

The New Jerusalem, Part 2: Enemies Gone (Revelation 21:1–8)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (6/19/2016)

Introduction

1. The conflict of the ages is over, and Jesus has won.
2. The restoration was promised by the prophets of old (Acts 15:12–17; citing Amos 9:11ff).
3. There are four great things in the vision before us:
 - a. There is *no sea*, a figurative reference to the *security* of the new earth because the *enemy without* is no longer able to oppress the people of God (Isa. 57:20, 21).
 - b. There is a *new city* coming down from heaven (v. 2), the consummation of long expectation, prepared for the Lord by the Lord (Heb. 11:10; Isa. 52:1, 2).
 - c. There is the *promised restoration* of Israel (v. 3) with God now truly dwelling with man (Ezek. 37:26–28).
 - d. There is a *new creation* (v. 4) with everlasting joy and gladness for overcomers fully freed from the *internal enemy*—the corruption of the flesh (Isa. 25:8; 2 Cor. 5:17).
4. The assurance of this restoration is confirmed by the Lord from His throne (vv. 5–8).
 - a. This portion of the vision is a *present reality*—“*I am making . . .*”
 - b. Its climactic certainty rings in the declaration, “*It is done.*”
 - c. The assurance of fulfillment is His *sovereign authority*.
 - d. The realization enjoyed is *full satisfaction* of every need.

I. No More Sea

1. Why is it emphasized that “*the sea was no more*”?
 - a. The oceans cover 71 percent of the earth, and 95 percent of earth’s water is contained in them. Less than 1% of earth’s water is fresh.
 - b. The seas that were a very important feature on the first earth (Gen. 1:1, 6–8) have passed away on the new earth. Why?
2. Should we take the “*no seas*” literally or figuratively?
 - a. The seas represent the origin of cosmic evil (4:6; 13:1; 15:3; 16:3, based on Daniel 7:2, 3; Ezek. 28:2ff).
 - b. The seas represent the wicked and rebellious nations who oppress the people of God (13:1; Isa. 57:20 cf. Rev. 17:1, 2, 6).
 - c. The seas represent the heart of the world’s idolatrous commerce (18:11–19).
 - d. The seas are part of the old creation (5:13; 7:1–3; 8:8, 9; 10:2, 5, 6, 8; 14:7).
3. It is best to understand *seas* as a summary statement that the wicked forces of the unseen realm are no more. The rebellion is over—judged and punished for ever. Hallelujah!

II. No More Sin

1. No sinner has access to the new earth (21: 8, 27; 22:3, 4; see also v. 15).
2. There is a saying, “Hate the sin, but love the sinner,” but verse 8 lists *sinner*s who are receiving the just compensation for their choice of sin over God.
3. The problem is *flesh*. Paul develops the problem and our deliverance from the flesh (Romans 7 and 8).
 - a. The enemy within is the *flesh*, corrupted through the fall and evidenced by habitual sinning (Gen. 6:3, 12).
 - 1) Sin is violation of the law aggravated by the flesh (7:1–3), which can only be overcome by the death of the sinner, freeing him from the obligation of the law so that he may be joined to Christ (7:4–6).
 - 2) Salvation was made possible through Christ’s coming “*in the likeness of sinful flesh*” to condemn sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:3). Christ took our sin upon Him and died in our place to free us from the penalty of the law.
 - 3) Christ’s work is then applied to the sinner *by the Spirit in regeneration* (Ezek. 36:36; Rom. 8:4, 5).
 - b. Overcoming the flesh is also a work of the Spirit (Rom. 8:6–10).
 - 1) The evidence of this work is whether one *sets his mind (phroneo*, “to direct one’s mind to a thing, to seek and to strive for”) on the things of the Spirit (vv. 5–8).
 - 2) The future *hope* of the believer is the *restoring* of the corrupted flesh through transformation and resurrection of the body (v. 11; 1 Cor. 15:50–56).
 - 3) The *present duty* of the believer waiting for transformation is *mortification* of the flesh (vv. 12–17).
 - c. The *eschatology* of the final victory over the flesh follows in verses 18–25. All creation waits with the saints, enduring great suffering in hope that “*the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God*” (v. 21).

Application

The final hope of victory is not for those who live after the flesh, sinning while excusing themselves in it.

Now, the ultimate and final judgment is whether or not one’s name is found in the Lamb’s Book of Life (21:27).

However, that fact is prefaced by a descriptive of condition: “*But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable*” (21:27).

In other words, *overcoming* is evidence that one’s name is recorded in the Book of Life.