



3 | REVELATION 21:1-4

OUR ETERNAL WEDDING DAY

What will it be like to meet Jesus?

Outline

1. WE'LL HAVE A **GLORIOUS FUTURE** (21:1)
 - A New Paradise
 - No Temple*
 - No Sun and Moon and Stars*
 - No Night*
 - A New Peace
 - No More Sin on Earth*
 - No More Sea of Enemies*
2. WE'LL BE A **RADIANT BRIDE** (21:2)
 - Radiant with Christ's Righteousness
 - Radiant with Christ's Residence
3. WE'LL HAVE AN **ETERNAL HOME** (21:3-4)
 - Moving Around a Lot*
 - No More Lonliness
 - No More Tears
 - No Death

Call to Worship:

MATTHEW 11:28-29 | Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Songs, Revelation 21: A Glorious Bride

All Creatures of Our God and King
Rejoice the Lord is King
Even So Come
Down at the Cross
Cornerstone

Introduction

Open your Bible if you will to Revelation 21:1-4. The title of our message is “A Glorious Bride”.

This is a message for the whole church, and it is also a joyful occasion to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary for Bill and Nancy Kroll. The golden anniversary is one of the most celebrated wedding anniversaries. And rightly so! Investing half a century in a loving relationship with one person is a wonderful statement about the gift of married life.

Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church, and in a few minutes, Bill and Nancy are going to renew their vows before the whole congregation. This is a picture of the covenant Christ has made with us. We have an amazing heavenly Bridegroom, don't we?

Marriage changes so much in our lives doesn't it? They say that the more years pass for a married couple stay together, the more they look alike! Well, I would like to say that the more Bill and Nancy have been together, the more they have looked like their Savior Jesus Christ!

What a joy Bill must have had the day he married Nancy. There's something to that feminine touch. There's something to having a beautiful bride enter your life. Everything becomes new and exciting. Marriage is just a picture of what God is doing not only with us, but with the entire cosmos.

There is coming a day when God makes all things new, when heaven comes to earth!

Scripture Reading

Let's stand and read Revelation 21:1-4.

21:1-4 | 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. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And 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. ⁴He 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.”

This is God's Word.

SLIDE

What will it be like to finally meet our Bridegroom? The 37th Article of the Belgic Confession of 1561 says this about the day we see Jesus face to face.

...The faithful and elect will be crowned with glory and honor. The Son of God will profess their names before God his Father and the holy and elect angels; all tears will be wiped from their eyes; and their cause...will be acknowledged as the cause of the Son of God. And as a gracious reward the Lord will make them possess a glory such as the human heart could never imagine. So we look forward to that great day with longing in order to enjoy fully the promises of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

I can't wait to get to heaven! It's a day when we as Christ's Bride are finally married to our Bridegroom! No more sin! No more pain! No more tears! There is coming the

dawning of a new age when Jesus comes! It's morning time! Sin and shame and hell will be gone forever. There is coming a forever and true utopia.

Outline

A glimpse of what it will be like when we finally see Jesus. What will we see when we see Jesus?

1. We will have a Glorious **Future** (1)
2. We will be a Radiant **Bride** (2)
3. We will have an Eternal **Home** (3-4)

You look at all that God has done through Bill and Nancy, and to through any couple who unreservedly surrenders to the Lordship of Jesus, and it is amazing. God gets all the glory. He did it all.

Psalm 127:1-2: "Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain." When we establish our home on the Lord Jesus Christ, He's the rock upon which our house stands. The winds and the rains of life come, but the house on the rock stands firm!

1. WE'LL HAVE A GLORIOUS FUTURE (21:1)

Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church. Just as everything radically changed for Bill and Nancy got married, so everything will radically change when we see Christ. Marriage is just like a black and white picture of a 3-D reality with Christ.

When Bill and Nancy got married, a lot of new things through the years: a new house, new jobs, new little children. There's a lot of new stuff to get used to when you get married.

When we finally come to that wedding day with Christ, we learn about a lot of new things.

