

③ Art Month: The Gospel and the Arts

INTRODUCTION | The Bride of the Lamb

Today's passage is about the vision for the world and our lives. Let's take a look at them from three following points: 1) Let's focus on the grand design of God by asking what is the plan of God revealed to us in the scriptures. 2) Our future is described as "a new heaven and a new earth", "holy city", and "new Jerusalem". Let's think about what these terms entail about the future. 3) Let's take a look at how the transformation of the world occurs, the arrival of the new world, and how we can join the movement.

SCRIPTURE | Revelations 21:1-11 (ESV)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." ⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." ⁹ Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

QUESTIONS |

1. (v.1-2) The world redeemed by the gospel of Christ, a new heaven and a new earth, the holy city, and new Jerusalem, is said to be like a bride adorned for her husband. What does that image denote about the world to come?

2. A vision for the world includes God's renewing of the world through the gospel of Christ. How does that affect your daily life? We constantly experience the vanity, suffering and sorrow we wish to avoid. They even seem like an odd shaped piece in a jigsaw puzzle. How does your hope in the consummation of the Kingdom of God encourage you to walk in faith? (Ref. Martin Luther King Jr.)

3. Many of the commentators of Revelations 21-22 view the holy city, which is also called the wife of the Lamb (v.9), as the garden city where nature and the city exist in perfect harmony. What are some of the beautiful things you see in modern cities, and what are some of the sins of flaws?
4. How is the consummated Kingdom of God realized? How can we enter into this Kingdom of God? Let's think in light of the warning given in verse 8.
5. (v.3-4) How is our experience of pain and agony, as well as sadness and tragedy filling up this world be alleviated and restored in the end? Let's think in light of Jesus' resurrection on the third day after he submitted to the pain and death of the cross. Also, let's pray for one another after sharing our current sufferings and worries to the extent you may share. (Ref. Makoto Fujimura)

Reading (Reference)

Martin Luther King Jr. "I have a dream"

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

Makoto Fujimura

"I painted the five large-scale images that illuminate this volume, *The Four Holy Gospels*, using water-based Nihonga materials (Japanese style painting), with my focus on the tears of Christ (John 11) - tears shed for the atrocities of the past century and for our present darkness."

John 11:32-35

³² Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. ³⁴ And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus wept.

UPCOMING EVENTS |

Lunch Time Meeting in November: Jinbocho (4th Tues), Kasumigaseki (5th Wed), Otemachi (6th Thurs)
Grace City Retreat @ Okutama Fukuinno-ke Nov. 1st(Sat) - 3rd (Mon)
Life Change Bible Study Nov. 9th (Sun) KDDI Hall 1:30 pm
Bento Project Nov. 8th (Sat) Please Donate Winter Clothing