

Mike Ensley - The Temple Mount

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This study that I have on the Temple Mount is something that I had a lot of fun putting together. The resources on the net are just incredible, the different illustrations and whatnot. I had a lot of fun in putting this together, and I hope that that comes across in the study. So it's not advancing. Okay, that does it.

Okay, you should see a screen there that says location of Mount Moriah, and my cursor, moving around, you see all that, I hope. Well, we'll go ahead with it anyway. The.

Okay, this illustration is actually of the geographical area that we're talking about here. Before it was the Temple Mount. This is Mount Moriah, and the first place where it's mentioned in our scriptures is very early on in Genesis, the 14th chapter, and it says, Melchizedek, King of Salem, brought out bread and wine.

Now, he was the priest of the Most High, and he blessed him, that is Abram, and said, blessed be Abram of God most High, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the God Most High who has delivered your enemies into your hands, and, and he that is Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all, and of course, Paul refers to that in Hebrews. The thing that's kind of interesting about, about this scripture here is the name Salem.

And according to Brown Driver Briggs Bible Dictionary, Salem means peace, and this will be a recurring topic in this discussion of the Temple Mount. The idea and the concept of peace comes up again and again. This dictionary says that this is the place which Melchizedek was king, and most Jewish commentaries affirm that it is the same as Jerusalem.

The second bullet point on here is the place where Abraham offered Isaac, and we find that a little further on in Genesis, in Genesis the 22nd chapter, verse 2, where the Lord says to Abram, he says, take your son, your only son, yes, Isaac, whom you love so much, and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice them as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you. This was kind of an incredible thing that the Lord did with Abraham, Abraham as a father, and many of you in the group out there have children.

I can't even comprehend of what that must have been like for Abraham, but he complied and he did that. The thing that's. That I brought this up here for was this word Moriah, which then again, according to Brown Driver and Briggs, Moriah means chosen of Jehovah. The place where Abraham offered Isaac the mount on the east side of where Solomon built the. The temple.

But it was chosen by Jehovah. It's not like it. Abraham just wandered out in the wilderness and found a hill and said, well, this looks like a pretty good hill. No, this place was chosen by Jehovah, and so Abraham took Isaac there.

And you know the story. We'll read these verses anyway, and Abram picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice, and at that moment, the angel of the Lord called him from heaven. Abraham.

Abraham. Yes, Abraham replied, here I am. Don't lay a hand on the boy. The angel said, do not harm him in any way, for now I know that you trust and fear God. You have not withheld from me even your own son, your only son.

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And then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in the place of his son, and Abraham called the place Yahweh Yara, which means the Lord will provide. To this day, people still use that name as a proverb. On the mountain of the Lord will provide.

Well, I thought that was kind of interesting. Have you ever heard of Mount Moriah being referred to as the mountain of the Lord will provide? I guess I never had. But evidently in Moses time when he wrote Genesis, it must have been a proverb that was used quite a bit. But I think that's an important proverb.

The Lord will provide. That's the inspiration of the opening hymn, by the way. Not my way or thy way, but only the Lord will provide, and there again, this is a recurring theme as we go through this study. The third bullet point is kind of interesting.

It was the site of the threshing floor of Orana the Jebusite, and this account. Just a second here. Okay. This is actually an account you might remember, of when David ordered a census of the people of Israel.

And this was considered a great sin by God because it seemed to suggest a lack of confidence in David of the Lord's ability to protect them with a large enough army, and so the Lord sends the prophet Gad to David to tell him of the Lord's displeasure, and in second Samuel, I'll start with the 12th verse, the Lord sends the prophet Gad, and he said, go and speak to David. Thus the Lord says, I'm offering you three things.

Choose for yourself one of them, which I will do to you. So God came to David and told him and said, shall you have seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days of Pestilence in your land. Now consider and see what answer I shall return to him who sent.

Then David said to Gad, I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercy is great. But do not let me fall into the hand of man. Well, initially, that might not have seemed like a good choice, because those three days of pestilence were brutal, and there were a lot of people in the land of Israel who died because of the pestilence. But as it turned out, David had made the right choice, because as we read in the 16th verse, but as the angel was preparing to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord relented and said to the death angel, stop.

That is enough. At that moment, the angel of the Lord was by the threshing floor of Orana, the Jebusite, and David built there an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and thus the Lord was moved by prayer for the land, and the plague was held back from Israel. So the plague was stopped there at this thrashing floor. Now, what does that got to do with our subject?

