

Revelation 21:1-22:5 – Earth Cannot Compare

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- [0 : 0 0] Um, let's just pray. We're going to, um, be opening a very special part of the Bible this morning. And, um, I think we probably, I probably could do with some help.
- So let's pray and ask God to help us. Father, we come to your word. Lord, we believe this is your word to us today. Lord, we want to confess, Lord, that there's some things in here that we don't understand.
- There are some things in here that sometimes we just don't agree with. And yet, Lord, our hearts need, we know this, we need to be positioned in submission to believe and confess again that these things are true.
- So Lord, help us this morning. Lord, be present with us in our thoughts, in my words, in the hearing of them. Lord, that we would just not only understand these things to be true, but accept them and would our lives then reflect them, Lord, in the everyday.
- Lord, would these things, Lord, break into the realities of our life today? We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.
- [1 : 2 2] And they all lived happily ever after. You've heard that phrase before, right? Whether it's Cinderella's life being changed when she meets Prince Charming and falls in love and lives out her days happily ever after in the palace or Snow White.
- As they get married and rule together the kingdom, happily ever after. Or the 2016 film, did you see this one, La La Land?
- Presents a bittersweet exploration of love, passion and the pursuit, not just of jazz, which is why I like it, but of happily ever after.
- This is how stories end, happily ever after. It's how our story ends. It's how we as people are somehow wired to know this.
- And pursue it. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes chapter 3 verse 11, that the reason for that, the reason for our pursuit of that, is that God has planted eternity into the heart of man.
- [2 : 4 0] That when we were created, when God created us, he placed in us eternity. Someone once said that we all have this idea of the perfect place, utopia.
- I wonder where your perfect place is this morning. But we all have this idea of the perfect place, don't we? It's something that we strive for.
- They said, even if we can't acquire it. And the trouble is, is that even though we have eternity planted in our hearts, for most of us, that is not a reality, is it?
- In terms of, when we look at the Bible in Genesis chapter 1 and Genesis chapter 2, the defining thing about utopia, about the happily ever after, was that God was walking with mankind.
- Right? He was there in the garden, walking with mankind. Just as like, we would go for a walk in the cool of the day with a friend, so God was with man, walking with man.
- [3 : 5 2] Chatting with man. And of course, the very next chapter, you know the problem. Chapter 3, the fall happens. So mankind then disobeys God.

And the Bible says that sin, what sin does, is that it separates from God. And so that once, that perfect place, that perfect union, that perfect presence of God, was there and then broken.

And the Bible talks about this idea, that ever since that time, we've been pursuing something, that is in our hearts, eternity, but never able to get.

Always out of reach. Again, the writer to Ecclesiastes, he said, it's like, it's like striving for vapor. And it's vanity.

The thing that we're looking for, eternity in our hearts, the happily ever after, is a striving for the wind, trying to grasp the wind.

[5 : 00] Why? Because the presence of God has gone. The separation from God is now more of a reality than walking with God.

And so we know of this experience, don't we? It's the experience that you two sung about, that they still hadn't found what they were looking for.

Let's read about it, this happily ever after, in verse 1, chapter 21, of Revelation. Revelation. John, the apostle, is writing, and he's been given these series of visions, you remember, and he says this, then I saw, a new heaven, and a new earth.

For the first heaven, and the first earth, had passed away, and the sea was no more. So, what do we make, of the happily ever after?

What do we make, of heaven? That's our subject this morning. Heaven. Like, I can't think of anything better, to speak on this morning. Heaven. But would you notice, that the first thing, that we notice about heaven, is that heaven comes in phases.

[6 : 16] Heaven comes in phases. John says, that there was a new heaven, and earth, because the old heaven, and earth, had passed away. So, heaven comes in phases.

There are different modes, of reality, of the heavenly experience. Now, that surprises most of us, doesn't it? When we actually think about heaven, you know, when we think about heaven, heaven is a place we go to.

