

SUMMER SERMONS

REVELATION 21:1-8

# WHAT A DAY OF REJOICING THAT WILL BE!



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**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

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# INTRODUCTION

The media and social media bombard our ears and eyes with painful sights, sounds, and stories that are deeply disturbing and depressing. As we listen, watch, and read, we ask, “Is there any good news in the world? Anything calming and uplifting? If there is, you won’t find it on CNN, MSNBC, ABC, CBS, FOX, or Talk Radio.

You probably have more chance of finding something happy on social media. But it’s hard to find because the social media companies’ algorithms follow the business model of creating maximum fear, to attract maximum eyeballs, and therefore maximum advertising dollars.

No wonder rates of depression, anxiety, social disorder, and loneliness are soaring when we consume a daily diet of painful sights, sounds, and stories that disturb and depress us.

## CONTEXT

The Apostle John and the early Christians felt this pain, even though they didn’t have the modern media and social media to contend with. They still saw and heard painful sights, sounds, and stories, especially of Christian persecution.

In the book of Revelation, God gave them new sights, sounds, and stories to help them persevere and look forward with hope. Towards the end of the book, he especially gave them new sights, sounds, and stories about heaven. Heaven is referred to about 550 times in Scripture, and 54 times in the book of Revelation. Let’s use Revelation 21:1-8 to look forward with them to new sights, new sounds, and new stories of a new people to alleviate our present pain with future hope.



What will we see?



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# 1. WE WILL SEE NEW SIGHTS

In the opening verses of Revelation 21 John says twice, "I saw..." What did he see?

He saw a new world

*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 (1).*

**The old world has passed away:** Cities, counties, continents, hemispheres are no more. New York has passed away. Chicago has passed away. West Michigan has passed away. Byron Center has passed away. They simply cease to exist.

**The sea has passed away:** In the Bible, the sea is a symbol of disturbance, division and danger. It divided people and killed people. In this new world there is no disturbance, division and no danger.

**A new world has come:** There's something familiar about this – there's a heaven and an earth. Yet there's something radically different about this too. It's perfectly beautiful, flawlessly functional, and totally accessible. There's a renewal of the old plus the addition of the completely new.

He saw a new church

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

**A holy city:** Cities are often associated with dirt, disorder, destitution, and depravity. On the positive side, cities are usually places of great buildings, impressive memorials and monuments, immense populations, and multiplied amenities. The worst of cities will be gone; the best of cities will be renewed.

**A beautiful bride:** He brings his perfect bride into this perfect city. His beautiful people will be adorned with all spiritual graces to begin the joy of an eternal marriage characterized by eternal beauty, joy, extravagance, and jubilation.

♥ Imagine how much better we would feel if we filled our eyes with these sights and so practised Philippians 4:8-9.

♥ Every time your eyes hurt from what you see in the world and in the church, remind yourself that you will one day see a perfect world and church

LOOKING AT THE OLD WORLD  
AND CHURCH WILL AGE YOU,  
BUT LOOKING TO THE NEW WORLD  
AND CHURCH WILL RENEW YOU.



These are certainly beautiful sights.  
What about beautiful sounds?



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## 2. WE WILL HEAR NEW SOUNDS

We've seen what John saw, let's now hear what John heard.

### A new spiritual experience

*And 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 (3).*

**God's nearer presence:** Yes, God lived with his people before, but they didn't always feel his presence. Now it's as near as can be. He's with them as never before. Like Eden, it's his personal presence with no need for a building.

**God's loving presence: They will be his people** is the language of adoption and means they will enter into a deeper and more intimate covenant relationship. God's covenant love will be perfectly and permanently expressed and experienced.

Three times, God speaks this promise of a new spiritual experience of God's loving presence. It's as if he knew John would hardly be able to believe it.

### A new emotional experience

*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 (4).*

As John listens to the new sounds of heaven, he hears God's promises. But he also hears a unique and special silence. There's a sound he's used to that he doesn't hear.

**There's no sound of loss, only gain:** No loss of life, health, friends, money. No loss of anything. There's only the sound of addition and gain. Therefore....

