

ASPECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHURCH LIFE SEEN IN THE NEW JERUSALEM

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Five

The Intrinsic Significance of the Name *New Jerusalem* and the Dimensions of the Holy City

Scripture Reading: Rev. 21:2, 9-10, 13, 16

I. The intrinsic significance of the name *New Jerusalem* applies to our living out and working out the New Jerusalem—Rev. 21:2, 9-10:

A. The holy city is “new”:

1. The New Jerusalem, the holy city, is created in Christ as the new creation with the divine element—2 Cor. 5:17:
 - a. The Bible reveals to us two creations—the old creation and the new creation; the old creation does not have the divine life and nature, but the new creation, constituted of the believers, who are born again of God, does—John 1:13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4.
 - b. Hence, the believers are a new creation (Gal. 6:15), not according to the old nature of the flesh but according to the new nature of the divine life.
 - c. The old creation is our old man in Adam (Eph. 4:22), our natural being by birth, without God’s life and the divine nature; the new creation is the new man in Christ (v. 24), our being that is regenerated by the Spirit (John 3:6), having God’s life and the divine nature wrought into it (v. 36; 2 Pet. 1:4), having Christ as its constituent (Col. 3:10-11), and having become a new constitution.
 - d. Only God is “new”; the old creation is old because it does not have God’s element, but the new creation is new because it has God as its element:
 - 1) Our new heart and new spirit are something of God (Ezek. 36:26); for our mind to be renewed means that God has been wrought into our mind.
 - 2) Everything that is designated new in the New Testament indicates that God has been wrought into these items (such as the new wine, the new wineskins, the new garment, and the new testament).
 - 3) God is revealed in the New Testament, and the New Testament conveys God to us; God is newness, and newness is God.
 - e. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new”:
 - 1) To say that all things have become new means that they have become divine.
 - 2) Furthermore, to say that all things have become new means that all things have become God since God is new and since God is newness.
 - f. Every day we need to have a new beginning of life, an “Abib” (Exo. 13:4), and we need to be saved from staleness to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4) and serve in newness of spirit (7:6).

- g. Those who are sanctified by taking Christ as their Substitute (Exo. 13:2), who have a new beginning of life (v. 4), and who eliminate all exposed sin (vv. 6-7) will have a daily living that is worthy of being a memorial, an eternal remembrance (v. 9).
- 2. The New Jerusalem as a new creation has God in Christ, possessing the divine life and the divine nature:
 - a. In the New Jerusalem there are the river of water of life and the tree of life (Rev. 22:1-2); besides the divine life the New Jerusalem does not display any other kind of life:
 - 1) Daily we need to drink of the one Spirit as the river of water of life (1 Cor. 12:13) and eat Christ as the tree of life (Rev. 2:7; John 6:35, 57b).
 - 2) Daily we need to give the preeminence to the inner flow of life (Ezek. 47:1-2) and live in the principle of dependence, the principle of the tree of life (2 Cor. 1:8-9, 12).
 - b. Also, the city itself and the street of the New Jerusalem are pure gold, like transparent glass (Rev. 21:18b, 21b); in typology gold signifies the divine nature:
 - 1) God is Spirit, the nature of God's person; daily we need to enjoy God's person by exercising our spirit—John 4:24.
 - 2) God is love, the nature of God's essence, and God is light, the nature of God's expression; daily we need to enjoy God as love and light by remaining in the fellowship, the flow, of the divine life—1 John 4:8, 16; 1:5, 3; cf. Rev. 22:1.
- 3. The New Jerusalem is constituted with Christ as the new man with the divine nature and the divine life—Col. 3:10-11:
 - a. Not only is there no natural person in the new man, but also there is no possibility, no room, for any natural person; in the new man there is only room for Christ.
 - b. Christ is all the members of the new man, and He is in all the members; He is everything in the new man; actually, He is the new man, His Body—1 Cor. 12:12.
 - c. Because we have been born of Christ and constituted with Christ, we can say that we are Christ (in life and in nature); how much we live Christ depends upon how much of Christ has been constituted into our being—Phil. 1:19-21a; Eph. 3:16-17a.
- B. The title *Jerusalem* is composed of two Hebrew words—*Jeru* means “foundation,” and *Salem* means “peace”; thus, *Jerusalem* means “the foundation of peace”:
 - 1. In the New Testament there are two titles—*the God of peace* (Phil. 4:9; 1 Thes. 5:23) and *the peace of God* (Phil. 4:7); both of these titles indicate that God Himself is our peace.
 - 2. Ephesians 2:14 says that Christ Himself is our peace; He is the arbitrating peace of the new man—Col. 3:15.
 - 3. The Lord Jesus told us, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid”—John 14:27.