Where there are angels, playing harps, eating marshmallows, sitting on clouds, and we hope, by some stretch of the imagination, to join them one day. It surprises a lot of people, but the Bible teaches, that there are multiple experiences, or phases, of what heaven is like.

So, Ephesians chapter 2, verse 7, Paul writes into the church, at Ephesus, he says this, he says, that in the coming, ages, notice that, that word, ages, there are ages, it's the Greek word, aeon, or it's, epikoma, aeon, right, the coming, ages.

What does Paul mean by that, when, when he, when he's writing to the church, and he says, there are coming, ages, by which, in which, through which, you're going to know, the immeasurable riches, of grace, and kindness towards us, in Christ Jesus.

[7 : 40] Like, when does that happen? He's talking about, he's talking about these phases, of heaven, and it's literally, the ekkikoma, aeon is literally, arriving forever, and ever, in the process, of going there.

So, so, here's one phase, as you die, as a believer, where do you go? Well, the Bible says, that you go, immediately, to heaven, that's a, epikoma, aeon, it's an age, it's an arriving, forever and ever.

Paul says, that the absence, in the body, equals, presence, with God. Right? When you die, as a believer today, you, the real you, you are immediately, in the presence of God.

Right? There's no purgatory, there's no soul sleep, where you just kind of, fall asleep, which I know sounds great, for most of us, right? It's like, I could do with the extra sleep, but soul sleep's not in the Bible, where you just fall asleep, and all, and then you, then you wake up, at some other, other point, with a resurrected body.

Now, the Bible talks about, how you are, immediately, in God's presence, in heaven. And actually, you know what? The Bible is actually, quite silent, about that, that phase.

[8 : 59] Doesn't really say a lot. But we hang, most of that, on that one verse. But then, look, there are other phases too, that we've talked about, quite a bit, in our study, in Revelation, about this thing, called the rapture.

Right? The rapture, is when Jesus returns, and those alive, Paul says, will be caught up, to meet him. Death is an experience, by the believer, at that point, and they then, go and be in the presence, of God.

They then, go and be in, what we call, heaven. It's an arriving, forever and ever. And mostly, the most extraordinary, experience of heaven, as we've, looked at last week, the most extraordinary, experience of heaven, is when Jesus, then returns, and he stays on earth, and he brings heaven, with him.

The millennial reign, of Christ. That is what, what Jesus prayed, would happen, right? In Matthew chapter 6, verse 10, he said, your kingdom come, your will be done, where on earth, as it is in heaven.

The day that, happens, is when Jesus returns, and he sits on the throne, of David, and he rules. And then here, in this chapter, we see John say, that there was a new heaven.

[10 : 16] Not that there's anything wrong, with the heaven that, we've spoken about before. But there was a new heaven, for the first heaven, and earth, had passed away.

So this new heaven, is probably what we would normally know as, heaven. What do we call heaven? The eternal state. This is heaven. And so, the heaven and earth, as we know them, as they are described in the Bible, they will have served their purpose, and, Jesus says in Matthew 24, that they will pass away.

And so Jesus says that, that the world in which we live in, is going to end. Isaiah 66, verse 22, God says, I will make, new heavens, and new earth, that will last forever.

Peter says how it will end, we looked at this a little bit last week, in 2nd Peter chapter 3, verse 10, the heavens will pass away, with a roar, the heavenly bodies, will be burned up, and dissolved, and the earth, and the works that are done, on it, will be exposed, and then he writes, a few verses later, but according to his promise, we are waiting for what?

New heavens, and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. So, there is going to be, a new heaven, and a new earth.

[11 : 43] And this is our, literally, this is our happily ever after. But notice, he says that it is a new heaven. And that word new, isn't the normal Greek word, used for new, which is naos.

Naos is like new, chronologically, like we would say, oh it is a new day. It is a new day, why? Because it is not yesterday. It is new chronologically. This is a different word.

And this is kynos. This is new quality. This is when, you buy new clothes. They are new.

