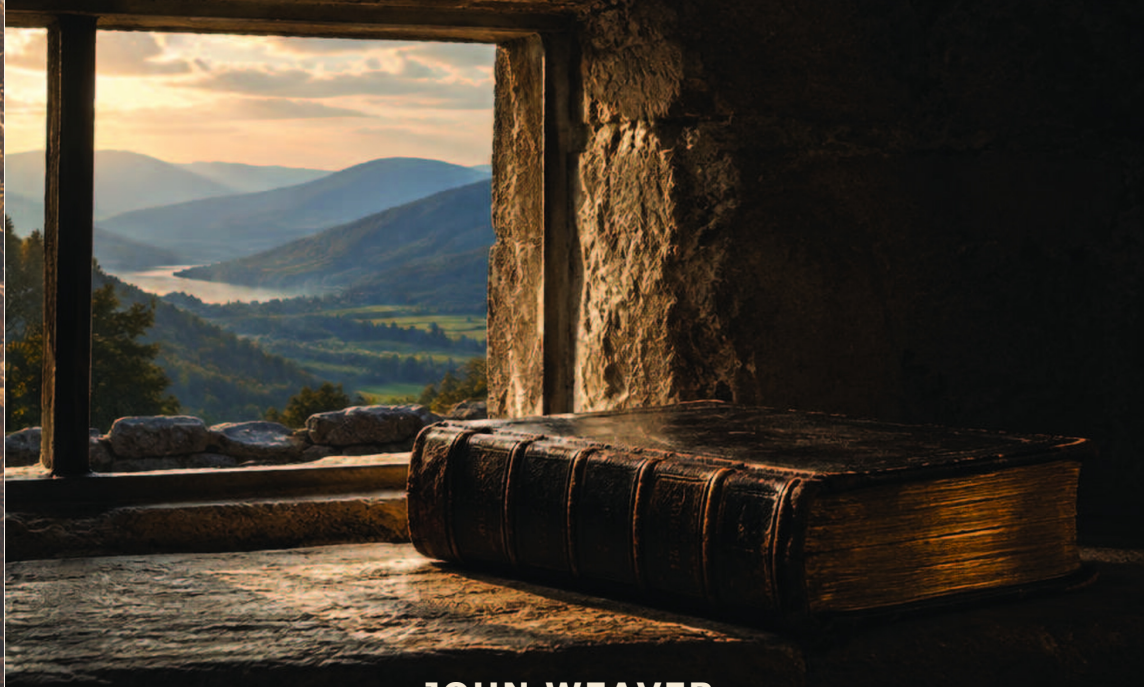
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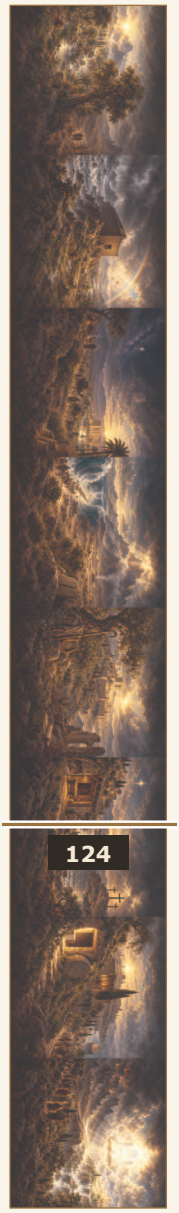
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

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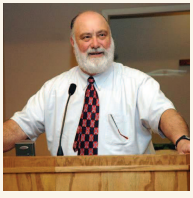
The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:18, EXCERPT

Visible circumstances do not exhaust the realities by which believers live. John Weaver considers unseen things, the testimony of Scripture, and the relationship between faith and present experience. These messages invite attention to enduring truth while taking seriously the responsibilities of life now.

“Faith is that spiritual faculty of the soul which deals in spiritual realities and enables us to see that which is unseen.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

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CHAPTER 1

Unseen Things

Part One

Introduction to Unseen Things

Hebrews 11:1–3 says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Verse 6 adds, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”

When you begin discussing unseen things, the subject may be disturbing or encouraging, depending upon the topic. A bump in the middle of the night might cause anxiety until you realize it is your 150-pound mastiff coming in to check on you; then it becomes encouraging.

While we are on the topic of unseen things, let me make something exceedingly clear: I do not believe in ghosts. There is a

good reason for that. Second Corinthians 5:8 says, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” If you are a child of God, when your soul is separated from your body, you go into the presence of the Lord. The opposite is true of those who are unsaved: when their soul is separated from their body, they go to the place of condemnation and judgment. Therefore, there is a place for the saved and the unsaved, and no place for disembodied human spirits floating around somewhere with no place to go.

There are indeed evil spirits, and the Bible speaks of them often. There are also angelic spirits, angelic beings, which the Bible also speaks of. The Bible teaches very clearly that the angels are ministering spirits sent to minister to those who are the heirs of salvation. Hebrews 1:13–14 says, “But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation?” So, no ghosts for me, because I do not believe the Bible allows for such. It is true that evil spirits and angels may manifest themselves according to the will of God.

The Nature of Angels

However, there is always a limitation placed upon what they can do. God has absolute and total control over each one. When Satan wanted to attack Job, God gave Satan permission, but He also placed a limitation upon what he could do. Satan could go so far, but he could go no further.

Angels, then, are ministering spirits who follow God's commandments and hearken unto His voice. Psalm 103:20 says, “Bless the Lord, you his angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.” Just as you and I are sitting around, angels are sitting around and standing around, waiting for God to speak to them, and then they certainly go out and obey.

