

3 Grace City Vision

INTRODUCTION | Holy City

The third theme we look at concerning Grace City's vision is the vision God has for Tokyo, its restoration and for the accomplishment of a holy city. With today's passage, let's first have a look at God's plan for salvation. Then, let's learn about this future world called the holy city. Finally, if this holy city is really coming, let's think of how we should wait for it and how it connects with our life style and way of living.

SCRIPTURE | Revelation 21: 1-8

1 I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and so had the sea. 2 Then I saw New Jerusalem, that holy city, coming down from God in heaven. It was like a bride dressed in her wedding gown and ready to meet her husband. 3 I heard a loud voice shout from the throne: God's home is now with his people. He will live with them, and they will be his own. Yes, God will make his home among his people. 4 He will wipe all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more death, suffering, crying, or pain. These things of the past are gone forever. 5 Then the one sitting on the throne said: I am making everything new. Write down what I have said. My words are true and can be trusted. 6 Everything is finished! I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give water from the life-giving fountain to everyone who is thirsty. 7 All who win the victory will be given these blessings. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 8 But I will tell you what will happen to cowards and to everyone who is unfaithful or dirty-minded or who murders or is sexually immoral or uses witchcraft or worships idols or tells lies. They will be thrown into that lake of fire and burning sulfur. This is the second death.

QUESTIONS |

- 1: (Verses 1-2) How is the coming kingdom of God described? For you, how does this vision of the future influence your daily life?
- 2: How does the hope the Bible talks about differ from the hope we are usually surrounded by (reference: Ryu Murakami)?
- 3: (Verses 3-7) Why are we able to believe in this consolation and happiness? Explain on what this belief is founded.
- 4: (Verses 6-7) How does this passage describe the person responsible for this bright future?
- 5: How can this future become a reality? How can we get ready for this future? Let's think about the lifestyle of those who are waiting for this holy city (reference: Rodney Stark).

Reading (Reference) |

Grace City Vision

To reveal God's glory through a church planting movement; to renew lives; to restore the city and to build God's Kingdom, through proclaiming Christ's gospel of grace in the center of Tokyo.

Ryu Murakami – Amid shortage, a surplus of hope (New York times)

... Ten years ago I wrote a novel in which a middle-school student, delivering a speech before Parliament, says: "This country has everything. You can find whatever you want here. The only thing you can't find is hope." One might say the opposite today: evacuation centers are facing serious shortages of food, water and medicine; there are shortages of goods and power in the Tokyo area as well. Our way of life is threatened, and the government and utility companies have not responded adequately. But for all we've lost, hope is in fact one thing we Japanese have regained. The great earthquake and tsunami have robbed us of many lives and resources. But we who were so intoxicated with our own prosperity have once again planted the seed of hope. So I choose to believe.

Rodney Stark, The Rise of Christianity, p.161

To cities filled with the homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity as well as hope. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate basis for attachments. To cities filled with orphans and widows, Christianity provided a new and expanded sense of family. To cities torn by violent ethnic strife, Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity. And to cities faced with epidemics, fires and earthquakes, Christianity offered effective... services.

Prayer |

- Let's be thankful for the wonderful hope God promised us through Jesus Christ's Gospel. The promise of a holy city is already starting by faith in the Christian community and will be accomplished. Think of what you would expect this city to be and pray.
- Even if the holy city partly realized among us, it is not achieved yet. Where do we need God's blessings in our lives and surroundings? Think and pray.

UPCOMING EVENTS | This Week & Next Week

Lunchtime meeting Akasaka 19th Tue
 Lunchtime meeting Kasumigaseki 20th Wed
 Lunchtime meeting Otemachi 21th Thu
 Day of Pentecost & GCCT 5th Anniversary Service 24th Sun

Grace City Gospel 25th Mon
 Lunchtime meeting Marunouchi 27th Wed
 Lunchtime meeting Otemachi 28th Thu

