

Easter 5
Revelation 21:1-7

5/18/2025
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OUR EPISTLE READING FROM THE 21ST CHAPTER OF REVELATION

“A Whole New World.” Aladdin sang about it, but God has promised it, and He will deliver it.

Yes, a whole new world. That’s what John sees in our reading today from Revelation 21,

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, 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. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

A new heaven, a new earth, a new Jerusalem. My Friends, having celebrated our Lord’s Easter resurrection, we today start looking forward to our Lord’s ascension into heaven, to prepare a place of us there. This morning, we get a glimpse of the home that awaits us. And it is new, and it is glorious, and it is something to be fervently looked forward to.

A whole new world. The question we should ask is: Why? Why is the first heaven and earth going to pass away? Do I even need to ask that question? You know the world you live in. To be sure, God opens His hand to bless us with air conditioning on May days in the 90’s, and grandchildren that make us smile. But this present age, as we know it, is filled with death and destruction and decay. All around us we see sorrow and sadness and sickness. Wars and rumors of wars. School shootings and other senseless acts of violence. Tornadoes, fires, and floods. Rape, theft,

vandalism, greed, jealousy, hatred, and division. Injustice, pain, sadness, and loneliness.

Like childbirth, earthly life can be painful, a “desert drear,” as the hymnwriter calls it [LSB 748:1]. We are in sorrow and pain, distress and discomfort, and tears – **real tears** -- fill our eyes.

And you know why that is. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* (Ge 1:1). *And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good* (Ge 1:31). Then, sin entered the into God’s creation. Sin entered us. We rebelled. We broke His command, because we wanted to be God. And the curse fell upon us, *“to dust you shall return* (Ge 3:19). Life, as we know it, is lived in the valley of the shadow of death. And, it is all because of sin.

II. But, rejoice, give thanks, and sing, Dear Children of God, for your Heavenly Father says, *“I am making all things new!”* The Good News of the Christian faith is that God makes all things new including a new home for us to live in with Him, a home where righteousness and glory dwell.

We must never lose sight of the fact that God did not breathe life into us so that that life would be cursed by tears and the wages of death. The GOOD NEWS of the Gospel is that God took it upon Himself to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil. And, He did by it by sending His Son to save us.

Our sin, which condemned us to eternal death, was all laid on Jesus. The very Son of God paid the price of our sin with His innocent suffering and His death upon the cross, so that all of our sin would be gone in His sin-cleansing blood. He died and was buried, but the 3rd day He burst the tomb’s dark portal, bringing life and immortality to light for us.

Forty days after our Lord rose from the grave, He ascended into heaven to prepare a place for you there. This is His promise to you, *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also” (Jn 14:3).*

Our lesson says it this way, *“The dwelling 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”*. As we walk by faith through this valley of the shadow of death, the good news for us is that we are strangers here, heaven is our home. Our deliverance from this vale of tears is sure and certain in the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Heaven is our home, our hope, our joy, our peace, and our comfort.

And look at what else is promised us, *“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”* Imagine this. No more death. No more tears. No more mourning or crying or pain. Disabilities and diseases – gone. Despair and depression – over. Loss and loneliness – things of the past.

“Behold, I am making all things new.” And that includes your physical body. On the day Christ comes again in all His glory, your body will be raised from the dust of the earth a glorious body, and that means your body will be renewed, restored; no longer subject to death and decay. No more getting frail and wearing out. A perfect body, which honestly, we cannot even begin to imagine how wonderful that will be.

The Apostle Paul well quotes Isaiah the Prophet, *No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Cor 2:9)*. The words of our hymn echo those words of Scripture:

“We know not, oh, we know not
 What joys await us there:
 The radiancy of glory,
 The bliss beyond compare (LSB 672:1).

Our citizenship, our home, is in heaven. The promise of a new heaven and a new earth in our epistle is God’s promise to us. Although life in this age is marked by confusion, chaos, uncertainty, conflict, and death, God is drawing this age to a close. That is news of great joy for you and for me. God will make a new creation and renew His people as a new Jerusalem. And we will dwell with God and His Son, forever, and ever, without end.

But even now, in this ‘little while’ in which we live, Jesus is with us. “I am with you always, to the very end of the age,” He promised. [And Graduates, I remind of that promise, because it is for you.](#) Baptized and living in Him, Jesus dwells with and in us, helping us, strengthening us, upholding us, until that time that He comes to take us to be with Him in heaven. Luther so beautifully puts it this way in his Small Catechism:

“We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.”