

As we reach the end of this book with its imagery and metaphors, out of this first glance confusion, two or three rich notes now stand out, emerging variously from all that has gone before, part of the music and yet with something else to say. Pay attention. Keep these words. I am coming. I am coming.

Read Revelation 22:1-11

1. We are still in the city, but we have left the walls, gates, and foundations, and the emphasis is on the river of life and the tree of life. These allusions alert us that John has the Garden of Eden in mind. What are some features of the water of life (vv. 1-2)?

2. Once God's glory has returned to the newly built temple in Ezekiel 43, we discover that this temple is actually a kind of new Eden, from which a river will flow out to irrigate the world around. Ezekiel saw in his vision fruit trees on either bank of the river (47:12), with their fruit for food and their leaves for healing. John, in one of the most moving reworkings of biblical imagery in his entire book, sees the river of the water of life flowing, sparkling on its way through the city streets and out into the countryside beyond. The tree which grows in profusion on either bank of the river is "the tree of life," the tree which was forbidden to Adam and Eve as they were expelled from the garden. And the "tree of life" is not merely there to provide healing for this person, or that, for this Adam or this Eve. According to John, what is the purpose of the leaves on the tree (22:2)? How might we play our part today in bringing healing to others?

3. John has a remarkable talent for mixing his metaphors. He jumps abruptly from one to another—the city, the garden, and the wedding—without any apparent sense of incongruity. It is as difficult to visualise a city as a bride, or a bride as a city, as it is to visualise a lion as a lamb or a lamb as a lion. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to interpret the symbols. All three metaphors—the city, the garden, and the wedding—represent our close, personal fellowship with God, which begins now, once we have been reconciled to him, and which will be consummated when Christ comes. How does John describe the closeness with God that the redeemed will enjoy (vv. 3-5)?

"Eternal life" means the personal knowledge of God through Jesus Christ. John illustrates this life—the ultimate and glorious destiny of the people of God—by the use of three distinct metaphors. The first is security in the city of God, the new Jerusalem. The second is restored access to the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. The third is the intimate relationship of bride and bridegroom in marriage.

4. In v3 there is further insight into what we will be doing, other than worshipping God together in song. What would serving God in heaven mean? What kind of activities would you like to have happen in heaven?

5. What did the angel tell John concerning the revelation John had received (vv. 6, 10-11)? With what promises did Jesus himself apparently interrupt the angel's words (v. 7)?

6. What do you think it means to keep "the words of the prophecy written in this scroll" (v. 7)? How did John react, and how was he corrected by the angel (vv. 8-9)?

7. Does Revelation 22:11 suggest that God does not want men to repent and change their ways?

8. How would you describe living between waiting for the Lord's return and faithfully serving in the here and now.

Prayer Points

1. Pray for BMS' partner the Shepherd Society working with refugees in Jordan. As they distribute resources and provide trauma counselling, pray that the love and hope of Christ will be evident.
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 31st 2022

God's Big Picture:
Restoration
The City of God
Revelation 22:1-11

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