

## NEW JERUSALEM, THE CITY OF GOD

The apostle John had a vision of a beautiful place yet to appear

For the Christian, Jesus is the center of his or her universe; affecting one's worldview in positive ways. He illuminates their world in such a way that should He ever be displaced from this primary position, the believer's world would immediately go dark. All of us have felt the chilling sensations of darkness; the cold hearts, angry spirits and foul mouthed persons who despise the warmth of God's presence. Saint John wrote in his Gospel that '*in Him {Jesus} was life and that His life was the light on men*' (Jn 1:4).

Therefore, if the light is lost then all sense of direction passes from us also. It is for this reason that the believer seeks to dwell within the light so as to have his or her pathway lit up by the glory of God. For one thing, without Christ to shine in this dark world no one is able to live the Christian life. That being the case, if our understanding of things is suffering from and plagued by darkness, how can we ever find our way to the one place which has been prepared for us from the foundation of the world—the celestial city? After all, that is the place to which we are headed.

Throughout the bible, Jerusalem has played a significant role in biblical history. To the Jew, Jerusalem, the Holy City, is the center of the universe—for from there goes the Torah or Law of God. David reigned there, The Temple was established there and the chief rabbis functioned there also. But for the Christian living on this side of the cross, Jerusalem has no meaning apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. It was there that He was crucified by Jew and Roman alike, and also the place from which He ascended to glory.

So whether one reads the Old Testament or the New Testament Jerusalem is important to the parties involved. But, the question to ask now is 'what is the need for a new Jerusalem'? Well, first of all, the old Jerusalem was one of blood-shed, deceit and corruption. Sin was rampant in all directions. No amount of bloody sacrifices could clear their guilt and shame—especially when compared to the power in the blood of Jesus. So, with an understanding of the iniquity perpetrated generationally by man, it is easy to see why a home made by God is needed for His people.

All over the world millions are watching as angry homosexuals, lesbians and transvestites march through the streets in protest to the voters of California deciding that marriage is to be a legal union between a man and a woman. And they honestly believe that it will effect a change. In the end, the only thing that will be seen on the TV's across the nation

are angry faces smeared with hostility towards a Church that still holds to the basic truths of the Word of God. We are definitely living in the last days and it is heart wrenching to see it all played out on the public stage.

I preached a message once entitled '18 reasons why homosexuality is wrong; wrong for your nation, wrong for your community, and wrong for you.' It was born out of a layover that I endured in the city of San Francisco. While sitting in the hotel lobby I observed the strange habits of many who lived what grandma would have called perverse lifestyles. Today, it is fashionable to practice sodomite religion—it is a religion in the sense that it is the ultimate love of, and idolization of self—and for those supposedly narrow minded persons who would dare question it, they are always deemed intolerant. But Jesus said *narrow is the way*..

Our collective problem today relates to how we are to view contrasting, and in many cases conflicting, cultures. Each city is a reflection of its internal ethnic group's beliefs. Whatever is believed in the shadows eventually makes its way to the light. And for now, it appears that shadowy deviant acts are more preferable to deeds which are clean and pure. TV reflects this trend as filth, destruction and sexual lust is pushed into homes daily. The average person of common sense grieves over this and even sighs inwardly at any notion that one day a brighter day may emerge.

Although I empathize with any human touched by these issues, I also know that Jesus, Paul, Peter, and John prophesied that concurrent with the massive outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the earth, there would be a large withdrawal from truth unto falsity. Read your newspaper, well, on second thought, do not read your newspaper it will bring you down lower emotionally. Times are changing, and what is today will differ tomorrow, but I give you my word that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb 13:8). That is why a new home is in view..

New Jerusalem as John saw in the book of Revelation will be a place where crime is non-existent. There will be no pains, so tears are useless there. Court systems will be absent, since murderers, liars, sodomites and other sinful types will find no admittance.

But, in the sense that the grace of God will prevail, it will be a city modeled after the character and nature of God. The purity of the items described by John, are only mere reflections of the holiness of God's motives, designs and intent. It will be a city radiated by the risen Son of God, Jesus. His role there will be to attract and hold our attention for all of eternity. With eyes focused upon Him who could be engaged in or enticed by any type of devilish device—because the devil is not there.

The bait which God uses to draw mankind unto him is the Cross of Jesus. The Cross of course, prepares the heart for entrance into the heavenly lair, and at the same time governs our conduct here on earth as we are being prepared for the day that we pass from this life unto the next. Presently, natural Jerusalem is occupied mostly by people who despise the name of Jesus as Son of God and sacrifice for man's sin. But at that time, the spiritual City of David will be wholly populated by those whose lives were given for the truth claims of the Gospel: (1) that Jesus was God manifested in the flesh, (2) Justified in the Spirit, (3) seen of angels, (4) believed on in the world, (5) preached among the gentiles, (6) My old pastor used to add this one—and coming back again.

This whole ball of wax (called the earth) is one day going to melt with a fervent heat and will ultimately be replaced by the new earth. God's plan therefore is to gather out a people possessed of the Holy Spirit to become the new born immigrants to this new place of dwelling. It is unbecoming of man to believe that he will receive an inheritance in the Kingdom of God without a prior relationship with the testator. Yet, so many believe that they will gain entry into heaven on the basis of the (a) relation to other Christians, (b) good works, (c) a preacher having told them that because they joined a church, that they are now in..

There are certainly many who will call this a fundamentalist view, which is fine because it is based upon the fundamentals of Holy Scripture. No matter what you think about what is outlined in scripture, one day the heavens are going to roll up like a scroll and time will be no more. Yet, in the meantime we must work to gather and bring in the sheaves. It is harvest time and Jesus is expecting nothing less than a bountiful crop of souls in these final days. So as old fashioned bible believing saints of God let us hold fast to our faith in the coming joys of heaven.

Meanwhile, far away from the New Jerusalem, in another direction, we find the fiery, darkened furnace of hell—Jesus had more to say about hell than he did heaven. The apostle Paul, when addressing this idea in 2 Corinthians 5, says "*knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men.*" Paul understood that as sure as heaven is a very real place, hell is also a domain of reality. To each and every one of you, I encourage you to humble yourself before the almighty God and surrender your hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ. He can touch you and heal you and make you whole.

This dark world stumbles along without any knowledge of the eternal. Few consider the prospects of eternity and their place in it. Most would rather eat drink and be merry without having their conscience impacted by the wording of the Ten Commandments or any other type of religious

literature. But when the roll is called up yonder, multitudes of names will be absent and time will be no more.

If I were you, I would return to your roots. If Grandpa knew the Lord at one time, then it is advisable for you to get to know the King for yourself. All the old folks used to say that God has no grand children, but I'm not so sure that this generation is aware of that fact. Too many are trusting that Heaven will be their final destination on the basis of God's goodness and love. Without a doubt, He is good & loving, but His goodness is predicated on the loving Son whom he foreordained to die from the foundation of the world.

Let us not assume that we can flaunt our rebellious ways in God's face, trample the blood of Jesus, doing despite to His name and expect that in that great getting up morning that we shall be found righteous. The only means of cleansing for the sinner (like you and me) is the life giving power found in the precious blood of the Lamb of God.

Lest you be deceived, let me remind you of this one truth. Unless you are found within the 'in Christ' groups mentioned in scripture, you will never ever see the celestial city. However, if Jesus is the Savior of your soul and the Love of your life, I assure you that you and I will meet on the other side. There we will sit down on the banks of that river, to meet and part no more.