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Sermon Notes

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God's Eternal Temple

Ephesians 2:18-22

The world is full of spectacular buildings

Recently, Calvin and I took a tour of the spectacular cathedral of St. Vitus in Prague, Czech Republic

Construction began in 1344, and went on for centuries... it is over 400 feet long, over 200 feet wide and almost 270 feet high... it has amazing flying buttresses, and stunning stained-glass windows... some of the stained-glass show bible scenes like creation, the death and resurrection of Christ, and the final judgment; other windows show scenes from church history... especially the history of the church in that region of the world, Bohemia. It is the largest church I've ever seen

I can't imagine the amount of work that went into that structure

From the very beginning of history, man has been fascinated with astonishing and impressive building projects.

Of course, the first awe-inspiring human building project was the Tower of Babel, created in defiance of God for the glory of man, created with state of the art technology and a desire to reach for the heavens on a man-made stairway

But it didn't end there. Humanity has continued to build impressive buildings even after God interfered at Babel. The Great Pyramid of Cheops in Egypt was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, a marvel of human cooperation (especially by slave labor) and a mystery of human precision in engineering. It still stands today.

Ancient building projects have been done as the fruit of all great human societies, the flower of a great people making a great name for themselves: the Roman Coliseum, the Great Wall of China, the great cathedral in Chartres, the Taj Mahal... all built by humans and gloried in pridefully by humans.

The Jews were extremely proud of the temple of Solomon

Jeremiah 7:4 Do not trust in deceptive words and say, "This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!"

And then, of the Temple of Herod

Mark 13:1 As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"

The EPHESIANS were extremely proud of their temple...

The Temple of Artemis of the Ephesians was one of the SEVEN WONDERS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD... and the Ephesians were extremely proud of it

Acts 19:34 they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

Acts 19:35 The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Men of Ephesus, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven?"

Antipater of Sidon, who compiled the list of the Seven Wonders, describes the temple:

"I have set eyes on the wall of lofty Babylon on which is a road for chariots, and the statue of Zeus by the Alpheus, and the hanging gardens, and the colossus of the Sun, and the huge labour of the high pyramids, and the vast tomb of Mausolus; but when I saw the house of Artemis that mounted to the clouds, those other marvels lost their brilliancy, and I said, 'Apart from Olympus, the Sun never looked on anything so grand'"

It was easy for the Ephesians to boast about their impressive temple, but Paul wants to set before the eyes of their hearts a far more glorious structure...God's massive building project through time: the Church of Jesus Christ

It is a spiritual temple that is comprised of believers from every tribe, language, people and nations

It is a spiritual temple that is made up of living stones, individual believers from every generation of human history

- God has been working on it since before the foundation of the world
- God is the architect, who drew up the plans
- God is the builder who is executing the plans
- God is the owner who will get all the glory

God the Father gave the command, God the Son paid for it by His blood, God the Holy Spirit is overseeing the day to day construction

***Ephesians 2:18-22 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.
¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens***

with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

I. Formerly Excluded, Now with Free Access

A. This Whole Section: A Lesson in the Journey of the Gentiles

1. Ephesians 2:1-3 Living dead

Ephesians 2:1-3 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

2. Ephesians 2:4-6 Made alive in Christ

Ephesians 2:4-6 But God, because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus

3. Ephesians 2:8-10 saved by grace and by God's workmanship

Ephesians 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

4. Ephesians 2:11-12 REMEMBER WHAT YOU WERE

Ephesians 2:11-12 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)-- ¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

5. Now brought near in Christ

Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

B. Gentiles Formerly Excluded... now "Brought Near..."

1. The Gentiles were on the outside looking in
2. They were forbidden to enter the temple area on pain of death
3. There was a BARRIER, A DIVIDING WALL of hostility
 - a. They were uncircumcised, they were not descended from Abraham, they were EXCLUDED
 - b. The Law of Moses, with its rules and regulations, kept them out
 - c. But now, through the blood of Christ, those who were once far away have been brought near
 - d. Christ's blood shed on the cross ended forever the Old Covenant, with its commandments and regulations

Ephesians 2:14-16 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

- e. The animal sacrificial system, with all its rules, regulations, and prohibitions, was made obsolete forever!

