

## THE WONDERS OF HEAVEN SERIES

### HEAVENLY REWARDS

Lets look at the account when the New Jerusalem was reviewed to the apostle John the city of God from the book of Revelation chapter 21. Verse 9 onwards *Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full o the seven last plagues, and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having he glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed; on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And on the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he who talked to me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its breadth; and he measured the city with his rod, twelve thousand stadia; its length and breadth and height are equal. He also measured its wall, a hundred and forty-four cubits by a man's measure, that is, an angel's. The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every jewel; the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eight beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.*

Remember the sister how she was taken up to heaven earthly time was about one minute but heavenly time was about one hour. And the Lord showed her all the things in heaven. And she saw the streets were made from gold and some of the walls were made from gold. And the gold in heaven was different as it is transparent. In case you didn't know, that sister works as a computer graphic artist and she will know colors. And she says she see colors that you cannot comprehend on this earth.

We have talked about the wonders of heaven to build into our hearts expectancy for heaven. We talked about all the different wonders and how some of those wonders are working in our life. From Hebrews chapter 6 we talked about the powers of the age to come. And how some of those powers are working in our life at this very moment having been born again into the grace of God in the New Testament times.

This morning we want to talk about our heaven rewards, our heavenly mansions, which go together with the city of God. We all do know that in Jn. 14 Jesus told His disciples, *"Be of good cheer for in my Father's house are many mansions."* We all have mansions in heaven given to us free in God because of His love for us. We need to know that our life on earth will affect our condition in heaven and that kind of reward we receive. We know it vaguely and generally that according to our faithfulness here on earth God will reward us in heaven. But we need to know how intricately it does affect that kind of reward that we receive and the place and the glory where we stay in.

I like to read a little passage from a book by H. A. Baker, *Beyond the Veil*. He wrote the book based on the children's experiences of Adulam's Cave, an orphanage in China. And the children had a revival and God started taking some of the children to heaven and showing them the things and the glory in heaven. He also came out with one book on angels and one book on heaven and the angels. When he was seeing these things taking place among the children he did a research in all the Christian writings to see what other Christians speak about heaven and the angels. And so here are some of those he had researched and quoted from.

One of those who went to heaven is General William Booth. General William Booth was the one who started the Salvation Army. In case you didn't know how he started, he lived his life as most of us lived just for this earth. He was fairly successful and he had all that he needed, food, shelter, clothing plus much more. One day he sort of had a death experience. And he went to heaven and he saw all the glories in heaven and Jesus says He give him one more chance because he did not lived his life for heaven. He lived his life for this earth and didn't really have much reward up there and God said, "I give you one more chance." When he came back to his earth he started the Salvation Army. It was not quite like what we have today. Today they function only in welfare work. Long ago they would parade in streets and they would evangelize on street corners. The widow whom General Booth saw in heaven had strength of character and beauty beyond human conception. She had left a humble sphere of inconspicuous hard devoted, self-sacrifices service to our Lord to be promoted to high rank of glory in heaven, while others who on earth seemed mighty to men were assigned to lower planes of glory

and usefulness in heaven.

You could be high and mighty on this earth but in heaven you could be low in the rank of glory. It doesn't mean that God doesn't want you to get into His rank of higher glory. When we die we will enter into the spiritual plane that corresponds with the spiritual state in which we die. And if you did not develop your character in Christ you would have to go to a lower plane and there you continue developing. Those who touched on the higher realm of glory go straight into the higher realm of glory. It is not fame or wealth on this earth that determines your place of glory in heaven. We should not go after the pride of life or the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the things of this world. The book of James tells us that if the desire for the things of this earth is still in us then friendship with the world is enmity with God. We need to live our life for eternity.