They are just not, new because they are new, bought today, as opposed not to yesterday. But they are new in quality. When Jesus was placed in a tomb, when he died, Matthew says that it was a new tomb.

It was fresh. Hadn't been used. Paul uses this word to describe the person, who has become a follower of Jesus, which we're going to explore, in a few weeks time.

[12 : 55] In 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 17, Paul says, therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a, what? A new creation. You're not just new, because now you're not old.

Some of us love that. But it's new in quality. You are different. The old has passed away.

Behold, the new has come. In other words, the new heaven and the new earth will be unlike what we know in our own experience of heaven on and earth. It's going to be kynos.

Someone once said that our ability to imagine what eternity will be like is like two infants in a womb. Talking about what they will be doing once they're born and 25 years old.

I think this is why John mentions that there won't be any sea. And like, we've talked about this before. It's like, don't get bummed out of the fact that there's no sea. I'm sure whatever heaven is going to be, it's going to be great.

[14:04] Like, I don't think we're going to be sat around going, there's no sea. What is this place? Right? I don't think we're, I don't think we're, we're going to get there and be disappointed that there's no sea.

So what is the reference about? Well, look, I don't think it's about, I don't think it's a reference to Gentiles. We talked about this symbology in Revelation before, how the sea often talks about Gentiles.

The sea is often talked about, you know, the pit of iniquity, you know, it's talked about in those references. But I also don't think it's literal water.

It seems to be, for me, what John is saying, it seems to be a really, really short commentary, and it is a short commentary, on what new means.

Right? So it's going to be new. There's going to be a new heaven and a new earth. The old heaven and earth and sea have gone. It's going to be new. It's not going to be, it's not going to be like anything you know.

[15:04] It's almost like where he says there's going to be a new heaven and new earth and people are like, yeah, but what about the sea? Right? And John's like, oh, let me just tell you about the sea. There's no sea either. So I think it's John's way of just saying it's going to be different.

It's going to be different in a really, really good way. But not only a new heaven and a new earth, look at what John describes in verse 2.

He describes a new capital. He says, I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem. And we get back to this in about verse 15 or so to describe it, but we'll get there when we get there.

I saw the new city, New Jerusalem, and it was coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Now, look, what is interesting is that John writing this book, Jerusalem has not been a city for about 25 years. I mean, it's basically just been bricks.

[16:12] It's just been rubble for about 25 years. There's no Jerusalem. And so, even though Hadrian kind of eventually rebuilt it, as John is writing, it's still rubble.

So can you imagine, you know, the seven churches who this letter has been originally written to, getting to chapter 21, they probably just did it in one day, right?

We've taken six months. They did it in one day, right? They're reading it and they're like, and I saw a holy city, New Jerusalem. Like, what kind of thing would that conjure up in their own hearts about Jerusalem?

For the readers reading this, this must have been exciting. And for John to describe it as beauty. No, we don't describe cities as beauty, do we?

Okay, you're not sure. No, we don't. Like, generally, we're not walking around Southampton, are we? We're like, man, this is beautiful.

[17:16] Amen? Right? So, Portsmouth, maybe, but, you know, Southampton, we're not, you know, our cities, even some of the prettiest cities, we would have a hard time describing them as a bride who's been made ready for her wedding, adorned.

Like, we'd have a hard time with that. And yet, John, this is exactly how John describes this new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. And, and, this captures two important characteristics of this city.

Firstly, God's personal relationship with his people is coming down out of heaven. But also, secondly, the life of the people in communion with him.

It's about God's personal relationship with his people. We talked about Eden and God walking with mankind. This is going to be better than that.

This is the city full of God's people coming down from heaven ready.

[18 : 34] And then in verse 3, this is emphasized as we look at not just a new heaven and a new earth and a new capital, but now we see a new communion. He says, and I heard a loud voice.

How many times has Paul said, John said that in this book? I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, behold, the dwelling place of God is with man and he will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God.

