

The House of God Part IV -- the Final House

by Stephen Kaung

The house of God is being built through the principle of faithfulness to what the Lord reveals, and believers must overcome to become living stones in the house of God.

Duration: 1:12:03

Scripture: Revelation 21:1-6, Revelation 22:2-3, Revelation 22:5-7

Topics: "Eternal Security", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher describes a vision of a city with a river flowing through it. In the middle of the river stands a tree of life, which spreads its shade and covers the entire city. The tree bears fruit every month and its leaves represent the Holy Spirit. The preacher also discusses the principles of government and grace in God's work, emphasizing the need for separation between the world and the church. The sermon concludes with a description of the city's dimensions, the tree of life, and the eternal security and blessings of those who keep the words of the prophecy.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the book of Revelation, chapter 21. Revelation, chapter 21. We will read the first seven verses.

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. And I heard a loud voice out of the heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with man, and he shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God.

And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall not exist any more, nor grief, nor cry, nor distress shall exist any more, for the former things have passed away. And he that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he says to me, Write, for these words are true and faithful.

And he says to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to him the thirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

He that overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be to him God, and he shall be to me son. Chapter 22. The first seven verses.

And he show me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, going out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of his street and of the river, on this side and on that side, the tree of life, producing twelve trees, twelve fruits, in each month yielding its fruit, and the leaves of the tree, for healing of the nations. And no curse shall be any more, and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be yielded, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name is on their foreheads. And night shall not be any more, and no need of a lamp and light of the sun, for the Lord God shall shine upon them, and they shall reign to the ages of ages.

And he said to me, These words are faithful and true, and the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets has sent his angel to show to his bondman the things which must soon come to pass. And behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

Let's have a word of prayer. Dear Lord, we want to thank thee for precious word. We thank thee that thy words are true.

We thank thee that we can stand on thy word, knowing that it is eternal, it is reality. Oh Lord, do pray that thy word be living and operative in our lives, that we may be counted among those who not only have heard thy words, but have kept thy word. We ask in thy precious name.

Amen. We have been considering together on this matter of the house of God. The first mentioning of the house of God in the word of God is found in Genesis chapter 28 verse 17.

Jacob, a homely man, was homeless. He was traveling in the wilderness. He spent the night there using a stone as his pillow.

He was so worn out, he fell to sleep. And then a vision was given to him. He saw a ladder setting up from the earth, reaching to the heaven.

And God stationed himself at the top of the ladder. Of course, Jacob slept at the end of the ladder. And he saw angels ascending and descending on that ladder.

After Jacob saw that vision and heard what God had promised him, he woke up and noticed what he said. He said, how dreadful is this place. Why? Because this is the house of God.

The way to heaven. Now that's the first mentioning in the Bible of the house of God. And we know that according to the principle of first mentioning, whenever something is mentioned for the first time, it usually gives us the principle ideas of what that matter is.

Now today we know that this ladder represents our Lord Jesus. Because in John chapter 1, our Lord Jesus himself said, you will see greater things you will see angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man. In other words, our Lord himself is that ladder.

He came into this world. He connect heaven and earth together. In him, God and man are joined together and communicate even.

Now that is the house of God. And it is the gate of heaven. Then later on we find God further reveal his house.

After God led the children of Israel out of Egypt, he brought them to Sinai. And there he declared to this redeemed people, make me a sanctuary that I may dwell in your midst. So we know a tabernacle was

built.

And when the tabernacle was built, Moses was warned again and again that he must do everything, every item, according to the pattern on the mount. There can be no deviation, no adding, no subtraction, exactly as God has shown him. Why? Because this is the house of God.

God is to dwell among his people. It is represented by the ark in the holiest of all. But unfortunately, the children of Israel were unfaithful to God.

God is always looking for reality. Man can be deceived, but God never. So when the children of Israel departed from God, God allowed his ark to be taken by the Philistines.