There is another person here by the name of Tellmash. When he went to heaven in reply to inquiry as to what impress him most in heaven, he said he was most impressed with the reversal conditions. *I knew of course that there would be differences of attire and residence in heaven. For Paul had declared long ago that souls would then differ as one star differ from another as Mars from Mercury, as Saturn from Jupiter, but at every step in heaven I was amazed to see that some who were expected to be low down were high up. I found the highest thrones, the brightest coronets, the richest mansions, were occupied by those who had reprobate fathers or bad mothers, but they had laid hold of God's arm, they had cried for a special mercy, they had conquered 7 devils within and 70 devils without and were washed in the Blood of the Lamb. By so much as their conflict was terrific and awful, their victory was consummate. And they have taken places immeasurably higher than those of good parentage who could hardly help being good. These others have 10 generations of piety to help them. The steps that many have mounted to the highest places in heaven were made out of the cradles of corrupt parentage. I pointed to one of those grandly residence and asked, "Who live there?" And the angel replied the widow who gave 2 mites. I wonder what about the people who gave thousands of dollars but whose percentage is small. That woman gave 100%. And she had this huge mansion. Then he made this statement about some of those professors of religion who were famous on earth. I asked about them but no one in heaven could tell me anything about them.*

The reason for this teaching is so that none of us is taken by surprise in heaven. We want to be prepared for heaven. We want to live for heaven. Then he says many who have 10 talents were living in the back streets of heaven. All social life in heaven is graded according to earthly struggle and usefulness as proportion to the use of talents given. Some of the most unknown on earth were most famous in heaven. Many who have been the greatest failures on earth were the greatest

success in heaven. Hence advancement in life and Spirit of Jesus here on earth determines our state of glory in heaven. Here it tells us what a surprise in heaven. Although everyone has a mansion in heaven yet there are so many conditions of our mansion in the things that are inside heaven. There are several facts that we want to bring forth.

We know that the teaching of the New Jerusalem, which is the city of God also has to do with our mansion. In other words the principles are the same. Lets turn to Rev. 21:14 *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

Lets look at the names of the 12 apostles of the lamb. I wonder whether one of the twelve apostles was Matthias who replaced Judas Iscariot. We know that Judas Iscariot was chosen as one of the twelve. From Luke 6 that after Jesus had an overnight prayer He came down and among His many disciples He chose 12 to be His apostles. Among them was Judas Iscariot. And Judas Iscariot had a part in the kingdom of God. The bible tells us in the book of Acts chapter 1 verse 20 *For it is written in the Book of Psalms, "Let his habitation become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it." and "His office let another take."* So there was an office given to Judas Iscariot. And the first teaching that we have here is that the calls and the offices that we have go towards building some of the things in heaven. Although there are 12 apostles of the lamb, each one of us when we have a call of God there are certain things about our life that are special to God in heaven. I believe that the foundation of the call of the 12 apostles of the Lamb became the foundations for the 12 gates in the New Jerusalem the city of God. A foundation is something in which other things are built upon.

Sometime ago, some high-rise apartments in town collapsed because the underground water had affected some layer of the underlying soil, thereby causing the foundation to be tilted. So the foundation is important because everything that is built rest on the foundation. When the foundation is upon the names of the 12 apostles, it tells us that these 12 apostles were the foundation of the heavenly buildings and many other things that we know not or fully comprehend. The 12 apostles have a call of course to the preparation of the Bride of Christ. Here we realize each one of us has a certain ministry or office that God has called us to fulfill. When Jesus called the 12 apostles it is recorded that He gave names to some of them. He changed some of their names. Simon He changed to Peter. He called them by their special names that He gave to them. We do know that He named them apostles.

Is it possible to lose our heavenly reward? Yes it is. It is possible that when we are not faithful to that which God called us, and in that way we lose the foundation of some thing that our life is building in heaven. Some of us think that our life here on earth has no connection with heaven. I mean God has mass-produced mansions and all our mansions look the same. Do you know why each mansion looks different in heaven? The mansions in heaven depend upon the material you send there from here. Didn't Jesus say, "Do not gather treasures on this earth where the rust will destroy and the moth corrupt? But He says to lay your treasures in heaven. We do this by sacrificial giving of our life to serve and love others. Then you get the treasures in heaven. It is important for us to take note that faithfulness to what God has called you determines your heavenly mansion. Therefore if you live and die without fulfilling your ministry your heavenly mansion is in a way not the way it should be. I can only speculate because it is silent here in the Word of God. Perhaps in heaven you would be doing certain work in order to earn some heavenly money or merits to continue building your mansion. But we can say with definite scriptural authority that although Jesus has mansions for us in heaven, the materials and the foundations of those mansions depend No. 1 on your faithfulness to the destiny in your life the call that God has for you. For the 12 apostles of the Lamb their faithfulness built some thing bigger besides their own mansions, and so their ministries became enshrined as names. Names not so much as the names are written there just for show. It tells you that the materials from their ministries built the heavenly city.

