

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 12/1/04 Wednesday Evening
Revelation 22 "The Final Chapter"
Revision of study first given 6/7/00

Tonight we're going to do something we ought to do often as Christians. We're going to go to a passage we ought to look at often. We're going to read and study *the final chapter* of the Bible!

Do you like to read? What's your favorite chapter in a book? I like the final chapter. In the final chapter everything comes together. In the preceding chapters of a book you become engrossed in the plot and sub-plots. You wonder. But with the final chapter comes closure, a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment.

God took over 1,500 years and dozens of human authors to give us His Word. But because it is *His* Word, there is a unifying theme in the storyline of the Scriptures. The Bible is the story of God forming a people for His glory. The Bible begins with the description of a paradise that was lost (Genesis 1-2) and ends with the prophecy of a paradise restored (Rev 21-22).

In Revelation 21, God allowed John to see a vision of the new heaven and earth. In Revelation 21 John attempted to put into words what he saw. The vision continues in the next chapter.

As we read Revelation 22, listen carefully for things that existed in the garden of Eden. What's mentioned in Revelation 22 that we saw first in Genesis 1-2?

READ Revelation 22.

Things in Revelation 22 first mentioned in Genesis 1-2

- *A river (1-2) -- see Gen 2:10
- *The tree of life (2, 14) -- see Gen 2:9
- *Fruit (2) -- see Gen 1:29 & 2:9
- *God's people will see God face to face (4) -- no specific text in Genesis, but see 3:8 for indication of the intimacy Adam and Eve once enjoyed with God
- *God's servants will serve Him (3) -- see Gen 2:15
- *God's servants will reign (5) -- see Gen 1:28

The Flow of Revelation 22

In the flow of the final chapter we see a picture and then hear a message...

I. We see a picture of what is coming (1-6).

Q: Who gave John the "picture?" The angel (see 21:9). Here's what he showed John...

A. The angel showed John the river of life (1-5).

Psalm 1 uses the scene of a river to illustrate the fruitfulness of the person of God who builds his or her life on God's Word. We've already mentioned the presence of a river in the first world. Notice two things in connection with this river...

1. Notice *what* John saw there (1-2).

- The throne of God (1)

John mentions that the river flows "from" the throne of God. God's throne is the source of this river.

Remember Jesus' claim? See John 4:10.

- The tree of life (2)

Q: What details are we given about the tree here?

Discuss: Why is it significant that we see the tree of life here?

2. Notice *who* John saw there (3-5).

- God and the Lamb (3)

- God's servants (4)

Q: What will God's servants be doing? *Serving God!* Why is that significant? That's what Adam was first created to do.

Q: What else do we learn here about what eternity will be like for God's people?

B. The angel explained the source of his message (6).

Q: What's true of his message? It's "trustworthy and true."

Q: Where did he get his message? From the Lord

Q: What did the angel say about the timing of the future events? "The things that must *soon* take place." Notice the word "soon" in this section (7, 12, 20; translated "shortly" or "quickly" in the KJV), as well as "near" (10, "at hand" in the KJV).

Two thousand years ago the Lord said He was coming *soon*. Why did He tell us that?

II. We hear a message from the One who is coming (7-16).

The message actually comes in the form of a dialogue of sort. It includes six parts.

A. Jesus speaks (7).

1. He gives a promise.

Q: What is it?

2. He proclaims a beatitude.

This is the sixth beatitude in the book. A beatitude is a statement which identifies who has God's approval and blessing. Who does, according to this verse?

B. The angel speaks (8-11).

Q: What did John do and why in verse 8?

Q: What did the angel tell him?

1. "Don't worship me (8-9)!"

2. "Don't seal up the message (10-11)!"

Why not?

C. Jesus speaks again (12-16).

This message is threefold...

1. He repeats His promise (12-13).
2. He proclaims another beatitude (14-15).

Q: Who will have access to the tree of life?

Discuss: What strikes you about the list of those who are "outside" in verse 15?

3. He identifies Himself (16).

D. John speaks (17-19).

1. He tells us what to do while we wait (17).

Notice we ought to be saying, "Come!" We ought to be looking forward to His return, and anticipating it.

2. He tells us what *not* to do while we wait (18-19).

This is a severe warning. What does it mean to "take words away" from this book of prophecy?

E. Jesus speaks one final time (20).

Q: What did He say?

F. John concludes (20b-21).

Notice the final words of the Bible. John has an eye to the future--"Come, Lord Jesus." And John knows we have what it takes for the present--"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people."

What is grace? Here we're told that *God's people* need grace. We needed grace to be saved. We also need grace to live as saved people. Why is it significant that the Bible ends on this note of grace?