



For the next 3 weeks Homegroups will be following our short series looking at Revelation 21-22v5. Each week we will be picking up a different theme from the verses and thinking through how our certain hope ought to shape what life looks like now.

Please find below a brief overview of the talk ('People') and then some ideas for questions and further reading.

You can listen to the talk here: http://www.mrc-oxford.org/Groups/89261/Magdalen_Road_Church/Resources/Sermons/Sermon_Audio/Sermon_Audio.aspx

We began by thinking about Jesus' words that '**where your treasure is, there your heart will be also**'. What we treasure in life will shape and mould who we are. If the New Heavens and the New Earth are what we treasure, then our hearts will follow and so our lives will be changed. We also thought about how to interpret this kind of literature and noted that the language being used is the language of the bible. Rather than trying to initially think what does a word (eg city) mean to us, start with trying to understand what it means to the biblical authors. What part do cities play in the biblical story?

We **firstly** saw that it will be a place of 'people' – that is, not something theoretical but rather, solid and real. And the complete, perfected, beautified people of God will be there. The language of a 'bride'(v2 and v9) picks up & completes the picture of a marriage between God & his people that runs right through the bible. The 'completeness' is highlighted by the names of the 12 tribes and 12 apostles being on the gates and the foundations (v12-14). As well as the perfected people though, the idea of the nations is clear within the verses (see v24, v26 and 22v2). This picks up on both the theme of the blessings from God going to the world (See Is 60v1-3 etc), but also from Rev 7v9 where every people group is represented praising their creator.

We **secondly** and **thirdly** saw that the daily struggles of the Christian life will be a thing of the past. There will be no more sin and no more suffering, as the curse of Genesis 3 has been finally lifted (v4) and we will perfectly be the people we were made to be (21v7), reflecting our Father as his children. Conformed once again to his image. This is contrasted with v8 that highlights those who do not belong to God and so, like Satan in ch 20, will not be with him forever.

Finally we saw that it will be a place of intimate service (22v3-5), as we will see God face to face and serve him forever. The language is that of priesthood and in some senses parallels Adam's pre-curse work in Genesis 2. Not tainted by sin and suffering but always fulfilling and joy-filled.

Some possible questions

What do **you hope for** at the moment in life?

How do these hopes shape you?

Do you find it easy to focus on Rev 21-22 as your final ultimate hope? Why / why not?

Does anything surprise / strike you about the theme of 'people' from Sunday's sermon from these verses?

What do you most look forward to as the curse and the daily struggles of the Christian life will be done with?

How can you be shaped more by these truths?

How can we help each other in this?