Well, what it has to do with our subject is the last bullet point. I wish my buttons worked right. See, I wonder if that one. No, that one doesn't work either. The only one that works is my mouse roller, and sometimes I roll a little too far.

But anyway, the next bullet point, the last bullet point on this slide, is the place where Solomon built the temple, and that's told to us in second Chronicles the third chapter, verse one, and it said, so Solomon began to build the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to David, his father, and the temple was built on the threshing floor of Orana, the

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Jebusite, the site that David has selected. Of course, David selected because that was the site that God had selected.

So we remember how David wanted to build the temple so bad, but God would not allow him to do so, and at first Chronicles, the 22nd chapter, David explains to Solomon his son why, and he said to his son, I had intended to build a house for the name of the Lord my God. But the word of the Lord came to me saying, you have shed much blood and have waged great wars. You shall not build a house to my name because you have shed much blood on the earth before me.

Behold, a son will be born to you, who will be a man of peace, and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side, for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give him peace and quiet in Israel in his days.

He shall build a house in my name and he shall be my son and I will be his father and I will establish his throne forever over Israel.

Here again, Solomon means peace. They're the strong's words. So we, we see this recurring theme of peace and we see from this why God didn't want David to build his temple. David had been a man of war. He had fought great wars.

And his reign was kind of characterized by that that's not what God wanted, and we'll see as we go through the temples that were built there and the themes, especially at the end, why peace is such an important concept here. So Solomon begins to build the temple. I don't think I'll read this verse essentially just gives us the timing. It, according to this, it the temple was built in 966 BCE and this is a representation of what the temple would have looked like with the city of David back in Solomon's time.

That's kind of an interesting picture. It's kind of a topographical map showing the hill, maybe a bit exaggerated, I don't know. But anyway, David builds the temple.

The construction of the temple under Solomon is given to us in 1st Kings 5 through 9, and it was magnificent. If you go through those, we're not going to take time to read it. But the lavish and incredibly ornate workmanship that went into that temple was just incredible, and I'm sure it was a sense of pride for the Israelites for generations.

But the very culmination of that process was the bringing of the Ark into the temple.

I think we'll just read the last verse of this group, and then the priest brought the Ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place inside the inner sanctuary of the house, to the most holy place under the wing of the cherubim.

The whole temple was huge. It was big, it was very incredible, and a lot of things went on here. But as we know, the Israelites weren't faithful to God, and the temple stood for a long time.

It stood for almost 400 years. But eventually the Lord allowed the Babylonians to conquer it, and that was represented in this slide. About the year 587 BCE, the Babylonians came and under Nebuchadnezzar and destroyed Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. I don't think I'll read this whole citation here.

We're going to run out of time if I read all these. But I want you to kind of look at this last verse because in that verse, actually the last two verse, it mentions all the Things from the Temple that

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the Babylonians carried off to Babylon. But there's something that's missing here. You see what it is. There's no mention here appearing off the Ark of the Covenant.

And you would think that if they were going to mention anything, they would mention that if they carried it off. So we don't really know why. Maybe it wasn't even there at this point in time. It might have disappeared before the temple was destroyed, before Solomon's Temple was destroyed. We don't really know.

But we do know that the people of Israel were carried off into exile. This slide kind of shows the sorrow and the utter despair of the people. Can you imagine being in this group? You turn around and look at the great city and the Temple Mount that was utterly destroyed and how hopeless that would have felt. Well, there was some in Israel that never gave up.

We see that even in Babylon. A good example is Daniel, and we won't go through this story, but you remember it well, I'm sure. Daniel knelt by the window facing out towards Jerusalem and prayed three times a day. In fact, his enemies use that as the only means that they had to try to have him executed.

And they did that. But of course it didn't work because the Lord was with him and delivered him from the mouth of the lions. But there was others in Israel that long for the return to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple. The Jews were in exile in Babylon for 70 years. But eventually the Lord raised up a king that would let them go back and rebuild the temple.

We'll read this citation. This is from Azariah 1:1. Now, in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout the kingdom and also put out in writing, saying, thus says Cyrus, king of Persia, the Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has appointed me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all the people, may his God be with him.

Let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord and the God of Israel, who is the God who is in Jerusalem, and so there were a pretty sizable number of Jews who took advantage of this opportunity. Not all of them. Some of them were pretty comfortable and happy where they were. So they stayed in Babylon.