Even though he came back, it never returned to the tabernacle. And then we find in the time of David, because of his love for God, he is a man after God's own heart. He desired to build God a temple.

Even though he was not allowed to do it because he shed too much blood, couldn't represent the house of God, which is peace. But God accepted his heart. And God showed him the pattern of the tabernacle.

And out of his love for God and for his house, even though he was not allowed to build a temple, he prepared the material for the temple. And Solomon, wisdom, built the house. You know, when a house temple was built, at his dedication, the temple was filled with clouds, the glory of God.

And fire came down from heaven to consume the burnt offering. God accepted it. God dwelt in that house.

He put his name there. But unfortunately, the children of Israel again were unfaithful. And because of this, we remember how the children of Israel were taken into Babylonian captivity.

And the temple was destroyed. God never will keep anything that is merely a false testimony. He would rather see the temple destroyed than to see it representing something, and yet false representation.

But thank God in his mercy, he did allow the children of Israel to come back from Babylonian captivity to rebuild the house. But we know in that rebuilt temple, temple, several things were missing. Number one, no ark.

In the holiest of all, there was emptiness. Number two, no fire coming down from heaven to consume the sacrifice. Number three, there's no Urim and Tumim, to know the one mind, the will of God.

Number four, the glory of God never took possession of that temple. So at the time of Christ, we find that the temple worship was going on, and yet it was empty. So God sent his only son into this world to be the real living house of God.

All these types have failed, but God never failed. So he sent his son into this world, and the Bible tells us the word became flesh and tabernacled among men, full of grace and truth. And we contemplated his glory, the glory as the only begotten of the father.

So dear brothers and sisters, for the first time, what God has in his heart concerning the house of God, for the first time, it is being perfectly represented. In Christ Jesus, God and man join in one. The Lord said, if you see me, you see the father, because the father is in me, and I am in him.

For the first time, there is such communion, unshadowed communion between God and man in Christ Jesus. He always pleased the father, and the father is so pleased that heaven is open three times, as if God could not hold himself back anymore. He said, this is my beloved son, in whom I'm well pleased.

For the first time, God is worshipped and served as he ought to be. How the son, our Lord Jesus, served the father. How he worshipped the father, put the father in the rightful place, and he always stand in the place of a man, a born slave, listening, waiting, obeying, even unto death, and the death of the cross.

So in Christ Jesus, we see the real meaning of the house of God. But this is a demonstration. Our Lord Jesus came into this world, not only to demonstrate what the house of God really is, but also he came to prepare for that full house of God, that is, including man.

So on Calvary's cross, he made it possible. Towards the end of his ministry, he said, on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. On this foundation, our Lord Jesus is the foundation.

He laid the foundation, and upon that foundation, the house of God will be built. So we who believe in the Lord Jesus, we are all living stones, having his life in us, and with that life of Christ, we are being built up together to be that house of God. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down, and 120 believers were baptized into one body, to be one house, and filled with the Holy Spirit, the presence of God.

So in the book of Acts, we see how the church, the house of God, is being built. And this building process has been going on ever since. That house hasn't been finished yet.

How do we know the house of God has not been finished yet? We know because our Lord has not come back and claim it at his bride yet. So even today, it is still going on. And brothers and sisters, maybe you begin to feel, will that house ever be finished, ever be built? It seems as if as years go on, the completion of that house seems to be further and farther away.

So you remember once, when Brother T. Austin Sparks asked Brother Watchman Lee, what is the most difficult thing in the Bible that can be fulfilled? And our brother's answer is, Ephesians chapter 5, when the bride shall be ready. So brothers and sisters, outwardly, probably as you look in the church today, your impression probably will be, there is no hope. Because what God's people have been building through the centuries are mostly the Tower of Babel instead of the house of God.

But if you look with the eyes of faith, you know God cannot fail. Whatever he has promised, he will fulfill it. So thank God this working is going on, secretly.

