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Revelation 21:9-14, 21-27:

“The Day After the Last Tomorrow”

- I. We Are Citizens.
- II. Home Is Heaven.
- III. Never Again.

Pilgrim Lutheran Church
2155 N. Oakland Avenue
Decatur Illinois 62526

Revelation 21:9-14, 21-27

Dear Friends in Christ,

Author Randy Rowland wrote the following:

A child on a train trip with his mother asked when they could see his dad. The mother responded, "Tomorrow - after it gets dark and light again." Not long after this conversation, the train entered a tunnel. When it emerged on the other end, the child asked, "Is it tomorrow yet?" This is the essence of hope.

Is it tomorrow yet? It often gets that way, doesn't it? Wanting to get out of a dark day into a brighter tomorrow. But tomorrow is always an unknown. The words of Jesus come to mind: "And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his life span?" (Mt. 6:24) Then Jesus gives the warning, "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble," (Mt. 6:34)

Here's something else that enters into the picture and our trying to make tomorrow a better day. First, from Proverbs 16:9, "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps." Second, from Proverbs 20:24, "A man's steps are from the Lord; how then can man understand his way?"

Though our tomorrow's are known only to the Lord, He has revealed a certain *Day* to us. It's . . .

THE DAY AFTER THE LAST TOMORROW

I. We Are Citizens.

In our text, John is taken to see The New Jerusalem. He states: "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." (vv.9,10)

The question is: *Who lives in this city?* The answer is, of course, the holy people of God. And the next question is: *Who are the holy people of God?* It is Peter who declared, "And he (Jesus) commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:42,43) "Who believes" - has faith that trusts Christ for forgiveness of sin. And, as Jesus said, "whoever believes has eternal life." It is Peter who says to all who believe, "...you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation..." (I Pt. 2:9a) With the saints in heaven we comprise a holy nation. And that gives us this promise, from the Book of Hebrews:

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven (the first born are those who believe), and to God, judge of all, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel (that is, the Blood of Christ that covers our sin and marks us as His). (Heb. 12:22-24)

In Christ we are now true citizens of Heaven, though we are still on this earth for a little while longer. Not only that, with the saints in heaven and the saints still on earth, together are "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." (v.9b) You'll recall what the Lord had Paul write concerning the earthly marriage bond: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church." (Eph. 5:32) As the angel said to John, "Write this: 'Blessed are those invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" (Rev. 19:9) Again, the invitation includes the saints in heaven and the saints who are on earth at the time of His Second Coming - His Bride.

II. Home Is Heaven.

And so, we're talking about the resurrected body and life forever in the Heavenly Jerusalem. In verses 22-24, John says . . .

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 honor of the nations.

John sees that there is no temple in the Heavenly Jerusalem. Our earthly worship forms will no longer be necessary. We will have direct access to God. John writes, "...its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb; Jesus." We know the promise Jesus made to the church before He ascended into heaven: "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Mt. 28:10b) Since God is omnipresent, in the Heavenly Jerusalem He will dwell with each of us face to face, and with each of us at the same time. He will communicate with us person to person, forever and ever! It has been stated, "We will have immediate and on-going access to His personal love forever."

John is then informed, "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 (Jesus)." That light is what is known as *the shekinah*, the bright light in which God made His presence known to ancient Israel. We recall this incident with the shepherds at the birth of Jesus: "And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear." (Lk. 2:9) "The glory of the Lord" is *the shekinah*. It is not created light. It is the Light that created light. As Scriptures say, "God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all." (I Jn. 1:5) It is the light of "the lamp of the Lamb" who has taken away our sin and won eternal life for us. It is the light of the lamp given to us in the written Word of Scriptures and the visible word of the Sacraments, as the Psalmist declared, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Ps. 119:105)

Then, John writes, "By its light the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it...". This refers to the gathering of all God's people. The word used here for glory is *doxa*, as in the Doxology; the "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

III. Never Again.

This brings us to our final consideration, what I am calling The Never Again. Verse 25: "and its gates will never (never again) be shut by day - and there will be no night there." - never again. This statement directs us to perfect, eternal security; the non existence of enemies. The fact that there will be no night there is hard for us to comprehend, but we need not comprehend it. We rejoice that we can look forward to it.

John is then told, "They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations." This calls us back to verse 24, "...the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it." Again, this is the praise and honor those in Christ will bring into the Heavenly Jerusalem.

God help us to hold on to these truths: "But nothing unclean will ever enter it..." - that is, that which hates and defies the Almighty God will never be there. Never again. And this: "...nor anyone who does what is detestable or false..." - never again. It's what God addressed before and after the flood: "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence." (Gen. 6:11) - never again. It's what Jesus said would happen before His Second Coming: "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." (Mt. 24:21) It's all coming to its final moment, never to be again!

And then the most wonderful promise: the ones who will be there with the Triune God and the angels are "only (those) who were written in the Lamb's book of life." (v.27b) - those who understand and believe they have "been saved by grace (God's undeserved love) through faith" in Christ. (Eph. 2:8) We're drawn to these words written by John:

"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. 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.'" (Rev. 21:3,4)

Think of it: statements such as, "I don't feel good.", "I'm afraid.", "What's going to happen next?", "I'm hurting and sad.", "I'm worried.", "I feel so lonely.", "I'm dying.", "I don't want to die." - you name the phrase that points to a world steeped in sin and death. Listen, such statements, thoughts and sentiments will never exist. **Never again!** Thanks be to God for His love through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Day After The Last Tomorrow is The Day of Christ's return. It's the Last Day. It's Judgement, and for those in Christ, it's entrance into unending joy. The end of this world's mess and death! Never to be again.

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott