

Description of Bride/Wife/City

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[0:00] I'll start off by asking what do we need? And I think one of the things that we human beings need, Christians are no exception to this, need purpose and hope.

We've used a long word there, teleological, telos means goal. We are teleological creatures, we are goal-seeking creatures. It's not just enough for people to survive, people want a purpose. We want to know we're going somewhere. And that brings the subject of hope. Now, hope, we're creatures that look forward to things.

So I'm looking forward to my holidays, and you're looking forward to a holiday because it's half term, isn't it, next week? Ah, wow. Now, some people are looking forward to getting married.

Some people in the church are looking forward to getting married. Some people are looking forward to getting a good job. All of these things are very legitimate things. Some people are looking forward to overcoming climate change because they've got a big view of what the future might or ought to hold.

[1:16] Some people look forward to political stability and security because the current world seems to be very unstable and insecure.

So we're looking forward to that, hoping for that. So it's right to have hope, but what is the basis for hope? What is all these hopes sort of resting on ultimately?

And I would say that the Bible is the ultimate reason for hope. There isn't really any solid hope apart from the Bible.

It's just wishful thinking. You know, people used to believe in progress, that things would just get better and better and better. But two world wars and the current situation, I don't think there's anything inevitable about things getting better and better and better.

We have to think about it in terms of the God who runs everything. We have to think about it, particularly as Christians, about what God says about the future.

[2:26] And the passage that we read is one of the classic passages about the future. In the child's fairy story, it ends up...

They all lived happily ever after. And the prince, she got the prince. Exactly, yeah. It ends up with the wedding and the beautiful princess marries the prince and they all live happily ever after.

It's actually in *Pride and Prejudice*. That seems to be much the idea, doesn't it? When Elizabeth Bennet marries Mr Darcy, everything is fine according to the way the book's operated.

They all lived happily ever after. Well, this is the place where that's true. This bit of the Bible is the place where they actually do live happily ever after.

It's something quite deep in our human longing, isn't it? That's what we would like, that they all lived happily ever after. And the hope, you could sort of say, for one thing, it's an absence of the whatever enemies we have in our human condition.

[3:39] Sickness, stress, anxiety, oppression, death. Yes, an absence of enemies. It's a close, happy relationship with people.

Certainly, that's the biblical way of looking at it. There's a communal aspect to it. The hope of the future, according to the Bible, is not just that we'll be on our own happy, but we'll be together happy. And the Bible, of course, brings that into a close, happy relationship with our maker.

There would be no happily ever after unless it's a happily ever after with God. And that's what this passage, that's what this chapter is about.

The passage we're looking at perhaps doesn't emphasize that so much as the other aspects of the passage. But that's what the hope is. They lived happily ever after.

[4:42] There were no enemies. They were happy with one another. They were in a happy relationship with God, where there's no dark clouds. There's no regrets.

There's no tears. All of those things are gone. And it talks about, he will be with his people. God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. They live happily ever after. And they do live happily ever after, ever after, forever. Just to mention, there are theories of interpretation which say that this is a temporary state.

No, it isn't a temporary state with something else to follow on after. This is the final end. This is where they live happily ever after. So, we saw it from last week as the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

[6:03] And just not to confuse you, the writer of the book of Revelation uses a lot of symbolism, and some of it is very pictorial.

And he doesn't mind contradicting himself. So, he doesn't mind saying that Jesus is the lamb and the lion. The lion of Judah and the lamb that was slain.

In ordinary life, lambs and lions are completely different, aren't they? But he's not afraid to say that Jesus is the lion and the lamb. And in this passage, he's not afraid to say that the future is a city and a bride.

So, a city is a community of people in an environment, a built environment, and a bride is a beautiful person. And the writer says both those things are true.

The city is the bride, as you will have noticed when it was read. So, let's see. Just leading up to this to give us some context.

[7:03] I won't give you the context of absolutely everything, but previous times we've seen the rider on the white horse. That's Jesus in chapter 19, verse 11.

I saw a rider on a white horse, and this rider conquers all the enemies who are gruesomely defeated. There are two outcomes for this.

The horrible outcome is the lake of fire, which is mentioned in those references. There is a process of division, a day of judgment, which is symbolized both by the conflict, the battle, and by a courtroom in which books of deeds are opened and the Lamb's Book of Life is opened.

One of them about how people have lived, and the other one about what God decided from eternity. So, those two books say the same thing in the end. And when we started this, God says there's a new heaven and a new earth.

So, the hope that's set before us is not just heaven, as sometimes people might think, where we float around on clouds, but something much more solid than that, a new heaven and a new earth.