This brings me to another point. No matter how many paintings you see, how old they are, or whether they were painted by one of the great masters, the truth is this: angels do not have wings, because

angels are spirit beings. Psalm 104:4 says, “Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire.” Moreover, when an angel is revealed in the Bible, when he is manifested, he is always manifested as a man. There are no female angels, neither are there any baby angels. Hebrews 13:2 says that any time an angel is manifested in the Bible, he is manifested as a man. The angels who came to Abraham were men; the two angels who came to Lot were men. Whenever angels are manifested, they are always manifested as men, and they look no different from us.

Hebrews 13:2 says, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Stop and think about that. A stranger might happen to be an angel, which means an angel would have to look just the way we look. It is just that simple.

If I get a knock on my door and open it to find someone in a long, flowing white robe with wings sticking out of his back, he is not getting into my house—at least not without a fight. The Bible says that strangers look exactly the way we look. Angels look the way we do, since we would count them strangers. But children who die in infancy do not become angels. Angels are a created species. They do not marry, neither are they given in marriage, and therefore they do not reproduce. There is a limited number of angels.

It is true, as I said earlier, that angels do not have wings, but the seraphim do. In fact, the Bible says the seraphim has six wings: with twain they cover their face, with twain they cover their feet, and with twain they do fly. They cease not saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty." Then there are the cherubim. The cherubim each have two wings, covering the ark, if you will remember.

But angels, he says, are spirits, and they do not marry. In Matthew 22:30, our Lord says, "For in the resurrection," speaking of the saints, "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God." The angels of God do not marry or enter into marriage, and therefore they do not reproduce.

Interestingly, when we are talking about unseen things, usually when we were children, if we ever went camping, there was always a campfire and ghost stories to scare everyone and get them upset before bed. It did not matter whether we were talking about Bigfoot,

the dog man, the moth man, or some other creature no one had ever seen. It was sufficient to scare everybody. There were plenty of imaginary creatures. Every child has imagined creatures under his bed, in his closet, and all around him. But some imaginary creatures have been made not only for recreation and fun, but also for education.

Imaginary vs. Unseen Realities

Let me give you a clear illustration. When my two older grandchildren were two or three years old, there were no mandatory car seats, and children rode in the car like everyone else. When they traveled with me in the truck, they would eventually stand up because they were tired of sitting. Each time, while their heads were turned, I would reach over and pinch them. They would turn around and say, "Papa, you did that."

I said, "No, that was not me. That was Alexander the Alligator. He lives under my truck seat, and whenever you stand up, he will nip you on the buttocks. So you have to stay seated." I pinched them every time they stood up. When they were five or six and had a little more thought about them, I told them, "You know, that was Alexander the Alligator." They answered, "Papa, that's not so. That was you. There's no Alexander the Alligator."

I said, "Yes, there is. Alexander the Alligator is a real figment of my imagination." They said, "No, he's not." I replied, "You just admitted that he's real, because I told you he's a real figment of my imagination." Now that they are married and have children, Alexander the Alligator still lives. They tell their children what they were taught from Alexander the Alligator. It is interesting and fun sometimes, but you have to understand that these things were totally imaginary.

Our problem today is that we normally think if something is not seen, it is not real. But we know better, because most of us have never actually seen an amoeba, a protozoan, bacteria, or a virus. Yet we know those things are real, even though we cannot see them. So let me show you.

The Temporal vs. the Eternal

In Hebrews chapter 11, hold your place, but look in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verses 17 and 18. The Apostle says, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Then, in verse 18: “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Paul makes it exceedingly clear that the things which you and I see are only temporal, while the things which we cannot see are eternal. The things which we see are passing; they have no substance about them. Paul uses an interesting word for “look.” In verse 18, he says, “while we look not.”

The Greek word is skopeo, which means to observe, to contemplate, to fix one’s eyes upon, and to direct one’s attention toward. Each one of us understands the purpose of a scope, whether it is a microscope, a telescope, or even a rifle scope. A scope usually magnifies something and brings it closer so that we can inspect it, observe it, and fasten our eyes upon it. If someone asks Steve or someone else to check a place out, they may say, “I’ll go scope it out for you.” In other words, they will observe it and look it over.

This is what the apostle is saying: We are not to scope out, fasten our eyes upon, or direct our attention toward the things which are seen, because they are temporal. The word for temporal is proskairos. Pros is a preposition meaning “for” or “to,” and kairos is the Greek word for time. Thus temporal means for a while, for a time, or for a season. It refers to that which is temporary and fading away. The things which are seen are passing away, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Eternal is the Greek word aionios, referring to that which is everlasting and forever.

So here is what Paul is saying, particularly in verse 18: substance and reality can only be found in that which is not seen. The shadow is seen by our eyes; that is what we can see. What we can see is not real, but what we cannot see is real.

Spurgeon said concerning verse 18, "The substance is beyond the river. The shadows are here. God help us to look for the substance

and claim it as our own and let none of us grasp the shadows, which would be worthless if we could ever hold them in our hands." That is exactly what Paul is saying. What we see is actually worthless; what we cannot see is eternal.

How can we see that which is invisible? How can we see that which we cannot see? The answer is that we see by faith. That which cannot be seen is discerned only by faith. The works of faith and the exercise of faith manifest its reality, yet faith itself is unseen.

Faith Defined and Illustrated

Look back in Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

When you stop and think about faith, faith is not blind belief—not at all. First, the word faith is the Greek word pistis, which is translated in our Bible as faith, assurance, belief, and fidelity. It refers to a conviction of truth and reality that we hold in our minds.

Verse 6 gives a good illustration of faith as truth and reality: "But without faith it is impossible to please him," that is, God, "for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." We are taught, first, that it is impossible to please God without faith, because faith is a conviction of the truth and reality found only in God. Secondly, faith is evidenced by believing that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. If you do not believe that God is revealed in Scripture, then you do not believe the promises revealed in Scripture.

If you do not believe the promises revealed in Scripture, then you do not believe the God revealed in Scripture. The person who does not believe Scripture and the person who does not believe in God has absolutely no faith whatsoever. If he had faith, he would believe both the promise and the promisor. Though faith is unseen, it is real and genuine.

