

Glorious Jerusalem

- ✧ the light of the Lamb (vv.21-23)
- ✧ the glory of the nations (vv.24-27)

In the name of Christ Jesus, our eternal Light, the Lamb of God, dearly redeemed, eternally loved:

Have you ever had someone look you in the eye and say they think heaven will be boring? Humans really love drama, don't they? Maybe that's why our music and movies are 95% problem and thirty seconds of holding hands on the beach. We're stuck on *me* and *my* happiness which all depends on happenings. We have no natural concept of pure joy through tears and forever. "Easter proves that God can take what normally causes people to weep and turn it into what causes people to rejoice. Sin, death, and shame went into Jesus' tomb. Forgiveness, life, and glory came out. Our risen Savior gives us joy."¹

Remember Saul's anger until Christ convinced him of Easter? He formed him into Paul the great missionary to us Gentiles. Paul's sorrow under persecution turned to J-O-Y – preaching the Gospel of Jesus, focusing on Others by going back to cities where he was persecuted, then speaking of Yourself: "***We must go through many troubles on our way to the kingdom of God.***" (Acts 14:22 EHV) Our hearts long for the wide open spaces of heaven and the unending joy of **Glorious Jerusalem** – only seen in...

✧ the light of the Lamb (vv.21-23)

The sole surviving apostle of Jesus, John the elder, is watching the revelation God gave him while in exile on the island of Patmos. It's the Lord's Day, a Sunday, as John sees the seventh vision, his time with Jesus dwindling down. Imagine his soul swelling with joy as the Holy Spirit's camera points upward to heaven. How could heaven be boring? If you're a believer in Jesus, you're in exile too! We're strangers and pilgrims on earth. Heaven is our home! We long for the Day when we will finally see Jesus face to face, be reunited with our loved ones, free at last from this sin cursed earth and our sin-sick bodies. Our Friend Jesus wants to lift up our hopes today. We see **Glorious Jerusalem in the light of the Lamb**.

John has already been talking in this chapter about the New Jerusalem having twelve gates – three in all four directions. ***The city's wall also has twelve foundations, and on them are the names of the Lamb's twelve apostles.*** (21:14) Revelation 1:1 says this book is symbolic with numbers as symbols too. Like 12 for the twelve tribes of God's chosen people in the Old Testament, and twelve apostles of Jesus in the New Testament trusting in Jesus as our Savior. So 12 (Old Testament) x 12 (New Testament) x 10x10x10 ~ the triple complete symbolic number of all believers **in the light of the Lamb**: 144,000.

Are gold and pearls boring? ***The twelve gates are twelve pearls. Each of the gates is made of one pearl. And the street of the city is pure gold, like transparent glass.*** Where can you find pearls that big on this earth? And where is there gold so pure? Somehow earth's priceless treasures are construction materials and paving projects in heaven. Get the picture? Unimaginable wealth!

And then there's the awesome time we get to spend with God again. Like paradise restored when our first parents, Adam and Eve, got to walk and talk with God in the Garden of Eden, before the fall into sin, before death came on all of us because of our rebellion. Heaven is paradise restored! So John writes, ***"I did not see a temple in the city because the Lord God almighty and the Lamb are it's temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it because the glory of God has given it light and the Lamb is its lamp."*** How awesome will that be – everywhere close friends with God?

¹ *Christian Worship Hymnal Foundations*, quoted in New Life worship folder, 5/22/2022, p. 2.

What if all of a sudden all your neighbors liked each other? What if all the races that God created as descendants of Adam and Eve suddenly lived as brothers and sisters in God's family? Wouldn't that be **the home of righteousness**? (2 Peter 3:13 NIV84) No need for drainage easements or county contracts, power grids or politics. Every heart totally turned on to J – O – Y – Jesus, Others, Yourself last. Sadly, not every heart will listen and believe God's gift of full and free salvation in Christ alone. Humans keep pointing fingers at each other as if no sin is here in me. But then the light of God's law exposes my dreadful darkness and guilt. Terrified, I have no hope until Jesus the Lamb of God takes away my sin along with the sin of the whole world. The Lamb once slain is now victorious over guilt and death. We have the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. See **Glorious Jerusalem in the light of the Lamb!**

☆ the glory of the nations (vv.24-27)

In the upper reaches of God's glorious heaven **the nations will walk by its light and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. There is no day when its gates will be shut, for there will be no night in that place. They will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.** Ancient cities hid behind stone walls and as few as gates possible because gates the weakest point. Ancient cities like Megiddo had elaborate gate structures with kill zones. But God's **Glorious Jerusalem** has twelve gates for full access in all directions for the nations dearly loved by God and fully redeemed by the blood of God's own Son. See how eagerly God wants you home? See the security where gates never need closing? No threat! No night! Death and hell vanquished for good by Christ's glorious resurrection. All this becomes yours in baptism. You're in a good place now trusting in Jesus! But when God finally gets you home to heaven, no more danger whatsoever, only eternal bliss with God in **Glorious Jerusalem**.

The Greek original literally says, "The kings of the earth are bringing their glory" into **Glorious Jerusalem**. I wonder if the Lord is describing how God fearing rulers even today repent of their sins and turn to Jesus for forgiveness? That's the only way to find glory with God. The full and free forgiveness of sins from God's own Son gives God's glory to real sinners by the real Savior. "The story is told that Queen Victoria of England once expressed a wish to be alive at the time of the Savior's second coming because, as she said, 'I would so dearly love to lay my crown at his feet.'" ²

But the dear Holy Spirit knows that with this glorious picture we also need a warning: "**Nothing that is unclean and no one who does what is detestable or who tells lies will ever enter it, but only those who are written in the lambs book of life.**" Power through lies is deadly damning with God.

Seven times the Holy Spirit has John telling of books opened on Judgment Day. One book records everyone's sins in thought, word and deed – embarrassing, damning, unforgiving before the just and holy God. But this **Book of Life** only has names written in it of everyone God has chosen by pure grace from all eternity. God brought us to faith and put His name on us in baptism. God's New Covenant says, "**Their sins iniquities I will remember no more.**" Written in the book of deeds for believers in Jesus there can be only one word: **Forgiven** – signed in blood by the Lamb of God. No sins are left. Your record is washed clean. And with Jesus' signature by your name only His righteousness, holiness and perfection remains. "**God made him who had no sin to be seen for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**" (2 Corinthians 5:21) On Judgment Day to the sheep on his right Jesus says, "**Come, you are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**" He gives us credit for doing everything right, visiting him, blessing him, feeding him clothing him – "**for as much as you did it for one of the least of these brothers of mine you did it for me.**" (Matthew 25:31-46) And God says he will never blot your name from the Book of Life.

Glorious Jerusalem in the light of the Lamb and the glory of the nations is the best ending ever, too awesome and wonderful for earthbound humans to imagine. Longing for the day, we pray with John, "**Amen. Come Lord Jesus!**" "**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints. Amen.**"

² Becker, Siegbert W. *REVELATION The Distant Triumph Song*. Milwaukee, WI: NPH, 1985, p. 89.