[8:21] Now, I always say this, just to get our bearings, that this is, the Book of Revelation is a book in the Bible. It is for our edification.

It is for our survival and our progress as Christians. It keeps us going, and hopefully, as Daniel was saying this morning, as we look at it, it changes us. By its nature, it is an unveiling.

That's what Revelation means. It shows us the truth behind the appearance, and in these chapters that we're looking at, it shows us the truth that we can't yet see.

It's in the form of a letter, so it would have had relevance to its original hearers, and it was sent to how many churches? Seven. I was just checking people are awake at that point.

It's also in the form of a prophecy. It says that it is a prophecy. It says that in 2218, the words of this prophecy, which means it's telling them what's shortly going to happen, where they were in the Roman Empire all those years ago, but it also is looking for the distant future, the long-term hope, and it stretches across that huge time span, and gives behavioral implications.

[9:37] If this is the sort of world we live in, this is where it's headed, this is how we should live. So it's a horizon, and it's from the time of writing to the end of the world, which I'll just say that to remind us of the process of it.

As we went through, the different chapters and the different sections all end up with the end. So I've, these are what the different chapters say, and they all go across time to the end.

There were seven trumpets for repentance, which go to the final end, and so on and so on. And I won't take up too much time, but just to remind us of that, the triumph of the white horse, the

triumph of the rider on the white horse, and that takes us up to the end, and now we're looking at the end.

And just taking the chapter to pieces, in chapter 21, verses 1 to 8, which you looked at last week, there was voices and speeches, and the bit that we're looking at is a description of the bride, the wife, the city, and it's going to end up, no, I'm sorry, it's not going to end up, it's going to continue with the river, which we're not going to look at this evening, and then there's more cluster of voices from the angel, the lamb, Jesus, the spirit and the bride, etc, etc.

So that's where we're going. So let's follow John as he spells out this hope for us in this description of the city of God, and what it's meant to do is that we would go away thinking, wow, that's what it's meant to do, and see how well I can put it across to, that's what we're meant to say, wow, okay, provoke us to awe and wonder.

[11:34] Now in 21.9, it says, one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, come, come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the lamb, and he carried me away in the spirit to a mountain great and high and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

So this is an angel which previously was an angel of wrath because he had one of the seven bowls, oh, not one of them, he had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues.

So that was, he's been redeployed, and he is now a tour guide. So he's recommissioned as a city guide.

And it says, he carried me away in the spirit, 21 verse 10, in the spirit. Can anybody remember a bit where it says about in the spirit?

In the book of Revelation? Revelation 1.10. Revelation 1.10, which says, on the Lord's day I was in the spirit and I heard behind me a loud voice.

[12:55] Well done, yes. You must get a round of applause for that. When it starts off, he, I was in the spirit on the Lord's day and he sees something.

And that idea, he sees the risen Christ, is it 1.4? You said 1.10, didn't you? Yeah, I got that wrong. 1.10.

And, again, again, is that right? Chapter 4, verse 2. Yeah, 4, verse 2.

At once, I was in the spirit and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

So again, another significant vision. He is in the spirit and he sees that.

And in 17.3, he's in the spirit. I've got that right. The angel carried me away in the spirit into a desert and there I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast.

[13:57] So he sees there a significant vision of the Roman Empire or at least in the first case of the Roman Empire as a prostitute. And here, in 21.10, he sees the bride.

Now, one of the people who've written about this says that divides the book of Revelation into four sections. I'm not sure it does. But it does say something special is going to be seen.

So I'm carried away in the spirit to see something special. There's a special sort of spiritual vision, if I can put it that way. So we want to find out what this spiritual vision is.

Something very special is coming up. Right. He's going to see a city and he's going to see the walls and he's going to see the gates and he's going to see the foundations and he's going to see the size of it and he's going to see something about the temple, which there isn't.

That's a spoiler alert. He's going to see something about the traffic in the city and that's how he's going to do the next bit. It is sort of theological architecture.

[15:12] I thought I'd invented that phrase. I felt quite smug about it and then I found it was in the commentary. I don't know whether I'd read it and I hadn't heard it. Yes, doesn't it just?

But that's what it is, isn't it? He's teaching us something spiritual, theological and he's doing it by describing a built environment, a city.

So my job is to try and unpick that so that we end up going wow rather than ugh. So we'll see what we can do. We like Grand Designs don't we?

Yes. It's a programme on the television about people making houses and stuff. Well, whether or not you like that, what we're looking at here is the grandest of all Grand Designs aren't we?