Go back to verse 1 and look at it: “Now faith is the substance.” Faith is the substance, or subsistence, basis, and foundation, of things hoped for. The same word is translated as “confidence” in Hebrews 3:14. The Greek word is hypostasis, translated as

substance. We think of subsistence and of that which is a foundation. Faith, then, is the foundation of things hoped for.

What is a foundation? It is what you build upon, and you cannot build without having a foundation. Faith is indeed the foundation; it is a substance. Faith is that spiritual faculty of the soul which deals in spiritual realities and enables us to see that which is unseen. Through faith we see. Faith is a real, present, confident assent of the soul of a believer in the person of God and in the promises of God, including the warnings and threatenings of God. Faith in the promise will always lead to the one who gave the promise. When you have faith in the one who gives the promise, you also have faith in the promise. You cannot divide these things.

Consider John 12:48: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” Our Lord said, “He that rejecteth me,” the living Word, “and receiveth not my words,” the written Word, “hath one that judgeth him in the last day.” You cannot separate Christ from His Word, because the living Word gave us the written Word. If you deny the written Word, you deny the living Word; and if you deny the living Word, you deny the written Word as well. Our Lord said something similar in John 5:46–47.

Listen to what he said to those Jews: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" If you do not believe in the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament, how can you believe Christ's words? You cannot divide the promisor and the promise. You cannot divide the living Word from the written word. They are one. If you have no faith in God, you will have no faith in His word or His promises. If you have no faith in His promises, you will have no faith in Him.

The opposite is also true. If you have faith in God, you will have faith in His word; and if you have faith in His word, you will have faith in God.

Now faith is "the substance," or the foundation or title deed, "of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." "For by it," that is, faith, "the elders obtained a good report."

Creation and the Unseen

The rest of this chapter proves the effectiveness of faith by showing us the manifestations, fruits, and results of faith in the promises of God and belief in God. Verse 3 gives another illustration of unseen things and also of seen things: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." The things which we see were made of unseen things. If you read Genesis 1 and 2, you will find that there was absolutely nothing until God spoke. We believe that the world was created ex nihilo—that is, out of nothing. God simply spoke the world, the universe, into existence. God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. "Let there be land," and there was land.

Psalm 33, beginning with verse 6, says: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."

"He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. Why? For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."

Do you realize that everything accomplished in Hebrews chapter 11 was accomplished by faith? It is the fruits of faith in Hebrews chapter 11 that demonstrate the faithfulness of God and the faithfulness of His promises. I certainly do not have time to go through the entire chapter, but I want to pick out a couple of things to share with you in relation to unseen things. Lord willing, I will finish this next Sunday.

Future Judgments Seen by Faith

Let me point out something that may surprise you: future judgments are unseen with the eyes. Future judgments must be seen by faith. In verse 7, the Bible says, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Pay close attention to what is said in verse 7: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet." What is that referring to? It is referring to the flood and the destruction of the old world. Here is an interesting truth: future judgments can only be seen by faith. While we look at the principles of the Word of God, it is still faith that must see those judgments.

Even present judgments, in one sense of the word, are only seen by faith. That does not mean that present judgments cannot be seen with the eyes; they just cannot be seen as being from God. Present judgments, unless viewed by faith and through faith, are not going to be seen as the wrath and justice of God.

Here is a good illustration. I do not care how many storms are sweeping the earth, or about the floods happening in Kentucky, Missouri, and West Virginia, the droughts happening out West, the fires ravaging California, the tsunamis happening somewhere, or the tornadoes that are coming. All of these things are attributed to Mother Nature or climate change.

Or it's got to be some difference in the way the weather is sent to us. If these things were viewed as the justice of God and the wrath of God, it'd be a call to repentance. But where they're not viewed as coming from God, there is no need to repent because it just happens.

In Isaiah 26, verse 8, we read: "Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee." "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

Then he makes this statement: "Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them."

So he says oftentimes when God's judgment is in the earth demanding righteousness and justice, they will not see, although they see. So many then are blind to present judgments even though

they see with their eyes. So many times even present judgments as well as future judgments can only be seen by faith.

God's Judgment on the Wicked

The Bible says, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." So think about this phrase, "by faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet." Now we're talking about the coming flood and the destruction of the old world.

There's a reference here to Noah by our Lord in Matthew chapter 24, beginning with verse 37: "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the

The flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Noah was a preacher of righteousness, and he preached 120 years without one convert. People back then were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and sinning, because the Bible says that God saw that the imaginations of the heart of man was only evil continually. He told Noah the whole world was corrupt before him. Yet people pretended that things were going to go on forever, just as people do today.

In light of this, think of the perversity, wickedness, rebellion, and downright exhibitions of depravity in our day and time. Everybody thinks everything is normal and that we will simply continue like this. Nothing is going to happen to us. Most people are therefore blind as to what is in store for them. Unhappily, many professing Christians are in that boat as well.

How do we know that God will judge the wicked? We know that God is going to judge the wicked, not only in eternity, but in time and history as well, because we have faith in His Word, we have faith in Him, and we believe exactly what He has told us.

Galatians 6:7–8 says, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” Listen to what he said: “Be not deceived, God is not mocked.” When we think that we can thumb our noses in the face of God, defy Him, deny Him, hate Him, mock Him, ridicule Him, and do everything that He commands us not to do, and that we will escape judgment, we are deceived. God is not going to be mocked. God is going to take care of those wicked people who refuse to bow to Him and refuse to listen to Him.

Scripture teaches that God is not only going to judge the wicked in eternity; He will judge them in time and history as well. Proverbs 11:31 says, “Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.”

Now think about what is being said here: “Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth.” The principle that I have taught you in time past is this: blessings always follow obedience, and curses always follow disobedience. The statement is clear: “Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth.” The word recompense means to be paid or to be paid back. This is a good question: Do we have to wait until we get to eternity to be blessed by God? Scripture's answer is that God's dealings are not confined to eternity; He recompenses in the earth as well.

