasn't told the hundredth part of how wonderful it is. This so far exceeds my expectations that I cannot express how much more wonderful this is than I was ever led to believe by these limited verbal descriptions contained in the Bible.

Well then, let's consider our passage together today. In the first place, let's consider together the description of the people of God. The description of the people of God is in verse 2. Notice it says: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Having seen last week the dwelling place of the people of God in verse 1, which is the new heavens and the new earth, John now begins to describe the inhabitants of that dwelling place in verse 2. John describes the inhabitants of the new heavens and the new earth with two

metaphors: he describes them as the holy city, and he describes them as the bride of Christ. Notice if you will verse 2: “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Notice then first of all, John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem.

Now in the book of Revelation, there are sharp contrasts set forth between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of Christ. We have seen that there is a city in the kingdom of Satan, and we have seen that this city is called Babylon. It is the city that is full of abominations and fornication and filthiness and blasphemy. It is the city that kills the Christians within its midst. This city Babylon represents anti-Christian society in all its wickedness, wherever it appears in the world. This anti-Christian society, this Babylon, will be destroyed by Christ. We have seen that in chapters 17 and 18.

But in sharp contrast to Babylon, is the city of the kingdom of God. The city of God is here described first of all, as the holy city. It’s called the holy city because it is morally pure. Within it is no sinful practice or behavior. Within it, righteousness rules, and Christ-likeness characterizes the thoughts and words and behavior of every person within it. This holy city described here in verse 2 represents Christian society, in all of its righteousness and holiness.

So Babylon represents anti-Christian society, in all of its wickedness. The holy city represents Christian society, in all of its righteousness and holiness. This city spoken of here in verse 2 represents Christians as they live together in the new earth, in holiness and righteousness and purity together. Christians are going to live together in a society on the new earth, and that society is called the holy city.

Imagine living in a truly Christian city:

- A city where there is no need for police, or courts, or jails;
- a city where there is no crime, no fear, and no violence;
- a city where there is no need for fences, or locks, or alarms;
- a city where there is no discrimination between rich and poor, black and white, male and female;
- a city where there is no multiculturalism, no persecution, and no divisions;
- a city where there are no politicians, no regulatory agencies, no oppressive laws;
- a city where everyone does the right thing all of the time, in every circumstance;
- a city where everyone is kind, and everyone is patient, and everyone is understanding, and everyone is loving;
- a city where people care more about their neighbor than they care about themselves;
- a city where courtesy, and selflessness, and serving others is the practice of every citizen;
- a city where there are no hospitals, no doctors, and no drugs;
- a city where there are no sirens, no screams for help, no homeless people;
- a city where everyone is holy, where everyone is happy, and everyone is God-centered and God-focused;

- a city where the worship of God is the chief activity and the chief delight of all the people within that city.

Here in this city, in this heavenly society, people will live as God intended them to live before sin ever entered the human race. This is what the holy city looks like. But this city is not only called a holy city in verse 2, it's also called the new Jerusalem in verse 2.

Now we are told repeatedly in the Old Testament that Jerusalem was God's chosen city. For example, in Second Kings 21 and verse 7, God said: "In Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever." Many similar passages with similar language in the Old Testament tell us that Jerusalem was the special city of God. It was the city where His presence and His name dwelt, and it was the city where His temple was placed. So Jerusalem was established as the city of God.

But sadly, Jerusalem failed to worship God and to glorify God as she should have. For example, in Isaiah chapter 1, verses 21 to 23, it says of Jerusalem: "<sup>21</sup> How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. <sup>22</sup> Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water: <sup>23</sup> thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them."

So Jerusalem failed to worship God and glorify God as she should have. And her crowning failure was the rejection and the crucifixion of her Messiah, Jesus Christ. As a result, Jerusalem was rejected by God. Jesus said, regarding Jerusalem, in Matthew 23, verses 37 to 38: "<sup>37</sup> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! <sup>38</sup> Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." And of course we know that this city and that house was destroyed by God in 70 A.D.