Now here is a very sober thought. God has called each one of us to a destiny and to certain ministry to fulfill. And He has given us mantles in our life to fulfill whatever office He sends us. When you are unfaithful to that office or you don't take upon yourself that mantle somebody else will take it. I can certainly say that the twelfth name of the 12 apostles in heaven is not Judas Iscariot. But it was his at one time. Somebody else took that reward. Kathryn Khulman has said that she was God's third choice. In other words, the earlier two persons who were chosen to carry that anointing that Kathryn Khulman carried, did not fulfill their calling. Subsequently it fell on Kathryn Khulman, and the rest they say, is history.

It is a very sober thought to think that when we don't fulfill the call and destiny of our life that which is ours disappears and becomes somebody's. You say its God perfect will for me; it's predestination. Predestination is still governed by free will. It was God's plan that all the Israelites who came out from Egypt enter into the Promised Land. But they refused to go in and the next generation went in. Your ministry that God has called you to is one that comes from the very throne of God.

And your ministry doesn't just determine your recognition or your function in the body of Christ on this earth. We always think that if I am called to be an evangelist, apostle, pastor, prophet or teacher, my main reward is that we could win souls on this earth and we could do our part in the body of Christ and train others in the body of Christ and bring them to perfection of Christ as in Ephesians 4:11 onwards. But this morning we want you to know that your faithfulness to that also determines the foundations of part of the heavenly city in some form or your mansion which will be a part of the whole heavenly city. It is not just winning souls on earth which one of the most important job on earth we have to win souls. Remember this your heavenly mansion is based on your ministry. By ministry it doesn't mean we all are called to full time but whatever destiny that God has in your life, whatever little thing that God has in your life.

In Ephesians 4 all the fivefold prepare the church for their ministry. If for example your call to is your gift of prophecy. And your only function may be to travel all over the world to preach the gospel like some evangelist. Your only function is within the body of Christ to intercede, to pray and to bring forth the word of prophecy and you didn't do it faithfully. When you go to heaven your heavenly mansion is not really what it should be. Now no one will steal that mansion from you in a sense. But somebody may take that reward from you that belong to the heavenly city. Just like Judas Iscariot's name was taken off and another name was placed there. Some believe it was Matthias and some believe it was Paul. We don't want to speculate. But according to Acts it was Matthias who was chosen to replace Judas Iscariot. There are some foundations of those things that are being built in heaven that depend on your life. When we think about your life and your ministry we only think about that on this earth the number of souls God wants us to bring, the fulfillment of our ministry here on earth. But we forgot to think of the fact that your life is building a material somewhere up there. And that if you fail to do so God will raise someone else to build that material and they will lay the foundation for heaven. We are laying foundations for different parts of heaven. The 12 apostles laid the main thing with the 12 patriarchs. But there are so many other parts of heaven that is being built that depends on your faithfulness and my faithfulness to God's call in our life our talents, our gifting, that came as a gift from God.

The next time you think of not being fully obedient to your destiny remember a part of heaven that you are supposed to be building. We always think of the building here but we forgot that we are building a part of heaven by our faithfulness. And it's affecting that part of heaven. And God will give you a time frame. When that time frame is over and you didn't carry out what you were

supposed to do, somebody else ends up building your part. Because God will make sure His heavenly city is completed. That is No. 1 our ministry and call have an effect on the heavenly city; have an effect on our heavenly mansion and what other things that are in heaven we know not of. This is why we need to go in fasting and prayer. The sacrifices you made, the love that you have shown, the choices that you have made, and the self-denial that you have walked in, all these go to build the heavenly parts of heaven. Heaven's glory cannot be bought with money. But they are building on your works in your life.

