

The Eternal Bride of the Eternal Son

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon explores the concept of reward and loss at the judgment seat of Christ, and how it relates to the marriage of the Lamb and the new heaven and earth.

Duration: 1:11:49

Scripture: Revelation 19:7-8, Revelation 21:1-2, Revelation 21:9, Revelation 22:8

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Worship God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher describes a vision of a city with a river of the water of life running through it. In the midst of the river, there is a tree of life that bears twelve fruits, symbolizing the fullness of Christ and life in the Spirit. The preacher emphasizes the importance of worshiping God and not missing the opportunity to do so. The sermon also touches on the concept of the judgment seat of Christ, which is a family judgment where rewards or sufferings are determined, and the consequences for the five foolish virgins and the wicked servant are discussed.

Transcript

After the meeting, several people came to me and I know there are more people, they are thinking about something not very joyous. So I think it needs an explanation before we go on tonight. A number of people are asking this question, what happened to the five foolish virgins? I think we should learn to be the wise virgins and forget about the foolish virgins.

And as a matter of fact, you find in the word of God, very little hints are given to what happened to the five foolish virgins. Why? Because our God is very positive. He wants us to arrive at wise virgins.

It is not his intention, it is not his desire that anyone should fall back to be foolish virgins. But I think an explanation is needed. I think the reason why people are wondering about what happened to the five foolish virgins, is because they think that probably it is a matter of eternal salvation.

In other words, will the five foolish virgins lose their salvation? Because the Lord, the bridegroom said, I do not know you. Now brothers and sisters, I think there is a basic understanding that we must have. And that is, in the scripture you find, you have this age, the age to come, and eternity.

We are living in this age. It is the age of grace. And we are approaching the very end of this age.

But after this age comes to an end. Eternity does not begin right away. Instead, you find between this age and eternity, there is the age to come.

You remember our Lord Jesus in Matthew tells us, he that speaks injuriously of the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven, neither in this age, nor in the age to come. And also you remember in Hebrews chapter 6, there are people who have tasted the power of the age to come. So after this age, there will be the age to come.

And the age to come in the scripture is the millennium, a thousand years. It is the time when the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. It is the millennium kingdom.

And after the millennium kingdom is over, you will find eternity. When we believe in the Lord Jesus, you remember the word said, he that hears my voice and believe in him who has sent me has eternal life. He is passed out of judgment, out of death into life.

In other words, we who believe in the Lord Jesus as our savior, we who are redeemed by the precious blood, we who have received forgiveness of sin, we who have received eternal life, we have passed the judgment out of death into life. But that does not mean that we will not be judged. You know the problem today is, some people think because we have passed out of death into life, Christ Jesus has judged for us on Calvary's cross.

And we have accepted him as our savior. Therefore we shall not be judged. Now that is true.

We will not be judged before the great white throne. One day all the dead will be raised and all will stand before the great white throne. It is a judgment of eternal life or eternal death.

It is a judicial judgment because it is a throne. There it will decide whether you will have eternal life, go to heaven, if you please, or you will have eternal death, go to hell, to the lake of fire, the second death. We who believe in the Lord Jesus, we will not stand before that great white throne and to be judged.

Because Christ has already been judged for us, we have accepted him as our savior. We are saved. We can go to heaven.

Eternity, eternal life is our portion. But that doesn't mean that because we have believed in the Lord Jesus and that judgment of the great white throne is no longer for us. It doesn't mean because of this we will not be judged.

You will find in the scripture there is the judgment seat of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 3, the apostle Paul said he is like a wise foreman. He lays the foundation and there can be no other foundation but Jesus Christ.

And each of us will be building upon that foundation. See how each builds upon that foundation. If you build with gold, silver and precious stone, or if you build with wood, stubble and hay, one day fire will appear and the works of each will be judged.

And those who build with gold, silver and precious stones that can stand the fire, they will be rewarded. And those who cannot stand the fire, they will be consumed, will be burned. But they are saved, very saved.

So let's remember that at the judgment seat of Christ, it is no longer a matter of eternal life and eternal death. That has already been settled. But it will be a judgment of reward or loss.

It is called the judgment seat of Christ. In 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 10, Paul said we shall all appear and we point to the believers, the Christians. We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ and be judged according to our works.

Now it is called the judgment seat of Christ. The word seat in Greek, it means, it says, is Bhima. Now you have to know a little bit of the background, because in the Orient, we have large families.

