

Revelation 21: 'The City of God'

by Art Katz

The sermon explores the profound imagery and promises found in Revelation 21, highlighting the New Jerusalem as the ultimate fulfillment of God's covenant with His people.

Duration: 53:43

Scripture: Revelation 21:1-7, Revelation 21:22-23, Revelation 22:6-7

Topics: "City Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the misuse and abuse of the word 'government' in our generation, associating it with self-aggrandizing politicians and corrupt practices. However, the preacher urges the audience to understand the concept of ruling and reigning in a divine context. The ruling mentioned in the Bible is not about personal gain or bureaucracy, but about making known the wisdom of God to the nations and living righteously. The preacher also discusses the healing of the nations, which will be brought about by a tree that will not only bear fruit but also bring healing. The sermon concludes by highlighting the significance of the number 12 in the Bible, representing apostolic authority and the foundation of God's work.

Transcript

I invite you to turn to Revelation chapter 21. I don't know what the Lord's intention is. I've been reading the text over and over and I can't get away from it.

No flash of revelation has come or unusual understanding. It almost does not require commentary. It's so graphic in itself.

But maybe it's just a washing of the words that the Lord wants. It's just the text read that we should be reminded of what the climax of the age is. And that we're even told that there's a blessing in the reading of the prophecy of this book.

Isn't that remarkable? It's the only book in the scripture that has that statement. That there's a particular blessing merely for the reading. So if the Lord doesn't give us anything more than the reading, we're blessed already.

So chapter 21 of Revelation. I have an italics over that. The new heaven and the new earth.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And the sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her bridegroom. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, See, the tabernacle of God is among men. He will dwell with them.

And they will be his people. And God himself will be with them. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more. Mourning and crying and pain will be no more. For the first things have passed away.

And the one who was seated on the throne said, See, I am making all things new. Also he said, Write this. For these things are trustworthy and true.

Then he said to me, It is done. I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

Those who conquer will inherit these things. And I will be their God. And they will be my people, my sons, my children.

But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death. Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And in the spirit he carried me away to a great high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal. It has a great high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites, 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 has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The Lord never tires of the number twelve.

The angel who talked to me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls, and the city lies four square, its length the same as its width, and he measured the city with its rod, fifteen hundred miles or twelve hundred furlongs, so the number twelve is again registered. He also measured its wall, one hundred and forty-four cubits, twelve times twelve. By human measurement, which the angel was using, the wall is built of jasper, while the city is pure gold, clear as glass.

The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every jewel, the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh crystalite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysolite, the ninth topaz, the eleventh jasper, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, each of the gates is a single pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass. I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb.

And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will

never be shut by day, there will be no night there, people will come into it, the glory and the honor of the nation will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life, with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Nothing accursed will be found there anymore, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads, and there will be no more night, they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. And he said to me, these words are trustworthy and true, for the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.

See, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. Let's go back over that.

You're invited to enter these waters. Anything that is ignited for you, or illumined for you, or quickened, any thought that comes, any question that is raised, I think the Lord wants us to corporately extract from this the unlimited riches. Probably one of the most symbolic chapters in all scripture, and the scholars debate how symbolic and how literal.

So, another has said that what God has reserved in this climax of the age is of such a kind that there's no way to communicate it to mortals on this side of that reality, except in these symbolic terms. What do you think of the description of what's coming down from above as a bride? Somehow I had the thought there's a creation of man and woman at the beginning, there's the mystery of the church as being the same mystery as marriage, and the age ends with a marriage. Actually, a marriage of what is in heaven with a marriage with what is on earth.

It's as if one is coming down over the other, and I don't know how to say this in a decorous and polite way, but I almost imagine an act of intimacy, the one coming down over the other, and the one who's receiving what is coming down is not some begrudging and compliant spouse who has to suffer this, but a joyous, long-awaited coming together of what is heavenly and earthly, and once they come down and into and one another, you can't tell where the one ends and the other begins. They have become one new thing, and in that one new thing, they abide and remain eternally. That's the consummation of the age.

That bride is somehow brought down from heaven by God, but we know that its formation was originally in the earth. How else can it be adorned? The streets of that city, which is yet a description of the bride, is pure as crystal and as transparent gold, and that's what makes it adorned for the bridegroom. It has the same purity and holiness.

It's called the holy city, the New Jerusalem. It's holy. There's nothing unclean there.

