

The Tale of Two Cities: The Garden City

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[0 : 00] Our Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for your revelation of your Son in your word. And Father, we pray today that you might be at work in us, that understanding this revelation, we might obey it.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Friends, I want to begin today with an imaginary walk with you.

I want you to come for a walk with me through an ancient Israelite, or through the ancient Israelite temple or tabernacle. And as we walk, I want you to just spot some things with me.

For example, one you wouldn't spot. Well, maybe you might, I suppose. It's unsure. But there is God in the middle of the temple.

He's not present, visible, but he is there. He said to walk amongst his people even, to be with his people through the temple. What else might you see as you walk around this temple?

[1 : 08] Well, you would see a lampstand. Now, it would have seven candlesticks, as it were, representing perhaps a tree.

Okay, then as you walked around, you would see various precious stones and gold. You would have entered that temple from the east.

You'd find that, at least after Adam and Eve had, sorry, you'd find in the temple that as you approached the curtains, you would see that engraved on them were cherubim.

Then you'd find that there was food there, some bread of the presence within the tabernacle. You'd find, hopefully, a priest who was there who would be working and keeping the temple.

And then you'd find that there were pictures, as it were, there was symbolism that indicated that there might even be rivers flowing from it.

[2 : 12] So in Psalm 46, for example, there is a stream that makes glad the city of God. There's this idea of a river flowing out. Now, friends, I wonder if it's ever dawned on you that that is very similar to the Garden of Eden.

Think about it a little bit. There is God walking amongst his people in the Garden of Eden. That is, walking among Adam and Eve. There is a tree, not unlike the lampstand, as it were.

There are precious stones there. Remember, they're all named there in Genesis 1. It's entered from the east, as it were, if you were able to get into it.

It's guarded by cherubim after sin, anyway. Do you remember the cherubim standing there, that are to guard it so that people cannot enter back into it?

There's good food there. Ample food. There is Adam and Eve, or Adam, who is meant to work the garden and keep it.

[3 : 17] And there are rivers flowing from it. It's remarkable. One is meant, in one sense, to represent the other.

Is the Garden of Eden meant to be a sort of temple, a place where humans meet with God? Now, I want you to store all that away, because we're going to come back to that right at the end.

But I want you to store it up, because it's quite important. The second thing I want you to do, as we begin, is to remember Wednesday night. Do you remember that idea of two cities? We saw that there was the city of humans, the worldly city, Babel, which became Babylon, and had many other representations in the Old Testament, but that's the main one.

And do you remember the other city? Jerusalem. Zion. The city of God. And do you remember what makes that Jerusalem special?

Do you remember that the thing that makes it special is that the temple is in the middle of it? That is, that God dwells amongst it. So again, remembering Psalm 46, there is a stream that makes glad the city of God.

[4 : 33] Because God dwells there. And because God dwells there, it will not fall. You see, while ever Israel had the temple in Jerusalem, they knew that God was with them.

Store up those two images. Images of gardens and temples. Images of Jerusalem and the presence of God. And just store them away for a moment, because we're going to come back to them at the end.

And you'll see it all fits into place when we get to Revelation. But let's pick up where we were last week. Do you remember? Do you remember that we finished in chapter 19, verse 10?

And do you remember that I said, well, there's a problem still remaining, isn't there? We've had a wedding. There's a wedding to go to. But somehow there was a shadow hanging over the rest of the book. Do you remember?

The harlot Babylon had been dealt with. And there was a marriage to a good, virtuous woman. But there were still left some enemies.

[5 : 31] After all, according to Revelation 17, 15 to 18, God's means for bringing the harlot to ruin was the beast and ten powers behind him. So there's still a beast and a false prophet who really brought the end of the harlot about in one sense, or at least brought her to ruin.

God dealt with her. So there's still a beast. There's still a false prophet to be dealt with. But there's more. Because even though there's those two still there, there is the one behind them, which is the serpent, Satan.

And there's still one other element left. There's still the judgment of the living and the dead to come. You see, even though we get to Revelation 19, verse 10, there is still lots to be done.

There is a beast. There is a false prophet. There is the serpent behind. And there is a judgment of the living and the dead. All still to come. There are stories yet to be told.

The end has yet to be, is yet to arrive. A secure eternity is yet to be witnessed and secured. And with all of this, we enter into the fray in chapter 19, verse 11.

