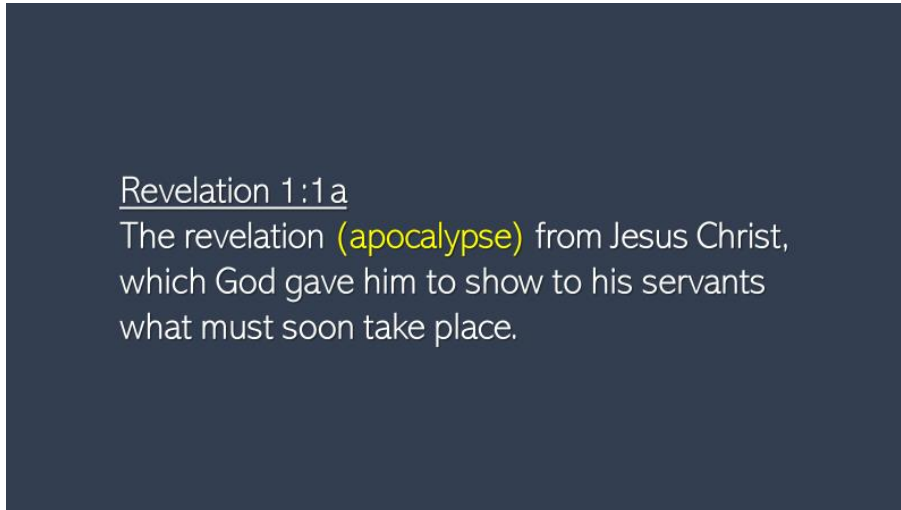




The vision which was shown to John while on the island of Patmos was....



Today our understanding of the word “apocalypse” is vastly different that it was for John’s original audience.

When people today hear the word “apocalypse”... they think... devastations.



But John’s original audience understood the word to mean...



... a revealing, a bringing to light of something that had not been known.

This is how the word apocalypse is consistently used in the Bible.

Matthew 10:26

“...there is nothing...hidden that will not be **made known.**”

Philippians 3:15

“...God will **make [it] clear** to you.”

1 Corinthians 2:10

“...these are the things God has **revealed** to us by his Spirit.”

The revelation from Jesus Christ to John... purposefully used vivid images.

... a lamb with seven horns and seven eyes

... an enormous, red, seven headed dragon with ten horns and seven crowns

... a seven headed beast that resembled a leopard, had feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion

... a beast that had horns like a lamb, but spoke like a dragon

... a city named Babylon that is a prostitute dressed in purple and scarlet

Why did Jesus communicate like this?

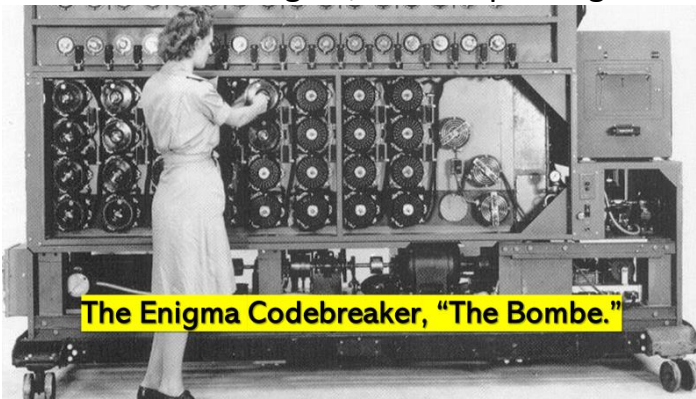
a. John was a prisoner of the Roman Empire.





Jesus' message through John to the churches had to be "cryptic" or the manuscript would never have been permitted by the Romans to leave the island.

Remember the Enigma, the enciphering machine used by the Germans in WWII?



Alan Turing a brilliant mathematician, along with Gordon Welchman, developed a machine they called "the Bombe" which cracked the enigma code. The codebreaker for the book of Revelation... that cracks the vivid images...



... is the OT Scriptures.