The other thing that we want to look at in Revelation chapter 21:19-20 the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds precious stones. I believe that our heavenly mansion is made from those precious stones too. There are many sets of precious stones that go to building our heavenly mansion. Now those precious stones depend on our life on earth too. That is the 2<sup>nd</sup> area.

Turn to the book of I Corinthians chapter 3. Paul talks about laying a foundation. And we always took it that the foundation as a foundation of the church here on earth. No doubt the church is built on a foundation of the early church. But remember what God is building is not just for this earth; it's for heaven. In verse 9 onwards *For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the commission of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and another man is building upon it. Let each man take care how he builds upon it. For on other foundation can any one lay that that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work, which any man has built on the foundation, survives he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*

That tells us we are saved by grace. You are saved based on your faith in Jesus Christ but there is no reward. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you? Any one who defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him.

No. 2 the precious stones represents the foundation of Jesus Christ. The precious stones represent the development of your character. The names in heaven and some of the things in heaven are your ministry. Some people have a ministry but they don't develop their character. Some people have character but they don't develop their ministry. They are both different things although both are connected. Effective ministry depends on character. No. 2 the precious stones that are going to adorn

your mansion is your character. I mean on this earth if your character is not like Jesus probably hundreds of people know your life. Do they see Jesus in you or when they look at you do they remember you as a bad tempered person. Or do they remember you as a greedy person. Or do they remember you as something else. Do you know that affects your heavenly mansion? It pays to be like Jesus. I didn't say it is easy to be like Jesus. But it pays to walk like Jesus and have the character of Jesus. In the natural precious stones are formed in a hard process of pressure, heat, and of course chemical components. Precious stones are usually found deep in the earth. Precious stones are formed only under right conditions. Likewise, character comes by tribulation, by going under pressure. When we go under pressure and the character of Christ is not formed in our life you lost some precious stones. The next time you are under pressure, the next time you are under a trial, the next time the heat is turned on you remember it will produce some more jewels for your heavenly mansion. And when you allow that pressure to bring out Christ in your life, the tribulation builds character, builds the things of Jesus in your life until you become like Jesus. Those are the precious stones that go towards making your heavenly mansion. The question we ask of you this day is your mansion adorned with precious stones?

Here is a little account that talks about heavenly mansion and the planes of glories that are there. I like this statement. It says: *All social life in heaven is graded according to earthly struggle and usefulness as proportion to use of talents given.* Visitors from the heavenly land returning tell us that the state of spiritual development in which we live here is the state in which we arrive there. Although Jesus is in all heaven and His life and presence is enjoyed by every saint and angel not all have equal capacity to partake this glory life. Because of this limited capacity it is impossible for saints just from earth at once to enter into the fullness of all the exceeding glories of heaven. And this is an awesome. It says: *It appears that very few walk so close to Christ in selfless worldliness, full hearted devotion to God and in such a constant communion with Him in the Holy Spirit that when they die they are directly led to mansions highest up in the holy city.*

See there are mansions at different planes. If we know these things on earth why don't we do some thing about it? If we are ignorant of those things then that in a certain way doesn't excuse us. That partly explains why we are not so zealous for the things in heaven. But now that we know we should do some thing about that. This high exaltation immediately upon entering the world of glory belongs to only to earth's rarest saints. And he mentioned some names here. Perhaps only such as directly enter such realms are the apostle John who was near to Jesus' heart, Mary

who sat at Jesus' feet, St. Francis of Assisi and others who daily walked and talked with Jesus. And he talks about how the saints grow from glory to glory.

Here is a little passage about from glory to glory. The order from glory to glory is revealed is apparently something as follows: *Person like the thief from the cross and deathbed repentance saints. In other words people who don't live their life for God and just before they die they say, "Jesus Christ forgive me, I am a sinner, come into my heart," they straightaway go to heaven. Or many backslidden Christians who don't live their life for God and just when they are dying they repented. And those who had little experience in the Christian life in being like Jesus, being like Jesus in character, in attitude, in words, in deeds, just being like Jesus and those who never suffered for Christ.*

Lets look at it heaven is measured from a different perspective from earth. But when we learn that tribulations work character and character equals the precious stones, we learn to value the pressure, the hard times. We learn to stay steady to holding on to Christ come what may. We learn to walk in Christian love although some times it is difficult. We learn to be Christ like and the heavenly reward is there.