God. You see, the problem today and the problem throughout all of the centuries and all the millennia that have existed is the presence of God.

Pursuing happily ever after without God. That's why it's futile. And that's why now there's this emphasis on you want to live happily ever after?

All right, throw God in the mix. Throw God's presence in the mix because that is the definition of happily ever after. This is what this new capital is about.

[19 : 51] It's about communion with God. It's about unity with God. It's about fellowship with God. Wayne Grudem, who's a scholar, Christian scholar, wrote a book called Systematic Theology.

He said this, that heaven is the place where God most fully makes known his presence to bless. You love that? What is heaven?

For heaven is the place where God most fully makes known his presence to bless. This is not, as Paul puts it, seeing through a mirror darkly.

You know, when you get out of the shower, it's all misted up, unless you have one of those fancy extractor fan things. It's all misted up, and you're kind of gazing in, and you're like, can't really see, or an old mirror, and it's a little bit blurry.

Paul says that there's a time in which we live where an eternity looks like that, but one day, it'll be crystal clear, because we'll see him face to face.

[21 : 02] face. But notice in verse four, that the presence of God, and this is crucial for our understanding of happily ever after right here, right now, in our reality, notice in verse four, that the presence of God makes the absence of other things.

The presence of God makes the absence of other things. verse four, he will wipe away every tear from their eyes. It's not talking about the intimacy that God will have with his people.

That God somehow comes alongside us and comforts us and helps us. We won't need comfort in heaven.

it's the idea that the longing for this place will be over, right? The heartache of not being in communion with God will be over.

Why? Because God will be there. That's the idea. There'll be no tears. Why? Because of his presence. And death shall be no more.

[22 : 27] God's presence means the absence of other things, right? God's presence means there won't be any crying.

God's presence means there won't be any death. Why? Because he is the source of life. Death is just the absence of life. And because God is the giver of life and he will be there, there won't be death.

death. These are all talking about what the presence of God brings. And he says, neither shall there be mourning. And that's mourning as in grief.

Why? Well, because Psalm 43 verse 4 says that God is the source of all my joy. That's going to become a real thing. Like, and I know that we struggle with it today.

like if we took a straw poll, probably all of us would go, yeah, God is, God, God isn't the source of all my joy. But one day he will be.

[23 : 33] And because one day he will be, there will be no mourning. Because God is there. The mourning, the psalmist says in Psalm 30, has been turned to joyful dancing.

Now, I'm a terrible dancer. Like, honestly, I cannot dance, so I refuse to dance.

But the Bible says in heaven, the happily ever after involves dancing. And I want to apologize in advance for that.

But the presence of God means the absence of all of these other things. John says that there will be no more. There's not going to be any crying.

And that word actually means outcry rather than weeping. It's an outcry. It's the same word that Paul uses in Ephesians chapter 4 when he says, let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor, that's our word, and slander be put away from you along with all malice.

[24 : 45] There's not going to be an outcry. There's not going to be clamor. There's not going to be any pain. The word is labor. The idea is to work for no gain.

Like, I'm just excited about that, right? How often do we work and we're just like, what am I working for? But in heaven, it doesn't say there's not going to be any work, there's not going to be any labor, but that labor is going to be fruitful every single time.

And he says, to round that off, as if we need that point emphasized that the presence of God is the absence of these things, the former things have passed away.

All of those former things, every former thing has gone. Which I think answers the question that I've been asked a dozen times, probably more than a dozen times over the years, will we know and remember those who aren't there?

I mean, it's a sad question to have to ask, isn't it? Will we be in heaven and will we remember those loved ones that didn't make it?

[26 : 11] And it seems the answer is no. sometimes memory is a good thing, sometimes it isn't, sometimes we don't remember if it's a good thing or not.

But there are things in life that we wish that we could forget. Sometimes there are things that we carry around with us that burden us, weigh us down, wake us up in the middle of the night, things that happened years ago that just make us short circuit, things that get us down, things that make us worried.