- b. Throughout the revelation, through the use of vivid images... Jesus reveals to his church, which was being fiercely persecuted... that heaven is in control... and that the Lord God Almighty is moving history towards His future ... a new beginning.

The apocalyptic images
are meant to grip
the reader's imagination
with the glory and power of God,
whose seen and unseen actions
not only influences,
but also directs the world
in this present time.

The Revelation encourages the people of God to not be distracted by world and local events, but to purposefully maintain their focus on Jesus at all times and in all situations.

It may seem redundant, but let me ask these questions for the sake of clarity:

- Does Jesus exist in the form of a lamb? with seven horns and seven eyes?
- Is Satan an enormous, red, seven-headed dragon with ten horns... who wears seven crowns?
- Do the two fantastical beasts described in Revelation 13 actually exist as described?
- Is there currently, anywhere in the world, a city named Babylon which is actually a prostitute?

The answer to all those questions is... no, no, no, no.

As the followers of Jesus read the Revelation, using as a codebreaker the OT scriptures, the reality behind the vivid images is revealed.



Let's work with this verse.

Revelation 21:22 – I did not see a temple in the city...

Why was there not a temple in the new Jerusalem?

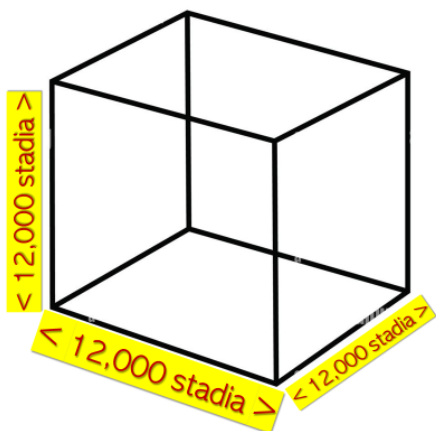
The reader is not left to wonder – the answer is provided.

...because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

What does this mean and why is it so significant to our faith in this present time?

I referenced this last week but need to restate it again...

Do you remember the measurements of the new Jerusalem which were told to John by an angel who measured it?



The city was
12,000 stadia* in length,
and as wide and high
as it is long.

Revelation 21:16

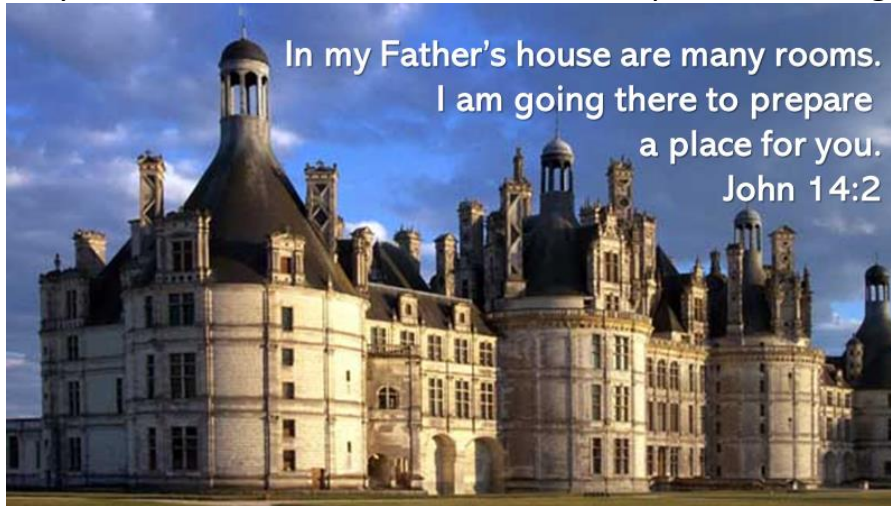
***2,200 kms**

In the Revelation the number 3... and the number 12... are numbers that communicate completeness.

With the numbers 12,000 x 12,000 x 12,000 – we see three twelves.

These numbers communicate how completely complete the new city will be, and how completely complete God will be everywhere present.

