

(Revelation 21:10-27, NIV84)

"And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

There's a story of a pastor whose parishioner, an elderly woman, after hearing him read the description of heaven given in Revelation, confessed: "Pastor, I don't want to go to heaven." When the pastor inquired as to why she would say such a thing, she explained that she was a gardener and loved the beautiful flowers and greenery of her garden. "I just can't imagine living forever in a place that is all stone and cold metal and devoid of foliage," she said. But her pastor lovingly explained that the description from Revelation is intended to convey to the reader a picture of a place of unmatched beauty and riches beyond compare. He also pointed her to another "picture of heaven" found in Revelation where John writes: "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:1-2). He also reminded her what the perfect home of Adam and Eve was at the world's beginning -- it was a garden. Most importantly, Jesus is there and, as He promised the thief on the cross, we will be with Him in paradise. God, who has made our earthly

home so lush and beautiful, has an eternal home for us that will be even more beautiful than the one we have now. Truly she has nothing to fear.

Nothing to fear? As we read these words from John's description of heaven: "Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life," it may cause fear to well up within our hearts, especially when contemplate our lives and our failures. Can we be sure that our names have not be expunged from the Lamb's book of life? Yes, we can!

John explains in his Gospel: "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:17). By Jesus' death on the cross our ransom has been paid and by His resurrection from the dead our eternal life is guaranteed. We are saved. Fear not! What God has in store for us is better than we can imagine.

With you, awaiting our future glory in Christ,  
Pastor Golm

-----

April 21

The Glory of the Father's House

And the city had no need of the sun ...for the glory of God did lighten it.  
Revelation 21:23

A little girl was walking with her father along a country road. The night was clear and the girl was enthralled by the splendor of the sky, all lit up with twinkling stars from one end to the other. After moments of reflection, she suddenly looked up to her father and said: "Daddy, I was just thinking, if the wrong side of heaven is so beautiful, how wonderful the right side must be!"

In a sense, her remark merely reflected the logic of a child. In a higher sense, she was echoing the words of the psalmist who, when pondering the polka-dotted canopy of the midnight sky, exclaimed: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth forth his handiwork."

No human tongue or pen has ever succeeded in describing the glory, the grandeur, and the magnificence of the Father's house above. That it is a place of entrancing beauty and matchless splendor the apostle John indicates in the Book of Revelation by interpreting heaven's glories in terms of costly jewels and precious gems and rarest metals.

How could heaven be anything else but beautiful? It is the habitation of our God, the royal palace of the King of kings! To that palace our Savior is gone to prepare a place for us. Through faith in his redeeming mercy we shall ascend someday to his beautiful home beyond the skies, more exquisite, more glorious, more wonderful than human speech can tell.

Jerusalem the golden, With milk and honey blest,  
Beneath thy contemplation Sink heart and voice oppressed.  
I know not, oh, I know not, What joys await us there,  
What radiancy of glory, What bliss beyond compare.