

# Ascension 1, 2020

## A Bridge Over Troubled Water

Revelation 21:1

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Metaphor and allegory are forms of communication whereby only those who have attained a necessary level of understanding can find meaning. Hidden, yet exposed, a deeper knowledge can be transmitted to the faithful of heart being led by the Holy Spirit. The book of The Revelation of St. John is a prophetic writing full of Metaphor and allegory and remains controversial to this very day. But that should not stop us from searching its depths to the degree we are given vision to understand. And so I have chosen one small verse from our readings today that we may find the true bridge over the troubled waters of this life.

*“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.”*

The sea tells the story of man's relationship with God. The sea becomes symbolic of a turbulent world and the unsettled lives of mankind. The sea can be seen as representative of the sins of the world crashing down, eroding the moral boundaries of humanity. And allegorically the sea can also be seen as a tool of chastisement. In Ezekiel 26 it is the deep sea that symbolizes God's judgment on Edom where the great waters will cover sinners and drag them to the pit. And Isaiah tells us *“the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up refuse and mud”* (Isaiah 57:20). And the sea was used in God's judgment of mankind in Genesis when the Earth was all but destroyed except for 8 souls who found favor with God and remained safe inside the ark; the ark which is symbolic of Jesus Christ. Prophetically this too is an allegory, an allegory of salvation found in Jesus Christ as we navigate the turbulent seas of life. And again in the Exodus from Egypt, God's chosen walked through the Red Sea on DRY ground while the disobedient were consumed to their watery graves by a crashing sea. For any of you who have been on the ocean you know that it is a scary experience when you look into the deep and feel the immense power it holds in wait...in wait for its chance to act. Like a boat on the ocean we

too are surrounded by the great force of sin that has the ability to consume us if we do not remain in the safety of the ship. The sea can take life without regard and it beats on the dry ground without mercy... But, is it the sea we should fear? Not if we truly understand the power of our Lord.

*"Do you not fear Me?" declares the LORD, in Jeremiah chapter 5, 'Do you not tremble in My presence? For I have placed the sand (the dry ground) as a boundary for the sea, an eternal decree, so it cannot cross over it. Though the waves toss, yet they cannot prevail; Though they roar, yet they cannot cross over it'"* (Jeremiah 5:22). Sin holds no power over Christ nor those protected in the body of Christ! We should be shaking in our shoes not because of the sea, but out of respect for the One who is able to control and contain the sea. *"He caused the storm to be still, so that the waves of the sea were hushed"* (Psalm 107:29). He *"divided the sea before them, so they passed through the midst of the sea on dry ground; and their pursuers He hurled into the depths, like a stone into raging waters"* (Nehemiah 9:11). And on a boat, in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus said to his disciples, *"Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm"* (Matthew 8:26). Jesus is the dry ground that leads us through the troubled waters of sin; Jesus is the ark that carries us above the turbulence as we wait for better days and calmer seas. Jesus is the bridge that leads us to the New Heaven and the New Earth after the old things have passed away.

*"And there was no more sea."* From this perspective we see, that John's vision in Revelation, does not concern itself with water, but with sin. In a new heaven and a new earth sin will not have a place, there will no longer be a basis for sin and therefore no longer a requirement for chastisement. *"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"* (Rev. 21:4). And we will be left with a new heaven and a new earth symbolic of the new Church that will rise from the dust of the earth in perfect unity with Christ. As new creatures in Christ we will experience the completeness of our transformations into truly holy children. As we ascend, the new Jerusalem descends as we meet our creator in the skies where spirit will unite with spirit in perfect harmony.

Sin is dried up and we are a new creation in Christ, for as Christ has Ascended so then shall we. Sin will no longer be a variable and our relationship with Christ will be made complete. It is in His ascension that we find hope in our own bodily resurrections. *“But God, (St. Paul writes to the Ephesians) who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins (the sea), hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together (our ascension, the rapture of the church), and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* (Ephesians 2:4-6).

Like a bridge over troubled waters, our Lord lays down his life for his friends that where he is so shall we be. Jesus Christ is in control and keeps at bay the sea of sin that overcomes the rest of the world. Although we are in turbulent times, we are safe in the Ark of God who is Jesus Christ, the door being sealed by the blood of the Lamb. And so...fail not in the continuance of your prayers...they provide safe passage through these stormy seas. Fail not in works of goodwill...for your edification of Christ will provide others with direction through the slippery currents of life. And refuse not the Table of our Lord...were you will gain the grace of God to battle the storms of life.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.