Do you remember what Jesus told his disciples the last night of his life?

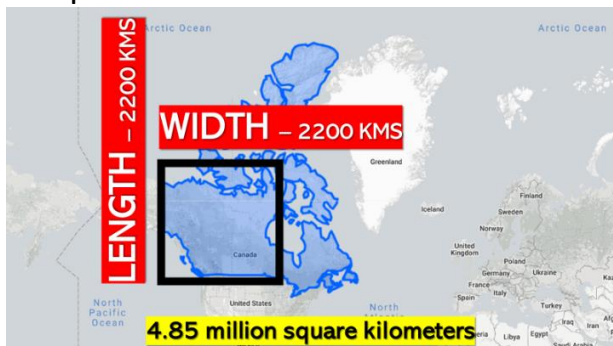


When we hear this, do we not think of a large home like this one in the slide?
Or maybe... an even bigger building?

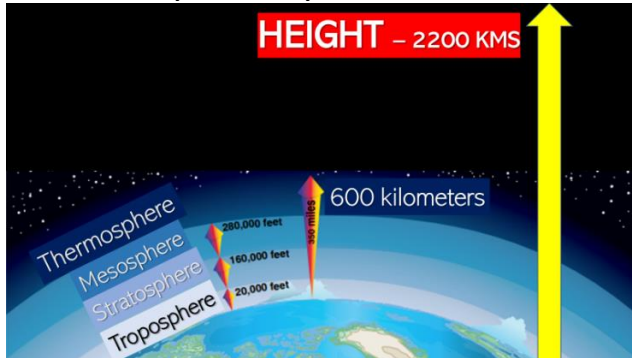


If we do... we think far, far, far too small.

The length and width of the new city – 12,000 stadia x 12,000 stadia... gives a footprint of 4.85 million kms.



Additionally, the city measures 12,000 stadia in height.



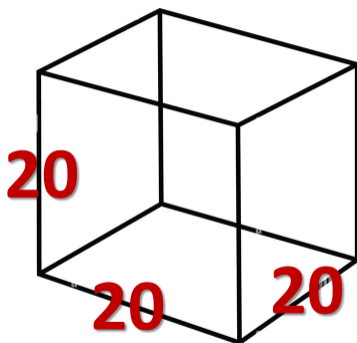
When you multiply the width by the length by the height of the city, we are presented with a staggering number ...

$$2200 \times 2200 \times 2200 =$$

10.648 billion
cubic square kilometers

We cannot begin to imagine a city of this scope, nor should we. Rather Jesus would have his people look past the image... to the reality that stands behind it. Which is what?

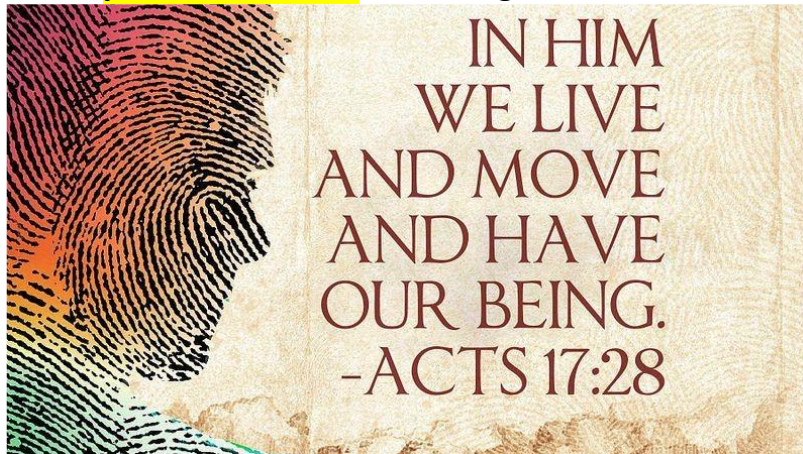
Remember... the OT is the codebreaker for the book of Revelation. What in the OT had the shape of a cube?