[6 : 41] Now, we're going to move at pace today because we've got a lot to do. So if you think we've been moving fast so far, then, well, we're going to move even faster.

We begin with verse 11 with John telling us that he saw heaven standing open. I think what that means is heaven is now accessible. That is, it is free, unrestricted, accessible.

There is nothing to keep us out because any barriers have now been removed. In fact, if you keep your eyes open from here on in, you'll notice that nothing more is heard about what happens in heaven after this verse.

In the book of Revelation, it now happens on earth. Okay. Now, as we look over John's shoulder, what is the first thing that he and we see? Do you remember how the very first judgments began? Think right, right, right, right, right back to chapter 6. Do you remember right back there? Do you remember even back further to chapter 5? Do you remember that the lamb took the scroll from the hand of God?

[7 : 42] And do you remember that he began to peel off those seals? Do you remember that? Do you remember the lamb opening that first seal? Do you remember that when we got to the end of the seven seals, no one actually read us the content?

Do you remember that? We've waited a long time. Still no content. We haven't actually read the scroll yet. In the original Greek, the language of the lamb opening the first of the seals reads like this.

Sorry, let me just rephrase that. Way back when the lamb opens the seals, we have a phrase that goes like this. And behold, a white horse and one sitting on it.

Do you remember the very first of the opening of the seals? And do you remember there was a white horse with one sitting on it? Have a look now. And see what you read there.

I will read it to you in the original Greek. And behold, well, not the Greek, the English translation, a literal translation. Behold, a white horse and one sitting on it. Why do you think God has put this in place for us?

[8 : 52] I think we're about to read the scroll. I think the contents of the scroll are about to be played out. I wonder whether the recall of the white horse here is designed to tell us we're about to see that scroll played out in front of us now.

Let's see what we can find out about the rider of this horse, though. We're told nine things about him. Can you see them? First, he's called faithful and true. These words are used of Jesus back in chapter three, verse 14.

In speaking to the churches, he told them that he was the faithful and true witness. Later, we hear that he who sits on the throne is faithful and true. Chapter 21, verse five.

So this one seated on a white horse is the Lord Christ, who is also God. Second, he who is seated on the white horse is he who with justice judges and wages war.

Notice again the two tasks that he does with justice. He judges and he wages war. The Old Testament is replete with references to God coming to judge in righteousness.

[10:01] But there's one particular one to focus on. Isaiah chapter 11, verse four talks about a shoot from the stump of Jesse. That is, it talks about the Messiah. And Isaiah tells us that he will with righteousness judge the needy and with justice give decisions for the poor of the earth.

Immediately following this, he says that this rod of Jesse will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth. And with the breath of his lips, he will slay the wicked.

In Revelation, the only other one who said to judge is God. So again, the rider is identified, I think, as Jesus, who is linked inextricably with God. This is the one who was snatched up into heaven in Revelation 12, verse five, but now returns in triumph to judge and wage war.

But on whom does he, this rider wage war? Well, verse 19 tells us it's against the beast and the kings of the earth. There is a third thing said about this rider.

His eyes are like blazing fire. Again, the language is used of Jesus back in Revelation 1, verse 14 and 2, verse 18. So we're getting a very good picture of him, aren't we?

[11:12] This is the Lord Christ. This is someone inextricably linked with God who does God like things. And fourth, this rider is said to have many crowns or diadems.

Elsewhere in the book, only the dragon and the beast are said to have these. The dragon has only seven. The beast has ten, but they're limited to one, but they are limited to one head.

This rider on a white horse has many crowns on one head. He is the one true and complete royal authority.

Crowns means rule and authority. Fifth, he has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. Now, there are others in Revelation who have said to have names written on them. The 144,000, for example.

The great harlot. However, the only other person who is said to have a name which no one else knows but the one who is the one who conquers. Do you remember back in the letters to the churches?

[12:11] So I think, again, Jesus is said to be a conqueror here. I think that's what's going on. Six, this rider is dressed in a robe dipped in blood. Now, the question here is obvious.

Whose blood? Well, it could be the blood of the lamb. That is, it could be his own blood, couldn't it? Or it could be the blood of the righteous. Both appear regularly in Revelation.

However, the image probably comes from Isaiah 63 where God is said to come with garments stained in crimson. And as we read on, we find crimson is the crimson of blood in Isaiah 56.