Just as God rejected old Israel and created a new Israel with the New Covenant, so God rejected old Jerusalem and has made a new Jerusalem under the New Covenant, as well. Paul makes this clear in Galatians chapter 4. I would like for you to turn there with me, if you would. Galatians chapter 4, looking at verses 21 to 26. Paul says:

"<sup>21</sup> Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? <sup>22</sup> For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. <sup>23</sup> But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise."—talking about Hagar and Sarah, Ishmael and Isaac—"<sup>24</sup> Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar. <sup>25</sup> For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. <sup>26</sup> But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

Now there's a lot in that text, and my full exposition of it is available for free on SermonAudio to any of those who are interested in hearing the explanation of it. But clearly, the Old Covenant concept of Jerusalem has passed away with the Old Covenant, and the Jerusalem which is above has replaced it. The Jerusalem which is above is the new Jerusalem, and the author of the book of Hebrews speaks of that new Jerusalem in Hebrews chapter 12, verses 22 to 24. He says to the believers, "24 but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." And it is this heavenly Jerusalem that exists now in heaven, that is said to come down from God out of heaven, in Revelation 21 and verse 2.

Turn back with me, please, to Revelation 21. Notice verse 2, it says, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven." So this is the Jerusalem Paul was speaking of in Galatians chapter 4 and verse 26. This is the Jerusalem that the author of the book of Hebrews was speaking of in chapter 12 and verse 22. It is this heavenly Jerusalem that exists now in heaven, that is said to come down from God out heaven, and which will be the city of God on the new earth.

That's why, as Christians, we are not obsessed with the Jerusalem that's over there in Israel. We're obsessed with the Jerusalem that is in heaven. That is the holy city. And while the old Jerusalem failed to worship Jesus Christ, the new Jerusalem will certainly worship Christ, and it is this new Jerusalem, made up of all the saved, that God will own as His holy city, and the city where He will put His name forever.

It's very fascinating as you read the book of Isaiah, and see all the things it says about Jerusalem. For example, Isa 62:1-12. And as you're reading those statements, you're saying, That can't possibly apply to that city over there in the middle of the land of Israel. There's some other Jerusalem that it's speaking of—and it is this Jerusalem. This new Jerusalem, this holy city, is the Christian society of all of the saved who dwell together in the new earth. And God will dwell in the midst of *this* city with His special personal presence.

Turn to Isaiah chapter 65 in your Bibles, please. Isaiah 65, beginning at verse 17, God says: "17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create:"—now notice—"for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." This is the Jerusalem which is above, which will come down from heaven, and will be the city of the New Earth. And so when God said He would put His name in Jerusalem forever, this is the Jerusalem that He is speaking of.

So when Jesus ascended to heaven, the new Jerusalem, the society of the saved, was established there. And that new Jerusalem that is in heaven continues to grow, and one day it will come down to the earth, and that society of the new Jerusalem will inhabit the new earth, and it is that society in which we will live forever.

It is interesting to observe that the wicked city of Babylon rose up out of the sea of fallen humanity, but the holy city of Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven. The contrast in their origin, is what explains the contrast in their character.

Please turn back in your Bibles to Revelation chapter 21 and verse 2, and notice that a second characteristic of the inhabitants of the new heaven and earth is declared. Verse 2 says, “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven,”—now here is the second characteristic —“prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

Now the idea that a city would also be personified as a woman is introduced to us in the Old Testament. For example, Old Testament Jerusalem was referred to as “the virgin, the daughter of Zion,” in Isaiah 37 and verse 22. The idea that a city would also be personified as a woman was also introduced to us in Revelation chapter 17, when the city of Babylon was also called “the mother of harlots” and “the great whore.” But in sharp contrast to Babylon the harlot, we have Jerusalem the bride of Christ. So the symbolism of a city also being a woman is common in the Scriptures, and it should not come to us as a surprise here.