The answer is no. We get blessings every day. We have blessings all of our lives. The more obedient we are, the more blessings we're going to have. That's all there is to it. So he says, "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth," that is, while we are alive in time and history. And then he says this: "much more the wicked and the sinner." So if God is going to reward and pay his children in time and history, he asked how much more is he going to do that to the wicked in time and history. You can mark it down. God's going to get the wicked in time and in history as well as in eternity.

Deuteronomy 7: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to

destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face." Wow. God will repay them that hate him to their face. He will destroy them. He will not be slack to them that hate him. He will repay him to his face.

Here then is one of God's treasures that is sealed up by Him and with Him. "Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?" So what is laid up in store with Him? What is sealed up among His treasures? Here it is: "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence." And look what he says about the wicked: "Their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste." God says, this is one of my treasures. It's laid up in store by me, and that is my righteous justice and vengeance, and I'm going to show you that the foot of the wicked shall slide in due time. Yes, they will fall. For the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.

Psalm 7 speaks of the wicked: “He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.” The pate is the top of the head, the crown of the head. God says that he who digs a pit will fall into it himself. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon the crown of his head; it will hit him in the head.

We find the same truth in Psalm 57:6. David said, “They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves.” God will make sure that they fall into their own pit. When I was a child, I loved the Roadrunner and Wile E. Coyote. Everything the coyote tried to do to the roadrunner always came back on him. This is what God is saying: it will ultimately come back on them.

Now go back to Hebrews 11:7. The Bible says, “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Noah was warned of God. How was Noah warned? The Bible gives us the answer. Genesis 6:13 says, “And God said unto

Noah," and God spoke to him: "The end of all flesh is come before me. I want you to build an ark."

Noah's Faith and Our Application

What if Noah had said to God, "I don't believe this. I just don't believe this"? If Noah had denied, disbelieved, and discredited God, would that have blocked, hindered, or stopped the judgment? Of course not. It would only have meant that Noah was consumed with the rest of the unbelievers, those who denied and hated God. How difficult was it for Noah to believe God?

Humanly speaking, it would really be impossible. Why? Because the Bible says, "By faith Noah, being warned of God." We know that faith is the gift of God. If God had not given Noah faith, Noah would never have believed Him to begin with. But God gave him faith, and Noah believed. Even with the faith God gave him, how difficult would it be for Noah to believe this? Notice: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house."

Why did he prepare the ark? Because in Genesis 7:4, God said, "For yet seven days, I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth." When we think of rain, we think nothing about it, because we have seen it all our lives. By Noah's time, it had never rained. A mist came up from the ground and watered the earth.

Genesis 2:5–6 says, "And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." Noah had never seen rain, and he had never seen a flood. He had no firsthand knowledge of the windows of heaven or of the foundations of the deep. Yet he believed God.

Second Peter 2:5 says, "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." Faith sees that which is coming down the road. Faith sees the hand of God in judgment

coming upon the wicked and wickedness. Faith can see the destruction of our economic system, the corruption and injustice in our judicial system, and that we have been thumbing our noses at God for so long. Somehow we think we will escape His judgment, that God will never avenge Himself or judge us. That is certainly untrue, because God will judge. This is what we are reading about in Hebrews 11:7: God did destroy the earth with a flood.

The Bible says in Proverbs 22:3, "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished." Stop and think: anyone with one eye and half sense can see our food supply and food system being destroyed. I saw a video this past week of cattlemen in Texas selling their cattle because of the drought. They had nothing to feed them and could not afford to feed them. The line to the stockyards was thirty miles long. I also read where one company just dug a hole and buried a thousand cattle.

I am simply saying that the prudent man perceiveth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished. So let me make this application and show it to you from the Scripture: Will God judge the wicked? The answer is yes. One objects, "But it looks as if they are going to escape; they are getting by with everything." No, they are not getting by, and they are not going to escape. I do not care how powerful or how rich the politicians are; they are not going to escape. I do not care how they have fortified themselves; they are not going to escape.

When you tell me, "Well, it looks as if," I remind you that we do not walk by sight; we walk by faith. Faith says that God is going to destroy them and judge them.

Turn in your Bible to Psalm 73. Asaph wrote Psalm 73, and he had a problem similar to the problems many have today. When you look around at the wicked and see how they are prospering, the money and opportunities they have, and how they use their wealth to destroy anything and everything righteous, holy, and godly, consider what he writes. Psalm 73:1: "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." He got to looking at the temporal,

not the eternal. He says in verse 4, “For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not

Asaph observed that the ungodly were not in trouble as other men, neither were they plagued like other men. Think of all the crimes our politicians are getting away with. If you and I did them, we would have been under the prison house. He says in verse 6, “Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.”

“They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.” They will curse God and man; they do not care. “Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.” Now Asaph was a godly man.

Look at what he said in verse 13: “Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.” In other words, he said, I am suffering and doing without. Look at the ungodly, and look at me. “For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.” I cannot get away with anything. “If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.” Then he said, “When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.”

Lord, I do not understand this. Here I am, suffering and doing without, trying to be holy, godly, and obedient, and all I receive is affliction. Look at the ungodly and how they prosper. His problem was that he was looking at things which are temporal.

Now watch the change in verse 17: “Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.” He begins to look at the eternal: “Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.”

"So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee." Asaph was saying, Lord, I am sorry. I was foolish to look at things which are seen. I need to look at that which is eternal.

The wicked shall be punished. Remember this: faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. Our faith is not baseless; it is the foundation upon which our lives are built. Our faith is real, true, and genuine. Upon this foundation of faith stand the promises of God, the judgments of God, and the threatenings of God. Just as surely as His promises, threatenings, and warnings are true, God also is true.