*Those who had never suffered for Christ or those who have little experience in the Christian life or little development in their spiritual life are at death ushered into the most remote parts for instructions in one of the lower planes of heaven. Great numbers of mansions and temples of instructions are arranged in ascending grades. Since all heaven is a spiritual realm everything in it is spiritual and has spiritual values. So that's from glory to glory. In short we see that all is from glory to glory, from the lowest plane and mansion until the weakest saint for some time through the ages stand in the highest sphere on higher planes and higher heaven would have obtained from glory to glory.*

Now the phrase from glory to glory is from II Corinthians chapter 3 and 4 and it tells us that we are transformed from glory to glory. II Cor. 3:18 and chapter 4 *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart.* Basically he is talking about you being like Jesus. This is something different from ministry that we covered. When Paul talks about from glory to glory, he talks about the glory to glory on our inside, in our character and in our spiritual development. We grow from one glory to another state of glory so that right now all our physical eyes are to be suspended and our spiritual eyes are to be opened and we look at one another. We see each one having different states of glory. Some will be shinier than others because of their development of their Christ's likeness in their life. But that is the level of glory in us but in heaven there are many planes of glory. And in each plane

there are mansions and schools of instructions. There is a higher plane where there are more mansions with a different degree of everything. And so there are so many planes in heaven. There is a lower plane of glory until it reaches to the highest parts of glory.

And here is where the key is. You cannot enter to the plane of glory that is different from the glory on your inside. Lets take from example, this could be plane No. 1, plane No. 2, plane No. 3, plane No. 4, plane No. 5 and the higher the number the greater the glory. If the glory development in your life is at plane No. 2, suppose that if you were to suddenly go home right now, you can only go to plane No. 2. You may be allowed to visit the higher realm but that has to be like Sundar Singh says in his book the "Spiritual World" a clothing is given to you so that you can just go and visit for some time and come back to rest in your plane of glory.

On this earth where you live depends on the amount of finances you have. Whether you live in an expensive bungalow house or an expensive condominium or an average terrace house depends on your finances. Your address on this earth physically depends on the level of your ability to pay for it. And it also depends on your choices. Some people are renewed and they don't mind living in any kind of condition. But in the general natural sense where your address is depends on your financial ability. Now what is your address in heaven? Your address in heaven could be No. 12 Elijah Street, or whatever form of address heaven takes. Do you know that your address in heaven is determined by the glory of Christ's likeness in your life? We always take those things to be accidental. I mean, in our hearts, we may pray, "O God every thing is Your choice. You choose where I live; as long as I get to heaven, I am happy."

God is more organized than that. He lets each one who gets into heaven to move into the plane of his or her development. Just like on this earth in a small little way if your spiritual development is not so great, you may not stand people praying in tongues all the time. Some people cannot stand people talking about Jesus all the time. If you were not used to that level you would be suffering in heaven if God puts you on a highest plane. You will be miserable in heaven. They will be talking about the glory of God and their shining glory will be so bright and yours so dim. God in His mercy takes you and puts you among those at your level.

Now He is not going to keep you there permanently of course. But God will place you in schools of instructions where you learn lessons that you should have learned down here on earth. And from time to time you could be promoted from glory to glory in heaven. But the fact is that the best place to learn is down here. Here is

where sacrifices can be made. Some times when you bring your tithes to God or when you sacrifice a gift to God, it costs you some thing. You feel the pain and the greater the pain the greater the suffering. Some times when you wrestle against temptation and you stand steadfast in holiness there is a reward up there in heaven. There is no devil in heaven to fight. There is no temptation to draw us away from God only on this earth. This is why the greatest rewards are made possible while on this earth. In heaven there are no unbelievers to draw you away from God. But on earth when you choose to be holy, you choose to spend time in a prayer meeting rather than on other things, you make choices for God, you got to say no to some things and say yes to other things - that's where the reward is.

Thus, the first thing to note is that your ministry affects development in heaven. And if you don't do the part God has chosen for you, He still got to build the New Jerusalem and He will put that mantle on somebody else. So be faithful to the ministry God has called you to.