But of those who went up, going to the third chapter, I'll read this one too. Now when the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets and Levites and the sons of Asha with symbols to praise the Lord according to the directions of King David of Israel, and they sang praises and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, for he is good, for his loving kindness is upon Israel forever, and all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord because of the foundation of the house of God was laid. Yet many of the priests and the Levites and the head of the fathers households, the old men who had seen the first temple wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, while many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the shout of joy from the shout of weeping of the people.

For the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard far off. It's kind of interesting. What was this weeping about? Haggai kind of points this out.

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Hagai, the second chapter, verse two, says, speak now to Jerusalem the son of sheeple governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehoshah, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying, who is left among you who saw the temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem as nothing by comparison? Skipping down to the seventh verse says, I will shake all the nations, and they will come from with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. The silver is mine and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts.

The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former, says the word of host, and in this place I will give peace. There's peace again. I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts. This prophecy in Haggai must have almost seemed like some kind of a riddle to the Israelites at the time.

How could this humble little temple ever rival the glory and the wonder of Solomon's temple? Well, Brother Russell in reprint 2520 describes that the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy will be in the kingdom arrangement, when Christ will reign as the corner, the chief cornerstone, and the church members with him, and I think that that's ultimately true.

That is the ultimate fulfillment of that prophecy that's given in Hagia. But I wonder if there was at least a little bit of a literal fulfillment of this prophecy, and I kind of think there was. This is what's called Herod's temple, and it was huge. We're going to be talking about it a little bit.

It was Built by this guy. This is Herod the Great. There's the years that he reigned. Herod was known for his large building projects, and the, the temple in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount was one of the largest.

And it was incredible. He also built a palace for himself, and you might say, well, wow, boy, he's a pretty great guy. He built this, this great big temple for, for the Jews there in Jerusalem. But we should remember that Herod was not a particularly religious person.

He did have some Israeli background. He was regarded as an Edomite. But all of his projects were for his own personal aggrandizement or to gain him some advantage in his political office and pursuits. In fact, Herod was the king that was king when Jesus was born, the king that slaughtered the baby boys in Jerusalem hoping to kill our Lord because he was afraid that Jesus would become a king who would displace him. So Herod was not a good guy, but he did build an incredible temple.

He expanded the Temple Mount complex from the rather humble temple that was built under Ezra and, and when they, the, the Israelites returned from, from Babylon, he expanded that complex from 17 out to 35 acres.

His temple was huge. He, and the thing that's really interesting about that to me is this is the temple that Jesus would have experienced in his first advent. He and the apostles and everyone that was. That we read about in our New Testament.

This is a representation of what the city of Jerusalem would have looked like in those days, and you see that the Temple Mount was a huge part of it, and this is a picture of what the Temple Mount looks like today under Google Earth. I hope you can see my cursor here. There's a kind of a faint outline around this thing.

I'm going to go around it with my cursor. Google Earth has some kind of neat tools. You can measure distance, but you can also measure area. You know, being a farmer, I use that all the

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time. If I want to know how many acres are in a certain piece of ground, I'll use this tool to do that.

You, if you do that here and you go around this outline, you come out with about 35 acres. So even though some commentators do not buy this at all, but I think it's entirely possible what we're looking at here, when we look at that picture, is kind of an outline where Herod's Temple Mount actually laid. Well, how big is 35 acres? This is a picture of my place. This down here is my house.

I'm sitting in the basement right now. But reason Why I pulled it up here is we built our house, Sister Kathy and I, on this piece of ground here. It's south of the road, the Shawnee Road, and if you go around this, that's 30 acres. Okay.

And you can see how small a regular sized household is on 30 acres, and Harris Temple Mount complex. This whole area is a different shape, of course, but this whole area would have been covered with Temple Mount. So it gives you a little idea of how big Herod's temple was. Oh, my buttons are working again.

That's good. Okay, just another thing to look at to get a little bit of perspective is this. I guess if any of you have been following football scene here lately, there's this little team up the road there called the San Francisco 49ers, I believe it is, and this is the place where they play football when they play their home football games called Levi's Stadium. At least I think that's right.

You can correct me if I'm wrong later. I don't follow these things very well, so I might be wrong. That's, that's what I think it is, and there again, if you go around this Google Earth, measure it out. This stadium holds between 30 or 68 and 75,000 people, depending on how it's configured.

What's the area? The area of the whole stadium is about 20 acres. So the Temple Mount that Jesus would have experienced during his first advent was half again as big as this huge football stadium. It was a big place during festival, during Passover and other times when all the Israelites were commanded to appear before the Lord at the temple. This Temple Mount would have been just a beehive of activity.