It is only by faith that we see what is coming down the road. If we cannot see it, we are blind; we are not walking by faith. Faith says that God cannot be mocked and will not be mocked. Therefore, as Noah was warned by God of things not seen as yet, we need faith to see what is going to come upon us and upon the wicked, because we will be here when that happens—or at least some of us will be here.

Perhaps not all of us. We need to be the prudent man who foresees the evil and hides himself, not as the simple, who pass on and are punished. It will come; you may count on it, because it is the Word of God.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee and ask Thee for faith to see that which is unseen. Lord, there are more unseen things that are eternal. May we not focus upon that which is temporal, but upon that which is eternal. Make us wise, Lord, and give us Thy divine wisdom. Help us discern, see, and understand Thy principles, and apply them to our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Unseen Things

Part Two

Introduction and Review of Faith

Hebrews 11:8–10 says, “By faith, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed. By faith, Abraham did this now, and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith, he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Faith is a substance. Hupostasis is the Greek word. It means that which is substantial. It is usually translated as a foundation. Scripture tells us that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Of course, it is actually used as a title deed as well. We live by faith and not by sight, and we are to see eternal and real things by faith and by faith alone. In 2 Corinthians 4, the apostle Paul said, “The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Not only is faith unseen—you cannot see it as an essence—you may see its manifestation, the fruit of it, which this chapter is all about, but you cannot see faith in and of itself. That is why James said, “Show me thy faith and I’ll show you my faith by my works.” Hebrews 11:7 says, “By faith, Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet.” Most of the message dealt with the fact that future judgments are unseen, and we see those things coming only by faith, because we understand that God is not mocked. God is righteous. God is holy. God cannot condone sin or look upon sin condoningly whatsoever.

Faith therefore sees and understands the future judgments of God. Faith not only sees and understands the future judgments of God, but faith sees and understands present judgments. It is interesting how so many times present judgments, although they are viewed as judgments, particularly or catastrophes or disasters, are not necessarily viewed as judgments from God.

Consider, if you would, the tornadoes, the hurricanes, the droughts, the floods, the tsunamis, and all of these things. They are the result of Mother Nature or climate change. In other words, we do not view these things as coming from the hand of God, which the Scripture does indeed tell us that they are. This should help us recall Amos chapter 4, where God sent all of the drought, all the floods, all the famine, and all the pestilence.

After each one, He said, "Yet you have not returned unto Me." Usually, if some of these natural disasters, as the world calls them, were seen as judgments of God and coming from the hand of God, it would also be a call for repentance. But the Bible also tells us in Proverbs 22 and verse 3 that a prudent man foresees the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished. Also, in Hebrews 2 and verse 3, the question is asked, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" Now, everything in the Word of God is important.

Abraham as the Father of Believers

The truth of the matter is this: we need to take very serious consideration not only of the promises of God, but of the threatenings and the warnings of God as well. Today I want to really

hammer down on a promise that was given to Abraham. Since this promise was given to Abraham, it was also given to us as well. I want to show you the connection between Abraham and Christians. There is a link between Abraham and Christians. Romans chapter 4 and verse 11 says, "And he, that is Abraham, received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also."

The Bible tells us that Abraham is the father of all of those who believe. There should be a likeness between Abraham and Christians in the fact that He is our Father. The children should act like the Father, and certainly should look like the Father as well. But there is a second reason why children should act like Abraham—that is, live by faith. The true seed of Abraham is Jesus Christ. As Christians, then, we are to be like Christ, because Christ is indeed our Redeemer.

Galatians 3:16 states, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not unto seeds as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed which is Christ.” All the promises that God gave to Abraham and his seed were promises given to Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ is the true Son and the true seed of Abraham. That is why Matthew 1:1 begins, “the beginning of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham.” The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ is the true seed.

Romans 4:17 tells us that Abraham is the father of all them that believe. Galatians 3:29 says, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.” Everything that God gave in promise to Abraham, He gave to his seed, the Lord Jesus Christ. Since we are in the Lord Jesus Christ, all of those promises are ours. We are heirs according to the promise.

That is why 1 John 4:17 says, “Herein is love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world.” As the children of Abraham, we live by faith as Abraham did; as the children of Jesus Christ, we live and act and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham walked by faith, and so must we. We do not live or walk by sight; we walk by faith.

Abraham's Call and Obedience

The physical illustration of Abraham leaving his home and traveling into Canaan land is, in reality, a picture of our leaving our earthly home and traveling to our heavenly home. How can we say that? Hebrews 11:8-9 makes the connection plain: “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed. And he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.” Verse 10 continues the thought.

"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and Maker is God." Before considering this passage, turn back in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 12, verses 1 and 2. This is where God came to Abram when he was in Ur of the Chaldees. Note specifically what God said: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing."

God said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." Abram was to leave his country and his kindred, those of his father's house. He was to leave everything that he knew, everything that he had experienced, everything that he could see, everything that he could feel, everything that had a hold on him, and everything on which he had a hold. He was to leave all of that and travel to a land that was totally, completely unknown to him.

The Difficulty and Faith of Abraham's Journey

I want to give you a couple of quotes. The first is from Albert Barnes. He makes six points, and each one shows the complexity involved when God told Abram to get out of his country. Barnes says: Number one, "The journey which he undertook was then a long and dangerous one. The distance from Haran to Palestine by direct route was not less than 400 miles, probably more than that, but not less than 400 miles. And this journey lay across the vast desert, the

Arabian Desert. That journey has always been tedious and perilous, but to see its real difficulty, we must put ourselves into the position into which the world was 4,000 years ago."

There was no knowledge of the way, no frequent path, no facility for traveling, no turnpike or railway, and such a journey then must have appeared incomparably more perilous than almost anything which could now be undertaken. There were no travel brochures, no travel bureaus, and no directions.

