

WEEK 26: CHAPTER 22

REVELATION 22:1-5 ~ THE FINAL TOUCHES OF PERFECTION

Revelation 22:1-5 “Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, [2] in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. [3] There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; [4] they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. [5] And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.”

- In **verse 1**, we have the river of the *water of life*.
- There are two other rivers prophesied in the OT, but this final river in Revelation is not the one. These two prophecies are for the Millennial Kingdom, but certainly point towards this final river in Revelation.
 - **Ezekiel 47:1** “Then he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, water was flowing from under the threshold of the house toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under, from the right side of the house, from south of the altar.”
 - **Zechariah 14:8** “And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter.”
- Whether it is a literal river or spiritual river, the ones inhabiting the city are going to have the fullness of life from it.
- “...this future river which is in the new Jerusalem, which speaks of the power, purity, and eternal life manifest in the heavenly city. This river corresponds to the present believer’s experience of the outflow of the Spirit and eternal life. The throne is indicated as that of both God and the Lamb; this confirms that Christ is still on the throne in the eternal state, though the throne has a different character than during His mediatorial rule over the earth.” (Walvoord)
- In **verse 2**, there is the tree of life.
- This is perhaps like or related to the tree of life which Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat from in the Garden of Eden.
 - **Genesis 2:9** “Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”
 - **Genesis 3:22, 24** “Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat,

and live forever” ... [24] So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.”

- Just as the tree was in the middle of the Garden of Eden, so this tree of life will be at the center of the New Jerusalem and not be guarded.
- The tree bears 12 different fruits every month.
 - Month = time...some have taken this as a way for John to relate to the readers, others have taken this as a way to show that there will be some sort of time in heaven.
 - This fruit will likely be eaten, not to sustain life but rather simply for enjoyment.
- The leaves are “for the healing of the nations.”
- If there is no more sorrow, pain, or suffering in heaven...why should healing be necessary?
- The word used for healing is *therapeia* in the Greek language...where English gets its word *therapeutic*.
- It is not healing that John is talking about (in verse 3 there is no more curse), rather it should be understood as “health-giving.”
- It is interesting that this word, at its root meaning, can be translated *serving or ministering*.
 - Jesus said in **Luke 12:42** “Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants [*therapeia*], to give them their rations at the proper time?”
- While we may not know exactly what John is saying, he does have in mind that the nations are going to be serving in heaven and the leaves of the tree most likely enhance the quality of life and service.
- From **verses 3-5**:
- There is no more curse for the people or upon the land.
 - All of creation is experiencing perfection like it has never experienced but always longed for.
- God the Father and Jesus the Son are on the throne.
- There are bondservants who are serving God and Jesus who are on the throne.
 - “What greater privilege can saints have in the eternal state than being servants of the Lord? Who would want to be perpetuated in eternal idleness and uselessness? This is a picture of blessedness in service rather than of arduous toil.” (Walvoord)
 - It appears this is a reversal of the curse from **Genesis 3:17** “Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.’”
- There is sweet fellowship between God, Jesus and their servants. As part of the blessing of heaven, we will be able to see the face of God and have His name on our foreheads.

- Saints in heaven will have an unrestricted view of the glory of God. We will belong to Him for all time and reign with Him forever and ever.

CHAPTER 22:6-21 ~ THE FINAL WORDS TO MANKIND

22:6-7 ~ The Certainty of Christ's Return

Revelation 22:6-7 “And he said to me, ‘These words are faithful and true’; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place. [7] ‘And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.’”

