

All right, let's take our bibles and turn to Revelation 21 to 22. I want to begin a two-part sermon I've entitled Tomorrow's World, because here we are confronted with the conclusion of human history as we know it on this present earth, and the beginning of the never-ending story, to borrow the language of C.S. Lewis out of Narnia. That's what's going on here in Revelation 21, 22. I'm going to kind of go on a hop, skip and jump across these two chapters over the next couple of weeks, and introduce to you what tomorrow's world and the city of the future will look like. So, keep your bibles open as we begin this morning.

Recently a friend of our family, who's a member of the exclusive Club 33 at Disney, treated our family to a day at Disneyland, and that included the tickets. And along with the tickets came a Disneyland host who met us at the Disney Hotel and was with us the rest of the day. That's the way to roll, I can assure you. And they take you through the park, and they get you on the rides. I think our longest wait for any of the rides was 10 minutes, maybe on the top end, three minutes on the bottom end. There is a great satisfaction of walking by everybody that are lined up there, the hoy paloy, and just going by them up to the head of the line. It was a great day. We loved it, front row seats for the fireworks at 9:30. It was fantastic.

And as was with many of the employees at Disney, this guy was the consummate professional, and we really enjoyed him as much as anything. And as him and I dialogued as we went through the park, he was kind of a aficionado of Disney history. And where Disney wanted to go with his dreams and his aspirations. And he reminded me of something I knew but had kind of forgotten about, that Disney World in Florida initially was not to be a theme park. Did you know that? It wasn't mean to be an amusement park. In fact, if you go to Disney World, you know that part of that park is Epcot. And originally actually, Disney wanted that to be Epcot. And Epcot stands for this. The Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow. His dream was to build a community. He got hundreds and hundreds of acres, and he was going to build a city that was futuristic. A city that was a testimony to American imagination and ingenuity. A city with the latest technology and transportation. That was his imagination. He drew up plans for that. That was to be Epcot.

It wasn't to be a theme park. That was Disneyland in California. Epcot in Florida was to be the city of the future, tomorrow's world. It never came about, because he couldn't secure the funding. They ran into some planning difficulties that delayed it, and then Walt Disney died and the dream died with him. In fact, listen to these words from Walter Disney Miller, who's the grandson of Walt Disney. He said this. "Epcot was my grandfather's biggest dream. The city of the future, that would point the way to a better world. His dream remains unbuilt. When he died, the company lost the driving personality that focused the organization's energies on a single goal. And so, it morphed into another Disney theme and amusement park." That introduces what we're about to look at in Revelation 21 to 22. Because the city of the future remains unbuilt. Because God's going to build it, and that's what we have in Revelation 21 and 22.

Tomorrow's world and the city of the future, the new Jerusalem. Walt Disney was not the first and would not be the last person to dream of a utopian society. A world that was better than the present one. You know this is a human aspiration. It's kind of in our DNA. Books are written, poems are composed by men and women that aspire to a better world. A utopia. We dream about it, we imagine it. Many of our movies have that theme throughout it. Because there is a deep-seeded longing in the human heart for a better tomorrow and a perfect world. That's why C.S. Lewis talks about the scent of a flower we haven't found. The echo of a tune we haven't heard. The news from a country we've not yet visited. We all long, our books, poems, dreams, movies, all look to a world where men study war no more. A world where you have life without death, presence without absence, strength without weakness, love without hatred, laughter without tears, day without night, hope without regret.

The human heart is homesick for Eden. See, biblically man once lived in a world like that. But because of sin, was ejected. Because of sin, that world became spoiled, and marred, and ruined. And when we aspire to the city of the future, and the world of tomorrow, it's a homesickness for Eden. And so, given that inspiration, I want to come to Revelation 21 and 22, because here God, through the apostle John, sets before us that dream. He sets before us the world of tomorrow, the city of the future, and it's breathtaking. Here we're given the promise of a future day when all things will be made new. Where there's going to be no death, no sorrow, no crying, no pain, no curse. Where you'll have the presence of all that is good and the absence of all that is bad. We saw that last week. We're going to see a new world where nothing remains untouched by God's grace and God's glory. We aspire to that. Jesus understands that.