There's no lie. There's nothing to disparage, discredit, or insinuate even a shadow of anything contrary to the character of the God who will abide there eternally as his dwelling. Can you picture that? If you can picture that, you'll suffer that.

You'll be willing for whatever intensive dealing of God is needful to rid us of our shadows, of the things that lie in the realm of things questionable, the liberties we take in speech, the inadvertent things we say, the questionable quality of our motives, even when we invoke the name of the Lord, as is so much the character of our present Christianity, everything in the name of the Lord, but so much of it is for the vain glory and the ambition of men in ministries and their institutions, not a scintilla of that will exist in that thing. God will have purified that bride. She's adorned for the bridegroom.

She has his character and his holiness, and the streets of that city are as pure gold. I served an apprenticeship in the jewelry industry in New York City as a kid, and I remember the smelting of gold and how painstaking. There's 14 carat, there's 24 carat, having to do with the purity of that metal, but imagine a gold so refined that you can see through it.

I can't imagine this, that everything that is contrary to its essential nature has been removed, and now it is translucent, and the city is paved, its streets are paved with translucent gold. The word impeccable is not even appropriate in the context of what God is describing, but it's important for us to see it. Why is it given? Why couldn't it have waited for the consummation itself? Why are we told to read it? That as many as read this prophecy are blessed, because God wants us to have a sense of the end, even from the beginning.

We need to know that toward which we are tending, and we started in Genesis with the God who created. He gave a tree, he gave a river that watered the garden, and we come to the very end of the book, and there are the same great symbols again, only this time unclouded and brought to their full expression, bearing fruit every month, another fruit every month. How prolific, profuse, prolific God is in his creativity.

The only thing that stunts him now is us. If he were given full and free sway through a body that was in union with him, with every impediment removed, we would see the prolific God now in measure, but then we'll see him in full, and the tree of life is the statement of himself. It is prolific giving forth of fruit, and the variableness of it in every month, and the leaves of that tree somehow for the healing of the nations.

I can only imagine what kind of healing they will need when we know the history of Rwanda, and our brother's country, the tribal warfares, and the genocide, and Serbia, and the things that have disgraced our generation from World War I to this moment, where rape has become now a legitimate instrument of warfare. You humiliate the enemy by raping his women from the age of 10 and up. It doesn't matter.

The earth is disgraced. The nations are polluted and corrupted, and those women, particularly those who have come out of an Islamic background, can't even show themselves to their own families. They're not even admitted into the society.

Far from a compassion that they so desperately need, having been so victimized and ravaged, the disgrace and the shame of rape is a stigma that they bear with them until their death. Day and night, their lives have been permanently marred and scarred. That comes into the history of their nation.

Their nation has been disgraced by such abuses, and we can go on, and the Lord knows we're only touching the periphery of the multitudinous abuses that have been heaped upon nations, and that nations themselves have produced and incurred in their own sinfulness in these last days, and it'll get worse before it gets better. So I think that this is somehow implied in the healing of the nations. It's not going to be done in a day that somehow, through the millennia, through the millennium, and into eternity of eternities, that tree will bring not only fruit, but healing.

And only that tree can bring it. Verse 4, he will wipe, oh, every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more.

Mourning and crying and pain will be no more for the first things that passed away. Seems to indicate, right to the very end of the age, right to the very threshold of this consummation, the experience of the saints invokes tears, suffering, pain, and the tasting of death. And maybe that's the necessary experience that goes into the refining and brings forth the bride that's adorned.

But once the Lord is established in his glory and his bride established and the communion, the joining of heaven and earth takes place, it's the end of suffering, pain, death, and tears. But until that, we can expect maybe especially in the last fury of those things which oppose this consummation, this will be the distinctive experience of saints, a mourning, a sighing, a suffering, a tears, and the kinds of things for which only God can bring consolation. And maybe the aged saints like Simeon and Anna, who were waiting for the consolation of Israel, had this kind of consolation in mind.

They knew that there's a long history of death, of suffering, of tears in Israel, and it's not the end. It'll be until the end. But when the end comes, it's over once and for all.

But we need to contemplate that end because it's the contemplation and the assurance of that end that enables us to bravely endure the sorrows and the sufferings that bring tears. We're not naive. We know that this is going to be contested until the bitter end.

If there's anything the powers of darkness could do to prevent this once and for all consummation that ends all history and establishes eternally this glory, they will seek to do it. And the saints will be the object of their great fury, knowing that their time is short. So expect tears, expect pain, expect sorrow, expect painful disappointment, expect even the kind of gentle reprimand that has come today.