- All that John has seen, heard and recorded is true and in both content and accuracy.
- “What the inspired apostle has written is not mystical; the Apocalypse is not a record of his bizarre dreams or the result of an overactive imagination. It is not an allegory from which readers can extract hidden meanings of their own concoction. It is an accurate description of events and persons yet to come.”¹
- This promise from Jesus (and behold, I come quickly) is recorded three times in the final chapter (vv. 7, 12, 20) and should be taken seriously.
- The church has been eagerly waiting for Christ to come for them.
- **1 Corinthians 1:7** “...so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ...”
- **Philippians 3:20** “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...”
- **James 5:9** “Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.”
- Why should we read Revelation? To know what the words of the book say so that we can follow them and be blessed.
- “It is a general command to long for Christ's return and our eternal fellowship with Him. It calls on believers to desire heaven, to desire holiness, to desire to see Christ vindicated and triumphant over His enemies, to desire the end of the curse, and to desire the glories of Christ's earthly kingdom and the new heaven and the new earth.”²
- In **verse 7** is contained the 6th of the 7 beatitudes that are found throughout the book of Revelation.
- These 7 beatitudes are all structured around the Greek word *makarios*, which means “blessed” or “happy.”

¹ John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22*, 292

² Ibid., 295.

- The 7 beatitudes are a literary pattern in the book and provides the reader now (and in the future) a strong anchor of hope and points of encouragement.
 - **Revelation 1:3** “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”
 - **Revelation 14:13** “And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, ‘Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.’”
 - **Revelation 16:15** (“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.”)
 - **Revelation 19:9** “Then he said to me, ‘Write, Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God.’”
 - **Revelation 20:6** “Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”
 - **Revelation 22:7** “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”
 - **Revelation 22:14** “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.”
- “How ironical it is that this final book of the Bible, more neglected and misinterpreted than any other book, should carry these special notes of promised blessing to those who properly regard its promises and divine revelation. Basically, the reason is not that this book contains more or varied revelations but rather that this book above all others honors and exalts the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Walvoord)

22:8-9 ~ The Response of John to the Message

Revelation 22:8-9 “I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. [9] But he said to me, ‘Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.’”

- “John’s response is natural, but he is rebuked by the angel who informs him, as he did on previous occasions, that he is John’s fellow servant who should be classified with the prophets, John’s brethren, and with others who keep the sayings of the book.” (Walvoord)
- He is given the simple command... “Worship God.”

22:10-11 ~ The Command from the Fellow Servant

Revelation 22:10-11 “And he said to me, ‘Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. [11] Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.’”

- John is told not seal up what he has written because there is a blessing to the ones who follow what he has written in the book. This prophecy was intended to be revealed to mankind, not hidden or sealed up.
- Again, “the time is near.”
- “The indeterminate period assigned to the church is the last dispensation before end-time events and, in John’s day as in ours, the end is always impending because of the imminent return of Christ at the rapture with the ordered sequence of events to follow.” (Walvoord)
- Now, **verse 11** can seem strange. “In effect, he advocates status quo for both the wicked and the righteous.” (Walvoord)
- But, this is given right after John is told that those who heed the prophecy will be blessed and that time is coming to a rapid end.
- So in the context, John is saying a warning to those who desire to keep their sinful ways and lifestyle.
- “The point here is not to condone what is evil, but to point out that if people do not heed this prophecy, they will continue in their wickedness. On the other hand, those who do heed the prophecy will continue to do what is right.” (Walvoord)
- What John is pointing out is that on earth, as people respond to the truth, they are in fact, fixing their own eternal destination.
 - In the context of this statement, I would hold that John is speaking specifically about how people respond to what is contained in the book of Revelation.
- “Preaching Revelation draws the line. Its truths will melt the hearts of the repentant and harden the hearts of the unrepentant. Those same truths thus become either an instrument of salvation, or an instrument of damnation.”³

³ MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22*, 298.

22:12-16 ~ The Blessings and Warnings from Jesus

Revelation 22:12-16 “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. [13] I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. [14] Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. [15] Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. [16] I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

