

Morning Sermon 5/8/2022 –

“Glorious Dimensions, Wonderful Numbers!” Revelation 21:15-17

¹⁵ And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶ The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. ¹⁷ Then he measured its wall: one hundred *and* forty-four cubits, *according* to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. Revelation 21:15–17 (NKJV)

I. *The gold reed, a perfect measure –*

¹⁵ And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. Revelation 21:15 (NKJV)

II. *Twelve thousand furlongs (here), are more than just BIG –*

1. *12 – the number representing God’s people, 12 tribes, 12 Apostles*
2. *Thousand – a great number, symbolically representing an undetermined amount*
3. *Here, “its length, breadth, and height are equal.” - :16 Each measure is 12,000 furlongs, making a huge perfect cube –*
4. *Another perfect cube in Scripture was the Holy of Holies in the Temple –*

¹⁹ And he prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple, to set the ark of the covenant of the LORD there. ²⁰ The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high. He overlaid it with pure gold, and overlaid the altar of cedar. 1 Kings 6:19–20 (NKJV)

This inner sanctuary was called the Holy of Holies, notice the comparative small dimensions when twenty cubits are compared to twelve thousand furlongs –

The cubit was an ancient unit of length based on the distance from the elbow to the middle finger.

The furlong (meaning furrow length) was originally the amount of land a team of oxen could plough in one day. This distance was standardized and is now equal 220 yards by 22 yards and now defined as any area measuring 4,840 square yards.

So, the inner sanctuary, in Solomon’s Temple is the size of a large, high-ceilinged room; while the size, length, breadth, height of the New Jerusalem covers an area, even going up height-wise, half the distance of the width of the United States!

What is the significance of this great difference?

5. *The Holy of Holies, Jerusalem, and especially the New Jerusalem were places blessed by the presence of God! They have God’s presence in common -*

A. *Even in the Old Testament, Jerusalem is called the City of God; the city of the Great King –*

¹ **Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, In His holy mountain. ² Beautiful in elevation, The joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, The city of the great King. ³ God is in her palaces; He is known as her refuge. Psalm 48:1–3 (NKJV)**

B. *Yet, while Jerusalem was the City of God; access to God, to His most glorious presence, was limited to those who came into the Temple, and really to those who brought an offering into the Holy of Holies, that 20 X 20 X 20 cubit room in the center of the Temple and that access was granted only ONCE PER YEAR, to ONE PERSON, that person being the high priest. That was relatively SMALL compared to 12,000 furlongs!*

6. *The extent of this access to God changed greatly when Jesus died for our sins –*

A. *The veil of the temple was torn –*

⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. ⁵¹ Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; ... Matthew 27:50–51 (NKJV)

B. *The barrier between us and God caused by sin, was eliminated when Christ died for our sins –*

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:14–16 (NKJV)

When Hebrews 4:14 says we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, it means Jesus entered the Heavenly Holy of Holies, of which the earthly Holy of Holies (was just a type) to do what all the High Priests before Him could NOT DO and that is offer up a perfect, once and for all, sin ENDING SACRIFICE ...

C. *Because the barrier was removed, because Jesus died for us, sympathized with us, we can come boldly to God's throne of GRACE -*

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)

D. *Because of this, we worship God and find grace without having to travel to Jerusalem, or have any other (other than Jesus) act as high priest for us, Jesus told the Samaritan women – ²¹ Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will*

neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” ²⁵ The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” ²⁶ Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.” John 4:21–26 (NKJV)

E. *We no longer need the Temple, even now, because Jesus has cleansed us, and now, we are the TEMPLE –*

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? 1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV)

F. *This means the presence of God IS, where God's people are, God dwells in us – Twelve / 12 in this passage is symbolic of the FACT God dwells in His people, **twelve thousand furlongs** 12 = the number of God's people 1,000 = symbolically, a great unrevealed multitude of people.*

144 = 12 X 12 – 12 Tribes of Israel / Twelve Apostles, all of God’s chosen people, God knows every name ... the Vision in this chapter speaks of the names of the 12 Tribes and 12 Apostles, but all saved by Jesus, written in the Lamb’s Book of Life are saved, are part of the spiritual temple ...

7. We both Jews and Gentiles are the TEMPLE, even now –

A. Gentiles, like the Samaritan woman, were once outcasts, but now brought near -

¹¹ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:11–13 (NKJV)

B. Jesus makes us ONE -

¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Ephesians 2:14–18 (NKJV)

C. We are the temple -

¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22 (NKJV)

III. Yet, twelve-thousand furlongs Its length, breadth, and height are equal. This great size represents something beyond being the Temple, as we are not called the Temple here; but rather, we will be the New Jerusalem, a glorious new city –

Why are we not the New Jerusalem NOW? We are Temples now, even as individuals, and as a church we are the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and this means worship does not require a trip to Jerusalem but and it is a **BIG BUT ... we are still living in a sin-filled world –**

¹⁴ Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, Philippians 2:14–15 (NKJV)

1. The Temple was a holy place, we are called to be a holy people, filled with the holy Spirit –

A. Being holy means be set apart for God, keeping His laws, living His way -

¹⁵ but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” 1 Peter 1:15–16 (NKJV)

B. Being holy means being separate from an ungodly world and its ways -

¹⁸ Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s. 1 Corinthians 6:18–20 (NKJV)

2. *We will change from being the temple, in the midst of an ungodly world, struggling with sin, to become the New Jerusalem, a much bigger, more spiritual, perfectly holy people and we have a new place, a new Heaven and New Earth, where sin and sinners – don't exist! –*

21 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and* be their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." Revelation 21:1–5 (NKJV)

3. *The wall measurement is 144 cubits, extremely short for a city so large and high .. according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. Revelation 21:17 (NKJV)*

1. *I believe when John writes according to the measure of a man, he is telling us he is talking about "people" in particular "God's People" and not literal walls and a city ...*
2. *WHEN he adds "of an angel" it is only to make clear he is talking about spiritual things, if the New Jerusalem is as stated here - "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." Revelation 21:9 (NKJV) It is not talking of a literal wall, with literal physical size that can be measured, BUT SOMETHING ELSE? Perhaps the fact ...*

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 2 Corinthians 4:7 (NKJV)

3. *God dwelling in us is something amazing, something we pray for, consider another passage speaking about dimensions, yet talking about spiritual things –*

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹ to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:14–21 (NKJV)

filled with all the fullness of God Ephesians 3:19 B *is a reference to us growing to be a spiritual temple, which Paul mentions in Ephesians 2:20-22 (outline page 3 7. C.) and here he is praying for it! Also, the small size of the wall Revelation 21:17, compared to the city Revelation 21:16, may also be hinting at the wonder of an infinite God dwelling in little old us, Solomon wondered at this! We should too, even with a spiritual temple / bride –*

²⁷ "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! 1 Kings 8:27 (NKJV)

Yet, God - is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think... Ephesians 3:19