

REVELATION 22

I. Background: This chapter brings us to the final scenes of John's God-given revelation and leaves us with a brief but tantalizing peek into eternity. Nothing of God's plan to redeem man and the earth has been unfulfilled: God has dealt with the rebellion of man and angels, established David's throne forever as Jesus reigns King of kings and Lord of lords; He has His saints in glory with Him and Creation has been renewed.

Before John is deposited back on the island of Patmos, the angel impresses upon John the lateness of the hour and the urgency of getting the prophetic message out. Here John is given final instructions of what to write and a warning given regarding those who would add to or delete from its powerful message.

Let's read those last recorded words of Jesus; God's "last will and testament" to man, if you will; His final prophetic message to stress the critical hour in which we live.....

II. TEXT

vv. 1-5: Continues the description of the New Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven (21:2); chronologically after the 2nd coming, Mill. Kingdom, Great White Throne Judgment, and creation of new earth and heavens. Up to now the description of our eternal dwelling place has been external, minimal and almost architectural in its description. Like viewing a celestial jewelry store -- limited appeal to me! Soft grass? Babbling brooks? Trees? **Food to eat?** Now our first look into the interior of the New Jerusalem however limited in detail.

v. 1: A river had been in Eden (Gen. 2:10); branched into 4 rivers: "Pee-shone", Ghee-khone', Tigris and Euphrates. Thus the Garden of Eden was located somewhere in the ME, somewhere around the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (modern day eastern Turkey/ NW Iraq). Jesus offered the woman at the well "living water" (John 4:10).

- **"Flowing from the throne [singular!] of God and of the Lamb"** – we will see God! When Jesus returns to the earth, His feet will touch the Mt. of Olives, splitting it in two (Zec. 14:4) and water will flow east and west from His throne in Jerusalem's Temple (Zec. 14:8):
- Zec. 14:4-8 *"On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. . . . On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in summer and in winter."*
- Ezek. 47:3ff Water of life: angel bids the prophet into ankle-deep water, then knee-deep, then waist-deep, then he's swimming – it's WAY over his head! (NIVSB p. 1294).

Dear saint, the LORD won't force us to go any deeper in Him than we choose – but He will take us as deep as we wish!

v. 2a: The "**great city**" (1,400 mi.³) will have a great central street (the most popular name for a street in America is "Main St."); "follow the yellow brick road?" (ala "The Wizard of Oz") NO – follow the River to the throne!

v. 2b: "Tree of life" ("tree" is singular; it apparently straddles the river) – first seen in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9). They say the Bible is the story of THREE TREES:

- There had been two trees in the Garden of Eden: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had been eaten of; the way to the tree had been prohibited because of sin (Gen. 3:24). If Adam and Eve had been allowed to eat of the Tree of Life after they sinned, they would have been forever eternally confirmed in their sinful state; that's why an angel with a flaming sword was stationed at the entrance gate! Now the Tree of Life is freely accessible! Rev. 2:7 The church at Ephesus was promised, *"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the **tree of life**, which is in the Paradise of God."*
- The third Tree in Scripture is the Tree upon which Jesus was crucified The Tree of Calvary (Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Gal. 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24). That is where our spiritual journey MUST begin . . .

v. 2c: “Nations” ? Why do nations need **“healing”** from its leaves since death has been destroyed (20:14)? “Healing” is *therapeia* (ther-ap-i'-ah): where we get our words *therapy* and *therapeutic*; it doesn't mean healing from sickness, but rather a maintaining of health...forever! In fact, the original language also implies exhilaration and invigoration! Do you ever get tired of being *tired*? I DO! What a grand day it will be when we're in Heaven, shooting the rapids of the River of Life, eating of the fruit of the Spirit, revived eternally by the leaves of the Tree of Life!!!

vv. 3-5 At the present time, the **“earth”** is under a curse. God said to Adam, *“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return”* (Gen. 3:17-18).