4. Our Lord also said, “These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have affliction, but take courage; I have overcome the world”—16:33.
5. Since the Lord has given us His peace and left us His peace, today we should live in His peace—Isa. 26:3; Rom. 8:6.
6. Jerusalem is the Triune God to be our peace, to be our safety; the whole New Jerusalem will be an entity of peace—cf. Isa. 66:12.
7. The New Jerusalem will be solidly grounded and safeguarded in the Triune God as peace and safety, and we will enjoy the Triune God as peace forever.

II. The dimensions of the holy city apply to our living out and working out the New Jerusalem:

- A. The city has three gates on each of the four sides—Rev. 21:13:
 1. The east side, at the front, toward the glory of the sunrise (cf. Luke 1:78-79), ranks first; the north side, at the top, ranks second; the south side, at the bottom, ranks third; and the west side, at the rear, ranks fourth.
 2. The gates on the four sides face the four directions of the earth, signifying that the entrance into the holy city is available to all the peoples on earth (cf. the four heads of the river in Genesis 2:10-14).
 3. That there are three gates on each side signifies that the three of the Divine Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—work together to bring people into the holy city; this is indicated in the three parables in Luke 15 and implied in the Lord’s word in Matthew 28:19; to be baptized into the Father, the Son, and the Spirit is the real entrance into the holy city.
 4. The three gates indicate that the Triune God has come to reach us and bring us into His eternal economy—Eph. 3:14-17; 2 Cor. 13:14; Num. 6:22-27.
 5. That there are three gates on each of the four sides, three times four being twelve, also implies that the Triune God is mingled with man, the creature (the number four signifying the creature—Rev. 4:6).
- B. The length, breadth, and height of the New Jerusalem are equal; it is twelve thousand stadia in each dimension—21:16:
 1. According to its measurements, the New Jerusalem is a cube; the dimensions of the Holy of Holies, both in the tabernacle and in the temple, were equal in length, breadth, and height; the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle was a cube measuring ten cubits in each dimension, and the Holy of Holies in the temple was a cube of twenty cubits in each dimension (signifying that our experience of Christ in the church must be balanced, like that of a cube)—Exo. 26:2-8; 1 Kings 6:20; Eph. 3:18.
 2. That the length, breadth, and height of the New Jerusalem are equal signifies that the entire New Jerusalem will be the Holy of Holies.
 3. In the New Jerusalem all God’s redeemed ones will serve and worship God, will see and touch God’s presence, and will live and dwell in God’s presence for eternity:
 - a. In our Christian life and church life, we must hold on to this principle: God’s presence is the criterion for every matter; regardless of what we do, we must pay attention to whether or not we have God’s presence.

- b. We should aspire to be like Moses and Paul, ones who had God's presence to a full extent for God's building, God's corporate expression—Exo. 33:11, 14; 2 Cor. 2:10; 4:6-7; 1 Cor. 3:9.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE NEW JERUSALEM

New

We need to consider what the designation *New Jerusalem* means. We believers have a bad habit of taking the Bible for granted. Why does the Spirit use the word *new* in the designation *New Jerusalem*? The Bible reveals to us two creations—the old creation and the new creation. There is nothing of God's nature involved with any item in the old creation. In other words, God is not in the old creation. In everything of the new creation, however, God's divine nature is in it. The old man has nothing of God in it, but the new man is not only born of God but also created and constituted with God. None of the new items in the New Testament refers to anything material or physical. Our new heart is something of God (Ezek. 36:26). For our mind to be renewed means that God has been wrought into our mind (Eph. 4:23). Everything that is designated new in the New Testament indicates or implies that God has been wrought into these items. If you do not have God, you do not have a new heart. The new wineskins, the new wine, the new garment, and the New Testament all are designated new because God is in them. The Old Testament was something of the dead letters, but the New Testament has God in it. The New Testament is altogether something of God. It is a testament not only of life but of God. God is revealed in the New Testament, and the New Testament conveys God to us.

By this principle we can see that the old Jerusalem was a physical city. In its constituents there was nothing of God's nature. However, the New Jerusalem, just like the new man, has God wrought into it. It is new because God has been added in. Anything that is without God is old, but anything in which God is added is new. A piece of furniture is old because it does not have God, but as a believer you are new because you have God wrought into you. Those who have not believed in the Lord Jesus are old because they do not have God. God is newness, and newness is God. Oldness is the old creation, the old I, the old you. When you have God, however, you have the newness. You become new, and you become newness. All the new items in the New Testament such as the new heart, the new mind, the new man, and the new creation are new because God has been wrought into these items.

Possessing the Divine Nature and the Divine Life

The New Jerusalem as a new creation has God in Christ, possessing the divine nature and the divine life. We cannot have God outside of Christ. Also, Revelation 21 and 22 provide us with many indications that the New Jerusalem possesses the divine nature and the divine life. In the New Jerusalem there are the tree of life and the river of water of life. Besides the divine life, the New Jerusalem does not display any other life. Also, the city itself and the street of the New Jerusalem are pure gold like

transparent glass (Rev. 21:18b, 21b). In typology gold signifies the divine nature. Thus, the New Jerusalem possesses the divine nature and the divine life.

