



The Eleventh Day of Christmas at St. Andrews Parish

FOR, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. 24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord. (Isaiah 65:17-25)

A wonderful prospect of this prophecy from Isaiah is that ALL things will be made NEW, including you and me! 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. (Rev. 21:5) ALL THINGS include these weary and worn bodies, the beauty of virgin nature, the beauty of the pristine heavens of Creation, and even our names will be given anew and without notoriety attached: *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that*

receiveth it. (Rev 2:17) No one will be able to assail our old reputations with that new and pure white name. No longer will the lion devour the lamb, nor the adder strike the child. All of God's original beauty and perfection of Eden shall appear anew but in richer and broader scope. The landscape itself shall bloom in wondrous beauty, and the sun shall never cease to shine.

That former Edenic estate, marred by sin and carnality, will not even be a fading memory, for all unpleasant things will be removed from our memory. The blessings and grace will be multiplied to the extent that there can be no room for sad recollections of our earthly walk. There will be no sorrow, no sickness, no disappointment, no gossip, and no yearning for the sins of the flesh. *4 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. . . . 6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.* (Rev 21:3,4,6)

No longer shall men claim the dirty and war-torn streets of Jerusalem as the City of God; for a new Jerusalem will be created by the Lord our God – not one whose streets are defiled by the blood of innocents, but rather a Heavenly Jerusalem that descends as a Bride from Heaven adorned for her husband. *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* (Rev 21:2) Who shall bear rule over such a wonderful Jerusalem? Shall it be an earthly potentate puffed up with arrogance and greed; or, as the great poet Thomas Gray writes in ELLEGY:

*Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.*

No, not even these shall bear rule in New Jerusalem. Who then? It will be the Lord Himself. *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.* (Rev 21:3) How excellent that we will have God to be our King and Sovereign. Injustice will no longer be the political rule, but absolute righteousness and Love shall be our banner in that New Jerusalem. *18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.* (Isa 65:18-19)

In this modern world in which innocent little babies may not be blessed by the beauty of a single sunrise before butchered by the abortionist's knife; and disease and famine in diverse places put in jeopardy the lives of children so that their tenure on earth is measured in days and weeks instead of year and decades; we shall see a purifying fire purge the chaff of the crops and the topsoil of the world of corruption and sin. The infant shall grow to enjoy a life of longevity in the intermediate New Creation before the final battles of evil and righteousness. *There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labour in vain,*

nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. (Isaiah 65:20-23)

There is some hope in the Reformation writers that this period described by Isaiah precedes the glorious return of Christ when the Church will be restored to its former wonder, and the incorrigible sinners will be ejected to the world of outer darkness.

In that day, our prayers shall receive and answer even before they are uttered: *24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*

I believe there to be a Balm of Gilead for those who have loved and cherished pets, for we find the final verse of our text makes allusion to the natural creatures that God made perfect at Eden, but fell at the sin of Adam: *25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord. (Isaiah 65:25)* There are two separate destinies contrasted herein: 1) the lion will no longer be a predator, but rather a vegetarian; he will not hurt or fright the little lamb – they become friends; these will enjoy the benefits of a restored Edenic life at the point described. Why would God exclude these from His future Heavenly Kingdom if He includes them here in this restored world? 2) the serpent shall remain fallen because he tempted himself and fell from Heaven. He continues to abide in the curse uttered on him at Eden. Dust remains his diet and he remains the lowest creature in all of Creation.

Note to Reader: The spiritual always precedes the physical. This spiritual new Creation will mirror that of the final great conclusion of all time and eternity. The world was spiritually created in the Mind of God long before it took physical shape in the visible Creation. The Lamb of God, without blemish, was slain before the foundation of the world in God's perfect plan for a Redeemer. Before our bodies can be perfected, our souls must undergo a sanctification as well. We are first made new creatures in Christ *err* we are made perfect in a glorious heavenly body.