On Grand Designs Kevin comes to the end and he says I never thought the triple glazed Icelandic windows would arrive in time and it was going to be ugly but as we look at it now it's a piece of beautiful architecture.

[16:24] He always ends up like that, doesn't he? But this, what we see here is a piece of beautiful architecture. So I'm going to ask you to do a little bit of homework on this now, a little bit of work.

Are there any other places in the Bible where there is theological architecture? In other words, where points are made by means of a building with measurements and walls and stuff.

Yes, sir? The end of Ezekiel. The end of Ezekiel. Thank you very much. Yes, there's a lot of chapters which we'll look at in a moment. You say in Leviticus about the temple. About?

Is it Leviticus who talks about different dimensions of the temple? It won't be the temple in Leviticus. No. What will it be? The tabernacle.

Yes, the tent version, the mobile version of which the temple was a static version, a rather grander static version.

[17:29] So we do have examples of theological architecture already and I thought the tabernacle, I also thought the city, perhaps just have a quick look at Psalm 122 and I see whether I got this reference right.

Yes. Psalm 122 says, I rejoiced with those who said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord. Our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is built like a city that is compacted together. And it says, may there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels.

So that's a sort of architectural statement, isn't it? Just a little hint of that there in Psalm 122. I was thinking about verse 3. Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together.

So it... What's that for your look? Yeah, there was an ark in the tabernacle. That's a... Noah's ark.

Oh, never thought of that. That's maritime architecture, isn't it?

[18:53] A floating thing. Yeah. So I thought of the tabernacle, the city, the temple as built by Solomon, the future temple, which is what you mentioned, because there's a future temple of...

I put eschatological, eschaton means last, last day, the future temple that gets prophesied and the future city, which is also in Ezekiel as well.

So it's... John isn't telling... isn't using language that has never been used before in the Bible. In fact, he's picking up on things that have already been said.

So, there is the tabernacle. Are most of us familiar with that idea? It was a tent sort of thing and it had one of those and one of those and inside, I've done a sort of cutaway drawing, it had one of those and it had one...

a number of these or at least one. Do we... I'm going to ask you if you know what those... You stand a reasonable chance. Right. The tabernacle, it was within the camp.

[20:04] So when there was Exodus and all the nation escaped from Egypt and they went across the desert so they're camping and moving and this tent thing is in the middle and that's where God will live amongst his people.

So, just like five minutes to team up with a couple of other people. Can you think of some main features? So, I've got A, B, C, D, E, F, G.

That's E and that's F underneath there. So, what is that? What is that? What is that? What is that? What is that? Who is that?

And what is that pointing to? Okay, so that's... Jesus. Okay, right. So, find a couple of other people and see if you can for five minutes just see whether you can rattle those off.

If you join with them they'll help out. Young lady, join you. Never so difficult. So, A, that bit there, what would that be?

[21:15] Yeah, well I was thinking of where the animal's offered. So, I think I'm correct to think that's an altar.

So, a sacrifice is made on there. Yep, and that blue thing. Yeah, so washing a big bowl of water. In the book of Revelation you don't get a bowl of water but you get a sea. A great big sea. So, I wonder if that is in the book of Revelation. And these things round here which I...

Hmm? They are, yeah, a type of curtains. They act as a barrier. A perimeter. A perimeter. What a wonderful word. Yes, a perimeter.

Well, they are curtains. It's a perimeter made out of curtains, isn't it? I think it's made out of curtains. Am I right? Looking at David.

[22:19] I don't know. But the point is it's to keep people out. So, one of the things that this, one of the things that this piece of architecture teaches is that it's not that easy to get near God.

There are certain barriers and certain steps and processes and parameters. Yes. Okay. And then this bit of the tent here. Well, first of all it's the holy place.

So, the whole thing is holy and inside there there's various pieces of furniture. And then I was thinking of this back portion here which I sort of took out to the...

That's the most holy place and that's behind the curtain. So, in Hebrews it says, no, what does it say? about Christ entered through the curtain that is his flesh or something like that and as Christian believers we have boldness to enter the most holy place through the blood of Jesus.

So, this is the most holy place and can anybody say anything about its dimensions or its geometry? It's cubits.

[23:35] Cube. It is a cube and I put it there as gold. It isn't quite a cube, is it? What? The way I've drawn it? The way I've drawn it is a bit wonky but I meant to draw it as a cube.

It's one of these questions where you have to telepath what the person meant rather than what they actually put. Yeah, I put it as gold. I think I might have been wrong in that.

It's gold in the temple but is it gold in the tabernacle? Sorry? There was gold.