You can see from this slide what it would have looked like. The thousands and thousands of people there. Notice how big these courtyards are. This probably was the place where they sold livestock and exchanged money and Jesus chased the money changers out, and of course the temple itself sits right there.

But it kind of brings a perspective to verses like this. Matthew the 26th chapter, verses three through five. Then the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest named Caiaphas, and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and to kill him.

But they said, not during the festival, otherwise there'd be a riot of the people. You can kind of see, yeah, there's a riot of the people. It would have been pretty, pretty bad for the chief priests. They wouldn't have been able to control them. So they managed to pull it off anyway because they did it at night when nobody was here.

But this just gives you a little idea of what the temple looked like during a passover season.

It was so important to the Jews to have this. It was so important part of their lives and even for the apostles too. We have this verse In Luke the 21st chapter, verse 5, where the apostles, and it said some of his apostles began talking about the majestic stonework of the temple and the memorial

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decorations on the walls. But Jesus said, the time is coming when all these things will be completely demolished.

Not one stone will be left on top of another.

Yeah, that must have been kind of a hard message to receive, and this is when that prophecy came about this in the Common Era, A.D. 70, when the temple was destroyed.

Well, I think we'll back up just a little bit before we proceed because I'd like to talk about the Ark of the Covenant just a little bit, and the thing of it is, is where is the Ark of the Covenant? During all this?

We remember that I had the slide before that showed when the Babylonians carried all the things from the Temple off when they destroyed the temple, Solomon's Temple. The Ark wasn't in the list. It's not in the list when I came back either. I'm not going to read this verse because we're running out of time. But it doesn't mention the Ark.

So what is the deal with the Ark? Now in the second temple, it had holy and a most holy, just like Solomon's Temple did. Excuse me, but what was in the most holy.

You know, there were. How much furniture was in the most holy. It was just like the most holy. In the Tabernacle, there was only one piece of furniture in there, and that was the Ark of the Covenant, and we can't figure, you know, the Ark of the Covenant doesn't seem to be there.

Well, one thing that. What. What was in the most holy. One thing we can do is we can kind of look and see what's there. Now, this is the Dome of the Rock.

Of course, it's an Islamic shrine. But the point is, is when they built this, they were trying to build it right over where the most holy was, and incidentally, some will say that they succeeded and some will say that they didn't, and we don't really know. Let's just for the time being say that they got it right.

Okay, so this Dome of the Rock, I like to think that it is over where the most holy was, and I guess the main reason why is what's inside the Dome of the Rock. What's inside? Well, surprise, it's a rock. But this isn't just a normal rock.

It's an ancient, geologically old formation. A stone that's an outcropping. It would have stuck up above the soil on the mountaintop or the hill through all this time we've been talking about. But it has some interesting names. One of the names for it is a foundation stone.

They call it the Noble Rock, and I guess my personal favorite is a title that's given to it, the Pierced Stone. Because I hope you can see my cursor. But you see this little hole right here? It's a hole in the rock that goes down into a.

A cavern that lies just below the rock that is called the well of Souls. Here's that hall right there. They let us send a little bit of light down here. Jewish tradition has it that the priest hid the Ark of the Covenant down here and hid it away from the Babylonians, and of course, we don't know if that's true or not.

It doesn't really matter whether it's true or not. The Ark obviously isn't there. Now. We don't really know where the Ark is there again, you can waste a lot of time on the Internet trying to figure out

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where the Ark is, but it doesn't really matter. But the other thing that's really interesting about this stone, you see how there's certain engravings.

There's places where they have chiseled away some of the rock, especially this one right here, that seems to coincide rather closely to the dimensions of the Ark of the Covenant. So could it be that the Ark of the Covenant was actually set on this rock? Rob? I like to think so, but, you know, like I say, there's a lot of authorities that don't think that that was the case, and it doesn't really matter. But the other thing is, if.

If the Ark of the Covenant isn't in here in the second Temple, when in Herod's temple, we remember in the services of the. Of the Atonement Day when the priest would. The only time during the year that anybody came into the Most Holy was on the Day of Atonement, and then only the priests would come in and sprinkle some of the sacrificial blood on the mercy seat. Well, what if the mercy seat isn't there?

What if the Ark isn't there? Well, if he did that, he would be sprinkling the blood on this rock. Anyway, I find that interesting. I won't talk about possible symbolisms Here, I'll let you do that, but I just think it's fascinating.

This is a cutaway of the Dome of the Rock. You see, the rock is itself is prominent down here. But I found a similar drawing of, of the Temple. This would have been the Temple during Jesus's time.

