

**A CHURCH OF ALL NATIONS**. In the Book of Revelation John was transported into the future. In chapters 4 and 5, he saw **Heaven** at the end of the Church Age, just after the Rapture. He saw the completed Church in Heaven. This is God's vision come to pass, showing us what God is working to achieve now. We see the final outcome of the Church-Age with the Church in Heaven singing: **"You (Jesus Christ, the Lamb) were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation"** (Revelation 5:9,10). God's purpose and vision is for every tribe and nation to be united in the blood of Christ. Jesus predicted that the Gospel will be preached to **every nation** then the end will come. His purpose now is to save people from every nation. Revelation reveals God's ultimate success - the Church triumphant! He will have a people from every tribe and nation worshipping Him together in heaven. They are not in their own sections (a quiet English corner, a louder Nigerian corner etc!) each with their own services, but all peoples worshipping as one family together united by the blood of Christ. This is God's vision for His Church.

Revelation 4 and 5: **"After these things** (after the Church-Age described in chapters 2,3). **I looked, and behold, a open door in heaven And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this** (after the Church-Age). **Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. Around the throne were 24 thrones, and on the thrones I saw 24 elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads** (these men represent the Church)...**the 24 elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship ..Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne,**

**saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created." And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with 7 seals (this scroll contains the Title-Deeds to the earth which only God's appointed King can open. It includes the authority to make judgments to end the old order and establish His Kingdom).**

**Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. (Many antichrists in history have tried to claim the role of world-ruler but were neither able nor worthy. To exercise such power requires proven character: perfect righteousness, love and humility. A sinful World Dictator becomes corrupted by power, bringing great evil). So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David (JESUS), has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its 7 seals."**

**And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having 7 horns and 7 eyes, which are the 7 Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. Now when He had taken the scroll, the 4 living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. They sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood (for you to stand in this group it is only through faith in the Blood of Christ, not by your works) out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made**

**us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth"**

The origin of nations and tongues is in the Plan of God:

**1. Creation** (Genesis 1,2),

**2. The Fall** (Genesis 3),

**3. The effects of the Fall** - evil spreads quickly in a time of no nations (Genesis 4-6),

**4. The Flood** (Genesis 7-9) was needed because after 1500 years evil was so widespread that only one family was left uncorrupted, and soon it would be impossible for Messiah to come because He had to come through a believing community. Thus the Flood was necessary for the salvation of the human race.

**5. After the Flood** the whole human race descends from Noah (Genesis 10). **"He has made from one blood (Adam and Noah) every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth"** (Acts 17:26). We are all related anyway - we have the same Great-great-great-...-great Grandfather)-. The 70 descendants of Noah are given from which come the original 70 nations: **"These were the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the Flood"** (Genesis 10:32).

**6. BABEL.** God had told man to spread out and form nations. Ethnic diversity was God's idea. **"God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth"** (Genesis 9:1). But man had other ideas: **"Now the whole earth had one language and one speech...Then they said to one another, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth"** (11:1-4).

We see that already soon after the Flood man rebelled under Nimrod, an anti-christ inspired by satan, who wanted to unite man under

a One World Order (Economy and Religion) with himself as Dictator. If God had not stepped in, this would have proved successful, closing God out, preventing His plan of redemption through Messiah.

**So: “The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth” (v5-9).**

The nations naturally divided according to their languages. **Ethnic diversity was God’s idea**, for the purpose of Redemption (so we respect and enjoy it). He ensured this division of mankind after the Flood because otherwise a united world-order of mankind would form under an evil dictator and a corrupted state-religion, closing God out and preventing God’s plan of redemption through the Coming of Messiah. In Gen11, when man tried to set up a One-World Order, God scattered the peoples, separating them into nations by language. He did it to restrain evil, localising and limiting its spread. For if an evil ruler and religion sprung up in one place it was hard for it to cross the ethnic barriers.

**So it was God who scattered the peoples, separating them into nations by language- to restrain evil, giving time for His Plan of Redemption to work.** Although antichrists would arise to try and become world-rulers, ultimately it was too hard to achieve satan’s plan (a One-World Order with his man in charge). Satan even tempted Jesus with this position. In this way a One-World Order/

Religion/Dictatorship under antichrist was restrained until God's time at the end of age when satan will for a short time only (3.5 years) be able to establish his antichrist as a world-ruler (from Europe) before God judges. Thus one sign of the approaching end will be the rebuilding of the Tower of Babel (One World-Order). We see this coming together in our time, helped by technology, and fuelled by World-War. **God's plan is also to have a World-Government and Dictatorship but only one Man is worthy- 'the Lion of Judah'** Who is also **'the Lamb of God'** slain for us. **Jesus** proved His worthiness in His First Coming, and will rule 1000 years on earth.

**7. Israel.** The Creation of nations (diversity) was only the first step in God's Plan. Next He chose one man (Abraham) and one nation (Israel) to reveal himself and bring forth the Messiah Jesus. His purpose was not just to bless Israel, but through them to bless all nations with salvation: **"I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"** (Genesis 12:2,3). He chose Abraham because he would teach and transmit his faith to his children (that's what God expects from Christian parents). God's vision was for all nations to be saved, but Israel just took the first line ('bless me - forget the rest!') But one mark of the true Christ (Abraham's seed) is that He would fulfil the Covenant and get the blessing to all nations. Jesus is the only one who delivered on this promise. So, He must be the Christ!

**8. The New Creation in Christ.** A divided humanity was necessary to restrain sin but it is not God's final vision. Christ came to bring salvation to the world and unite all humanity in Himself. **Jesus died for all** (1Joh n2:2) **so that all who believe may be saved** (John 3:16, Romans 10:13), so He told us to **disciple all nations** (Matt 28:18,19) and **preach the gospel to every creature** (Mark 16:16). His vision for all nations was radical for the Jews of His time. They thought

that God just loved Israel and Gentiles were 2nd class. God did a great miracle to change their hearts and send them to the nations. Jesus declared in faith: **“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth”** (Acts 1:8). The power and love of God propelled them across all ethnic barriers, overcoming all their prejudices for Christ’s sake.

The Spirit does the same today. Jesus did not just get the gospel of salvation to the nations, but also **came to UNITE redeemed humanity into ONE BODY** with one Spirit, one nation in Christ, one Family under one Father. Now all racial barriers are broken down in Christ(see Eph2:13-16). The world’s attempt to unite politically is not of God and will fail, but in the Spirit believers form a united family of God. Pentecost signified that God was reversing Babel (Acts 2). Now those with varied tongues understood them praising God in their own language. God was saying that in the Spirit all language and cultural barriers are broken down.

We are a new Creation in Christ. In Him there is total equality of race: **“There is neither Jew nor Greek... for you are all one in Christ Jesus”** (Galatians 3:28). As God’s family we are not united through race or politics, but something much greater - the blood of Christ. The rainbow of national and cultural distinctives is good and it is O.K to be proud of your country, but that isn’t the important thing now. **Our union and what unites us in Christ is far stronger than any natural differences** (being nothing in comparison). **Our identity is partially based on our ethnicity but all that is swallowed up by our identity in Christ** (2Corinthians 5:16). A (multinational) Church like ours is a witness to what God wants and is doing. We are not all separated off into our own race but are all united together (as in heaven). **So as we preach the Gospel to all nations, welcoming, loving and worshipping with our brothers and sisters from every tribe, we are fulfilling God's vision and pleasing His heart.**