The Orient has a clan system. In other words, you'll find a family with a grandfather probably as the head of the family, of the clan. And you have many uncles and aunts and all these cousins and brothers and sisters, you know, and they form a family, a clan.

And in the old days, that clan system or family system is very tight. And the head will be the grandfather probably. He probably will be the head of the clan.

And once in a while, there will be a family gathering. The whole family members will be called into a large room. And in that large room, you will find a lifted place, which is called Bhima.

A lifted place in the room. This is the place where the head of the family, the head of the clan will sit. And all the rest of the members of the family will gather before him in that room.

Now remember, only members of the family can attend that conference. If you're not a member of the family, you cannot come to that conference. Because it is a family conference.

And all the members will be there. And there you'll find the head of the family, probably he will recommend some members of the family have done something that bring honor and glory to the name of the family. And their names will be mentioned and they will be rewarded.

While others that may have committed, have done certain things that bring shame and disgrace to the family. At that time, they will be reprov'd and sometimes they will be chastised. They will be disciplined.

So it is a family affair. It is not a judicial judgment, it is a family judgment. Now brothers and sisters, we belong to the family of God.

Thank God for that. But that doesn't mean because we are in the family, therefore we will never be judged. As a matter of fact, after we become members of the family, our works, that is our life, afterwards, after we are saved, will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ.

One day we shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And there He will dispense His judgment to us. Those who build with gold, silver and precious stones, gold represents the nature of God, silver the redemption of Christ, precious stones the work of the Holy Spirit.

If your life and your service is of God, is based on the redemption of Christ and it is the work of the Holy Spirit, then it will stand the fire. As a matter of fact, when the fire is applied on these metals or precious stones, you'll find they glow, they become more brilliant and you will be rewarded. And the reward is put in the scripture in many different ways.

The reward concerns the millennium, the age to come. In other words, the reward is given during the age to come, the millennium kingdom. He that overcomes, he that has part in the first resurrection, is blessed because he shall reign with Christ for a thousand years.

In the scripture you'll find there are various descriptions. For instance, in the parable of the ten virgins, you'll find the five virgins enter into the marriage feast of the Lamb. That is the reward.

But the five foolish virgins were kept out of the door. That is to say, they are not able to attend the marriage feast of the Lamb. They suffer loss.

But it doesn't mean that because of this they lose their salvation. It has nothing to do with salvation. Because salvation is the gift of God.

And the gift of God knows no repentance. Our God gives salvation to us as a gift. He does not give you salvation because you deserve it.

He does not give it to you because you have done something to earn it. He does not even give you first and then you have to pay back to Him. And because of this you'll find salvation is free.

We are saved by grace through faith. It is the gift of God. And the gift of God knows no repentance.

It does not depend how you behave. You do not get it because you behave. You will not lose it because you do not behave.

It is the gift of God. But reward is dependent upon how you behave. If you behave, if you live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, then you will be rewarded with the glory of the marriage feast.

Or if you look into the parable of the three servants, you will find the two faithful servants, the master said, you have been faithful, therefore come into the joy of the Lord. That is another way of putting it, being rewarded with the joy of the Lord. Now what is the joy of the Lord? Of course the joy of the bridegroom is that he has his bride.

That is the joy of the Lord. That is the marriage union. And the two faithful servants enter into the joy of the Lord.

But the wicked servant, he is cast out into outer darkness. And there will be gnashing of teeth. Suffer loss.

He will have, he is not rewarded with the joy of the Lord. Instead he was in outer darkness. There he was weeping and gnashing his teeth.

In other words, regret. He regrets that he has not been wise and faithful. He missed his opportunity.

So you find that in the scripture there are various ways of putting it. But it points to the same thing. At the judgment seat of Christ, it is a family judgment.

It is not a judicial judgment. It has nothing to do with eternal life or eternal death. It is just a matter of reward or suffer loss.

And after the millennium, then will come eternity. And this is what we would like to enter into tonight. But anyway, I do want to clarify this point.

And if you still want to know what happened to the five foolish virgins. It is very strange. Because in the Bible you find that there are a few things about it.

And that's all. The Lord does not seem to explain it. He does not like to explain it.

Because that is not his wish. But in the case of the five foolish virgins, of course, they are shut out of the door. That is, shut out of the door of the kingdom.

When the kingdom of the heaven shall appear upon this earth, they have no part in it. They cannot reign with Christ for a thousand years. In the case of the servant, you find that he is cast into outer darkness.