They are ashamed to us, they are a guilt for us. And yet when we arrive in heaven, the Bible says those things will have passed away.

Verse 5 says that he, and this is now Jesus speaking, he who was seated on the throne said, behold.

Now look, check this word out, this behold, I love this word behold. The behold is literally stop and consider this. You have to think about this, Jesus is saying.

[27 : 35] Don't, don't move too quickly over this. He wants us to stop and think. What is it the thing he wants us to stop and think about? He says, I am making all things new.

Just pause there, Jesus says. This is our future. And this is the heart of Jesus to John.

God for you and for me today. Because he also says there, write this down for these words are trustworthy and true.

Well, who's he writing it down for? Can I suggest that he's writing it down for us? Pass them on to Calvary, Southampton, you know, in the year 2021, write this down.

And he said to me, verse 6, it's done. Behold, think about this.

[28 : 39] I'm making all things new. Write this down. Make sure the guys in Southampton get this. Make sure they meditate on this. What is it that we are to meditate on?

Three little words. It is done. Now, look, the three little words, actually one word in the Greek is *genomai*, and it means that, it literally means, it's a very, very popular word in the Bible, it literally means to become.

To become. But you might find that phrase familiar, right? it's done or it's finished. Different word.

Okay? So, it's not like when Jesus said it's finished on the cross, it means that what was planned is now done, all of it.

From the time the lamb was slain, before the foundation of the world, and creation, and Adam and Eve sinning, and Abel embracing God, Cain rejecting, and Noah's flood, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses, and the children of Israel, coming out of Egypt, the twelve tribes, the wars in the land, the judges, then King David, then King Solomon, then the divided kingdom, then the captivity, and the return, and then God Almighty putting on human flesh and the birth of Jesus, and walking with men.

[30 : 31] John says that he tabernacled with us, became the great high priest who was touched with our infirmities, understanding thirst, and hunger, and weariness, and mocked, and spit on, and crucified, laid in a new tomb, rising the third day, ascending back to the Father, all of the program of God, him calling his people back to him, heaven and earth fleeing, we finally come to what God wanted all along, and he says here, it's done, and he says, know it, why?

Because I am the alpha, and the omega, the beginning, and the end, and he's saying that in relation to it is done, this is not just a phrase on its own, phrase that we pluck out every now and again, or, you know, Jesus is the alpha, omega, the beginning, and the end, yes he is, but why is he?

What's the context? The context is, it is done, the whole program of God, in redemption, is that in the alphabet, is full knowledge, when we think about knowledge, you know, the idea is that all knowledge is within the alphabet, how you think about, how you describe, how you write about, you write about it with words, you think about it in words, you use the alphabet, no knowledge exists outside of that, everything relating, this is the point, everything relating to the it is done, is because of Jesus, the redemptive plan of God, to bring his people to this place, is bookended by Jesus, it started with Jesus, slain from the foundation of the world, it ends with

Jesus, and you see this scarlet thread all the way through the Bible, don't you? The totality of knowledge about God's redeeming plan, given in the idea of an alphabet, starts with Jesus and ends with Jesus, he was the one in Genesis chapter three, do you remember, who said he would crush the head of Satan, he was the one who was the real king of Israel, he was the one who redeemed and restored and gave himself on the cross, he is the one who was resurrected and ascended and is coming again, the whole knowledge of God to save his people started with Jesus and ends with Jesus, and there is no happily ever after without Jesus, he says this, to the thirsty, verse six, to the thirsty,

I will give, that's grace right there, isn't it, not what we deserve, but what we need, to the thirsty, describing all humanity with eternity in their hearts, never reaching it, never gaining it, never being thirst by it, our careers,!