The second thing to note is that your Christ likeness determines the jewels in your life and the precious stones that will go to build your heavenly mansion and your address in heaven.

The third area that we haven't looked at is found in the book of Revelations chapter 21. We will look at the names of the 12 apostles and the jewels of God. In verse 12 I says, *It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed;* Now the names of the 12 apostles were written on the foundations. But here are the gates. On the 12 gates were the 12 tribes of the children of Israel. The 12 tribes are different from the 12 apostles. Now the 12 apostles were chosen for a ministry. But the 12 tribes couldn't help being there. They are right there and it's something that is fixed for them. And here it is not placed on the foundation but placed on the gates. Gates are places of entrance and exit. You go in and out through the gates. Exits and entrances talk about fellowship in God.

So we talked about ministry, we talked about Christ like development and now we have fellowship. It is important for us to be in the right fellowship. I am not talking about a legal organization. Although legal organizations are an expression of that fellowship, this has nothing to do with salvation. Remember you can be in any place, any church, any where on this earth and if you believe in Jesus you are saved. But every fellowship has a different grace and different appointment of God. And based on the fellowship, which the Spirit of God draws us to, being a member of a church is not just determined by our choices. No one comes to God except by

the drawing of His Spirit. And pastors of any church should not strive in drawing members from other churches to their own church. We put it this way if God doesn't a person to be part of your church, there is no way you can draw him or her anyway. And at the same time if God wants a person to be a part of the church that you have there is no way a person can run because God will keep drawing him or her back. When God appoints leaders He also appoints people to be under the shepherd of His choice, so that they become responsible to a particular fellowship.

Turn to Jn. 17:6 *I have manifested Thy Name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept Thy Word.* Do you know that God gives people to people? God gave men to David. God gives men to men whom He appoints to lead. Turn to Acts chapter 5 verse 14 *And more than ever believers were added to the Lord multitudes both of men and women.* Then in chapter 6 they multiplied again. Verse 7 *And the word of God increases; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.* Then you look at Paul talking to the elders at Ephesians in chapter 20:28 *Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of the Lord which He obtained with His own blood.*

Now all the sheep belong to Jesus. No one has the right to say this is my sheep. It is your sheep in a sense but yet God gives what I call men to people. And He gives responsibilities to those He appoints over a certain fellowship. And being in a tribe is like being in a fellowship. Sometimes being in the right fellowship determines the future of your life. For example the apostle Paul as long as he continued in Jerusalem his ministry could never take off. His ministry only took off when he went with Barnabas to Antioch. Antioch became the center of his base. Notice all the people who gave him troubles because of his special call. He was called to the Gentiles. Only the church in Antioch is more opened to ministry to the Gentiles than the church in Jerusalem. If Paul tried to base his ministry to the Gentiles in Jerusalem, he would have so much trouble defending himself, so much so he could hardly minister to the Gentiles. But if he bases his ministry in Antioch he could be free to just keep going out because the Christians in Antioch supported him. A great portion of all the troubles he had in going to the Gentiles came from Jerusalem. Even the apostle Peter himself nearly got himself into trouble for going to Cornelius. The moment he came back from a revival meeting in Acts 11 he was called to questioning. That is why God can never use that church to preach to the Gentiles. And Paul had to be pulled out by God into the church in Antioch for his ministry to the Gentiles to take off from there. And when Paul was in Antioch, who came to cause trouble in Antioch? They were *Judases* from Jerusalem claiming to

have authority from the church in Jerusalem.

So here in the third point: sometimes being in the right fellowship with the right people is conducive to the total reward to the whole system. We all have individual rewards for our life. We all have rewards for the ministry that we bring to God. Do you know that there are corporate rewards? For example if your company is doing well in certain things, there is an honor given to you as an individual. You could be the best employee. And so there is an honor given to you from that company for your work performance. Then there is an honor given to you for your team spirit and work character and the extra help that you give to others. That is your character. Then there is an honor that is given to you for your whole team. So your team is rewarded.