There's a golden lamp stand. The ark, this sort of chest thing, is covered in gold. So I might have done that wrong but anyway, oh yes, so that's the most holy place which is a cube.

It's ten cubits by ten cubits by ten cubits and who's this bloke here? He's the priest. Yeah, the high priest. And what's that multicolored bit on there?

[24:52] The twelve tribes represented by twelve jewels. They're what we would call semi-precious stones.

I mean, let's call them precious stones. Wonderful colours and beautiful opal and sapphire. Is this where they get the stones for your birthday stuff?

Oh, I don't know. No, I don't know. from the creation.

God's stone. Well, it's an interesting thought. I think he's probably died now. An American teacher called James Jordan.

I don't recommend you listen to everything because I think sometimes it's off the wall. But one of the things that he did so I thought was very suggestive was that did God actually create these semi-precious stones with the specific idea of giving us a view of heaven?

[26:05] Are they meant to be sort of little reminders of heaven that have been built into this creation? Did anybody when they were little have one of those kaleidoscopes with little pieces of coloured plastic in them and you turn them round and they make the most fantastic geometrical shapes don't they?

And I remember as a child looking at those it would probably be the same now I think it's absolutely fantastic it's like looking into another world isn't it? And I wonder whether this idea of multi-coloured in this case multi-coloured stones is meant to say there's something heavenly about a reminder of heavenly things something out of this world anyway well yeah it's a suggestion I'm not going to go to the stake for that so the high priest when he goes in he's got these precious stones on his front and there's 12 of them corresponding to the 12 tribes that he's representing yep okay let's go on then so Solomon's temple is said to be the Lord's house that's where the Lord lives it's on the top of a mountain it contains the most holy place which in the temple is definitely a cube and it is definitely covered in gold and it's guarded by the just see if you're reading this by the cherubim yes these sort of throne creatures who are like

God's security agents and accompany him and guard him and transport him and the temple also has restrictions of access with different courtyards and the temple has a holy place and a most holy place but imagine the whole city and then within that are the various courtyards and within that is the holy place and just one bit within that is the cubic most holy place so that's the sort of layout of

the temple that Solomon built and Isaiah had a vision which you may remember it in the last days the mountain of the Lord's house will be exalted above all the mountains and all the nations will flow to it so there's my picture of the mountain of the Lord's house and all the different nations are flowing up to it and they say something like come let us go to the house of the Lord but we may I don't know perhaps we better look it up Isaiah chapter two in the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple or the mountain of the Lord's house will be established as the highest of the mountains it will be exalted above all the hills all nations will stream to it many peoples will come and say let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the temple of the God of Jacob he will teach us his ways that we may walk in his paths the law will go out from Zion the word of the Lord from Jerusalem he will judge between the nations and settle disputes for many peoples they will beat their swords into plowshares their spears into pruning hooks nation will not lift up sword against nation nor will they train for war anymore oh house of Jacob let us walk in the light of the Lord so just taking this architectural thought a little bit further it's on a high mountain it's a place of international pilgrimage a place of international cooperation and peace where the Lord's word rules okay that's Solomon's temple and the visions that come off the back of that now then let's look at the Ezekiel temple that you just mentioned David so Ezekiel chapter 40 we will get to Revelation in the end and I hope the journey will be worth it so Ezekiel chapter 40 and yes please could we have the reading of verses 1 to 5 Ezekiel 40 1 to 5 in the 25th year of our exile at the beginning of the year on the 10th of the month in the 14th year after the fall of the city on that very day the hand of the Lord was on me and he took me there in visions of God he took me to the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain on his south side were some buildings that looked like a city he took me there and I saw a man whose appearance was like bronze he was standing in the gateway with linen cord and a measuring rod in his hand the man said to me son of man look carefully and listen closely and pay attention to everything

[31:19] I am going to show you for that is why you have been brought here tell the people of Israel everything you see thank you this is interesting isn't it this is thinking of the disgrace and the judgment that fell on the people of God and Jerusalem after many many hundreds of years of God's patience he said look enough is enough you've disobeyed me so often I threatened that if you can't walk with me then you have no place here in my city and after hundreds of years God said well my patience has run out and he expelled them from the land and the temple was destroyed and the city was ruined and God wants to say that isn't the end of my purposes I do want to have a holy people and I do want to save those people and I do want them to come and live with me forever and I'm still going to do that and the way he communicates that through

