

The River of Renewal

Adam Davidson

BIG IDEA

Jesus is restoring what was broken, bringing us back into the presence of God.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Revelation 22:1-5, Genesis 2:8-9, Genesis 2:10, 15-17, Genesis 3:17-19, Mark 1:15, Mark 14:61-62, Psalm 27:1, 4-8, James 5:13-16, 2 Corinthians 5:17

1. Revelation depicts the "new heaven and new earth", the ultimate culmination of the Kingdom of God. To remain acquainted with this promise, take time to read (individually or corporately) Revelation 21. But don't do this too quickly or from a merely academic approach. As you read/listen/experience, what stands out? Does any particular phrase or passage make your heart beat faster? Is there a specific Word that the Holy Spirit is prompting you to ponder?
2. Now that we've taken the time to consider the glory of God's presence among us, read the text from Sunday (Revelation 22:1-5). Compare the scenery and image here with what is depicted in Genesis 2:9, 3:22, and Ezekiel 47:12. What images are consistent with Revelation? What's different?
3. We ultimately go "back to the Garden," flourishing as God intended for humanity. However, the Garden of Eden is home to two people, whereas the New Jerusalem is home to many. The Garden is a populated city, where buildings and streets coexist with fruit, healing leaves, a river, and a single source of light. What does this tell us about God's original plan for creation? Would it have looked like this without the fall of humanity?
4. Let's talk about water. The Angel showed John a "river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb." Contrast this with any number of references to water throughout Scripture (Genesis 1:2, 6, Isaiah 12:3, Ezekiel 36:25, John 4:7-14) and look for parallels. How is this heavenly image of the source and flow serve as a culmination & reconciliation?
5. Let's talk about trees. Genesis 3 tells the story of God removing Adam & Eve from the Garden, in large part to disable their access to the Tree of Life. In Revelation, this Tree is now a key part of eternity. What is the significance of this tree compared to its depiction in Genesis, and what does creation "gain" from the "city tree"?
6. Let's talk about darkness. Dark is scary, threatening, death. Jesus is the light of the world, the one who has made his light shine in our hearts, the light of life. How do you imagine this light "working" in eternity, especially with the elimination of other light sources -- lamps, sun -- and what does it mean for eternity?
7. The phrase "so heavenly minded they're no earthly good" has been around for quite some time. Talk about the risk of seeing heaven as mere escape from the world vs. the Kingdom of God coming to dwell on earth.
8. Conversely, consider the other extreme, where we take it upon ourselves to fix everything that's broken, creating a utopia. Why is it impossible to work ahead of God's timeline, and how do we be sure to keep in step with Him?
9. Take time to pray -- for life, healing, light, and intimacy with the Lord. Pray this for yourself, your group, and your community/pop-up garden.