There will be gnashing of teeth. And in Matthew chapter 24, you find at the end another parable. A servant, he can be wise, he can be foolish.

It is the one servant, the same servant. And if he is prudent and faithful, then when the Lord shall come, you'll find it is said, Verily I say unto you, that he will set him over all his substance. The Lord will give him all his substance.

But for the wicked servant, that says that the Lord will delay his coming, and begin to feed his fellow-born man, and eat and drink with the drinker, and the Lord of that born man shall come in a day when he does not expect it, and in an hour he does not know of, and shall cut him in two, and shall appoint his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. All these are descriptive.

All these are telling us that if we are not faithful, if we are foolish, if we are wicked, after we have received so much grace from God, if we abuse the grace of God. Now dear brothers and sisters, as a matter of fact, you'll find when a person of the family is rewarded by the Lord, actually it is the grace of God in him that enables him to be faithful. It is really not by his own self.

It is still grace, but it is grace responded. Dear brothers and sisters, all is grace. The grace of God is sufficient for us, and the grace of God is impartial.

It is given to every one of us. The problem is with some people you respond to the grace of God. You let the grace of God perfect its work in you, while with other people they resist, or they abuse the grace of God.

They despise the grace of God, like Esau despised the birthright, and because of this you'll find you will suffer loss. Now what is the loss? I feel I shouldn't tell you in detail, because the Bible doesn't give us the detail, so it will be speculation. But anyway, just remember this, God wants you to be wise, to enter into the kingdom, and to reign with Christ, and to be part of that bride, to satisfy the heart of our Lord.

He doesn't want you to be foolish and wicked, and if you insist on it, there will be. Let us turn to Revelation chapter 21. Revelation chapter 21, we begin with verse 1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea exists no more.

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Verse 9. And there came one of the seven angels, which had had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, and spoke with me, saying, Come here, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

And he carried me away in the Spirit, and set me on a great high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, having the glory of God. Chapter 22, verse 8. And I, John, was he who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to do homage before the feet of the angel, who showed me these things.

And he says to me, See thou do it not, I am thy fellow bondman, and a fellow bondman of thy brethren the prophet, and of those who keep the words of this book. Do homage to God. In chapter 19, you find when the apostle John heard the great voice saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord our God, the Almighty has taken to himself kingly power, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready, and it was given to her that he should be clothed in fine linen, bright and pure, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

Here you find the apostle John, he heard this declaration, that the marriage of the Lamb is come, and the bride, or the wife, has made herself ready. And when John heard these things, and being assured that these are the true words of God, what did John do? In verse 10 he said, I fell before his feet to do him homage. In other words, when John was given the vision of the marriage of the Lamb, and the wife being ready, oh, his heart was so overwhelmed, because he knows that this is something that our Lord Jesus is looking forward to, and this is something that he is looking forward to, and when he saw such a vision, when he heard such a declaration and assurance, he was so overwhelmed with joy, that he forget himself.

He forget, he began to worship the angel, he did the most foolish thing that John ever did in his whole life. Why? Not because he does not know, it is because he was just overwhelmed. Even with the news bringing to him, it is just too good, therefore he bowed down and worshiped the angel, and the angel had to gently reprove him, and said, now don't do it, worship God.

But here you'll find in chapter 21, again you'll find a vision is given to him. It is the vision of the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, and the angel said, now this is the bride. The bride has adorned herself for her husband.

This is the bride. And when John saw that vision, and heard that declaration, strangely he did the same thing over again. He fell down and worshiped the angel.

Why? Because he was just overwhelmed, just overwhelmed with joy. Dear brothers and sisters, the question is, are these two the same event? Or are these two different events? I personally believe that these refer to two different events. Why? Number one, time-wise, in Revelation chapter 19, you'll find the marriage of the Lamb is come, and the wife has made herself ready.

This happened before the millennium. As a matter of fact, the marriage of the Lamb commences the millennium. So time-wise, it happens at the beginning of the millennium.

But in Revelation chapter 21, you'll find the new heaven and the new earth. In other words, the old heaven and the old earth have passed away. In the millennium, it is still the old heaven and the old earth.

But here you'll find the old heaven and the old earth pass away. And then you'll find the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from heaven upon the new earth. Therefore, it is after millennium.

It happens after millennium is terminated, and this begins eternity. So time-wise, you know, they refer to two different events. Feature-wise, as you look into the feature, you'll find they are different.