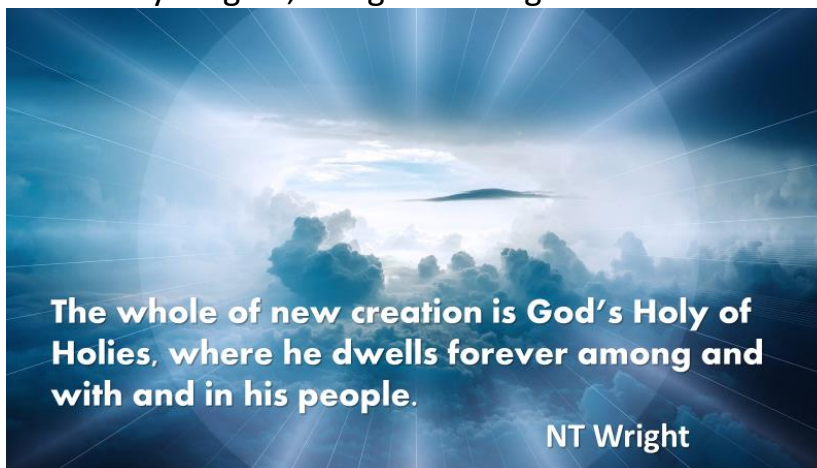
1 Kings 6:20
The inner sanctuary
[the Holy of Holies]
was twenty cubits long,
twenty wide
and twenty high.

The dimensions of the new city... communicate to the followers of Jesus that it is God's... Holy of Holies.

In the **present creation** according to Acts 17:28 nothing exists apart from God.



In the **new creation** and the new city “nothing will exist outside of God.” DJ, p.372.
Let me say it again, using Tom Wright’s words...



In this present time, by faith we believe that from heaven Jesus rules over all things, seen and unseen... and is everywhere present.
Because he does so the people of God have access to Jesus wherever they are.

But often we forget ... that Jesus is everywhere present with us... and will be so to the end of this age... and will never leave us or forsake us.

In the new city, the redeemed will never forget... because our glorious triune God will always be visibly manifest... with and among and in us.

In the new city, God’s people will live in God, but not be God.
In the new city, God will be in his people, without erasing their creatureliness.

In the new creation, God will always be distinct from his creation while all the while... permeating it with his glory, his holiness and his goodness.
This is the reality to which our salvation is taking us.

Regarding the size of the new Jerusalem.

2200 x 2200 x 2200 =
10.648 billion
cubic square kilometers

The sheer scope and immensity of the new city is intended by God... to leave the people of God... in awe of God's creativity and power and wisdom by which he has made the home in which we will live forever.

It is the same with the universe in which we live!

The observable universe
is a sphere measuring
92 billion light-years.

A light year
is equivalent to
9 trillion kilometers.

The vastness of the universe... and the enormity of the new city impresses upon the people of God the immensity of God's power and the profundity of God's wisdom.

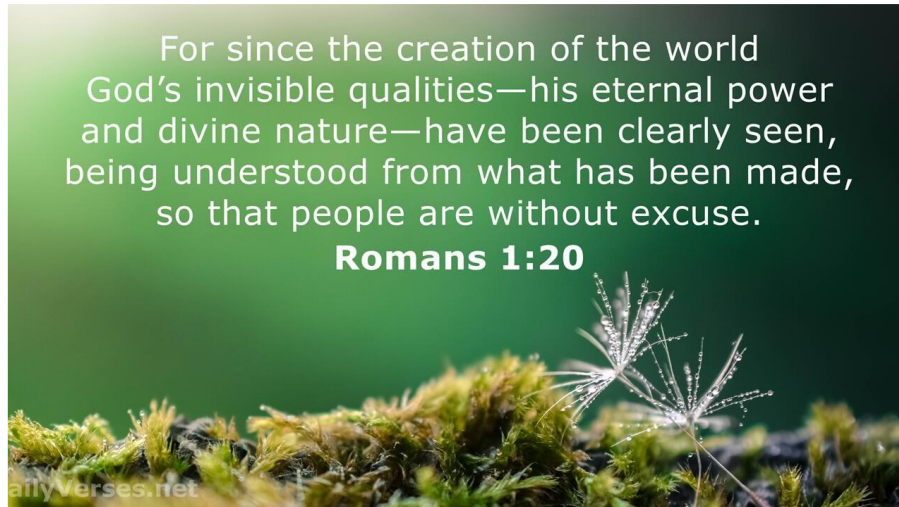
Romans 11

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?

