

30.03.2019 "I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW"

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." Revelation 21:5

The last four chapters of Revelation show us the judgment and eternal destruction of Satan and the evil angels; Satan's agents on earth and human beings who refused the grace of God manifested in Christ Jesus for their redemption.

Heaven Rejoices over Babylon: Revelation 19:1-5

After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honour and power belong to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.

And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!"

Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

This passage reprises the proclamation at the sounding of the seventh trumpet:

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned. Revelation 11:15-17

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb: Revelation 19:6-10

The preparation of the Lamb's bride in Revelation 19 must be understood in the context of the ancient Hebrew wedding. (Those who come from the East will be familiar with this custom, which is not limited to the Jewish people). The Hebrew wedding usually began with the betrothal at the house of the bride's father, where the groom paid the dowry. The two were, afterwards, considered husband and wife. The groom then returned to his father's house to prepare the place where he and his bride would live. During that time, the bride stayed at her father's home preparing herself for the wedding. When both the place and the bride were ready, the bridegroom would return to take the bride to his father's house where the wedding ceremony was to take place (cf. Matt. 25:1-10). The preparation of the Lamb's bride in Revelation 19:7 reflects a typical Hebrew wedding setting.

This context gives such meaning to the words of Jesus in John 14:1-4. He, the heavenly Bridegroom has betrothed Himself to a Bride and has returned to His Father's house to prepare a place for His Bride.

"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know."

And to her it was given to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (19:8)

The fine linen of Christ's righteousness is given as a gift to the Bride. The '*righteous acts of the saints*' is the result of their abiding in Christ; their union with Christ (John 15:5).

In Matthew 22:1-14 we find the parable of the wedding supper. Before the marriage of His Son, the King comes in to see the guests, to see if all are attired in the wedding garment, the spotless robe of character washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. This is a reference to the pre-Advent Judgment. God will look down to see who has accepted the gift of the righteousness of His Son.

The Two Suppers:

1. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. Isaiah 61:10

Of those who have accepted the invitation AND have accepted the garment of righteousness it will be said:

“Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” (19:9)

2. The Great Supper of God

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.” (19:17, 18)

Those who refuse accept Christ’s righteousness, instead of eating at the wedding supper, will be eaten at the end of the battle of Armageddon. **Our destiny is decided by our response to the gospel.**

Armageddon Ends: Revelation 19:11-16

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Christ is portrayed as the Warrior King. The conquering Lamb of Revelation 17:14 is now the Warrior King. He fulfils the prophecy of Isaiah 11:4, 5... *But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.*

The weapon of this battle symbolically comes out of Christ’s mouth. This affirms again that the final battle will be a spiritual battle of ideas concerning who has the right to be ruler of this earth and who has the right to be worshipped. God’s people will defeat Satan by the blood of the Lamb (their defence) and the word of their testimony (their offence in the battle) – see Revelation 12:11.

This passage is the culmination of Jesus’ many victories: Jesus defeated Satan in heaven; He defeated Satan in the wilderness; He defeated him at the cross; and He will defeat him at His return.

Christ will come *‘in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.’ 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10*

The Millennium: Revelation 20

Satan Bound for 1000 years:

The second coming of Christ ushers in the millennium. The earth is a barren waste and Satan is symbolically bound as he has no-one he can influence any more.

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. (20:1-3)

The Saints Reign with Christ 1000 Years:

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (20:4)

Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3

The Final Destiny of Satan: Revelation 20:7-10

Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The Great White Throne Judgement: Revelation 20:11-15

All the wicked dead will be resurrected at the end of the millennium to face judgment. They will face the record of the deeds they have done in life which declare where their allegiance has been. In contrast, whose names are in the Book of Life are those who have heard the word of God (Christ) and believed in Him do not come to this judgment, but have everlasting life, for they have passed from death into life.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." John 5:24

The Great Controversy is over. God has triumphed over the forces of evil

A New Heaven and a New Earth

Revelation 21 and 22 describe the new earth and its capital, the New Jerusalem.

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind." Isaiah 65:17

Now 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. (21:1)

Sin is no more. God is no longer separated from His people.

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. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 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." (21:3-5)

Revelation 21:9-21 describes the external aspect of the city.

Revelation 21:22- 22:5 describes the inside of the city.

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there)... And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

The only way to live in the new Jerusalem is through total surrender and loyalty to Christ here and now (cf. Rev. 21:7). This is a strong allusion to Isaiah's prophecy: "And it will come about that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy-everyone who is recorded for life in Jerusalem" (Isa. 4:3).

The description of the new earth in Revelation 21-22:5 with its capital city concludes the full circle of the great cosmic drama. Evil is permanently destroyed, and peace, joy, and safety are restored on the earth as in the beginning. Just as God originally gave human beings a garden for their dwelling place, so on the new earth he gives to the redeemed a city, New Jerusalem, for their dwelling place. The new Jerusalem is the city that God's people-since Adam's banishment from the garden of Eden-have been anticipating. Abraham himself longed for that city (Heb. 11:16). It appears that the new Jerusalem is portrayed in Revelation as the fulfilment of all the dreams and hopes of human beings throughout the history of this world. Life in the new Jerusalem is God's final word to futile hopes and utopian dreams of prosperity based on human strategy and effort. *Revelation: Stefanovic.*

The Conclusion of the Book of Revelation

John re-affirms that he has written a true and faithful report of the visions he saw on Patmos (22:6-11).

Jesus testifies that the message of Revelation is from Him (22:12-17)

The Final Appeal:

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. (12:17)

Christ is Coming Soon:

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! 22:20

The Benediction:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The purpose of Revelation is above all to constantly remind God's people as they face oppression and hardship not to look to the things of the world but to fix their eyes on him who is their only hope. The book is not just a revelation about the course of history or final events, but rather about the presence of Jesus Christ with his faithful people during the course of history and the final events. The Christ of the book of Revelation is the answer to all human hopes and longings amidst the enigmas and uncertainties of life. He is the One who holds the future.

The book of Revelation is intended to remind God's people throughout history that this world is not their home. As Christians go through the hardships of life, experiencing oppression and fierce opposition because of their loyalty to Christ and to the gospel, they must keep in mind that they are not home yet. The day is coming, however, when they will be welcomed home. The whole of heaven will be there to greet them. Yes, indeed, come, Lord Jesus!' *Ibid.*

“Thus says the Lord: ‘I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the Lord of hosts, the Holy Mountain...Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; I will bring them back, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be My people and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness.’” Zechariah 8:3, 7, 8

How Shall We Then Live?

In anticipation:

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13

In hope and patient endurance:

If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard. Colossians 1:5, 23

With faith in Christ and love towards all our brethren in the faith:

We heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel. Colossians 1:4, 5

With Godly fear:

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Hebrews 12:28

In Confidence!

Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6

I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have perfect peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer, take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.] John 16:33

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. 1 John 2:28