Why? Because with the wife of the Lamb has made herself ready, and it is given to her the white linen, the fine linen, bright and pure, which is the righteousnesses of the saints. We have already explained something about it. But when you come into the holy city, the New Jerusalem, you do not see fine linen there.

Instead, you'll find the whole city is built of gold, pearls, very different. It's almost like you can go back to the Old Testament, and you think of the tabernacle that Moses built. The tabernacle that Moses built is built with linen, the curtains are vices.

But when Solomon in the promised land built the temple, he built the temple with massive stones and gold. In other words, the tabernacle seems to be temporary, but the temple is permanent. The tabernacle that is built in the wilderness has to be carried along the journey.

But the temple that is building Jerusalem stays there. It is permanent. So you'll find almost a similarity there, a comparison there.

That is to say, in chapter 19, you'll find the wife is clothed with fine linen, the righteousnesses of the saints, Christ being incorporated into them. And in Revelation 21, 22, you'll find it is gold and pearls and precious stones as the foundation of that city. It is of a more permanent nature.

Why? Because it is eternity. In other words, in chapter 19, you'll find the wife of the Lamb, or the bride of the Lamb. But the bride of the Lamb there is represented by the overcomers of the church.

To put it in another way, the five wise virgins, they form the bride of the Lamb. It is a temporary thing, not the permanent thing. But when you come to Revelation 21 and 22, you'll find there the whole church is there, not only the whole church, but all the works of God in the Old Testament and the New Testament times are being consummated into that holy city, the New Jerusalem.

Nothing of the work of God is lost. I wonder if you begin to see this. In Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3, you'll find the seven churches.

And there you'll find to every church, there is the voice of the Spirit. He that has ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. And to every church there is a call of overcomers.

He that overcomes. He that overcomes. Now why? As far as the work of Christ is concerned, the church ought to be an overcoming church.

Because Christ has overcome. Therefore, in 1 John, you'll find, who is he that overcomes? He that believes. The whole church, so far as the work of Christ is concerned, ought to be overcoming church.

But unfortunately, you'll find the church has fallen. Instead of overcoming, it is being overcome. And for this reason, you'll find the cry of the Spirit.

He that has ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He that overcomes. Out of the church, God is calling for overcomers.

Now who are the overcomers of the church? The overcomers of the church are not some people who are special, elite, not at all. The overcomers of the church are the normal Christians. Christians have become abnormal and subnormal.

And for that reason, the Lord is calling for us to be normal. He that responds to the voice of the Spirit. He that maintains the testimony of Jesus.

He that cooperates with the Spirit of God. And that grace perfects His work in His life. These are all overcomers.

In other words, it is not a matter of merits. It is a matter of grace. But grace responded.

That we may be normal Christians. And being normal is to overcome. Because the church is supposed to be an overcoming church.

And these overcomers form the bride of the Lamb. Enter into the marriage feast. And bless it all day.

Because they shall reign with Christ for a thousand years. But after the thousand years is over, there will be the last rebelling. And after the last rebelling, the Bible says, the old heaven and the old earth will be consumed with fire.

It will be burned and consumed. And there will be the judgment of the great white throne. All the dead will appear before the great white throne.

And they will be judged according to the books. And the book is all these records. Everything that these people have done in their lives, they are being judged according to the books.

And if the name is not in the book of the Lamb of light, book of life of the Lamb, shall be thrown into the lake of fire the second day. And then after that you will find a beautiful vision. The ultimate.

You'll find the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven. Dear brothers and sisters, what is the eternal will of God? The eternal will of God is to have an eternal bride for the eternal son. And here you'll find the eternal bride has adorned herself for her husband.

It is the eternal bride for the eternal son. And that is for eternity. Now if you think of heaven, this is heaven.

The bride of the Lamb is a city. Now do not take it literally. Because literally a city cannot be a bride.

It is spiritual reality. You know spiritual reality is more real than literal. It is spiritual reality.

And in that vision John saw the holy city. It is a city. Now why is it a city? Because a city gives you the impression of being a corporate oneness.

A city is composed of many people. And yet these many people who live in the one city become one people. In other words, though we are many, yet are we one.

We are one body. Many members, but one body. We are many and yet we are one city.

Is the corporateness, is the oneness of those who are redeemed of the Lord. A city is a unit. A city speaks of unity.

Here you'll find there is no division. A city is a unit. It is unity.

