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Revelation 21:9-10; 22-27:

“When All Is Said and Done”

- I. Let's Remember That We're Citizens!*
- II. Living in the Light.*
- III. Never Again.*

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Revelation 21:9-10, 22-27

Dear Friends in Christ,

No doubt you don't need the definition, but I'll put it in front of you anyway. It's simple. "*When all is said and done* means when considering everything, summing up a conclusion about the situation... The phrase *when all is said and done* was first used in the mid-1500s."

So, here we are in a world overflowing with corruption, dissipation and violence. Here we are listening to another generation of godless thinkers reasonably sure that we'll finally get our act together and arrive at a happy earth as long as we do things their way. And here we are with Jesus' words in front of us, most church people not wanting to hear them, but they are His words, none-the-less: "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be." (Matt. 24:21)

If we have any understanding of human history as it has consistently worked to exist apart from God, this world's thinking and doing can be summed up in three favorite words: "Blah, blah, blah!" So, here we go . . .

WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE

I. Let's Remember That We're Citizens!

I would think everyone here loves the words of Jesus, "I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." (Jn. 14:3) He first spoke those words to the disciples who were about to make a journey with Him to His suffering and death - the punishment He would endure for the sin of the world.

Every day the sinful, decaying, dying nature of this world is impressed upon us. Many of us have already arranged our funerals, and if you live long enough you begin the process of divesting yourself of the "stuff" you've accumulated because you know you have to get ready for the exit, and if you're thoughtful you don't want to leave the responsibility to others. It's soon to be check out day - and how young or old you are has nothing to do with it. The Scriptures call it "The wages of sin." (Rom. 6:23a)

However, every day God's word impresses upon us that "the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 6:23b) Everything Jesus did was for us. To address the brevity of life because of sin; to secure our pardon and an eternal home for us. We know the words of Jesus to Pilate: "My kingdom **is not** of this world."

When Jesus said, "I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." He was directing us to our eternal home. That's what John saw. That's what He writes about in our text:

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God... (Rev. 21:9-10)

"I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." The wife - the church - God's people - including us. The writer of Hebrews says, "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem..." (Heb. 12:22) And this: "For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come." (Heb. 13:14) Luther wrote:

Christ did not come to establish any temporal kingdom, for the promises of God are altogether far too glorious for that sort of thing. It would not well befit our Lord to establish such a kingdom. Christ is not concerned with

political and domestic economy, but is a King who came to destroy the dominion of the devil, and to save mankind. (*Daily Readings With Martin Luther*, Templegate Publishers, Springfield, Illinois, 1987, p. 61)

We get excited and worked up about a lot of things, don't we? How many times have we heard people say, or we've said, "Ooh, I've got to do this or that" or "I've got to see this or that before I die!" Seriously?? Is the anticipation of Heaven that dim? Look at what's to come . . .

II. Living In The Light.

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 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. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day - and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. (vv. 22-26)

Think of it: no temple, no church buildings, no special meeting places. Martin Franzmann wrote, "The presence of God is no longer mediated by a temple (there is no need for something to stand between God and man); His presence in overwhelming power and in astonishing grace is an immediate presence. (He's there and we will be in His presence forever!) (Martin Franzmann, *The Revelation to John*, CPH, St. Louis, revised 1975, p. 142)

How frequently we say, "When I get to heaven I'll be with this person or that person forever!" On the contrary, when we get to heaven we will be with the Living God forever, and if the people we expect to be there are not there we will still be in the highest joy and bliss forever. That's the point of what John is saying.

Think of it: "no need of sun or moon." No need for rest and sleep because of the sin that wears and stresses our bodies. Again, to quote Franzmann: "Before that light-giving presence (that is, the Presence of God!) the great lights of the first creation (sun and moon, Gen. 1:14-19) grow pale and meaningless, like our lamps at sunrise. God's glory, manifested in the Lamb (cf. John 1:4), is now wholly and forever 'The light of the world (Jn. 8:12).'" (Ibid, p. 142) We can't fathom that, can we? But it's wonderful to contemplate!

And think of it: "By its light (that is, the light of God's glory), the nations will walk...and its gates will never be shut...". If I may quote Franzmann one more time:

The 12 gates are open to receive "the glory and the honor of the nations" (that is, the believers of all nations) as the nations, no longer aliens and enemies, offer willing tribute to their God; whatever His sovereign control of all histories and all cultures has brought forth that is splendid and honorable will come home to Him and will be forever kept safe in His city. No one can imperil His gathered treasures (His people! Us! His treasures!); therefore the gates are never shut by day - and there is no more night in which thieves may break in and steal. (Ibid., p. 142)

We will be living in the unending and pure light of the glory of God, without interruption, forever and ever! There will never be anticipation of sorrow or disappointment or fear or killing or dying or death. Never! Listen to this 27th verse of our text . . .

III. Never Again.

But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. (v. 27)

Do you remember at the beginning of this sermon I quoted Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"? To reject Christ is to embrace eternal death. The hatred of this world toward the church has always been and will be to the very end. The world will and even now is rejoicing in its thinking that Christianity is finished. John writes:

And when they (the Word and the Church) have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer and kill them...and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents because these two prophets (the Word and the Church) had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. (Rev. 11:7 & 10)

However, Scriptures always direct the church to its ultimate victory in Christ that will quickly drown the earth dwellers' cry of victory:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light... Then will appear in the heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn (will mourn!), and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matt. 24:29a & 30)

And Scriptures describe the eternal outcome for this world's hatred, rejection and efforts to rid itself of Christ - the ultimate outcome as "the outer darkness...that place (where) there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 25:30) That place is "...the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41b)

Again, this 27th verse of Revelation 21 states "...nothing unclean will ever enter it (the Heavenly Jerusalem), nor anyone who does what is detestable, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life." The agonies and intrusion of this world's godlessness will never be again. Never!! Forever!! In Christ the victory is ours! ***When all is said and done***, this world's thinking apart from God and its pursuit of godlessness are...well...are momentary "blah, blah, blah."

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott