Nov. 6, 2016
Lesson 10
Everything is Brand New
Text: Revelation 21: 1-8

Today’s scripture lesson comes from one of the most famous passages of scripture that we hear in times of mourning and distress to comfort others. Whether at funerals or All Saints’ Day services, this text is used to remind all people that God promises a resurrection.

The background of Revelation comes an unknown prophet John of Patmos who presents a series of striking visions, prophecy, and communication of divine intentions. The text is believed to be written in second half of the first century as there are several mentions of the Emperor Nero, one of Rome’s most notorious leaders. While we may not know the certain year or time, we know that there was always tension in the ancient world when it came to matters of religion. During this time, local Christians found themselves in a time where imperial persecution was real and there was always the threat of the Christian church not making it in the world.

As such, John seeks to comfort and remind the early church that they are not alone in the fears and troubles that lie before them. Even in turmoil and trepidation, their God will not abandon them. They need to hear that God is with them and that Jesus has not left them to perish.

In chapter 21 of Revelation, we read that God’s home is not some distant place, but is with the people who follow God. Like the promises made by the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel in the Old Testament to God’s people, we hear of a new Jerusalem where there is no more pain or mourning. God will make all things new and will give life to all those that call upon God’s name. There will be an inheritance for those who cry out to God as they will be nourished. Those who harm others and continue to live lives without foresight to what comes next will not be as fortunate.

In a nutshell, the message conveys hope to people who are going through things and need a reminder that God will nurture the people and give them new life even when all hope seems lost.

Application

We need to hear John’s word today just as the early church needed to hear it two thousand years ago. Today the church will celebrate All Saints’ Day, a day in the life of the Christian church where we observe those who have died in the past year. We call these people “saints,” those who sought to follow our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and now rest from all their labors. Some of those who died may have lived long live and came to that point where they died in peace, content and ready to go be with our Lord. Others may have been less peaceful or serene. Some of the saints may have died as the result of a battle with cancer, a tragic accident, or victims of violence. Today we remember all of those lives, both their joys and struggles. We remember their stories and the faith that they have passed on to those of us still living today.

We are also reminded that God has made us new beings; each day is an opportunity to be renewed and to remember that we are given a fresh start. May we be reminded that the Lord is still working us on us so that we be may be God’s saints.