God's people are really one as one city. The prayer of our Lord Jesus is answered. In John chapter seventeen you'll find the burden of our Lord is that we may be one as He and the Father are one.

He said I have given the name that I was given me. I have given to them that they may be one. That they may be one as we are one.

I'm in you. You are in me. They are in us and we are in them.

That they may be one. This is the burden of the Lord. And also in Ephesians chapter four until we all arrive at the unity of the faith, at the knowledge of the Son of God.

As a full grown man at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. And here you'll find we all arrive. Not just those overcomers have arrived.

But you'll find we all have arrived at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. That's the city. In other words, all the works of God throughout the centuries, both in the old testament time and in the new testament time are now being consummated into one eternal bride to the eternal Son.

As you look into the city you'll find certain features. Probably the first one that will strike you is the wall. Here you'll find that city that comes down from heaven.

It has a tremendous wall. It has a wall of 144 cubits. We have never seen such a wall before.

144 cubits high. And that wall has the shining of God. Having the glory of God.

Her shining is like a most precious stone. As a crystal like jasper stone. If you read Revelation chapter 4, you'll find when John saw one sits on the throne.

He says, and he was sitting like in appearance to a stone of jasper and of sardines. And a rainbow round the throne like in appearance to an emerald. In other words, you'll find the very material of the wall is the same as the appearance of God.

The appearance of God is like jasper. And here you'll find this wall is like jasper, like crystal, like jasper. It has the same material as the one who sits upon the throne.

A great, tremendous wall. Of course that brings us to the Garden of Eden. In Genesis you'll find God planted a garden.

It is called the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Pleasure. And there God put the man in the garden and asked him to kill and to guard. But unfortunately you'll find that the enemy cracked in and deceived the woman and man's sin.

And because of that man and woman were driven out of that garden. And the way to the tree of life was guarded by flesh and sword and with cherubim. Why? Because you'll find that garden is a beautiful garden.

And yet there is no wall to it. Because there is no wall, the enemy comes in. You know, as a matter of fact, there is a wall, supposed to be a wall.

Adam and Eve are the wall. Because God said, guard it, you are the wall. But they did not guard it.

They left the garden without a wall. So the enemy came in. And that began the tragic story of mankind.

Cannot build a wall. God can plant a garden, certainly He can build a wall. But this is the kind of wall that God will not build by Himself.

In other words, in the good pleasure of God, there is a kind of wall that He cannot build, He will not build by Himself. He has to build it with man. He needs the cooperation of man.

And if man does not cooperate, God will let the garden there without wall. But thank God you'll find in the holy city, the New Jerusalem, the one thing that meets your eye at first and really attracts your attention is the tremendous wall. Here you'll find the whole city is walled in.

And the wall is 144 cubits. 144 cubits is the multiple of 12. In other words, it is the measure of the statue of the fullness of Christ.

Here you'll find the bride has come into the measure of the statue of the fullness of Christ. And that's the reason why it is Jesper. It is the nature of God.

It is God's own character. It is the glory of God. It is we are being transformed and conformed to the image of God's Son.

And entering into full maturity. In Romans chapter 8, we have a wonderful verse there. It is whom He has foreknown, He has also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He should be the firstborn among many brethren.

But whom He has predestinated, these also He has called. And whom He has called, these also He has justified. But whom He has justified, these also He has glorified.

Whom He has foreknown, He has predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He should be the firstborn among many brethren. Now that is predestination. I know the doctrine of predestination has disturbed many people.

And it has been a battle through the centuries among God's children. I thank God for the doctrine of predestination. Why? Because it is said, whom He has foreknown, He has predestinated.

Predestinated to what? Predestinated to be saved? Predestinated to perish? Oh no. Predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son. Now think of that.

This is what predestination is. You are predestinated for one thing. That is to be conformed to the image of God's Son.

Whom He has foreknown, He has called. And you are called. Whom He has called, He has justified.

And you are justified. And whom He has justified, He has glorified. Now what is glorified? Glorified means conformed to the image of God's Son.

Now this is the purpose of God. Once God sets His eye on you, once He calls you, once He justifies you, He will never let you go unfinished. Uncompleted.

Because it is His will. He has predestinated you to be conformed to the image of Christ. If you are not willing to be transformed and be conformed to the image of Christ today, you will lose the reward.

But eventually, I do not know how, but eventually, when it comes to eternity, you will find you are conformed. God has perfected His will. Can you imagine that God begins to do something and He cannot finish it? We may fail, God cannot fail.