That somehow, even in our best and well-meaning intentions, we make ourselves candidates for a kind of thing that will bring us sorrow or remiss. But that's a necessary thing, and the end of it is translucence, transparency, clarity of such a kind as has never been known in the church, that has been muddied, corrupted, disfigured, tainted by all of the subtleties of thought, of ambition, of rivalry, of jealousy, of fear, of how about this guy, what will this man do? All these kinds of things that God has got to work out, like a great metallurgist to remove the impurities from the precious metal, that it will be brought to a place of transparency forever, that even the streets of that city are paved with it. Can you imagine walking on such a thing? Hallelujah.

Okay. I'm making all things new. It is done.

I'm the Alpha and the Omega. The creator, the one that was at the beginning, is also at the end. And to the thirsty, I'll give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

Those who conquer will inherit these things. Those who overcome, these trials, these perfecting trials, that probably the enemy, unbeknownst to himself, is providing the very ingredient that obtains this perfection. We would not have come to it except through the press of oppression, last days persecution, and the great struggles that are even internal within the church.

Obtain the thing that will glorify God forever and will be appropriate to him, adorned for the bridegroom, has got to be in keeping with the character and nature of the bridegroom himself. What a remarkable thing, remembering that it goes back to the time when he took us off to Dunkeep. That's where we were found and made us to sit with the princess of his people.

At the end of that great process is a bride adorned for the bridegroom. I will be their God, they will be my people is the whole foundation of what covenant is. This is the covenant.

This is what was breathed to Abraham and reiterated to Moses and to David and to every expression of covenant right through to the end. The foundation of it is this. I will be their God, they will be my people.

The eternal consummation is the fulfillment of the covenant that God is God to his people. I don't know if the Lord will allow me, but I'm reading Spurgeon on what that means when God will be God to a people. What does that mean? What benefit will that bring? How will that redound to us as blessing when God will be to us a God? All of his lavish and prolific generosity of heart and mercy and love and wisdom, he will be to us in full, that God eternally.

Who can weigh that? Who can measure that? Who has contemplated that? We're only receiving in measure now and in part the mercies of God, but then there'll be no hindrance. He will be to us as God. What he is in himself lavishly and continuously poured out will be bathed in that Godship.

We will be his people. This is the consummation of the age. We can only feel for this, try to approximate what these remarkable symbolic statements mean, but we would do ourselves a disservice to ignore them.

And then this jab in verse 8, in the midst of this beautiful statement of what this eternal future holds, a reminder that there are those who are prohibited. They'll have no place in it. They've condescended too long.

They refused the redemptive appeals of God like Cain. And they're cowardly and unbelieving, polluted, murderers, either in deed or in thought, being angry with their brothers and insisting on retaining that anger and heeding the word of God that sin is at the door. Fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars.

All that is unbecoming to God. All that is contrary to his holiness cannot find entry. Their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and silver, which is the second death.

And the commentators say, why should we discredit this stringent and painful reminder of the fate of those who have not entered into the kingdom? It has to be as credible to us as the glory of what is described for those who are faithful and believing. If we accept the one of the glory that is before God's people, whose tears are wiped away by his own hand, we have to equally receive this stringent reminder that God forbids the entry of people of this description. Maybe the benefit in our reading it is that we ourselves will contend with them while there's yet breath, while there's yet hope, that they might forsake the lie, that they might forsake their pollutions and their corruptions and their defilements, where there's an eternal consequence that will forbid them entry, and they'll have to have their part in the lake of fire that is without remedy, an eternal anguish of burning.

You know, even if it's not a literal fire, if it's the burning of embarrassment and shame, have you ever experienced that, where your face washes, you've said something stupid, you've been caught in the act in something stupid and sinful, and you blush, and you feel the redness coming up your neck and into your face, it's the most uncomfortable thing that I can imagine. I don't even want to imagine, but imagine this, that that burning sensation that is so prickly and uncomfortable would be the permanent condition of those who have forfeited the atonement of God. They have to live in that burning humiliation and shame forever.

If the fire of that lake is no more than that, it's everything to be avoided by whatever means. That we should press upon men that God has an escape and an alternative, if it's no more than that. But if it's more than that, the imagination can't even conceive it.