In fact, he gave us an aspirational prayer didn't he? In his own prayer? In Matthew 6, verse 10, he told his disciples, "Hey, pray like this. Pray that my kingdom will come. And my will, will be done on earth as it's done in heaven." And we're living with that prayer. And we're living with the promise of a better tomorrow. And so, this morning and next Sunday morning, I want to delve into that. The bible is our brochure on where we're going, what we're going to enjoy, what we're going to experience. Now Let's get our bearings in the book of Revelation, at least in the surrounding passages as we come to look at Revelation 21, 22. If we go no further back than chapter 19, we know that the Lord Jesus has already returned to planet earth in power and glory, with his saints from heaven, to judge the living. To setup his kingdom. A kingdom that, according to Revelation 20, will last for 1,000 years. It's the Davidic kingdom, it's the millennial kingdom where Jesus will reign in the city of Jerusalem as it exists today.

His knowledge will fill the earth as the waters fill the sea. So, before we get to Revelation 21 and 22, God has already invaded human history. Jesus has already brought about some major changes. Jesus has already returned, the millennial kingdom has come and now gone. At the end of Revelation 20, you'll see that we have another judgment. It's called the great white throne judgment, where the wicked dead, their bodies are raised and they are brought before the tribunal of God in space, because it says in Revelation 20, "The heavens and earth fled away." They were burned up. They disappeared. And you have the final judgment of the wicked dead, and then following that the first earth and the first heaven will have passed away, and now, according to verse 1 of chapter 21, "Now I saw a new heaven, and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away." And then John says, "I saw a holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, from God, prepared as a bride."

So, here's what we've got according to Bruce Milne in his book on heaven and hell, with the completion of judgment and the removal of the perpetrators of evil, both demonic and human, the true goal of the historic purpose of God is reached. The full and final triumph of the kingdom of God. It's beautiful. That's where we're at. The beginning of chapter 21, God's historic purpose for mankind. Creation, fall, redemption, consummation, has come. We're in the consummation phase. What's being manifest in the judgment of the wicked dead, the banishing of Satan to the lake of fire, the destruction of the old world and indeed the regeneration of a new planet is the final triumph of the kingdom of God. Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent is now reigning. The curse is being reversed. What was lost in Genesis as we saw last time has now been regained in Revelation. Heavens and earth created in Genesis, a new heaven and earth created in Revelation. In Genesis, the sun was created, in Revelation no sun, the night was established, in Revelation no night.

The seas were created, no seas. The rivers in the garden of Eden, now there's a river in the new Jerusalem, the curse was pronounced, now the curse is removed. Death had entered because of sin, death has exited because of Jesus. Man was denied access to the tree of life, now he's got access to the tree of life. Sorrow and pain begin, sorrow and pain end. We have the final triumph of the kingdom of God. You know, when I was growing up I kind of binged a little on American TV. Some of my favorites were Kojak, Hill Street Blues, the High Chaparral Fonzy, Happy Days. And then The A-Team. Loved The A-

Team, okay? So did you, alright? Hannibal Smith. Mad Dog Murdock. Mr. T. You fool. You know? I loved it. And one of the things I loved about The A-Team, and you know in every episode, rinse and repeat, somewhere in the episode Hannibal Smith says what? "I love it when a plan comes together."

That's what you got in Revelation 21, 22. We got to love this. We got to get excited about this. This is God's plan come together. He created a world that was marred by sin, man is fallen, corrupt, God's world is now mismanaged and marred. But God's got a solution. Jesus Christ comes and dies for our sin, and overcomes the grave, and begins to destroy the works of the devil. And creation that has become the fall is now met with redemption that promises the consummation. I love it when a plan comes together. And God now is exercising his final triumph with the new heaven and a new earth. And a city of the future. So, let's beginning to look at this. Let me just kind of just pick up this terminology. I love it. Then John and I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, from God. The new Jerusalem is the capital city of the new earth. And you know what? It's important that it is a new Jerusalem and it's important that it is Jerusalem, because think about it.

Under the old covenant, within history, Jerusalem was the city that God chose to house his glory, and to localize his presence. Also throughout history, Jerusalem had become, according to Zachariah, a cup of trembling. It's the hotspot, it's to convergence of spiritual warfare. It will be the epicenter of the clash between Satan and Christ, and the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness in the last days. And then don't forget that the city of Jerusalem as we know it today is where Jesus died on a cross for our sin and was buried for three days and rose again. It's where he secured the victory, and where he indeed pronounced the judgment of the kingdom of darkness. So, it seems to me, think about this, that a new earth requires a new Jerusalem at peace where Jesus reigns supreme. That's what's going on here. So, I want us to look at this capital city of the world of tomorrow, and there's several things I want to learn about it. We'll not exhaust it this morning. So, number one, let's look up at what I call the site of the city.

