

Lesson 4

Imagine your favorite town or city without any potholes, traffic, pollution, or crime of any kind! Impossible? The Bible tells of a city with streets paved with gold! And within its tall walls made of pure jasper, there won't be even one person coughing, sneezing, or coming down with a cold. Everyone will be in perfect health and will enjoy each other's company. Would you like to visit this city? Well, not only can you visit, you can live there! Read on to find out how ...

1. Who is the architect and builder of this incredible city?

“God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them” (Hebrews 11:16).

Answer: The Bible says that God is building an awesome and huge city for His people—and it's as real as any other city in the world!



God is the architect and builder of the holy city.

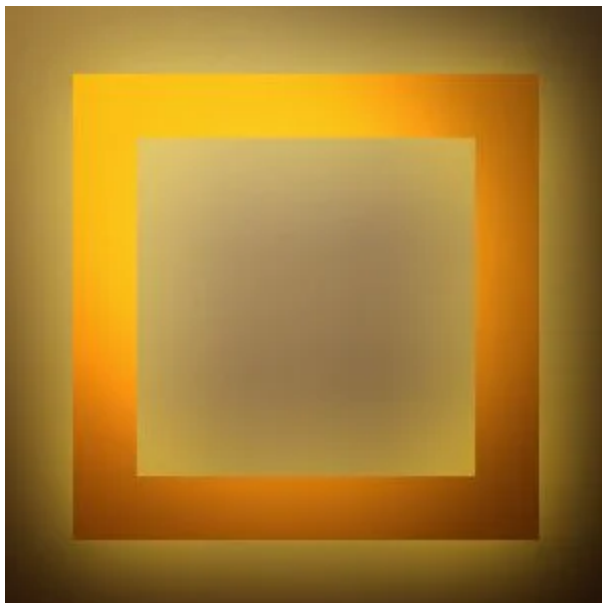
2. Where is this amazing city?

“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God” (Revelation 21:2).

“O Lord my God ... hear in heaven Your dwelling place” (1 Kings 8:28, 30).

Answer: At this moment, the holy city is now under construction in heaven.

3. How does the Bible describe this amazing city?



It's perimeter is 1,500 miles!

Answer: A. NAME

The city is called by the name “New Jerusalem” (Revelation 21:2).

B. SIZE

“The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs” (Revelation 21:16). The city is perfectly square. Its perimeter is 12,000 furlongs—equivalent to 1,500 miles. It is 375 miles long on each side!

C. WALLS

“The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick. The wall was made of jasper” (Revelation 21:17, 18 NIV). A wall standing at 144 cubits—that’s 216 feet high!—surrounds the city. The wall is made of solid jasper, with a radiance and beauty beyond description. Think of it: nearly 20 stories high and solid jasper!

D. GATES

“It had a great, high wall with twelve gates. ... There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ... The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl” (Revelation 21:12, 13, 21 NIV).

E. FOUNDATIONS

“The wall of the city had twelve foundations ... decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst” (Revelation 21:14, 19, 20 NIV). The city has 12 full, complete foundations—each one made of precious stone. Every color of the rainbow is represented, so at a distance the city will appear to be resting upon a rainbow.

F. STREETS

“The street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass” (Revelation 21:21).

G. APPEARANCE

“The Holy City ... prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband ... shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ... The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide” (Revelation 21:2, 11, 16 NIV). The city, with all of its precious stones, gold, and shimmering beauty, will be lighted with the glory of God. Its breathtaking majesty and purity is compared to “a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.”



Heaven's fantastic tree of life brings unending life and youth to all who eat of it.

4. What phenomenal feature of this majestic city assures every citizen eternal youth and health?

“In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve

fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2).

“Take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” (Genesis 3:22).

Answer: The tree of life bears 12 kinds of fruit, is in the middle of the city (Revelation 2:7), and brings unending life and youth to all who eat from it. Even its leaves contain wonderful sustaining qualities. This tree will yield a new crop of fruit each month.

