

The Nations in the Millennium and the Eternal State

by John F. Walvoord

The millennial reign of Christ primarily concerns the nation Israel and their restoration to their ancient land, and Gentile nations such as Assyria, Egypt, and the Ethiopians will also play a role in the future kingdom.

Scripture: Genesis 15:18, Isaiah 11:11-19, Ezekiel 28:20, Daniel 11:40, Micah 5:5, Revelation 21:24

Topics: "Millennial Reign", "Israel Restoration"

Description

John F. Walvoord preaches about the divine purpose of God for the Gentiles reaching its natural conclusion at the end of the times of the Gentiles marked by the second coming of Jesus Christ. The millennial reign of Christ focuses on the restoration of Israel to their ancient land, with prophecies indicating that Gentiles will also partake in the blessings of this period. The prophecies concerning various nations surrounding Israel, such as Assyria, Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Edom, Arabia, Tyre, and others, are viewed in the context of Israel's restoration and glory in God's ultimate kingdom on earth.

Transcript

The divine purpose of God for the Gentiles comes to its natural conclusion at the end of the times of the Gentiles which is marked by the second coming of Jesus Christ. The millennial reign of Christ primarily concerns the nation Israel and their restoration to their ancient land. Most of the prophecies dealing with the millennial kingdom describe Israel's day of glory and prominence with Christ as their king and David resurrected from the dead as the prince.

There are, however, numerous prophecies that indicate that the Gentiles also will participate in the millennial reign of Christ and will inherit many of the blessings which characterize this period. As the reign of Christ is from sea to sea it necessarily goes far beyond the borders of the Promised Land, outlined so long ago to Abraham as extending from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates (Genesis 15:18). Outside the Promised Land, but often adjacent to it are the millennial counterparts of the ancient peoples who in one way or another were related to Israel's long history.

Extent Of Gentile Prophecy

In addition to the major nations which had a large part in the history of Israel such as Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt, a number of important prophecies are found in the Old Testament relating to minor nations. While such prophecies are scattered throughout the Old Testament, three major passages are found in Isaiah 13-23, Jeremiah 46-51, and Ezekiel 25-32. Seven major nations are mentioned in Isaiah to which can be added prophecies concerning the cities of Tyre and Damascus. Jeremiah adds additional prophecies relating to five of these plus a passage on the Ammonites (Jeremiah 49:1-6) and a short prophecy about Kedar and Hazor (49:28-31). Ezekiel offers additional prophecies concerning five of these nations and adds a prophecy about Zidon (Ezekiel 28:20-24). As special attention has already been directed to the prophecies relating to Babylon, the most prominent nations in these prophecies to be considered here are the remaining nations, namely, Assyria, Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Edom or Dumah, Arabia, the city of Tyre, the Ammonites, Kedar and Hazor, and Zidon.

The great prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel treat the predictions concerning the nations in the context of Israel's coming day of restoration and glory. Unquestionably the main theme in the prophet's mind, whether it is stated or not, is that Israel in contrast to the nations which surround them is destined for glory and honor in God's ultimate kingdom on earth. This tremendous truth has been blurred by the unfortunate tendency to spiritualize these prophecies in the attempt to make them describe the glory of the church. If they are taken literally, however, they provide a pattern of fulfilled prophecy in the past and a program of unfulfilled prophecy in the future which is tremendously significant in unfolding the great purposes of God for the nations of the world.

The prophet Isaiah for instance portrays the glories of the coming kingdom in Isaiah 11-12 before turning to the prophecies relating to the nations in chapter 13 and following. It is clear that from the prophetic viewpoint the importance of these prophecies relating to the nations can be discovered only in the contrast to the prophecies relating to Israel, many of which are yet unfulfilled.

In a similar way the prophecies of Jeremiah emphasize Israel's restoration and coming glory. Often these prophecies are set in the midst of prophecies relating to the nations and are presented as sharp contrasts to the destined doom of the other nations and God's divine judgment upon them.

The major portion of Jeremiah's section on prophecy concerning the nations occurs late in the book in chapters 46-51 preceded by the historical and prophetic matter describing the stirring relationship of Jeremiah to his contemporary situation coupled with many prophecies concerning Israel in the latter days.

