

## Behold the New World

Revelation 21:1–7

Dear friends in Christ

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our meditation this morning is based on the reading of Revelation chapter 21, where the Lord presents us today with the New World! With a New World order!!

A new world order? No, it is not that nonsense conspiracy theory about a secretive power elite of socialists, with a globalist agenda conspiring to eventually rule the world through an authoritarian one-world government that has become more prevalent in the last two years. Absolutely not! Rather, it is God's new world, our home, heaven. And God reveals it to us through John, as he sees it in a vision.

It is coming, and that's where we are heading. So, are you looking forward to it? You should be, all of God's people should be looking forward to that new home, and today I'll tell you why.

First, we give thanks to God, because what he has in store for us, is so good that it will exceed—far exceed—our expectations! Something far beyond our wildest dreams, even incomprehensible. Yet, John gives a glimpse of it, enough to whet our appetite and to give us a firm hope to hold on to, here and now.

John begins by saying: “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 at the center of that new world is the New Jerusalem. And in there, we find God's throne. And from there we hear him saying: “Behold, I am making all things new.”

At this point in the book of Revelation, John has been witnessing the unfolding of the world's history before his eyes, through a series of visions, from the beginning of the world to its recreation, and in that recreation he arrives to the destination of all our hopes and dreams, he says: “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!” That's God's plan, and it is for all of us who trust in him.

But why would God have a whole new world? What's wrong with the first earth and the first heaven? Didn't God say, at the beginning that what he created was all good? In Genesis 1 we hear: "And God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." To be sure, there are still many good things about this creation that we live in. Beautiful sunsets. Birds singing. Trees. Flowers. Music. Children and grandchildren. The marvelous abilities of the human mind. These all are good things, and they give us joy. But still, why then a New World?

Despite the good that we still see, have you seen the world we live in? It is filled with death, destruction, and decay. All around us we see sorrow, sadness, and sickness. And when we see introspectively, all we find is sin lurking inside and making its way out in the things we say and do and think. Even though what God created was good, there is much about this created order that is no longer good.

All because our first parents doubted God's word and turned against him, corrupting thereby their nature, and consequently the world God had created. And since then, all of their children, you and I, have been sinning. That's the inheritance we receive from our fathers, and that's the inheritance we are passing down. Really, we stand before God as the ones who broke his commandment. The ones who wanted to be our own God. And so the curse fell upon mankind. "Dust you are, and to dust you shall return." The death sentence, begun as they were driven out of the garden and cut off from the tree of life. Discord, friction between husband and wife. Futility in work. Futility in creation. Things don't work right. Nature itself gets fouled up. Disasters, death, and danger. Things don't work the way they're supposed to. Death and decay surround us. We are passing away, and one day this world will pass away too. But take courage because a new heaven and a new earth will spring up. God is going to make all things new. Out with the Old and in with the New.

Behold the New World! A new World where things will be perfect. Our fellowship with God—something we know now although imperfect, but on that day, it will be perfect, undisturbed by any sin.

Behold the New World! All things new. Things like being the people of God gathered in his presence—something we are now, but then it will be fulfilled to the greatest possible degree. In that day we will hear a loud voice proclaiming that this is

what God promised he will do, John hears it already: “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.” (v. 3)

It will be, it is a new world. He says, “Behold, I am making all things new.” It has been foretold already by the prophet Isaiah who said: “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. <sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.” (Is. 65:17-18)

What Isaiah had foretold comes to life in the book of Revelation. New heavens and a new earth, and also a new Jerusalem: “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

“New Jerusalem”: Well, again, what was wrong with the old one? If you know your Bible, you know the answer to that question: Plenty. There was plenty wrong with the old Jerusalem. Even though it was meant to be a holy city, set apart to be the dwelling place of the Lord in his temple—even so, old Jerusalem behaved in some very unholy ways.

For those who are followers of the Zionist movement, hear what the Lord says of Jerusalem: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! <sup>38</sup> See, your house is left to you desolate.” (Mat. 23:37-38)

Yet, Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem where he was going to be betrayed and killed. Old Jerusalem had lost its holiness and missed its Messiah, rejecting the very king sent by God. And so God would send destruction on old Jerusalem in the form of a Roman army. And more it will be no more but a new one will be in its place!

And that new Jerusalem, will truly be a holy city, at last. And notice where this new Jerusalem is coming from. “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.” John says, that’s always the direction where things you can be sure of are coming from. From God to us. Just as the Son of God came down from heaven for us men and for our salvation. So likewise does the new Jerusalem come down from heaven to earth. When God does the coming down, it is holy and it is sure.

“Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Oh, this city will be beautiful! “Glorious things of you are spoken, O city of God.” (Psalm 87:3) King David prophesied.

And so it will be. “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.” This is the fulfillment of God’s plan for the ages. God and mankind together again, at peace, reconciled, dwelling in harmony and sweet fellowship. Paradise restored. What was lost in the garden is restored in an even greater way in the new Jerusalem.

And listen to this “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.” What will be so wonderful about this whole new world is that what we dread here the most, will no longer be found there! No more death. No more tears. No more mourning or crying or pain. Disabilities and degenerative diseases—gone. Divorce and depression—over. Loss and loneliness—things of the past.

“Behold, I am making all things new.” This is good news indeed. No, he is not making new things, rather he is recreating that which was ruined by sin. You will still be you. I will still be I, but renewed, made anew. God is going to raise up your body, only it will no longer be subject to death and decay. No more breaking down. No more getting frail and wearing out. No, you will be fitted out for eternity, ready to go. As you know, mankind was never meant to die in the first place. Unfortunately, our sin spoiled that. But when God makes all things new, our bodies will be renewed, restored, raised up whole and glorious, transformed but still—a real physical body, your body, but perfected in a way we can’t even imagine now.

And this creation will be restored, too. It will be restored into its original beauty and more, the beauty that is in store in the world to come.

How can we be sure of all this? Because God says so. You can count on his word. “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” John was told. Trustworthy and true, are indeed God’s promises to you. In this world with so many world views, ideologies and even interpretations of Scripture, it is hard to comprehend and take this New World as its going to be. That’s why reading the Scriptures continual will help us to understand God’s plan. So read, pray and meditate!

There you will hear God saying to John, "It is done!" "It is finished." John must have been reminded of a word he had heard years earlier: "It is finished." That's what Jesus said on the cross, as he was hanging there, dying for the sins of the world. And because Jesus did die for those sins, your sins and mine, our debt has been paid, the goal has been reached, and the deal has been sealed. Jesus' work on the cross guarantees it. That's why he says "It is done." And the proof is in the resurrection of Christ, when he conquered the grave and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

"It is done!" God says. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son." It's all a gift, God's free gift to you. Are you thirsty? Drink up. Drink from the spring of life-giving water he offers you free of charge. You get a taste of that today as you drink from the cup of blessing here in the Lord's Supper, Christ's own blood shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. "And where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation."

"And I will be his God and he will be my son." God says. Now wonder John in his letter writes: "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:1-2)

Yes! We will see him in the New Jerusalem, in the World!

For now, we wait for a little while. It may seem like a long time to us, but in the big picture of things, it will only be a little while. "A little while, and you will see me," our Savior says to his disciples. So hold on tight, hold close to Christ.

Yes, dear friends, a whole new world, a true new world order is on the way. A new heaven and a new earth. The holy city, new Jerusalem. A holy people, a new you, and a new us, God with us forever.

To his be all glory and honor and praise, may we be hold fast to his coming soon!  
In his name, amen!