S-I-T-E. The location. Where do we geographically pinpoint the site of the city? Well, look at verses 1 through 3 of Revelation 21. "Now, I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no more sea, and I John, saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem", notice, "Coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with man, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people. And God himself will be with them and be their God."" Heaven has come down. The epicenter of God's rule and kingdom is now planet earth. Right now, the heavens above, the third heaven, is the abode of God. It's where his throne is. But when we get to Revelation 21, Jesus has come, the millennial kingdom has come and gone, the wicked dead have been judged and Satan has been banished, and the new earth and a new heaven.

At that point, God's throne, God's presence is now come down and is among man. In a way that we've never known. We got a taste of it when Jesus was among us, tabernacling among us, and we beheld his glory, that's the glory of the only begotten of the father, full of truth and grace. But not now. The new Jerusalem, the father's house, heaven has come down. The glory, the knowledge and the presence of God blankets the earth as the waters cover the sea. There's now no distance and no distinction between earth and heaven. Listen to what Ephesians one, verse 10 says about that possibility. Here's what we talk about what God's going to achieve through Jesus Christ. Listen to this. "That in the dispensation of the fullness of time", alright? At the end of human history. In the consummation, the fullness of the times. "In the dispensation of the fullness of the times, he, that is God, might gather together in one, all things in Christ both that are in heaven and that are on the earth in him."

See, Jesus, not only through his death and resurrection removed the wall that divides us from God and from each other, he's removed the distinction and the barrier between life on earth and life in heaven. It's beautiful. I stole that thought from Randy Alcorn. I'll let him say it better than me. "Heaven is God's

home, earth is our home, Jesus Christ is the God-man, forever links God and mankind. And thereby forever links heaven and earth as Ephesians 1:10 demonstrates. This idea of earth and heaven becoming one is explicitly biblical. Christ will make earth into heaven and heaven into earth just as the wall that separates God and mankind is torn down, so the wall between heaven and earth will forever be demolished. There will be one universe with all things heavenly and earthly together under the headship of Jesus Christ."

Beautiful. And that's the point I want to make on this first thought, the site of the city. The location of the city is earth. And I think you've heard me beat this drum incessantly through this series. That eventually heaven is not up there. Eventually heaven is down here. Okay? We've hammered that caricature of the fluffy clouds, the blue sky, the halo, the harp, the angelic existence. The disembodied spiritual heaven. That's not our future. Our bodies are going to be resurrected. There's going to be a unity between body and spirit. Spiritual and physical. There's going to be a oneness between heaven and earth. And a final heaven will not be up and away. It will not be somewhere over the rainbow, it will not be purely spiritual. No, no, no. It involves a new body, it involves a new body fitted for a new earth. Heaven will be bodily and earthly in its experience. I like that. That other caricature I can't identify with. I've lived my whole life in a body.

On terra firma. Imperfect as it is. And that's what the future is. It's you and I in a body, on terra firma, but it's all new. And the curse is being reversed. And we're back to Eden. Heaven will be God's kingdom come to us, on a new and renewed planet. It will be Eden revisited. I love that thought. It's a wonderful thought. And I want to kind of take it in two directions quickly, this idea of the new Jerusalem come down from heaven, God among men, the new earth, Satan banished, the triumph of God's kingdom. Number one, it would remind us that the Christian view of heaven is distinctly material. Of all the world religions, Christianity is the most materialistic. Whether you look at Greek philosophy, or eastern religion, they tend to look at the body as evil, something to be discarded, something that's not honorable, something that's the seed of our trouble, and so liberation is kind of detaching your mind from your body and the surrounding reality.

And it's the pursuit of some spiritual nirvana. And so, salvation is to discard your body and enter into some spiritual eternal experience that is indeed bodiless. That's not Christianity. Christianity is the most materialistic of all the world religions. It involves the body resurrected, it involves the body perfected, it involves a beautiful harmonization of spirit and body, heaven and earth. And I just think that's worth reminding ourselves, lest we fall into some gnostic or eastern mysticism. Your body is something that needs to become an instrument of righteousness, right? Romans 6. Your body is something you should possess as a vessel of honor, sexually, 1 Timothy 4. Your body is something you can offer to God in daily obedience as a sacrifice, Romans 12. Your body will grow old and some day it will die, but God's not done with your body and he's also not done with what you did in your body.