Ezekiel by contrast presents the prophecies concerning the nations first in chapters 25-32 and then follows in chapters 33 and 34 with predictions concerning the coming kingdom. Then after additional prophecies concerning Mount Seir, Israel's future is again depicted in the latter portion of chapter 36. The vision of the valley of dry bones in chapter 37 foreshadows Israel's ultimate restoration. Then before the great section beginning in chapter 40 there are the prophecies concerning Gog and Magog related to Israel's restoration in chapters 38 and 39. It is clear in Ezekiel as in the other prophecies that Israel's future is set into the context of God's dealings with the surrounding nations in the past as well as in the future. A survey of prophecies of these nations can well begin with an examination of prophecy relating to Assyria.

Assyria

The importance of Assyria is borne out by more than 140 references in the Bible to this ancient people and more than 20 references to its principal city Nineveh. First mention is found as early as Genesis 2:14

where Moses in describing the Hiddekel River, later known as the Tigris, stated concerning this river, "that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria." Moses of course was alluding to Assyria as it existed at the time he was writing Genesis. A similar reference is found in Genesis 25:18.

According to archaeologists, Assyria had a long history. As early as 2900 b.c. colonists, probably from Babylon, settled in a small area between the rivers Tigris and Zab southeast of the Armenian Mountains. Racially they were closely related to the people of Babylonia and mixed with the Sumerian people who were the earlier residents of this area. The Assyrians are generally classified as belonging to the Semitic race. Their language, similar to that of the Babylonians, was written mostly in ideograms on clay and stone by a wedge-shaped instrument, and hence is known as cuneiform.

Assyria first became a great city state under Shamshi-Adad I (1748-1716 b.c.) and increased in power as Babylon declined. Its greatest period, however, began with Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076 b.c.) when it extended its borders westward to the Mediterranean Sea and embraced a considerable area. Its power rose and fell for a number of centuries following and it was in this period that Assyria came in contact with Israel. Shalmaneser III (858-824 b.c.) is recorded as fighting Ahab in 853 b.c. and accepted tribute from Jehu, the son of Omri. These incidents, however, are not mentioned in the Bible.

A later ruler, Tiglath-Pileser III, according to II Kings 15:19, conquered Israel and exacted tribute from Menahem and carried off many of the children of Israel as captives. His successor Shalmaneser V (726-722 b.c.) attacked Hoshea of Israel who had revolted against him. His successor, Sargon II (721-705 b.c.), mentioned only in Isaiah 20:1, conquered the capital of Samaria (II Kings 17:3-41). Sennacherib (704-681 b.c.) is recorded as attempting to conquer Jerusalem, but was thwarted by the slaying of his army by the angel of the Lord (II Kings 19:1-37) and was succeeded by his son Esar-haddon. With the rising power of Babylon, Nineveh, capital of Assyria, fell in 612 b.c. under a coalition of Babylonian, Median, and Scythian armies. With this event Assyria came abruptly to the end of its career and in a remarkably short time Assyrian civilization was completely destroyed. Its great cities became mounds of debris and for centuries were lost until finally recovered by archaeologists and identified in the nineteenth century.

From the standpoint of prophecy, the history of Assyria is important because along its path numerous prophecies were fulfilled. Isaiah the prophet, for instance, solemnly warned the children of Israel of the coming invasion of the Assyrians and their ultimate captivity (Isaiah 7:17-20; 8:4-7) and predicted that Assyria would be punished in due time and brought down (Isaiah 11:12-16). The entire book of Nahum relates to the downfall of Nineveh, and the book of Jonah records the remarkable experience of repentance of the people of Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah which delayed their ultimate destruction one hundred and fifty years.

Most of the prophecies concerning Nineveh have already been fulfilled. A few references, however, are subject to fulfillment in the millennial reign and events relating to it.

One of the prophecies concerning the destruction of Assyria is found in Micah 5:5, 6 where the context seems to indicate a millennial situation. Some expositors have identified "the Assyrian" of Micah 5:5 as the little horn of Daniel 8 and conclude that the future world ruler who will head the Roman Empire will be an Assyrian. This identification, however, is doubtful, and it is more probable that Micah, living in the period of Assyria's ascendancy, is merely contrasting here the future glory of Israel with the destruction of Nineveh and of Assyria which actually took place in the seventh century b.c.

That Assyria is to be recognized in the millennial situation, however, is indicated in several passages. According to Isaiah 11:11, 16, the regathering of Israel at the beginning of the millennium will be from Assyria as well as from other nations, and a highway will stretch from Egypt to Assyria through the land of Israel as a major transportation link in the millennial kingdom. A similar prophecy is found in Isaiah 19:23-25 in reference to the future millennial kingdom: "In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."

