

Background

The New Testament speaks about the church as a family of God into which every believer has been adopted. God is the loving Father who is willing to receive and forgive everyone who repents and wants to live in His household now and forever.

Reflect

Reflect

The church fellowship is to reflect genuine family values. What are the most significant of these values that you may also find in the church? Are there conditions for being accepted into the family of God? Are there consequences of being a member of the household in relation to lifestyle?

4. Principles for Living



Read

- Ephesians 5:1, 2 and Titus 3:11-15

Reflect

Reflect

The Christian's general lifestyle and attitude to other people is motivated by two great events: the death of Jesus on Calvary and the promise of His return in the clouds. Discuss some of the differences these events make in your life in areas such as family, education, entertainment and plans for your future.

Background

Most of the epistles in the New Testament contain not only theological reflections, but also practical exhortations. If you read through the last part of these epistles, you will note how Christians are encouraged to live holy lives in preparation for the world to come.

5. The Decisive Testimony



Read

- Matthew 24:14
- Revelation 14:6, 7
- John 13:34, 35

Reflect

Reflect

Christians are asked to share their hope with the world. Jesus tells that when the gospel of the kingdom has been preached to all the world, He will return. What does it imply to preach the gospel as a testimony? What is the significance of the communal lives of the Christians in the church and, for instance, in its educational institutions?

Summary

The future glory is experienced in a city, the New Jerusalem. The Christian life is lived in community. It is in loving fellowship here that the Christian gets ready to live in eternity. Being part of the family of God here prepares for living in the household of God forever. God's visible kingdom is a continuation of the kingdom He has already established among us on earth. It is present wherever Jesus rules.



Number 13. Going Home

ClearView

Bible study guide

The last book of the Bible, Revelation, is a beautifully composed literary work. It contrasts two cities, Babylon and Jerusalem. God's people have been in exile in Babylon. Now they are called home to Jerusalem. As the struggle between these two cities is described, the book reuses the historical conflict of the Old Testament between Babylon and Israel. But Revelation moves beyond a narrow setting and follows the controversy between good and evil throughout the history of the Christian church until the end of the world. The setting in Revelation is no longer local, but universal.

1. A Tale of Two Cities



Read

- Revelation 17:1-5 and 21:9-12

Reflect

Reflect

What are the differences between these two women or cities? In dress? In location? Are the two cities to be understood as the literal cities of Babylon and Jerusalem?



Comment

The parallel between the cities in these two texts forms one of the longest identical verbal parallels in Scripture.

2. Heavenly Citizenship



Read

- Galatians 4:22-26
- Hebrews 12:22-24

Reflect

Reflect

Why do the New Testament writers call the Christian a citizen of a heavenly Jerusalem? What difference does it make that the Christian no longer is to look to the earthly Jerusalem and a kingdom on this earth for his or her home? Think it through in relation to such issues as politics, church and state—and your personal attitude to material wealth, entertainment, marriage and family.

Background

The early Christians emphasised the heavenly Jerusalem in part because of the inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary. The sacrificial service in the earthly temple was no longer of any significance in the plan of God. The true sacrifice was brought on Calvary. The shadows had lost their function.