

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## NO MORE SEA

*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

*Revelation 21:1-4*

John bears testimony that he received this Revelation of JESUS CHRIST (see Rev.1:1) while he was on the isle of Patmos, (see Rev.1:9) just off the coast of Greece. In John's characteristic humility he does not go into detail about how he came to be there but does mention that it was for "*for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*" (Rev 1:9)

History bears record that John was banished to this somewhat deserted island for preaching CHRIST, (which was deemed subversive by the government) by the emperor Domitian around 95 AD. There is one high point on the island from which the mainland (Greece) could be seen on a clear day. One can only imagine the exiled John looking longingly, from time to time, over that expanse of the Aegean Sea which separated him from those churches which he had by the grace of GOD established in Greece. He desired to be with the people of GOD, (see I John 3:14) who are the body of CHRIST.

Thus we see him writing of that new heaven and new earth which the LORD showed him, and commenting that there was "no more sea". I believe he meant that there was nothing to separate the people of GOD from one another, but most importantly no bars of separation between him and his LORD. The LORD JESUS, had told HIS disciples that it was a necessity that HE go away and that they could not accompany HIM at that time. But HE promised that HE would prepare a place for them and that HE would come back to get them. "*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*" (John 14:3)

Thus with this promise firmly planted in his mind, we can imagine the exultant joy that must have gripped HIM as the LORD showed HIM this Heavenly Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her HUSBAND. For he saw there not bricks and stone but those whom Paul said "HE would bring with HIM." That city of GOD is a people chosen, redeemed, and prepared to dwell everlastingly with HIM who loved them before the foundation of the world and has hid them in the palm of HIS hand. (see John 10:28,29)

The entire life experience of the sons of GOD in this world is but a preparatory work for that which is to come. The elect angels have never experienced sin, along with its corruption, and they can but look on with wonder and amazement at the unfolding of redemption as it remains a complete mystery to them. They worship and glorify GOD daily but they can have no true appreciation of the redeeming work of CHRIST in the behalf of HIS chosen people as those men can, who have known what it is to be lost and separated from GOD.

Those who are the objects of CHRIST's redemption shall forever praise HIM for that which HE so freely performed for them. *"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."* (Rev 5:9)

What a glorious privilege indeed to be included in that number for which CHRIST laid down HIS life as a sacrificial LAMB. That man who has never been acquainted with the depths of his own sin and his total unworthiness to dwell in the presence of the LORD, could never have any appreciation for what CHRIST has done. Yet those who know themselves to be unworthy of the least of the LORD's mercies shall rejoice and glorify HIM forever for such an unspeakable gift as the purchase and bestowal of eternal life upon them. Those who are worthy of death are presented in the courts of heaven as having never sinned, so great is the work of CHRIST in their behalf. (see Rom.8:29-34)

So John speaks of this heavenly city coming down and sees it not as some unpopulated metropolis but rather as a "bride adorned for her HUSBAND". This city is indeed that bride, which is the church of JESUS CHRIST, made ready for the unending wedded bliss that can only exist between a bride whose love has been earned, and the ONE who purchased and loved her as HIS own body. (see Eph.65:22-33) This marriage is described as one in which:

**HE will be their GOD.** A look at the history of the nation of Israel reveals that they were constantly going after other gods and engaging in idolatrous practices. One of the greatest laments of the true Israel of GOD is that they find themselves prone to disobedience and unfaithfulness. That day is coming when all of their unbelief and this wicked flesh shall be put off and HE shall be their GOD and they shall be HIS people. (see Rom. 7:14-25)

**HE will dwell with them forever.** There has never been a time revealed unto men when the LORD has not had a perfect and unbounded love for those whom HE chose in CHRIST. According to HIS purpose HE subjected them to the rigors of sin and the law and ultimately to the separation which such a course of action brought to pass. (see Isa.59:2; Rom.3:23) John sees this barrier of separation removed, (no more sea) and now there being no impediment to their enjoyment of HIS presence forevermore. For while HIS affection for them has never waned or changed in anyway, their ability to completely rest in HIM shall reach its unending climax in the ages to come when they see HIM face to face.

**There will be no more death, pain, sorrow, or crying.** This earth in which we dwell is but a lowland of sin and sorrow, it is a valley of suffering by the direct design of HIM who works all things together for good to those who are the called according to HIS purpose. But it is only a temporary stay for those whom Peter describes as *"as strangers and pilgrims"* (1Pet 2:11) in the earth. Though the people of GOD are in the world they are not "of it" and freely confess to be looking for a city which hath foundations. They mourn their sin daily and long to be free from this *"body of death"*. That which they desire shall be brought to pass when CHRIST shall come to claim HIS purchased possession and wipe their eyes forever.

**The former things are passed away.** We are all, without exception, sinners.(see 1John 1:8) Thankfully the LORD JESUS CHRIST came into the world to save sinners. HE has not failed in any wise to accomplish that task, even though we see not all things yet put under his feet (see Heb. 2:8) for the last enemy to be destroyed is death. (see I Cor. 15:26) Now we are certain that death itself has been stripped of its power by HIM who has triumphed over it openly, but we are yet subject unto death in order to fulfill HIS purpose. The certain hope of the resurrection is that which is the great hope of the sons of GOD for we know that even the state of death upon the people of GOD is but a temporary condition.

*"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1Co 15:54-57)