It is evident from this passage that Israel's two most important neighbors in the millennial kingdom will be the peoples who inhabit the area of ancient Assyria to the northeast and Egypt to the southwest. In that day both Assyria and Egypt will be blessed along with Israel. The fact that Israel is called "third" in the light of other prophecies should not be interpreted, however, as meaning that Israel is less than these nations, but rather that it will be spoken of in the same breath as a prominent world power of that day. Another reference to Israel's regathering from Assyria is found in Isaiah 27:13. Zechariah adds his contribution in Zechariah 10:10, 11 where the destruction of the pride of Assyria and the scepter of Egypt is predicted and the regathering of Israel from these lands is anticipated. Assyria, the great nation of the past which antedated the Babylonian Empire and successive dominions of the Gentiles, will have its echo in the prophetic future and its place in the divine program of the millennial kingdom.

Egypt

In the millennial situation, Egypt likewise is to have a prominent place as already illustrated in passages cited concerning Assyria. Israel will be regathered from Egypt to their Promised Land, but Egypt will be a prominent nation in the millennial situation. That Egypt will be blessed is mentioned specifically in Isaiah 19:25 and that it will be a prominent nation along with Israel and Assyria is indicated in the same passage. Egypt is singled out for special warning in Zechariah 14:18, 19; God will punish them unless they keep the feast of tabernacles in the millennial kingdom. What is revealed in respect to Egypt has reference to the world-wide rule of Christ and indicates that all people will necessarily be required to serve Him.

Philistia

The prominence of the Philistines in the history of Israel is demonstrated by approximately 270 references to them in the Old Testament. Most of these concern historic events depicting the constant struggle between Israel and the Philistines. A few references to the Philistines contain prophecies of their doom or defeat at the hands of Israel already fulfilled. References such as Jeremiah 47:1; Ezekiel 25:15, 16; Amos 1:8; Zephaniah 2:5; and Zechariah 9:6 are probably best interpreted as already fulfilled.

A few references to the Philistines, however, are found in a context of the future millennial kingdom and imply that the territory of the Philistines and the inhabitants in that future day will have a relationship to the kingdom. According to Isaiah 11:14 Israel will have domination over the Philistines in that day. Again in Obadiah 19 the house of Jacob shall possess the Philistines. In both of these prophecies it may be presumed that the writer of Scripture is referring to the territory known to them at that time as possessed by the Philistines and to the future inhabitants of that area. It means simply that Israel will be victorious over their ancient enemies and possess their territory.

Moab

Of the more than 180 references to Moab in the Old Testament, the great majority deal with historic events. They had many contacts with the children of Israel during the Exodus as well as in the period of the judges. The fact that Ruth was a Moabitess and in the lineage of David sets this people apart.

The first important prophetic utterance relative to Moab is recorded in Numbers 24:17 where Balaam predicted concerning the Messiah, "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." The reference is, of course, to the Davidic line of which Christ is the ultimate fulfillment, and the prophecy anticipates not only the conquering of the Moabites under David and his successors but the ultimate possession of the land by Israel in the coming kingdom.

In Isaiah 11:14 a similar reference is found where the children of Israel are predicted to conquer Edom and Moab as well as the Philistines and the children of Ammon. This too refers to the possession of the land by Israel in the millennial kingdom.

Still another allusion to the Moabites in the future is included in the prophecies of the final world war described in Daniel 11:40-45. In Daniel 11:41 Moab along with Edom and the children of Ammon is said to escape the warfare between the king of the north and the king of the south with the Roman world ruler. This will have its fulfillment in the days just preceding the second coming of Christ.

The more extensive prophecies relating to Moab seem to have their primary fulfillment in history. These prophecies anticipate that Moab will be punished by God for their sins and for their opposition to the children of Israel. Some of them, like Isaiah 25:10, may have a future reference like those previously considered and will be fulfilled in the millennial kingdom. But the great prophetic passages such as Isaiah 15:1-16:14, Jeremiah 48:1-47, and Ezekiel 25:8-11, although describing in detail the downfall of Moab, seem to have their primary fulfillment in events of the past. Although they may foreshadow, as prophecy often does, the ultimate triumph of the children of Israel, the two important prophetic references to Moab in the minor prophets, namely Amos 2:1, 2 and Zephaniah 2:8, 9, refer to judgments already fulfilled.