Now the symbolism of the church as the bride of Christ is well known, and is developed at length in Ephesians 5, verses 22 to 33. Furthermore, we have seen the church symbolized as the bride of Christ attending the wedding supper of the Lamb, in Revelation 19, verses 7 to 9. And here in Revelation 21 and verse 2, and later in chapter 21 and verse 9, which we’re going to look at subsequently, the church is explicitly declared to be the bride of Christ.

Notice if you will Revelation 21 and verse 9. It says, “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 shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” And then what did he show him? The new Jerusalem, the holy city, which is the society of all of the saved. Collectively, we form not only the holy city, the new Jerusalem, but collectively, we also form the bride of Christ.

And just as the city, new Jerusalem, is designed to symbolize the purity and perfection of a Christian society, so the symbolism of the church as the bride of Christ is designed to convey the commitment that Christ has to us, and the closeness that Christ has with us. The idea of marriage conveys the idea of commitment and closeness.

The church is the single object of Christ’s love, so that He will never forsake us for someone else. He is absolutely committed to us, and to us alone. Furthermore, the church has the most intimate relationship with Christ, into which no one else can ever intrude. Christ has a heart to heart relationship with us. We are as secure in Christ, and as close to Christ, as a husband and wife would be in the perfect marriage.

In Isaiah 61 and verse 10, it says, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth

herself with her jewels.” The Old Testament speaks of this marriage between Christ and His people, in which He clothes His bride with the garment of salvation and righteousness.

And so these two symbolic metaphors describe the inhabitants of the new earth, in relationship to each other, and in relationship to Christ. The inhabitants of the new earth in relationship to each other are a holy city, a perfect Christian society in which perfect love prevails between all the people who live there. And the inhabitants of the new earth in relationship to Christ are His bride, enjoying perfect security and perfect closeness, and sharing a transcendent love for one another that will never end.

Well that brings us then to our second major point this morning. Having seen in verse 2 the description of the people of God, that they are a holy city, and that they are the bride of Christ, notice in the second place then this morning, not only the description of the people of God, but secondly, the blessedness of the people of God. The blessedness of the people of God is spoken of in verses 3 and 4. Notice if you will verses 3 and 4:

“<sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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.”

Now verse 3 opens with a declaration that a great voice spoke out of heaven in order to convey the message of verses 3 and 4. The loudness of this voice and the heavenly origin of this voice are entirely fitting for the incredibly important announcement that is about to be made. This announcement that is made by this loud voice out of heaven summarizes the totality of the blessedness of the redeemed in two overwhelming statements: First of all, that God will dwell with His people, in verse 3; and secondly, that the curse and all of its effects will be forever removed, in verse 4.

Consider then first of all that the blessedness of the people of God consists in God dwelling in the midst of them. It says in 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.”

Now when it says that the tabernacle of God is with men, the word “tabernacle” conveys neither the idea of a tent, nor does it convey the idea of something that is temporary and transient and which can be packed up and moved. Rather, the word “tabernacle” conveys the idea of a dwelling place where God’s presence and God’s glory is manifested among His people.

For example, in Leviticus 26, verses 11 to 12, God says, “<sup>11</sup> And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. <sup>12</sup> And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and

ye shall be my people.” So what God is saying when he tabernacles among his people is, My presence and my glory is going to be in your midst.

Turn in your Bibles please to Ezekiel chapter 37. We want to read together verses 24 to 28. Ezekiel is talking about the future of Israel, the people of God, and he makes this very interesting statement in verse 24. He says, “And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.”

Now if you understand biblical chronology, you understand that David has been dead for centuries. And yet here it says, “David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd.” The word “David” here is used here by way of metonymy—that is, the substitution of one thing for another—for Jesus Christ, who is the son of David. So when it says, “David my servant,” you could just read that, “and Jesus, the son of David my servant, shall be king over them.” So David here is used by way of metonymy for Christ, all right?

