

01-08-2017

Message: Inheriting with Christ the Glory of God, Part 2

Text: Revelation 21:9-27

Introduction

- A. Last Sunday we began looking at the 7th and last cycle of visions God gave Christ to give us, depicting the eternal glory all believers inherit with Christ at His Second Coming (show cycles of Revelation chart).
- B. We saw in verses 1-8 ...
1. The removal of the present heaven and earth, the removal of all unbelievers from the new creation, the removal of the curse on humanity and creation that results in crying, suffering, pain, disasters, and death.
 2. The introduction of a new heaven and earth, a renewed church, a new level of comfort from God, a new lease on life - eternal life, a new level of intimacy with God, and a new inheritance of glory with Christ.
- C. We continue to remind ourselves from the first words of Revelation that it was obviously very important to God that Jesus give these visions to all of His people, not just Bible scholars. God's purpose for revealing to us this hope of glory in this last cycle of visions is captured in 21:7 - to encourage us to overcome sin, Satan, and the world by an enduring faith that follows Jesus no matter the earthly cost. Christ's inspires His apostle Paul to give the same encouragement in Romans 8.

Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which **God gave Him to show to His bond-servants**,

Revelation 21:7 "**He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.**

Romans 8:17 and **if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**

- D. What Paul states as a truth about our renewed and glorified bodies in a renewed and glorified creation, John pictures for us, that the hope of glory might linger long in our imaginations, that we might savor and long for it, and endure to take hold of this blessed hope at the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- E. Today I pray we can marvel together as we see in these visions ...

1. that God the Creator, who is central to all that exists, has made the bride of Christ, the city of God, the church, the dominant feature of all the created things in the new heavens and earth. (Our uncreated God is of course the dominant feature, but of things created, the church is dominant in Revelation 21:1 - 22:5).
2. that God has given the church this prominent position among all created things by giving the bride of Christ, the church, His glory, picturing her for us as ...
 - a. 21:2,9-21 His glorified city, the New Jerusalem (which we will look at today)
 - b. 21:12-16,22-27 His glorified temple (which we will look an next week, Lord willing)

I. 21:2,9-21 The church as God's glorified city, the New Jerusalem

- A. In the OT era God likened His people to His wife and to His holy city, simultaneously so in Isaiah 54.

Isaiah 54:5 "**For your husband is your Maker**, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth. 6 "For the LORD has called you, like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, **even like a wife of one's youth** when she is rejected," says your God.

Isaiah 54:11 "O afflicted one, storm-tossed, and not comforted, behold, **I will set your stones** in antimony, and **your foundations I will lay in sapphires**. 12 "Moreover, I will make **your battlements** of rubies, and **your gates** of crystal, and **your entire wall** of precious stones.

- B. Christ's present vision to us, drawing heavily from Old Testament Israelite imagery, as throughout Revelation, also simultaneously likens the church, His people, as His bride and His holy city.

Revelation 21:2 And I saw **the holy city, new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, **made ready as a bride adorned for her husband**.

Revelation 21:9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, **I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb**." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me **the holy city, Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ **having the glory of God**.

- C. Notice in 21:11 the church is stated as "having the glory of God." (21:11), and in 2:23 the city has no need for the created heavenly luminaries that once displayed the glory of God (Psalm 19:1), for the Lord's presence will illuminate the city, the church.

Revelation 21:23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for

the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb.

1. The glory of God is the manifestation of the worth/value/splendor of His attributes.
2. Can we imagine this? We, the church, will not only behold the glory of God, we will possess the glory of God. We will share in God's righteous attributes as well as behold God's righteous attributes.

John 17:22 "**The glory which You have given Me I have given to them**, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, **that they may be perfected in unity**, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. 24 "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, **be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me**, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

3. Christ came the first time for sin, so that our guilt could be forgiven, enabling us to stand in the presence and behold His glory, and so that our sinful natures would be crucified with Christ, that we might no longer be slaves to sin, but be transformed into His own likeness, holy and blameless. I.e., that we might share in the glory of His righteous character. This is what Christ, the bridegroom, has done for us, has made possible for us, His bride.

Ephesians 5:24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her**, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 **that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory**, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

4. It is important to understand that the hope of glory is an essential part of proclaiming the gospel, the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. He is saving us to share in His glory!

Colossians 1:27 to whom **God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory** of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, **the hope of glory**.

2 Thessalonians 2:14 It was for this **He called you through our gospel**, that you may gain **the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

D. Application:

1. The gospel promises Jesus will deliver us from God's coming wrath and calls us to wait in faith for Him.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 and to **wait for His Son from heaven**, whom He raised from the

dead, *that is* **Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.**

1 John 2:28 Now, little children, **remain in Him**, so that when He appears, **we may have confidence** and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

2. The gospel also promises us that when Christ returns, He will perfect our very characters to reflect His glory. If that is what we sincerely desire for ourselves in the future at Christ's return, then we be purifying ourselves by God's Word and Spirit in our present life.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that **when He appears, we will be like Him**, because we will see Him just as He is.³ And **everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**

Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are **the pure in heart**, for **they shall see God.**

3. We have to be careful not to be deceived about our desire and pursuit of purified hearts, for God warns us by His wisdom ...

Proverbs 30:12 There is a kind who is **pure in his own eyes, yet is not washed from his filthiness.**

2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present **you as a pure virgin.**³ But I am afraid that, **as the serpent deceived Eve** by his craftiness, **your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.**

4. So we need God's Word to wash over us with commands to pursue specific aspects of His purity in relating to Christ, and resultantly, toward one another. E.g., ...

Psalms 119:9 How can a young man **keep his way pure?** By **keeping it according to Your word.**¹⁰ With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments.

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth **purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren,** fervently love one another from the heart,

Psalms 24:3 Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place?⁴ He who has clean hands and **a pure heart,** who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully.

Conclusion

- A. The glory of God's sinless, pure character will at His return be perfected in the saints,

represented as precious minerals and gem stones.

Revelation 21:10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ **having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone**, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.

Revelation 21:18 The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

- B. Just as the most beautiful, brilliant diamonds are those with the least defects, so the beauty of Christ's church is found, not in her buildings or decorations, but in the absence of sin and the presence of Christ's righteousness in her very character. Pray that the glory of Christ, our King's purity would shine ever brilliantly in us, His church, knowing ...

Proverbs 22:11 **He who loves purity of heart *and* whose speech is gracious, the king is his friend.**