The New Creation

Also, the New Jerusalem is created in Christ as the new creation with the divine element (2 Cor. 5:17). Some may think that the new creation refers to us believers and not the New Jerusalem. To say this, though, indicates that we do not have the sight to see that the New Jerusalem is a living composition of all of God's redeemed people, including the New Testament believers and the Old Testament saints. All the redeemed ones composed together are a new creation in Christ, and this new creation has the divine element. The divine element has been wrought into the new creation. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, they have become new." It would be helpful if we could spend some time to pray-read this verse. To say that all things have become new means that they have become divine. Furthermore, to say that all things have become new means that all things have become God since God is new and since God is newness.

The New Man

Furthermore, the New Jerusalem is constituted with Christ as the new man with the divine nature and the divine life (Col. 3:10-11). According to Colossians 3:11, the new man is constituted with Christ because in the new man there cannot be any natural man. Not only is there no natural person in the new man, but there is no possibility, no room, for any natural person. In the new man there is only room for Christ. He is all the members of the new man and in all the members. He is everything in the new man. Actually He is the new man, His Body (1 Cor. 12:12). In the new man He is the centrality and universality. In the new man "there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but Christ is all and in all" (Col. 3:11). Although the church as the new man is composed with people from many different cultures and races, Christ is actually everything in the new man. This is a matter of constitution. Christ was born into you at your new birth and from that time Christ is being constituted into your very being to transform you into Christ. Because a certain piece of furniture is made with wood and constituted with wood, we can say that it is wood or wooden. In like manner, because we have been born of Christ and constituted with Christ, we can say that we are Christ (in life and in nature). The Bible tells us that the new man, the church, cannot have the natural man and that what is in this new man is just Christ, not Christ by Himself, in Himself, or with Himself, but Christ in you and with you. Due to the influence and restriction of today's traditional teaching, we have been very much limited and even we do not dare to say that we are Christ. However, I hope we would receive a heavenly vision to see that since we have been born of Christ and constituted with Christ, we are Christ.

We like to say that we live Christ, but many times we dare not say this because we have some realization that we do not live Christ all the time. The reason why we do not live Christ is because we are void of Christ's constitution. What we are

constituted with is what we live. Some saints told me, “To live Christ is wonderful, but I forget to live Him all the time. When I lost my temper, I remembered that I should have lived Christ, and by then it was too late!” The reason why you forget to live Christ is because Christ has never been constituted into you that much. To live Christ does not need you to remember that you have to live Christ. If He has been so much constituted into you, you cannot forget to live Him. Our bad temper is “quicker than electricity.” If we do not have the constitution of Christ for us to remember that we need to live Christ, it is impossible to live Him. How much we live Christ depends upon how much Christ has been constituted into our being. According to our fellowship thus far, we can see that to say the New Jerusalem is a physical city prepared by God is absolutely absurd. There is no way to interpret the consummation of the Bible in this way. Because this city is new, it has been wrought with God and has God as its contents.

Jerusalem—the Foundation of Peace

The title *Jerusalem* is composed of two Hebrew words—*Jeru* means “foundation,” and *Salem* means “peace.” Paul tells us in Hebrews 7 that the King of Salem is the King of Peace (v. 2). *Salem* is peace, and *Jeru* is something founded, something built, something laid as a foundation. Thus, *Jerusalem* means “the foundation of peace.” Jerusalem is something grounded, founded, and safeguarded in peace. The Bible indicates that peace is God Himself. In the New Testament are two titles—*the God of peace* (Phil. 4:9; 1 Thes. 5:23) and *the peace of God* (Phil. 4:7). Both of these titles indicate that God Himself is our peace. Also, Ephesians 2:14 indicates that Christ Himself is our peace. This peace is God into whom we have been grounded. This is not an outward peace, but an inward peace in which we are safeguarded. In eternity we will enjoy peace forever.

The Lord Jesus told us, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you” (John 14:27). Our Lord also said in John 16:33, “These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have affliction, but be of good courage, I have overcome the world.” Since the Lord has given us His peace and left us His peace, today we should live in His peace. Actually, the Lord Himself is still here as our peace. Jerusalem is the Triune God to be our peace, to be our safety. The whole New Jerusalem will be an entity of peace. When we consummate in the New Jerusalem, we will be in peace, that is, in the Triune God. The New Jerusalem will be solidly grounded and safeguarded in the Triune God as peace and safety, and we will enjoy the Triune God as peace forever. (*God’s New Testament Economy*, pp. 277-281)

A BUILDED CHURCH HAVING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Now we will go on to see how we can know that a church has been built up. In other words, what is the condition of a built-up church? I would like to point out several things from the last two chapters of Revelation.

