We are deeply concerned about the future and here in Revelations, God reveals to us through John, what we can expect happen in the end times

Cities:

First century readers lived in cities so the picture of a new city descending will make sense to them

However cities are usually deemed as anti-God realities

The city built by man have been places of arrogance and violence. Such is the case when Cain kills Abel and runs to hide from God in a city, the tower of Babel was built in a city, as a city, Babylon “the Harlot” was a city that embodied rebellion and immorality. Here the holy city contrasts all these negative associations attributed to a “city” because this is a God-made city, not a man-made city.

This city is described as “coming down from heaven and coming out of heaven” reminding us that the city is not our own doing, but is God’s creation

New heavens and new earth refers back to Genesis in the creation story

What is NOT there in the city:

The sea- the sea in the Bible represents forces of chaos for example Psalm 93:3 says that the floods have lifted up…their pounding waves” and in Genesis we see that before creation, darkness hovered over the face of the deep.

Tears death, mourning, crying, or pain- it’s almost too good to be true. These markers of the old creation are what causes the most frustration in our lives and reminds us of our human-ness. In the new earth, there will be none of this! Imagine what a wonderful world that would be. Isaiah 65:20 describes this wonderful image through the eyes of Isaiah when he saw the new city.

Character traits and behaviour inconsistent with the kingdom of God- cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, immoral persons, sorcerers, idolaters, all liars - these traits are all markers of Babylonia ness but in particular cowardice and lying was singled out because it pertains to people of the 1st century church. They were persecuted for not announcing Caesar as their Lord but if you do, you are both cowardly and a liar. If you are able to overcome this, you will be “my Son” reigning with Jesus

The temple- God in the old testament dwelled in the temple which was rendered holy and was not approachable by anyone except the select few. Here, the whole city has now become the temple of God that there needs not to be another temple. John describes the new city “He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia[c] in length, and as wide and high as it is long” this shows that there is a “height” to the city. The city is a cube! OT readers would remember that the Holy of Holies is also a cube (1 Kgs 6:20) The number 12,000 has significance in that it relates to the 12 in the rest of the passage.

No need for sun or moon to shine - there is “no need” but John does not say there was a “lack” of the sun or moon. God’s glory fills the city with light!

There are no closed gates- God’s new city is open for everyone

No longer any curse- The curse came after Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil and the ground was cursed to no longer yield fruit without toil and sweat. Relationships were cursed- males sought to rule over females and women suffered through childbirth.

What IS there in the city:

God- will dwell among us as He promised. The Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple. God is in the city but the city is in God. When we move into the temple in the city, we move into God. We now exist within the Triune God- in the circle of the Holy love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Glory- *doxa* the Greek word for glory means the “heaviness of God’s self manifestation”.

Creatureliness - there is “stuff” in heaven. John describes the stones and gems, walls and gates, trees and fruits, rivers. Christianity is the most earthly of all faiths because we are created for the ultimate destination of a new heaven and a new earth not just “ to go to heaven or another dimension when we die”

Peoples- all peoples of the earth, all ethnicities, all cultures, not just the Jews or the chosen people but all peoples. The presence of kings of this earth in the city indicate that the nations will gather from different b

Creativity- “I am making all things new” and we will be reigning with God in doing His endlessly ongoing creative work

Life- *bios* is the life that we inherit- the biological life from our parents but *zoe* is the life that is from God, that will not decay or die. This river of life, of *zoe* flows in the new city and is available for all! who live there

Face of God- In all of history, no one has seen the face of God because it is too much for us to bear. In Exodus 33:18 Moses prays for God to show him his glory but God answers by saying that “no human can see me and live”. Now though we have been changed, glorified and thus we “shall see his face, and his name shall be on our foreheads”.

**Revelation 21New International Version (NIV)**

**A New Heaven and a New Earth**

**21**Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,”[a] for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. **2**I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. **3**And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. **4**‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’[b] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

**5**He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

**6**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 water without cost from the spring of the water of life. **7**Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. **8**But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

**The New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb**

**9**One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” **10**And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. **11**It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. **12**It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. **13**There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. **14**The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

**15**The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. **16**The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia[c] in length, and as wide and high as it is long. **17**The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits[d] thick.[e] **18**The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. **19**The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, **20**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.[f] **21**The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

**22**I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. **23**The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. **24**The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. **25**On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. **26**The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. **27**Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.Revelation **22New International Version (NIV)**

**Eden Restored**

**22**Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb **2**down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. **3**No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. **4**They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. **5**There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.