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The Abiding Presence of God in the New Year *A Commentary by Jason Curry*



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The language used and imagery described by John on the island of Patmos helps to make the twenty first chapter of the book of Revelation one of the most beautiful and powerful passages of holy writ that has ever been inspired by God. After more than a decade of theological training, I will admit that I have much to learn about this book. However, I will also admit that I am convicted about the unmistakable presence of God within this book, as well as the influence of God in the lives of those who have claimed God as their own. Yes, this book speaks of a time in the future, and it has captivated people for more than two-thousand years because it describes a new beginning for those who have kept the faith. In the first verse of that chapter John writes: "And I saw a new heaven and a new

earth: for the first heaven in the first earth were passed away; and there was no more by sea." In the fourth verse of that same chapter, he writes: "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 anymore pain: for the former things are passed away." The older I get, the more I believe that the significance of this book should not be limited to talk about trials and tribulations which surround the second coming of Christ. For me, the significance of this book concerns a new and great beginning with God because we have kept the faith throughout the life that God has given us.

January marks the beginning of another year. 2011 is a year that we have never seen before, and it is a

year that we will never see again. To be sure, there will be challenges within the forthcoming year. Many of these challenges are sure to be financial in nature and global in scope. But, the writings of John, who was banished to an island because of his love for Christ, continue remain helpful to us. For example, his writings remind us that God has promised to be with us even amidst an uncertain tomorrow. God will continue to be an ever-present help in a time of trouble. God will continue to be shelter in the midst of a storm. In 2011, God will continue to make a way out of no way. We may not know the future, but we know who holds the future. We give thanks for God's abiding presence. God is still alpha and omega, both the beginning and the end.