First, a built-up church has God’s presence. Revelation 21:22 says that there is no temple in the New Jerusalem, for God and the Lamb are its temple. We know that during the Old Testament times the temple was the center of Jerusalem.

Therefore, that God and the Lamb are the temple means that God and the Lamb themselves become the center of the city. In other words, God is with the city, and the city has the presence of God.

This shows us that where there is building, there is the presence of God. God's presence follows His building. Does not our experience also tell us that whenever we are built together with all the saints, we have God's presence, and whenever we are individualistic, we immediately lose the sense of God's presence? In the last chapter I used an illustration of three persons who were discussing when to have a gospel meeting. One of them suggested having it in the evening, another one suggested having it in the afternoon, and the third one suggested having it in the morning. Eventually they came to a deadlock. I believe many of us would ask, since there are three different opinions, which one should be accepted? At which of the suggested times should the gospel be preached? My reply is that the gospel should be preached at the time when there is God's presence. This means that when three people are discussing such a matter, the first one should ask, "While I am insisting on having the meeting at 7:30 p.m., do I have God's presence?" The second one should also ask, "While I am fighting to have the meeting at four o'clock in the afternoon, do I have the presence of God?" And the third one should also ask, "While I am suggesting 6:30 a.m., do I have God's presence?" Therefore, the time of the meeting should be decided altogether according to God's presence. If there is the presence of God, then any time is proper, regardless of whether it is in the morning, in the afternoon, or in the evening. But if there is not the presence of God, then no time is suitable.

If we know this principle and live in it, we will never contend with the brothers and sisters while we are serving God in the church. We know that whenever we argue with them, the presence of God is lost. God's presence is like a dove that cannot stand any disturbance. Once we argue, it will fly away. Recently while I was abroad, in many places, whether it was in the park or even on the street, I saw many doves flying around. These doves were not afraid of people. While we were sitting in the park, a group of doves came in front of us. If we talked loudly, they would all fly away, but if we just sat there and talked gently, one by one the doves would come near us again. Brothers and sisters, it is the same with the presence of God when we are serving the Lord together. Perhaps your reasoning is right, and your suggestion is the best, but because we argue, the Holy Spirit as a dove flies away.

Therefore, we must hold on to this principle: God's presence is the criterion for every matter. Regardless of what we do, we must pay attention to whether or not we have God's presence. Do we have God's presence while we are expressing our opinions? Do we have God's presence while we are saying certain things or taking a certain attitude? Is God's presence in our suggestion or proposal? If we touch the presence of God in all things, we will see that God will be there as the temple, and the building of God will be with us. When we argue with each other, we all may be for the Lord, and our insisting may be quite justifiable. However, due to our arguing we do not have God as the temple—the presence of God. Instead, we have torn down the city.

One thing that grieves me very much is that in all the places that I visit it is rare

not to hear the brothers and sisters judging and criticizing one another. In nearly every place I visit, I meet some brothers and sisters who speak to me with words of criticism and judgment. If they are not unhappy with the responsible ones, then they are blaming the workers, or they are dissatisfied with the church. One thing is certain: the brothers and sisters who criticize are the first ones to lose the presence of God, regardless of whether they are right or wrong in their criticism or judgment. They do not have God's presence, and they do not have God as the temple. Among these ones there is no building.

We must see that in the church reasoning does not matter. What matters is the presence of God. The church is not a law court where it is advantageous to present your reasons adequately. This is not the case! In the church the more you reason, the more God stays away from you. Even if your reasoning is one hundred percent correct and all the good reasons are on your side, the more you argue, the further away from God you will be.

Let me tell you more about doves. Doves do not care whether or not your arguments are convincing. They care only whether or not you have a loud voice and whether or not you have a fierce look. You cannot deceive them. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Scriptures say that the doves' eyes are the fairest. Through careful observation I have found that a dove's eyes are its keenest part. Humans cannot cheat them. That day while I was in the park, I tried various ways to lure one of the doves to come to me. However, when my hand moved, even just a little, the dove quickly ran away. When I rested my hand, it came back again. Brothers and sisters, the presence of the Holy Spirit within us is also like this. The Spirit does not care about how right you are. He cares only about your attitude, your intention, and your condition. In the law court the louder a person argues, the greater his advantage is. In the church, however, the louder a person argues, the greater his loss is. The more we reason, the more we lose God's presence. Please remember that the temple in the New Jerusalem is God Himself. God's presence is the center of the city. Therefore, in the church we must have the presence of God; we must have God as the temple. Then we will be built up to have the condition of the New Jerusalem. (*The Building Work of God*, pp. 88-91)