In fact, as we saw in the judgment seat of Christ, right? 2nd Corinthians 5, 9 to 10, you and I are going to stand before Jesus Christ, in a resurrected body, and give an account for the things we did in our bodies. Our bodies are to be a vehicle of service. Our bodies are to be attuned with God's kingdom and used for his glory. And that would just remind me as a Christian, that my body is not evil in and of itself, although it is marred by a fleshly nature, and life is not inconsequential. What I touch, smell and taste, and what I affect is important. It won't be discarded. In fact, it will become the basis of my judgment. The things done in my body. And so, I want to remind you and remind myself that we'll not be shedding our body and we'll not be leaving a material world, therefore life is precious, your actions are moral, and your time on earth is probationary. So, present your body as a living sacrifice to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Number two, this is a very important point. Very helpful. When we get to this point where heaven has come down, where we have all things one under the lordship of Jesus Christ, it's God manifesting the

final triumph of his kingdom. Where you've got a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness, right? That's the message of 2nd Peter 3, and verse 10 following, where we read, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. Both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up, therefore since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you and I to be in all holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the day of God because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire. The elements will melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth in which dwells righteousness."

And I love that, and that's what's going on with the new Jerusalem coming down, heaven and earth are now one, righteousness is reigning, and God is among his people. We're back to Eden, walking with God in the cool of the day. Beautiful. And I love it because it's a manifestation of God's final victory over Satan, and sin. Don't miss that. When this city comes down, it's the announcement of a new day. And complete victory. What do we read about Jesus in 1st John 3, verse 8? That he came to destroy the works of the devil? And the new Jerusalem and the new earth signal that he has destroyed the works of the devil. In fact, in the prior chapter, verse 10, we read that the devil, who deceived the nations, was cast into the lake of fire. Okay? Satan is banished, Satan is judged, and the world that fell into sin led by him has now been remade, all things are new, and righteousness reigns. Complete redemption. Complete vindication. God will reconcile all things to his son, Colossians 1:19 to 20.

Here's the point. God is not going to give Satan the satisfaction of having irreparably ruined the divine creation. Why does God need to remake the creation? Make it new? Because Adam's fall into sin led by Satan's temptation spoiled the creation. And if God doesn't redeem the creation the way he's redeemed us, Satan has a victory. But he's not going to get that satisfaction. Biblical eschatology is the doctrine of recreation. Listen to these words by Anthony Hokima. He says this, "If God would have to annihilate the present cosmos, Satan would have won a great victory, for then Satan would have succeeded in so devastatingly corrupting the present cosmos, and the present earth that God could do nothing with it, but to blot it out of existence. But Satan did not win such a victory. On the contrary, Satan has been decisively defeated. God will reveal the full dimension of that defeat in renewing the earth and banishing the results of Satan's evil machinations." Love it. Love it when a plan comes together.

A plan that God put together in the counsels of his own mind and will, within the trinity. A plan that included the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. A plan that involved creation made, then unmade, then remade, and that's where we're at. Which would remind me, before I leave this thought, to get pastoral and practical here, if we're not already doing that, this is an announcement of God's sovereignty. His city is coming down, his rule is coming to earth. The Lord's prayer is being answered, his will is now getting done on earth as it was done in heaven. And that's why, by the way, go to Revelation 22 verse 1, we're still getting a survey of the world of tomorrow and the city of the future. The angel is showing John a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, preceding, notice, from the throne of God and of the lamb.

Look at verse 3, there shall be no more curse but the throne of God, and of the lamb shall be in it. There's no temple, but there is a throne. In the new world, there's a throne at the center of the universe. It's God's throne. In fact, that's been the focus of the book of Revelation. That's one of the great messages to the suffering churches of Asia, who are feeling the cold steel of the Roman's sword under Domitian. They need to know is God sovereign? They need to know that their suffering and their loss will be worth it. They need to know that evil doesn't win out, and this is what they're being told. John is caught up, right? In Revelation 4, verse 1. "I looked, and behold a door opened in heaven, and a voice said, "Come up."" And he says in verse 2, "Immediately I was in the spirit, and behold ..." What was the first thing he saw? A throne sat in heaven. Scroll over to the worship of God in heaven.

The third heaven, the heaven above. We read in Revelation 5, verse 6, that the worshiping angels and saints in heaven, they are focused in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb. You'll notice again a throne. Scroll down to verse 13 of chapter 5. And again, "And every creature which is in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and such are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard sing, "Blessing and honor, glory and power, be to him who sits on the throne."" And it's easy in the middle of the life we live and the life we see, and the history we encounter, to lose sight that there is a throne. Because all we see is chaos and crisis.