This would have been Herod's temple. I'm gonna, I'm not gonna read all of these captions, but this one over here is kind of interesting. It says the high priest entered the holy, the most holy place once a year on the Day of atonement to offer incense and sprinkle blood. Josephus reports that this room was empty, although the original emplacement of the Ark of the Covenant in the foundation stone is still visible. So that's what I was talking about there before, where it looks like there's a flat spot that was chiseled into that rock.

This is another part of Jerusalem. I just put it in here as interest the Jews. Jewish tradition says this one of the last retaining walls still visible from Herod's Temple. This is the west wall, or often referred to as the Wailing Wall. For the Jews come here to pray for the return of the glory of the Temple.

And this is where it sits in relation to the dome on the rock. Go back to this slide again so you can see where this all lays. Here's the Dome of the Rock. The temple would have been sitting in this area back in Jesus's time. The western wall is right over here.

Well, what did the Temple mean to our Lord? You know, actually the Temple was pretty prominent in the ministry of our Lord, and I'm running out of time here, so I'm really going to go fast here. We remember how they brought him into the temple and that Simeon recognized him. The Word told him that he wasn't going to see death until he saw the Word's salvation.

And so what a blessing, blessing for Simeon that he actually got to see Jesus, and he said, now, Lord, you can release your monster and to depart in peace according to the words, from my eyes that have seen thy salvation, and a similar situation for the providence. Anna, she's our Lord as well. Our Lord was involved in the temple.

We remember when he was 12 years old that his parents found him in the Temple, exchanging information and ideas with. With the priests, and it's interesting because when his mother asked

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him why he had disappeared from his parents, he. He couldn't understand why they would have any trouble understanding where he was. For he said in the 49th verse of Luke the second chapter.

Why is it that you were looking for me? Did you not know that I would be in my Father's house? It just seemed obvious to him. But after that he, he did submit himself to their care as his parents. Even though Jesus was not a normal 12 year old boy.

Here he is on. It's interesting that the devil used the Templars in one of the temptations throw himself off the peak of the temple to demonstrate the divine power that God had given him. He said no, that he would not do that, and of course he chases out the money changers in that huge court that we were looking at a bit for, and here again he refers to this as his father's house.

The temple was really special to Jesus even though he knew it was going to be destroyed.

And this is the last one. When Jesus was traveling from the upper room to the garden, he gives this lesson of the vine and husbandman, and many think that this was actually inspired by an inscription on the temple wall as they went by with their torches. Brother Russell writes about that and reprint 3544 Peter after Jesus was resurrected, began to understand that the temple was just a symbol of something that was a lot bigger and a lot more glorious, and as he says here in the 11th verse that he is a stone which you rejected, you builders for he has become the chief of the corner.

And he enlarges that in his first epistle where he includes us in that picture, and let's see, let's just read verse five says and you, and that is you brethren, our living stones are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. So when in Hezekiah, when he was prophesying that that temple there would ultimately be more glorious than Solomon's temple, this is what the ultimate fulfillment of that prophecy that the spiritual temple is being built up. Now we as, as under stones, under our chief cornerstone Jesus, are being built up into that incredible building, that incredible spiritual temple that will bless all the families of the earth. So I would like to quickly close with two of my favorite scriptures.

This is Micah 4:1:4. In the last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord will be the highest of all and the most important place on earth. It will be raised up above the other hills and people from all over the world will stream to it to worship. People from other nations will come and say, come, let us go up to the mountain of the house of the Lord of Jacob that he might teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.

And the Lord's teachings will go out of Zion, in His word will go from Jerusalem, and he will mediate between many peoples and settle disputes that have been in existence for generations. They will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears and the pruning horses. Nation will not lift up sword against nation. Everyone will live in peace and in prosperity.

So it's the ultimate expression of that peace that comes up time and time again in this Temple Mount. It was a symbol of the ultimate Temple Mount, which will be where God will bless all the families of the earth in answer to that promise that he gave Abraham so many years ago. Now I'd like to close with this scripture. This is Revelation, the 21st chapter, and I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the old heaven.

And the old earth had disappeared, and the sea was also gone, and I saw the holy City, the new Jerusalem. That's that spiritual temple coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband, and I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, look, God's home is

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now amongst his people. He will live with them, and they will be his people.

God Himself will be with them, and he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain, for all these things have been taken away forever, and the one sitting on the throne said, look, I am making everything new, and then he said to me, write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true, and he also said, it is finished.

I am the alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To all who are thirsty, I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be their children, and they will be my children.

May God add His blessing. Thank you.