Second, he was going among strangers. Who they were, he knew not. But the impression could not have been otherwise than that they were strangers to religion and that a residence among them would be anything but desirable.

Third, he was leaving country and home and friends, the place of his birth and the graves of his fathers, with a moral certainty that he would never see them again.

Fourth, he had no right to the country which he went to receive, except by God's promise. He could urge no claim on the ground of discovery, inheritance, or conquest, at any form or period. Though he went in a peaceful manner, with no power to take it, and could urge no claim to it whatsoever, yet he went with the utmost confidence that it would be his. He did not even expect to buy it, for he had no means to do this, and it seems never to have entered his mind to bargain for it in any way, except for the small portion that he needed for a burying ground.

Fifth, he had no means of obtaining possession. He had no wealth to purchase it, no armies to conquer it, and no title to it which could be enforced before the tribunals of the land. The prospect of obtaining it must have been distant, and probably he saw no means by which it was to be done. In such a case, his only hope could be found in God.

Sixth, it is not impossible that the enterprise of that age might have been treated by the friends of the patriarch as perfectly wild and visionary. In other words, they would call him a fanatic. They would call him insane. The prevailing religion evidently was idolatry, and the claim which Abraham set up to a special call from the Most High might have been deemed utterly and entirely fanatical.

To start off on a journey through a pathless desert, to leave his country and home and all that he held dear when he himself knew not whither he went, to go with no means of conquest, and with the expectation that the distant and unknown land would be given him, could not have been regarded otherwise than as a singular instance of visionary hope.

The whole transaction, therefore, was in the highest degree an act of simple confidence in God, where there was no human basis or calculation, and where all the principles on which men commonly act would have led him to pursue just the contrary course. It is therefore not without reason that the faith of Abraham is so commended. When you stop and consider those six things, the average man, the average intelligent man, would never ever have accomplished such a trip because he would have said, “It’s insane; it cannot be done.”

Andrew Murray hits this from a different perspective because he is trying to teach us the purpose of God in calling Abram like this. Murray says, “What was the object of God’s thus dealing with Abraham? And what, in real truth, the worth and the blessing of his obedience? The call of God was no arbitrary one. As we see into its divine meaning, we shall understand what God asks of us and what our faith must lay hold on.”

Man stands between the visible and the invisible. His sin and fall consisted in having turned from God to the world. His redemption from the power of sin could only be found in giving up the world and setting his whole heart upon God. It was to train him to this—to teach him to find his life and happiness in God Himself—that the call came, “Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred unto the land that I will show thee.” God wanted to have him alone with Himself, separated from all he could cling to or trust in, that He might teach him to find his all in all in Himself.

And it was by faith—not faith that only saw the land and the promise connected with it afar off, but faith that saw the living God near to fulfill the promise—that Abraham obeyed. The call of God is ever accompanied by the promise. True faith in the promise is ever joined to obedience to the call. Obedience is of the very essence of faith. Faith is always the power by which a man gives himself up to

an unseen object and receives it unto himself. It is of the very nature of things impossible to receive God without receiving His will. So Abraham believed God.

He went out not knowing where he went. He placed himself in the hand of God, for God to send him wherever He pleased. He subscribed to God's wisdom as the fittest to direct him and submitted himself to His will as the fittest to determine everything concerning himself. Implicit faith and obedience are due to God and to Him alone. By faith, Hebrews 11:9 tells us, "He sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."

Canaan as a Picture of the Heavenly Country

God had promised Abram the land of Canaan, yet he lived in that land as in a strange country, and as a stranger there himself. Abraham did not move to Canaan and immediately serve an eviction notice upon all the Canaanites, saying, "Get out, this land is mine." He lived with them. The land was his by promise, but he had not yet taken possession of it. He was in it; it was promised to him, but he did not have possession of it. He was simply living in it as a stranger and as a sojourner.

Although Canaan was real, literal, and visible—you could see it—Canaan was also a picture, simply the picture of what you and I would call a heavenly reality. It was a picture of that which could not be seen with visible eyes. Hebrews 11:9-10 says, "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

The Heavenly City Described

Verse 10 indicates that most cities do not have foundations, or at least do not have divine and eternal foundations. While sojourning in Canaan, which was seen and therefore temporary, Abram was looking for the Eternal City, the heavenly Canaan, built by God alone.

Matthew Henry writes, “The description given of heaven, it is a city, a regular society, well established, well defended, and well supplied. It is a city that has foundations, even the immutable purpose and the almighty power of God, the infinite merits and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the promise of an everlasting covenant, its own purity, and the perfection of its inhabitants, and it is a city whose builder and maker is God.”

“He contrived the model. He accordingly made it. And He has laid open a new and living way into it and prepared it for His people. He puts them into possession of it, prefers them in it, and is Himself the substance and felicity of it. Observe the due regard that Abraham had to this heavenly city. He looked for it. He believed that there was such a state. He waited for it. And in the meantime, he conversed in it by faith. He had exalted and rejoicing hopes that in God's time and way, he should be brought safely into it. The influence this had upon his present conversation, it was a support to him under all the trials of his sojourning state, helped him to patiently bear all the inconveniences of it, and to actively discharge all the duties of it, persevering therein unto the end.”

Arthur W. Pink wrote:

“That for which Abraham looked was heaven itself, here likened to a city with foundations, in manifest antithesis from the tents, which have no foundations. Various figures are used to express the saint’s everlasting portion. It is called an inheritance in 1 Peter 1 and verse 4, to signify the freeness of its tenure. It is denominated as many mansions in the Father’s house, John 14. It is styled a heavenly country, Hebrews 11 verse 16, to signify spaciousness.

“There are various resemblances between heaven and a city. A city is a civil society that is under government. So in heaven, there is a society of angels and saints ruled by God, Hebrews 12. In Bible days, a city was a place of safety, being surrounded by strong and high walls. So in heaven, we shall be eternally secure from sin, Satan, death, and every enemy. A city is well stocked with provisions. So in heaven, nothing will be lacking, which is good and blessed. The foundations of the heavenly city are eternal—the eternal decree and love of God, the unalterable covenant of grace and Christ Jesus, the Rock of Ages on which it stands firm and immovable.”

