

[Revelation 21:1-7](#)

I once worked with an Anglican rector who believed there would be no sea in heaven. Not much fun for anyone who enjoyed playing with a bucket and spade and wearing swimming trunks or a swimming costume!

His argument was based on the first verse of our reading, which includes the words, 'there was no longer any sea.' I disagreed with him, pointing out that Revelation uses a lot of picture language, and that the sea was something that terrified the ancients. So to say there would no longer be any sea was a way of saying that all our fears would be removed in the life of the age to come.

Unfortunately, my argument didn't work, it just came up against intransigence. 'If the Bible says there isn't any sea in heaven, then there isn't any sea,' he said.

But even if I disagreed with him about that – and you may wonder why I'm starting an All Souls service address with this line of thought – there is definitely one form of water that will be abolished in God's new creation when it comes.

Verse 4:

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

No more tears. All wiped away. An end to crying.

No more tears. It's a universal aspiration. Think of the song 'No More Tears (Enough Is Enough)' by Donna Summer and Barbra Streisand. It's about the end of a relationship that started promisingly but descended into the man causing the woman misery.

No more tears. Even Ozzy Osbourne made an album with that title. It was the first recording he made sober.

We long for the day when there will be no more tears. Sometimes in this life our grief and pain is so huge and so draining that, in the words of Alison Moyet, we are 'All cried out.'

My late aunt had a physiological problem with her tear ducts, and she couldn't cry. But we long for the day when the tears don't flow because we don't need to cry anymore.

How we long for that on an occasion like today when we remember those we love dearly but who have been separated from us by death. Yes, we also learn to smile at happy memories. But we still weep.

No more tears.

Jesus says, that day is coming. When he makes all things new (verse 5), even the heavens and the earth (verse 1), he will make us new with resurrection bodies just like his. No longer will we be subject to decay and death. We shall have immortal bodies.

And we're waiting for that day.

However, it already feels like a long wait. For all we know, it may be much longer yet. But it is coming.

And that's why we light candles today for our loved ones. Small chinks of light in the darkness. For our hope is there, even in the darkest of times. At times it may seem to flicker and be at risk of being snuffed out, but it is real. It is real because of Jesus' resurrection and his promises, which he always keeps.

As we come forward and put our lit taper on these tea lights, see it as a sign of hope. Light in the darkness. For all who entrust their lives to Jesus, light indestructible is coming.