Ezekiel's prophecy is by showing these buildings and measuring them it's just the way it's done come and look here's something let's measure it and let's look at well if you just cast your eye down to verse five and so on I saw wall completely surrounding the temple area the length of the measuring rod in the man's hand was six long cubits each of which was a cubit and a hand breadth he measured the wall it was one measuring rod thick and one rod high so the way he says I am going to there is going to be a rebuilding is by sort of giving this vision of the architect and the builder with a measuring rod and say that's just the way he does it now let's look at 43 10 to 12 what's meant to be a reaction to this vision of the building so could our

Sema readers 43 10 to 12 son of man describe the temple to the people of Israel that they may be ashamed of their sins let them consider its perfection and if they are ashamed of all they have done make known to them the design of the temple its arrangements its exits and entrances its whole design and all its regulations and laws write these down before them so that they may be faithful to its design and follow its regulations this is the law of the temple all the surrounding area on top of the mountain will be most holy such is the law of the temple thank you very much do you notice what he says there in describing this architecture it has a spiritual implication he says describe the temple so that they may be ashamed of their sins!

sin not sin is Yeah, it is. Yeah, but the point of the vision, or at least one of the points of the vision, is not just to think, I wonder how many bricks that's going to take, but to think, what does this say morally about my sin and God's holiness?

So it's an Old Testament vision with pattern and perfection, and it's looking forward to the future. The vision convicts people of their sin, and it is part of the fulfilment of all God's promises.

[35:55] It's looking forward to all God's promises being fulfilled. And if you were to look further into Ezekiel, there's a lot of it, but in 47 verse 1, there is a river.

47 verse 1, The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple towards the east. For the temple faced east.

The water was coming down from the south side of the temple, south of the altar. And the river, contrary to usual rivers, it gets, well, no, maybe it is how usual rivers work.

As it goes on, it gets deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper, and it goes into the Dead Sea, and instead of it becoming salt, it makes everything fresh.

It's sort of a river of life, a healing river. Do you know, there are loads of songs that are based on all this. There's a song by Pete Seeger called, Oh Healing River.

[36:56] I don't think he was a Christian, but he took this idea, Oh Healing River, send down your water, send down your water upon this land. This land is parching, this land is thirsting.

Oh Healing River, come upon this land. He was writing in the days, I guess in the 1940s and 1950s, and it would be associated with equality for black people in America and the protest movement.

I'll sing it to you if you like. If I can get the right key. Okay. Oh Healing River, send down your water, send down your water, upon this land.

Oh Healing River, send down your water, and wash the blood from off the sand.

Like that. Yeah. But it's quite dramatic, and I think it's meant to pick up on the drama of the Healing River.

[38:24] I just want to say that wasn't prearranged. No, it wasn't. There's a place for God's people and there's mention in Ezekiel of the gates of the city and the size of the city.

There's a whole lot of text here and I'm just trying to get us to dip into it. 48 verse 30. These are the exits of the city beginning on the north side which is 4,005 cubits long.

The gates of the city will be named after the tribes of Israel. Three gates on the north side will be the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah, the gate of Levi, the east side three gates, the south side three gates, the west side three gates.

So this idea of 12 gates in the city is, there's a song called 12 gates in the city as well actually. That's there in the book of Ezekiel.

And the absolute key part of it is the presence of the Lord. Now have I got the right verse for this? The name of the city from that time will be the Lord is there.

[39:38] So it's the presence of the Lord in this wonderful city with its healing river and with its 12 gates. And I just stopped to point out this idea of temple.

Our Lord Jesus was very pro-temple. In John 2 verse 19, his disciples remember that it was written, zeal for your house will consume me.

But the temple vision that Jesus was in favor of, do you remember he said, destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days.

But the temple he spoke of was his body himself. All this temple idea is actually fulfilled in Jesus Christ in a marvelous way, I guess a mysterious way.

But anyway, let's move on. So let's come actually back to, with those sort of thoughts in our minds, let's come to the text itself in Revelation 21.

[40:56] So here's John's vision of the city. He's, as I, I'm sure I've made the point, he's following on from something.

This isn't just a totally new thing. He's following on from things that have been said in the scriptures all the way through. And here is a high mountain, verse 10.

He carried me away in the spirit to a mountain great and high. So that idea of a high mountain is here in this book. And he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

So it comes to earth from heaven, from God. So again, it's not that we go to heaven so much as that heaven comes down to earth.

earth. And this city has glory. There's quite a bit said about it. It shone with the glory of God. Its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper clear as crystal.

[42:01] I don't know what a jasper's like, but anyway, it says a very precious jewel. So this is a shining city. It's a glorious city, a city with light.