[34 : 30] family, money, the pursuit of wealth, all of these things outside of Jesus, create a thirst in us, and Jesus comes on the scene and says, when you know me, when my presence is with you, you will find that your thirst is quenched, and he says, I will give you from the spring of the water of life without payment, and the idea is without limitation, freely, just come and drink, and the one who conquers will have this heritage, that I will be his God and he will be my son, what a great text for Father's Day, let's just be encouraged by that verse,

John in his gospel, and in his first three letters, he only wrote three that we know of, but certainly in the three that we have, so John in his gospel, John in his letters, and John in Revelation speaks frequently about sons and children, it's almost one of his favorite phrases, it's the Greek word *technon*, and look, here's some verses just to show you, and it means born ones, right, so sons, children, born ones, they're in John chapter one, but all who did receive him, that is Jesus, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become *technon*, born ones, children of God, one John chapter three verse one, see, John says, what kind of love the father has given us, that we should be called *technon*, children of

God, born ones, and so we are, to John four, I rejoice greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the father, whenever he speaks about children sons, in John, it's one of our go-to verses, we love it, we get the right to be children of God, adopted by God, like we've talked about before, haven't we, that salvation is wonderful, being forgiven of our sins is amazing, being redeemed back to God is crazy awesome, that's not the end of the salvation journey, the end of the salvation journey is being adopted as sons, as *technon*, but can I tell you something, that there's something much greater than that, in the whole of John's gospel, in the whole of three letters, in the whole of revelation, whenever he's speaking about Jesus as the son of God, he never uses the word *technon*, he uses the word *huyos*, the only time John ever uses the word *huyos*, to describe us as heirs of

God, is here, it's almost like John has been saving this word for this place, because the *huyos* was the heir, the son who would inherit, not a born one, not just one who is born of the father, one amongst the other sons, this is talking about the heir, the *huyos*, and so he says, the one who conquers will have this heritage, what heritage John, I will be his God, he will be my *huyos*, he will be my heir, Paul says in Romans chapter 8, if children then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, and it's almost like this one place, John wanted us to know that, the one who conquers will have this heritage,

I will be his God, and he will be my *huyos*, he will be my favoured one, but verse 8, let's look at this really quickly, you know that means nothing, verse 8, but, so there's a contrast going on, alright, and this is not really to dwell on these verses, but to help us dwell on the previous verse, so, but the great contrast, as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, sexual immoral, sexual immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake, that burns with fire, and sulfur, which is the contrast to the living water, which is the second death, and look, the idea with repeating this list of people who won't be in heaven from previous chapters, is to remind us that we were once on that list, like we were amongst those,

[40 : 01] I was, I was one of those, like I fell into more than one of those categories, and it's to remind us again, that though we were on that list, we're no longer on that list, we've been forgiven, we're who yours, it's a statement about what we've been saved from, and it's supposed to, to stand in contrast to what we get, the verse doesn't say that whoever has done any of these things at any time in their past is going to hell, that's not what it says, that's the grace, isn't it?

It says that God has forgiven you, brought you from there, and made you an heir, and in one of the seven angels, he says, then one of the seven angels, and he's used to seeing angels, so this isn't a big problem by the time we get to chapter 21, he's just almost munching it off the coffee, and one of those angels, like before last time, one of the chapters, he's like fell down dead, now he's like, oh you again, right?

So one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues spoke to me, saying, come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the lamb. If you turn back to Revelation 17 verse 1, we read this, one of the seven angels, who had the seven bowls, so this is the same dude, right, who comes in our text, he says to him, come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, so this phrase, come, I will show you, is designed to help us contrast the judgment of the anti-God chaos system, and its destiny, with the redeemed people of God, and theirs.