It is true that God's greatest problem is not Satan. God's greatest problem is you and me. We are His greatest problem.

But not because we are such a problem that He gave up His purpose. You may give in and give up, but He never gives up. Thank God for that.

This is eternal security. It is not in you, it is in Him. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son and once He puts His hand on you, He will never leave until He finishes.

If you cooperate, it is finished early enough to be rewarded. If you do not cooperate, maybe in a millennium, He has to finish you up. And that thing is, the eternal bride includes all who are redeemed, not only in the New Testament time, but also in the Old Testament time.

No one is lost. Finally, God has got what He has first purposed. Yesterday, I shook you up a little bit.

Today, I hope you are comforted. What is the separation? The separation is not some rules or regulations. The separation is the life of Christ in you.

That is the war. As the life of Christ in you begins to build up, to grow up, you are more separated from anything that is not of God. And you are more included in everything that is of God.

And when you reach full maturity, you will find all things are of God and all that are not of God are outside the city. Perfect separation. It is a spiritual separation.

And if this is the case in eternity, remember, it has to begin again today. Today, let the Spirit of God build up that wall in you and in me. Let the life of Christ grow in you and in me.

And in the measure of His life will be the measure of your being separated from anything that is not of God and be included with everything that is of God. That is what the wall is. And of course, the second thing you notice in that holy city, the New Jerusalem, are the gates.

After you see the wall, then you see the gates. You will find there are twelve gates, three gates on each side. And the twelve gates are twelve poles.

We have never seen such big poles. One pole, one gate. Now, it is not literal, but it is spiritual reality.

Why pole as gate? Because pole represents the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will arrange our circumstances, just like an oyster. Some grains, some sand may enter into the shell and begin to hurt the oyster, and then the oyster begins to produce some kind of flu to cover up, and you know, after a long period, it becomes pearl.

So, pearl in the Scripture represents the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. How He arranges our circumstances, He puts certain ones with you, He allows certain things to happen, and here you will find it seems as if some kind foreign particles had entered into your life and began to rub against you, and you began to suffer for it, but here you find something is being produced, and cover it up, and it becomes pearls. The work of the Holy Spirit.

How do we enter into the holy city? The work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that convicts us of our sin unto repentance. It is the Holy Spirit who convinces us of the redemptive finished work of Christ that we believe in Him.

It is the Holy Spirit that enables us to enter into the fullness of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit that brings us into the fullness of Christ. Gates, pearls.

But here you find the names written on the twelve gates, or the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Why? Because you remember in John chapter four, the Lord Jesus says, salvation is of the Jews. In Romans chapter nine, the apostle Paul says, I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit that I have great grief and uninterrupted pain in my heart, for I wish I myself to be accursed from the Christ for a brethren, my kinsmen according to flesh, verse four, who are Israelites, whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant, and the law giving, and the service, and the promises, whose are the fathers, and of whom as according to flesh is the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever.

Our Lord Jesus Christ comes out of the Jews. Abraham, he is the father of faith. He is like that olive tree.

Even though the Jews, because they do not believe, therefore the natural branch will cut off, and we are the unnatural branch, are being grafted into. But one day, the natural branches will also be grafted back into the olive tree. So in other words, you'll find that salvation is of the Jews.

In other words, God prepares salvation through the Jews. Christ came out of Jews. God gave covenants to the Jews, promises to the Jews.

Abraham, the father of faith, and here you'll find that's how we come into this holy city. In other words, all the Old Testament saints are included in this eternal bride. This eternal bride is not just the New Testament saints.

This eternal bride also includes Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, including all these, because the gates have the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Nothing is lost. You know, during the kingdom time, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, will come and sit at the table that is at the marriage feast, but they do not sit there as the bride.

They sit there as the friend of the bridegroom. But when it comes to eternity, they are part of the bride. And of course, the third thing that you will notice here is the foundation.

Because the foundation is tremendous. Tremendous. Twelve foundations.

Twelve precious stones. Every one is unique. And on the twelve stones, they have the name of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

You come to the New Testament. You remember in Ephesians chapter two, verse twenty, it is said that we are being built up together into a holy habitation for God. We are built on the foundations of the apostles and the prophets.

Christ being the cornerstone. Now remember this. It is not in conflict what Paul says.

