

The Dwelling of God & Man

Revelation 21:1-4

INTRODUCTION

- A. “I’m not looking for the sunset as the swift years come and go; I am looking for the sunrise and the golden morning glow. I’m not going down, but upward and the path is never dim, for the day proves ever brighter as I journey on with him. So my eyes are on the hilltops, waiting for the sun to rise, Waiting for my invitation to my home beyond the skies.”
- B. What a glorious day when we see the sun rising of that glorious eternal day!
 - 1. In our text, John is able to catch a small glimpse of that eternal day.
 - 2. We want to see what we can learn from this text.

THE NEW CITY, vv. 1-2

- A. John saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, v. 1.
 - 1. The image of a new heaven and a new earth comes from Isaiah.
 - a. “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind” (65:17).
 - b. “As the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, says the LORD; so shall your descendants and your name remain” (66:22).
 - 2. When John uses the word “new” here, he probably means a completely new universe made out of completely new materials.
 - a. This new universe would not even resemble the old one.
 - b. This new universe was necessary because the old heaven and the old earth had been destroyed.
 - 1) We know that when the Lord returns, the universe will be destroyed.
 - 2) “The day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10).
- B. The sea was no more, v. 1c.
 - 1. Earlier in Revelation, the sea stood for separation between God and man.
 - a. “Before the throne there is as it were a sea of glass, like crystal” (4:6).
 - b. Thus, the sea’s being no more may signify that the barrier between God and man has been removed.
 - 2. Throughout Revelation, the sea stands for evil.
 - a. “And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads” (Rev. 13:1).
 - b. Thus, the image here may be that evil is gone.
- C. John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, v. 2.
 - 1. The image of the new Jerusalem comes from Isaiah 65:17-19.
 - 2. This must be a new Jerusalem for the old Jerusalem was destroyed when the first heaven and earth passed away.
 - 3. Jerusalem was often referred to the holy city.
 - 4. The new Jerusalem comes down from God, this is a divine city; God is the foundation of the city.
 - a. “When I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also” (Jn. 14:3).
 - b. Abraham “looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10).

- c. "God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16).
- 5. The new Jerusalem was prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
 - a. This creates a small problem for those who simply see Rev. 21-22 as a picture of heaven, for the church is pictured as the bride of Christ.
 - 1) "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom" (Mt. 25:1).
 - 2) Writing about the roles of husbands and wives, Paul concludes by saying, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:32).
 - 3) "My brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another - to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God" (Rom. 7:4).
 - b. What are we to make of this image as this city being depicted as the bride of Christ?
 - 1) There is a sense in which, I think, this is an image of the church in her final state, glorified.
 - 2) But, I think there may be a more simple explanation.
 - a) What we have here is a mixing of the picture of the church in her final state and the place she shall abide.
 - b) "Charleston" can refer both to the place and the inhabitants of that place.
 - i. If I say, "Charleston is 15 minutes away," I'm referring to the place.
 - ii. If I say, "Charleston just elected a new mayor," I'm referring to the inhabitants.
 - c) Thus, the picture here is one of both the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem and the place of the new Jerusalem.

THE NEW HOME, vv. 3-4

- A. John heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them," v. 3.
 - 1. This is the only time in the book of Revelation that we hear God speak. This is significant, for what we hear is quite important.
 - 2. The dwelling of God is with men.
 - a. The dwelling of God with men is the fulfillment of an Old Testament promise; Lev. 26:11-12.
 - b. The Greek term for "dwell" here is closely associated with the Hebrew word "tabernacle."
 - 1) The idea behind the tabernacle was that God dwelt among the people of Israel.
 - 2) After the consummation of the ages, God will dwell with his people in heaven.
- B. John enumerates the blessings associated with that future age - "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away," v. 4.
 - 1. This is a passage to which we often turn when we need comfort, and we ought to turn to this passage, for these words were inspired to give us great comfort.
 - 2. God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.
 - a. These must be tears of sorrow, for we are told that mourning, crying, and pain will be no more.
 - b. Not only is God going to do away with tears of sorrow, but God is personally going to wipe away every tear from our eyes.
 - 1) When our children are hurt and crying, we not only comfort them, but we wipe the tears from their eyes in an expression of love.
 - 2) God shows his love for us individually in that he personally wipes the tears from our eyes.
 - 3. Death shall be no more.
 - a. It only stands to reason that death shall be no more.

- 1) Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire after the final judgment (20:14).
 - 2) John also saw “the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (22:2).
- b. This must have had to comfort those early Christians who read this.
- 1) They might have been forced to give up their lives for Christ in this world, but in the next world they would never die.
 - 2) Their loved ones and friends would never be forced to give up their lives.
4. Pain shall be no more - no more shall there be the threat of being torn apart by wild animals, the threat of being burned alive, and the threat of being crucified.
 5. John tells us why these threats will no longer be - “The former things have passed away.” The old world order with its pain and sorrow will have vanished.
 6. Illustration about the car-sick boy at Grandma’s, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #4962.