“Man” is also under a curse. God said, *“By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return”* (Gen. 3:19). Earning your bread by the sweat of your brow is also a part of the curse. It's the result of man's sin.

v. 3b: Who are **“His servants?”** The Greek verb is a linear idea: “shall keep on serving.” His servants are those that shall see His face (v. 4); those that have His Name written on their foreheads (v. 4; “name” is mentioned 27 x's in Revelation; that's 9x3 or 3x3x3; the number of GOD) – that's us and the Tribulation saints (Rev. 14:1). That's why the greatest in the kingdom of God shall be the servant of all!

v. 4: *“Blessed are the pure in heart, Jesus said, for they shall see God”* (Mt. 5:8); they shall see his face (1 Cor. 13:12; 1 John 3:2) **“and his name shall be in their forehead”** (as in Rev. 2:17; 3:12; 7:3; 14:1).

v. 5a: **“Night”** was when Judas betrayed Jesus (John 13:30); metaphorically “night” is when trial, temptation and sin abound; when evil reigns. Night was God's way of making us rest...

v. 5b: “Direct lighting” now! The *Shekinah* (Hebrew for the visible manifestation of God's “glory”) of the Lord will illuminate the city!

- Like the glory of the LORD that filled Solomon's Temple at its dedication (1 Kings 8:11; 2 Chron. 5:14; 7:1-3) and
- When Jesus was transfigured on the Mount (Mt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2)! Jesus was described as *the “light of the world”* (John 1:4-9) and said, *“I Am the Light of the world”* (John 8:12; 9:5).

v. 5c: **“And they will reign forever and ever”** – over who? The angels? Other worlds and/or their populations? The “nations” of Rev. 22:2?

v. 6a: There is nothing more sure than the prophecies of God's Word. We have *“a more sure word of prophecy”* (2 Peter 1:19).

This is a repeat of the promised blessing in Rev 1:3 for those who keep the sayings of this book.

v. 6b: **“Servants”** (Greek is the plural of *doulos*). Sounds like us, the Church. **“Soon”** mentioned 4 x's in this chapter alone!

v. 7, 12, 20: You ask, “What does Jesus mean, **‘I come quickly’**”? John wrote that almost 2000 years ago, didn't he?” Yes. And **2 Peter 3:8-14** says, *“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*

Hosea 6:2-3 "After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth."

v. 8: John had tried this back in Rev. 19:10; that's a "no-no." Angels are humble; they remember what happened to Lucifer when he wanted to be worshiped (cf. Luke 4:5-7)! Man always wants to exalt the messengers (same as 19:10); worship the instrument, instead of God! The first commandment was to worship no one but God:

Exodus 20:1-5a "And God spoke all these words: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before me. "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God..."

v. 9: "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1:14).

v. 10 Daniel was told to seal up the prophecies given to him (Dan. 12:4,9). Revelation is NOT A SEALED BOOK!!! It is for NOW, during the Church Age – **"the time is near!"** Hallelujah! The book of Revelation, unlike the book of Daniel, is a book for the people living NOW! It's SIMPLE:

- Ch. 1 the Risen and glorified Lord Jesus;
- Ch. 2-3 Church History;
- Chs. 4-5 The Rapture of the Church;
- Chs 6-19 The Great Tribulation;
- Ch. 20 The 1,000 year reign of Christ;
- Chs. 21-22 The new heaven and new earth!

If you just read the book of Revelation and accept what it says at face value, not adding to it or taking away from it, you will have no problems. It is only when you try to "spiritualize" or "allegorize" everything in it and give everything some kind of a weird twist that it becomes a difficult book to understand.

v. 11: Continue to **"do right"** and **"be holy"** – that is, separated FROM this world and separated TO God. "Jesus is Lord and I'm going to live for Him!"

vv. 12-16: **"Reward"** - cf. 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor 5:10. Salvation a free gift; "saved by grace through faith." But differing degrees of rewards was taught by Jesus (Mt. 16:27), Paul (Rom. 2:6) and John (Rev. 18:6; 20:12f; 22:12). Why do you do your good works? For the approval of men? Jesus said the self-righteous have their reward (Mt. 6)

"For what he has done" – In John 6:28-29 Jesus was asked, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." That's what God requires: that we BELIEVE! The thief on the Cross beside Jesus put it in 2 simple words: "Lord, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." Peter put it in just 3 words, "Lord, save me!" John in just ONE: "Lord!"

