

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Revelation: God's Revelation To His Servants Today On Events About To Occur Part IV: "The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter": Events After The Rapture Of The Church

G. The Eternal State, Revelation 21:1-22:5

1. God's Presentation Of His People's Sanctified Eternal Home (Revelation 21:1-8)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We who believe in Christ face a relentless, often draining tension with the world's evil around us:

(1) We are in tension with the world's evil actions: (a) An ad in the Christian magazine, Answers, Jan.-Mar. 2015, p. 7 noted: "People often don't know that most health insurance companies cover abortions . . ." (b) The magazine's editors (*Ibid.*, p. 12) also cited the article, "So Far, So Fast" in The Economist, Oct. 11, 2014 that stated: "Given that America, like most places, has viewed homosexuality as wicked since more or less the beginning of time, approved by a wide majority represents a watershed not just in contemporary politics but also in cultural history."

We believers are thus in constant tension with a world of widespread murder and perverted immorality.

(2) We are also in tension with the world's evil thinking: (a) the same issue of Answers (*Ibid.*, "Answers in Exodus," p. 11-12) reported on the new documentary, "Patterns of Evidence" that tells of "(t)he . . . secular date of the Exodus in 1250 B. C. . . . the time of Pharaoh Rameses in the New Kingdom. Since no evidence has been found for an Exodus during this time period, most archaeologists are skeptical about the biblical account . . . (H)owever . . . (s)ecular Egyptologists are increasingly admitting that their dating of Egyptian history is in shambles." I was taught about the error of the secular date for the Exodus in Bible school 48 years ago, but just now secular archaeologists are being pressed to admit it! (b) Yet, evil thinking permeates many religious groups: ((1)) the same Answers magazine ("Good-bye Adam," p. 13) told how "(t)he belief that Adam was not a historical person (which undermines the atonement message of Jesus, who came to earth to offer redemption for Adam's descendants) has already become a prominent view in many Bible colleges and seminaries." ((2)) Last Thursday, I heard a widow call a local radio talk show to report a Church she attends had refused to perform a mass for her deceased husband on his birthday since she did not send in the money for the mass a month earlier! The talk show host, who is of the same faith as the widow, replied, "Well, you have to obey the rules!" I was stunned: the multiple unbiblical beliefs of lessening a party's time of torment in purgatory by the efficacy of a priest's saying a mass and the loveless rule of a distraught widow's having to pay a month in advance to have such a mass said for her husband -- it was all so evil! ((3)) Then, my wife told me that she heard a Christian radio station report last week on a book that was popular with evangelical Christians and told of a boy who had died and gone to heaven only to return and report on what he experienced has been pulled off of store shelves because the boy now admits he made up the story for attention! The *latimes.com*, January 21, 2015 story, "Book publishing shocker: That boy didn't actually come back from heaven" by Michael Hiltzik confirms it!

Need: *So we ask, "How does God want us to handle the constant, draining tension we face with an evil world?!"*

- I. After Jesus Christ judges and sends all evil beings to the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:10-15), He will create a new universe for believers in Christ that is free of sin and its effects, Revelation 21:1a:**
 - A. The new heavens and the new earth set up in Revelation 21:1 fulfills God's promise to create a new universe for the godly remnant as *opposed* to the future experience of the wicked as is taught in Isaiah 65:8-17.
 - B. The new universe is needed since Isaiah 51:6-8 implies that the old universe, like its sinful human dwellers, must die due to sin's effects, but that God's salvation remains forever for the godly. This truth explains why the old universe is destroyed at the great white throne judgment of the unsaved dead in Revelation 20:11-15.
- II. That new universe will be free of any tension with evil for the believer, Revelation 21:1b-5:**
 - A. All that is hostile to man's life, typified in the sea of the old world, will not exist in the new world, Rev. 21:1b.
 - B. John also saw the new Jerusalem descend from heaven "once-for-all-prepared" (*hetoimasmenen*, perf. pass. ptc., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 890; The Analy. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 189) as a bride "once-for-all-adorned" (*kekosmemenen*, perf. pass. ptc., *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*, The Analy. Grk. Lex., p. 228.) for her husband, Rev. 21:2. Its "holy city" title recalls Isaiah 52:1 where the old Jerusalem was polluted by godless men who tread into it (Rev. 11:2), but Isaiah 61:10 reveals the people of the **new** "holy city" will greatly rejoice in the Lord as they will be adorned with His salvation and righteousness [through Christ] like a bride of God.
 - C. The godly in the New Jerusalem (Isaiah 61:10) will thus have unconditional salvation security as they will be "once-for-all prepared" as a bride "adorned once-for-all" with God's righteousness, Revelation 21:2.