And it has twelve gates. Well, that's the same as Ezekiel's city. It has twelve gates and it has twelve angels at the gates. So I guess these, I mean, could they be bouncers or are they welcome staff? What do you call them? Greeters. Welcome to the city. I'm not sure, but there's twelve angels on the gates. And the gates are three, three, three, three.

Gates in the east, three in the north, three in the south, three in the west. If you go home and look on YouTube for Twelve Gates to the City, you'll get a whole number of songs about Twelve Gates to the City.

I did think about trying to learn one of them, but they've all got different tunes, which sort of baffled me a bit, but it's material for song. Twelve Gates for the City.

[43:09] And the gates have twelve foundations. Verse 14, the wall of the city had twelve foundations and on them were the names of, let me just get this right, verse 12, on the gates were written the names of?

The apostles, tribes of Israel. The tribes of Israel in verse 12 and in verse 14 the names of? The apostles. The twelve apostles. Yeah. I think what this is saying is that the city, its origins are with the God of Israel.

That's why we have the Old Testament. That's the same God and they were heading for the same city if they were believing people. And in the New Testament, the twelve apostles, they, through the gospel, bring us to the same city.

So it's a city of one people, Old Testament and New Testament, and it's all combined together.

Whoops, something's gone wrong there. Right.

The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold. What was the previous measuring rod made out of? Can you remember? No, I can't remember either.

[44:27] I remember thinking it as we read it. It's different. It wasn't a gold measuring rod. This is a gold measuring rod. To measure the city, its gates, and its walls. So measurements.

Let's see if I can click this. The city was laid out like a square as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod. And measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length and as wide and high as it is long.

Question. What geometric form did the city have? A cube. Yeah? It's as wide and high and long equally.

Yeah? What does that remind you of? The Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies. Yeah. It's a cube.

Twelve, why did I put that?

12,000 stadia by 12,000 stadia by 12,000 stadia. 12,000 stadia is about 1,400 miles, I'm told. Yeah. So it's huge.

[45:39] And if you were to think of it, it would stretch all the way across Israel and encompassing most of the known world. It's a huge city and it's that high as well.

I mean, it's just mind-boggling, isn't it? A city 1,400 miles high. Let's see if the next click works. The walls are, how thick are they?

1,44. 1,44. What does 1,44? Is that a... Is that... Yeah, 144 is 12 times 12.

So again, you've got the 12 apostles and the 12 tribes and he uses these numbers to sort of make points like that, doesn't it? And what units of measurement, this is an interesting one, what units of measurement does he use?

Verse 17. Cubits. Cubits, yeah. And what sort of cubits? Cubits. Yes. This is interesting. The angel uses a human measurement and we get in this city a most marvellous...

[46:48] Combination. Thank you. Combination of that which is human and that which is heavenly. And here's the angel and he's using a human measurement to measure the city.

We'll get this in something else as well. Yeah. What's... And the city is constructed of...

Let's see the... Let's... Where are we? Where are we? I think we go a little bit further now. I think we go to verse 18. So the walls...

Jessica. The foundations... And the foundations are all listed. And the gates in verse 21...

Pearl of great... Yeah, there's pearls. Yes, Jesus talks about the pearl of great price. Yes. I mean... You've got the pearl out. Yes. These pearls...

[47:48] These pearls must have been huge. You think of what sort of oysters they came out of. Yes, they're huge pearls. But the pearl that was lost was...

Yeah. Yeah. I'm not sure whether there's too much of a connection there. But it's certainly... Jesus talks about the pearl of great price. These building materials, what do they remind us of?

The e-form. The e-form. Yeah. What the priest had on his front. So he was decorated with...

As he went into the holy place, he's there on behalf of people that they should be saved. And he has these sort of heavenly type uniform on when he goes to do it.

And now the same materials have been turned into the building materials for the city. So what did I put there?

[48:53] It's constructed of precious stones like the precious stones on the priest's front. And I put the agenda of heaven is built into the city.

I could perhaps have put that better. The agenda of salvation. The agenda of redemption. salvation. Which is what the priest was about. That's built into the city itself.

It's a sort of salvation city. But only God knew the significance of that. Sorry? Only God knew the significance of that. Well, the priest was on an interface.

He would have been outside. The people would have seen what he was wearing. And he went inside. God knew because he knew that that was going to be the new heaven. Well, that's true.

Yes, that's true. I think he could... What was the significance of that it represented the tribes? Well, I guess in the days of Exodus, they probably would have said, why has he got those 12 stones?

[50:01] Why is it 12? We're 12 tribes, aren't we? So they would have worked out there was some sort of connection there. Yeah, I guess. And the street is paved with...

