**“New Things”**

Acts 11:1-18

Revelation 21:1-7

John 16:12-22

 Easter 5, May 14/15, 2022

Jesus told His disciples: “A little while, and you will see Me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I am going to the Father.”

**He is risen!** He **is risen, indeed! Alleluia!**

**Future New Things – Ascension Text**

“’What do you **mean by** “a little while”? We do not know what He is talking about.’ Jesus knew what they wanted to ask Him, so He said to them, ‘Is **this** what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, ‘A little while and you will not see Me, and again a little while and you will see me’? Truly, truly, I say to you, **you will** weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. **You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy**. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also **you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice**, and **no one will take your joy from you**.”

What an amazing **Ascension** text (of Jesus’ **ascent**, **returning to** Heaven to reign upon the throne beside His Father, “since” (as He said) “He **is going to the Father**”. We’re, though, two weeks from that remembrance, so it seems a little early to hear it other as than a **preview** … and so get that **preview of it**.

It is, indeed, an Ascension text: for that little while after that the disciples won’t be seeing Jesus, Him **out of sight for the time of their earthly lives**, yet then again they will see Him in Heaven when their earthly work is done, physically then reunited in a resurrection foreshadowed by His.

And we sang of that future in “**Jerusalem** the Golden” with “milk and honey blest, of peace and rest in that **PLACE**” as Revelation describes it, and **so that believers can hope in it**. The hymn reminds us “What joys await us there”, with “bliss beyond compare and the radiancy of glory”.

But that “**little while**” waiting for it has now been 2,000 years … and, so far, all of the first disciples’ lifetimes and our own so far. A friend of my family’s just this week passed to “Jerusalem the Golden” **beyond that “little while”** after having experienced 80 years in this world with challenges like strokes and therapy and the tragic and mournful burying of family members (a grand-child even). But Jesus said about our earthly lifetimes: “You **will** weep and lament. You will be sorrowful. Yet there will come a time when your sorrow will turn into joy”. And, for Mr. Costner, the ”little while” that Jesus talked about in John 16 got endured by him (as it must by all of us) until the end of it, “no one anymore (ever) taking joy from us.

For us, “Come Lord Jesus” is a daily (and maybe 3 times a day) prayer, so we are reminded to be interested in that “Jerusalem” which is ahead of us coming, so “smelling some rosy hints of that” while here, but too-often, sometimes, fooled into thinking those **Good-ish** things **ARE heaven** when **dim hints are all they are in our roller-coaster days** (some very sorrowful or painful and, sometimes, begging the Lord to bring all of it to a **quick end**, making every**thing new**) …

**New Testament New Things – Death Then Resurrection Text**

… but our Gospel reading for today is not **just** an Ascension text. The Lord does not here **just** speak of the New Things of the future, when He returns for us or we pass from this domain to the much better one. “Jerusalem the Golden” isn’t just (in other words), a future place of residence but an existing one (“hint” and beyond that) since Jesus Himself passed through death back into life, dying so that we can have His “life, and it abundantly” and even before it’s “fully completed” or “perfected” or “obvious” …

… because John, chapter 16, comes **before** his chapters 19 and 20 of Jesus passion, he speaks of Jesus not seen for a little while / then seen before He became crucified, died, was buried then rose on the third day. The “little while” He identified was (of an equal **wait / WAIT and weight / weight**) the time, from His death, through the time His body laid in a tomb. See, an anticipation and hope of **Easter awaited disciples, and joy fulfilled “hearts that rejoiced”) … with that lasting, really, forever as an Easter / resurrection SEASON with no end … even after the Ascension of the Lord**.

Acts points that out. Peter and brothers that he took with him saw that hope and joy and life **spreading upon people beyond who everyone thought it wouldn’t be effective**. To **Gentiles** (like you and I are) **Jerusalem became golden**, not perfectly but **perfect** (as in **eternal**) to people beyond, just, **initial disciples and Jews and some inner circle: “to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to** **salvation**” and “**salvation**” has been exactly what constitutes the Golden Jerusalem we sung about from in our Revelation 21 hymn (the Gold Jerusalem being “the **promise of salvation**” in the fact and, actually, logistics of Paradise and the Heavenly Kingdom).

See, “**SALVATION**” is the **New Thing** from “Jerusalem the Golden”. “He who was seated on the throne said this (as John’s seeing it in the Revelation to pass onto us), ‘Behold, I am making all things new. **Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true. It is done**” (as in “**It is finished!**”) “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty **I give from the spring of the water of life without payment**” (**now as well as in the future and forever**). “The one who conquers” (after the One who conquered / Jesus) “will have this heritage” and that “Conquerer” was Jesus Christ beating Hell and death through by dying on the cross / sacrificing His own **sufficient blood** in place of our own **insufficient bloodshed**. He, then, got raised from the dead, and “**I will be His God**”, the Father says, “and **those in My Son” will be my sons or daughter**.

He (Jesus) **is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!** “**SALVATION** unto sons and daughters of God has come”. Which is never a **small thing … or old thing** … but a **New One through the death and resurrection of Jesus**.

Mr. Costner (my family’s friend) had 80 years to **rejoice in that**, and then **SALVATION** became **obvious** to him this week. My guess is that he **had all of that same joy hinted at and hinted at so much that he knew that he had it** all or most of his 80 years (I’d only known him for half of that or so), but the half of that or so that I know of him I know that he was **reminded of that joy and possession** during Church services, **hinted at it and at least cognizant that he had it** in suppers around the Lord’s altar (**fed that joy and SALVATION**), and **cherished it** (knowing that the grandson he’d had to bury was baptized also into Christ so **he’d get to see him again** **(and, actually, now is)**. And his wife he’ll see again, and kids and other grandkids also baptized into Jesus’ death and resurrection and **believing in that work being for them**. **They too will see him again**. Jerusalem **is Golden** (and, for him, now **obviously is**) yet **always** **has been** **since Christ’s passion**. ….

“Jerusalem’s Golden **promise of SALVATION” is ours**. The **gift of it is our “heritage”**. With **that kept tightly in mind**, hear Jesus promise, as well, that “**no one will take your joy from you**”. “Restore unto me” we pray “the **joy of Your SALVATION**, Lord, and uphold me (and us all) with Your free Spirit”.

**Happy still and forever Easter!** In +Jesus’ name. Amen.