5. Is it true that this amazing city will descend to this earth?

“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2).

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5).

“The righteous will be recompensed on the earth” (Proverbs 11:31).

Answer: Yes! The majestic holy city will come down to this planet to become the capital of the earth made new. All the saved will have a home in this city.

6. What will happen to sin and the unsaved?

“All the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up” (Malachi 4:1).

“The elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

“You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet” (Malachi 4:3).

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:13).

Answer: God will cleanse the earth from sin; He will also, in deep sadness, cleanse the earth from those who would continue in sin. Then God will make a perfect new earth. The holy city will be earth’s capital. Here the saved will live in joy, peace, and holiness throughout eternity. God has promised that sin will not rise up again. See Nahum 1:9. (For more information on hell, see Study Guide 11.)



7.



Sin and sinners will be eradicated by fire from God.



What thrilling promises has God made to the people who enter His new kingdom?

Answer: **A.** The Lord, in person, will live with them (Revelation 21:3).

B. They will never become bored. There will be pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11).

C. There will be no more death, pain, tears, sorrow, sickness, hospitals, operations, tragedy, disappointment, trouble, hunger, or thirst (Revelation 21:4; Isaiah 33:24; Isaiah 65:23; Revelation 7:16).

D. They will not get tired (Isaiah 40:31).

E. Every person will be physically whole in every way. The deaf will hear, the blind will see, and the paralyzed will run (Isaiah 35:5, 6; Philippians 3:21).

F. Jealousy, fear, hatred, falsehood, envy, impurity, cynicism, filth, worry, and all evil will not exist in God's kingdom (Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15). People will no longer be burdened with the worries and cares that distract and damage them. There will be no more anxiety. Time will become eternity, and the pressures and deadlines of earth today will be gone forever.



8. How will the new earth differ from our earth today?

Answer: **A.** Vast oceans as we know them today will be gone (Revelation 21:1). Today, oceans cover about 70 percent of the earth's surface. This will not be the case in God's new kingdom. The whole world will be one huge garden of unsurpassed beauty, interspersed with lakes, rivers, and mountains (Revelation 22:1; Acts 3:20, 21).

B. Deserts will be replaced with gardens (Isaiah 35:1, 2).

C. Every animal will be tame. No creature—wolves, lions, bears, etc.—will prey upon others, and little children will lead them (Isaiah 11:6–9;

Isaiah 65:25).

D. There will be no more curse (Revelation 22:3). The curse of sin, as detailed in Genesis 3:17–19, will be no more.

E. There will be no more violence of any kind (Isaiah 60:18). This includes no more crime, storms, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, injury, etc.

F. Nothing defiling will be found (Revelation 21:27). There will be no drunkenness, taverns, alcoholic beverages, brothels, pornography, or any other impurity of any kind in the new kingdom.

9. Will there be young children in God’s kingdom? If so, will they grow up?



“The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets” (Zechariah 8:5).

“You shall go out and grow ... like stall-fed calves” (Malachi 4:2).

Answer: There will be many young children in the holy city (Isaiah 11:6–9) and these young ones will grow up. Ever since the fall of man, we have degenerated much in stature, intellect, and vitality—but all of this will be restored! (Acts 3:20, 21).

10. When loved ones are reunited in heaven, will they recognize one another?

“Then I shall know just as I also am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).



Answer: The Bible clearly teaches that the saved who have died will be raised to life, join the saved who are living, and enter God's new kingdom together (Isaiah 26:19; Jeremiah 31:15–17; 1 Corinthians 15:51–55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18). It also teaches that loved ones in God's new kingdom will know one another, just as people recognize each other on the earth today.

11. Will people in heaven be made of flesh and

bone?

“Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, ‘Peace to you.’ But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.’ ... But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, ‘Have you any food here?’ So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence. ... And He led them out as far as Bethany, and ... while He blessed them ... He was parted from them and carried up into heaven” (Luke 24:36–39, 41–43, 50, 51).