The Holy Spirit builds churches into team groups. There is an angel set over every church that has come upon this planet earth. Some times there is a reward that God gives to the entire fellowship. Not to just one individual, not just because of reward of character or ministry but there are rewards that God gives to the entire group. This is call being in the right fellowship that brings a certain amount of blessings.

Look at I Cor. 5: 4-5 *In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* Now what they did is what Matt. 18 commanded. They treat that person as a heathen after the third admonition. First admonition, in a one to one confrontation; second admonition, bringing two to three other witnesses, and finally if the person still do not change, he is brought before the entire church. Then it says in Matt. 18 that person is to be treated as a heathen. In I Cor. 5:5 *You are to deliver this man to Satan.* Now its not some thing that you could just simply do. A lot of people try to excommunicate church members out of their own emotional anger that is not from God. But here we are just pointing to a fact that what actually took place was that person was removed from the fellowship. The moment the fellowship was removed Satan came in to claim that person. There is a measure of protection and reward that we get by being in the right fellowship. We cannot take that lightly. Likewise, being in the wrong fellowship can cause destruction. Perhaps there are a whole group of people who are drunkards, who are sinners and they are your good friends. Psalms chapter one tells you do not sit in the seat of the scornful. Don't sit with them. But because your natural ties is stronger than your spiritual growth you went along with them thinking that you could protect them. You can only protect them if you are living in God's perfect will then your umbrella can cover them. If you are not living in God's perfect will you don't get protected and you get destroyed.

Let me give a few examples of that. When Joshua sent the spies into the Promised Land there was only one place that the spies could be saved, and that was by hiding in Rahab's house. And the Israelite spies later promised that Rahab and her household would be saved from the onslaught of Israel if they remain in the house. If they are outside the house they are not our responsibility. But whosoever that is in the house is protected. That's a form of what I call a corporate covering or fellowship covering that God gives. It can be dangerous for it also works in reverse when there is destruction in that fellowship. But it's a tremendous blessing when it works on the positive side. That's being in the right fellowship in God. So here we see the rewards that God gives in heaven for being in a team together with those whom God appoints. When God rewards corporately, He sends people to you with the right team and you bring out the whole blessing as a team together. There is an individual reward for being having your character transformed. There is an individual reward for your particular ministry that you are faithful to. Then there is a corporate reward that God brings for being part of the team He assigns you to be with. The right fellowship is important.

So these 3 things that determines heavenly rewards must be viewed with great importance. From the book of Revelations you remember when destruction is about to come on Babylon in the tribulation week, God calls His people, "Come out of her my people." There is a time when judgment falls and God says get out before the destruction falls. Remember Lot and his family. Lot his wife and his 2 daughters were saved. When Lot tried to talk to his two daughters' husbands they looked to him as a mad man. They should have been saved but because they didn't choose to come out with them, when the destruction fell, it fell on them too. Same with the Passover when they put the blood on the lintel of the house if any Israelites were out on the street and they were first born they would die. It doesn't matter whether they were Israelites or not. You must enter a house with the blood.

Being in the right fellowship does have its blessings. It doesn't mean that an organization alone is sufficient. People have taken that in a wrong sense that if you are not inside their organization you don't have the blessings of God. Not to say that. We can have rewards in 3 realms remember. They could be ministries who refused to base it in a church. They are always going around. They don't realize that the local church is where the base is. They will have their reward for their ministry. They will have their reward if they become Christ like. But there is a third reward they may miss out. If they had remained in a fellowship, their third reward could have been even bigger in their blessings on earth and in heaven.

Lets not miss out on these rewards where the gates are. What do the gates symbolize? Entrance and the power of multitudes where we say one can chase a thousand and two chase ten thousands. So what is this telling you? You can reach more people on this earth by joining a fellowship. If 5 ministers work individually by themselves and never have contact with one another, and each man to himself, they each could reach only so much. But I tell you if all five of them would come under a fellowship and they work together corporately, they can reach probably 50 times as much or more. Therefore it magnifies the ministry and magnifies the reward. We need to teach and train people this team spirit because people tend to be very individualistic. We need to understand that team spirit and working together can bring tremendous rewards from God. That is why it's the gates. It can reach out to more people.