

Port of Entry

Aucune traduction disponible There is a unique bookstore in downtown Montreal. It is situated on a busy street and even though rent is high, the bookstore thrives. This shop sells only travel books, maps and any material related to traveling. What this confirms is that many people plan their traveling itineraries beforehand making use of this store. Others may browse the bookshelves and dream about traveling by taking the time to enjoy the visual enticements of all these destinations. For either group the planning and perusing in advance of possible itineraries, is their motive and their joy, because when it comes to traveling, getting ready for the trip is half the fun.

This preparation time can be therapeutic because it gives us something to look forward to and helps us cope with the stress and anxieties of life. For some, traveling can become their religion... and an expensive one at that! No wonder there are people who, having come back from one trip, are already talking about the next one they're anticipating taking.

Where does this desire, this need to travel, to "get away" come from? And to where are we looking to get away? This need to seek solace from anxieties and find a place of placid calm is more than just a whim of the heart; it is a search for a long-forgotten nostalgia. It is a homesickness that has filled the heart of all men and women since the fall of Adam and Eve when they were expelled from their perfect home.

Scripture is not silent concerning man's search for this lost paradise. The Book of Hebrews deals with the first Messianic Jews who, under tremendous persecution were contemplating returning to rabbinical Judaism. Their need to get away from this persecution and get to a "better place" may have caused many to stumble. But the Spirit of God reminded them of who they were and the vision they needed to have: "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come." (Hebrews 13:14).

Scripture tells us that what we have now is temporary for there is another place that is waiting for us. These persecuted Messianic Jews sustained their faith by recognizing and affirming that they were heading to another world, a better world that has been prepared for them (John 14: 2-3), to a city called Heaven. Abraham too, who never himself owned the land promised by God, sought another land: "For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Hebrews 11:10).

And it is here in heaven where nostalgia finally meets its desired end. The common denominator that should keep all believers throughout the ages geared up with excitement is the anticipation of their own trip into eternity. As we prepare to meet our Creator, let's keep reading all about this splendid place we are headed to. While we might not always call this earthly pre-trip preparation time "fun", every godly effort that we undertake to prepare ourselves and others in advance,

will find its fulfillment in eternity. Be sure to book fast because His return is imminent!

What about those pearly gates?

Much has already been written concerning what heaven will look like. For example, the New Jerusalem will have 12 gates, each one representing a tribe of Israel, and each gate will be made from pearl. Why pearly gates?

As many of us know, a natural pearl is formed when a foreign object becomes trapped inside a pearl-producing oyster. As a natural defense, the oyster secretes a liquid called nacre, which covers the intruder. The nacre solidifies and over time the many layers create a smooth and lustrous natural pearl. So the pearl is formed out of the suffering of the oyster. In the same light, our salvation has come through the suffering of the Messiah.

But there is more. Pearls are uniquely different from all other gemstones. The pearl is the only gem that does not have to be cut or polished to produce the final product. A diamond, for example, as well as all other gemstones need man's hands to cut and polish the stone, but as soon as you take a pearl out of the oyster, it is beautiful and ready to be owned and worn. It is the only gem that emerges from nature perfect and complete. This is a type of the salvation we have in Yeshua - we have nothing to do; all the work is already done for us. In fact, the pearl is the only gem that is grown from a living organism. The time period of the pearl's formation is relatively short. While most the other gems are formed by an extremely slow process of nature - the beautiful pearl is formed within a couple of years from the time of its initial inception. We can liken that to the speed with which our salvation comes; it is immediate and not based on works we have done. And as the pearl develops from a real "life source", the oyster, so too our salvation comes from the true life source, the Life Giver, Yeshua our Messiah.

So these pearly gates of heaven, will constantly remind us of the work Yeshua did for us, on our behalf. And throughout eternity, every time you enter heaven you will remember that it is because of the Messiah's suffering and His love that you are there. Let us therefore turn our hearts to Heaven while we continue seeking our lost paradise: "We groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling." (2Cor. 5:2).

And for those of you who suffer the daily trials because of your faith, remember that you too, by your suffering will produce fruit for the Lord, pearly fruit. Because as you take that seed of persecution and wrap layers of prayer around it, molding it with wisdom and touching it with Godly luster, you too will produce the pearls borne out of faithfulness under trials and offer those to the Lord as your way of showing your trust and your love for Him.