Famine, war, men abusing men. That's the world we see. But we don't walk by sight, we walk by faith, and faith helps us to see there is a throne set in heaven. And what is invisible today to the eye will become visible, in Revelation 21 and 22. And it will signal God's sovereignty. It will signal God's triumph. The vision of the future is the vision of a throne, all terrestrial, and supra-terrestrial, all angelic, demonic and human opposition, will have been crushed. All plans and machinations against God will have been thwarted and the kingdom of God will triumph. In fact, in Revelation 22, verse 5 we read, "As God's people, we shall reign with Christ forever and ever." I just want to remind you of that fact this morning, that there is a throne. And God sits on it. God is in heaven, he does whatever pleases him. God purposes and permits all that's going on. God effects things directly and God permits things indirectly, and altogether is moving to this triumphant moment.

It might seem that we're losing some of the skirmishes, and some of the battles, but we'll win the war. And God's got the whole world in his hands. And that means he's got your world in his hands. Whatever that is, whatever that challenge is. There's a throne at the center of the universe. At the center of the universe is not some impersonal, cold force called fate. At the center of the universe is a sovereign hand and a loving heart. Where an immortal and all-wise God will triumph within history and at the end of history. That's why Corrie ten Boom said, "There is no panic in heaven, only plans." This is God's plan. A new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. That's why we read in Revelation 21, verse 6, that he's the alpha and the omega, he's the beginning and the end.

Doctor John Walvoord liked to tell the story of being with a friend of his at Fort Worth Airport in Dallas. They were about to go on a trip together. This friend of his was the managing editor of a Christian periodical called Eternity. I don't know if you remember that, it was a magazine many years ago called Eternity. And this guy was the managing editor. And so, they were talking, and as they were talking another friend of John Walvoord comes up. And introduces himself, and realizing he didn't know the guy who was with Walvoord, he asked him who he was. The guy gave him his name, and then he asked him what he did and the guy said, "Well, I manage Eternity." The guy looked at him and said, "That's a very big job." And then he went on to explain, "Well, I'm the managing editor of the magazine Eternity." Come on, there's only one person that manages eternity. And some day he will establish his throne. And the tear of the widow and the orphan will dry. And hungry bellies will be fed, tyrants will be punished.

And the saints who have sacrificed and served, away from the spotlight, will be rewarded. And we will reign with him forever. Let's move on. Not only do you have the site of the city, S-I-T-E, the size of the city. What's the size of this capital city of the new earth? Well, believe it or not, we're actually told its actual size. Scroll down to verses 15 and 17. In fact, we'll back up into verse 14. We'll look at this idea of it being walled next week. "Now, the wall of the city had 12 foundations, and on them were the names of the 12 apostles of the lamb, and he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city. Its gates and its walls. The city is let out as a square. Its length is as great as its breadth. And as he measured the city with the reed, 12,000 furlongs", that's about 1,500 miles, "Its length, breadth and height were equal." How interesting. So, here we're told that this city is symmetrical in shape, it's a perfect cube. All of its sides are equal.

1,500 miles in length, 1,500 miles in width, 1,500 miles in height. If you calculate that, that's kind of mind blowing. That covers about 2.25 million square miles. It's as high as it is wide, it's as wide as it is long. It was an eye-popping sight. My friend, Mark Hitchcock, whose written much on subjects like this, says this. "The size of this heavenly city is 1,500 miles on each side, 1,500, it's wide, long and high. The moon is 2,160 miles in diameter." So, the city is like an enormous floating continent coming down to settle on the new earth. To put this 1,500 miles in perspective, that's the size of the area from Florida to Maine, to Minneapolis to Houston, and back to Florida. It's about two thirds of the US land mass.

But then, remember it goes as high as it is wide and long. Imagine that. Imagine something that's two thirds the size of America and also as high. Mark says that, "The city contains therefore 2.25 million square miles, that is 3,375 million cubic miles of space. That's enough to accommodate 100,000 billion people. Wow. In fact, somebody else, maybe nothing better to do, decided to say, "You know what? If I took the fastest elevator to the top of the new Jerusalem, how long would it take me?" And they worked out that the fastest elevator fillable today, if it was to go that length and height, it would take 30 hours to reach the top floor. Amazing. Want another measurement? In terms of its height, it's about 250 Everests high. It's massive. It's humongous. And there it sits, either hovering or connects to the earth. Now remember, I may not have said this, we're not going to live all of our eternity in the new Jerusalem. We'll enter it and we'll exit it. Because there's also the new earth to explore and subdue, which we talked about in an earlier study.