It says, “<sup>24</sup> And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. <sup>25</sup> And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and my servant David,” that is, Jesus, “shall be their prince for ever.”

Now this land of Israel was never really “the land,” was it? When Abraham went into the land of Israel, did he think that was the land that God gave to him? It was just the foreshadowing of the land. He looked for the city whose builder and maker was God, the new Jerusalem. Read Hebrews 11:8-16. They were looking for a heavenly country. And you know, when God said to Abraham, I’m going to give you the land forever, did Israel have the land forever? Israel had the land, they lost the land, they had the land, they lost the land. They lost it for 2,000 years, and maybe now they’ve got it back again. The land that is never lost is the new heavens and the new earth, of which the land in the Middle East was just a picture, just like Solomon the son of David was a picture of the real son of David, who is Jesus Christ.

Let’s keep reading. Verse 26: “<sup>26</sup> Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them;”—that’s the New Covenant—“it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.” What sanctuary is that? Verse 27: “<sup>27</sup> My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>28</sup> And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”

So what God is saying is that through the ministry of my servant Jesus Christ, I’m going to give you the land. I’m going to make a new covenant with you and I’m going to tabernacle in the midst of you; that is, my presence and my glory will be in the midst of you forever and ever in the land that I give to you, which is the new earth. So God is saying in this passage in Ezekiel,

My presence and my glory will remain among you forever, based on the saving work of Jesus and the New Covenant - the covenant of peace - that He makes.

Now let's turn back please to Revelation 21. This passage in Revelation 21 and verse 3, when it says, "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," what this passage is telling us is that God will consent to be a God who shows favor to us, instead of wrath towards us; that God will be a God who will consent to have us as His own special people, who have permanent access to His immediate presence; and that God will consent to have personal fellowship with us and communicate with us as His own dear children.

In other words, what's being promised in Ezekiel 37, verses 24 to 28, and what's being promised in Revelation 21 and verse 3, is that God will be a Father to us, with all of the love and communication and provision that a perfect father would give to his own beloved children. He will never leave us or forsake us. He will always be with us, clear into infinite eternity.

What's being promised in Revelation 21 and verse 3 is that never again will God withdraw His presence from us. Never again will He place His wrath upon us, like he did upon Adam after the Fall. Instead, what's being promised here in Revelation 21 and verse 3 is that God will love us with an everlasting love, and with lovingkindness He will draw us to Himself forever.

A very beautiful and touching description of this love that God will have for us and express to us has already been given in Revelation chapter 7 and in verses 15 to 17. In Revelation chapter 7 and verse 15, it says of the saints, "<sup>15</sup> Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple:"—that's the new Jerusalem, that's the dwelling place of God, that's the tabernacle—"and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." That's exactly what it says in Revelation 21:3.

Verse 16: "<sup>16</sup> They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. <sup>17</sup> For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

So this, then, is what it means when it says in chapter 21 and verse 3 that He will dwell with us, and He will be our God, and we will be His people. We will have the most intimate of communion with Him, we will have His personal presence, we will have His fatherly care, we will have His unending commitment that He will never leave us or forsake us, for all eternity.

But the blessedness of the people of God not only consists in God dwelling in the midst of them, as it says in Revelation 21 and verse 3; secondly, the blessedness of the people of God consists in freedom from the curse. Notice Revelation 21 and verse 4. It says, "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."

The new earth and the new heaven will be known by what is *not* there, as well as by what *is* there. We have seen in verses 1 to 3 what is there, and it is wonderful. We have a new heavens, we have a new earth; we have the holy city, the new Jerusalem; we are the bride of Christ; and God Himself will be our God and dwell in our midst, and we will be with Him.