C. The Gospel of Peace Proclaimed by Christ

Ephesians 2:17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

1. Paul now includes the Jews as well
2. Christ preached peace with God, reconciliation with God, through his finished work on the cross

John 20:19-21 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you!"

3. Both Jews and Gentiles received this good news of peace through Christ

D. Free Access by Christ in the Spirit

Ephesians 2:18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

1. Paul expands his thoughts now to include every believer, Jew and Gentile alike
2. Actually, everyone was excluded!
3. The real barrier, dividing wall of hostility was between the holy God and sinful humanity
4. The message of the Old Covenant was THIS FAR YOU MAY COME, AND NO FURTHER

God's infinite holiness and his lofty position is a terror to all of us in our sins:

Isaiah 57:15 For this is what the high and lofty One says-- he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place..."

1 Timothy 6:15-16 God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light

God yearned to teach arrogant, sinful people that they cannot just come into his presence as sinners, or his holiness will break out against them... they are EXCLUDED because of their sins:

Exodus 3:4-5 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." ⁵ "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

Exodus 3:6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

5. Mount Sinai

Exodus 19:12-13 Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, 'Be careful that you do not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. ¹³ He shall surely be stoned or shot with arrows; not a hand is to be laid on him. Whether man or animal, he shall not be permitted to live.' Only when the ram's horn sounds a long blast may they go up to the mountain."

6. Tabernacle and Temple: Holy of Holies... where God dwelt

Leviticus 16:2 The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover."

Hebrews 9:7 *But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.*

7. The Lesson: YOU MAY NOT YET ENTER

Hebrews 9:8 *The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.*

8. BUT NOW... we ALL have free access into the presence of God

Ephesians 2:18 *For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*

When Christ died, he said "It is finished!"

Matthew 27:51 *At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.*

9. New and living way:

Hebrews 10:19-22 *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*

E. Access to the Father, by the Blood of the Son, in the power of the Spirit

Ephesians 2:18 *For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*

Romans 5:1-2 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.*

Hebrews 4:14-16 *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

We can approach the throne of Almighty God anytime we want by the Spirit... in prayer! We can cast all our burdens on him

F. This Access is Spiritual... not Physical... No Temple Required

John 4:20-24 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹ Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

Acts 7:48-49 the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says: ⁴⁹ "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be?"

II. God's Nation, Family, and Temple

Ephesians 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household

Lots of images for the church, the people of God here

- Nation of which we are citizens
- Family, of which we are adopted members
- Temple, of which we are living stones

A. Nation: No Longer Outsiders... Now Citizens

1. All Christians everywhere are welcomed right into the presence of God
2. Our status has changed forever
3. We are no longer strangers, no longer aliens, no longer outsiders
4. NOW... we are FELLOW CITIZENS... we are included in the Nation... included in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ
5. Christ is the King, we are his subjects...
6. Gentile Christians are every bit as much citizens of the Holy Nation as are Jewish Christians

B. Family: Adopted Members of God's Household

1. The word was well-known in Greek society

2. It had to do with a grand estate, a large, wealthy family
3. And Paul asserts that we are beloved family members

Ephesians 1:4-6 In love ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace

John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Romans 8:15-17 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs-- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ

C. Building: A Temple Rising

Ephesians 2:20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

1. Third image: a building, a temple, rising higher and higher for the glory of God
2. This is a powerful image!!
3. The “dwelling place of God” has been an unfolding theme in the Bible
4. The tabernacle was constructed by Moses as part of the Old Covenant

Exodus 25:9 Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.

Exodus 25:40 - 26:1 See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.

