

Rev.21.²²⁻²⁷ 'Glory'

Background

This is the concluding study in the present series: there'll be a break in terms of CG material over the summer, although the Daily Bible Reading Notes will still be available week by week.

The nations matter to the Lord and from the outset were clearly an integral part of His purpose of salvation. The 'table of nations', for instance, in Genesis 10, is a key portion of Scripture – albeit commonly overlooked and often neglected. In the revelation of God's purpose in Christ that chapter provides, at a pivotal point, the backdrop to all that follows. Genesis 11 narrates the confusion of languages and the spreading out of the nations, before chapter 12 homes in on the remarkable promise of God to the one man, Abram, through whom "all peoples on earth" will be blessed.

The Old Testament follows through the story of the Lord's dealings with and through this one man, describing the miraculous gift of a family to this elderly, barren couple and the equally miraculous expansion of this family comprising the 12 tribes of Israel: it then narrates the story of their deliverance out of slavery into a kingdom given to them in a good and spacious land.

This people are a light to the nations – not because they are paragons of virtue (anything but!), but because their story provides the paradigm for the experience of salvation which the nations themselves will come to know: rescued out of slavery, restored to a good and spacious land.

And so from this single nation there comes finally the one through whom that saving power of God is effected: the day of Pentecost thus became the moment when that plan of salvation moves from the 'drawing board' of God's dealings with Israel onto the larger canvas of history, and the message of salvation is taken to the nations of the world.

Revelation 21 describes, in vivid picture language, where it will all end!

The nations were all made by God, with their appointed times and places marked out by Him ([Acts 17.26](#)): and the vast multitude which will gather round the throne – rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought safely to the Lord's heavenly kingdom – that multitude comprises people "*from every nation ..*" ([Rev.7.9](#)).

Revelation 21 describes that multitude as not simply 'the bride' of Christ, but as 'the Holy City': there's a cohesion, in other words, to this multitude – they're not just a random collection of individuals. This is the 'good and spacious land' – infinite variety, boundless freedom, total security – to which the promise of God in [Ex.3.7-8](#) was always pointing. And each nation, carefully located in time and place by the Lord down through His story, will bring to the party their own particular God-glorifying distinctive and honour!

Although the whole chapter is well worth reading, I suggest you try and address '**days** (4), (5), (6) and (7) in particular, making sure that you definitely include 'day' (7)!

1) Monday 20th June – beautiful

Read [Revelation 21.1-2](#)

“.. I saw the Holy City .. coming down out of heaven from God ..” (Rev.21.2)

As the sight of the finishing line spurs the athlete on, so a glimpse of where it's all going to end can energise you in your present struggles. The storms will all be past: and the life, and love, for which you've longed will at last be fully yours!

What's meant by the statement that *“there was no longer any sea”*?

Why do the two pictures of (a) the city and (b) the bride help you understand something of what 'a new heaven and a new earth will be like'?

Prayer: *I'm so looking forward to things being finally righted by You, Lord! Help me to live such a holy and godly life that I speed the coming of that day* ([2 Pet.3.11-12](#))

2) Tuesday 21st June – joy

Read [Revelation 21.3-5](#)

“.. God Himself will be with them and be their God ..” (Rev.21.3)

Jesus is taking you home to His Father's house, and you will “dwell in the Lord's home forever” ([Ps.23.6](#)). What that means is too wonderful for words and can only be put in terms of negatives! No death, no sin, no sorrow, no pain. Joy beyond words!

What do you learn about God from these verses?

How can you be sure that this is more than just the stuff of dreams?

Prayer: *Here I am again to worship, Lord, to bow down, to say that You're my God. You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy, altogether wonderful to me!*

3) Wednesday 22nd June – life

Read [Revelation 21.6-8](#)

“.. water without cost from the spring of the water of life ..” (Rev.21.6)

There's a final divide. The thirsty: the greedy. Those who fear God: those who fear the world. Those who drink from the spring of the water of life: those who drown in the fiery lake. Those who live: those who die. Those who trust in Jesus: those who don't.

Is it the Lord for whom you find yourself thirsting more and more?

Does the knowledge of this final divide prompt a deepening concern on your part for the state of the 'lost'?

Prayer: *As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, my God! May the day come soon when I go and meet with my God!*

4) Thursday 23rd June – destiny

Read [Revelation 21.9-14](#)

“.. it shone with the glory of God ..” (Rev.21.11)

The bride becomes at last the wife! The city is made all new! However described, the experience of believers in the age that is to come is characterised by sparkling beauty, total security, and boundless freedom – a destiny guaranteed by the Word of God.

The passage is full of ‘picture language’: what message are the ‘pictures’ intended to convey?

When John is shown ‘the bride, the wife of the Lamb’, why does he see a city?

Why are the gates, the walls, and the foundations such an integral part of the description of ‘the Holy City’?

Prayer: *You have set me free, Lord – and I long now for the glory of that full and final freedom which is the inheritance of all Your children!*

5) Friday 24th June – right

Read [Revelation 21.15-18](#)

“.. as wide and high as it is long ..” (Rev.21.16)

In the new heaven and new earth where righteousness dwells, everything is finally right. Rightly proportioned and perfectly ordered: ample space for everyone and everything: a family home and estate which is strong, secure, enduring.

What are the measurements intended to convey?

How does the present way you live your life anticipate and proclaim that more glorious life to come?

In what ways might the life of the church here and now reflect something of the features of ‘the Holy City’?

Is the church a ‘safe place’ and in what ways might we better make it such?

Prayer: *Thank You, Lord, for the riches stored in heaven for me: help me to see such riches more clearly, to prize them eagerly, and to await them more confidently.*

6) Saturday 25th June – foundations

Read [Revelation 21.19-21](#)

“.. the great street of the city was of gold ..” (Rev.21.21)

Solid foundations count for everything! ‘On the Rock of ages founded, what can shake thy sure repose?’ Your future as a believer is guaranteed, not only through time but through all eternity as well. Whatever your age, the best all lies ahead of you!

[Jesus’ parable](#) of the wise and foolish builders stresses that importance of good foundations: are you putting into practice everything Jesus taught?

Each ‘foundation’ is a different precious stone, a reminder of the great variety in the work and grace of God: how is such variety reflected in the life of a local fellowship?

Here’s the Bible reference to the ‘pearly gates’: what’s meant by the fact that each gate is ‘a single pearl’?

Prayer: *You have heard my cry, O Lord! How thankful I am that You lifted me up out of the dreadful pit and set my feet upon the Rock, establishing my way* ([Ps.40.1-2](#))

7) Sunday 26th June – splendour

Read [Revelation 21.22-27](#)

“.. the glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it ..” (Rev.21.26)

The immediacy of God’s presence will be wonderful to know: the brightest day on earth will seem dull by comparison! And the rich and varied dealings of the great Creator God with all the different nations of the earth will be seen to the full at last.

What might be described as ‘the glory and honour’ of *your* nation?

We’re greatly blessed to have a large number of national backgrounds within our fellowship: in what ways are we all enriched thereby?

In what ways can you recognise the Lord graciously removing from you all that is impure and what areas of impurity still remain?

Prayer: *How I long for the day when I shall at last be fully conformed to the likeness of Your Son! Purify my heart, cleanse me from within and make me holy, Lord.*