

## The Magnificent Kingdom - Lesson 12 of 21 - Landmarks of Prophecy

Good evening, friends. Welcome again to the 'Landmarks of Prophecy' Bible study series. And tonight we're going to be studying a subject that you do find in the prophecies of the Bible, dealing with the Kingdom of Heaven, more specifically, the lesson tonight is titled 'The Magnificent Kingdom' and it's based upon a story that you find in your Bible with the experience of King Solomon.

You can read in the first book of Kings, it tells us in chapter 3, that Solomon loved the Lord. When Solomon first became king he was very humble. He was actually the youngest of David's sons so it was unusual that the youngest would be the one chosen to be the king. And when he came into power and was asked to rule in the kingdom, he just felt totally inadequate. He went to sleep one night and they said he had a dream. And the Lord appeared to him in the dream and said, 'Ask what I shall do for you.' And in his dream he said, 'Lord, you've made me the ruler of Your people that are like the sand of the sea and I'm just a little child; I don't know how to go out and come in. Give me a wise and an understanding heart that I can judge this people of Yours.' And his first thought was for the Kingdom of God and that he might be a righteous king. And because that was his desire, the Bible says that the Lord answered his prayer and not only gave him a long life, it says he gave him wisdom beyond any king before him.

Now, when you look at the history of Israel, they had their ups and downs. But if you were to pick a point during the history of Israel when they had the highest glory, it would be during the time of King Solomon. It said that all the nations of the world came to him. That there was so much silver and gold in the kingdom that, actually, silver was counted as nothing because everything was made of gold. The pinnacle of the kingdom - the closest the children of Israel ever got to realizing the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, was during that reign of Solomon - in particular, when the Queen of Sheba came, because it tells us that the goal that God had for His people - He said, 'I want you to be a nation of kings and priests. I want all people to come to you and to learn of Me.'

The temple had just been built. Everything was brand-spanking new. Solomon had just built his house. There was great wealth and prosperity. They had peace on all their borders and, during that time, the Queen of Sheba had heard about the wisdom of Solomon. She came from a very wealthy country down somewhere near Saudi Arabia, with a great caravan - brought animals and gifts and all these treasures to Solomon - and all she was asking for, she said, 'I want to ask you questions.' Because the most important thing to her was truth and wisdom. And really that is the most important thing. The truth will set you free.

And she just plied him with all kinds of questions. Now you're going to hear stories that the Queen of Sheba and Solomon had an affair and they had a baby. None of that is in the Bible. None of it is even in history. It's in more recent lore and legends and movies, but the Bible doesn't say that. I mean, you know, Solomon had like 300 concubines and 1,000 wives. He didn't need one more. And so, it wasn't like she came up for that reason. So there's nothing in the Bible that alludes to that. She purely wanted to see who was the God that Solomon worshiped.

You ever heard the expression, 'I had a breathtaking experience?' That comes from the Queen of Sheba. After she saw Solomon's house and the temple of God and the seating of his servants and their apparel and the wealth of the kingdom and heard his answers for all the questions, the Bible says there was no more spirit left in her. We learned what that word means. She was left breathless. That's what the word 'spirit' means there. She was left - it was breathtaking - and she said, 'Surely the half was not told me of your wisdom and your greatness.'

Now there's one greater than Solomon who's come into our world. Solomon was the Son of David who built a house for the Lord. You know God told King David, 'Your son will build Me a house that will last forever.' That's what Nathan the prophet said to King David. Was Nathan the prophet talking about Solomon or, more specifically, Jesus, the Son of David that would build a house that would last forever?

Solomon ended up falling. His wives drew his heart away from God. He ended up repenting near the end. You can read the book of Ecclesiastes where he says, 'Vanity of vanities, I spent my time pursuing the things of the world and all is vanity.' He returned to the Lord but that temple was destroyed. That son of David fell.

But the Son of David that was to build a house that was to last forever was the church - or was Jesus and the church is like a type of the Queen of Sheba - that is coming looking for wisdom. And so, in this story, we sort of have an allegory of the glorious magnificent Kingdom that God is preparing for us. What happened with Israel during the time of Solomon is just a little shadow of what Jesus, the Son of David, - a real golden Kingdom - that He's prepared for those that love Him. And we're going to talk about that tonight. The Bible has a lot to say about Heaven and it's very real. Let's look at some of the verses.

Question #1 in our lesson: What did Jesus promise His people? What did Jesus promise His people? In John 14, verse 2 He said, "In My Father's house" - and you can say it with me - "are many mansions: ...I go to prepare a place for you." He said, 'and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself.

He said - Question #2: What do we know about the place Jesus is preparing for us? The Bible tells us that He's going to make everything new. Now, there's a lot of beautiful things that the Lord is promising for us. First of all, Isaiah 65, verse 17, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. Wherein dwells righteousness." Why is the Lord making a new heaven and a new earth? Is there something wrong with the old Heaven? When you say 'new Heaven' people say, 'What was the matter with the old Heaven?' Heaven has three words - or there's three definitions for the word 'heaven.' One is, in Hebrew, the first heaven, was speaking about the atmosphere around the world. It's the - that envelope that covers our planet where the clouds float, where the birds fly - the air. Hasn't that kind of been polluted over time? So when God says, 'The first heavens and earth were passed away,' it's not talking about Heaven/Paradise, He's talking about the atmosphere around the world. When God said, 'I'm making a new heaven,' He means a new atmosphere around the world. You can read in Genesis where God separated the waters above from the waters beneath by the heavens. Talking about the air between the land and the clouds. And so, that's what it means when he says he making a new heavens and a new earth. God is going to take this planet. It will be purified by the fires that rain down at the end of the 1,000 years, and on the purified remains of this planet, He's going to start all over except that this time, those days of creation, you and I get to watch.

