

Week beginning 1st December 2019

God's Big Picture: The Bible in 6 weeks— Life in the Spirit



Welcome

As you look back at 2019, what things surprised you most?



15 mins 12/1

Worship

We naturally focus on what worries us; what things from 2019 do you need to thank God for? This could be things happening in your personal life, but also things happening in the wider world.



As you look towards 2020, what things weigh on your mind? This could be things happening in your personal life, but also things happening in the wider world.

Pray prayers of thanks to God for 2019, then commit 2020 to God in prayer.

20 mins 12/1

Word

The Bible can be divided into six chunks. Can you remember what they are?!



Read Revelation 21: 1-7

Health warning (!): the book of Revelation has spawned all kinds of wacky theories. It is a good starting point to say that we should leave to God difficulties too great for us.

So if we don't understand something (and a lot of the language in Revelation is highly symbolic), we don't need to fry our brains trying to explain things.

Verses 1 to 5 of chapter 21 have a kind of 'doughnut' structure - there is an outer layer and an inner core.

Verse 1 and 5 are the outer crust - on what do they focus?

Then there is a focus on what is 'no longer' (end of verse 1 and verse 4). What do you think this is about?

What other part of scripture might be being referenced when 'the sea' is mentioned - and what might that mean?

Then in the middle is the focus on God's holy city, the new Jerusalem, where God dwells (verses 2 and 3). What are the chief characteristics of the New Jerusalem?

The Bible starts in a garden and ends in a city. What do you think this could mean?

A thought about verse 8: verse 8 is about judgement. Judgement is theme that naturally makes us uncomfortable. We find it hard to understand God as a God of love and connect this with the idea of judgement.

This opens up tons of questions, which we can't tackle here - but it may help to think of this passage in the light of the whole '6 acts' of scripture.

45 mins 12/1

Witness

God who made us in the 'first act' of the Bible (Gen 1-2), will remake us in the final act of the Bible (Revelation 21). How is the Father calling us to change in 2020 to make us more ready to be citizens of the New Jerusalem?



10 mins 12/1