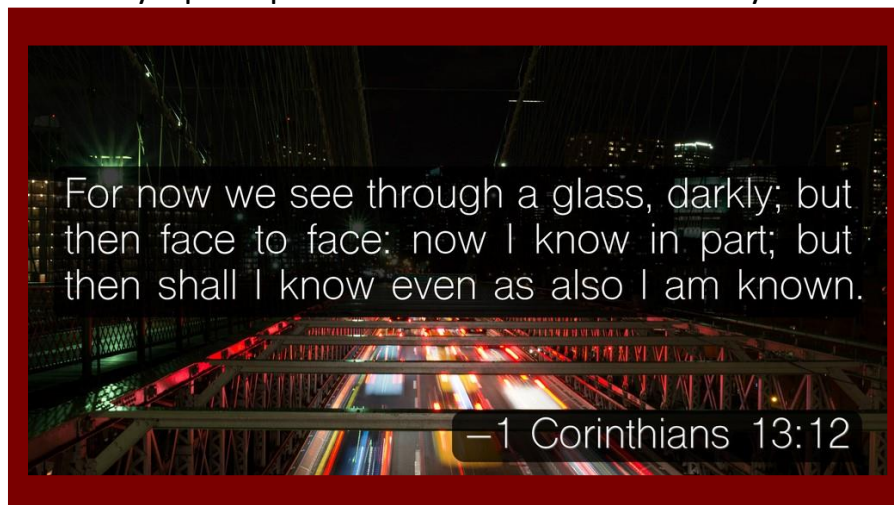
For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Right now, in this present time, we cannot see God with our physical eyes. But that does not mean there is no observable evidence of him. In the present creation the fingerprints of God are everywhere seen. These fingerprints clearly reveal God's invisible qualities...



... his eternal power and divine nature.

We also need to recognize that ever since our first parents were exiled from Eden, humanity's perception of God has been mercifully filtered.

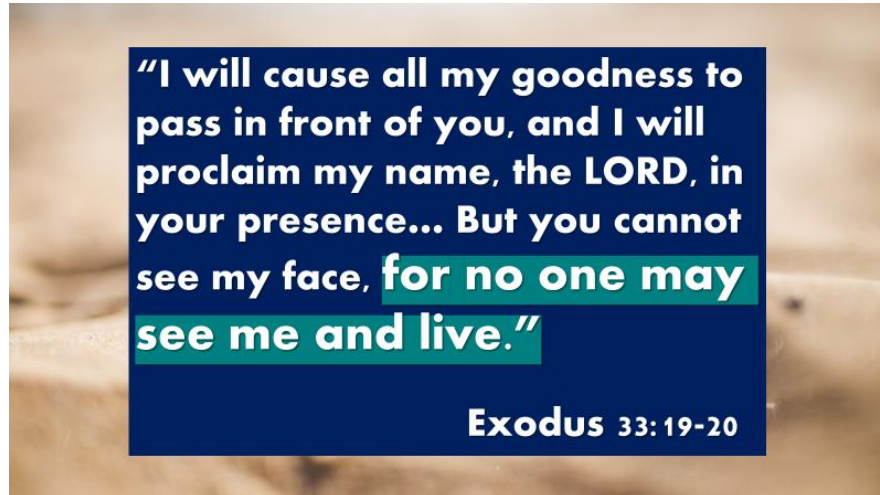


In this present time we see God through a glass darkly.

The followers of Jesus have experienced new creation at work in them. Our spiritually dead souls have been resurrected by the same Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead.