Now, couple of things by way of application. We've looked at the site, now let's look at the size, and does it say anything? I don't want to run this to the ground, but at least given its size, given its cubic square mile capacity, it can hold a vast number of people. And I believe it will. I believe it will. Revelation wants us to know that God's family, and God's people, from throughout the ages and across history, from Adam to John, will come out of every tribe, and every tongue, and every nation. They are said to be, Revelation 7, verse 10, a number that can't be numbered. The redeemed will be an innumerable number of people. Don't let the idea of a limited atonement make you think small. It's limited in the sense it's designed, and it's targeted, and it's applied. But the number is vast. Huge. Innumerable. Because I think when we use that kind of language theologically, we tend to constrict our idea of what God's up to in the world.

In fact, through Adam, not only physically but also the spiritual seed of Adam, according to Genesis 12:17, and in Genesis 26, verse 4, God is going to exceedingly multiply his seed. And just as a measure, it'll be like the stars of the sky in number. Love it? God's heart's big, my friend. God's heart's big. God's love is large. Because heaven's big. Heaven's big. I love Spurgeon. Spurgeon was a Calvinist, but I wish most Calvinists were like Spurgeon, because he didn't allow his systematic theology to tighten things down so tight that he couldn't pray like this. And he did pray like this one day, "Lord, save all of the elect, and then elect some more." Because the new Jerusalem's massive. Wonderful. Let me say this, it has a negative tone to it, but its got a positive outcome. Remember last week we said, "No more death", and we even gave some numbers on abortion? And the infanticide and the murder of little ones? Which is the mark of a depraved and decadent society.

Were you not staggered? Or maybe it just ran in one ear and out the other, that since 1980 worldwide, one billion children have been aborted. Before we're done with this series, I'll give you my perspective. I think children that die go to heaven. And if that's the case, since 1980, there's a billion children in heaven. It's a big city, because it's going to have a big population. That God's going to call out from among the nations all across history. His love is large, his heart is big, take that with you into the world and indiscriminately share the gospel, and tell people there's room at the foot of the cross for them. And there's a door so wide, no matter who they are and where they're from, they can enter it through Jesus Christ. Here's another thing about the size of the new Jerusalem, that hovers over the new earth, in the

midst of a new heaven. Given its size, given its enormity, doesn't it speak to the extravagance of God's grace?

The extravagance of God's grace. I mean, this is just one element of what he has prepared for those that love him. Eye hasn't seen, and our minds can't imagine what God has prepared. Although, the spirit of God has told us, through John, an element of it. And here's an element of it. Let alone the new earth, you and I are going to live in a new Jerusalem and it's massive, it's spacious, it's holy, it's glorious, and the curse will have no part to play in it. That's extravagant grace. You know, remember what Paul said to the Ephesians? In Ephesians 3, verse 18? He said, "You know what you need to do? So that you don't take God's love for granted and you don't lose the ability to get lost in wonder, love and praise?" He says, "You need to sit down and measure the breadth, and the height, and the depth of God's love." And I'll tell you what, I thought about this, that one way to do that is just to take the measurements of the new Jerusalem and realize that's a measurement of God's love.

1,500 miles wide, long and high. It's this massive cube that's like the holy of holies that we get to live in. There's no temple because God's presence is in every square inch of it. His glory illuminates it, Jesus is at the center of it. I mean, my goodness, that should dismiss from you and me all narrow confining anticipations of heaven. It should remove any impoverished images we have of the life to come. We should join D.L. Moody who said, "With God, make no small plans because God got no small plans for you and me." He's got big ones. Extravagant ones. He gives grace and then he gives more grace, right? James 4, verse 6. More grace. "Through many dangerous toils and snares, we have already come. And the grace that has brought us safe this far is the grace that will carry us home. And when the grace of God carries us home, more grace." I love the thought of God's extravagance. If you remember when we did Psalm 23, we talked about that.

And the extravagant kindness that's displayed in the image of Psalm 23, verse 5 where David says, "My cup overflows", or my cup runs over. And when you go back into the history and background of that, you'll realize that the [inaudible 00:40:56] shepherd didn't really take care of his flock. He didn't put his life on the line, he didn't feed them well, he didn't go out of his way to take care of them. And so, the image is this. When they came to a well, there was these stone receptacles that kind of housed water. And the shepherd would drop the leather bucket well down into the well, and then by the rope hard work, underneath the sun, would bring up some water. And he would drop that into this stone receptacle. It looked like a cup. And the good shepherd would do that, if he had maybe a flock of about 50 sheep, the calculation would be maybe two and a half hours of manual labor so that the water would spill over the sides of the cup.

