

A New Creation Rev. 21

Hello Dear Listeners;

The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness,¹ That's the word of God in 2 Peter 3:9. Actually we might also read, "The Lord of promise is not slow as some understand slowness." People, mortal human beings, are easily frustrated and impatient when things don't go their way, when we think they should.

Yet the bible emphasizes in more than one place that the Lord is not bound by our agendas. He keeps time and he acts according to his plan, his providence. Moses, in Psalm 90 says, "God is from everlasting" and "A thousand years in his sight are like a day that has just gone by." (Psalm 90:4)

In the apostle Peter's day there were "scoffers" who dared to say, "Where is this coming He (that is, the Lord) promised"? They didn't reckon with the fact that the Lord is a whole lot more patient than people. He waits for them to come to Him! He still gives them time, even today to turn from sullen, arrogant ways to Him and His Word.

That Word does tell us that the time will come when God's final judgement will go over all of creation. The Book of Revelation testifies to the time when Satan will go down to defeat. O yes, before that happens says the Holy Spirit in chapter 20, Satan will make a last-ditch attempt to thwart God's plan to gather his people and bring them home. He will go out to deceive the nations, all over the world. But that devil who over the ages has deceived many people ,will be thrown into what the bible calls " the lake of burning sulphur." (Revelation 20: 10.

Then the dead, " Great and small" will be judged. Yet those who have looked to Jesus Christ with believing hearts have nothing to fear . Their names, testifies the Spirit, are recorded in the "book of life." Then in Revelation 21 we read of that most awesome event which will take place.

"The new heaven and a new earth" will make their appearance by an act of Almighty God. (v. 1a) John saw that " the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and there was no longer any sea." (v. 1b) Surely it will be even as the prophet Isaiah had been allowed to speak of it in ch. 65 of his book where

¹ 2 Peter 3:9

God said, “ Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth.” (v. 17). The curse that had fallen on mankind will be completely, finally, lifted and replaced by righteousness. ² All that is transient, and obsolete, will be totally, refreshed and renewed.

The “New Jerusalem” the City of God, the church above, will be united with the church here below and God’s people (and only they), will dwell on a new earth. A new earth, this earth, cleansed by fire from all unrighteousness(2 Peter 3:7, 10,12) .Purified from one end to the other.

The result of this purifying work of the Lord will be that God will dwell in the midst of His people and as John was allowed to see and witness,

He, (that is Holy, sovereign God), “ Will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning, or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. (v. 4)

Here is blessedness beyond all measure, all imagination. Someone has said, “ Not only is grief alleviated but even its last traces, every lingering tear, is wiped from the eyes.” There can, be, there will be, no more tears, for death, which right up till the end is an enemy, be it, as Paul writes elsewhere (1 Cor. 15) “ the last enemy”, will be no more.

Indeed who can imagine that?! The world today is full of tears and pain and crying. I don’t only think of the millions that even these last few months have been uprooted, their homes and livelihood in shambles because of war and the fomenting of cruelty by terrorists. I think of the many, many Christians who are being hounded, persecuted by those who hate the one true God. It is happening in many countries, in Africa, in the Middle East, in China and in North Korea, to name only a few places. In some of these places the mere possession of a bible is reason enough to put the owner and one’s family to death.

The certainty of the bliss and the freedom and the holiness which will flood all of this earth is underlined by the fact that these chapters of Revelation use the present tense. Just listen to the words which follow in chapter 21: 5 and 6.

² Prof. L. Selles in his A Series of Outlines on the Revelation to John Revised edition. Vol. 2. p. 126

He who was seated on the throne (who is no other than Jesus Christ) said, “ *I am making everything new!*” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Dear listeners, the Church of Jesus Christ, that is, Christ’s Holy Catholic (*or universal*) Church is on her way to the renewal of all things. The renewal of all things by the sovereign hand and decree of God and not the supposed result from an evolution of all things. ³

O even then, there will be a separation. A decisive separation of believers and unbelievers. For those who even today look and listen to the Lord Jesus Christ with believing and expectant hearts will inherit eternal life and will receive their reward in what will be Paradise restored. The children of believers - many of whom will have died in infancy, together with many teenagers, grownups, families who experienced much pain and hardship in this life will never again be hurt and cry in agony. Instead they will sing, The whole Bride of Christ, seemingly so small in the eyes of many, even of sincere Christians, will celebrate. Even as they take up their place on this “new earth”. Even as they fulfil their calling, whatever the Lord has in store for them while the Lord will be right in their midst.

For no, it will not be a multitude of bodiless spirits, mere mirages that will occupy a sparkling new earth. It will be people, with amazing, new, immortal bodies who will work and play and worship in the very near presence of God.

But what about the others? Those of whom Christ Himself says that they *are “ The cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars” what will be their end?*

John heard that “ Their place will be in the fiery lake of burn ing sulphur. This is true second death.” (v. 8)

What does all this have to say for us today? For you and me who live in a society that while greatly blessed with a large measure of peace and prosperity, is nevertheless in many ways, drifting away from God? It has much, very much to say. For to believe God’s word and to look forward to Christ’s coming as it is revealed to us in God’s Word is life, true life for all who believe. It is comfort and joy even in difficult circumstances. It gives stability, and hope, even a hope which doesn’t fail in the midst of a broken, groaning world.

³ L. Selles, *ibid.* p. 128

No, it doesn't put some kind of bandaid on your pain, your disability and loss. It doesn't try to smooth over the deep sorrow you are experiencing with a few hollow words, like "keep your chin up" or "It can't be that bad" or worse, "Just eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you're dead".

This testimony of the culmination of all things and the banning of all grief and pain and sin is instead a solid lifeline, and an anchor in the midst of the storms of life. It cause the believer to look to Jesus Christ, King Triumphant, strong to save. Dying, He has death defeated, buried, He has spoiled the grave." He was resurrected from the dead that those who belong to him might look forward to their resurrection. He reigns on high . He is triumphant. And he returns, on the clouds of heaven. I pray that if you and I are alive at his coming He might find us waiting and working and loving God and our neighbor in great expectation.

Amen and thank you for listening.