You see, God has a plan and nothing that God plans is going to be thwarted by the devil. The devil doesn't win. God is going to complete His plan. His plan to make this world and be populated with people created in His own image - He will accomplish that. Hebrews 11, verse 16 - the Bible says, "For He hath prepared for them" - what? - "A city." Now, when I think of cities, I don't think, usually, good things. I was born in Los Angeles - millions of people down there. I don't know how many now. Mom moved to New York - grew up in New York City - another big city. Dad moved to Miami. I went down there - went to school in Miami - another big city. I don't like cities. This year I was in Shanghai. I've been to Manila - big city - millions. Jakarta, Indonesia, Cairo, London, Paris, Frankfurt - I mean, you can name most of the major cities of the world - Madrid.

I've been just about every major city in the world. And there's some pretty things, I don't want you to misunderstand. I've looked at some things and marveled, but the reason I ran away when I was thirteen, the first time - fifteen the second time - I ran for the hills. I wanted to get away from people. You know why? People struggle with sin and selfishness and wherever you have a concentration of people you're going to have a concentration of problems. Where do you have the gang problems? Not so much out on the farm. It's in the cities where you've got the concentration of people. And cities in Heaven will be different because there's no sin problem. There's no selfishness. Instead of it being a concentration of selfish people, it'll be a concentration of loving people. It'll be a great thing there.

So I had to kind of revise my thinking about cities when I read that God has prepared a city because I used to run in the other direction when I thought about cities. Now, it says that this city comes out of Heaven. And some people say, 'Oh, Doug, you know, how can you take this seriously? Pie in the sky by and by - these stories about heaven. You Christians need to - it's just a crutch for your weakness. You need to live in the here and now.' You know, but those same people have no problem believing that man can make a space city. Isn't that strange? Does anyone now doubt that we could put, at least, a little city in space? Isn't that what we have with the International Space Station? I was out camping a few years ago in the high desert and we saw this bright star and one of my friends said, 'Oh, that's the International Space Station.' I said, 'Yeah, right.' He handed me some binoculars - it wasn't even a telescope - and I looked and I thought, 'It is.' Because it was a square star.

But the more we're studying about the mysteries of the cosmos, the more we're learning that we don't know. Matter of fact, that's a simple rule that Solomon would probably say, 'The longer you live the more you know you don't know.' The more you learn, the more you realize you don't know. And the bigger our telescopes - do you think they answer questions? They answer some, but they present more questions than we had before. The better our microscopes - sure it answers some questions, but they end up producing more questions than we started with. And so the closer we look at what man makes, the more flaws we find. The closer we look at what God makes, the more mystery and marvel and beauty we find. So when God says, 'I'm going to bring this city down from Heaven - these dwelling places - people watch 'Star Trek' and think, 'Yeah, this could be true.' There's Trekkies out there that believe it. But God says it and, 'Oh, no, not so sure God could do it. Hollywood can do it, but we're not sure about God.' I think He can.

I want you to listen to this lesson tonight. Use a little faith that - think bigger than just the here and the now. There are so many marvels in the world we can't explain. Even in this life, we don't even know how a single cell can be formed. Why would we doubt God's Word? Jesus said Heaven is, ultimately, going to be here on Earth. The New Jerusalem comes down here. Matthew 5:5, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the" - clouds? - They inherit the "Earth." On this world God is going to recreate a new heavens and a new earth. I heard one pastor say, 'Right now where sheep graze, dinosaurs used to thunder.' And in the same way, where the wicked may rule now, God'll recreate things and the righteous will inherit the Earth.

Now what will we do up there? Are we just going to sit on clouds and play harps? It tells us that we'll actually be very busy through eternity. God did not create man for nothingness. Isaiah 65, verse 21, it says, "And they shall build" - what? - "Houses, and inhabit them. They'll plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them." This house, in particular, I just heard - this is last week in the news - Jeffrey Greene, billionaire investor, is selling his house - most expensive house in North America - 195 million dollars. I think it's like 23 acres in Beverly Hills overlooking the ocean. He's got his own vineyard, tennis court - and you can understand why Jesus said it's hard for a rich man to get into the Kingdom of Heaven, because if people have mansions down here like this, they're probably not looking forward to Jesus' mansion.

Well, Jesus is preparing something even better than that. Some people's concept of Heaven - you see all these medieval paintings - is that we're going to be chubby little cherubs that sit on clouds and play harps - little naked babies that are up there, you know? And people say, 'Going to Heaven, what are you going to do?' 'Oh, we're going to play harps and we'll float around on these ethereal clouds and' - if that's all we're doing, you can understand why some people think that Hell would be more interesting. But no, Hell is not going to be interesting and Heaven is going to be infinitely more interesting. We're going to be doing all kinds of exciting things.