Although the unfulfilled prophecies relating to Moab do not seem to be a large proportion of the total material provided in Scripture, they add their evidence to the total picture of the future kingdom in which Israel will be restored and triumphant over her traditional enemies.

Damascus

Damascus was one of the most ancient cities of the Middle East and one of the few to have a continuous history down to modern times. First mentioned in Genesis 14:15, it continued to have a relationship to Israel throughout the Old Testament period where there are more than forty references and in the New Testament where it is mentioned fifteen times. The more extended prophecies as found in Isaiah 17:1-14 and Jeremiah 49:23-27 have all been fulfilled as well as the occasional references found in Isaiah 7:8; 8:4; Amos 1:3-5; 3:12; 5:27. In Ezekiel 47:16-18 and 48:1 reference is made to Damascus as being in existence in the coming kingdom and furnishing identification for the borders of the land of Israel. No events are predicted and the reference seems to be to geography rather than to people who inhabit the land at that time. It is of interest that Damascus, which has had such a long history, apparently will continue its existence into the millennial kingdom.

The Ethiopians

The Ethiopians were so named by the Greeks and the Romans and refer to those known as the children of Cush in the Hebrew. They were descendants of Ham and occupied the area south of Egypt. Although most of the references to Ethiopians seem to concern events already fulfilled or historic in connection with the Ethiopians, some of the statements seem to be prophetic. The extended prophecy of Isaiah 18:1-7, while largely fulfilled, seems to go beyond the past, such as in the prediction of Isaiah 18:7 where it is stated that the Ethiopians shall be brought as a subdued people to the Lord of hosts in Mount Zion. Isaiah 45:14 may also be interpreted as picturing the triumph of Israel over the Ethiopians in the kingdom period, although the reference may be to historic fulfillment. The predictions of Isaiah 20:3-5 and 43:3 seem to have had adequate fulfillment in the past. The prophecies of Ezekiel 30:4, 5 relating as they do to the Day of the Lord may well have some future fulfillment. The reference to Ethiopia in Ezekiel 38:5, because it describes a northern invasion, has been taken by some to refer to another people, but in any event it is future and a part of the great northern invasion of Israel yet to be fulfilled.

Several other future references to Ethiopia seem to be found in the prophets. In Daniel 11:43 Ethiopia is mentioned as one of the countries that escaped warfare in the final world struggle which apparently reaches Egypt, but does not go farther south. In Psalm 68:31 it is predicted, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." This seemingly refers to the future millennial kingdom, although the prophecy of Zephaniah 2:12 of destruction at the hands of the Lord probably was fulfilled in the past. The prediction of Zephaniah 3:10, that the Ethiopians will come as suppliants to the Lord, fits best into the future millennial kingdom.

Taken as a whole, the references to Ethiopia recognize their continued significance in God's program and their ultimate destiny as one of the Gentile nations which will be subordinate to Israel when Christ reigns on earth.

Edom

The descendants of Esau are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament under various designations, but usually as the Edomites. Many of the prophecies relating to Edom have already been fulfilled, such as the extended predictions of Jeremiah 9:26; 25:21; 49:7-22; Lamentations 4:22; Ezekiel 25:12-14; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:6, 9, 11; 2:1. Some of these may be a foreshadowing of ultimate subjugation of Edom in the millennial kingdom.

The prophecies concerning Esau and his descendants stem from the original prophecy of Isaac. After Jacob had stolen the blessing intended for Esau, Isaac pronounced the lesser blessing on Esau recorded in Genesis 27:39, 40. Esau is promised physical blessing, but is put under the dominion of Jacob, although it is predicted that he would break the yoke of Jacob from off his neck. The long history of the relationship of the children of Jacob to the descendants of Esau carried out the conflict anticipated here and the children of Edom continued to figure in prophecy up to and including the kingdom age.

Isaiah 11:14 mentions Edom as being subdued by Israel in the kingdom period. Isaiah 63:1 is a prophetic description of the coming of Christ in judgment at His second coming. He is described as coming "from Edom." Daniel 11:41 includes Edom as one of the countries which escape warfare in the final world conflict before the second coming.

The most extended prophecy concerning Edom is found in Obadiah which is entirely devoted to this subject. Verses 1 to 14 speak of the judgment of God upon Edom because of their sins in rejoicing over the captivity of the children of Judah. These prophecies had at least partial fulfillment. The passage,

verses 15-21, which conclude the book, picture Edom in the Day of the Lord as having experienced divine judgment and being under the domination of the house of Jacob. The age-long controversy between Esau and Jacob will be resolved in Jacob's favor in keeping with the sovereign choice of God in which it was declared that the elder should serve the younger (Romans 9:12). Taken as a whole, the prophecies relating to Edom have already had amazing fulfillment in so far as God's judgment has fallen upon them in the past. The ultimate fulfillment awaits the second coming of Christ.