Maybe we do not see it outwardly, but it is continually being built. And we have the assurance. Why? Because in Revelation, towards the end of the book of Revelation, God gives us a preview of that finished house.

So far as God is concerned, it's finished. Because with God, there is no time factor. But so far as we are concerned, we are still in that process.

So this morning, we would like to raise our eyes of hope, our eyes of faith, and look into this finished house of God. And see how glorious it is. That is our permanent abode with God.

And hopefully, that will increase such a desire for it that we are willing to give everything for it. Abraham, in his days of sojourn, in the land of promise, what kept him living in tent all his life was the secret. In Hebrews chapter 11, we are told, because he waited for the city with foundation, whose builder is God.

That's what he's looking for. That gave him the strength, the hope, the faith to continue on as a stranger, a sojourner on earth, because his eternal home is in that city. Brothers and sisters, may this be our inspiration.

But before we will consider this holy city, this New Jerusalem, we would like to ask one question. Because this question is a pressing question to each one of us. It is something we have to know and we have to answer.

And that is, upon what principle will the house be built? Or put it in another way, in the building of the house, what is it that really decides whether the house is built or whether it is not built? Whether you are involved in that building or whether you are not involved. Now for that, we'll go back to Revelation chapter 1 through chapter 3. Because Revelation chapter 2 and 3 are seven letters to the seven churches. Our Lord has already risen from the dead.

He has ascended up to heaven. While he was on earth, he was the apostle of God. Hebrews chapter 3. He was the sent one of God.

He was the anointed of God. He was sent by God for a mission. And that mission was to complete the work of redemption.

Which he did, on Calvary's cross. But now he has ascended up on high. What is he doing there? What is his ministry today? We know from the book of Hebrews that today his ministry in heaven is as the high priest of the true sanctuary.

The spiritual house of God. So our Lord Jesus today in heaven is the high priest of the sanctuary. On earth, he is the apostle of God.

And he says it is finished. The work is done. But in heaven, he is continuing working, ministering as the high priest of the church.

The house of God. So that's why you'll find in chapter 1 of Revelation, a vision of the risen God, risen Christ, as the high priest, ministering to the seven churches in Asia. These seven churches in Asia are real churches.

Towards the end of the first century, these are seven churches you could find in Asia, in Asia Minor. Of course, during that time, there were more than seven churches, local churches, in that Roman province of Asia. But God picked out seven of them.

With a reason. Because in these seven churches, not only prophetically speaking, it speaks of the whole history of the church on earth. And spiritually speaking, at every age, every century, every generation, you will find these conditions in the church of God.

Therefore, they are representative. So in these seven churches of Asia, God is showing us what our Lord has been and is still doing to his church. He said, I will build my church.

And this building process has been going on for more than 20 centuries. So we want to see, how does he build that house of God? Why is it that it is still unfinished? Where is the problem? These seven churches are represented before God as seven golden lampstands. Why? Because lampstands is not an end in itself.

Lampstand is a means to an end. Lampstand is not used just to be a decoration. Lampstand is used for a purpose.

God is very practical. Lampstand is a hold of light. And we know the light is our Lord Jesus.

The church is that instrument of God to uphold the testimony of Jesus. That's what the church is. So here you'll find one like the Son of Man, dressed as the high priest, walking among the seven golden lampstands, ministering to them to see if the light is burning bright.

Whether it begins to smoke, whether it is darkened, and he minister to them. When you read these seven letters, you'll find in the beginning of each letter, there is a revelation of himself. Now in chapter one, you have the whole vision of the great high priest.

And then to each church, you'll find a part of it that is being revealed to that particular church. In other words, the Lord reveals himself to the church. And what he has revealed himself is what the church is to be.

So as the high priest, what is he watching, looking into these seven churches? He's looking for himself. These seven churches all have their many good points, things that are presentable, commendable to man. But he is not looking for himself.

He is not looking for these things. He is only looking for one thing, what he has revealed to that church. He's only looking to see if the church is faithful to what he has revealed to it.