Seeing the Unseen by Faith

Hebrews chapter 11 is a chapter on faith, and we have considered not only the faith of Noah, but also the faith of Abraham. How are we as Christians like Abraham? Abraham was in Canaan. He lived there as a stranger and a sojourner. He could see Canaan, but he could not see the city for which he was really looking. He had to see it by faith and faith alone. While he was in Canaan, he had the promise, but he did not have the possession. So it is with us today: we have the promise of heaven, but we are not yet in possession of it.

Have you ever been to heaven? The answer is no. Have you ever seen heaven? The answer is no. Do you know anyone personally who has been there and returned? The answer is no.

You could say, “Well, I know Moses and Elijah did on the Mount of Transfiguration.” Yes. Paul was caught up into the third heaven. Yes. But you and I do not know them personally, nor have we talked to them personally. You can buy any large number of books on deathbed experiences. People will tell you they died, went to heaven, and returned. They will tell you about beautiful things and many other things.

As long as their experience fits with Scripture, it might be valuable to listen to them, but it will not add to Scripture, nor will it be any truer than what we already find in Scripture. The average person has never seen anything about heaven.

Since heaven is unseen, how do we know it is real? We know it is real by faith.

We are still talking about the wonderful faith of Abraham. The Bible says, “Now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly. Wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city.” The truth is that we do indeed have a description of the eternal state. The Word of God gives us plenty of truth concerning heaven, yet it is still only by faith, and faith alone, that we believe and see that eternal glory given to us by God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that our position in heaven is real, genuine, and secure.

One reason I can be absolutely assured of the reality of heaven and the reality of my reservation there is found in Hebrews chapter 6, beginning with verse 13: “For when God made promise to Abraham,” because He could swear by no greater, “He sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.” That is the fulfillment of the promise. “For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them the end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”

The hope set before us is that, as Abraham patiently endured and finally obtained the fulfillment of the promise, we too will find the fulfillment of the promise. Now watch what he says about this hope in verse 19.

"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth into that within the veil, that is, into the most holy place, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." So here's what he's saying: We can be absolutely sure of the eternality of heaven because not only has God confirmed it by an oath, and it's impossible for God to lie, but also because the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the forerunner, has entered into the holiest of all, and He is there reserving our place.

Remember, He is our head; we are His body. Where He is, is where we're going to be.

Now, everybody understands this simple principle. Many times, Alice and I have traveled, and Stephen and Lorraine as well. We might get on the airline, and Alice would say, "Well, I'm going to go to the bathroom before everybody sits down." Fine. So there I am sitting, and there's that empty space by me. Usually someone's going to stop: "Is that seat taken?" "Yes. It's reserved for my wife. I'm waiting for her. I'm holding her place. Nobody can have it because it's hers."

This is what our Lord is doing in the most holy place. He's the forerunner. He's gone there, secured it for us, and reserved that place for us. Therefore, the author of the book of Hebrews says, we now have an anchor of the soul, which is both sure and steadfast. It's not going to change.

Here's another picture that's given to us. Hebrews chapter 12, beginning there with verse 22. The Bible says, "And you are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Note, if you would, he says, "You're come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." And of course, he tells us there's an innumerable company of angels. There's a general assembly and church of the firstborn. There's a judge of all the earth. There's the spirits of just men made perfect, and there's Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant. So we have a city, we have a country, we have a kingdom, and we have the Lord Jesus Christ who guarantees our possession.

SCRIPTURE READING - Revelation 21:1-4 (KJV)

The Description of the New Jerusalem

Turn in your Bibles to Revelation chapter 21. I want to take the time to read this entire chapter, because I want you to see that here is indeed a description. I am going to come back to verse 1 a little bit later, but I want you to look at this.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for a husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither

sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

SCRIPTURE READING - Revelation 21 (KJV)

And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, For these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. And I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

But the fearful and unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. And there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials, full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.

And her light was likened to the stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and the names written therein, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. And on the east three gates, and on the north three gates, and on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth. And he measured the city with the reed twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof a hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

And the building of the wall of it was of jasper, and the city was pure gold likened to clear glass. And the foundations of the wall

> of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was Jasper, the second, Sapphire, the third, a Chalcedony, the fourth, an Emerald, the fifth, a Sardonyx, the sixth, a Sardius, the seventh, a Chrysolite, the eighth, a Beryl, the ninth, a Topaz, the tenth, a Chrysoprasus, and the eleventh, a Jacinth, and the twelfth, an Amethyst.

"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls. Every several gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb were the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it. For the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it. And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, nor maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Here we have a description of heaven. Have you seen it? Have you seen the eternal city? The answer is no. But how do we see it? We see it by faith, because we believe that which God has promised. Although we may not be in possession of it at this particular point in our lives, that possession is just as real. Faith is not only a substance or the foundation upon which something is built; it is oftentimes used as a title deed. We have a title deed to heaven because our place has been secured by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Seeing the Invisible God

Those things which are seen are temporal, but those which are unseen are eternal. We know that faith is unseen. We know that future judgments are unseen. We know that heaven is unseen, and yet these things are real and genuine. If you want to deny that which is unseen is not real, then you have a problem. Hebrews 11:27, speaking of Moses, says, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for He endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

God is clearly invisible. The Bible says that no man has seen and no man can see His face and live.

Now you say, "Elijah saw Him." Yes, Elijah saw His backward parts and God hid him in the cleft of that rock as He passed by. And God said, "You can't see My face. You can see My backward parts." And the same would be of Moses. God spoke to him face to face, but that does not mean that Moses saw God Himself. He certainly saw the presence of God, and obviously the manifestation of God's presence, but the Bible tells us that God is invisible. In 1 Timothy 1 and verse 17, the Bible says, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory, both now and forever. Amen."

