

God dwells in His people

- No temple
- New Jerusalem is a gigantic holy of holies
- God's holiness lights the city
- Vision includes things that happen on the way to the church reaching its final glory – while nations still exist

Revelation 21:22–27 expands 21:3, and develops the idea of God's indwelling his people. ²²*And I saw no temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty is its temple, and so is the Lamb.* ²³*And the city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God gave out light and the lamp of the city is the Lamb.*

There is no temple in the city, because the whole city is the temple! The entire new Jerusalem is a gigantic holy of holies. Its outstanding mark is the radiating glory of God. We remember the story of how on the Mount of Transfiguration for a few moments the glory of God in Jesus shone out brightly, becoming visible even through his clothes. Something similar is seen in John's vision. The radiating, shining light of God's holiness provides bright light for the entire city.

²⁴*And the nations will walk in the light of the city, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.* It is verse 24 that makes one feel that this vision is not **exclusively** a vision of the final glory but includes in it some stages along the way. In John's vision, the nations of the earth still exist! In Revelation 21:1–8 the old world has passed away^{□1} and God makes all things new^{□2}, but the vision in 21:9–22:5 includes glimpses of some things that happen as the church reaches such a position in final glory.

'Panoramic' vision

- God's people will face persecution but will conquer the dragon
- Jerusalem will heal the nations
- Great spiritual success for the people of God – before the final glory
- Jesus reigns through persistent believers

These glimpses of final glory are 'panoramic'. That is, they give us a wide and total sweep of **all** that God is about to do (beginning immediately in John's day^{□1}) to establish his people and get them to be 'a praise in the earth'^{□2}. God's people will go through days of fierce persecution, but by the blood of the Lamb and by the persistent proclamation of their testimony they will conquer the dragon. Jerusalem – God's people – will be established and become a centre of influence in the healing of the nations. There is obviously much picture-language in Revelation 21–22. It is a symbolic vision of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ being raised to world influence and eventually to total victory in a new heaven and new earth. The unfolding of the vision will be in stages. It is not given to us to know exactly the times and the seasons, but we can expect that along the way to glory God's people will be a means of 'healing the nations'.

'And the nations will walk in the light of the city, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it'^{□1}. This is surely a prediction of great spiritual success for the people of God. **This** part of the vision must be fulfilled before the **final** glory. There are other places where the Bible gives us indications that the church will indeed achieve its goal of reaching all nations for the Lord Jesus Christ. It is implied in Abraham's call: 'And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed', said God to Abraham. God had a plan for bringing salvation to the world. Jesus must reign until he has put all enemies beneath his feet. But he reigns through us, through persistent believers. It has always been God's will that the blessings of salvation should come to all the world. Salvation is for all nations.

□1 21:1
□2 21:4

□1 1:1
□2 Isaiah 62:7

□1 21:24

Old Testament visions of new Jerusalem

- Precious stones
- All nations will come to the new Jerusalem

...And back to Revelation

- Entire nations will submit to the gospel
- The blood of the martyrs will lead to the victory of the church
- The church will rise to new heights of purity
- Success
- Final glorification
- No sins or sinners

There are visions in the Old Testament of that plan being fulfilled¹. Isaiah especially sees ahead to days when a 'new Jerusalem' will be established in the earth. God will build Jerusalem. 'I will set your precious stones in fair colours, and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, and your gates of sapphires, and all your border of precious stones'². All nations will come to this symbolic Jerusalem³. 'Your gates also shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night, that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations, and their kings led captive'⁴.

²⁵And its gates will never be closed during the day – for there will be no night in that place! – ²⁶and they will bring the glory and honour of the nations into the city. In the day of the church's victory the message of salvation and purity will be ever available to all nations – as it is already. Entire nations will submit to the revelation of the gospel. It does not mean that every individual will be saved but it does speak of (at least) powerful influence of the gospel at a national level. Although there is much persecution to be experienced along the way (as the book of Revelation bears witness), yet the blood of the martyrs will be the seed of the victory of the church. Anything achieved or owned by the nations will be made available to God and his people.

The church will rise to new heights of purity. ²⁷And there will not enter into it anything unclean or anyone who works abomination or a lie. There will only be those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. I continue to emphasize that this is a 'panoramic' vision. It takes in all that God will do to exalt his church. It includes both the success of the church and its final glorification. In the day of its success all who are in the church will know God, 'from the least to the greatest of them'. The purity of the church will be raised to new heights. In the final glory of heaven-on-earth no remnants of sin or sinners will be found at all.

¹ Psalm 72; Isaiah 2:1-5; Isaiah 54 & 60

² Isaiah 54:11-12

³ Isaiah 60:5-6, 9, 11

⁴ Isaiah 60:11



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