But in spite of this work of grace within us, were the followers of Jesus to see God straight on, it would ruin us.

Until the return of Jesus... when his salvation of our body, soul and spirit is completed... what God told Moses applies to us.

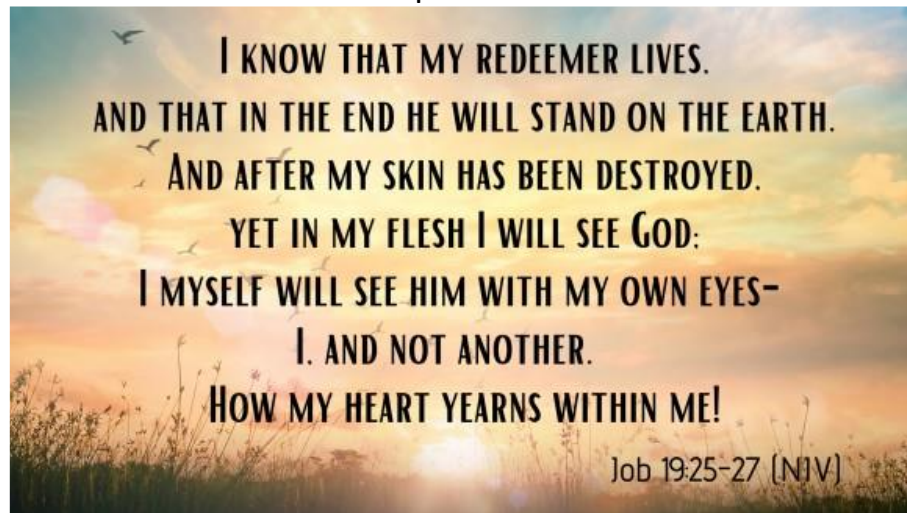


However, in the new creation, in the new city... we shall see God face to face.

This has always been the hope of God's people.

One of the earliest books of the OT is Job.

It is remarkable what the Spirit of God revealed to him. Job said...

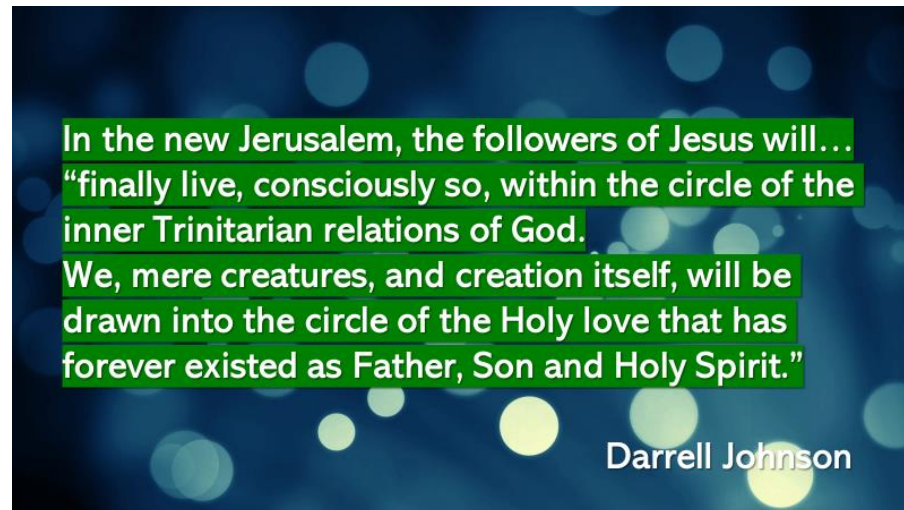


In the time of the new heaven and the new earth and the new city, the people of God will know and experience God in a way that far exceed our present reality.

In our resurrected, glorified, immortal bodies we will see God... with our own eyes.

In that time our sight of God will not be filtered; it will not be... through a glass darkly

In that time... in the words of Darrell Johnson...



p.372.