A NEW PARADISE

This earth as we know it will very soon pass away.

21:1a | Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth...

The vision begins with the words "And I saw." The first time we see it is the appearing of the Lord on his great white horse.¹ But now we see the vision of a glorious future. What's it going to be like when we see Jesus?

The description echoes God's promise through Isaiah: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind" (Isa 65:17). The "former things" are all the painful, sinful things we have to endure. The point is the present state of rebellion and decay and death on this earth is only temporary. There is a new paradise coming! The curse that came with the fall of man into sin will soon be gone forever.

In this new world, for instance, the temple, which was properly there in heaven as well as on earth (11:19), will be abolished (21:22); not because it was a stupid idea for God

¹ John Phillips, *Exploring Revelation: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Re 21:1-8.

to dwell among his people, but because the Temple was the advance model of God's great hidden plan for the whole cosmos, now at last to be realized. The new world will be like the present one, but greater, with God in our midst, fully realized!²

The center of the picture, though, is not, or not yet, the new world itself, but the one true God who made the first creation and loved it so much that he sent the lamb to redeem and renew it.

The Old Earth is Just Scaffolding

When I was in Spain, we purchased a 300-year-old farmhouse and began to remodel it. We spent a lot of time putting that scaffolding up. Scaffolding is normally extremely functional: it's made to do a job, not to look pretty.

But supposing a builder decided to construct a beautiful shell of scaffolding? Supposing he made it so stunning that people came to admire the scaffolding itself, without even realizing that there was something far, far more impressive being built inside it? When the building was finished, some might be sad at the thought that this wonderful sight was to be taken away. But the builder would, of course, insist on removing the scaffolding, however splendid it was. That was the point of it in the first place, to do its job and then be dismantled so that the ultimate reality, the real new building, could be seen in all its glory.³ This present earth is just the scaffolding for our eternal home on the new earth.

Verses 22-25 tell us there will be no need for a Temple or church building in heaven. The LORD God the Almighty and the Lamb are our Temple (vs 22).

No Temple

Did you know there's no need for a Temple or a church in heaven?

REVELATION 21:22 | And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

The Temple in Jerusalem, and also it seems in the first heaven, are advance signposts to that great, almost unthinkable reality to which nevertheless so much of the New Testament points, that "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Hab 2:14). That is the goal towards which so much of Scripture is pointing, a goal forgotten by those who imagine that the whole aim is to leave earth behind and go to heaven instead. Heaven has come down to earth.

No Sun and Moon and Stars

REVELATION 21:23 | And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

It's not only the Temple that is no longer needed. Even the sun and the moon, the two great lights that play such an important part in the first creation, and are celebrated as such in many scriptural passages (think of the sun in Psalm 19, where it is an image of

² Ibid, Wright.

³ Ibid, Wright.

God's holy law itself) – even the sun and the moon will become redundant. They are part of the scaffolding, and we must not mistake them for the ultimate reality. They are yet another pair of signposts to the ultimate truth, that God himself is the light of his people, shining and radiant. Slowly we rub our eyes and discover that even the glorious world of Genesis 1 was the beginning of something, rather than an end in itself.⁴

No Night

REVELATION 21:24-25 | By its light [*light of the Lamb*] will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.

They'll be no night. No tiredness. You'll have unlimited energy when you see Jesus.

A NEW PEACE

John looks forward in time, and he sees something shocking. He describes a new peace because the current ways of sin on the earth will pass away.

No More Sin on Earth

21:1b| ...For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...

The old earth of sin and brokenness will soon be passed away. Oh, I can't wait for that. Peter talks about the breathtaking way the old earth will pass away.

2 PETER 3:10-13| But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Everything you see will be dissolved. The next event on God's timeline is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. For the world, they should fear. For the world it is Judgment Day. But for the Bride, if you have trusted in Jesus by faith, it is a day of joy and wonder, triumph and victory! We are waiting! Waiting for new heavens and a new earth where we are made perfectly righteous with Jesus.