“This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

“The Lord Jesus Christ ... will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body” (Philippians 3:20, 21).

Answer: After His resurrection, Jesus proved to the disciples that He was flesh and bone by having them touch Him and by eating food. This same Jesus ascended to His Father and will come again to the earth. The saved will be given bodies like the body of Christ and will be physical people with flesh and bone throughout eternity. The difference will be that our heavenly

bodies will not be subject to deterioration and death. The teaching that the saved in heaven will be merely spirits who float around on clouds and do nothing but play harps has no foundation in the Bible. Jesus did not die on the cross to provide any such trivial future for those who accept His love and follow His way. Most people have no interest in such an existence and, therefore, have no desire to enter God's heavenly kingdom—sometimes preferring it only because they fear hell. If every person could learn the truth about God's holy city and the new earth, millions more might begin to understand His love and would turn to Him and enjoy the peace, joy, and purpose that He designed them to experience.



12. How will people spend their time in the new kingdom?

“They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant

and another eat ... and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands” (Isaiah 65:21, 22).

Answer: The saved will build their own homes in the new earth. (Each person will also have a city home built by Christ—see John 14:1–3.) They will plant vineyards and eat the fruit from them. The Bible is plain about this: Real people do real things in heaven, and they will thoroughly enjoy it all.

13. What else will the saved do in this paradise?

Answer: A. Sing and play heavenly music (Isaiah 35:10; 51:11; Psalm 87:7; Revelation 14:2, 3).

B. Worship before God's throne every week (Isaiah 66:22, 23).

C. Enjoy never-fading flowers and trees (Ezekiel 47:12; Isaiah 35:1, 2).

D. Visit with loved ones, ancestors, Bible characters, etc. (Matthew 8:11; Revelation 7:9–17).

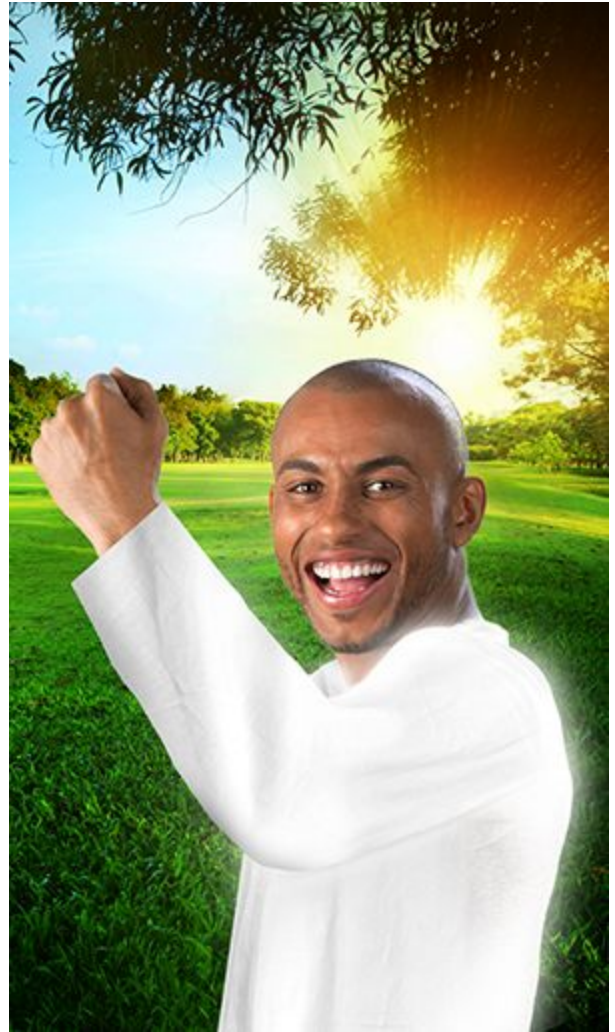
E. Study the animals of paradise (Isaiah 11:6–9; 65:25).

