Neighbors & Nations: Made to Worship

Made for Glory

Revelation 7:9-12

Today we finish up our sermon series **Neighbors & Nations.** This has been such a powerful look at the reality of our mission. God is glorified and people flourish when they function according to their design, so we live on mission to our neighbors and nations for God's glory and their good!



Consider the extraordinary engineering behind the $10 Billion James Webb Telescope (most advanced infrared space observatory ever built). Gold-coated mirrors, intricate instruments, and precisely engineered sunshields all serve a purpose. But, none of this was designed to draw attention to the telescope itself, but to reveal the glory of something beyond itself (the universe).



Stellar Cradle (star cluster Westerlund 2 sparkles in the Gum 29 nebula, 20,000 light-years from Earth)

In addition to reaching its potential & honoring its designer, the gloriousness of the telescope is directly connected to the gloriousness of that which is magnified. Church, we have been saying over and over this fall how we, along with our neighbors and nations, were created BY God, FOR God, and for God's GLORY! And, there is coming a day when the purpose for which God created all of us will be gloriously realized and there will be no doubt that we were MADE TO WORSHIP!

Main Idea: For God's Glory & Their Good, Our Neighbors & Nations Can Praise Forever

"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!' And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.'" **Revelation 7:9-12**

Two Groups Engaged in Eternal Worship from Revelation 7:9-12

I. The Gloriously Redeemed – Revelation 7:9-10

The book of Revelation is a vision that God gave to John (Rev. 1:1-3), and chapter 7 is the part of that vision that describes a heavenly worship gathering. While we cannot see it today, we are actually a part of this type of worship gathering now!

- **Who are The Gloriously Redeemed?** A massive/diverse group exceeding human calculation, from all people groups on earth & in history (vs. 9a).

"And he brought him outside & said, 'Look toward heaven, & number the stars, if you are able to number them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.' And he believed the LORD, & he counted it to him as righteousness." **Genesis 15:5-6**

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." **Matthew 28:19-20**

- **What is Their Glorious Song?** From their lips (Salvation), as well as their clothing (white robes – holiness) & hands (palm branches – victory/peace). It isn't about comfort, healing, or happiness…it is all about salvation!!!

"Our robes will be white because his robes were red." **Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

- **Who is Their Glorious God?** God who sits on the throne (God the Father), & to the Lamb (Jesus, God the son). He owns salvation, and the universe!

"Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth." **Isaiah 12:5**

Long ago, professional orators read famous literature in dramatic & powerful fashion to large crowds. In one show, the orator was asked to recite the 23rd Psalm & he agreed on one condition: after he recited it an aging pastor, who was in the crowd, come & do the same. The booming and articulate voice of the orator finished all six verses to a raucous applause as the old pastor slowly made his way to the stage. His feeble, broken, and faint voice started the same passage. As he finished, *"and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever"* there was no applause or cheering…only the powerful, audible sobs of an audience overwhelmed. When the newspaper man

asked the professional orator, *"What's the difference?"* He said, *"I know the psalm, but the pastor knows the shepherd."* Big difference! Do we know the shepherd?

Everyone wants to know what heaven will be like, but the Bible doesn't give us much more than these verses and a few others to ponder. I can assure you that, once our sinful flesh is no longer warring with our Spirit, we will have an entirely different "want-to", and joining this massively diverse Gloriously Redeemed group, in signing a glorious song with our lips/clothes/hands to our glorious God who alone is worthy will be our deepest desire and singular obsession. We can start right now!

Main Idea: For God's Glory & Their Good, Our Neighbors & Nations Can Praise Forever

Two Groups Engaged in Eternal Worship from Revelation 7:9-12

II. The Gloriously Celestial – Revelation 7:11-12

On that day, we will not be alone in our eternal praise and worship of God.

"And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.'" **Revelation 7:11-12**

They are echoing our praise with some of their own. Their posture is prostrate (fell on faces), Amen (truly), Blessing (Eulogia – speak well), Glory (doxa – honor), Wisdom (Sophia – always prudent), Thanksgiving (Eucharista – gratitude), Honor (respect), Power (dunameos – omnipotence), & Might (exceptional strength). The gloriously celestial have a unique look into the characteristics of our glorious God!

"Say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.' Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it!" **Psalms 96:10-12**

"Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." **Luke 15:7**

We join with the heavens in eternal worship, and we get to participate in that now as we praise and help people experience their created purpose today. Heaven celebrates, we must engage with the encouragement that they can transcend life!

Main Idea: For God's Glory & Their Good, Our Neighbors & Nations Can Praise Forever

We, along with our neighbors and nations, were made for worship. And, it's only in fulfilling that purpose will we ever reach our potential and fully honor our creator. That is why we praise, follow, belong, work, go, experience peace, love, and enjoy eternal glory…and, that's why we live on mission to help others do the same.

"…a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb…" **Revelation 7:9**

Salem Church's Mission is to Make Disciples & Multiply Churches: This weekend, we are recognizing that God has set apart Jonathan and Lilly Sanabria to serve as the Lead Pastor and wife of Salem Church South Shore. As covenant members of Salem Church for several years, Jonathan has also graduated from our MTI, served on staff, and completed an ordination council. Well done!

Ordination - Modern definition (*granting pastoral authority*) is a bit misleading. Biblical look at 'Ordination' defines it as a sending or designation. Consider…

"While they were worshiping the Lord & fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas & Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting & praying they laid their hands on them & sent them off." **Acts 13:2-4**

- **Observation 1**: It was God who called & certified Paul & Barnabas for Ministry…not the church at Antioch.
- **Observation 2**: The Church at Antioch had ample opportunity to observe their qualifications, character & gifts.
- **Observation 3**: The Church affirmed Paul and Barnabas' qualifications, character & gifts by prayerfully laying hands on them as a physical act of commissioning them to service.
- **Observation 4**: God worked through the church at Antioch, by the Holy Spirit to send these men into missionary service.

<u>Sources and Further Reading Opportunities</u>

- **CSB Study Bible –** Trevin Wax, Ed. (2017)
- **Message of Revelation –** Michael Wilcock (1986)
- **CCE: Exalting Jesus in Revelation –** Mason, Platt, & Merida (2016)
- **Bible Exposition Commentary –** Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- **Holeman New Testament Commentary: Revelation –** K. Easley (1998)
- **New American Commentary: Revelation –** Paige Patterson (2012)
- **Spurgeon Study Bible –** C.H. Spurgeon (2017)
- **Tony Evans Study Bible –** Tony Evans (2019)
- **Let the Nations Be Glad –** John Piper (1993)