

The eternal city is not only the home of the bride; it is the bride! A city is not buildings; it is people. The city John saw was holy and heavenly; in fact, it descended to earth from heaven, where it was prepared. John's description staggers the imagination, even accepting the fact that a great deal of symbolism is involved. Heaven is a real place of glory and beauty, the perfect home for the Lamb's bride.

What is the best city you have visited and why? If you could live in any city in the world, where you choose to be?

Revelation 21:9-27

1. How is the New Jerusalem specifically designed to reflect the identity of God's people from all of salvation history(vv. 12-14)?

The new Jerusalem is a massive, impregnable fortress, symbolizing the security and peace of the people of God. The presence of God permeates the whole city. It is not only huge and solid but also beautiful, shining with the glory of God and flashing with the brilliance of a very precious stone, perhaps a diamond.

2. How are the city's solidity and security expressed (vv. 12-17)? How is the beauty of the city expressed (vv. 11, 18-21)?

3. As verse 16 makes clear, the city is not only vast in terms of its footprint—fifteen hundred miles each way. It is also fifteen hundred miles high. John, of course, has no thought of what kind of buildings would occupy this extraordinary structure; he is constructing a symbolic universe, not an architect's design. The city will be an enormous, perfect cube ... because that is the shape of the holy of holies at the heart of the ancient temple in Jerusalem, the place where God's presence is most palpably found (1 Kings 6:20). What is the significance of this connection between the holy of holies and the New Jerusalem? Read v22

4. In Islam heaven is often described as follows:

In Islam, Heaven or Paradise is known as Janna. In the Qur'an, the language used to describe Heaven is very descriptive. It is regarded as a place of: bliss, reward, pleasure for eternity.

Muslims believe that people will be reunited with their families in Janna, where they will enjoy the pleasures of being in a beautiful garden. What are the differences between the above description and John's vision? Why does this matter?

5. The readers of John's letter had only oil lamps for artificial light. What significance do you think they would find in the images of light in verses 23-25?

6. How do verses 26-27 demonstrate that the New Jerusalem will be a place of honour?

7. This great new reality, the place of God's dwelling on earth, can never be something that humans make (that takes us back to Babylon, to Babel!), but remains always and forever the gift of God's love and grace. How might we live in a way that is open to receiving great gifts from God rather than always trying to build everything ourselves? The picture we are gazing at in these chapters is certainly a vision of the ultimate future. Yet, as we have seen from the letters at the start of the book, there are signs that this reality keeps peeping through even in the present world of death and tears, of cowards and liars. Just as nothing we do in the present is merely relevant to the present, but can carry implications into God's future, so nothing in the vision of the future is merely future. How do you see the glory of this future reality peeping through in our world today?

Prayer Points

1. Please pray for Mel Spears and Jackie Chilvers, involved in a community health awareness project. Please pray that the local community will engage with them well.
2. Pray for all the teachers, staff and pupils who are on their summer break. Pray for the Christian conferences happening over the summer, for those running them and the people who are attending.

Sermon notes:-



BIBLE STUDY

July 24th 2022

God's Big Picture:
Restoration
God's dwelling place
Revelation 21:9-27

The Bible isn't just a random collection of books but one connected story and it is vital to understand it in that context. Grasping the bigger picture helps us to see why studying the Bible is essential to our spiritual growth. Learning the big picture is also key to interpreting, understanding and applying all that we read and study in the Bible.



If you would like to join a Connect Group, please contact the church office 01424 730001