F. Travel and explore without ever becoming weary (Isaiah 40:31).

G. Listen to God sing (Zephaniah 3:17).

H. Experience their deepest desires (Psalm 37:3, 4; Isaiah 65:24).

I. And the greatest joy of all—enjoy the privilege of being like Jesus, traveling with Him, and seeing Him face to face! (Revelation 14:4; 22:4; 21:3; 1 John 3:2).



14. Can human language fully describe the glories of our home in paradise?

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1

Corinthians 2:9).

Answer: Not even in its wildest dreams can the heart of mankind begin to comprehend the wonders of God's eternal kingdom. The paradise that Adam lost will be restored (Acts 3:20, 21).

15. Is this kingdom being prepared for you personally?

"Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

"To an inheritance incorruptible ... reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4).

"I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).

Answer: Yes! It is being prepared for you personally—right now. And the invitation from the Lord is to you personally. Please do not reject His offer!



16. How can you be assured of a place in this great and glorious kingdom?

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20).

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12).

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Answer: Give your life to Christ and abide in Him so that He can cleanse you from sin and the desire to sin. It's that simple! When you abide in Him, Jesus gives you the power to do His will and to keep His commandments out of loving obedience. This means that you will begin to live as Christ lived and that He will help you overcome all sin. "He who overcomes shall inherit all things" (Revelation 21:7).

A person is prepared for heaven when heaven is in the heart.

17. Have you accepted Jesus' glorious invitation to live with Him forever in His heavenly kingdom?

Answer:

Thought Questions

1. How can heaven be a happy place when the saved think of loved ones who are lost?

The Bible says that God will "wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Revelation 21:4). Surrounded by the beauty and joys of the new earth, God's redeemed people will forget the tragedies and heartaches of the past. Isaiah 65:17 says, "The former shall not be remembered or come to mind."

2. The Bible says, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 15:50). How, then, can the redeemed be flesh and bone?

Here the apostle Paul emphasizes what he said in verses 35–49, that our resurrected bodies will be different from our present bodies. Sin changed our bodies and our very natures. Therefore, when we enter the paradise of Eden restored, our bodies will be changed so we can fully enjoy the perfection of heaven. "Flesh and blood" is only a figure of speech referring to the human body on this earth (see Matthew 16:17; Galatians 1:16, 17; Ephesians 6:12). Christ, in His resurrected body, declared that He was truly "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39). And according to Philippians 3:21, we will have bodies like His.

3. Is the apostle Peter in charge of the gates of the holy city?

No. The Bible says in Revelation 21:12 that the new Jerusalem—the holy city of God—has 12 gates, and at the gates are 12 angels. No reference is made in the Bible to any of the apostles as guardians of the gates.

4. Is the holy city really big enough to hold all the saved people of all ages?

If each saved person were given 100 square feet of ground space, there would be room for 39 billion people in the city, which is many times the present population of the world. Many statisticians believe that if all the people who have ever lived were saved, there would be plenty of room for them in the holy city. Scripture makes it clear, however, that not everyone will be saved (Matthew 7:14). Thus, there will be more than enough room in the great city.

5. Sometimes I wonder if the reward is worth the sacrifice. It seems that Satan is about to overwhelm me at times. Does the Bible offer any encouragement?

Yes! The apostle Paul must have been thinking of you when he wrote, “The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). Just one glimpse of your heavenly Father who has been waiting for you in that eternal kingdom will cause the worst trials and temptations of earth to fade into insignificance!

6. Will babies who die be saved in God’s kingdom?

We do not have a specific Bible answer to this question, but many believe that infants will be saved on the basis of Matthew 2:16–18, where the Bible tells of King Herod slaying the young male children in Bethlehem. The Old Testament foretold this tragic incident, but God told the mothers to stop their crying because their children would one day be restored to them. “Refrain your voice from weeping. ... Your children shall come back to their own border” (Jeremiah 31:16, 17).