Really, the projection of a kind of human superiority over God, that we are more moral than he, and we would not allow an eternal punishment, so therefore how can he? We have to find ways to excuse him that the word doesn't mean what it says. How much of our tears and mourning and sorrow that God himself has got to wipe away and comfort us has come at the hands of these unregenerate and fastened sin people who will not change and will ventilate their last spite upon us and we will bear it, yet in hope that somehow something might turn for them. But we can believe that when this end comes every grace has been given to men that they need not be excluded from the unspeakable joy of this kingdom.

That everything will have its full opportunity to find its way into one end or the other radically. Be the saints who have been purified by God and adorned for the bridegroom or the unbelieving and the liars and the fornicators who have insisted in retaining their sin right to the end. Nothing will be made to God's account that men were not given opportunity right till the consummation of the age to come in to the precious atonement of God and be washed in that blood from all the heinous sins and be as acceptable in the last moment as those saints who have persevered all their life long.

That those who have worked all the day will not receive more than him who has come into the harvest at the last moment. So great is the grace and mercy of God that no man will offer a reprimand that somehow he has not given the widest opportunity for all men to come and inherit this eternal kingdom. The wicked in the Psalms are often hinted at as not being the chronically unregenerate but as those who once knew God and have forsaken the faith and turned against the believing with a greater vehemence and bitterness once having shared that faith.

Can you imagine the eternal lament and shriek of horror by those who have once known the faith and spurned it? It is yet a greater calamity eternally than those who have been all the while regenerate. The wicked is a special category. Wickedness implies knowing better but yet refusing to act rightly.

Even with this there are cities who will walk in the light of this kingdom. Nations will walk in the light of this kingdom. It doesn't mean that they are in it but that they exist nationally.

They still continue. Their kings will bring the glory of their riches into it and they walk by the light of it though they are not in it. So the issue of the light of this kingdom which is the righteousness of God and the righteousness of this king very much depends on the severity and lightness of his justice and his judgments or they would not be light.

So every reason why this is the judgment of God however severe needs to be very clearly established. Now what do you make of this in verse 9 that the one who bids the apostle to come and see the bride of the lamb and brings him up to the high mountain and shows him the holy city Jerusalem coming down from heaven that has the glory of God and the radiance like a very rare jewel like jasper clear as crystal is the same angel who had the seven bowls full of the seven last flakes. I've never noticed that before but why are we told that? Is God short of angels? And he had to press this one into service though he had already performed a very vital function or is there some conjunction between the angel that is used to minister the judgments of God is the same one that has the privilege of calling the apostle up to the high mountain apart to view this holy city.

Is that some kind of recompense for the faithful angel who has had to do the painful thing and has not withheld himself. Now okay, here's my acknowledgement and reward. Now call my apostle John and bring him up to the mountain and let him glimpse even while he is yet in his frame and yet breathing this glorious conclusion of the age that I have not seen and you have not heard.

I'm giving you the privilege of bringing him up and seeing with him that glorious visage. You know what that would say to me? You're called to do prophetic things and to speak hard words in the last days and men will put their fingers in their ears and mash upon you with their teeth. Be faithful to bring the words of judgment and the warning of judgment because in your faithfulness is a reward reserved for those who are faithful not to withhold and is not given to another.

Seeing that which is invisible and eternal, Paul accounted his present sufferings as momentary in life. He was so suffused with this end that it affected the way he would see his present trials and that's God's normative intention for every saint and the history of martyrdom is marked with men who have bravely gone to the stake and had the flesh rent from their bones or sawed asunder rejoicing because by the eye of the spirit like Stephen he saw the heavens opened and the glory of God and Jesus at the right hand of the Father and was so suffused with that glory and that image that he did not even feel the stones that were thumping on his flesh and breaking his nose bones and coming and gouging his eye and the blood running down his face he only saw the glory of God and the eternal thing that will be enduring and the Lord even up on his feet to receive him. We've got to see this that's why it's in the book that's why we're blessed to read it because upon us will come those things that will bring tears, will bring sorrow will bring suffering but we can foresee and be brave even those of us who are suffering now, inexplicable things, marriage is going to pot overnight and I have to repeat myself, how shall we become translucent and transparent and as crystal and as gold except by such a process? There's no other way that such a refinement could be obtained and it says that this holy city coming down out of heaven from God has the glory of God and the radiance like a very rigid crystal coming down from heaven is that a geographical description? Is it north of the earth? Is it literally, physically above or is there another way to understand what is implied in coming down from heaven or what has been obtained in heaven? This process of purification and translucence is not some magical dimension but the very grit of where we are in this earth in the fellowship of the saints and in obedience to God and in the call of God and the various things for which we're summoned that's heaven.

