

Message Two

**Israel's Encamping in Array Typifying
God's Redeemed People Being Consummated
as the New Jerusalem**

Scripture Reading: Num. 2:2;

Rev. 21:12, 21a; 22:14

- I. In Numbers 2:2 Jehovah said to Moses and Aaron, "The children of Israel shall encamp each by his own standard with the ensigns of their fathers' households; they shall encamp facing the Tent of Meeting on every side":**
- A. In the matter of encamping in array, there was no human choice; whichever tribe an Israelite was born of, he had to encamp by the standard of that tribe; he was not allowed to have his own choice—cf. 1 Cor. 12:18.
 - B. The spiritual significance of this type is that in the coordination in the church, the believers are not allowed to have their own choice; their coordination must come absolutely out of God's ordination and arrangement.
 - C. There were twelve standards among the Israelites (three on each of the four sides of the Tent of Meeting), but there was only one central goal; they took the Tent of Meeting and the testimony of God as their center:
 - 1. For the meeting of God's people with God, the tabernacle was called the Tent of Meeting—Lev. 1:1.
 - 2. For the testimony of God, it was called the Tabernacle of the Testimony—Num. 1:50, 53.
 - 3. In the New Testament both Christ and the church, the enlargement of Christ, are the reality of the tabernacle in these two aspects.
- II. The children of Israel encamping in array typifies God's redeemed people being consummated as the New Jerusalem:**
- A. The Israelites encamped facing the Tent of Meeting in four directions: the east, the south, the west, and the north; this means that the testimony of God faced all sides—2:1-34.
 - B. There were three camps in each of the four sides; three denotes the Triune God, and four denotes the created man; three times four signifies God in His Divine Trinity being mingled with the created man as one.
 - C. Three times four equals twelve, which also denotes eternity and completion as well as administration and government.

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- D. Thus, according to the numbers in the Israelites' encamping in array, their formation signifies God in His Divine Trinity being mingled with the created man, forming a unit of eternal and perfect government.
- E. The New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 has four sides, and each side has three gates; the total number of gates on the four sides of the New Jerusalem is twelve, and on the twelve gates are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel—vv. 12-13.
- F. According to verses 2 and 3, the New Jerusalem is the tabernacle of God; the Israelites' encamping in Numbers 2 was around the tabernacle; this picture corresponds to the description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:
 - 1. Just as the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 has four sides, so also the encamping in Numbers 2 had four sides.
 - 2. The New Jerusalem has three gates on each of her four sides, on which are the names of the twelve tribes; similarly, the twelve tribes of Israel's encamping in Numbers 2 had three tribes on each of its four sides.
 - 3. This all depicts the scene in eternity, showing that God's purpose in the universe is to be mingled with man in His Divine Trinity in order to become a unit of government; this unit of government can fight for His testimony.
 - 4. When the twelve tribes were encamped, they were like a city; the walls of the four sides of the New Jerusalem are the safeguard of the city.
 - 5. The twelve camps of the army encamped in array in Numbers correspond to the walls of the New Jerusalem; likewise, the coordination in the church is for safeguarding God's testimony.
 - 6. The administration of each local church should be "three times four," which equals "twelve," for the divine administration in a locality; this administration is an army that fights for God and maintains God's testimony.

III. The New Jerusalem "had a great and high wall and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names inscribed, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel"—Rev. 21:12:

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- A. The wall is for separation and protection; New Jerusalem will be absolutely separated unto God and will fully protect the interests of God.
- B. Its wall will be great and high; today all believers need such a great and high wall for their separation and protection.
- C. In God's eternal economy, angels are ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14); they serve those who inherit salvation and who participate in the eternal blessing of the New Jerusalem, the center of the new heaven and new earth.
- D. These angels will be the gatekeepers of our possession, while we will be the enjoyers of the rich inheritance in God's eternal economy.
- E. Israel in Revelation 21:12 represents the law of the Old Testament, indicating that the law is represented at the gates of the New Jerusalem; the law watches and observes to insure that all the communications, the comings in and goings out, of the holy city meet the law's requirements.
- F. That the names of the twelve tribes of Israel are inscribed on the twelve gates signifies that the twelve tribes are the entrance into the holy city; as such, they lead people, through the preaching of the gospel, into the riches of the Triune God to enjoy the supply in the city—cf. 22:14.

IV. "The twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was, respectively, of one pearl"—21:21a:

- A. Pearls are produced by oysters in the waters of death:
 - 1. When an oyster is wounded by a grain of sand, it secretes its life-juice around the grain of sand and makes it into a precious pearl.
 - 2. The oyster depicts Christ as the living One coming into the death waters, being wounded by us (cf. Isa. 53:5), and secreting His life over us to make us precious pearls for the building of God's eternal habitation and expression.
 - 3. That the twelve gates of the holy city are twelve pearls signifies that regeneration through the death-overcoming and life-secreting Christ is the entrance into the city.
 - 4. This meets the requirement of the law, which is represented by Israel and is under the observing of the guarding angels;

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we can enter into the city only through the once-for-all regeneration accomplished by Christ's overcoming death and life-imparting resurrection.

5. God is triune in one entrance to bring us into God, into God's interest, into the kingdom of God, and into the economy of God, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem; the Triune God is our triune entrance—Luke 15:1-32; Eph. 2:18; 1 Pet. 1:1-2.
- B. Pearls signify the issue of Christ's secretion in two aspects: His redeeming and life-releasing death and His life-dispensing resurrection:
1. Both kinds of secretion (dispensing) require the seeking believers' daily experience of the death of Christ subjectively by the power of Christ's resurrection that they may be conformed to the death of Christ—Phil. 3:10.
 2. We can experience His death only by the power of the resurrection of Christ; by the power of the resurrection of Christ, we have the ability and the power to keep our pitiful self on the cross—cf. S. S. 2:8-9a, 14.
 3. We also should seek the daily experience of the resurrection of Christ subjectively by the bountiful supply of the Spirit (the reality of resurrection) of Jesus Christ that we may be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God—Phil. 1:19; Rom. 8:28-29.
 4. Christ's death can be experienced by us only through Christ's resurrection, and Christ's resurrection can be real to us only by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
 5. When we turn to our spirit, we meet Christ as the life-giving Spirit, who is the very reality of Christ's resurrection; we have to touch Christ in our spirit all the time by praying unceasingly—1 Thes. 5:17.
 6. His death applied to us will conform us to the mold of His death, and His Spirit in us will conform us into the glory of His image, the image of the firstborn Son of God.
 7. We all need to pray, "Lord, imprison me and keep me always in Your death; I do not want to leave Your death but to make Your death my sweet and wonderful dwelling place; Lord, I want to stay with You in Your death."

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8. His death is the place where He has the position to secrete Himself around us, and this is the only place where we can enjoy and experience His resurrection life as a kind of life-sap secreting itself around our being to make us a wonderful piece of pearl for the entry into God's building.
9. Christ was wounded for us in order to have us imprisoned in His wound so that He might carry out His secretion over us again and again throughout our entire life to make us pearls for the building of God's eternal habitation.
10. The more we are made pearls subjectively, the more we are in the New Jerusalem, and the more we are in the kingdom—Matt. 13:45-46; John 3:5.