7. Do I understand correctly that the home of the saved will be here on this earth?

Yes! Although the holy city is now in God’s dwelling place, He is going to move it to this earth. The holy city will be the capital of the new earth, and God will move His throne here (Revelation 21:2, 3; 22:1, 3) and live with the saved right on earth throughout eternity. And where the Lord abides, that is heaven. God’s plan is to restore to us what Adam lost: the glories of a perfect life

on a perfect planet. Satan and sin interrupted God’s plan, but the plan will be carried out. We can all share in this new kingdom—it’s too much to miss! (See Study Guide 12 for more information.)

8. Why do so many believe that the home of the saved is a misty place with ghostlike inhabitants who float on clouds and do nothing but play harps?

This teaching originates with the devil, the father of lies (John 8:44). He is anxious to distort God’s loving plan and present heaven as an unreal, “spooky” place so people will lose interest or become skeptical of God’s Word altogether. Satan knows that when men and women fully understand the Bible truth regarding the home of the saved, his power over them is broken, because they will begin making plans to enter that kingdom. This is why he works so hard to confuse the issue and spread falsehood regarding our heavenly home.

Quiz Questions

1. The holy city in space (1)

- Is not literal but simply an allegory.
- Is a literal city being prepared now by God in His dwelling place.
- Does not exist except in the minds of some people.

2. This holy city (1)

- Will be destroyed by a nuclear explosion.
- Will be captured by Satan and his fallen angels.
- Will descend to this earth and become the capital for the earth made new.

3. In the following list, check the true Bible facts regarding the holy city: (7)

- It is called the new Jerusalem.
- It is about the size of London.
- Its walls are of topaz.
- The city is as long as it is wide.
- The streets are of pure gold.
- The city has 14 foundations.
- The apostle Peter stands at its gate.
- Each of its 12 gates is made of one pearl.
- Its perimeter is 1,500 miles.
- Its foundations are all made of precious stones.
- The city will be in perfect proportion.

4. The tree of life (1)

- Is a real tree that will impart eternal health and youth to God's people.
- Is a figure of speech and means only that God will give His people strength.
- Existed in the beginning but will not be included in the new kingdom.

5. In the following list, check all items that are true Bible promises to people in God's new kingdom: (5)

- The Lord will perform marriages daily.
- The tree of life bears 20 kinds of fruit.
- The Lord Himself will live with His people.
- After a million years, the saints will become bored.
- There will be no more death or sorrow.
- People will never get tired.
- The paralyzed will be carried around by angels.
- Angels will be the doctors and perform all operations.
- The blind will no longer be blind.
- Jealousy, fear, hatred, falsehood, envy, and impurity will be gone forever.
- Babies will not grow up.

6. Check the statements below that tell the truth about the new earth: (6)

- The oceans of today will be no more.
- The deserts will be larger.
- Animals will be kept in lovely heavenly cages.
- Tornadoes, earthquakes, and floods will not happen.
- Trash will be carefully removed from the streets daily by the angels.
- Flowers and trees will not wilt or fade.
- Heaven will be right here on earth.
- Sin will not arise a second time.
- The glories of it all cannot be adequately described.

7. The righteous in the heavenly kingdom (1)

- Will be ghosts who play harps and float on clouds.
- Will not know other loved ones and friends who may be there.
- Will have real bodies of flesh and bones and will know each other.

8. We know that people in heaven will be real and will do real things because (1)

- Science has proved this conclusively.
- The Bible says we will be like Christ, who had flesh and bones after His resurrection and did real things.
- Many preachers say this is so.

9. I can be sure of a place in that heavenly kingdom if I (1)

- Say daily that I love the Lord.
- Am fearful enough of hell.
- Accept and follow Christ and keep His commandments.

10. What will the saved do in the heavenly kingdom? Check the true Bible facts listed below: (5)

- Build houses and live in them.
- Plant vineyards.
- Kill animals and eat them.
- Play heavenly instruments and sing praises to God.
- Worship before God's throne.
- Fly past hell and taunt the lost.
- Eat of the tree of life.

11. I accept Jesus' offer to live with Him forever in His kingdom.

- Yes.
- No.