And he carried me away, verse 10, into a spirit to a great high mountain, back in chapter 17, he was carried away into the wilderness, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and let's just get lost in these verses, its radiance, like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal, it had a great high wall, with 12 gates, and the gates, 12 angels, and on the gates, the names of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed, and on the east gates, and on the three north gates, and on the three south gates, and on the west gates, on the wall of the city, had 12 foundations, and on them were the 12 names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb, and the one who spoke with me, and on the one who spoke with me, had a measuring rod of gold, to measure the city, I told you, it was not unlike anything, no one makes measuring rods of gold over here, and he went out to measure the city, and its gates, and its walls, verse 16 says that the city lies four square, its length, the same of its width, and he measured the city with its rod, 12,000 stadia, its length, and width, and height, were equal, and were like, cool, what's a stadia?

And so a stadia, or stadion, the singular, is a unit of measurement used in Roman times, and it was literally the size of a Roman foot, which causes historians all kinds of problems, because in some places in the Roman Empire, feet were slightly bigger and slightly smaller, right?

[43 : 36] But if you take an average of about 625 feet, Roman feet, is a stadion, stadia. In Roman times, you remember chariot racing was a thing?

It's not so much a thing now, but in Roman times it was a thing, and if you've been to Rome, the famous Circus Maximus in Rome is a famous horse chariot racing place, could see 150,000 people.

And the distance that the horses would run over was 625 feet or a stadion. And seated within the stadion gave you the best view of the race, and later we understand that became synonymous with our idea of a stadium.

Why do we go to a stadium? Well, we want the best view, same idea, the place you go and watch, but it's the distance. And John says, seeing the holy city Jerusalem being measured, he says, verse 16, that the city was four square, its length the same of its width, he measured the city with its rod, 12,000 stadia, plural, and its length and width and height were equal.

So the length and width and height mean that it's a cube. And each side is 12,000 stadia, so 625 feet times 12,000, which is 1,420 miles.

[45 : 07] Oh, that's quite big. Let's put that in context, it's about the same size as Europe. So if you leave London and you head east until you get to Kiev, and then you head south to Cairo, and then you turn, I guess it would be right, and you head all the way to the Algerian Moroccan border, turn right again until you hit London, that's about that area.

And then you go up the same distance. Just bear in mind that the International Space Station flies about 250 miles above sea level.

and this thing is coming down out of heaven, New Jerusalem, and it's filled with jewels, sparkling, glorious.

and I think it's important to make this connection that this is the Holy of Holies.

You remember in Exodus 28, it talks about the Holy of Holies being the place where God dwelt, the presence of God, the priests would go in there, right?

[46 : 25] it was a 15 by 15 by 15 box. This is 1420 mile box filled with the presence of God.

It's everywhere and it's huge, that's the idea. And he also measured the wall, verse 17, 144 cubits by human measurement which is also an angel's measurement, don't get hold up on that, don't lose sleep over that, don't YouTube it either, you'll get some weirdos tell you what they think it means.

The wall was built with jasper while the city was pure gold like clear glass, so just incredibly brilliant. And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel.

I love this, right? So this is, this is, this is, in our reality, foundations are made of concrete, rock, you chuck the bits in that you don't want.

The new city, the foundations are jewels. Why? Just the bits that we don't want. Compared to the presence of God, gold's not a big thing.

[47 : 46] you're not going to be blinging it out with jewels in heaven. That'd be like wearing concrete around your neck. You know, check this out.

You'd be like, got a signet ring of concrete. And he says, look, the first was jasper, the second, sapphire, the second, the third, agat, the fourth, emerald, the fifth, onyx, the sixth, carnelian, the seventh, chrysolite, the eighth, beryl, the ninth, topaz, the tenth, chrysophrat, whatever that is, the eleventh, jaseth, and the twelfth, amaseth.

So, twelve jewels, probably the twelve jewels relating to the breastplate that the priest would wear in Exodus 28, one jewel for each of the tribes. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls.

Just in case anybody's like, I don't really like jewels. what about oyster spit? That's what that is, right? Yeah. Sorry if that's devalued any pearls that you have.

It's just a string of oyster spit, that's all it is. But listen, there was twelve gates with twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl. Like, how big is that?