Remember when I had malaria my first day in Tanzania with a fever beside myself on the bed, incapable of praying for myself, ready to perish and here's the brother pacing back and forth, he sends them out by twos crying out to God, Lord he said we're not in Egypt we're in heaven because these diseases shall not come upon us, we are not in Egypt, we are in the service of God and in the place of duty and of call and of obedience. So I'm just suggesting I'm talking off the top of my head that this issue of coming down from heaven, however beautiful an image it is and in fact literally may well be fulfilled the heaven in which these saints are purified and adorned for the bridegroom is here in our very earth but it's not earthly, it's heavenly, it's the body of Christ it's the church, it's the place of obedience, it's the place of relationship that we have not shunned, it's the willingness to hear a mild rebuke and bear it and receive it and say yes Lord I don't even witness, I don't even know I thought I was being obedient, I had something to say that seems to fit in, but I've been chastised for it and I receive it Lord you explain to me later but that very willingness has done more for that saint than the thing that the saint thought to bring as blessing you see that? The process of God, he's a metallurgist of an ultimate kind and he only knows how to perfect the saints what is the subtlety of our souls what is mixed in with our desire to bless and to bring what we think will be an

encouraging word that is tinged by our own ambition yet or a desire to be heard or to be recognized, I'm not saying this is the case, but how often is it the case, if not invariably the case, as we are where we are in the process of God being brought to the place where we are adorned as a bride for the bridegroom there's no shortcut we don't know the subtlety of our hearts we don't know what it hankers for and what recognition it craves to receive not carnally, but spiritually and until the subtlety of those motives are removed God cannot be all in all and only he can identify them and bring the corrective by which we are purified by even that kind of subtlety. Talk about manipulation in the church talk about the manipulation of ministers and orthocles, talk about the use of music to affect a certain kind of soul response that will gratify the evangelist.

Manipulation is the name of the game in present day Christendom and nobody faults those who practice it I have to tell musicians shut up God doesn't need your mood music, he's well able to convict and bring by his spirit to the altar who he will.

I don't want your access to excuse me there's a purity that God is wanting thank you Lord so in our own fellowship I hear the announcement I'm going to be doing this this and this God has told me already oh I wasn't consulted I'm the elder you're going to take this leave of absence as if it's already a fact and what are you saying when you say God told me that means this is not to be questioned even by you how we will employ God that's taking the Lord's name in vain even if God did tell you you do not publicly express that as a manipulation to bring the man into a place of agreement you see what I mean that's what we do saints these are our impurities we're shot through with things like that I'm guilty of it myself and so God is going to have a city made of gold that is appropriate to him

and it has got to be pure through and through and you know how that purity is going to be obtained that person who was manipulative has got to be confronted and say look this is what you did you may not have been conscious of it but when you say the Lord told me what you're really doing is using the Lord as a lever to bring an agreement that will justify you enjoying what you have determined already to do without the consultation of the body or its leadership you need to be confronted it's going to be painful, I shrink from it but unless we do it however painful how is the body going to come to that purity for which it is fitted for the bridegroom he is absolutely pure, he is holy holy, holy there's not a scintilla of anything of a motive for himself that was in his earthly service or in

his eternal place and he will not reign in the earth he will not have dominion over creation until there's a bride for the bridegroom God gave to Adam and to Eve, he gave to them dominion over creation and until the Lord has a partner, until he has a bride, until he has a co-regent, he cannot rule and reign and the whole thing of what we are about is the preparation of that bride and where is it done, it's done in heaven in La Porte Minnesota, in the woods in the morning prayer meeting, in the confrontation with the saints in the Sunday morning assembly in something that takes place as an episode that the Lord may well have provoked and you may well have been obedient to the Lord in reading what he gave you through the night hours and sharing what you shared not so much to serve the

purpose that you thought, but to serve a greater purpose your own purification and those of us who are witness to it because we are with you in that we do very much the same out of our best and well meaning intentions, we don't know as we ought to, and this is how God purifies, and praise God for a mother who will call us to task now we have the choice of being resentful or being grateful and in that choice is the purity of God obtained Amen Oh the depth of the riches both of us have the knowledge of that how great is our God and he can deal with with the raw material just the interaction of the saints themselves is the very

