

I.N.I.

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 6, 2012

Revelation 21:1-5

In Christ Jesus, who makes all things new again, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

As we have stated before the Apostle John wrote the book of Revelation to give believers of all ages comfort in the face of trials and tribulations. Remember John was exiled on the island of Patmos for his faith in the resurrected Lord Jesus. His fellow believers were also suffering various sorts of persecution. It would be very easy for them to become discouraged, self-pitied and despairing. From their perspective it could appear that Satan was winning the battle. The Holy Spirit through John's words in Revelation clearly reveals that Jesus is still in control, the victory is His! What a comfort that was and still is.

We look around us and we see terrorist plots not only overseas but here at home. We see an economy that has been very slow to recover and may never be what it once was. We see more unrest and rebellion and murder everyday. We see drug abuse and sexual promiscuity, we see greed, waste and corruption, we see despair and hopelessness.

We look into our own hearts and we see evil thoughts, selfish ambitions and sinful desires. We see a world that hates Christ and Christians and tempts us to join in with the ungodly and ridicules us if we don't. We see death and sorrow and tears everywhere. From our perspective it too could appear as if Satan is winning the battle for the souls of this world.

In the book of Revelation, the Spirit peels back the veil of this life and peeks behind the scenes of world events to show us the majesty of the Lamb and how He rules history for the sake of His believers. We have mentioned in the past weeks that this book consists of seven visions. The first 19 chapters consist of the first six visions in which the pattern of world history is unveiled. These visions show that the present age is an age in which Satan will unsuccessfully attempt to destroy Jesus' Church of believers.

Chapter 20 begins the seventh vision in which the final judgment is revealed. Satan is judged and thrown into the lake of fire, a picture of hell. Then the public judgment at the great white throne takes place. At that time all who followed the ways of Satan and did not believe in Jesus are judged and condemned to their eternal home of hell. But those whose names are written in the book of life, who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, the Lamb who was slain and risen again, will be declared blessed and enter heavenly bliss.

Chapter 21 then reveals this eternal home for us. What a glimpse we get of this most marvelous place of glory.

We have entitled our theme this morning:

**OUR GOD MAKES ALL THINGS NEW!**

The first new thing we see in our text is

**I: OUR NEW HOME--CREATED BY HIM.**

We read vs. 1 **AND I SAW A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH, FOR THE FIRST HEAVEN AND THE FIRST EARTH HAD PASSED AWAY. ALSO THERE WAS NO MORE SEA.**

Throughout this closing scene, literal and figurative descriptions of eternal paradise stand side by side. It is not always easy to tell whether John is providing us a figurative painting or a literal snapshot of heaven. In this first picture we are assured from God's Word that this is a literal new

heaven and new earth. We read from II Peter 3:10-13 **BUT THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT, IN WHICH THE HEAVENS WILL PASS AWAY WITH A GREAT NOISE, AND THE ELEMENTS WILL MELT WITH FERVENT HEAT; BOTH THE EARTH AND THE WORKS THAT ARE IN IT WILL BE BURNED UP. THEREFORE, SINCE ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE DISSOLVED, WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT YOU TO BE IN HOLY CONDUCT AND GODLINESS, LOOKING FOR AND HASTENING THE COMING OF THE DAY OF GOD, BECAUSE OF WHICH THE HEAVENS WILL BE DISSOLVED BEING ON FIRE, AND THE ELEMENTS WILL MELT WITH FERVENT HEAT? NEVERTHELESS WE, ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE, LOOK FOR NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS.** The LORD through Isaiah said in chapter 65:17 **FOR BEHOLD, I CREATE NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH; AND THE FORMER SHALL NOT BE REMEMBERED OR COME TO MIND.** Jesus also said in Luke 21:33 **HEAVEN AND EARTH WILL PASS AWAY...**

Will this be brand new? It appears that God will **RENEW** what was old. The Greek word **NEW** that is used in our text contains the idea of “new in quality or in freshness, renewed.” Paul speaks of this in Romans when he writes, **THE CREATION ITSELF WILL BE DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION INTO THE GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.** God will take the destroyed, burnt up, charred creation at the end of time and renew it to pre-fall perfection, like it was with Adam and Eve in the beginning of time. This new place which the Lord shall re-create for us at the end of time is a place of beauty and peace, perfection and glory, the likes of which we have never seen on this beautiful planet of ours. **OUR NEW HOME--CREATED BY HIM.**

The next **NEW** thing John sees is

### **II: Our new Condition---PREPARED for Him.**

It is the New Jerusalem. We read vs. 2 **THEN I, JOHN, SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND.**

From Scripture we see that these words are not to be taken literally. John is not seeing a real city and a real bride. He is speaking of the Holy Christian Church. He is describing the entire number of all believers in Christ. John pictures the believers descending from the sky where they met Jesus in the air and are now to inhabit their new home of the new heaven and the new earth.