5. When it was finished according to the pattern, God moved into it with his glory cloud

Exodus 40:34-35 Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

6. After the Jews had entered the Promised Land and been dwelling there a long time, David had the idea of building a more permanent dwelling place for the Ark of the Covenant... a permanent dwelling place for God

2 Samuel 7:5-6 *"Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?' ⁶ I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling.*

2 Samuel 7:11-13 *"The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

7. Solomon built a temple and the glory cloud came to dwell in it

2 Chronicles 7:1 *When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.*

8. BUT when Israel forsook the Lord and went after idols, the glory left

Ezekiel 10:18 *Then the glory of the LORD departed from over the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim.*

9. Then God destroyed the building by the Babylonians

Psalms 74:4-7 *Your foes roared in the place where you met with us; they set up their standards as signs. ⁵ They behaved like men wielding axes to cut through a thicket of trees. ⁶ They smashed all the carved paneling with their axes and hatchets. ⁷ They burned your sanctuary to the ground; they defiled the dwelling place of your Name.*

10. The TRUE Tabernacle, the TRUE dwelling place where God would dwell with his people was not a building on earth

Hebrews 9:8 *The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.*

Hebrews 9:11-12 *When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. ¹² He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.*

D. The Church is the Dwelling Place of God

Ephesians 2:21-22 *In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

1 Peter 2:4-5 As you come to him, the living Stone-- rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1. As each person comes to faith in Christ, he or she becomes a “living stone,” rescued from Satan’s dark kingdom, and shaped and fitted by God for a specific place in the church of Jesus Christ
2. Peter says that we are not only living stones that make up the temple, but we are a royal priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices within the temple
3. This is what Christ Jesus came to do with us!!!
4. The building is rising and rising, becoming higher and more glorious all the time

III. The Apostles and Prophets the Foundation; Christ the Cornerstone

Ephesians 2:19-20 members of God's household,²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

A. This is an Amazing Image

1. The church of Jesus Christ is portrayed as a spiritual temple, rising higher and higher all the time to glorify God
2. But it is BUILT ON A FOUNDATION... a solid, immovable foundation
3. Every grand, lofty building must have a solid foundation

Matthew 7:24-27 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

4. If the foundation is SHAKY, the whole building will crash down
5. So... what is the foundation for the church?
 - a. According to this passage, the church is built on the foundation of... THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone

- b. What does this mean?
- c. It is especially difficult when you look at other passages

Isaiah 28:16 So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.

1 Corinthians 3:11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

According to these two passages, JESUS CHRIST is the unshakable foundation of the Church

- 6. Yet, this is not contradictory!
 - a. Even in the passage, it says the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone
 - b. A chief cornerstone is the first foundation stone laid, from which all other stones are aligned
 - c. It must be perfectly shaped... 90 degrees on each corner, or all the walls will go off at a skewed angle
 - d. Everything draws its reference from this chief cornerstone
 - e. So ... why does Paul say the church is built on "the apostles and prophets?"
- 7. The "apostles and prophets" I consider to be the human messengers of Christ... ultimately, it refers to the WRITTEN WORD OF GOD in its TESTIMONY TO JESUS CHRIST... this is the unshakable foundation of the Church
 - a. The prophets testified for centuries about Christ; now the apostles explain those prophetic writings

Luke 24:44-48 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

Romans 16:25-26 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, ²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the prophetic

writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him

- b. The apostles proclaim the history of Christ, and their eyewitness of Christ's words and deeds, especially his death on the cross and his bodily resurrection from the dead is the foundation of the church

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-- this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

B. The Word of God's Testimony to Christ is the Foundation of the Church WORLD WIDE

1. No one knows anything at all about Jesus Christ apart from Scripture
2. Scripture brings people to salvation

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

This shows the absolutely vital role of the Bible... the apostles and prophets... as it testifies to Christ, the chief cornerstone, in the building of the church

Every person who hears the message of the gospel, of the apostles and prophets, and believes it is a "living stone" in the rising temple of Almighty God

IV. We Are All Built Together

Ephesians 2:21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

^{KJV} Ephesians 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord

A. This is the Ultimate Picture of Unity

1. Formerly enemies, now Jews and Gentiles are in amazingly close proximity with each other
2. Gentiles were formerly far away, aliens, strangers... now intimately constructed with others into one magnificent temple rising higher and higher to be a place where God dwells by his Spirit
3. Note that THREE TIMES it says this building is rising IN CHRIST...

