

JESUS THE BRIDEGROOM

A PLACE IN FATHER'S HOUSE

In my Father's house are many dwelling places, if it were not so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. - John 14:2-3

Jesus spoke those words to his disciples just after he had washed their feet and shared the covenant meal with them. He wanted to comfort his closest friends for the challenges to come. In a few hours he would be crucified at the outskirts of Jerusalem. Several weeks after that, he would return to a more welcoming Jerusalem, the one where his Father dwelt on high.

Jesus had many roles when he came to earth: carpenter, builder, teacher, preacher, prophet, healer, disciple maker, friend of sinners and Savior. During the last supper he was a bridegroom, making his covenant pledge to the first members of his bridal company. After his return to heaven he took on other roles: high priest, intercessor, wedding planner, architect and designer of heavenly homes in a mega city. Sometimes this whole thing sounds like a big fairy tale story which is too good to be true. However, anyone who has even a modest knowledge of the Bible knows that it is a supernatural book with so many fulfilled prophecies and amazing facts that are corroborated by archaeology, history and science.

It was customary in Bible times for the bridegroom to make a visit to his future bride and then return to his Father's house in order to prepare a home for his bride.....and so it was with Jesus. The Bible gives us some facts of the city where these homes are being prepared.

Cities have various qualities, both good or bad in things such as: climate and terrain, housing, health care, crime, transportation, education, economics etc. They are often described in a word or a phrase

NYC...the big apple, Buffalo...snow and chicken wings, Los Angeles.....film and entertainment. Las Vegas...gambling. Seattle....rain. Chicago....windy. Denver....mile high. Toronto...cosmopolitan. London...financial center. The cities of the world have similarities to the one mentioned in the book of Revelation, the city of Babylon (Rev. 18) - worldly and self-indulgent.

God's city, the new Jerusalem, has a unique description.....HOLY.

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. - Rev.21:2

The city of God is big and beautiful. It is about 1500 miles wide, high and long. This would make it as large as half of the area of the USA. The Holy of Holies of the tabernacle in the Old Testament was 15 feet wide, high and long. One thing these places have in common is the glory of God that fills them, which is His manifest presence which can be tangibly felt. Since the city is filled with God's presence, we can understand that its atmosphere would reflect the nature of God. John described the city as 'beautifully dressed'. The beauty of God is his holiness and Jesus is preparing that place for his bride!

God is Holy - 'To define holiness, we must start with God and work our way down to us. The simplest definition of holiness is separation. God is the most separate of beings. In fact He is separate from everyone in the truest sense. There are only two categories: uncreated and created. God is in the first category; every other being and object is second. **This is the root of God's holiness: He is separate from all else. No one is like him.**'

John Snyder in his study manual - Behold Your God

No one nor anything impure can live in the new Jerusalem. **Fire** comes to mind when we think of God's holiness. It is the most frequent symbol used of God in the Bible. Moses found himself on holy ground when God brought the fire into the bush in the desert. There were thousands of bushes in that desert, but they went unnoticed. We remember the one Moses saw because God was in it! It was set apart.....holy. (God calls Christians saints, ie. holy because we are set apart for him and belong to him).

The most holy place in the tabernacle had **fire** over the ark of the covenant. The whole tent of meeting was holy and had a special protocol for entry, but to enter the most holy place (holy of holies) was dangerous. Only once a year the high priest would enter it with rope tied to him (in case he needed to be dragged out). If the sacrifice for his sins and the sins of the people was not acceptable, he would die instantly in the presence of God's holiness. The curtain that guarded the most holy place was so heavy that it took four men to carry it when it came time to move the whole tabernacle. That thick curtain was put there by God because he knew that **no fleshly man can see his full glory and live. One great truth missing from the church today is God's holiness and our need to view Him with reverential awe.**

A closing scene from the movie, Raiders of the Lost Ark, gives us a vivid display of what happens when onlookers were exposed to the full power of God in the ark of the covenant. The **fire** of God's presence consumed them. (In future messages we will be looking at how we are to prepare to meet God and spend eternity with Him in His most holy place.....the new Jerusalem.) We see other examples of fire in the Bible, even at the beginning of the church in the book of Acts. On the day of Pentecost God brought **fire** down upon his early church.

It was a purifying power that energized Peter as he gave a passionate message to the crowd that had gathered in Jerusalem. Three thousand new worshipers were added to the kingdom of God. Jesus had taught that the Father is seeking true worshipers. - John 4:23.

God is to be worshiped with reverence and awe for He is a **consuming fire**. - Hebrews 12:28,29. God is awesome along with his creation and mighty acts, but few other things are. The world will realize this when Jesus returns in **flaming fire**. His followers will marvel at him but the ungodly will be banished from his holy presence.

- 2 Thess. 1:7-9 There will be singing in heaven, including the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. Here are a couple of lines from each.

Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you- **majestic in holiness, awesome in glory**, working wonders? - Exodus 15:11 (Song of Moses)

Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are **holy**. All nations will come and worship before you. - Rev. 15:4 (Song of the Lamb)

Around God's throne there are seven lamps of **blazing fire** and the creatures never stop saying.... **Holy, Holy, Holy**. The supreme attribute of God is His holiness and all in heaven will forever be in awe of Him. Yes....He is our loving Father who desires intimacy with us, just as Jesus had with Him when he walked this earth but He also deserves our deepest respect and honor. While Jesus walked the earth, he called God, 'Holy Father' - John 17:11. Jesus knew the Father better than anyone and that He was more special than any father imaginable - one who deserves our utmost honor and respect, especially since He is the head of the household. - Ephesians 2:19.

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