

Revelation 21:1-6
May 19, 2019 – FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Behold, Our Living Savior!

- † He loves His Bride. (vv.1-2)
- † He satisfies His people. (vv.3-6)

In the name of Jesus, our **Living Savior**, dear Bride of Christ:

It's that time of year again when "love is in the air." More weddings in the next few months than the rest of the year combined. Good fun and happiness, yet for those of us who care for people, the reality of disappointment and heartache in every marriage, shattered dreams in nearly half – makes you wonder what goes wrong? Even Christians with Christ's great command: "**Love one another**," fail and falter in our relationships. Why do we prove again and again that human love, as God says, "**is like the morning mist**" (Hosea 6:4)? It disappears like fog on the marsh as soon as the sun gets hot. Could it be that we're not quite listening long enough to our Lord? "**Love one another**" gives no power for us to love on our own. But then Jesus adds, "**just as I have loved you.**" (John 13:34 EHV¹) Not the law of God's righteous demands, but the gospel gift of God's righteousness, the gospel enables us to do as we promise at the altar, though not perfectly this side of heaven. So God's perfect love assures us, "**I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist.**" (Isaiah 44:22 NIV84) **Behold, Our Living Savior!**

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New marriage, new home. And the Lord's Apostle John whom the Holy Spirit inspired to write Revelation must have been longing for home. John the Elder pastor, the only survivor of the Twelve Apostles, was arrested for preaching God's Word. His punishment? Exile on a bleak Greek island. On Sunday, "**I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingship and patient endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony about Jesus.**" (1:9 EHV) Jesus opened up heaven to look inside at what's happening now and where it's all headed.

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, because the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And the sea no longer existed." The sea separates, spawns storms, stinks at low tide and more with pollution. In heaven, all gone! God had promised 700 years earlier through Isaiah: "**Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more....As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,**" declares the LORD, "**so will your name and descendants endure.**" (Isaiah 65:17-19; 66:22 NIV84) God will destroy earth as we know it, and remake outer space too.

Gorgeous! "**And I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**" Not the earthly Jerusalem where Jesus wept over their stubborn unbelief, then was crucified as the innocent Son of God. Here's the heavenly city where Christ gave His bride the Church a wedding dress. Back in 19:8 we read: "**His bride has made herself ready, and she was given bright, clean, fine linen to wear. (In fact, the fine linen is the 'not guilty' verdicts**

¹ EHV ~ *Evangelical Heritage Version* (<http://wartburgproject.org>) © 2017. NPH: 800-662-6022; also Amazon-Kindle.

pronounced on the saints.)” We keep soiling ourselves by selfishness in all our relationships, especially where it hurts in marriage. Jesus keeps cleaning us up. Say, “Yes!” to this dress, as Isaiah exclaimed: ***“I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”*** (61:10 NIV84) **Behold, Our Living Savior!** Jesus loves His **Bride**. In Ephesians 5, where the Holy Spirit answers all marriage problems with His command for the husband to love and the wife to respect, just look! ***“Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”*** (Ephesians 5:25–27 NIV84) By faith you are the **Bride** of Christ. Darling, you look marvelous because...

† He satisfies His people. (vv.3-6)

John’s continues: ***“And from the throne I heard a loud voice that said, ‘Look! God’s dwelling is with people. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God.’ ”*** God’s people Israel recalled God’s tabernacle tent in the desert with Moses in the Feast of Tabernacles. Imagine if by law everyone has to go camping every year. “City Slickers” might visit country friends to camp with them next to farm fields. Great fun except for bugs and storms, rain or snow. But in heaven’s eternal vacation God will literally be ***“tenting”*** with us. On earth sin hides His presence. With sin gone in heaven, we will see God everywhere on eternal vacation together! John wrote: ***“Dear friends, we are children of God now, but what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when he is revealed we will be like him, and we will see him as he really is.”*** (1 John 3:2)

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain, because the former things have passed away.” These effects of sin belong to this shadowy planet where sorrow and death invade our happiest moments. Right after our text, Jesus warns about the ***“second death.”*** Satan and the unrepentant damned in hell will be thrust forever from the presence of the living God. Death will no longer exist in God’s eternal kingdom of light and everlasting bliss. “The story of man’s redemption began when man fell into sin and brought the curse of death into the world. It will be complete when death itself will go out of existence, at least for the children of God.”²

On “Command Thursday” Jesus promised His disciples: ***“You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.”*** (John 16:20) In heaven it will be our turn to laugh as **Our Living Savior satisfies His people:** ***“The ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.”*** (Isaiah 51:11 NIV84)

Secular humanists dream of building a perfect utopia. But **Our Living Savior** says this can come only when the present order is destroyed. Did you catch who will do this? ***“The one who was seated on the throne said to me, ‘Look, I am making everything new!’ He also said, ‘Write, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ ”***⁶ ***And he said to me: It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To anyone who is thirsty, I will give freely from the spring of the water of life.”***

My adopted Grandma Rose, used to complain about the water in town and how no one liked her artesian well water on the farm. It flowed into a creek with both sides colored red with rust. She was my first “Iron Lady.” Christ’s ***“spring of the water of life”*** gives us the solid hope, courage and strength.

Gone: ***Tears – “everything new!” Death – “everything new!” Sorrow – “everything new!” Crying – “everything new!” Pain – “everything new!”*** For ***“the former things have passed away.”*** At last God’s people will be satisfied because God cannot lie. He proved that by keeping His promise to come and redeem **His people**. Love is in the air and in the eternal sunshine of God’s glorious Son, our heavenly Bridegroom. **Behold, Our Living Savior!** Say, “Yes!” to the dress and love that lasts! Amen.

² Becker, Siegbert W. *REVELATION The Distant Triumph Song*. Milwaukee, WI: NPH, 1985, p. 330.

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