purifying device of God but this is the end of it and we're willing for whatever whatever the sting, whatever the rebuke whatever the embarrassment whatever the

reproach whatever the, we're willing but he will have a bride and we will be that bride the city from the Lord you know this city is four square it's perfectly squared up there's no bulges, there's no misshapeness someone said about me once well what you see is what you get I thought are they rebuking me or complimenting me laughter laughter laughter what you see is what you get he's square all around take it or leave it, that's it laughter I love this city because to the dimensions of God it's four square it's 144,000 it's 12 times 12 times 12 times 12 times 12 12 gates, 12 this, 12 that 12, 12, 12 I don't know what that number 12 is if someone can find out I know it's the number of what is apostolic but what is apostolic there's something about 12, the 12 tribes of Israel, Elijah

rebuilt the altar that had been torn down he took 12 stones, there would have been no sacrifice, no fire, but for the 12 the 12, the 12 so let that sink in and kindle something in your heart of an admiring respect for that number and that the city is four square 12 furlongs it's length, it's height, it's width wow the word government has suffered such abuse in our generation that immediately when the word is sounded we think of something self-aggrandizing politicians back rooms, smoke-filled rooms conniving hokum rallies, conventions balloons popping, all of that junk for men for their ego trips but we need to take the word afresh in the divine context because we are called to rule and to reign and it's in this very text in verse 5, and they will reign forever and ever this bride is not

going to sit on her thumbs, this bride has a task with her husband to rule and reign over creation, but what does that ruling mean?

It's not self-aggrandizing it's not bureaucracy, it's not shuffling papers, but it's making known the wisdom of God to the nations on how to live rightly what is righteousness itself? By a people who will not have academically come to the definition, but in whom it has been wrought in their life and in their walk and in their service and relationship with one another and before God then we can rule and reign we can convey the authenticity of what we have obtained in the house of God, in heaven where he has formed us and now communicate that to the nations that are still outside this heavenly city but are enjoying its light.

Ruling and reigning is making God known as he is and his way, and that's why we're serving the remarkable apprenticeship that we are because we have such a destiny forever many of us right now can't even rule our way out of a paper bag generally speaking in the condition of the church, children do dominate our homes, they're running riot, there is a lot of loose things that betray the government of God even under our own roofs so this is our our school these are our testing the issues of government in the church where the reluctant elder who doesn't want to have to bring rebuke or reproach or correction has every temptation to let the thing slide, so let that person do what they want, what's the harm of it we'll have missed the occasion that God himself has given both for the elder in

government as well as the one receiving the correction how shall we rule and reign if we forsake the occasions now to learn to bring righteous judgment and equity in the domains where we have a measure of responsibility not to ring the cell to the last drop but not to leave something untouched that deserves some examination is the privilege of these saints to look upon his face when prior to this time throughout the whole of biblical history to see the face of God was to die how is it now this privilege is extended and extended eternally they shall see his face, they shall have the father's name in their forehead one of the things is that death is no more there's no capacity for death being brought but I don't think that's the

reason why they can now look upon his face what that will mean

what that kind of revelation brings of course the face is the signature of the personality when you wear it that long what you are, how you've conducted yourself your secret thoughts have their expression in your visage what then is in God's expression and in his face that the saints now who have been purified are able to look upon it is an unspeakable privilege and one that we need to anticipate, now we see in part only, then we shall see in full and how about walking in the light that this city has no need of the sun and the moon not that they don't exist but we have no need of that light because he is the light of it and nations shall walk in the light of that city how many will be able to endure that light and count it as a blessing are only in proportion to those who in this life

have been willing and desired to walk in the light as he is in the light this is the light by which this eternal city is going to be lighted how are we doing now what is our propensity now what is our desire now for that light if that light will illumine that city eternally with no need for sun and moon what is the brilliance of that light that is going to reveal the transparency of those streets and the gems that make up its walls and the whole city is going to be bathed in that light who can take it it's a mercy from God to cast people into an outer darkness who have not been fitted for that light and shrink even from a measure of it in this life and prefer darkness and the lie to truth and unveiling so what shall I say welcome the light walk in the light as he is in the light whatever

