

May 25 2025

Revelation 21:9-10,22-27:

The Movement and End of the Blah

- I. We're Citizens
- II. Heaven Is
- III. Never Again

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Dear Friends in Christ,

I was thinking back to about 30 years ago when a Christian told me how blessed she was because she had never experienced, what she called, the tragedies of life. I would say she was in her early fifties. It was a few years later when everything began to unravel. We work so hard trying to avoid what cannot be avoided.

Over all my years I have witnessed all the "brilliant" people of the generations reason that if we do "this and that" we will finally get everything together and have our happy earth. Unfortunately, "this and that" doesn't include the most important ingredient: The Lord. In the centuries humanity has walked this earth it has never found itself close to the apex of peace and tranquility. History says so. The Scriptures say it never will.

The world, including most of the church today, won't look at the words of Jesus concerning where this world's movement is taking it: "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 moving to *The End!*

And there's another part to this. Harold Senkbeil, Lutheran author, wrote: "Sure, we're all caught up in the tangled web of sin and its effects on our lives, but all these ugly actions find their origin in something uglier still: our own sinful heart. This is the real dilemma - not the rotten situation we live in, but the rottenness living in us (Dying To Live by Harold Senkbeil, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1994, p.33)." Do we give much thought about that: *the rottenness within?*

For me, much of the reasoning of sinful humans, including this one, can be summed up in three words: "Blah, blah, blah." So, let's consider . . .

THE MOVEMENT AND END OF THE BLAH

I. We're Citizens

Every day the sinful, decaying, dying nature of this world is in front of us. I'm guessing that many of us have already arranged our funerals, and if we're up in the years we're probably trying to get rid of the stuff we've accumulated asking ourselves why we accumulated so much stuff that is basically just stuff. If we're thoughtful, we don't want to leave the responsibility to others. The fact is, check-out day can be any moment at any age. The Scriptures call it, "The wages of sin (Rm.6:23a)."

Every day God's Word impresses upon us, "the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rm.6:23)." Listen, if anyone here is tempted by the preaching and teaching of the "health, wealth, and happiness" preachers...wake up! Without question, I see them as minions of hell. They've abandoned Jesus's words, the words He spoke to Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world." And Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation." That's not hard to understand, is it?

What Jesus said to the first disciples before His crucifixion He says to us: "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 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 and 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).

"...the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." The wife is the church - God's people. The writer of Hebrews says, "But you have come to Mt. Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb.12:22)." And this: "For here (this world) 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...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, Il., p.61)."

I have to ask you brothers and sisters - would you truly be disappointed if you don't get to do this or that, or see this or that, or have this or that before you die and enter eternal life? Is the anticipation of Heaven that dim? Do you see living face to face with the eternal love of God as hanging out and reminiscing with family and friends about earthly life? Think about this Word from the Lord: "...the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind (Is.65:17b)."

II. Heaven Is

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives its 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 about it: no temple, no church buildings, no special meeting places. Martin Franzmann wrote, "The presence of God is no longer mediated by a temple (i.e., 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 (Martin Franzmann, The Revelation to John, CPH, St. Louis, p.142)."

Do we understand this? Heaven is God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the Triune God, the fulness of incomprehensible love and light - without end. We often compare what Heaven is on the basis of what we need and want in this world. Multi-merchandise stores, on-line shopping, favorite restaurants and foods, golf courses and your favorite fishing places, calendars and clocks; hospitals, police and fire departments are for this world. Heaven can only be glimpsed.

And think of this: "no need of sun or moon." No need for rest or sleep because of the sin that wears, stresses and ages 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, Gn. 1:14-19) grow pale and meaningless, like our lamps at sunrise. God's glory, manifested in the Lamb (Jn. 1:4), is now wholly and forever 'the light of the world (Ibid, p.142).'" We can't fully grasp this, but this Word of God helps us to focus on our journey: "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we will see him as he is (I Jn.3:2-3)."

III. Never Again

From the very beginning, this world has persistently worked to rid itself of the Word of God and, with it, the church. When Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation (Jn.16:33)," He was talking about the tribulation that comes to God's people because of Christ. Sadly, the world ignores what's coming at it.

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).

We've been watching this happen...incrementally...step by step. But the ultimate moment is this:

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 (wail!), and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Mt.24:29-30).

And Jesus describes the eternal consequences of this world's rejection and efforts to rid itself of the Christ as entering "the outer darkness...that place (where) there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (forever)...(the place of) the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt.25:30,41b)."

Concerning the Heaven our resurrected bodies will enter, verse 27 of our text states: "But nothing unclean will ever enter it, not anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life." Adjectives such as "unclean...detestable...false" are erased...forever.

John writes of the Heavenly Jerusalem, "By its light (the light of God's glory), the nations will walk...and its lamp is the Lamb (Jesus)...and its gates will never be shut...". Franzmann notes that the believers of all nations... "will come home to him and will be forever kept safe in His city. No one can imperil His gathered treasure (His people); 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)."

The agonies and intrusions of this world's godlessness will never be again. There will never be worry and fear, lying and cheating, hatred and war, aging and disease, accident and crippling, dying and death. And best of all, it's the end of fallen human reasoning. Forever!! In Christ the victory is ours! It's **The end of the...blah!**

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott