

No Night There
Revelation 21:22-27
2/14/2016

As we have seen in several of our studies on Revelation, the new heavens and the new earth are just as wondrous when we consider what will *not* be there as when we consider what *will* be there. What will be there? God Himself in all His glory, and all the saints, together with all the angels will be there, never to be separated again. Our passage, however, speaks entirely of things that will *not* be there. There will be no temple, no sun or moon, no rebellion, no fear, no night, and nothing unclean. John tells us, then, of 6 things that will not be there. Let's look at them now, for when the time comes, you won't see them at all.

First of all, John tells us that there is no temple in the new heavens and the new earth. The reason for that absence is immediately obvious to us. John says that the reason there is no temple is that the Lord Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. This is somewhat puzzling at first glance. Aren't the people of God the temple in which the Lord will dwell? Why is it that now God Himself, Father and Son, are the temple? How can God be the God Who dwells in a temple, and also be that temple? What John is actually saying here is that wherever God dwells, there is the temple. There is no building that we will call the temple.

The reason this is significant is that God's temple was always limited to a small space in the Old Testament. Even in the New Testament, only believers are part of the temple. But, since all unbelievers are going to be removed from the new heavens and the new earth, it becomes clear to us that God will dwell everywhere visibly. Of course, God is everywhere even now. However, God is not visible in this universe. But He will be visible in the new heavens and the new earth. Since there will be no more sin, there will be no corner of the universe where God will need to refrain from appearing visibly. He will have the closest possible contact with every person and every place in the new heavens and the new earth. John is saying that the meeting place with God is everywhere in the new heavens and the new earth. There will be no waiting period, no standing in line to see Him. You can see Him whenever you want. There will be no temple.

Secondly, there will be no sun or moon. According to Genesis, chapter

1, the sun and the moon were set in the heavens to give light on the earth and to mark out the time and the seasons. Here in Revelation, it is primarily the idea of light that John is talking about. There is no need for the sun and the moon, for God Himself and the Lamb will provide all the light necessary. The glory of God is light indeed! Jesus is the light of the world. That is spiritual light in John's Gospel. However, the visible glory of God is light indeed. And we see here that it is far more powerful than the sun and the moon for giving light to the earth. If the Lord God illumines it and, as we see in verse 25, there is no night, then we can conclude that the glory of the Lord covers the whole earth. The sun and the moon, of course, do not shine on the whole earth all at once. The glory of the Lord God, however, can illumine the whole earth all at once, and it will. No temple, and no sun and moon.

Thirdly, there will be no rebellion. Verse 24 speaks of how the kings of the earth will walk, and what they will do with their glory and honor. They will walk in the light, and they will bring all their honor and glory into the city of God. Of course, that is the furthest thing from the minds of almost all kings and rulers today. They want what they can get, which is more power, money, fame, and a little more power, money, and fame.

Notice a very important detail in the text: it is the nations of those who are saved! All the nations of the world will consist of no one but saved people in the new heavens and the new earth. I wonder, in fact, if John isn't really talking about us! After all, the rest of Scripture speaks of God's people as being kings and queens by right of adoption into God's family. In other words, we shouldn't be thinking about being spectators in what John is seeing here. Instead, we should be thinking of being the participants!

There are some very important truths about what the future life will look like that are embedded in these words. First of all, we will achieve glorious and honorable things. John speaks of glory and honor that belong to these kings. They must achieve that glory and honor somehow. The only way to achieve that is to work for it, and create things worthy of honor. In other words, life will look somewhat like it does today, except that there will be no frustration, no anxiety, no fatigue, no barriers, and nothing to cramp our style. We will all want good things, but we will never idolize them, and there will be obstacle to getting and using those good things. In short, there will be no rebellion. And when there is no rebellion, there is only joy and

bliss in creating and working. We will truly then look like God Himself, and our actions today will never imitate God nearly as much as they will then. Verse 26 tells us that it is not just the glory of individuals that will enter the new Jerusalem, but also that of the collective nations. No longer will the deeds of the leaders of the nations look any different from the deeds of the people of that nations. There will be a unified testimony between the ruler and those ruled. No temple, no sun or moon, and no rebellion.

Fourthly, verse 25 tells us that there is no fear. All cities shut their gates at night for fear of attack by enemy forces. Elaborate plans were usually necessary to conquer cities in those days. Perhaps no plan was more audacious or more cunning than the gigantic horse that the Greeks used to get inside the ancient city of Troy. As the story goes, they built a huge horse out of wood, and hid soldiers inside. It wasn't their whole army. It was just enough to open the gates and let in the real army. The foolish Trojans brought the horse into the city because they were curious about it, and because it looked so magnificent. Thus came about the saying, "look a gift horse in the mouth." Of course, the Trojans should have looked the gift horse in the belly to see if all was as it seemed! The other proverb that originated from this incident was "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts." The point of the story was that they had to overcome the gates if they were going to sack Troy. They had fought with the Trojans for ten whole years before the sack of the city actually occurred by means of the horse. Well, the new city, the new Jerusalem will never even need to have its doors closed! There is no fear whatsoever of an attack, because all the people on earth will love the new Jerusalem, and will rejoice in its beauty. No temple, no sun or moon, no rebellion, no fear.

