
Revelation 21:9 ... “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates.

¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick. ¹⁸ The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

²² I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ 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. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there.

²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ 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.

Sustained through hope

We are witnessing the product of postmodernism.

To live as a Christian in a corrupt world like this one requires being anchored to God’s Larger Story

Romans 15:4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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A Hope-Centered Community

Isolation—part 8

June 12, 2022

I need the big picture of life and reality

Malachi 3:13 You have spoken arrogantly against me,” says the LORD. “Yet you ask, ‘What have we said against you?’” ¹⁴ “You have said, ‘It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty?’ ¹⁵ But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly, evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.”

- Big-picture perspectives

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Rom. 8:22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly AS we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Romans 5:3-5 More than that we rejoice in our suffering, knowing suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us because God’s love has been poured out through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Hebrews 12:28 ... since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29 for our “God is a consuming fire.”

What is spiritual maturity?

Colossians 1:28 Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man with all wisdom that we may present every man mature in Christ.

(a) Someone who is learning to love people when loving people is tough. Matt. 5:43-48

(b) Someone who is grateful for evidence of spiritual formation while at the same time, broken over the still strong power of their own human nature. Rom. 7:25-8:2; 1 Tim. 1:15

(c) Instead of despair over a greater awareness of my fallen nature, spiritual maturity generates a sense of wonder! Rom. 6; Rom. 8:31-39

(d) Evidence of *longing* for God more than an *experience* of God. Isaiah 55:1-3; Psalm 27:1-6; 42:1-2; 63:1-5; Matt. 5:6

(e) People who are open, realistic, and humble about themselves, without living in the mudhole of discouragement—for very long. Romans. 12:3; Matt. 5:3-5

(f) People who keep on enduring in following Jesus on the narrow road, no matter how difficult.

Col. 1:9 We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience...

(g) A growing sense that lost people matter to God, and make themselves available to be used by God in the pursuit of their salvation. Matthew 28:19-20

The final and eternal defeat of evil and Satan

Revelation 20:7 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. ⁹ They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

• Big picture truths that should bolster us:

a. Ultimate judgment is coming

b. No matter how powerful evil, there is the ultimate doom of evil.

c. A rebellious world will finally come to an end.

Revelation 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

More big picture truths:

a. A righteous reckoning will take place. People will get what they deserved.

b. Justice will prevail. Evil will be ultimately and fully defeated

c. God will be just.

A new heaven and a new earth—the land of eternal joy

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death" ⁵ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "**I am making everything new!**" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

⁶ He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. **To the thirsty** I will give water without cost from the spring of **the water of life**. ⁷ Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.