And if he can find himself there, it's built. If he cannot find himself, even though he can find many other things there, nothing satisfies him. All these things will be judged.

Brothers and sisters, that's what our Lord has been doing to the church for these 20 centuries. What tragedy it must be, what heartbrokenness it must be to our Lord Jesus. But he never gives up.

He pursues the long patience of God. That is our salvation. When he sees anything that is other than himself being built, he says, repent.

Repent, return, recover, come back to that revelation of himself. Because this is the only material that can be built into the house of God. So, brothers and sisters, the same principle applies to us today.

He is building. He said, I will build. But are you being built? Do you cooperate? Are you flexible in his hand? Are you willing to deny yourself, your good self, the self you're proud of? Take up the cross and follow him and let him be built in you and into.

The house of God. Nothing but what comes out of him can return to him, can be joined back to him, can be the house of God that God can dwell and be pleased. Brothers and sisters, God has a high standard, a perfect standard.

He will not allow anything less than what he himself is. It's a challenge to us. If you really desire the house of God, you have a responsibility.

You are called to allow him to work in you until Christ is fully formed. Because the church is the fullness of him who fills all and in all. Brothers and sisters, unfortunately, most Christians redeemed by the precious blood fail.

Do not respond. That's why you'll find in the end of each letter the call for overcomers. He who overcomes, let him that have ear to hear, hear what the spirit says to the churches.

He who overcomes. It comes down to individuals, each individual. If we have an ear to hear what the spirit is saying and if we respond to him, we overcome.

By overcoming doesn't mean that we are special. By overcoming simply means that we answer. To the calling of our Lord.

Lord, I'm willing. I want to be what you want to make me. I'm willing.

I'm willing to lay down myself. I'm willing to be faithful to what you have revealed to me. I will not compromise.

I will not depend on anything that I consider as my marriage. Because unless it is Christ, it is nothing. Worse than nothing, it is an hindrance to God, an affront to God.

Brothers and sisters, that's how the house is built. It is building. Thank God throughout the centuries, there have been overcomers.

If you read the book of Revelation, you'll find the book of Revelation give us indications how in the first century the call to overcome and how through the centuries many by the grace of God did respond and overcome. And how even before the coming of the Lord, there will be that man child being born. Brothers and sisters, are we among them? That is a question.

Do you want to be there? Or do you want to delay that building process? We have to answer that. But thank God, it will be done. If not today, even in the millennium, it has to be completed.

Because whom he has called, he has predestined to be conformed to the image of his beloved son. But anyway, now go back to Revelation 21 and 22. The finished product, that's your eternal home.

I hope that it will create such a desire in you that you want to be there. Just like Abraham. The apostle John was given a preview of that eternal home of God and man, the house of God.

And he saw a holy city, New Jerusalem, descending from heaven from God upon this new earth as a bride adorned for her husband. Brothers and sisters, you never connect a city with a bride. These are two different things.

But in God's eyes, in spiritual reality, that's what they are. You know what is a city? A city represents a unity. It is a congregate of people within a certain area.

And because they live together, they become one unit, one government, one administration. That's a city. What is a bride? A bride is a person of life, of love, of union.

Not only unity, but union. Union in life, union in love, that's what a bride is. And dear brothers and sisters, do you know that in God's work, he works according to two principles.

One is the principle of government, and the other is the principle of grace. If you look at the work of God, his work is along these two principles. He is God.

He created the world. Government is upon his shoulder. No matter what men say, what it may appear to be, we know that he rules over all.

He never gave up his government. People can rebel, but there will be judgment. Government.

And one day, everything will be under his feet. His government shall be over all. Yet at the same time, we find the principle of grace.

According to government, if you sin, you rebel, you are judged, you are condemned, you are finished. Whatever you sow, you reap. That's government.

It's an eternal law. But God being love, he works with another principle. Grace.

And we find how God is so merciful, gracious. Through the whole history of mankind, he forgives, he is willing to even give up his only begotten son to die for us. Grace.