But it's also wonderful that all the effects of sin and all the effects of the curse that are so painful and difficult for us to bear now, will be entirely absent then. The seething mass of unsaved humanity will be absent, as verse 1 made clear when it said there will be no more sea. We will be delivered from problems that arise because of evil people around us, and from all of our problems that arise from outside of ourselves that the wicked Babylon in which we live bring upon us. That sea of wicked people will be gone.

But there are also problems that arise from right within ourselves. Because of the sinfulness and the corruption that we have within ourselves, we are subject to death, and sorrow, and crying, and pain. And the wonder of being redeemed by Christ, and the wonder of residing in the new heavens and the new earth, is that we will experience these things never again. All these former experiences we had that were all the result of the curse will never occur to us again, because these former things we experienced on this earth, it says in verse 4, have forever passed away.

Never again will you have to weep over the loss of a loved one. Never again will you have to suffer the agonizing loneliness that their death brings upon you. Never again will you sorrow over the rejection, and the loss, and persecution that this world brings upon you. Never again will you suffer the emotional and physical pain that are the result of a broken body and broken soul. In the new earth, everything that is good will be present; but thank God, everything that is bad will be absent. Death, and sorrow, and crying, and pain will never be experienced by us ever again. And all of this is promised to us in the Old Testament.

In Isaiah 25, verses 8 and 9, it says, “<sup>8</sup> He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. <sup>9</sup> And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

It goes on to say in Isaiah 35 and verse 10: “and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” When the first heaven and the first earth passed away, death, and sorrow, and crying, and pain passed away along with it. And just as the first heaven and the first earth cannot ever come back again, death, and sorrow, and crying, and pain cannot ever come back again either. Death is swallowed up in victory.

Well this, then, is the blessedness of the people of God. They have the presence of God, and they have the absence of the curse. The holy city and the bride will dwell in the presence of God, free from the curse from all eternity, with God having a perfect commitment to them and a perfect

closeness with them so that all that we will experience is unending joy, and peace, and happiness in the glory of heaven together.

These are the wonderful things that God has laid up for us. And I feel so entirely inadequate using human words to try to describe something that is supernaturally infinite, and that's why all that I've said to you here this morning is just a tiny part of the wonder of all that you're going to experience. And wouldn't a person be a fool to pass this up—to miss out on this blessedness that is described of living in this holy city, having this wonderful relationship with Jesus Christ, dwelling in the presence of God, and having the absence of all that is destructive and harmful?

This is what Christ promises to us in the gospel. These are the everlasting riches of Christ. And all we have to do to obtain them is repent of our sins and believe in and trust in Jesus Christ as our Lord and as our Savior. So you turn from following self and Satan and sin, and you say to God, God, I am done with that! I want to be a pure man, I want to be a pure woman, I want Christ to save me from my sins. O, Lord Jesus, save me! Be my master; I will follow you. Be my Savior; I will trust you, and trust nothing and no one but you to present me faultless before God's presence with exceeding joy.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. Call upon Him now. He will save you. And this will be your destiny. Let us pray together.

Our Father, we thank you so much for this blessed book and the good news that it contains about the remedy that Jesus has purchased and provided from the curse of sin and all the destructiveness it brings. How could anyone ever think that there was some advantage, some blessing, some benefit in rebelling against God and breaking His laws? Father, save us from that madness, that insanity that would think that by rebelling against God we could have something better than what He has provided and described in these passages.

Father, we long for the day when we are absent from the body and present with the Lord, and then for the day when our bodies will be resurrected and we shall, body and soul, go into the new earth forever. Father, thank you for these wonderful promises and the fact that Jesus has destroyed the works of the Devil, and that there shall be no vestige left of sin, or the curse, or Satan and his works, for all eternity, in that new earth.

And now, Lord, be pleased to help us repent of our sins, believe in Christ as our Savior, and continue to follow Him all the days of our life, and thus find ourselves in that narrow way that leads to life. In Jesus' name. Amen.