

Hello Dear Listeners;

“Wait till you see this!” That’s the exuberant exclamation of someone who can’t wait to show and tell you something that must be fantastic! Perhaps it was something great bought at a bargain price on a “Black Friday” or “Cyber Monday”. Maybe it is the surprisingly excellent report card that proud Karen is waving in Mom’s face.

“Wait till you see this!” When you read the opening verses of Revelation 21, you can hear the apostle John brimful with excitement because of what the Lord God was showing him in a vision. In a vision, a revelation, the *uncovering* of some amazing things. This while this apostle had been banished by the emperor to a small island called Patmos off the west coast of Asia Minor.

Yet it was there that he received amazing news about the course of history of the church and of all people from shortly after Christ’s return to heaven till His Second Coming.

In chapter 20 of this amazing book John had seen an angel coming down from heaven. He’d seen that the decisive battle between Christ and the dragon had been fought and had been won by Jesus Christ. The dragon had been thrown into what is called *“the lake of fire and sulphur”* (20:10) and the last judgment had been pronounced and had passed (20:11 ff). But the *“Marriage Supper of the Lamb”* had also been announced and Christ’s Bride, that is the church had been granted the privilege of making herself ready clothing herself with *“fine linen, bright and pure.”* (ch. 19: 7, 8).

But now in chapter 21:1-8 the vision and prophecy proceeded to the re-creation of all things. This grand renewal will be universal and total! For, as we read in v. 5 “*The one seated on the throne*” who must be King Jesus Christ, said, “*Behold I am making all things new.*” So then, the apostle didn’t see a program of re-decoration going on in heaven and on earth, a universal ‘*touchup*’ of sorts, but a most glorious renewal of everything!

The word John used for that *new* heaven and *new* earth is not the opposite of *old* but of **obsolete**.¹ It means the old heaven and the old earth had had their day and needed to be replaced. This old earth, so polluted with sin and its consequences as well as the existing heaven, though the dwelling place of God, had been open to Satan’s attack and his accusations against believers.²

But from his throne on high God and his exalted Son, Jesus Christ would see to it that new things would come. Things prophesied even long ago by someone like Isaiah through whom God said, “*Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered.*” (ch. 65: 17).

The apostle Peter in his second letter, ch. 3: 12, 13 also says that “We”, (that is, he and other believers), “ Are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” For, said Peter, “The heavens, (and here it means the heavenly bodies, sun moon stars and galaxies), “Will be set on fire and dissolved and the heavenly

¹ The late Prof. Rev. L Selles in A Series of Outlines on the Revelation to John Rev. ed. vol 2, ILPB, 1990, p. 125

² see the Book of Job, ch. 1 and Zechariah 3

bodies will melt as they burn”. In the process this earth, said Peter, “ will be exposed” or “laid bare” (2 Peter 3: 10b).

But then, fire does not only burn up but it purifies, it cleanses like nothing else can. This is what will happen as heaven and earth undergo a thorough purification and not a whiff, of unrighteousness, not a suggestion of an accusation will be found anywhere, anymore.

At the end of Rev. 21:1 John says that he saw that “*the sea was no more.*” That’s a powerful statement as well for this “sea” is not the Mediterranean or the North Sea although you could call it a terrible Black Sea for in Revelation the sea is shown to be synonymous with *hostility*, and sinful, *destructive power*. Even in the Old Testament the sea is an image of the wicked (Isaiah 57:20) In Rev. 13 we read of a horrible beast, who is shown to be the dragon’s first ally in the persecution of the “woman’s offspring”, which is the church *coming out of “the sea.”*

When God brings about the new heaven and earth however, No More Sea! No more wicked scheming against the anointed of the Lord. No more violence and persecution heaped on the church. No more waves and breeding grounds of immorality and idolatry!

Instead, John saw “ *the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God*” (21:2). He saw her in her glorious state as Isaiah the prophet had also been told (Isaiah 61: 10). We may know this Jerusalem, not to be that physical city in the state of Israel. No it stands for Christ’s *holy, universal church* . It truly is the church in glory. That church, made up of glorified citizens now in heaven above, will be united with true believers here on earth. Elsewhere the bible says these will meet each other in the air at the return of Christ. And they

will dwell on the new earth in amazing peace and glory, and, no doubt, even productivity!

John heard a loud voice “from the throne” saying, “ *The dwelling place of God is with man.*” *He will dwell with them , and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*” (21: 3).

This gracious God will “*wipe away every tear from their eyes.*” Not only that but the ushering in of this “ new heaven” and “new earth” will mean that all death and mourning and crying will disappear. There will be no more pain, which ravages so many today. The most amazing thing is that there will be no more sin, no more revolution and opposition to the Lord God. No more wickedness in human beings’ relationship to each other. No more devious, underhanded thoughts and deeds.

Earlier, in Paul’s first letter to the church at Corinth he had spoken (as the prophet Isaiah had done in Isaiah 64:4) , of “*What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him*” (1 Corinthians 2: 9). Unimaginable beauty,, peace and glory awaits those who put their trust in Jesus Christ alone.

Yes God has preserved these wondrous gifts for those who fear him. For those who will have nothing to do with that world of immoral and ungodly arrogance that threatens to take the whole world by storm.

John and the churches, and we ourselves, are not left guessing whether this renewal of all things will actually take place. For he was told in no uncertain terms, by God himself, “ *Write this down, for these*

words are trustworthy and true.... It is done! I am the alpha and the Omega, the beginning and end". (21: 5, 6).

Are you and I among those God calls "the thirsty"? Do you cherish this revelation and its sure fulfilment like the life-giving waters of the Lord? I pray this would be the case. If you are, if you belong to those God calls "*The ones who conquer*", - who fight what the bible calls "*the good fight of the faith*" and are victorious - you are richly blessed. For God says to you, "I will be your God and you will be my son and my daughter".

Yet to the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, the murderers, those sexually immoral, idolators and liars God says, "Your portion, will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur which is the second death" (Rev. 21: 8)

Yes it is a powerful warning. But then the Lord God urges us all to forsake our evil ways. He'd have us seek him with all our heart, "*while he may be found*" and call upon him while he is near." (Isaiah 55: 6, 7)

May you too be joined to Jesus Christ and so wait, actively wait in faith "*to see this*" new heaven and new earth and so pray, "Maranatha, come Lord Jesus", Maranatha, Amen.

Thank you very much for listening!