Question #3: What more do we know about the Holy City? We're going to look at a number of details that tell us about Heaven and what's going to be happening there. Revelation 21, verse 16, "And" - it says, - "the city lieth" - what is it? - "foursquare, ...and he measured the city with the reed," - it was

12,000 furlongs. That would be about 1,500 miles, using these - converting these ancient measurements. The length, the breadth, and the height of it are equal. And so here's this massive city - it's square. Now, I want you to think about this - the walls are about 375 miles on each side - and I think I mentioned this earlier - and 1,500 miles around.

How far is it across New Mexico? It's a square state, roughly - - 400 miles? Yeah, so people worry, 'Will there be room for me in the city?' You know, 'All these people that are going to be saved through the ages of man and will there be room for me?' I grew up in this city. This is a more recent picture of New York City and there are, you know, 7.5 million people in New York City. You want to hear an amazing fact? I was flying through Dallas/Fort Worth and somebody - we were taxiing and it took forever to taxi, once we landed, up to the gate. And they said, 'Do you know that the DFW airport is bigger than the island of Manhattan?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'No, really.' And I like - I like amazing facts, you know, so I wanted to use this in my radio program. I went home and checked it out and it's true. The Dallas/Fort Worth airport itself covers more land than the island of Manhattan and there are 7.5 or 8 million people in New York City.

The New Jerusalem is 350 miles - miles square - it's like the state of New Mexico - and God says He's building mansions. He doesn't just have to keep it all flat, He can go up. You know how many people can fit in that city? Billions and billions. So don't ever think, 'Oh, you know, they're going to run out of room before I can get saved. There'll be nowhere to put me. I'll just have an itty bitty mansion. No space.' Oh no, friends, you've got to think bigger than that. Revelation 21, verse 2, "and I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven." Now here's a picture of the old Jerusalem and do you know, the city that's probably had more wars fought - that has been destroyed and rebuilt more than any other city in the world is a city called the City of Peace.

You know, that's what Jerusalem means - Jeru - city - shalom - peace. Jeru-shalom - City of Peace. It's first mentioned in the Bible with a king - the first king of Jerusalem is not David or Saul or Solomon, it's someone named Melchizedek who, the New Testament tells us, is a type of Christ. He was a king of righteousness. He brought out bread and wine for Abraham. Jesus is our king of righteousness. He was called the Priest of the Most High God. Jesus is our King. He's our Priest. He's our King of Righteousness. He brings us the bread and the wine - that's in the last supper.

And Melchizedek was the king of a place called Salem - or peace. It probably was peaceful back then, but once they started building up the city, there were more wars - you walk around the old Jerusalem today and you can see bullet holes in the walls and the buildings still - everywhere - that have not been repaired. Just a little chip - pit marks from the wars that have been fought. But it's not the old Jerusalem that's coming down of Heaven. It's the New Jerusalem. Revelation 21, verse 10 and verse 12, it says "The Holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God, ...had a wall great and high, and had" - what? - "twelve gates." Twelve is a perfect mathematical number, really, for building. Why do we have a foot with twelve inches? Because it's one of the most perfectly easily divisible numbers. Twelve is divisible by one, by two, by three, by four, by six, and God, in building the city, used perfect arithmetic. Twelve is the number that represents the church.

There are a lot of unusual numbers. How many tribes of Israel? Twelve. How many apostles? Twelve. And the Bible tells us that the new Jerusalem has twelve foundations, twelve gates - I'll get to this in a minute - Tree of Life has twelve kinds of fruit twelve times a year. You've got a woman in Revelation chapter 12 and she's got twelve stars around her head - and how many lepers did Jesus heal? Ten. Just wanted to see if you were going to - I want you to think about this, you know? You just go 'twelve, twelve, twelve.' You've got to know your Bibles. But it really is - it's a perfectly designed city.

And you know what it says the gates are made of? You've heard the expression 'pearly gates?' It doesn't mean that they're inlaid with mother of pearl. The Bible says that each gate is a pearl. Now, when you look at the dimensions of this city, if one wall is 375 miles, and it says the walls are 144 cubits or over

feet thick, not quite sure how high they are - there's one verse that says, 'the length, the breadth, and the height are the same, one of the gates would need to be pretty big. That'd be a pretty big pearl. You're saying, 'Pastor Doug, I can't imagine that.' Don't worry, the Bible says you can't imagine the things that God has prepared for those that love him. So as we go through this study and say, 'Oh, that's too far-fetched. I can't imagine that.' That's exactly what Jesus said, 'You can't even imagine it.' And if the pearls are that big, think about how big the oysters have to be. Right? You know, Jesus tells a parable about a man who is seeking goodly pearls and he found a pearl of great price. And he went and sold everything he had in order that he might get that pearl that was such a great value.

I ran into an amazing fact a few years ago. This man named Alan Golash, in Rhode Island, went to an antique store, and there in a basket full of junk and costume jewelry he was rummaging around and he found this broach and it was called 'The Pearl of Venus.' And it turned out that he recognized 'That's not junk. That's a real pearl.' That is a very rare - matter of fact, it was two very, very rare purple quahog pearls that are highly prized, set in gold with real diamonds. He bought it for fourteen dollars. Sold it for millions - I forget. When I heard it was being auctioned I knew that it would fetch at least 2 million. I never got the final tally, but it sold for millions. How could - how do you think the owner of the antique shop that sold it for fourteen dollars - how do you think he felt when he found out that he had something worth millions and he let it slip through his fingers?