That said, our experience of God in this present time is still beyond incredible...
The writer of Hebrews said...



The Spirit of God would have us linger over and think much upon each of these phrases...

Through Peter the Spirit of God said this about our present experience of our Lord Jesus...

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:8-9

Here too the Holy Spirit would have us linger over each of these phrases...

Do you realize that in this present time... all that is ours in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit is a first fruit?

You could say, with no disrespect intended, that our present experience of the triune God is like a spiritual...

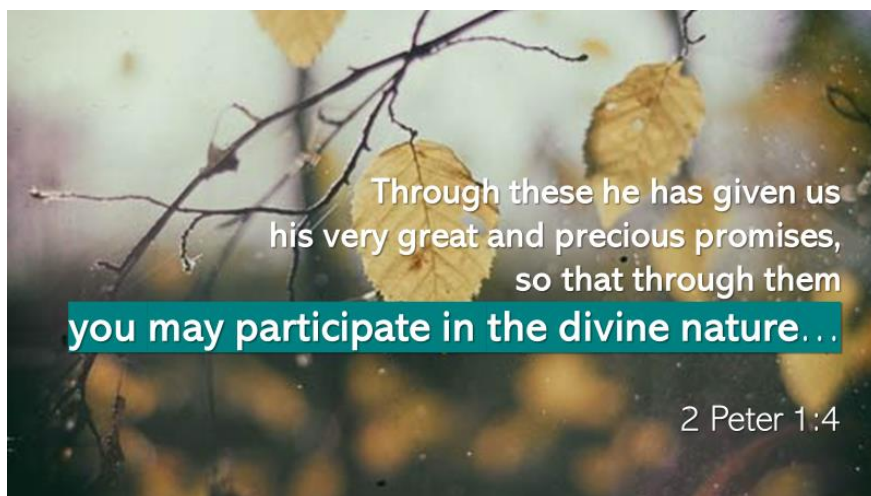
Hors d'oeuvre

... like a spiritual appetizer.

Our experience of God in this present time... creates both longing and anticipation within us.

We've tasted the grace of God; we've known its joy and sweetness... and we long for more.

We've experienced the powers of the age to come, that birthed in us a new nature... that even now empowers us to put to death our habits of sin....but we long to be made completely righteous... body, soul and spirit... that we might not only perceive God but see him and live immersed in his glory and beauty.



Even now we participate in the divine nature, even now we experience fellowship with the Father, Son and Spirit... but we long for the moment when we will stand in that circle... to be welcomed by God as an heir of Jesus Christ... this is a glory we still anticipate.

Before we tasted the goodness of God and his word, discouragement and dread and fear would visit us... even stay with us for an extended time.

But now.... our hope of a new creation and a new city... emboldens and empowers us to live in this present time, with joy and with courage and with a faith inspired abandonment to the things of God.

We know the best is yet to come.

The inexpressible and glorious joy that fills our hearts, keeps us focused on Jesus. And inspires us to run the race marked out for us!

Psalm 46:1-3

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore, we will not fear,
though the earth give way
and the mountains fall
into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake
with their surging.

O Father, I ask you to help me
throw off the things that hinder
and hold me back.
I long to experience a greater
freedom in you.

I confess my sin.....
and ask for your forgiveness and
cleansing. With the help of your
Spirit I choose to obey you. Amen.



THE PRAYERS OF
GOD'S PEOPLE

O Lord God Almighty,
I bring before you the
nation of _____.

I ask that you would reveal yourself through the good
news of Jesus, and that your goodness and kindness
would bring many people to repentance and faith.
May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
May your kingdom come. Amen.

Lord Jesus, you said, “Let the children come.” I ask you to speak to my heart – in what way do you want to use me – to introduce children and youth to you and to help in their spiritual formation? Speak to me, Lord, I am listening! Amen.



**O Lord, we pray for Rick Wismer
and the Blue Bus ministry.
We ask for gospel opportunities.
We ask for cultural insight.
We ask that you will fill the team
with your grace and love.
Amen.**