

Perspective Digest

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The Land of Never Again

Jackie Ordelheide Smith

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The Land of Never Again

A Meditative Revelation

Recently I reread a text that is a continual source of reflection for me: “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*” (Rev. 21:1, KJV).

Sea, in prophetic language means “peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages” (see Revelation 17:15). I won’t argue with the theologians on that! But if we use that interpretation here, then it would mean no more people, multitudes, nations, or languages in the New Earth, a concept at odds with other “revelations.”

To interpret this phrase literally, to say that there would be no major body of water in the New Earth, would also be a mistake, since the Bible speaks about the river of life in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1); and

four rivers flowed from the Garden of Eden: their destination, the Mediterranean Sea.

John’s Sea Prison

When John wrote the Book of Revelation, he was exiled on the isle of Patmos, a penal colony used by the Romans. The island, in the Aegean Sea, is approximately 10 miles long and six miles across. John had been banished to Patmos because he refused to worship the Roman emperor, Caesar Domitian.

**Jackie Ordelheide Smith is Coordinator of Global Mission Pioneers for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. “The Land of Never Again” is adapted from an editorial she wrote for the Adventist Review.*

He writes back to his fellow Christians, many of whom were also suffering persecution and separation from families, exhorting them to stand firm. He paints a word picture of the final showdown between God and Satan and rejoices that the evil one knows that he has only a "short time" (Rev. 12:12).

As John looks longingly across the Aegean, the sea barrier of his island prison, he records the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, a "land that is fairer than day." A land free from encumbrances. No more obstacles, no more hard times, and—no more sea! No more separation!

Your Sea Prison

What is the sea in your life right now? What is the one thing whose absence would make your life more heavenly?

For the editor, a rewrite of "no more sea" might go to press as "And there were no more deadlines." For the physician, it might read, "And there were no more deaths." For the

farmer, "No more pests, no more hurricanes, no more floods." For all of us: "No more broken marriages, birth defects, sudden infant death syndrome. No more AIDS, cancer, famine, or heart disease. No more skinned knees, cruel jokes, or chicken pox. No more fleas, mosquito bites, or lost puppies. No more painful memories. No more sorrowful good-byes." No more. Never again!

"They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the Lord" (Isa. 65:25, NIV). "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years. . . . No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant, and others eat" (verses 20-22, NIV). "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind" (vs. 17, NIV).

No more sea! No, never again! □



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