Wouldn't it be sad for you to have this opportunity in this life to secure eternal life and you let that slip through your fingers? Jesus is saying, 'Don't waste your life.' You see, you're alive, really, for just a couple of reasons: 1) To know God and His love - accept Him by faith. Allow Him to transform you. Get eternal life. 2) Share God and His love. The purpose of this brief adventure you've got in this life, is to determine eternity and yet, most people are willing and ready to sacrifice eternity for the passing temporary pleasures of this life. That's sad.

Revelation 21, verse 18 - speaking still about the dimensions of the city - "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper." Beautiful, glowing - now this one illustration the artist had there it shows it's very tall, almost like a pyramid because it does say, the length, the breadth, and the height of it are the same and some have wondered. And then you can read in Revelation 21:21, "The street of the city was pure gold. Now I've heard that gold, if it was - if they could make gold absolutely pure it would be transparent - that what gives gold the color is the varying degrees of impurity. And about 14 karat is about as pure as we can get it. But and then, you know, they've got 22 karat and various forms of gold, but here, John is saying this gold is - it's as if it's transparent. It's the purest form of gold in Heaven.

Question #4: What does the Bible say about the city's water supply and its food supply? I get so excited talking about this study. It says in Revelation 22, verse 1, "He showed me a pure river of water of life." All life needs water - animal, plant, fungus, mushrooms, bugs - whatever it is, there is no life - bacteria cannot live without water and in this world the source of all life is going to be this water. Jesus said, 'I am the Water of Life.' And first we must accept that into our lives, but from the throne of God flows this river. Now I've seen the Nile. I've seen the Amazon and the Mississippi and a number of the major rivers of the world and, do you know that at its mouth the Amazon River is like 50 or miles wide where it enters the Atlantic Ocean? How big do you think this river is? When you picture the river that irrigates the whole planet - the main river that's supplying the water to the planet - you better think big. It is going to be enormous. Read the last chapters of Ezekiel and he talks about this river and he says, 'I went in hundreds of yards and it's up to my ankles, and I went further and it's up to my knees, and I went in further and it's up to my waist.' And he keeps going out, out, out and it very gradually gets deeper and deeper and finally he said, 'It's over my head.' A river you can't even walk through - it's - you have to swim. And he talks about this river that's just so hard to describe. And you wonder if he's seeing the river that flows from the throne of God.

Furthermore, on either side - Revelation 22, verse 2 - "On either side of the river, was there the Tree of

Life, which bare twelve manner of fruits." Now, twelve times a year, twelve kinds of fruit - twelve times a year - that'd be 144 different kinds of fruit. I used to work for Baskin Robbins - that was great job. And when I first went to work there, the owner of the establishment, he said, 'Doug, you might be wondering, 'Do you get to eat the ice cream? Yes you do. We're not worried about that. Whenever you want some, you just take your time out and you're welcome to have as much as you want. You'll get tired of it.' I never did. I ate a whole - Jamocha Almond Fudge, I think - I ate a whole lot of that - Praline Pecan - I ate a lot of that. That was my lunch half the time. And you know, funny thing is, I've given up ice cream now. Now I'm a vegan, but boy, I ate a lot of ice cream.

But can you imagine? The Tree of Life - it tastes even better than ice cream - 144 different kinds. Now, you notice what it said about the tree? It says, "and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." One tree and it says on either side of the river. Now how do you reconcile that? Here you've got this big river, bigger than the Amazon, and you've got one tree. Well, it has to be a big tree - I mean, a really big tree. We live in Northern California where you've got the tallest trees in the world, the Redwoods, and they're pretty massive. Doesn't even come close to the tree that gives life to the whole planet. This is a tree that every person alive on the planet needs to eat from. All the saved need to eat from this tree. And I think the branches not only grow together above the river, I think the roots may touch under the river and the river actually runs through it. Because it's one tree on either side of the river. How else do you - and they've looked at this and every translation says the same thing. One tree on either side of the river. The river runs right through it. It's a massive, massive organism and we'll all gather - it says the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations. What's that mean?

Are people going to get sick in Heaven and have to run to the tree and rub it in their wounds? No, there's no sickness there. It doesn't say the leaves of the tree are for the healing of sickness. It says the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. You know, we're all divided in this world by - there's political divisions, cultural, racial, language divisions. But when we come together as one family under the glittering leaves of that tree, all the divisions and distinctions are going to be healed and there's going to be a unity there as we all have to reach out together and take from that Tree of Life.

You know, I just came back from Australia. And in Madagascar, Africa, Australia, they have these Baobab trees - that's what they call it in Australia - and they call it a Tree of Life because, in a very dry climate - you see it all out there in the outback - they somehow store water. They just suck up water whenever it does rain and they store it and they keep people alive because their fiber - they can squeeze moisture out of it. You can eat the fruit. The young leaves are like spinach, the pollen is used for glue. The fiber can be used for clothing. I mean, just every single part of the tree somehow gives life. My father told me, during World War II he was a pilot, that a lot of sailors and pilots got shot down, ended up on Pacific islands. They called the coconut tree a Tree of Life. Same thing. It gave you water from the nut, it gave you food, it gave them fuel. It's just like it did everything. Well, if God has these trees of life that we can see now, I can't wait to see the big one. Won't that be something?