Already in the Old Testament, the prophets spoke of Jerusalem figuratively as the place where God was present among His people. Paul also distinguished between the earthly Jerusalem and the heavenly one. John says this New Jerusalem was **PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND.** The bride of Christ is the Church of believers. She has been prepared by God for this eternal marriage. Paul writes in Eph. 5 that Jesus has sanctified and cleansed His bride with the washing of water by the Word, and that this bride is glorious, with no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish. We are adorned, dressed in the white robes of Christ's righteousness. This is all the doing of our Savior for us--His bride. He has prepared us for Himself, to be His bride forever and ever in the New heaven. This will be **OUR NEW CONDITION--PREPARED FOR HIM.**

The Bride is prepared. The Bridegroom now comes on the scene and we see

### **III: Our new Relationship---LIVING with Him.**

We read vs. 3 **AND I HEARD A LOUD VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAYING, “BEHOLD, THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN, AND HE WILL DWELL WITH THEM,**

**AND THEY SHALL BE HIS PEOPLE, AND GOD HIMSELF WILL BE WITH THEM AND BE THEIR GOD.** We heard last week that this word **dwelt** literally means God will pitch His tent with us, His believers. Throughout the Old Testament God's tent or tabernacle appeared in various forms. God dwelt among the Israelites in the Tent of Meeting and the Tabernacle in the wilderness and in the Temple, in the Holy of Holies. In every case the only access to God was through the priests.

But when Jesus came into this world and took upon Himself human form, He "tented" lived among His people and unlimited access was granted to the Father through Jesus. We still have unrestricted access to the Father, but since His Ascension, Jesus' physically living among us has changed. In heaven it will be restored. Our Savior will dwell with us visibly in an unbroken fellowship, face to face. The separation between God and man brought about by the fall into sin, will be removed forever and their will be an endless "dwelling together." David's words of Psalm 23 will be fulfilled, **WE WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER.** No longer will sins and sorrow cause a separation between us and God. What a blessed eternity. **OUR NEW RELATIONSHIP--LIVING WITH HIM.**

Next we see

#### **IV: Our new Life---HAPPINESS through Him.**

In verse 4 John describes for us what **WILL NOT** be in our new home. We read, **AND GOD WILL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES; THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH, NOR SORROW, NOR CRYING; AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE PAIN, FOR THE FORMER THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY.**

What a special promise, what a special place. It's almost impossible to imagine:

**NO MORE TEARS**--look at the world around us, it is filled with tears!

**NO MORE DEATH**--every day hundreds of thousands of people die throughout the world. Death has touched everyone of us at one time or another as we have had to say goodbye to loved ones.

**NO MORE SORROW**--all the bad news will be gone, all of the heartaches will be removed.

**NO MORE PAIN**--all of the emotional and physical pain that people suffer day in and day out, depression, despair, arthritis, cancer, headaches and more----**ALL GONE! FOREVER!**

Jesus said, **MOST ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU THAT YOU WILL WEEP AND LAMENT. BUT THE WORLD WILL REJOICE; AND YOU WILL BE SORROWFUL, BUT YOUR SORROW WILL BE TURNED INTO JOY. THEREFORE YOU NOW HAVE SORROW; BUT I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN AND YOUR HEART WILL REJOICE, AND YOUR JOY NO ONE WILL TAKE FROM YOU.**

All of the bad things that are a daily, ever-present reality to us in this life because of our sin, will be things of the past. How can we even imagine something so wonderful? What a gracious God! **OUR NEW LIFE--PERFECT HAPPINESS THROUGH HIM.**

And finally we see

#### **V: Our new Confidence---TRUSTING in Him.**

There are a lot of doubters out there. Many, in fact, most of the world scoffs at these words. They call them "pie-in-the-sky hopes" or "fairy tales of old," "fables and legends" only Sunday School stories for little children."

But Jesus tells us in verse 5 **THEN HE WHO SAT ON THE THRONE SAID, "BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW." AND HE SAID TO ME, "WRITE, FOR THESE WORDS ARE TRUE AND FAITHFUL."** No more trustworthy words can be given than the words of our Savior. He is in charge. Everything that has happened on this earth to destroy man's

happiness and make life miserable, hard and sorrowful will be gone. He is making all things new. For Jesus has **ALL POWER IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH.**

He promised us, **I AM GOING TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU.** He is now fulfilling that promise. He is guiding everything so that history concludes exactly as John has described it in this book. It will all come to pass because the almighty Son of God is in charge. It is **HIS STORY! OUR NEW CONFIDENCE--TRUSTING IN HIM.**

John's vision is but a brief glimpse of what heaven will be like. These words cannot possibly match what glory we will enjoy forever. Our concern therefore, should be, that we use the relatively few years we have living in this old heaven and old earth to prepare ourselves and others for the unending bliss of the new heaven and the new earth, where we will dwell with the Lord forever.

We do that through the faithful use of His Word to strengthen us in our faith life. May that be our committed goal as each day we take one step closer to the final day when **OUR GOD MAKES ALL THINGS NEW!**

**Our new Home—CREATED by Him.**

**Our new Condition---PREPARED for Him.**

**Our new Relationship---LIVING with Him.**

**Our new Life---HAPPINESS through Him.**

**Our new Confidence---TRUSTING in Him.**

Amen.