Ephesians 2:21-22 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

B. Word for the Precision Fit is Amazing

ESV Ephesians 2:21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

1. KJV: “fitly framed together”
2. Same word later in Ephesians for a different image of th church as a BODY

Ephesians 4:16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

3. The image is one of absolute precision... perfectly joined together

Taj Mahal... one flower, carved in its walls and only one inch square, was inlaid with sixty different materials, so perfectly meshed that they feel smooth to the touch like glass.

C. The Building is Ongoing... the Image is Dynamic

1. The building is “rising” now... it is getting higher and higher, more and more glorious, more and more ornate and majestic
2. It is not DONE... there are more living stones to be rescued and quarried from Satan’s dark kingdom

Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves

3. Evangelism and missions involves scaling Satan’s dark walls, quarrying living stones out of his dark kingdom, transferring them and putting them in place in this rising building program

D. The Plans are Made... A They Are Being Executed

Hebrews 11:10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

V. God’s Final Dwelling Place

Ephesians 2:21-22 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

A. We Are NOW Indwelt by the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 1:13-14 *Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-- to the praise of his glory.*

Philippians 3:3 *For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh*

B. But the Full Dwelling of God will Not Be Complete till the Church is Perfected

Ephesians 1:13-14 *Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-- to the praise of his glory.*

1. Every elect person saved... [until the redemption of God's elect]
2. Every saved person glorified

C. The Final glory in heaven

Revelation 21:1-4 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

Revelation 21:9-11 *One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.*

Revelation 21:22 *I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*

Revelation 22:3-4 *No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*

VI. Applications

A. Are You on the Outside Looking In??

1. Come to Christ!
2. This amazing passage speaks of the church of Jesus Christ as a SPIRITUAL BUILDING that is constantly rising and getting more glorious every day
3. But if you are still on the outside, still living in spiritual death, still in Satan's dark kingdom, then none of these marvelous things is true of you
4. I PLEAD WITH YOU... be reconciled to God!
5. Don't stay an alien, a stranger, an outsider!
6. Become a child of God, included in his family, a citizen of his Kingdom, a living stone in his temple
7. Christ died for sins to bring you to God... trust in him

B. Christians: Recognize the Majestic Picture of the Church Here

1. The church is so amazing and so elaborate that no one image can handle it
2. Ephesians 2 give us three images: citizens of a nation, members of a family, living stones of a rising temple
3. Ephesians 4 gives us one more: members of a body
4. So ESTEEM THE CHURCH!!
 - a. The church is not some optional thing you do like a club or hobby
 - b. The church is the work of God in the world
 - c. This is what he is doing in the world... building the church of Jesus Christ living stone by living stone
5. Be IN the church... a healthy covenant member of it

Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Be faithful in attendance... and enrich the church using your spiritual gifts

Ephesians 4:16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

C. Access: Come near to God in Christ by the Spirit

Ephesians 2:18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

1. Pray regularly!
2. How is your prayer life?
3. Understand the role of the Holy Spirit in drawing you close to God in Christ by prayer
4. When the Spirit moves, breathe a prayer

Hebrews 10:22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

D. Understand Christian Unity Based on this

1. We are “closely and perfectly joined together”
2. Let us love one another, forgiving one another, serving one another

1 Corinthians 12:26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

E. Be Involved in the Worldwide Rescue Effort

1. The holy temple is RISING to be a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit
2. It's not done
3. We need to be faithful in evangelism and missions!
4. We need to scale Satan's dark walls and quarry those now living stones and rescue them out of there!

F. Look Forward to the Consummation of the Church in Heaven

Revelation 21:9-11 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.