

Sermon Notes: November 3, 2024 **Focus:** All Saints' and Revelation
[Readings: All Saints' Year B](#)

I want to accomplish three things for All Saints' and give you one task.

First, celebrate the saints Let's lift up the everyday saints in our midst. You are probably tired of hearing it, but we are the saints: our loved ones past, the community in our present, and saints yet to come.

Second, marriage and heaven The Book of Revelation is intimately wrapped up in marriage. Marriage in the Bible is a cudgel for some churches. "Biblical marriage retreats" often stress submission and traditional marriage roles. Actual biblical marriage is very muddy. Marriage of enslaved people, rape victims, concubines, all make this glossy ideal of man + woman + 2.2 kids only a fraction of "biblical marriage." Even as the Episcopal church has made strides in LGBTQ inclusion and marriage rites, we still only have a fractional view of the future bond. The bond of heaven and earth where Christ and his people celebrate forever is indeed a "New Heaven and New Earth" united.

Third, appreciation for the book of Revelation I think the book offers a fantastic picture of compassion and empathy for those who suffer. I suspect you think "that's crazy" because Revelation gets packaged into horror movie schlock and end-of-the-world Christian triumphalism. On the next page, I want to go into a bit of detail about Revelation 21, our particular, lectionary passage for Sunday, Nov 3rd. It's definitely *not* horror movie fodder.

*I hope you will do one thing this Sunday.
Bring a memento or picture of a passed on loved one with you.
When you get to church, place it on the rectangular table
that will be in front of the Altar on Sunday.
Please pick it up after 10am church.*

If you are an 8 o'clock worshiper and are comfortable leaving it, we will take all pictures left back to the office to be picked up during the week.

I won't be talking about the table on Sunday except to note the presence of saints past.

Now for the details on Revelation:

Details on Revelation 21

Verses 1-6

New Heaven and New Earth (v. 1) This is complete renewal, not just repairing the old. The word “new” (Greek: *καινήν kainēn*) is forward looking. The old “first heaven and the first earth” have (are) passing away in favor of heaven descending down to earth. If you to want geek out on a concordance for *καινήν*, here you go https://biblehub.com/greek/kaine_n_2537.htm

New Jerusalem (v. 2) New Jerusalem is described as a bride (us). I am sensitive to gendered language. With intention; however, I will use the biblical convention of Jesus as groom and church as bride. The ‘New Heaven and Earth’ will usher in an eternal feast and community. Love and care will be the rule and *not* a perfected man, woman, and 2.2 children. Whatever God has up God’s sleeve for “the New” it won’t be just spiritual, but a physical place of heaven and earth united. I will talk more about that in the sermon.

God’s Presence (v. 3) God and humanity in ‘the New’ will be intimately connected and beyond anything we can currently imagine in our day-to-day life (I hope). The hope is not really new. That same hope shows up in Leviticus 26:11-12 and Ezekiel 37:27 where God dwells among God’s people. God will be with us, and “they (we) will be his people.”

End of Suffering and Death (v. 4) God wipes away every tear of personal sorrow and cosmic suffering where the “old” is being overcome by God’s ‘new.’ Revelation 7 and 21 describe tears wiped away and are regularly read at Episcopal funerals. Chapter 21 is also connected to Isaiah 25:8, where God promises to “swallow up death forever.”

Making All Things New (v. 5) I don’t think God wants to obliterate everything from the past (I hope). I pray not for holy amnesia, but a celebration of what we were and what we become. May God renew, rebuild the old and the new for one better reality.

The Alpha and Omega (v. 6a) If Jesus really is our beginning and end, that is extremely hopeful and a little terrifying.

So, bring a pic,
give Revelation a chance,
and celebrate the new promises in store.

Todd