Rom. 10:9 "...if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

v. 13: **"Alpha/Omega"** = first and last letters of the Greek alphabet; signifies completeness! Applied to God in 1:8; 21:6, and here alone to Christ, crowning proof in this book of Christ's deity.

"The bright, the morning star" -- The Davidic King is called a star in Num. 24:17; Luke 1:78. This "day-star" (phôsphoros) is interpreted as Christ (2 Pe 1:19). In Rev. 2:28 the phrase "the morning star" occurs in Christ's words, which is here interpreted. Christ is the Light that was coming into the world (John 1:9; 8:12).

v. 14: The final **"blessed"** in Scripture; the term appears 7 x's in Revelation (of course)! Jesus said, "I am the Gate" (John 10:7).

v. 15: “**Outside**” i.e., outside the kingdom of God. “**Dogs**” (Phil. 3:2) are religious legalists; “**those who practice magic arts**” (*pharmakois*) – drug-takers. Satan is the father of lying (John 8:44) and Satan's home is a congenial place for those who love and practice lying.

v. 16a: “**You**” is plural: “ya’ll.”

v. 16b: “**Root**” promised in Isa. 11:1,10; Rom. 1:3 – cf. notes on Rev. 5:5. Jesus is both the Root (inasmuch as He precedes David as the Second Member of the Eternal Trinity) and Offspring of David in that He comes from David in His human lineage and genealogy.

“**Bright morning star**” – cf. Num. 24:17ff Balaam’s 4th oracle; fulfilled initially in king David; ultimately in Jesus! This “day-star” (*phōsphoros*) is interpreted as Christ (2Pe 1:19).

v. 17a: “**Come!**” (Greek is *erchomai*: present middle imperative). “Come” in Scripture is always an invitation:

- Isa. 1:18 “**Come** now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool”.
- Isa. 55:1 “**Come**, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”
- Mt. 11:28 “**Come** to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
- Mark 10:14 “Jesus . . . said to them, “Let the little children **come** to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”
- John 1:39 “Jesus...asked [the disciples following Him], “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi”, “where are you staying?” “**Come**,” he replied, “and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.”

v. 17c: Note the open-ended “whoever” – salvation is open to all, not just the “elect” (per Calvinists).

v. 18: If you are tempted to add to this book, you might want to review “the plagues that are written” in chs. 6-19. This promise (threat?) speaks of the book of Revelation in particular, but is a good rule to apply to all Scripture, since it is the Word of God! Don’t add to (like the Mormons do with their ‘required’ Book of Mormon and the J.W.’s with their *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines) or detract from (like many are wont to do today; deleting ‘unpleasant portions’ of Scripture or refusing to teach on it; e.g., “sin” “repent” “Hell” “crucify the old nature”; “die to self”, “pick up your cross daily, deny yourself, and follow Me...”). Cf. Old Testament commands in:

- Deut. 4:2 Moses had said to the people, “Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.”
- Deut. 12:32 “See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.”

v. 20: “**I am coming soon**” - scoffers doubt it (2 Peter 3, One day = a thousand years and visa versa). How quickly is He coming for you? Hosea 6:2 For 2 days Israel shall be as dead; then revived (2,000 years? Then reborn?)

v. 21: “His grace is sufficient” (2 Cor. 12:9) until He comes! “**Grace**” is mentioned some 131 x’s in the NIV Old and New Testament; most occur in the NT: 123 x’s ! God is so gracious (Exodus 34:6; Num. 6:25; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 67:1; Prov. 22:11; Isa. 30:18).

III. SUMMARY / APPLICATION / RESPONSE

2 Peter 3: 10-14 “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you

look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.”