We're told in Isaiah, sorry, 63, in Isaiah 63 that he has trodden the winepress of his wrath among the nations. Verse 15 would seem to indicate that that's the scripture being referred to here.

This one will tread the winepress of God's wrath among the nations. The seventh characteristic is that his name is the word of God. As we've already seen, this is linked with the gospel and with the word of testimony.

[13:15] It's possible, given that John is writing, that it here might be a reference to Jesus, the living word of God, to whom the word of the gospel points. Verse 14 has the armies of heaven following him on his own white or on their own white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

That language is used elsewhere in Revelation for the followers of the lamb. In other words, this army of people. Dressed in fine linen is the army of the lamb, the followers of the lamb.

The census of this army is taken in chapter 7, verse 14. That army is mustered in chapter 14, verses 1 to 5. And now they are with their leader. However, do you notice something striking about their dress?

Their dress is their attire is not battle attire, is it? Why? It's wedding attire.

Hardly the thing to go out to war in. We saw that back in verses 7 and 8. Why? Well, because they're not expected to engage in battle. They're not going to war with their leader.

[14:27] They are to watch and celebrate. In verse 15, we're given the eighth characteristic of our rider. He has a weapon. It is a sword.

And we heard about that sword from the Lord Christ in chapter 2. It'll be mentioned again in verse 21. And we heard earlier about it, about Isaiah 11. Do you remember earlier on when we looked at some, the earlier reference?

And the root of Jesse. Well, in the same passage, the root of Jesse is said to strike the nations with. Do you remember hearing it? The rod of his mouth. And rule the nations with a rod of iron.

That's, in turn, a reference back to Psalm 2 and the Davidic king. And finally, we find out that our rider has a name. His name is inscribed on his robe and on his thigh.

The name is one which no one else knows. But it is told to us by John. His name is king of kings and lord of lords.

[15:29] A sign of his victory and that he is mighty to save in a day of vengeance. Friends, this is the true Jesus. I mean, what is your view of Jesus? Is it anything like this?

Is it anything like this? This is God's son. This is God's Messiah. This is God in the flesh. This is God who exercises God's power in purity, in victory, in righteousness and in vindication.

He comes here to retake the kingship of God given to Adam, but which was usurped by evil and the evil one. We've taken time to explore this passage because of its importance.

Can you see the great identification of Jesus here? It is a grand portrait. When you put it together, it is extraordinary. It is not the Jesus I hear about mostly in church.

It is grand. Here is one who is the key to all of history. Someone mighty. A great one. One who is clearly in charge. A warrior king returning to earth.

[16:35] This is, I think, the second coming. He is riding. He comes with his saints. He rides forth in triumph, judging the enemies of God and the people of God.

He is waging war against. Sorry, and the people of Satan. He is waging war against them. It is a victory signed and sealed by the cross.

But now, from this moment on, in this public coming to the earth, it will universally be known and proclaimed. Let's watch and see what happens.

Verse 17. We turn to a great battle. And what we do is we observe this battle from a number of different perspectives. First, there is this one here, verses 17 to 21. But then, after a brief gap, we have chapter 20, verses 7 to 10, which is the same battle, I think, replayed.

Both have introductions. And the first introduction is the one we've just looked at, an introduction to one who's on a white horse. Second introduction is verses 1 to 6 of chapter 20.

[17:39] It's an introduction to a thousand years, or if you like, the millennium. Now, we're going to look at that in detail because I know you've been waiting for the whole book of Revelation to see what I'm going to say about this. But because of the ground we need to cover, I'll have to move quite quickly through it, even though I will slow down in those first few verses of chapter 20, just for your sake.

Let's look at the great battle as it's portrayed here, verses 17 to 21. Primary focus of the battle is that it will be waged by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. That's given in verse 19.

The beast and the false prophet have been the public face of evil in the world. It is they who have deceived and seduced the world. They are captured, verse 20. They are thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

The rest are killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse. In fulfillment of Ezekiel chapter 39, birds gorge themselves on their flesh. But now let's move to 1 to 6, chapter 21 to 6.

Here we are introduced to the millennium, the thousand years. Let's see if we can work out what's going on. First, I want you to notice there are three scenes here that mention the millennium. The first is verses 1 to 3.

[18:51] John sees an angel with a key to the abyss. He seizes the devil or Satan, binds him for a thousand years and throws him into the abyss. This results in him being restrained from deceiving the nations in that millennium.

