

**Sermon - 11/31/21**  
**Ps 24; Is 25:6-9; Rev 21:1-6a; Jn 11:32-44**  
**All Saints Sunday – Loosed from Death!**

Our Scriptures promise us a huge, worldwide, fabulous party. There is a parade into the City of God – Heaven coming to earth. Through the gates of Zion comes the procession with trumpet fanfare, marching bands, singers, banners and the King of Glory – the Lord Jesus. Can't wait to throw those paper streamers that spread a colorful ribbon. And we'll have confetti and flower petals fluttering in the air – and balloons – all colors of balloons.

The Bible says we'll be seated at a feast set for all peoples – on the mountain of God. What are we celebrating? The Prophet Isaiah says all tears will be wiped away, all disgrace and shame will be removed from God's people. At this moment, the shroud of death simply vaporizes. Abundant, joyous, eternal Life begins as all things are fulfilled. God, through Jesus Christ, will live among God's people forever.

Those who are living this life at the moment of Christ's return will not enter death. They will be transformed in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor 15:52 KJV). We will see Jesus as He truly is, and we will be like Him. This is New Life – in a glorious body having no infirmity, no lameness or pain or flaw. Great promises from the Word of God!

Psalm 24 was written for the Sabbath procession into the temple (10<sup>th</sup> c BC). The temple mount is uphill from the rest of the city. This psalm takes us back to the time when church leadership and the congregation made their way up the steep streets to the gates of the temple. In a high church setting, even today we process with the symbols of the faith and choirs and other signs of devotion to God.

Verses one and two tell us that the God we exalt and worship is the Creator God. All things have been made by God, and all things honor God. Even before the temple was built, there was the great congregation of God's creatures that acknowledge His power.

Remember, to come near to God is to be changed from our natural, fallen state. Verses 3-5 of Ps 24, describe the working of God in us:

- 1) Those who are washed – cleansed – with hearts made pure by the glory of the Creator – only these may enter.
- 2) Also, those true to God alone – having integrity and honesty and humility – these are the character traits of the ones who may enter the presence of the Almighty. Again, the work of God in us, not our own effort at being good.
- 3) We do not prepare ourselves to commune with God (v 5). It is God the Holy Spirit – by the blood of Christ's sacrifice – who blesses and vindicates us – rescuing and unbinding us from the sin that so easily entraps us in this life.

Jesus said, as His dear friend emerged from the tomb, still wrapped in the shroud, “Unbind him and let him go.” (Jn 11:44)

The Gospel of John shows us a picture of what will occur billions of times over on the day the kingdom of God is fulfilled. Lazarus died. Jesus wept to find him already buried. So, Jesus went to the grave site and told the people to roll the stone away. Then He shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” Lazarus rose from being dead four days. The difference between the raising of Lazarus and the raising of the dead on the last day is that Jesus' friend was restored to the life into which he was born in the flesh. When Jesus returns, all His faithful ones will be raised to glorious eternal life – never to face death again. We will be loosed – liberated – unbound from the cold grip of death when we rise up to meet the Lord Jesus.

The passage from the Book of Revelation was written by John of Patmos. He was sending word to those under terrible persecution. The Roman Emperor Domitian was a megalomaniac. He believed he was a god. He was insane. He slaughtered Christians left and right. John, himself a political prisoner, smuggled words of encouragement to Jesus-followers around the empire.

The purpose of apocalyptic writing is to strengthen believers by revealing the things to come. John shares his vision of

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what was, what is and what will be. He gave people then, and he gives us now a God's eye view of the cosmos. We have in Revelation a divine perspective on our own troubles and trials.

John says:

*I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."*

*And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true." And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. (Rev 21:3-6 NLT)"*

At the Feast of All Saints 2021, we are unbound and set free from the bonds of sin and death. Take inspiration from these glorious saints we have celebrated this morning – not from the symbols of All Hallow's Eve. Not from the dark of the tomb – but from the light of the very face of our dear Savior, "See, I am making all things new!" Amen.