

## Chapter 3

# The Kingdom of Heaven

The rewards for living the beatitudes include receiving eternal life with God and Christ in the kingdom of heaven, a compensation that is often overlooked. This chapter focuses on describing this kingdom, including the specific blessings Jesus promises in the beatitude portion of his Sermon on the Mount. Jesus begins and closes his beatitudes by affirming to his disciples that, when serving God and becoming “poor in spirit,” “reviled” or “persecuted for righteousness sake” their reward “is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3, 10).

We find the finest image of this promised kingdom, whether one views it as a literal description or as allegory, in the last two chapters of the book of Revelation (Rev. 21–22). Jesus instructed his angel to describe the holy city to John as follows. Like the Holy of Holies in Solomon’s temple, the shape of the eternal city is as long as it is wide and as high as it is long (1 Kgs. 6:19–20). In other words it is laid out like a vast cube. Each dimension is equally “twelve thousand furlongs” (ca. 1,500 miles). The length of the new Zion would be approximately from Salt Lake City, Utah, to Cleveland, Ohio. The width roughly corresponds to the width of the United States running from Canada to Mexico. The celestial city is also 1,500 miles high and may be three-tiered. In this respect the Apostle Paul said that he had visited “the third heaven” [tier] of this king-