Arabia

Of the comparatively few references to Arabia in the Bible, the principal prophecy is found in Isaiah 21:13-17. Although the passage is not entirely clear, it seems to have been already fulfilled in the past. The kings of Arabia are also mentioned as those who will drink of the divine judgment of God in Jeremiah 25:24, probably already fulfilled. In Isaiah 13:20 it is also mentioned that the Arabian will no longer pitch his tent in Babylon after its destruction. On the whole, these prophecies are brief and insignificant in the total program of God.

Tyre

The city of Tyre like Damascus is one of the ancient cities of the world. Its riches and commercial interests were renowned, and it figured largely in the history of the ancient world. Although assigned to the tribe of Asshur, it was not subdued by them, but through much of its history was in friendly relationship with Israel as during the time of the reign of Solomon. Because of a fortress on an island in the Mediterranean to which the people could retire when Tyre was under siege, Tyre was very difficult to subdue and was able to resist the Assyrian armies and stand off Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon for more than a dozen years. Alexander the Great had to construct a causeway from the mainland in order to conquer it, and in the process fulfilled many of the prophecies concerning the destruction of the city itself.

Most of the prophecies concerning Tyre have already been fulfilled, such as Isaiah 23:1-18; Jeremiah 25:22; 47:4; Joel 3:4-8; Amos 1:9, 10, and Zechariah 9:2-4.

The importance of Tyre prophetically stems largely from the great prophecy of Ezekiel where three long chapters are devoted to Tyre, namely, 26, 27, and 28. Chapter 26 of Ezekiel describes the judgment which is impending upon Tyre. The immediate occasion was Nebuchadnezzar's siege of the city, but it goes beyond the immediate situation to its ultimate destruction later at the hands of Alexander the Great. Then the remarkable prophecy of Ezekiel 26:14 was fulfilled which reads: "And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it, saith the Lord God." The city of Tyre was literally scraped to the rock in order to provide materials to build a causeway out to its island fortress. Visitors to Tyre today can see the evidence of this fulfillment.

Chapter 27 of Ezekiel is a long lamentation over the destruction of Tyre with its description of the riches which once characterized this city. The lamentation is extended to the prince of Tyre in Ezekiel 28:1-10. The prophecies to this point can probably best be interpreted as having been graphically fulfilled in the long history of Tyre.

The prophetic utterance of Ezekiel 28:12-15, while having a partial reference to Tyre, seems to go beyond the immediate human ruler to Satan himself in his original conflict with God. He is described as "the anointed cherub that covereth" who at one time was "perfect...from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." Many interpreters from Augustine to modern times have felt that this

description is a revelation of the character of the original rebellion of Satan against God when he, according to the parallel description in Isaiah 14:12-15, sought to be like God and take the place of God in worship. The Ezekiel passage, however, beginning in verse 16 seems to return largely to a description of Tyre itself and predicts its utter destruction. The large place afforded Tyre in these three long chapters of Ezekiel indicate its importance from the prophetic standpoint as not only embodying divine judgment upon a wicked city which had exalted itself above God, but also upon its unseen ruler, Satan. The entire prophecy anticipates the downfall of Satan as well as the city of Tyre itself. As far as the prophetic program of God is concerned, Tyre does not seem to figure largely in end-time events, although the intimation is that it will be in existence in some form as a city in the time of the end.

Miscellaneous Prophecies

Among the lesser prophecies concerning the nations is that concerning the Ammonites. Although the Ammonites are mentioned frequently in the Bible, they do not loom large in the prophetic narrative. One of the major passages is found in Jeremiah 49:1-6 where God's divine judgment and conquest of the Ammonites is pictured. A similar passage is found in Ezekiel 25:1-7 which prophesies the conquest of the Ammonites by "the men of the east." Other references to the Ammonites in prophecy now fulfilled are passages such as Jeremiah 25:21; Amos 1:13; and Zephaniah 2:8, 9. The only reference clearly future is that of Daniel 11:41 where Ammon is said to escape some of the warfare at the end of the age. The dealings of God with the children of Ammon again illustrate His justice and the certainty of fulfilled prophecy.