Fifthly, there will be no night, as the last part of verse 25 says. As we saw in our second point concerning the sun and the moon, the glory of the Lord God of Hosts, and of the Lamb, will illuminate the city. And we also saw already that the glory of the Lord will cover the whole earth, and so there will be no alternating cycle between day and night. Back in Genesis 9, after the Flood, God made this promise to Noah and his sons: "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease." But that promise has an expiration date built in to it, because of the very first part: "while the earth remains." We could also infer that it means "while *this* earth remains." But what would happen if

this earth were to be renewed to the point where we could not say that it was this earth anymore? Then God's promise will have come to an end, for a more glorious future will displace it.

There being no night in the new heavens and the new earth means also that there will be nothing to go bump in the night. Anyone who fears the night will never need to fear again. Having no night means that there also will be no deeds of darkness. As we know, sin loves the dark, and does not come to the light. Nothing will be hidden, because there will be no guilt or shame, and therefore there will be nothing to hide. No temple, no sun or moon, no rebellion, no fear, and no night.

Sixthly, there will be nothing unclean in the new heavens and new earth. The golden streets that are as transparent as glass told us the same thing earlier in chapter 21. Here, John gets a bit more specific. Nothing can defile, nothing will be an abomination, nothing will be a lie. There will be none of those actions, because there will be none of those people. The only people that remain are the people whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. And those people will be entirely cleansed of all sin. Imagine being in a world without sin! It means a world with no crying, or pain, or sickness, or death, or tears. It means a world where no evil exists.

Incidentally, this is the biggest problem with those who believe that history is always circular. If history just goes around in circles, and there is no ultimate direction or final change, then what hope is there of getting rid of evil? Most Eastern religions believe that time goes around in a circle. John here begs to differ: time is most certainly linear, meaning that time has a direction that it is going, being directed that way by God. Evil does have an ending. It is an ending of non-existence. So, no temple, no sun or moon, no rebellion, no fear, no night, and nothing unclean.

What does this mean for us here and now? Firstly, it means encouragement. The current state of the world is not very encouraging, to put it mildly. Evil stalks at night, and the plague kills at noonday. The arrow flies by day, and the lies spread by night. But all of that will one day be gone. We get discouraged when we can't see beyond the trial. God says here that there is always a beyond. And ultimately it is a "happily ever after" beyond.

This also means that our circumstances should never ultimately determine our state of mind. Let me repeat that: our circumstances should

never ultimately determine our state of mind. Paul says that he has learned the secret of contentment: the secret of being able to be content no matter what the circumstances. In plenty and in want, he is content, because his contentment is not in things, but in God. This is one of the biggest problems of the Christian walk: shedding ourselves of a circumstance-driven mentality. This one is very difficult, and don't I know it! It is so hard to be content when circumstances are hard. But remember this: circumstances do not force you to have a certain mindset. With any set of circumstances, there is always a range of possible response. Choose the response that corresponds with satisfaction and joy in the Lord God. That way, you can actually give thanks even for your trials.

Secondly, it means that our walk in this world should be in the light as it will be in the new heavens and the new earth. One of the problems we face in this life is that the temptation to walk in the darkness presents us with a whopper of a lie. Satan tells us that we can have our sin and enjoy it in this life, and still expect to have the new heavens and the new earth in the next life. That way, we supposedly get the “best” of both worlds. It is a lie. Sin's pleasure is only momentary, whereas the guilt that plagues us ends the momentary pleasure, and also robs us of our Christian joy.

Thirdly, our fears can go away as well. There will be such security in the new heavens and the new earth, because there will be no criminals anywhere. Not one will remain. With no one to do anyone any harm, how can fear remain? Of course, Jesus tells us that we need not fear even now. He says, “Do not fear those who could take your life, and that is all they can do. Instead, fear Him Who has the power to cast both body and soul into Hell.” The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Therefore, we do not need to fear the things that go bump in the night.

Lastly, and most importantly, if you do not have any kind of relationship with the Lord God, then wouldn't you like to be a king or queen? The only way to be a king or queen is for God to adopt you. So turn to the Lord in faith and repentance. Turn away from sin, and turn to the living God, so that He adopts you, and calls you royalty. As Aslan says in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, “Once a king or queen in Narnia, always a king or queen.” We might paraphrase that just a bit and say, “Once a king or queen in the new heavens and the new earth, always a king or queen.” Bear it well, sons of Adam; bear it well, daughters of Eve. And

rejoice ahead of time in the thought of no temple, no sun or moon, no rebellion, no fear, no night, and nothing unclean.