**There's no sound of tears, only joy:** Think of all the times you've cried in your life. Not just wet tears, but heart tears over losses. God removes the losses and tears, and adds gains and joys instead. God wipes out our tear ducts as we enter heaven.



How do these sounds sound to you?  
How do these silences sound to you?  
No mourning, crying, or suffering. Instead, rejoicing, celebrating, thriving. Can you hear them? Those who have gone before us already experience this.



Does this not sound better than our radios and TV's? How much more soothing, healing, calming. Sometime just turn off the radio, the internet, the TV, the people. In the silence, exercise faith to hear these astonishing sounds.

THE PAIN OF PEOPLE PASSING AWAY  
WILL ALSO ONE DAY PASS AWAY.



New sights and new sounds are great.  
But will I be new to match?



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### 3. WE WILL BE NEW PEOPLE

God will fit us for this new environment.

#### A New People

*And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son (5-7).*

He's making all things new, but only for a certain kind of people.

**A thirsty people:** This people thirsted for God and for holiness throughout life and now he gives it fully and freely to them.

**A fighting people:** This people also fought against sin, the devil, and the world while they lived, but now they are given total victory.

They desired spiritual water and engaged in spiritual warfare, and therefore they were given complete spiritual satisfaction and complete spiritual victory.

#### An Old People

*But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death" (8).*

**The old were not made new.** They were not made new by faith during their lives. They stayed as they were born. Notice that "faithless" is grouped with other awful sins.

**The old will never be renewed:** If they were not made new in this world, they will never be made new in the world to come. They too get an inheritance, but it's very different. Instead of the water of life, they get the lake of fire. The second death is far worse than the first death because it's not only physical but spiritual; it's not over in a few hours or days, but is forever.

♥ Which people group are you in? Are you renewed by faith and therefore hungering for God and for holiness? Or are you in the old people group, aging, unrenewed, and going to the place you will never be renewed?

♥ The puritan, Richard Baxter, lived a life of suffering. When he took up the practice of meditating on heaven 30 minutes a day, it had such a powerful impact on him that he commended the practice to all Christians.

PILGRIM 1: "WHEN DO YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE MOST WHOLESOME AND MOST VIGOROUS SPIRITUAL STATE?"  
PILGRIM 2: "WHEN I THINK OF THE PLACE TO WHICH I AM GOING."  
PILGRIM'S PROGRESS



# CONCLUSION



## FURTHER STUDY

### Online Articles

- [Heaven Will Never Be Boring](#) by Dave Radford
- [Some Wrong Ways that Some Christians think about Heaven](#) by Justin Taylor
- [Can we enjoy heaven knowing loved ones are in hell?](#) by Tim Challies

### Books

- [Is Hell for Real or Does Everyone Go To Heaven?](#)
- [Heaven your Real Home](#) by Joni Eareckson Tada

### Discussion Questions

- What are some of the causes of depression and anxiety in our culture? How has the media impacted your own mental and emotional health?
- What do you think of when you think of heaven? What do you want to see and hear there? What do you not want to see and hear?
- How much do you think about heaven? How can you increase your thinking about heaven this week?
- What are you thirsty for? What are you fighting?
- What emotion are you most looking forward to losing or gaining in heaven?

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## SUMMER SERMONS

REVELATION 20:1-8

# WHAT A DAY OF REJOICING THAT WILL BE!



Painful sights, sounds, stories

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Despair

**Biblical answer?**



**We will see new sights**

- A new world
- A new church

LOOKING AT THE OLD WORLD  
AND CHURCH WILL AGE YOU,  
BUT LOOKING TO THE NEW WORLD  
AND CHURCH WILL RENEW YOU.

**Sounds**



**We will hear new sounds**

- A new spiritual experience
- A new emotional experience

THE PAIN OF PEOPLE PASSING AWAY  
WILL ALSO ONE DAY PASS AWAY.

**Will I be new?**



**We will be new people**

- A new people
- An old people

WHEN WE ALL GET TO HEAVEN  
WHAT A DAY OF REJOICING THAT WILL BE  
WHEN WE ALL SEE JESUS  
WE'LL SING AND SHOUT THE VICTORY

**Action?**



Get and kindle this heavenly  
hope to reduce the pain in this  
world and the next, and to  
maximize pleasure in this world  
and the next.