Question #5: How will living in Heaven be different from living here on Earth? Alright, we're going to go through several things that are very exciting. A - and these are kind of A, B, C. Answer A: The eyes of the blind will be opened. Won't that be wonderful? Some people, maybe who have never seen, that are all going to have perfect vision then. You'll be able to see like an eagle. Anything you've got in this life is going to be maximized in Heaven. All your senses will be infinitely more acute and I think that they'll actually be enhanced. People who've always struggled with eyesight here are going to have the best eyesight there. People maybe who have struggled with hearing here, it says the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. They're going to have supernatural hearing like superman. In heaven, I'm going to have a head full of hair when I get there, just down to my shoulders and you'll all call me Harry when I get there.

And it says in Isaiah 35, verse 6 - Answer C: "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart," - not just walk a little bit. You remember when Peter and John healed this crippled man at the Beautiful gate? In Acts chapter 3 it says 'He went into the temple of God - jumping and leaping and praising God.' He went from being crippled to leaping and he was so excited. All of your senses - all of these things will be - and then it says, "and the tongue of the dumb" - will not just talk, but they will sing and they'll have beautiful voices. I'll be able to sing - oh, I'm looking forward to that. Singing in Heaven with the - you know, the Bible says we'll be able to sing, not only with angels, but with God.

Did you know, in the book Zephaniah, it says, 'He will rejoice over us with singing?' God sings. We're made in His image. The reason we sing is because He sings. Can you imagine singing with Jesus? It's mentioned once in the Bible. After Jesus had the last supper, it says they sang a hymn and they went out. He sang with the apostles just before He went to the cross. Jesus sang.

Answer D: Isaiah 65, verse 25, "And all the creatures there" - there'll be animals there - God had animals in the first creation, He's going to fill the world with - and look at all the extinct animals - we have now - well, you can't look at the extinct ones, you know what I mean. Look at all the ones we know have become extinct. How many more were there before the problems of man? Before the flood? There'll be many more varieties. And will they hurt each other? No.

You want to hear an amazing fact? See - you ever - you've heard of the Wizard of Oz and they're saying, 'Lions and tigers and bears, oh my.' Well these three in this picture here, they call them 'BLT' - BLT stands for Bear, Lion, and Tiger. They were rescued from - a drug dealer in Atlanta kept them as cubs in his basement. It was filthy conditions. They were rescued - they were adopted by an animal park in Georgia. Because they were so used to being with each other, they put them in the same enclosure and they all get along just great. You ever wonder what would happen if a lion and a tiger and a bear got together? Well, if they know each other from childhood, they can do okay.

And that's why the Bible tells us, in Isaiah chapter - this is answer E in your lesson - Isaiah 11, verse 6 - "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, ... and a little child shall lead them." You see a little child leading a lamb, but a little child leading a lamb and a wolf? And it says that the lion will eat straw like the ox.

How many of you ever read that book - it was out years ago - about Little Tyke - you know what I'm talking about? Raise your hands - Little Tyke? This family had adopted a baby cub - it's mother actually was killing all of her cubs and so they took it away from the mother at the zoo. They gave it to this family, the Westbeaus, in Northern California and they - they adopted it and they gave it milk and once it got past milk they tried to give it meat. It would not eat meat but it gravitated towards grain. And this lion just refused to eat meat. It would play with lambs and the family pets and it would never bite or hurt anything else on the farm. And it never - its entire - grew to be a massive, full-grown lion. Never ate any blood, any meat - it was a vegetarian lion. How many of you have heard that story? You can look it up - 'Little Tyke' is the name of the book. It's an amazing story - maybe a foretaste of what will be in Heaven.

Answer F: it says, "The desert shall...blossom as the rose." You can find the most desolate places in the world now and there'll be a beautiful garden there. You know, now we have places that they look like they were scorched earth. But not in Heaven. The beautiful places will be infinitely more beautiful and the deserts will still be beautiful. Everything is going to be enhanced there. Matter of fact, you know there's a - the sun'll be brighter. In Isaiah it talks about the brightness of the moon will be as bright as the sun is now and the brightness of the sun will be sevenfold. That's in a prophecy of Isaiah. Now you might be thinking, 'Wouldn't that burn us?' It'll be brighter but it will not be hotter. And our eyes, somehow, will be able to take it all in. But the colors that you see now are nothing compared to the colors - if we could be taken in vision right now to Heaven - if we could endure it - if we could handle the glory of it all and how spectacular it is. If you could hear the strains of angels singing. If you could taste how much better - infinitely more delicious the food is going to be. Whatever your senses are, multiply

that a hundred times. Everything has become dull in this life because of sin. It's all going to be enhanced and it will be that way for eternity.

Furthermore, Answer G: Isaiah 33, verse 24, "The inhabitant shall not say, 'I am sick.'" Nobody will be sick there. Won't that be wonderful? Don't have to ever worry about your health plan in Heaven - or your health insurance. And, boy, a lot of people are going to be out of work. Poor Dr. DeRose, what's he going to do? No, he'll find plenty to do. Think of all the extra space we're going to have up there - no cemeteries, right? We'll have lots of room in the city. There'll be no police stations. There'll be no prisons, right?