[49 : 07] Like, how big is the oyster? And the idea, obviously, is that, you know, people going in and out of the city, they're not going to be going in and out of the gates, walking past pearls, kind of going, look at that pearl!

It's a gate. It's a gate. They are insignificant compared to what they're going into. like what he says next, he says that the streets of the city were pure gold like transparent glass.

Like the thing that people value most on earth is tarmac in heaven. Right? We're not going to get to heaven and start digging up the floor. Can you see how everything including our values change when we get there?

Everything changes in the presence of God. The thing that we drive on and allow potholes in and rubbish on is going to be, gold in heaven. And no one will care.

Look, this is how corrupt our minds have become, isn't it? That we value these things. The highest value thing on earth is just something we drive on in heaven. Jesus said in Matthew 6, don't lay up yourself treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.

[50 : 36] verse 22 says, I saw no temple in the city. For its temple is the Lord God and the Almighty and the Lamb.

The idea is, why would you need to go somewhere where God is if God is everywhere? the city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it.

Why? God is there. He's just repeating the same point over and over and over again, right? Why do you need the sun? Why do we need the sun? Light, life, warmth?

Well, you've got it in Jesus. So you don't need those things. by its light will the nations walk and the king of the earth will bring their glory into it and its gates will never be shut.

By day there will be no night. So the gates will never be shut. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations, but nothing unclean will ever enter into it.

[51 : 40] You've got any doubt. Is this just a thing in the back of your mind? Yeah, yeah, but what if? But what if Adam and Eve what if that thing starts all over again?

He's going to address that. Nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those written in the Lamb's book of life.

Then the angel showed me, we're going to finish with this, then the angel showed me the river of water of life, brightest crystal flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, through the middle of the street of the city, also on either side of the river, the tree of life, with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month.

So, the Bible begins in a garden and ends in a city. The garden, the Bible begins with a tree of life which man was not allowed to eat from after he sinned.

fruit. And would you know, we see that tree of life again. And here there's fruit every single day, every single week, of every single month throughout the year.

[53 : 04] The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. no longer will there be any accursed, but the throne of God and the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him, and they will see his face.

Like, you're going to see his face. You're not going to be at the back somewhere.

Like, your ticket gets you to the front row. You're going to see his face. Do you know what I'm saying? Like, these stadiums, that people buy tickets to go and see these singers, and they're way back at the back, and there's just this little guy, about this big, and they have to have these screens, and you're kind of like, I could have seen that on TV, and I've paid like a bazillion pounds to go and, you know, and a bottle of water has cost me 40 quid, or whatever, you know, and it's like, I came out to, the fireworks are bigger than the dude that I'm watching.

Our idea of stadium has become corrupt, hasn't it? But here, they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads, and night will be no more, and they will need no light of lamp nor sun, for the Lord their God will be their light, and they all lived happily ever after.

I was listening to a song this morning, I shared it, if you are a Facebooker, let's just close with this, and the words of a song, again, I was thinking about this morning, come Lord Jesus, come back soon, creation waits to bow before you, let's pray, Father, thank you for this promise in your word, thank you for the happily ever after, thank you Lord that we have that promise, that we have the happily ever after, because you will be in our midst, and we will be with you, Lord we want to say sorry this morning, for pinning our hopes and trust in things that we think are going to make us happy forever, and yet leave us thirsty, we pray today, that we not only look forward to this day, where all our dreams come true, but Lord help us in today, to recognize your presence showing up in remarkable ways, as well as the ordinary ways, you've promised to never leave us nor forsake us, you've given us your Holy

[56 : 22] Spirit to be in us and to be with us, and so we want to recognize your presence with us, and the knowledge of you, walking with you, following after you, give us a glimpse of what is to come, help us to forsake all other things, and follow you, because the presence of God is our happily ever after, Lord, as we turn to you in song again, may the words of these songs be the meditation of our hearts, may they be true, may our hearts be honest, Lord, may we say, come Lord Jesus, come back soon, creation waits to bow before you, amen.