That's the image of a kind and a good shepherd. And David says, "I tried to be that kind of shepherd, where the cup of the sheep ran over, and God has been that to me." My friends, throughout all of eternity our cup will run over. You ever think about the kindness of God, and how he fills our cup? If it's salvation we need, isn't it great salvation he gives us? According to Hebrews 2, verse 3? If it's grace we need, he makes all grace abound to us in all things for all sufficiency, 2nd Corinthians 9, verse 8. If it's peace we need, he gives us perfect peace, Isaiah 26, verse 3. If it's life we need, he promises life abundant. More abundant, John 10:10. If it's victory we need, he promises that we'll be more than conquerors through him that loved us, Romans 8:37. And if it's answers to prayer we're looking for, often he answers our prayers exceedingly abundantly, above all that we can ask or think.

He's a generous God. Now you see it in the extravagance of the holy city. His extravagant grace. In fact, in a little book on Psalm 23, Haddon Robinson says this, and we'll move on. "This is the God we serve. The God of the overflowing cup. This is the blessing he brings. The calf is always the fatted calf, the robe is always the best robe, the joy is always unspeakable, the peace is always beyond imagination. There is no grudging in God's goodness. He does not measure his goodness by drops like a druggist filling a

prescription. It comes to us in floods." And the new Jerusalem tells us that when we look at its size. Just this morning, finally, the shape of the city. The shape. We talked about this last week. I alluded to it just a few moments ago, so let me move quickly. The shape of the city, it's a square. It's a cube. It's symmetrical. Okay? We saw that in verse 16. Its length, breadth and height are equal. The new Jerusalem will be in the shape of a cube, and that's significant. Why?

Well, let's take that idea, marry it to the idea of chapter 21, verse 22, there's no temple. Because if you go back to the blueprint for the tabernacle and the temple, both in 1st Kings 6, verse 20, and 2nd Chronicles 3, verses 8 to 9, you'll realize that the holy of holies, where the ark of the covenant was, where God's glory dwelt, where the priests went in once a year to make atonement for the sin and to meet God on behalf of the people, it was shaped in a cube. 30 feet by 30 feet, by 30 feet, long, wide and high. Folks, this city will be the holy of holies written large. No temple. No holy of holies. No room within a building filled alone by the glory of God. That's all removed. We'll have complete access to the presence of God. We talked about that last week. The thing that gets me is that we need to just grasp that thought that heaven is one large holy of holies. It's a place, right?

2nd Peter 3, verse 14, wherein dwells righteousness. There's a throne, and upon that throne sits a thrice holy God who's worshiped back in Revelation, chapter 4, verse 8, as the God who is holy, holy, holy, which is an echo of Isaiah 6. We read here of this city that nothing that defiles will enter it. Look at verse 27. "There shall be no means enter it anything that defiles or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the lamb's book of life." That's my point. The site is earth, the size is gigantic, a measure of God's grace. The shape is the shape of the holy of holies where you and I live in the presence of God forever. Where holiness and righteousness are the atmosphere we drink in, and we mirror in both our looks and in our actions. Life in the city, the future city, in tomorrow's world, reflects the holy character of God and the justness of his ways.

Heaven is a holy place for a holy people. And as I close this morning, if you hope to go to heaven, then your life will be marked by holiness. By righteous actions. By repentance and obedience to the word of God. Are you saying pastor, that it's through our righteous deeds that we get to go to heaven? I'm not saying that. We get to go to heaven because of the lamb. The lamb is mentioned throughout Revelation, 21 and 22. There's no temple, because God and the lamb will illuminate the place. No, we get to go to heaven because of a righteousness that's not our own. The imputed righteousness of Christ that's given to us as a gift, it's Christ and our union with him through what he did on the cross. That's our righteousness, that's our standing before God. We don't lead holy lives to be saints, we are saints by faith alone, through grace alone, in the Lord Jesus Christ. But here's what I'm saying. We don't lead holy lives to be saints, but we lead holy lives because we're saints.

Because you know that salvation's in three tenses, or I hope you do. You have been saved by grace, that's justification. But you are being saved. You now have a perfect standing before God, but you are now abiding in Christ, you're in union with Christ like a branch in a vine, and that bears fruit. You are now indwelt by the holy spirit who takes the holy scriptures to shape your behavior into holy behavior. And that's got to be going on in your life. That's one of the grounds of your assurance. That you are changing. That you are becoming holy. In fact, think about this, 2nd Corinthians 5:17 says, "If any man in Christ, he's a new creature." Listen to the language. It's the language of Revelation 21, 1 to 5. "And the old things will pass away, and new things will come." Salvation is heaven begun, and if true salvation is operative in your life, holiness will be the result. And if there's no change, there's something strange.