Gold. Gold, yes. If you think about streets... Can you imagine Dickens? London was supposed to be paved with gold.

Well, it wasn't paved with gold originally. If you... Let me just... Let's just follow this. Did anybody see The Muppets Christmas Carol? Yes. Yes, I did.

The streets of old London would have been flowing with... Old. Yucky stuff. Yucky stuff. Because they didn't have a toilet system.

They just chucked it out of the window. So by no means... So you were passing by. Yes, that's right. You would have to wear a hat. The idea of streets being pure and clean and wonderful and precious is the complete opposite of what streets would have been like.

[51:12] I mean, this is a really radical statement. Now, we have that in Dick Whittington, doesn't it? Turn again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London. The streets of... The streets of London are paved with gold?

Yeah. Yeah. They're not. I've been there and they're definitely not paved with gold. The building materials here are very special, aren't they?

If you go to different parts of the world, things get built out of different materials. So at times I've been to Sri Lanka, building materials are concrete, the wood of the jack tree, because that's very common, and you build your doors and your window frames out of that.

Palm leaves you sometimes use for your roofing material, and that's Sri Lankan construction. There was a fantastic TV series many, many years ago, perhaps in the 1970s, with Alec Clifton Taylor describing six English towns.

Does anybody? No. No. Okay. And he described Lewis, and he said... He had a quite posh way of putting things.

[52:32] He said... How would he put it? He said, the buildings are made out of the local molecular. And in Lewis, because it's a flinty sort of area, lots of the buildings are made out of flint.

You've been to Lewis and you've noticed flint buildings. You've got them in Brighton as well. And another particular thing about Lewis is mathematical tiles. So mathematical tiles, if you look at them from the front, you think they're bricks, because they have that sort of interlocking brick appearance.

However, they're only that thick because they're tiles. They're put on top of a wooden frame. And if you look at the edge, the corner, of the buildings in Lewis that have mathematical tiles, they just have...

You can see that what you thought was a brick is actually only that thick, the thickness of a tile, because that is the local vernacular material. And people build from the local materials.

And it shows in the building. And Jerusalem is built out of the materials of heaven. That's the building materials that you use. Precious stones, gold, stuff that shines.

[53:47] It's not just gold. It's gold as pure as glass. Yes. Well, work that one out, because glass and gold are completely different, but it says as pure as glass.

The building materials echo heaven. It's full of heaven, but it's also people, because that's what... It is the bride of Christ. It is people.

It's heavenly people, if you like. Let's just take this thought a little bit further. Verse 22, what wasn't there in the city? Verse 22.

Temple. Temple. Sorry. Yeah, verse 22 says... No temple. Now, do you remember, as we look back at it, the tabernacle is part of the total camp, and within the tabernacle, the holy place is a subset of that, and the most holy place is a subdivision of that.

So, of all the space, the bit where God is most particularly present is just that little cube somewhere over there. And the same was true of the temple in the city.

[54:59] So, you've got the whole city, and then you've got all the boundaries and walls and things, and then you've got the holy place, and then you've got the cubic, most holy place, where God is particularly present.

So, what this is saying, God is particularly present there. If you want God's presence, you're going to have to walk from the far end of the city, and you're going to have to go through that barrier, and then you're going to have to go in there, and you have to go in there, that's where God's presence is in that particular bit, and he is, in a sense, absent or relatively absent everywhere else.

That's where God is particularly present. However, in the new Jerusalem, they don't have a temple, because there isn't a part of the new creation where God is ever absent in any sense.

The whole thing is the temple. The whole, it's cubic. The Lord himself is present everywhere in his fullest possible way.

There is nowhere you go and you're absent from the presence of God, or where God's presence is absent, and you don't have to trek to the temple because there is no temple, since the whole thing's a temple.

[56:08] And the temple is a subset of space where God is particularly present, but here the city itself is temple-like. Unlike us, we live outside Eden.

Unlike that, sorry, in the future, there is no place where God is absent, nor where he is more present than anywhere else.

He is just present everywhere. Unlike our environment, where one thing we notice is the absence of God's presence, we see things going on which can surely not take place in the sense of God's presence.

I know God is present everywhere, in a sense, but there's also a sense in which we... His presence is sort of relativised.

We talk about, may the Lord be with you, meaning, may his presence be most particularly with you. But, in the world to come, he fills the whole environment with his glorious presence.

[57:17] And he's there everywhere. They have no need for a temple. And... Jesus is a new tabernacle. Pardon? I believe Jesus is a new tabernacle.