A brief prophecy concerning Kedar and Hazor is contained in Jeremiah 49:28-33. It is a prediction of judgment upon them at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. A similar judgment is pronounced upon Elam in Jeremiah 49:34-38. Other references to God's judgment on Kedar are found in Isaiah 21:16,17. Only future reference relative to those of Kedar seems to be found in Isaiah 60:7 where it is indicated that "the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together" as possessions of the coming Messiah.

Mention should also be made of Zidon also spelled Sidon, another ancient city on the eastern Mediterranean north of Tyre. In Ezekiel 28:20-24 it is predicted that Zidon will be subject to divine judgment of pestilence and warfare because of their sins. This has unquestionably been fulfilled already in history. Zidon is also mentioned as participating in the general judgment which falls upon Tyre in Isaiah 23:2, 4, 12 and is also associated with Tyre in other prophecies, such as Jeremiah 25:22; 47:4, and Joel 3:4. As a city it does not figure largely in prophecy.

A survey of the countries surrounding Israel demonstrate that prophecies of their coming judgment and subjugation to Israel are set in a context of Israel's exaltation in the kingdom age. Although in some cases the reference may be largely geographic rather than to the nations themselves, for racial continuity may be difficult to sustain, the language of Scripture is sufficiently clear to make plain that Israel will triumph over her enemies and in the process be restored to a place of glory and blessing under the rule of the Messiah. The fact that Israel is already in her place in the Middle East is a foreshadowing of these ultimate triumphs which await the second coming of her Messiah and Saviour.

The Nations In The Eternal State

It is only natural that prophecies relating to the nations should be primarily concerned with the present earth rather than the eternal state. It is an error, however, to assume that national identity will be lost in eternity. Just as there will be individual identity, so also there will be racial identity, and individuals will

inevitably carry throughout eternity an identification related to some extent to their place in the history of the world. Hence, Israelites will be Israelites throughout eternity and Gentiles will be Gentiles as well.

Although there has been some resistance to this idea, national identity seems a natural corollary to individual identity. If Abraham is to remain Abraham throughout eternity and David is to remain David, it is inevitable that they would be considered in their historical context in time. So also will it be with those who are saved among the Gentiles. There is no indication that nationality of individuals will be stressed, but the fact that they belong to a nation is revealed in the description of the New Jerusalem.

According to the revelation given to John, the New Jerusalem will include the angels (Revelation 21:12), the children of Israel (Revelation 21:12), the church as represented in the twelve apostles (Revelation 21:14) and the Gentiles (Revelation 21:24). This is anticipated in the itemization of those who will be related to the heavenly Jerusalem given in Hebrews 12:22, 23 where specifically the heavenly Jerusalem includes "an innumerable company of angels," the "church of the firstborn," and "the spirits of just men made perfect." This latter reference seems to be an inclusive one referring to all men who are saved who are not included in the previous itemization. Such a description obviously includes Gentiles who were saved. Hence, the reference to "the nations," better translated "the Gentiles," in Revelation 21:24 is not surprising.

Expositors are of course disagreed as to whether this description relates to the heavenly city in the millennial period or in the eternal state. In either case, however, the implication is that the same people who inhabit the eternal city in this description will continue to inhabit it throughout eternity. The conclusion is therefore sound and valid that the saved among the Gentiles will find their place in the eternal bliss which will characterize the saints in eternity to come as they dwell in perfect fellowship with God in the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem.

Although the pattern of Gentile prophecy and fulfillment is largely one of judgment upon their unbelief and blasphemous rebellion against God, it is another token of the grace of God that, in addition to His program for Israel and the church, the body of Christ, countless Gentiles in the Old Testament period as well as in the tribulation and the millennium will come to know Jesus Christ and His saving grace, and accordingly will be qualified to participate as individuals in the blessings which God has ordained for those who love Him. The majestic purpose of God for the nations is therefore crowned with this happy note of the triumph of grace in those among the Gentiles who turn to Jesus Christ.

Taken as a whole, the program of God for the Gentiles, emphasizes His righteousness and His sovereignty which, though challenged for many centuries, ultimately has its clear declaration at the second coming of Jesus Christ. Throughout eternity, however, the presence of Gentiles who entered the eternal state is the reminder of the comprehensive character of the grace of God which provided Jesus Christ as a means of reconciling the world unto Himself. Their testimony will join with that of all other saints and the holy angels in the mighty symphony of worship and praise which will constitute the music of eternity.

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