Freely given. These two principles may look opposite to each other. If there is government, there can be no grace.

If grace, how can you govern? But brothers and sisters, God used these two principles to work out his purpose. They are not contradictory. They are complementary.

God is God. He has his government. Anyone that violates his government will be punished.

There is no doubt about it. And yet he is love. So he undertook himself the judgment as it were upon himself and gave grace to us.

But grace never abolished government. Grace brings back government. Because those who receive grace, they will willingly submit themselves to the government of God.

So you see the cycle, how God works in a marvelous way. And then in that house of God, New Jerusalem, these two join together. On the one hand, the city represents government.

God is supreme. Unchallenged. Obeyed.

His authority over all. There is order. Unity.

And yet at the same time, like a bride, full of grace. Full of love. Union of life.

Together. That is the house of God. Unfortunately today, we think these two principles are opposites.

We swing either to one or to the other. But God works with these two opposite principles. And in the final product, you'll find it is done.

Thank God for that. In our eternal home, God is supreme. His throne is there.

No challenge. His servants serve him. Willingly.

There is unity. No more distinctions. One unit.

One city. Under one government. The government of God.

And yet at the same time, there is a union of life. Love is the law. Brothers and sisters, this is the final house of God.

It is not where love is, disorder is. It is not where order is, no love is. It is order and love.

This is what God is working in us today. Take a closer look at your future home. It came down out of heaven from God.

The building process is on earth. But the final product descends from heaven. Wonderful.

Whatever is being done on earth is being recognized in heaven. And it is from God. Everything is out of God.

Out of him, through him, and unto him. That is our God. Then when John saw that holy city coming down, he saw the shining of that city.

The shining as of the glory of God. Of Jesper. Crystal like Jesper.

Now brothers and sisters, this house of God is full of glory. Not only glory fill that house, but glory diffuse from that house. It is the glory of God, not a shame of man.

Jesper. In the scripture Jesper, whenever God appears, he looks like a Jesper stone. In other words, the house of God is where God is manifested.

Glory. Then John saw that city. It has a wall.

You know brothers and sisters, in the beginning of human history, our forefather Adam and Eve were putting a garden, a beautiful garden of all trees. Wonderful garden. But there was no wall.

God wanted Adam and Eve to be that wall. But they failed and allowed the enemy to slip in and tempted man to sin. But thank God in that eternal home there is a wall.

And look at the wall. It's built of Jesper. All of God.

It is so tall. 75 yards. Now when I was a boy, I lived in a city with wall.

Now you probably have never seen a city wall, but I lived there. But here is a wall. 75 yards high.

And it's measured. In other words, in that holy city, the New Jerusalem, the house of God, everything is measured. Measured by a golden rod.

In other words, Christ is the measure of everything in that city. It has reached its full measure. Do you know today the Lord is building that wall in you and me? What is a wall? A wall serves two purposes.

On the one hand, a wall separates everything that is within the wall and outside the wall. And on the other hand, it unites because it puts all that within the wall into one unit. That is a wall.

Our problem today is we are not separated from the world. We are not separated from ourselves. The world and the church have become one.

You cannot see where the world begins or ends and where the church begins or ends. The world is in the church, the church is in the world. People in the church do the same thing as people in the world.

You may call it differently, but it's the same thing. No separation. This separation has to be built in you and me.

It has to be built high enough to really separate and really unite. It is of Jesper, of God. Only that which is of God separates from anything that is not of God.

So with that wall, everything is protected forever. That's the eternal security of the saints. No fear.

No night. Rest. Peaceful.

And then you find the city. The city is four square. You measure it and the measurement is 1,500 miles length and width.

Now have you ever seen a city that long? Half of America. A city. It shows the universality how throughout the centuries God has brought people into one city, the New Jerusalem.

And the city is made of gold. And it's a kind of gold you would have never seen today. Because it's crystal-like gold.