If you're not repentant of your sin, if you're not overcoming sin, if you're not growing in grace, you need to take a look at yourself, because heaven's a holy place for a holy people, and heaven has begun in us. And what God will do some day with the creation in the former things being replaced by new things, God's already doing that in you and me. And we are pursuing holiness in the fear of God. Heaven will be

in us before we are in heaven. And let me tell you what holiness is. John Brown, a Scottish theologian of the 19th century said, "Holiness does not consist in mystic speculations, enthusiastic fervors, or uncommanded austerities. It consists in thinking as God thinks, and willing as God wills."

That's what holiness is. It's a word that kind of scares us. It's a bit like some cheeses, once they get past our nose we begin to enjoy them. And once holiness kind of gets past our nose and we kind of go, "Holiness?" And we think of austerity, we think of black suits, and Scofield bibles, and legalistic rules. We think of, you know, holy people have dreams and visions. No, John Brown's saying no. Holy people think like God thinks. And they submit to his will, and they obey his word, and they repent of known sin, and they conform to known commandments. And they pursue Christ. Ever becoming more like him. They have a passion for what he has a passion for. Their lives will be marked by godly character, repentance, worship, love of the church, obedience to the word, love of the brethren, remaining unspotted from the world. Look, that will be progressive. None of us will ever get to a place where we're perfect, and completely holy.

We are perfect before God through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, but we are becoming righteous in our behavior through the progressive work of the holy spirit. And that's an imperfect work. Sanctification will never have an end, but it must have a beginning. Sanctification will never have an end until we get to heaven, but it must have a beginning. That's why I like what J.C. Ryle says as we close.

"The history of the brightest saints that ever lived will contain many a but, how be it, and not withstanding before you reach the end. The goal will never be without dross, the light will never be without clouds, until we reach the heavenly Jerusalem. The son himself has spots upon his face, the holiest men have many a blemish and defect when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary. Their life is a continual warfare with sin, the world and the devil, and sometimes you will see them not overcoming, but overcome. The flesh is ever lusting against the spirit. But still, for all this I am sure that to have such a character as have faintly drawn in the heart's desire and prayer for all true Christians, they press towards it although they do not reach it. They may not attain it, but they're always aiming at it. It is what they strive, labor to be, if it not be what they are."

God is holy, and he saved us to live in a holy city that's like a holy of holies. And if that's the case, if God is holy, and wants us to be holy, then let us be holy. Let us be like the little ermine, the little animal in North Europe who had a beautiful white fur coat in the winter. And instinctively wanted to protect that coat. Wouldn't touch anything that would soil it or spoil it, and those who hunted this little animal, because it was wanted for its fur, royals liked it, and rich people liked it, what they did was they didn't hunt the ermine. They found out where its lair was, or its home was, and whether that was in the cleft or the rock, or the hollow of a tree, and they put all kinds of slime and dirt, and gunge around it. Then they let their dogs loose. At some point, the dogs flush out the little ermine who comes running in fear to its home. But history tells us the little ermine just sits outside the door to their home.

It won't go in through the dirt, the grime, and the grunge. It won't soil or spoil their coat. And so, they turn around and face death at the barks and bane of the dogs. Amazing, isn't it? They have this instinctual commitment to remain unspotted. And that should be the heart and the behavior, and the desire of those who are going to the new Jerusalem, which is the holy city come down from heaven. Father, we thank you for our time in the word, we've turned a few more pages on the brochure on heaven. And we're drooling, we're licking our lips, we're desiring. Who have I in heaven but you? And there's none on earth that I desire besides you. We so look forward to the ultimate triumph of your kingdom. We so look forward to there being no curse, and no death, and no sorrow, and no pain. We realize that, that will come to us at the cost of what Jesus did on the cross for us.

We thank you that he made a display of the powers of darkness in defeating them on the cross, in triumphing over the grave, and he laid down the foundation for ultimately a new heaven and a new

earth. Wherein dwells righteousness. And so Lord, we pray, that indeed that the site of heaven on earth, and the size of heaven, and its extravagance and the shape of heaven as the holy of holies would inform us. As Peter says, "Knowing that these things will happen, what manner of people ought you to be in all holy conduct and conversation?" Lord, it was said of Richard Sibbes, may it be said of us, heaven was in him before he was in heaven. It's the pure in heart that will see God. Without holiness, no man will see God. And we pray and ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.