- D. Thus, the godly will unconditionally forever enjoy God's blessed presence and fellowship, Revelation 21:3-4:
1. God will set up his "tent, dwelling" (*skene*, Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 762) with men to "tabernacle, dwell" (*skenosei*, *Ibid.*, *U. B. S. Grk. N. T.*; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich) "together with" (*meta*, *Ibid.*, *U. B. S. Grk. N. T.*) them. Believers will be His people and God *Himself* (*autos*, *Ibid.*, *U. B. S. Grk. N. T.*) will be "together with" (*meta*, *Ibid.*) them as their God since they will be purified from sin, all in fulfillment of God's Leviticus 26:3, 11-12 promise for righteousness, Rev. 21:3!
 2. Consequently, the negative effects of sin will all be removed for the godly, Revelation 21:4:
 - a. God will wipe away every tear, there will be no more death, sorrow nor crying to fulfill Isaiah 25:7-8: there, God promised to remove the veil of death that was cast over all people groups, Revelation 21:4a,b!
 - b. John added that there would be no more pain, for the former effects of sin will all be gone, Rev. 21:4c.
- E. To counter the fear that such an ideal future state might be just a vain hope, the Lord Who sat on His throne said, "Behold, I make all things new," and added to John, "Write: for these words are true and faithful." The "true and faithful" expression is used elsewhere in Revelation (3:14; 19:11) of Christ as Judge Who condemns the evil but Who also supports the upright, cf. Jeremiah 42:5. Thus, the rewards promised for the righteous in Rev. 21:3-4 are **assured** by a **holy, righteous, divine Judge**, so they are **both SECURE and ETERNAL!**

III. Christ then gives an evangelistic message to all who read Revelation 21:6-8 (as follows):

- A. On the one hand, Jesus Christ offers salvation and eternal blessing to those who trust in Him, Rev. 21:6-7:
1. Having stated the promised future bliss, Jesus affirmed their reality as being already as sure as if they now existed by affirming, "They [the things just uttered] are once-for-all done" (*gegonan*, 3rd pers. pl. perf. act. indic., *U. B. S. Grk. N. T.*, p. 891; *Ibid.*, *The Analy. Grk. Lex.*, p. 76). Jesus added that He was the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end as the **ONLY** God (Rev. 21:6a) in alluding to Isaiah 44:6 to drive home the fact that no other deity can offer such an assured future bliss as no other party is truly God!
 2. Jesus as the only true God then offers to give unto him who is spiritually athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely (Rev. 21:6b), an offer of salvation by faith through grace in alluding to Isaiah 55:1 that calls men to buy eternal life from God at the waters of salvation, and all without money and without price.
 3. For those who believe in Christ and are justified by God's grace, they will be overcomers, God will be their God and they will be His sons, an allusion to 2 Samuel 7:14 where God called the Davidic kings His sons if they obeyed Him. Likewise, the godly will eternally reign as kings with God, Rev. 20:4; 5:8-10.
- B. However, for all who **REJECT** Christ, there is only the "second death," *the lake of fire*, Revelation 21:8:
1. The reference to the "cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars" (Rev. 21:8a NIV) pictures all who reject the water of the fountain of life, i.e., faith in Christ for salvation, and who thus live in sin; *Bib. Know. Com.*, *N. T.*, p. 985.
 2. Those who reject Christ will go to the "fiery lake of burning sulfur," the "second death," Rev. 21:8b NIV.
 3. Thus, unbelief in Christ alone results in eternal damnation, just as John the Baptizer taught in John 3:36.

Lesson: *The great, persistent TENSION the GODLY experience with the EVIL of the SINFUL WORLD around them will one day assuredly, forever be FULLY RELEASED: God will place believers in a SINLESS universe with its NEW Jerusalem in close, fulfilling, eternal security and fellowship with Him. Christ thus offers all men today that utopia if they trust in Him, warning that rejecting Him will lead to an eternity of torment in the lake of fire.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Jesus Christ to be saved, John 3:16, 36. (2) As believers, may we rely upon the indwelling Holy Spirit to CONTINUE to live uprightly in tension with a godless world (Galatians 5:16-23; 1 John 2:15-17), armed with the hope of a blissful eternity free of the tension we now face with an evil world!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

As I was in the midst of typing up the first draft of this sermon on January 20, 2015, a Christian man drove onto our Church property and began shoveling sand out of his pickup onto the sheet of ice that covered our parking lot. I went outside to thank him, and he spoke at length of the tension he faced in his life between good and evil.

When I returned to my office, I realized that study-interrupting conversation had been used of the Lord to validate the direction I had begun to take with these sermon notes. Later, I heard the radio reports mentioned in this sermon's introduction section, so I added them to these notes, convinced this message was from the Lord.

Accordingly, (1) may we trust in Christ for eternal life. (2) May we as believers then rely on the Holy Spirit to live righteously (Galatians 5:16-23), persisting to act and to think in tension with an evil world by hoping for God's new, righteous heaven and earth!