No More Sea of Enemies

What does John mean, "there was no more sea"?

21:1c| ... the sea was no more.

⁴ Ibid, Wright.

This is interesting and somewhat strange! First, let's consider what it does not mean. It does not mean there is no water on the new earth! There is a "river of life." There are rivers and water sources throughout the new creation.

The 'sea' stands as a reminder of the power of evil.⁵ In Bible times, Israel's enemies would come through the sea to try to destroy God's people. The sea is consistently a place of fear for the Israelites, who were not much of a seafaring people. So the sea means "no more enemy waters!" In the book of Revelation, the sea is constantly pictured as **chaotic**, and out of it come all sorts of evil creatures (often symbolizing various kingdoms) who are a threat to God's people. The antichrist comes "out of the sea" of corrupt humanity. The idea is Jesus will defeat all our enemies!

What a glorious future we have in Christ! "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard!"

2. WE'LL BE A RADIANT BRIDE (21:2)

Have you been to a wedding lately? There are a lot of courting couples in our church right now, and that means you can feel the electricity of weddings in the atmosphere of our church!

I get so emotional at weddings. You know who was probably more emotional than the happy couple? The **parents** of the bride and groom! The heart-rending joy is all the more intense, most of all, for the **father** who walks his daughter, radiant in white, down the aisle.⁶ Many times I have had the privilege of watching the father's hand trembling as he gives his daughter away to the groom. But here we have, one of the most emotional sights in history, Christ's glorious Bride, in all her radiance.

21:2 | And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

It's our wedding day! The church of all ages will be gathered to marry our Bridegroom! What is it that adorns the Bride?

RADIANT WITH CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

One day the Bride will be perfected. Right now (7 churches) the Bride is imperfect, needing to be corrected and warned. But there's coming again when you will never be chastised again. There's coming a day when you will be perfectly holy! There's coming a day when you will sin no more!

EPHESIANS 5:27 | That he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

What will it be like to never sin again! The moment we come to Christ, we get his record. We are justified: "not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith" (Phil 3:9).

⁵ Ibid. Wright.

⁶ Dennis E. Johnson. *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation* (Kindle Locations 3280-3282). Kindle Edition.

RADIANT WITH CHRIST'S RESIDENCE

Here comes a Bride out of Heaven, descending to earth with Christ.

21:2| And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Why are we so radiant when we see Christ? Because we'll finally be home. We are going to dwell with him forever. And that leads us to our final point.

3. WE'LL HAVE AN ETERNAL HOME (21:3-4)

Moving Around a Lot

I moved around a lot when I was a child. I loved the adventure of moving, but it takes its toll. You know there's coming a day when we never move again? We're going to have an eternal home.

NO MORE LONLINESS

Dear saints, there's coming a day when faith will be made sight. No longer will you long for God or go through dry spells and the ups and downs of the spiritual life. Listen to this promise:

21:3| 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.

What a joy marriage is. You are no longer alone. Yet anyone will tell you that no spouse can fulfill us completely. No human being is capable of bring our Savior. Our loneliness can be fulfilled only partially in marriage. Marriage points to a greater covenant. When we know Christ, he says, "I'll never leave you nor forsake you." He promises to give us what no human being can give: "fullness of joy" (Psa 16:11).

We are finally with our God forever.

NO MORE TEARS

21:4| 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."

We look forward to the second coming to see the final removal and reversal of the curse! We look forward to the new creation when we suffer! The Curse is removed.

Romans 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Today we have plenty of tears.

1. No tears
2. No death
3. No sorrow
4. No crying
5. No more pain

A mother has great sympathy. I can remember many times my mom would wipe away my tears. Dear friend, there is coming a day, when God will wipe away all our tears! No more tears! We will possess a glory beyond imagination! Amen! For now, we see through a mirror darkly. We continue each day struggling against our own sin, and heaven feels very far away.