Answer H: Revelation 21, verse 4, "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, for the former things are passed away." What you get there you get forever and you never have to be afraid of losing it again. And yet, people are - they're reluctant - they hesitate being willing to give their hearts to Jesus and to follow him.

Question #6: What kind of bodies will the saints have in the Kingdom? Are we going to be ghosts floating around? Philippians 3, verses 20 and 21, "The Lord Jesus Christ: who will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." The Lord is going to give us a glorious body.

When Jesus rose from the dead, was He real? That's our next question - #7: is Jesus' body real, or is He a spirit?" - When He rose from the dead? Do you remember? He came forth from the grave. He appeared to the disciples. And there in the upper room He told them - Luke 24, verse 39 - He said, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." What is He saying? He's saying, 'I am not a ghost.' And He ate in front of them to prove that He was real.

What kind of bodies will we have? Real bodies. But we get four dimensions. See, right now we live in three dimensions. After Adam and Eve sinned, they lost a whole dimension - the spiritual dimension. That will be restored and we will have these glorified eternal bodies. We'll be able to talk to the angels. We'll see God. So we'll be in tune with the spirit world at that point - the good spirits - the angels.

Question #8: What other encouraging promises are found in God's Word, regarding this magnificent Kingdom? It says in Acts chapter 3, verses 20 and 21, "and he shall send Jesus Christ, ...whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things." That means everything is going to be restored. So when you wonder, 'What will we do in Heaven, what did God want Adam and Eve to do? Did He want them to just float on clouds and play harps? Or did God create a garden and He gave Adam and Eve real things to do in this real Kingdom? Except it's going to be better.

You know, I travel a lot and every now and then I rent cars. I had to rent a car for this meeting - and sometimes, if the car I rented is not there, they say, 'Well, we don't have the model you wanted, but we're going to upgrade you.' That's always nice when that happens. I remember one time I was in St. Louis and I got to the checkout counter for my rental car and she looked at me and she goes, 'Are you on TV?' I'm never quite sure what to say because sometimes I say, 'Yes.' And they say, 'Are you that car salesman?' They don't know. So I said, 'Yeah.' And she said, 'You've got that program 'Amazing...'' And I said, 'Yeah, Amazing Facts - Doug Batchelor.' 'Oh, I watch. I love your program.' And it's just the two of us there, I was picking up my car. She kind of looked to the right and the left - she says, 'Let me give you an upgrade.' I said, 'Oh, that'd be nice.' She said, 'How'd you like a convertible?' I looked outside - 'It's snowing!' I said, 'Well what am I going to do?' She said, 'Oh, I'm so sorry.' She said, 'I don't know what I was thinking.' She said, 'Ah,' she said, 'We've got the executive Cadillac.' She says, 'You're going to like this - got a heated steering wheel.' I thought, 'Oh man, what are people coming to? Heated steering wheel. What a bunch of wimps, people.' Well, I got in the car and I turned that thing on - it was cold, you know, and that heated steering wheel was pretty nice. And, you know, I really did appreciate the upgrade on that trip. The only thing is, I pulled up to a church to preach and I had to park way off in the distance



because I thought, 'They're going to think I'm some rich televangelist that's, you know, living high on the hog. And so I parked as far out - so no one would see me as I came into the church. And when I went to lock the car I accidentally hit the panic button and so it started going off and all the church members turned and they looked and saw me in this Cadillac.

Anyway, the reason I'm telling that is because we're going to get an upgrade. Oh, you know, nothing sweeter you can hear, if you do a lot of traveling, than when they say, 'We're going to take you from coach to first class.' And everybody that gets to the Kingdom, it'll be better than what Adam and Eve had. Because the devil is not going to mess up God's plan. God says, 'I'm not only going to do what I said, I'm going to do it better than before.' The restitution of all things. Revelation 14:4 - it says, "These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes." Speaking of the 144,000.

Now here's a question, friends: how many of you want to be in that Kingdom and follow Jesus there, then? If you're going to follow Him there, then, you must first follow Him here, now. That's it. Those that follow Him here, now, will be able to follow Him there, then. You can't make up your mind at the last moment. You want to be a Christian after probation closes. God's calling you now.

Question #9: Will sad or painful memories from this life trouble people in Heaven? Answer: Isaiah 65, verse 17 - it says, "The former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." We won't have to worry about the form - I don't know about you - even when I'm standing here, I can think of things that I just - whenever I think of, I just cringe - 'Oh, did I say that? Did I do that? Oh!' Or painful things you've experienced you wish you could forget. Some people have experienced violence and things that just have caused all kinds of stress - soldiers - and you think, 'Will I have those terrible memories forever?' God says He'll heal us. All the beauty and the glory and the splendor and the wonder and the pleasures of Heaven will eclipse and displace all the painful memories of this life. And there'll be pleasures at His right hand forevermore.

Question #10: Will people from the earth recognize each other in God's new Kingdom? You know, you say, my grandma looked old for the last thirty years of her life. When I get to Heaven, how am I going to spot her if she's got this young, glorified body?' Don't worry about it, the promise in the Bible - 1 Corinthians 13, verse 12, it says, "Then shall I know even as also I am known." The Lord is going to give us increased discernment, not less. We're not only going to recognize a person externally, because you've got that fourth dimension, your spiritual powers, you'll recognize the spirit of a person. I'm not meaning a ghost but, you know, the essence - who they are. You'll have better discernment back then - or in the Kingdom.