Yes, that's right, yeah, because in him, the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. So we don't have to do sacrifices. We just need to believe in him because he's an ultimate sacrifice. That's right.

Yeah, absolutely right, yeah. And... And... Whereas the... The Old Testament people used to have to trek across to Jerusalem to meet God, we can pray to Jesus anywhere because we have access through the Spirit.

And... Yeah. Yeah. I know they've got the patience just to round this off. What about the traffic? That was one of the things, the traffic.

In verse 24, what traffic do we notice? People coming in and out. I'm sorry?

[58:20] Walk by its light. The nations will walk by its light and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor. Yes, thank you.

The nations will walk by its light and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. It's a quotation, again, from the Old Testament. And... If you look at verse 27, nothing what will enter it? Nothing impure will enter it. So there's no sin, there's no destructiveness entering into it. So there's no entry sign for that. Yeah, I could ask, will you and I enter that?

Because nothing impure will enter it. Only if we're washed, if our names are in the book of life, if we're washed in the blood of the Lamb. That's another song. Are you washed, are you washed, are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

I mean, it's the right challenge, isn't it? Because we won't enter that city in our natural state. We have to be purified. We have to have new hearts.

[59:25] We have to be washed in the blood of the Lamb to enter this city. Are you in the Lamb's book of life? Are you washed, are you washed in the soul-cleansing blood of the Lamb? That would be another song, wouldn't it?

Well, there's loads of songs like this. When the saints go marching in, when the saints go marching in, I want to be in that number when the saints go marching in. Yeah, or swing low, sweet chariot. I don't know, but I've been told. The streets of heaven are paved with gold. It sort of sparks off loads of songs, doesn't it?

So the traffic, the nations walk by its light, the kings of the earth bring in their glory and splendor. So here's another difficult thing to get our heads around. There's nothing impure that enters there. And in one sense, the kings of the earth, insofar as they sided with the beast and the dragon are going to the lake of fire.

[60:25] But there's another sense in which the nations bring their splendor into it. It's a multicultural city. On earth, multiculturalism struggles hard to escape suspicion and prejudice and racism and division.

But in heaven, multiculturalism means variety, creativity, the glory and honour of the nations is brought in. So each different nation brings something glorious and honourable.

And I always find it interesting to sort of toy with the idea of what nations will bring what. So the Germans will undoubtedly bring the music of Bach, which is...

Isn't it? Yeah. I've been to a concert. I went to a Bach concert with Maria, and the programme notes said that when it got to the bit where they sing, and he rose, meaning Christ, and he resurrects it, the programme notes said, this is surely the highest point of the development of Western music. You may or may not agree, but I mean, the idea that Western civilisation has got good things, and one of the great things is the wonderful spiritual music.

[61:49] So the Germans will bring efficiency, and it would be nice to have a multinational congregation. So what will the Ethiopians bring? Oh, me.

The Italians... The Italians will bring cookery, and the Welsh will bring hymns, and the English... Gardening? Gardening? I don't know. But, I mean, I'm making it sound comical, but it's a truth here that under God's guidance, different nations have used God-given gifts to do different things in different ways, and the glory of that and the goodness of that will not be lost.

In some sense, that will be brought into the heavenly city, and there will be something in there that you say, oh, that comes from Indian culture. There will be something in there that comes from Polish culture.

There will be something in there that comes from the Global South, something that comes from Africa. It will retain the... What shall I say?

[63:09] The creativity, the brilliance, the variety of humanity. So I think this is the last slide, or pretty much... It's a place of holy

community, a place of human interaction and connection and action.

So we should value humanness. It's not shameful to be human. We're made in God's image. We have something to contribute. There's something eternally valuable about human beings.

We should also value holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. Perhaps we need to remember that we're called to be holy and cultivate holiness.

That's the essential quality of the future. It's a holy city. We should look forward to this fulfilment.

We should look forward to this fulfilment of what it is to walk by faith.

At the moment we walk by faith, but then we shall have sight. We don't walk by sight at the moment, but we're looking forward to this by faith. And it'll be a place of human fulfilment, without frustration, without sin, without impurity.

[64:20] What is humanness? Being... Well, what we are, whatever that is, being human, being human. Human. Human-ness. Yes. Okay.

This will be life in the unimaginable, full, glorious presence of God. There's various things that perhaps we'll look at in a couple of weeks' time.

The idea of the bride, who is in this intimate relationship with her husband. Sons and daughters, who are sons and daughters of the living God.

servants who delight to obey their master. These are all relationship things that will be there in the world to come.

And it will be happily ever after. And we will be with him forever. Amen. Amen. Amen.