

# GOD AMONGST MORTALS

Dr. Fred Fourie ~Sunday, May 20, 2007



**I AM MAKING  
EVERYTHING  
NEW!**

**R e v e l a t i o n 2 1 : 5**

**Revelation 21:1-7** 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. And I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." and the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then 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 water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children."

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The author of the last book in the Bible wrote in order to reassure, console and bring new hope to the victims of the Roman Empire during the first centuries after Christ. However, since then this same passage inspired, touched and changed countless millions of people faced with overwhelming odds. The world in general and America in particular are wrestling, to cope and deal with devastation, fear and poverty like seldom before.

How are we doing? How are you responding apart from [accepting the things that you cannot change](#)? It is amazing how some people can handle adversity. Even under the most trying circumstances, there are those who refuse to give up and who succeed to show others that there is always a more positive and a brighter side.

My favorite illustration happened during the Nazi occupation of Paris. A tough Nazi storm trooper stepped into a subway car and tripped headlong over the umbrella of a little elderly lady sitting close to the door. After picking himself up the bruised Nazi launched into a tirade of abuse, and then bolted from the car at the next station. When he was gone,

the passengers burst into spontaneous applause for the little old woman. "I know it isn't much," she said, "but he is the sixth Nazi I've brought down today."

Like this little woman, some privileged people in the world are beginning to take high-visibility action against poverty, aids, climate change and other worldwide issues! Is the privileged part of the world finally beginning to wake up? There is so much devastation and misery suffered by so many! Can you imagine what would happen if all people on earth ~ who believe in God ~ would put their deeds where their voices currently are?

I believe that this is exactly how we should understand and read the message of Jesus Christ. You and I should first seek God's Kingdom and God's Righteousness before all other good things will come our way. This is where God's Word in Scripture becomes more than a vague hope for a "beautiful isle of somewhere" that so many Christians with folded hands, isolated from the realities of our times are singing about! Is it not a misreading of God's will in Scripture when we believe that mortals will someday be flown away in order to be with God rather than that God will be amongst mortals, as the author of the book of Revelation promises?

The suffering, persecuted and tortured Christians of the first centuries receive the message that they must not give up the good fight. They must not give in to the terrible persecution of the Roman Emperors. They must be faithful in battle and stand against darkness, misery, and pain, until the day of victory! Only then, God's home will be amongst mortals. Only then, tears will disappear and pain and suffering shall be no more. The Bible says. "Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children!" It tells about a changed world – a new world – where tears, bloodshed, and misery shall be no more!

"The world hardly has any tears left to weep!" Masses are fleeing the scenes of devastation - into hunger and cold and desolate nothingness - crushed by grief. Hunger, illness, poverty and homelessness have reached unimaginable proportions.

I read a story about little Emily, aged six, a victim of incest. Her father abused her and her ten-year-old sister Tracy in the bedroom while their mother cooked dinner. Emily clings to a doll that plays the tune, "It's a Small World, It's a Small World, it's a Small, Small World After all."

I read a story about little Antwan, the ten year old boy who was caught after dealers, who ran away, stuffed drugs in his socks. The arresting officers went to the shack where Antwan lived and saw a torn poster on a wall of a young boy crying. A caption at the bottom of the poster reads like this, "He will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. All of that has gone forever." The poster shows a picture of the New Jerusalem promised in Revelation 21. We now understand that it is actually a picture a picture of how God desires this world to be. A better world than the one we have produced so far. A world where God's will and ways are law! That will be a haven without bitter tears, where death, sorrow, crying, or pain shall no longer surround them.

That can happen if you and I get involved! God's people should be God's hands, God's feet, and God's messengers. Time has come to put our deeds where we say our faith is.

How do you understand this vision of Revelation? For some it translates into looking the other way until death mercifully freezes their tears.

Not every Christian has this level of concern. Some unknown author described many of us like this, "I was hungry and you discussed my hunger. **Thank you.** I was imprisoned and you prayed for my release. **Thank you.** I was naked and you discussed my appearance. **Thank you.** I was sick and you knelt and thanked God for your health. **Thank you.** I was homeless and you preached to me of the shelter of the love of God. **Thank you!** I was lonely and you prayed for me. **Thank you.** You seem so holy, so close to God, **but I'm still very hungry, and lonely, and naked and homeless and imprisoned and cold and without Christ in my heart."**

If tears are to be wiped from their eyes, it will be because God's faithful people across the world got busy. We are his ambassadors. We are those entrusted with carrying on the ministry began by Jesus Christ so long ago. "At the end of life we will not be remembered by how many diplomas we have received - how much money we have made - how many great things we have done." The memories we leave behind will be, "I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was naked and you clothed me, I was homeless and you took me in."

They are hungry, not only for bread, but also for love. They are naked, not only for the need of clothing, but because of the lack of human respect and dignity. They are homeless, not only for the need for a room of bricks, but homeless because of rejection. This is the Christ of 2007 in distressing disguise

**Maybe,** someday, serious followers of Jesus will reach out to people like Antwan and Emily. **Maybe,** someday, the prophecy God's home will indeed be with mortals, not only somewhere in a far distant place, but also on the streets of downtown Cocoa Beach, or wherever you live and I live. **O God, let it be, let it be!**

**AMEN**