Question #11: What other thrilling promises does God give us regarding His coming Kingdom? A number of things here we're going to look at. Answer A: In Isaiah 35, verse 10 it says, "The ransomed of the Lord shall...come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy." Jesus didn't come to take away our happiness, He came to give us happiness. You know, when I first was pondering being a Christian - I'll just be very honest with you - I struggled and I said, 'I don't want to be a Christian, they can't do anything fun.' You know, back then I was smoking and drinking and doing all these things and God, I found out, would not make me stop. And I'd wake up after a night of partying and be all hung over and I'd hear a little voice say, 'Are you having fun, Doug?' Or I'd wake up in jail and try and remember exactly how I got there. And I heard a little voice say, 'Having fun, Doug?' And it took a while, because I'm slow, but gradually I learned that God is a loving, Heavenly Father and the Bible says 'He will withhold no good thing - no good thing - from those that walk uprightly.' He will not want to keep anything good from you. At His right hand are pleasures forevermore, but you'll never find the pleasure unless you do it God's way.

Oh, by the way, I just jumped ahead to our next verse. This is my wife's favorite verse - Psalm 16, verse 11, "At His right hand are pleasures forevermore." Pleasure is not a bad thing. God wants you to enjoy pleasure. He gave you all the senses. He wants you to be blessed by your food. But, you know, in the world we spin it around backwards.

We think we're supposed to go for the physical, selfish pleasures first and then we suffer with the hangover all day. God says, 'You do the right thing now and have the pleasure for a long time.' If I were to make you a proposition and say, 'How would you like to have a bank account with a billion dollars in it?' Come on, so far, so good, right? You'd do that? And you'll have an all-expense vacation paid, guaranteed perfect health, go to Las Vegas, have all the fun you want for a year. But there's fine print. At the end of the year, you then have to go to a lake of fire and pay for your sins. Would you want to do it? Even if you said, 'Oh, that sounds pretty good. You know, maybe I'll try it.' But as soon as that first day went by and you're at the slot machine or you're enjoying all the questionable shows, you'd be hearing a little voice say, 'Three hundred and sixty-four days.' And the next day you'd be hearing a little voice say, 'Three hundred and sixty-three days.' And you would not be able to enjoy anything because you'd know, 'I'm on a conveyor belt to the lake of fire. How can I enjoy anything?' Right?

Now switch it around. Suppose that God says, 'I'm asking you to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me and you will have everlasting joy and pleasure with no guilt in the future. Plus, you'll have an abundant life now, because the Christian life is even a better life now.' So wouldn't that be foolish? It's like a child saying, 'I'll take a nickel - I'll take a piece of candy now rather than a hundred dollars later.' You know, we do that. We make these immature decisions without thinking about eternity.

Answer C: Zechariah 8:5, "The streets of the city will be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." You know, here in some of our cities, we're pretty scared. My mother used to let my brother and I play on 42nd and Broadway. It's hard to believe now. But in Heaven, will there be anything to be afraid of? You'll tell your children, 'Go play in the street. Go play in the golden streets.' They'll have nothing to be afraid of out there, right? No one's going to hurt them.

Answer D: Isaiah 40, verse 31 - It says, "They shall run, and not be weary: and they shall walk, and not faint. Mount up with wings like eagles." We'll have constant endurance and strength. And that was our next verse - Isaiah 40, verse 31. Sometimes I just rush ahead because I know these verses. "They'll mount up with wings like" - will we be able to fly? Yeah, it talks about - you know that song 'Rock of Ages?' 'I'll soar to worlds unknown.' Of course, that's a song. But I believe. It says we'll mount up with wings like eagles. I believe we'll be able to fly.

Question #12: - Before I go to question #12, Why can't we leave this planet? Everyone talks about UFOs and aliens and, you know one reason we don't see any aliens? I know everyone claims that they saw - do you know, my uncle - honest uncle - worked at Area 51 - my father's brother. He's still alive today and he'll tell me all about it. They worked on the top secret aircraft that we all know about, like the SR-71 Blackbird and others. There's no aliens there. You know why we don't have any real contact with aliens? The only aliens are probably angels - good or bad - is because this planet has a contagious disease and we are quarantined to this planet until that's healed - at least this solar system - but will there be any reason for us not to go to other worlds when Jesus comes? I can't wait to go exploring space. And after you fly the speed of light for a hundred years, you'll never reach the end of it, will you? You go the speed of thought and you'll never reach the end of God's creation and you'll see new things all the time, that we can't even comprehend.

Question #12: Can we adequately describe God's new Kingdom with words? This is something that we've repeated several times tonight, here's the verse: 1 Corinthians 2, verse 9, "Eye has not seen" - that means anyone's eye - "nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart" - even the imagination - "of man, ...the things which God hath prepared" - for those that are scared of Him - is that what it says? He's prepared it for who? "Those that love Him." That's why He says He wants us to love Him, friends.

Question #13: What is the highest reward of God's new Kingdom? Oh, this is the most beautiful part. It tells us in Revelation 21, verse 3, "God Himself shall be with them." Won't it be something? Bible says that 'From one new moon to another and one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me.' We'll be able to worship before Jesus. He'll be the preacher and nobody will fall asleep during a

sermon when He's preaching, right? And we'll know that everything He says is good and true. God Himself - we'll be with Him - we'll see Him.