- In **verses 12-14** are the blessings that Jesus has for those who have submitted to Him and followed after Him.
- Again, Jesus is coming quickly, and He is bringing rewards for those who have followed Him.
 - Our works do not have any bearing on our salvation, but Jesus is keeping track of all that we do after we are born again.
 - Before Christ, our righteous works are no good before Him.
 - **Isaiah 64:6** “For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”
 - After Christ, we read in **Ephesians 2:10** “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”
 - I believe that Jesus brings our rewards from the works that God prepared beforehand.
 - The reality that Jesus can return at any given moment should motivate His people to live for Him, seek out the good works that God has for them, and glorify Him with our whole life.
- In **verse 15** is the curse which awaits those who have given themselves over to the lusts of the world and not followed after Jesus.
 - As was stated before, it is not for those who have committed these sins, but those who have lived their life in habitual sin.
 - This is the 3rd time such people have been mentioned as part of the warning.
 - Revelation 21:8 and 21:27.
 - God wants people to know where they stand with Him before it’s too late.
- Jesus, in **verse 16** gives His own personal stamp of approval of all that has taken place in the book.
 - “Thus the very God of all inspiration, and of all inspired men, reiterates and affirms the highest authority for all that is herein written. Either, then, this Book is nothing but a base and blasphemous

forgery, unworthy of the slightest respect of men, and specially unworthy of a place in the Sacred Canon; or it is one of the most directly inspired and authoritative writings ever given.”⁴

- This is the first time that the word *church* has been used since Revelation 2-3.
- Jesus describes Himself as the “root and descendant of David.”
 - “That phrase sums up the biblical teaching on Christ’s two natures; only the God-man can be both David’s ancestor and his descendant. In his deity, Christ is David’s root...in His humanity, He is David’s descendant.”⁵
- He also says that He is the “bright morning star.”
 - “This is the brightest star announcing the arrival of the day. When Jesus comes, He will be the brightest star who will shatter the darkness of man’s night and herald the dawn of God’s glorious day.”⁶

22:17-21 ~ The Gracious Invitation and Grave Warning

- **Revelation 22:17-21** “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. [18] I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; [19] and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. [20] He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. [21] The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.”
- As the book closes, reading **verse 17**, God’s unlimited offer of grace is on full display. The Spirit and the bride (church) make a final appeal to come. The one who hears is to say it, the one who is thirsty is to come, and the one who knows they can’t earn the promise of salvation should come.
- “The extensive warnings of the wrath to come that grace the book of Revelation on every page, as well as the gracious provisions of God for forgiveness and salvation occurring with almost equal frequency, are the grounds for extending this sincere invitation to all. The plaintive plea of the Spirit and the bride concluding the Apocalypse should be the appropriate consummation of the message of the church in every age.”⁷
- In **verses 18-19** Jesus gives His support of the final command.
- “The urgency of the final command is supported by the solemn testimony of Christ Himself in verse 18 concerning the sacred character of the prophecy which has been given.” (Walvoord)

⁴ Joseph A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse*, p. 513.

⁵ MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22*, 298.

⁶ *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Rev 22:16.

⁷ Paige Patterson, *Revelation*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2012), 384.

- Then a warning about adding or taking away from the Scriptures.
- It is important to note that John was not writing a book of the Bible. Meaning that when he wrote Revelation, the final warning in the back did pertain to the book.
 - This was common practice from authors during John's day to prevent copyists from making changes to what an author had written.
- But, since we know the entire Bible is one unified "book" and since Revelation is at the end of the Bible, this principle can be applied to the whole Bible.
- This is also seen in other areas of the Bible so that we know it's not just about one book.
 - **Deuteronomy 4:2** "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."
 - **Proverbs 30:5-6** "Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. [6] Do not add to His words or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar."
- This is why we put such a high importance on knowing what the Bible says and then making sure we interpret it correctly and apply it in our lives.
- While mistakes will be made, man must make every effort to know what God's Word says and not change it to make it more palatable for his day and age.
- Again, **verse 20** is about the imminent return of Christ.
- While we may not know the day or timing of His return, He has certainly told us that He is coming back.
- No one will stand without excuse.
- "As John closes this remarkable book of which he is the human author, he uses the phrase so familiar in Paul's epistles, a benediction that the grace of the Lord will be upon his readers. The expression "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all" is probably rendered more accurately, according to the best manuscripts, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints." Nothing is clearer in the book of Revelation than that God's blessing is on the saints but not on the wicked." (Walvoord)