

Revelation 21:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes (καὶ ἔξαλείψει ὁ θεὸς πᾶν δάκρυον)—The verb exaleipsei means to "wipe out, erase completely," the same word used for blotting out sin (Acts 3:19, Col 2:14). God Himself performs this most tender act, echoing Isaiah 25:8. This is not mere comfort but complete obliteration of sorrow's cause.

There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither...any more pain—A fourfold negation dismantling the curse of Genesis 3. Thanatos (death), penthos (mourning/grief), krauge (crying out in distress), and ponos (pain/toil) are permanently abolished. The repeated ouketi ("no more, no longer") emphasizes finality. What Adam's sin introduced, the Second Adam's victory eradicates forever.

For the former things are passed away (ὅτι τὰ πρῶτα ἀπῆλθαν)—Perfect tense: they "have gone away and remain gone." This is the eternal state, not the millennial kingdom. Paul's "old things passed away, all things become new" (2 Cor 5:17) finds ultimate fulfillment here. The new creation eclipses the first creation as fully as resurrection bodies surpass mortal flesh.

Historical Context

John wrote from exile on Patmos (circa AD 95) to seven churches enduring persecution under Domitian. His first readers faced imprisonment, economic ruin, and martyrdom for refusing emperor worship. This vision of the new Jerusalem descending (21:2) directly counters Roman imperial propaganda—Caesar's "eternal city" versus God's eternal city, Caesar's false peace versus true shalom.

The imagery echoes Isaiah's new creation prophecies (Isa 65:17-19, 25:8) and Ezekiel's temple vision (Ezek 40-48), but radically transforms them. No temple exists (21:22), for God and the Lamb are the temple. The prophets spoke of restoration; John sees complete re-creation. To readers suffering "death, sorrow, crying, pain," this vision was not escapist fantasy but bedrock hope: present suffering is temporary, God's victory certain.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the image of God personally wiping away tears reveal His character differently than simply "ending suffering"?
2. Which of the four abolished realities (death, sorrow, crying, pain) do you most long to see vanquished, and how does this hope sustain present endurance?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἔξαλείψει ὁ Θεὸς πᾶν δάκρυον ἀπὸ τῶν
And shall wipe away G3588 God all tears from G3588
G2532 G1813 G2316 G3956 G1144 G575 G3588

όφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν καὶ ὁ θάνατος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι
eyes their And G3588 death no shall there be any more
G3788 G846 G2532 G2288 G3756 G2071 G2089

οὔτε πένθος οὔτε κραυγὴ οὔτε πόνος οὐκ ἔσται
neither sorrow neither crying neither pain no shall there be
G3777 G3997 G3777 G2906 G3777 G4192 G3756 G2071

ἔτι ὅτι τὰ πρῶτα ἀπῆλθον
any more for G3588 the former things are passed away
G2089 G3754 G4413 G565

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 25:8 (References God): He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

Revelation 7:17 (References God): For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

1 Corinthians 15:26 (Parallel theme): The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Isaiah 60:20 (Parallel theme): Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

Isaiah 35:10 (Parallel theme): And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Isaiah 51:11 (Parallel theme): Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

1 John 2:17 (References God): And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Jeremiah 31:13 (Parallel theme): Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.

Matthew 24:35 (Parallel theme): Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Isaiah 30:19 (Parallel theme): For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

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