If you are without Christ, I plead with you to exchange your tears, your sins, your pain for his loving arms, his tender mercies, his complete healing of all pain and brokenness, and his perfect righteousness.

NO DEATH

In Christ death has been defeated! Death is dead! No tears, no crying, no pain, no death! No more funerals! No more hospitals! No more *Blue Cross – Blue Shield*. No more pain! No more surgeries! **The former things are passed away! Hallelujah!**

Conclusion

What will it be like to see Jesus? It will be amazing. We'll see a glorious **future**, a radiant **bride**, and an eternal **home**.

VOW RENEWAL CEREMONY

Welcome (Pastor): At this time I would like to call Bill and Nancy forward to join hands before this congregation to celebrate 50 years of marriage.

Knowing this to be the will of God, we gather in the presence of God and witnesses to reaffirm the vows of this man and this woman in holy matrimony. Bill and Nancy were married 50 years ago! To God be the glory! Genesis 2 tells us that God is the One who has instituted marriage between a man and a woman for their lives on this earth. We have come together to celebrate the giving of Bill and Nancy's vows on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Prayer

Let us pray. Father, thank you for Bill and Nancy. Thank you that this couple has come to know Christ as Lord and Savior. Now we ask you to bless this moment as Bill and Nancy enter into holy matrimony. In the Name of Jesus Christ, we ask, Amen.

Giving of the Vows

Pastor: Before we have the giving of the vows, the Groom would like to say something to his bride of years.

Pastor: Bill and Nancy, at this time, I would like you after 50 years of marriage to renew your sacred vows for the covenant of your marriage before God and these witnesses.

Pastor: Bill, repeat after me.

Bill: I Bill reaffirm my vows of 50 years, to take you Nancy with sincerity and Christian faith to be my lawfully wedded wife to have and to hold, in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer. I promise to love, to respect, and to protect you. Forsaking all others, I dedicate my life to you alone all the days of my life, till death do we part.

Pastor: Nancy repeat after me.

Nancy: I Nancy reaffirm my vows of 50 years, to take you Bill with sincerity and Christian faith as my lawfully wedded husband, to have and to hold, in sickness and in

health, for richer or for poorer. I promise to love, to respect, and to obey you. Forsaking all others, I dedicate my life to you alone all the days of my life, till death do we part.

At this time we will have the lighting of the unity candle. Their granddaughter, Dana Ringler will sing “Love Never Fails” as they symbolize God’s faithfulness in bringing them together 50 years ago.

The Unity Candle

[LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE—Bill and Nancy light the unity candle together and pray privately with each other.]

Song (*Love Never Fails*): At this time, Bill and Nancy’s granddaughter, Dana Ringler, will sing as the Kroll’s celebrated their vow renewals by lighting the unity candle.

Prayer of Dedication

Call Elders up to pray: Mike Klikas and Marcel Reid to pray.

(A payer for the future)

Pastoral Prayer of Dedication: *(with Bill and Nancy)*

Let us pray and dedicate this marriage to the Lord. Father, thank you for joining this couple together 50 years ago for your service. I pray for your will for to be done in their lives. I pray for your blessing to be upon their home in every way. Father I dedicate Bill and Nancy to you for your service until Your Son, Jesus Christ comes again. In Your precious Name we pray. Amen.

[Bill and Nancy stand and face the congregation]

Pronouncement of the Marriage Renewal

Pastor: By the power vested in me as a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and by the laws of the State of Illinois, I reaffirm your vows of 50 years ago when you were pronounced man and wife. **Bill, you may kiss your bride.**

Pastor: “What God has joined together let no man put asunder” (Mat. 19:6).

Presentation by the Pastor: Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me much pleasure to present to you, celebrating 50 years of marriage: Mr. and Mrs. Bill Kroll

Announcements by the Pastor:

- We give thanks to the Lord for the marriage renewal of Bill and Nancy.
- Everyone is invited afterward for a cake fellowship in the fellowship hall.
- Let's now close with a song

Congregational Song: Cornerstone