There is no other foundation but Jesus Christ. Of course, there is only one foundation, Jesus Christ. But why is it here, you'll find in Ephesians said, being built on the foundations of the apostles and the prophets? And here you'll find the holy city, the New Jerusalem, is built on twelve foundations bearing the name of the twelve apostles.

Why? There is no contradiction. Why? Because the revelation of Jesus Christ, that we receive today, comes to us through the apostles and the prophets. So the foundations being the apostles doesn't mean that they are the foundation.

It simply means that through them, the revelation of Jesus Christ is given to us. And everyone gives us some of Christ. And when you put twelve together, you have all of Christ.

The Christ that Peter shared with us. The Christ that John shared with us. The Christ that James shared with us.

The Christ that Philip shares with us. The Christ that different apostles share with us. You'll find they have different luster, different precious stones.

But it is Christ. Christ is the foundation. Our faith is based upon nothing but Christ.

It is not the teaching. It is not the doctrine. It is the living Christ revealed and confessed.

That is the foundation. So here you'll find all the New Testament saints are being included there. Everything is consummated in that holy city.

And then of course you notice the city is built of gold. Transparent gold. We have never seen gold that is transparent.

Because there is always some impurity there. But here you'll find the city is built with transparent gold like crystal. You can see through.

And the street is made of gold like crystal. Transparent. And there is only one street.

You'll never get lost. And this street will lead only to one place. To the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Gold represents the nature of God. So here you'll find everything is of God. Dear brothers and sisters, today, thank God there is something of God in us.

But there is much more of ourselves there. Much more that is not of God in us. But thank God the day is coming when the work of God is consummated.

You will find the whole city is just pure gold. Crystal like. Street always speaks of fellowship.

Because street is the place that you walk. It speaks of fellowship. And here you'll find the fellowship is all of God and transparent.

No shadow. You know today when we say fellowship, oftentimes what are we sharing? What are we fellowshiping with? Is it Christ that we are fellowshiping with? Or is it ourselves? There are lots of impurities in our fellowship. And when we fellowship, we are not very transparent.

There is a little opaque there, here and there. We have to hide something. You cannot be too transparent.

If you are too transparent, well everybody will know exactly who you are. We don't like people to know. But thank God the day is coming when our fellowship will be without any shadow or shade.

It is the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. There are certain things that are missing in that city. You find a number of things you find today, but you cannot find in that city.

You cannot find a temple in that city. Why? Because God and the Lamb are the temple. As our Lord Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, woman the day is coming, the hour is here.

You do not worship in this mountain, nor in the temple in Jerusalem, because the Father is seeking for true worshipers, those who worship in spirit and in truth. So here you'll find there is no need of a temple, of a place where you go to worship God. God Himself is the temple, and you worship Him in spirit and in truth.

There is no sun, or moon, or stars to brighten that city. Why? Because that city is illuminated by God, and the Lamb is the lamp. The glory of the Lord fills that city.

There is no need of sun, and moon, and stars. And there is no night there. Now today we thank God there is night, but when you come into eternity, thank God there is no night, no night there.

There is no sorrow, no tears, no curse, no death. And everyone in that city is a king. Why? Everyone has overcome by the grace of God.

Everyone will reign with Christ for eternity, and they shall see His face, and they shall reign forever. Finally, you'll find in that city a river. The river of the water of life.

And this river runs through the whole city. And in the midst of the river, on the two sides of the river, tree, the tree of life, all over the city. And the tree of life bears twelve fruits.

At twelve, and this is the picture of the fullness of Christ, of life in the spirit. The fullness of life abundant. This is the picture of the eternal bride wedded to the eternal son.

And dear brothers and sisters, if we catch a vision of this, I wonder if we will be so overwhelmed that we also may do something foolish. But God said, worship God. Let's.

We do praise and thank Thee for Thy eternal will. We thank Thee that it is Thy will to give Thy son a mate, a helper, a companion. We do thank Thee that it is Thy good pleasure to choose us, to call us, to justify us, and to glorify us.

We have to acknowledge that it is all of grace. We repent because how often we resist Thy grace. We despise Thy grace.

We will not allow Thee to perfect the new creation in us. But our Father, we just come to Thee today, seeing what Thy will is, knowing what Thou art doing, oh, how we do desire to offer ourselves to Thee, and said, Lord, do whatever Thou wantest to do by Thy Holy Spirit to bring us to that point when Thou shalt get us as Thy eternal bride. To Thee be all the praise and the glory.

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