that means if we've got to examine what it means to ask the brother to take the baby out if we have to examine the reprimand of having missed the Lord in our well-meaning intention light more light light more light Lord let your light shine because only your light bathes and brings to awareness those things that would otherwise not be seen light is painful before it's glorious to love the light will be a condition for fitting us to walk in that light eternally for he is the light of that city that has no need of that which is even from what he has created as the sun and the moon how are you related to the light now and what are the issues before us day in and day out where we can cry out like the famous German poet Goethe on his deathbed who thought that the cross was too harsh and too

painful an object and that it needed to be gilded with roses he was a humanist a poet, liberal minded looked upon apostolic faith as being too stringent, too demanding you know his final words were on the deathbed light more light too late it was a cry too late he had spurned it in his lifetime and now what he sensed in the final moment of his life would be denied him, he is incapacitated for light because he had not consistently welcomed it in his own lifetime that issue is before us continually light more light I dread going into restaurants that are moody where you have to have a miner's helmet on to read the menu and they think that they're doing us a favor, you know why those places are so murky, cold, atmospheric because they know that couples are coming who want to rub knees under

the table and speak little endearments and whisperings in that darkened atmosphere, darkness is conducive to sin but light, more light I want to see what I'm eating I want to look into the face of those who are at the table with me do you love the light? because we need to know that when eternity sets in and is irrevocable in its character it's full of the light of God and we need not to shun it then or be uncomfortable in it then because we have spent a lifetime habituating ourselves from coming out of darkness and into the light and say even now Lord, light more light open our understanding, give us to see things as you see them is this thing of a sword in our sister in hearing the requirement to have their baby carried out is that a spirit response or is that a soul response very

important to make a distinction, lest we continue to reinforce the realm of soul where God wants to bring us into the realm of spirit, are we very susceptible in the realm of emotion, particularly being women I'm being very hypothetical, I'm not in any way saying this is the case, what I'm saying is it could be the case and we need to be brave enough to welcome the light of God to show us the difference between soul and spirit because we are of a generation in the church that can't even distinguish between the one faculty or the other and think that everything is spirit and therefore almost everything that they do is soulish light more light, to see things as God sees them and to welcome that seeing, however painful a confrontation it is for us and by such a means will we be brought from

light to light to light, that when the day comes that we will be inhabitants of that city, we will glory in the light and we'll have been prepared for it.

True church is the welcoming of the light that comes through the correction, through the operation of God's spirit, through brothers receiving a correction, a reproof and so on, that's living in the light. One precious thing as we move to a conclusion to consider that in the end there's not two trees as there were in the beginning, but only one. Only the tree of life.

Praise God. Very true, watered by the river of life whose waters are crystal clear lapping over to the nations in bounty and so the book ends more gloriously than so to speak as it began. Death has been removed and even the prospect of death by eating from a wrong tree, for the wrong tree no longer is there, only the one tree the tree of life and that's abundant and prolific.

So these words are trustworthy and true for the Lord the God of the spirits of the prophets and I don't know why that's inserted why God is described in that connection of all the ways in which he could be described has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place. See I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

So thank you Lord for the river of the water of life right as crystal that flows from the throne of God that where the epicenter of government is is the place of life and flowing out at the end of the eternity of eternities and even now in like measure and principle life flows out from the throne so give us my God an appreciation of that what that throne is what authority is even now the life that issues from authority even when it seems at first flush to curtail life, help us to see by your light my God and the most insidious thing that is contrary to it in our generation and has always marked the world is the counterfeit morality, counterfeit ethic counterfeit kindness counterfeit niceness counterfeit love that obscures and competes with what is authentically from you. Precious God light for us to see the difference light for us to choose the difference thank you for our precious sister my God condescending bowing to acknowledging something has come from a man in authority that whether my own subjectivity witnesses to it or not I receive that as being the counsel of God and the wisdom of God and the government of God that's life thank you my God we pray that your life will flow out of the throne has flowed through this meeting my God through these days watering us Lord and we might come into the fullness of what will glorify you forever thank you for your work Lord continue we pray to purify us as you yourself are pure and we thank you for a love that will not let us go we thank you for the divine jealousy that seems to us harsh or judgmental whatever Lord everything that you do is good and may you be the doer of our doing for we cannot trust ourselves only that which issues from you ever and always now and always is alone good bless us Lord and instruct us give us an anticipation for this consummation and the willingness to welcome from your hand every discipline every judgment every dealing that will purify us as you are pure that will admit greater light that we might not just abide the light but delight in the light that illumines your holy city forever

and ever in Yeshua's name we pray

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