Transparent gold. In God there is nothing hidden. Everything is transparent.

Wonderful. And you find there are twelve gates. And these gates are twelve poles bearing the name of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Now poles in the scripture always represent the working of the Holy Spirit. Because that's how a pole is produced through suffering. Long patience.

And that's the way we enter in. They bear the name of the twelve tribes of Israel. So brothers and sisters in that eternal house of God all the works of God throughout the centuries will be consummated, gathered together in that holy city, the New Jerusalem.

Today is the church that represents the house of God in eternity. Israel and the church whatever God has done in the old dispensation, testimony time, and the new testimony time, will all be gathered together. Nothing is lost.

God never loses any of his work. It's all there. And the foundation is the foundation, twelve foundations, bearing the name of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

In other words that is the New Testament. The Old Testament and the New Testament all come together. And they are precious stones.

You go into the city and you discover there's only one street. Think of that. Such a huge city.

Fifteen miles one way. Only one city. One street.

Twelve gates. One street. Now how do you picture that? We know that this description is God is using something physical to try to give us an impression of something spiritual.

So actually you never have such a city like that. It is a spiritual reality there. Only one street.

So some people think that that city is like a spiral. One street spirals through all these twelve gates and then it goes up and up and up until you've reached the top, the throne of God. Everything leads to God.

Street represents communication. Fellowship. All in that city the fellowship is one.

Not many fellowships. One fellowship. And that one fellowship is transparent.

Now today we are afraid to be transparent. If people can look into my mind, I will hide myself. But at that time everything is transparent.

No hiding. No need to hide. And every fellowship comes from God and returns to God.

Wonderful. You like to walk on that street? It's dreadful, yes. Jacob said it's dreadful.

Because everything is exposed. But it's wonderful because this is the work of God. His grace has made this possible.

So you find the street spirals up to the throne. God and the Lamb is the throne. And then you find a river that comes out from the throne.

Only one river. No more Yangtze River or no more Yellow River. Just one river is coming down out of the throne.

And it goes through the whole city. The river seems to be in the midst of the street. Because you find one tree.

Not many trees. Only one tree. The tree of life.

And that one tree spread over the whole city. It's in the middle of the river. It's on the two sides of the river.

Like an arc, you see. What a shade. What a covering.

And every month there's another fruit. The leaves are for the healing of the nation. They represent the Holy Spirit.

In that city is the full of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit fills all the fellowship. The throne.

God is the light there. Christ is the lamp. And the city is the lampstand.

So you find in Revelation chapter 2 and 3, seven churches. Seven lampstands. But the final product is one lamp.

Huge lamp. The consummation of all the works of God in man. And brothers and sisters those who dwell there are sons of God.

But at the same time they are born servants. They have the name of God and of the Lamb upon their forehead. In other words, they belong.

They gladly acknowledge themselves. As the love slaves of God, we will not go away. We love our master.

We love his house. We want to serve throughout our life. Born slaves.

Yes. But kings. Everyone is a king.

And we shall reign forever under. Dear brothers and sisters, this is the vision that God gave us to encourage us. There is hope.

To strengthen our faith. And stir up our love. We cannot wait to be there.

Blessed is the one who keeps the word of God for they shall inherit. How do we keep the word of prophecy? This is the word of prophecy. How do we keep it? We believe it.

We respond to it. We are willing to give ourselves to it. So dear brothers and sisters, I hope the house of God is not just a theory to us or a term to us.

I hope that it will create within us such a love, such a desire for it that we are willing to pay any cost if you can say that's cost. To see that God's purpose is fulfilled. Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father, for thou has purpose in thy heart for thy beloved son is so wonderful, so glorious.

Is beyond our imagination. Oh, we thank thee for revealing it to us. Pray that it may really sink into our very being, our heart and stir within us a love for the house of God.

Enable us to be like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. To walk on this earth as strangers and sojourners, content to live in tents, knowing that we have an eternal home, a city with foundation, whose builder and architect is God.

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