

VICTORY: REVELATION'S HEAVENLY PERSPECTIVE

Reading Revelation Responsibly

Purpose: to give us a heavenly perspective on our earthly circumstances so that every generation of readers can be challenged, comforted and given hope.

→ **Our God who promises peace and eternal life in his presence**

On Sunday, Micah mentioned that John draws upon some of the greatest texts of hope from the Old Testament to emphasize the new heaven, new earth, and holy city. Here are some examples:

- READ Isaiah 65:17-19 and compare it to Revelation 21:1
- READ Hosea 2:14-20; Isaiah 62:4-5; and compare it to Revelation 21:2, 9 and 22:17
 - The tradition of the covenant between God and humanity as a wedding or marriage comes to expression in early Christian thought as the wedding of Christ to the people of God – see Matthew 22:1-14.
 - This tradition blends well with Zion/Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride dressed for her husband.
- Several promises previously articulated in God's name are recognizable in Rev. 21-22:
 - Zech. 2:11, God dwelling in our midst.
 - Ezek. 11:20 – God's dwelling place among his people
 - Is. 25:8 – God wiping away every tear
 - Is. 65:19 – no more sadness or crying in Jerusalem
 - 2 Sam. 7:14 – "I will be their God, and they will be my son or daughter." First applied to the Davidic dynasty, then to the Messiah, and here extended to the universal church.
- All of these foretold promises will be fulfilled at the second coming of Christ, and because God is Faithful and True, we are comforted and receive hope in this life.

→ **Revelation's Unique Message of Hope**

- John's final vision in Rev. 21-22 has at least two distinct differences from his OT sources (listed above):
 - First, the scope of God's promises for life eternal includes men and women from every tribe, language group, people and nation. (Rev. 5:9-10; 7:9; 14:6-7; 22:2) This is in contrast to God's investment in one nation – Israel. See also 1 Peter 2:4-10.
 - Second, the absence of a temple in the holy city. This contrasts with Ezekiel, who devotes nine chapters to describe how the perfect temple would be constructed (Ez. 40-48).
 - John has a clear rationale for this difference (Rev. 21:22): the full presence of God and the Slain and Resurrected Lamb in the holy city eliminates the need for a temple. God is literally with us in the new heavens and new earth.
- How does this final vision of Revelation challenge you? Bring you comfort and hope?