Okay, so for a thousand years, not going to deceive the saints. Second scene, verses 4 to 6. This time, John sees some thrones of those who had been given authority to judge.

And he sees the souls also of those beheaded because of the testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. And they hadn't worshipped the beast or his image. Nor had they received his mark on their foreheads.

They'd come to life and reign with Christ for a thousand years. This is labelled the first resurrection. Then we're introduced to the second death and told that it will have no power over them. And they will reign with Christ for a thousand years. Scene 3 contains the next reference to the thousand years. And that is when it's over, Satan is released and a battle ensues. We'll take a look at that battle a little later.

[19 : 54] Let's see if we can get some perspective on the millennium. Now, here's where you need to concentrate really hard. Okay, because there's a lot of technical stuff needs to be done. First, look at verse 4. John sees thrones.

He sees people on them. Seated on them. Given authority to rule. Sorry, to judge. This, I think, appears to be a heavenly perspective.

Then, in the second half of verse 4, he notes that there are people who have died because of their gospel preaching and living. They were resurrected. That is, they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Okay, you with me so far? But the rest of the dead did not come to life until a thousand years were ended. Okay, now just store all that one up.

Now, look at verses 5 and 6. There are references to the first resurrection and a second death. Let's start with a second death. What do you think that is? Well, we don't have to do any guessing, really, because if you look down at verses 14 and 15, we find out.

[21 : 03] It is being thrown into the lake of fire. That is, it is spiritual death. Eternal in its nature. When this second death happens, you are really, really dead. That's it.

It is the death that comes because of sin. Sorry, the first death. So the first death is physical death. The second death is this eternal punishment, as it were. Make sense?

You with me so far? Okay. That, the first death is physical death. It came because of sin back in Genesis 3. Physical death is awful.

Well, why? Well, none of you have died yet, so... But you... Most of us have had people who have died. That is, friends. What is the... What's the awful thing about death?

It's the dislocation in relationships, isn't it? Okay? Physical death is awful because it breaks relationships with other people. Spiritual death is far more awful because of what?

[22 : 01] It breaks relationship with God, the giver of all good things. So the second death is a death to be avoided at all costs. You see, because it's about eternal break of relationship with God.

And that leads me to my third point. If that's the first death and the second death, what do you think the first resurrection and the second resurrection might be? Okay, what do you think the first resurrection and the second resurrection might be?

Well, verse 4 helps us. It tells us of those who have been faithful to Jesus and died, but are seated and judging. They are reigning with Christ. However, there's still another resurrection to come.

The second resurrection will be what? I take it will be the resurrection when they'll receive new bodies. Does that make sense? Okay, so they are present and reigning with Christ now, which makes sense of lots of the New Testament, doesn't it?

Where the New Testament seems to indicate that once you are dead, you're still with Christ. Okay? So that does mean I have to think about disembodied in one sense, but real people.

[23 : 12] So the resurrection is one when they receive new bodies. So they're present and reigning with Christ even now. So the thousand years that exist between...

So I think the thousand years is that time which exists between the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ. Okay? During that time, what happens?

Christians carry out gospel ministry. That is, they go about the ministry of the Word of God. They testify about Jesus. And some pay the ultimate cost. They die. But as Ephesians says, even when they were alive, they were raised up together with Christ into the heavenly places.

That union with Christ doesn't stop when they die a physical death, does it? That continues past death. And one day at the end of time in the second resurrection, they will not experience a second death.

No, they'll receive a resurrection body. Friends, that matches, I think, what is said in other parts of the New Testament. For example, we're told that Satan was bound. As Jesus carried out his ministry of exorcism.

[24 : 18] Matthew chapter 12, verse 29. Similarly, gospel ministry, we know, restricts Satan's reach and power. And when the thousand years are over, Satan's end will come climatically and

dramatically, as we'll see in verses 7 to 10.

Let's turn now to those verses. As we do, let me remind you that this is about the great and final battle. Perhaps you remember, this is the second perspective on that battle.

We saw the first earlier on in chapter 19, verses 17 to 21. We got introduced to a rider on a white horse with his followers. And when we watched him, then we watched him wage war on the beast with his followers.

Clearly, the Lord Christ and his victory over the beast is the focus of both the introduction and the battle. That's that first perspective. The second perspective has an introduction that focuses on Satan and his binding.

So first on Jesus and his battle. Second on Satan and his binding. Or the first one on Jesus and who he is.

[25 : 29] The second on Satan and how he is bound. Then we watch a war. Same as we did with the first perspective. Here it's verses 7 to 10. I think it's the very same war that we watched in chapter 19, verses 17 to 21.

It's just played differently. We get a different perspective. The focus this time is not Jesus. The beast and the false prophet, is it?

No, this time the camera has focused on another view, hasn't it? You see, the camera is focused this time on Satan's attack on the people of God. So the first one focuses on Jesus, his people, the beast, and so on.

This time focuses on Satan attacking the people of God. But where the Lord Christ is victorious in his first, in the first snapshot, Satan is not.

In verse 10, he's thrown into the lake of burning sulfur where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. And so he joins them. Both battles have echoes of Ezekiel 38 and 39, Gog and Magog.

[26 : 36] Both battles have God victorious. It's hard work, isn't it? You should have been there with me preparing this week. I wonder if you're still with me.

Following along? I hope so. The hard work, I think, has been done now. Let's now have a gopura run through the rest. First, we're now looking at the final judgment.

The woman has gone. The beast and his cohorts has gone. Satan is gone, overthrown. What remains is the judgment of humans. The first is in verses 11 to 15 of chapter 20.

And the first perspective on this, remember, another two perspectives as we go. First perspective gives us the negative side. By this, I mean it focuses on humans who have been on the wrong side of the spiritual battle.

Friends, the spiritual reality is that God is the God of all the earth. He is and will be the judge of all the earth. All humans at all time.

[27 : 38] All spiritual forces at all time. Nothing escapes his eye. And all that he sees will have its day of accounting before him. That is what is conveyed here.

The dead, great and small stand before him. Books are opened. Now, that's great comfort for God's saints. But let me tell you, it ought to be a great terror for those who are not.

For everything that opposes or contradicts God's holiness will be overcome by his holiness and judged by him. And everyone who ignores or defies him can expect the second death.

Have a friend. While the picture here is tough, there's one positive aspect noted. Can you see it? Look at verse 12. There's mention of the book of life. Only those not mentioned in it are not thrown into the lake of fire.

That neatly leads into the second perspective on the final judgment. Where the first was overwhelmingly negative, this is overwhelmingly positive. This is the destiny of the righteous now.

[28 : 42] Now, friends, I need to emphasize something here. You see, many Christians have largely lived in a world. We Christians have largely lived in a world that is relatively accommodating to Christians. That is, we here in Australia have lived in a world relatively accommodating to Christians.

That world is not the usual world that Christians face. Hasn't been historically. And it's not in large parts of our world now.

And maybe the day will come. I think it is coming when it won't be that good here in Australia as well. The usual world for those who testify to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus is what?

Hostility and persecution. Thus it has been throughout history. Revelation shows us that. The history of the world shows us that.

The hordes of Christians who have died in the last century shows us that. The trend in our own country demonstrates that. And it's that vision in verses 1 to 8 that is designed by God.

[29 : 46] Sorry, it's this vision in verses 1 to 8 that is designed by God to encourage us in steadfastness, faithfulness, confidence and hope. No matter how grim things are or might become.

Our future, if we are God's people, is secure and strong. This picture is designed by God to stimulate our faith and stir us on. And look at it.

It's grand, isn't it? God the creator has a new heaven and a new earth waiting. For Israelites, the sea was a place of deep, dark, chaotic and fearsome things.

The sea won't exist in this new world. That is, there will be no deep, dark, chaotic and fearsome things. What will exist is instead the city of God.

A place where God dwells with his people. What will exist will be intense fellowship with God such as that experienced by a bride with a husband. In such a place there will be no tears or sorrow.

[30 : 50] There will be total absence of death. Mourning and crying won't be known. Pain won't be felt. These will be dim memories of a past world.

For that order will have passed away. And who sits on the throne will say, I am making everything new. Then he will say, write this down. For these words are trustworthy and true.

Friends, consider our sisters and brothers around the world who suffer for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Think today of those in jail. Those being cruelly treated.

Those having instruments of torture used upon them. Those whose women are abused. Those whose men are brutalised. Those who have no scriptures to give them comfort except the bits that they can vaguely remember.

But to them, God promises full rest and satisfaction. Victorious will inherit all of this laid out here.

[31 : 52] God will be their God. They will be his children. And my guess is that the water of verse 6 is the Holy Spirit. Perhaps this is the verse for those like many in the Bible who have felt God's absence and thirsted for his presence.