Now, I want you to turn back in your Bibles to 1 Timothy and look in chapter 6. 1 Timothy chapter 6. Having quoted 1 Timothy 1 and verse 17, let's now begin reading in 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 14. 1 Timothy 6 and verse 14. So Paul writes Timothy and he says this, "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in His times He shall show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see, to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." Now, how does one see that which is invisible? Moses endured by seeing Him who is invisible. The answer is, we have to see by faith. I want you to turn to two passages. I want you to turn to 1 Timothy chapter 3. And then if you would, go ahead and find John chapter 14.

John chapter 14. And hold that passage if you would. John 14. And look now if you would first, to 1 Timothy chapter 3. Look if you would please at verse 16. 1 Timothy 3 verse 16, "And without controversy"—no arguing over this—"without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory." Now let me emphasize this word again in this passage. "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness." Watch, "God was manifest in the flesh."

This refers to the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. Without controversy, no arguing about it.

Want you to turn in your Bibles to John chapter 14 and let's begin reading there verse 6. John 14 and verse 6. In fact, let's begin with verse 5. In verse 5 Thomas said unto Him, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; how can we know the way?" Jesus said unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life.

“No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also. And from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.” How could they have seen the Father? Because Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. Philip said unto Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” Jesus answered, “Have I been so long with you? And yet thou hast not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. And how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?

“The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself. But the Father which dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me, or else believe Me, for the very works’ sake.” Our Lord asked Philip how He could have been with him so long, and yet Philip had not known Him. He was declaring, “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.”

How many of you have seen the Lord Jesus Christ physically? I have not. Where is the Lord Jesus Christ seated now? At the right hand of God the Father. How, then, can we see Jesus Christ now? By faith alone. Jesus Christ is indeed God in the flesh; that is certain. Our Lord said, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.”

Now turn to 1 Peter chapter 1. Put this together and watch carefully. We will read the first nine verses, with special emphasis on one verse. I have asked how many have seen the Lord Jesus Christ physically, and none of us have. Peter begins: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, Grace unto you and peace be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again into a lively hope”—or a living

hope—“by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” Here is our inheritance.

"To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." So we do have a reservation. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith into salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you're in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than a gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found in the praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Are you looking? Here it is.

"Whom having not seen, you love. And whom though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." So how do we see Jesus Christ? By faith.

Job said, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me." He said, "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh"—that it would be a resurrected flesh—"I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold Him and not another."

Our Lord said in Matthew 5 and verse 8, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Theologically, seeing God is called the beatific vision.

There are all kinds of gospel songs abounding, and all kinds of talk: "When I get to heaven, I'm going to sit down and have a talk with the apostle Paul, or I'm going to talk to Peter, James and John, and I want to see my family and I want to see this and I want to see that." I got news for you. I believe that when we see God, everything else will just about fade in the background. When we see the splendor and the glory and the greatness and the purity.

Isaiah described, in Isaiah 6, “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord high and lifted up, His train filled the temple.” The seraphim had six wings: with twain they covered their face, with

twain they covered their feet, and with twain they did fly. They ceased not saying, “Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty.” Job said, “Mine eyes will behold Him.”

There will be a time in eternity when our faith will become sight, so we will see not only heaven itself, but we will see God as He is. Isaiah 33:17 says, “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty. They shall behold the land that is very far off.”

Then Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, “As I pause over this verse, I would like to ask every hearer here whether he expects to see the King with joy. You never will, unless you see Him here on earth as your Savior. You may see Him by faith in His sufferings, or else you will never see Him by sight in His beauty.”

Application: Living for the Eternal

Let the question go along these seats: “Shall mine eyes see the King in His beauty?” Or must I say with Balaam, “I shall see Him, but not nigh, I shall behold Him, but not now.” I shall see Him as a judge, but His beauty shall increase my alarm. I shall flee from Him and say to the rocks and to the hills, “Hide me from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne.”

Dear hearer, I hope that that will not be your dreadful lot, but that you will look to Him this morning by faith. For still He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. Spurgeon is commenting on the truth that our eyes shall see the King in His beauty.

Let me make a couple of applications. The first one is this: I believe Hebrews chapter 11 verifies, in reality, the fact and the truth of what the apostle Paul said: “But the things which are seen are temporal. But the things which are not seen are eternal.” When you stop and consider this simple truth, everything that you and I see is temporal. Even the heavens and the earth are temporal.

How can I say that? Look in 2 Peter 3:7: “But the heavens and the earth, which are now”—that is what we have right now—“by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” The Bible talks about this earth being purged by fire. Verse 10 says, “But the day of the Lord

will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved"—or loosed—"what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation in godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, where the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

Are you looking? "Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." That is why I said I would comment once more on Revelation 21:1: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heavens and the first earth were passed away, and there is no more sea." Everything that we see is basically temporal. It will pass away. It will fade away.

Only that which is unseen is eternal. That is why the Apostle Paul said in Colossians 3, "Set your affection on things above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God, and not on things below." By faith we see the future judgments coming down the road, the reality of heaven, and the reality of God. That is why you cannot convince an atheist or an unbeliever that God is, because God can only be perceived by faith. You remember Hebrews 11:6: "He that cometh to God must what?" First, believe that He is; and secondly, that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him.

Those unseen things are real and genuine. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your Word and Your truth. Lord, enable us to look upon things that are unseen. Help us to see the invisible by faith, to believe, and to prepare our hearts. May we trust in Thee as Abraham did, giving ourselves up totally and completely unto Thee.

Knowing that Thou art too loving to be unkind and too wise to make a mistake, we love Thee and acknowledge Thy promise and Thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In whose name we give Thee praise and thanks and ask these things. Amen.

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