Question #14: What will exclude people from God's heavenly Kingdom? Now, this is where it gets serious - Revelation 21, verse 27, "There shall in no wise" - that means 'in no way' - "enter into it any thing that defileth." That means that if there is anything defiling or sinful, it doesn't go in. The Bible says that Satan was cast out of Heaven for sinning. Heaven is a pure place. It's the presence of God. We must be purified now and prepared, through the blood of Christ, to live in that Kingdom.

So we can't wait till Jesus comes for Him to transform us. Now is the time for us to become new creatures. The Bible says that today is the day. The Lord can give you a new heart. Old things are passed away when you're converted - all things are made new. It's often called the new birth. And we need to be born again now. Someone said that if you're only born once, you're going to die twice - the second death - but if you're born twice - natural birth and then the spiritual birth - you'll only die once - that means, if you die before Jesus comes.

Some of us won't die at all. But you must be born again. You must be a new creature. And He's offering us so much. Revelation 21:7, "He that - he that overcometh" - that's the King James way of saying, 'He that overcomes.' Seven times it says in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, 'To him that overcomes. To him that overcomes.' Overcoming what? We're all held captive by our sins and, through the power of Christ, we can be transformed and be new creatures. It is possible. All things can happen through prayer. You spend time with Jesus - you fix your eyes on Jesus - you think about these things and it starts to become part of you.

You know, when - Karen and I have done a lot of traveling. We've been to Russia, we've been to Korea, China, and a number of other places. And whenever we're going to a country for the first time - India - we like to read and find out about the customs, language, currency, weather, the food, accommodations - and we try and pack and prepare accordingly. Especially if it's a big trip. I remember once I went to India for forty days. That was a long time to be away from home - doing meetings like this - and I learned a lot about the customs. Karen and I were in Russia for five weeks. And you learn.

If we're preparing to spend eternity somewhere, shouldn't we be thinking a little bit about that now? And yet, some people never talk about, they never think about, they never pray about Heaven and somehow they think that they're going to be packed and ready to go when Jesus comes. We need to be making this our goal now and living lives now in preparation for a life that is measured with the life of God. He's offering us eternity. What could possibly be worth more than that?

Question #15: What can I do about sin? 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to" - do what? - "to cleanse us from" - how much? - "all unrighteousness." That means that everybody here - everybody that's listening - you can come to the Lord right now, just like you are, and say, 'Lord, I'm a sinner and I would like to ask You to forgive my sins and to give me a new heart.' You repent and you confess your sins. Ask for Him to transform you and deliver you and He can do it. He says He will cleanse you, not only from the past sins, He will save you from the power of sin in your life.

You can't tell me, friends, you can't name a sin He can't save you from. I've known alcoholics that have thrown away their alcohol and never drunk again. They'll throw away their cigarettes, they've thrown away their pornography. They've given up all manner of addictions through the power of God and they've become new creatures. And He can do that for you. You just need to come like you are and ask Him. He's promised that if we confess our sins He's faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Question #16: What did Jesus say is the formula for success in this life and the life to come? Answer: Matthew chapter 6:33 - you know this, it's where we started - "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His

righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Solomon - when he loved the Lord he prayed, 'Lord, give me wisdom.' He prayed for God's Kingdom. He prayed for God's righteousness. God said, 'Because you sought this first, I'm going to give you everything else. I'm going to give you the wisdom. I'll give you long life. I'll give you prosperity, but seek first My Kingdom.' And that was the key and it's still the key today. If you make God - knowing God and sharing God - living for Him - living for others your priority, He's offering you that wonderful Kingdom.

How many of you would like to be there? This is a real place and I've not really even begun. I pray for the tongue of an angel to try to explain to people the wonders of Heaven. But I hope I've given you a little glimpse. I hope I've created within you a thirst to be in a better world than this one. There's so much sin and suffering here. But I want to be ready there, don't you? When Jesus comes. We're going to ask Laura if she'll come out and sing for us a familiar song and then we'll be closing with prayer.

Shall we gather at the river where bright angels' feet have trod?

With its crystal tide forever flowing by the throne of God.

Yes we'll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river.

Gather with the saints at the river that flows by the throne of God.

Father in Heaven, Lord, our hearts thrill as we consider the wonders that You've prepared for those that love You. And I pray, Lord, that it will not just be a theory that we've heard tonight to entertain us for a little while, but I pray the reality of eternity will be impressed on the hearts of all those who are listening - that these things, though sometimes hard for us to imagine in this life, that Jesus said they're real. Help us believe His Word.

We would hate to miss the incredible treasure that You've provided - that You've paid for at such an infinite cost. I pray, Lord, You'll be with each person. We know that we must come to You and allow You to transform us. To wash us in the blood, that we might be prepared for Your return and to be citizens in that Kingdom. Help us to live for You and love You and serve You now.

And Lord, I want to pray that You'll be with each of these people and bless them in their lives personally. Be with them. Give them strength. Bless them in their homes and their families, and all those who are watching. Pour out Your spirit on these meetings. And I pray many will be in the Kingdom as a result of these efforts. We thank You and pray in Jesus' Name, amen.