And God promises them there will be springs of water for you without cost. That is his presence on tap. Have it.

Just as the first perspective was largely negative, but sounded a positive note. So this largely positive perspective sounds a negative one as well. Can you see it there? Verse 8. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars, they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

This is the second death. Now let's survey the next chapter. What happens is that John is now thrown a conflation and crossover of three great themes in scripture.

First, there's the bride. We encountered her for the first time in chapter 19. However, the image is very ancient. You see, Israel was often presented as a bride. The most famous among those passages is the prophecy of Hosea, which in turn draws on the story of God courting Israel in the wilderness after they've escaped from Egypt.

[33 : 14] Basically, the wilderness was seen to be the high point of the relationship. And after that, Israel was a prostitute. After that, after the golden calf incident, she often is referred to with this sort of prostitute image.

God had courted her in the wilderness and in Egypt, but she played the harlot. Well, here we return to the image unsullied. Christ and the church bound together in untainted relationship.

And there's intimacy there. There's joy. There's victory. There's purity. And there's permanence.

And there's no hint of anything anywhere that will harm this. But in chapter 21, verse 10, the image changes.

The bride of the lamb turns out to be the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. Its fundamental character is one of shining with the glory of God.

Verse 11. Now, earlier in Revelation, Jerusalem was not a positive image. You see, as Israel had been a harlot, but now as the church is a bride, so too with this image.

[34 : 32] You see, back in Revelation chapter 11, verse 18. Flip back to it. Have a look. Revelation 11, verse 18. We read that the physical city, Jerusalem, is identified as a place where Israel's Lord was crucified.

So it is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt. They're not very complementary terms, I should tell you. So what is being said here with Jerusalem and that language being used in this city of God is that the physical Jerusalem is rejected.

There is a new Jerusalem. There is a new Jerusalem. And that new Jerusalem shines as it compares to the alternative city, Babylon.

That was the harlot. That was the harlot back in chapter 18. The new Jerusalem is totally centered on God. Look at Revelation 21, 22 and following.

In the old Jerusalem, there was a temple. The temple symbolized the presence of God. But for God to be present, sin had to be repeatedly atoned for.

[35 : 39] Do you remember the book of Leviticus? Do you remember all those elaborate things you had to do in order to keep the temple pure? All these elaborate rituals.

Why? Because if you didn't do them, God couldn't be present. God's presence was therefore in the Old Testament always fragile because sin was always a way of life for the people of God, as it is for all humans post the garden.

But look here. There is no temple. There's no temple. Why? Because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb and the Lamb are its lamp.

That is, God is there. You don't need the symbol anymore. You've got God present. There is free and unbridled access for all whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

However, there's one more thing to say. Not even the temple is enough to capture the reality won by the Lamb slaughtered but standing. Not even the temple is glorious enough to talk about the new people of God.

[36 : 46] No. To do that, you need to return to Eden where serpents were and where sin began. And look at what happens in chapter 22. The temple in Israel always had echoes of the garden.

Remember I showed you that right at the beginning. However, now the temple is a symbol of the presence of God. It's a place where God freely walked among his people.

There's a river of the water of life. It is as clear as crystal. Flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb. And there's healing.

There's absence of curse. There's constant access to God and the Lamb. There's freedom to serve him. There's constant seeing of his face.

There's no need for lights or lamps or even the sun. For the Lord God will give them light.

[37 : 53] Friend, those images of bride, a city, a garden are exactly that. They are images. But by painting these images, we are conjuring up the deepest longings of humans.

For the deepest longing of humans is to know God and to be known by him. The great news announced in the gospel is that this is now possible.

The great news announced in the book of Revelation is that this cannot adequately be pictured in words. But if we know and love Jesus, have him as our chief desire, then it will be all that we could dream or imagine and then even more.

Nothing good will be missing. Nothing good will be missing. Everything bad will be absent.

There will be no more crying or pain or tears. No serpent. No beast. No harlot.

[38 : 59] No servants of those three. But the Father will be there. The Lamb will be there. The Spirit will be there.

They're all there in chapter 22. And the bride, the servants of the Lamb will be there. Friends, our Lord testifies to the truths contained in this book.

He says, Yes, I'm coming soon. Amen. Amen. And all who love him and live in this waiting world say, Amen.

Come Lord Jesus.