



gracefellowship

Revelation
May 19, 2019
Jesus: The Coming King

:: Revelation 22:1-5

Recap:

1. This is a book about Jesus! Yes, it tells us about future things, but it is primarily meant to enhance our love and passion for the King we are waiting for.
2. Letters to the churches showing us how to live victoriously in this life as we await the return of Jesus
3. Those who follow Jesus have a special role to play in this life and in the life to come.
4. The judgments of God- 3 sets of 7 judgments (seals, trumpets, bowls)
5. The battle for mankind is continually taking place, but in the end, Satan will attempt to set up his own kingdom to rival God, giving power to the anti-christ and the false prophet to deceive the nations.
6. Jesus will return for His Church, destroying His enemies in the process and will set up his eternal Kingdom on earth.
7. We will reign forever with Jesus and enjoy the glory of God in His new created order.

The Bible is masterfully laid out and conceived. To think that there are 66 books and as many as 35 contributors to the Bible, we might believe that it would be disjointed and have problematic themes throughout. Instead, what we find is a cohesive story from beginning to end full of the same themes. The Old Testament begins and ends with a curse.

- Genesis: The curse as a result of sin
- Malachi: The threat of a curse if the hearts of parents and children are not turned toward one another.

The Old Testament begins hopefully, but because of our rebellion against God, quickly turns and then ends badly. What begins in paradise ends in the devastating consequences of our sin under the power of the curse.

The New Testament opens with Jesus arriving to save us from the curse of sin and ends with Jesus returning to deliver on His promises!

In the final chapter of Revelation we are going to see the return of the themes

from Genesis 1 and 2.

With those things in mind, let's take a look together at Revelation 22.

:: Revelation 22:1-5

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.

4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever.

If I had been the person putting chapters and verses in the biblical text I would have included these verses with Chapter 21. This is a continuation of what John saw in the last chapter and describes again the river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

John is borrowing language from Ezekiel 47 where the prophet was also shown a vision of heaven and a river coming from God's throne. Ezekiel was told out of the throne of God flowed a river that eventually ended up in the Dead Sea and because of the life giving power of the water, the Dead Sea was made fresh and sea life sprung up in it! This is a way of communicating that if the sea of life can bring life out of the Dead Sea, it can bring eternal life to the people of God!

In the new creation the Tree of Life reappears!

John also sees on each side of the river the tree of life! In Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve sinned against God they were kicked out of the Garden of Eden and an angel was placed at the entrance to keep them from having access to the tree of life so they would not live eternally in their sinful state. Part of the curse was death. But now, as Jesus returns and brings His Kingdom to earth, the tree of life once again appears, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

- Again, John is borrowing from Ezekiel's writings in Ezekiel 47. The prophet tells us that there are a great number of trees on either side of the river coming from God's throne. Rather than reading the tree of life as being singular, we should imagine many trees.

The Tree of Life gives fruit continually- there are no seasons!

Without sun or moon in the city, there is no way to gauge seasons, so the trees perpetually offer their life giving fruit. This is another way to express the eternal nature of our life in God's Kingdom. The fruit of this Tree is life giving because it is nourished by the River of Life from God's throne.

The leaves of the Tree are for the healing of the nations.

This does not mean we will get sick in heaven and will need to come to this tree for physical restoration. Healing here doesn't imply disease; John is making the point that only healing exists in the new creation! The healing relates most importantly to the fact that there is no longer any curse! The plague of mankind because of sin no longer exists! In heaven there is no curse- therefore there is no sickness or death or pain or mourning!

In the new creation we will serve God perfectly and see Him face to face.

3b The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.

4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

As servants of God, we will serve Him perfectly and for the first time since the fall of man the will of God and the will of man will line up as one! There will be work to do in the Kingdom of God, and we will find pleasure and peace in our work. All the work of the Kingdom will be worship! Last week we talked about the idea that the new city of Jerusalem is laid out like a cube, which reminds us of the Holy of Holies, and now we all have access to the presence of Jesus; we are all priests in His eternal Kingdom.

The great promise of this passage is that we will see God face to face! John describes vividly so many things in the book of Revelation, but he never attempts to describe God. There will be no need to describe Him because we will see Him and be with Him!

- Heaven is not a place we go to as much as it is a place where God is. Being in the presence of God is heaven! A friend of mine asked me one time if I would want all the glories and perfection of heaven if God weren't going to be there. No! Because you can't have heaven without God! We want to be with God! We want to be with Jesus!
- And the good news is, that time is just around the corner! Look at verse 7

:: Revelation 22:7-13

7 "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll."

8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me.

9 But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!"

10 Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near.

11 Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy.”

12 “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

Jesus speaks and announces that He is coming soon! John becomes so overwhelmed after seeing all these prophecies and then hearing that Jesus is returning soon that he turns falls down to worship the angel who has been showing him these visions. The angel tells him not to do that, because he is a fellow servant- we should worship God alone!

Then John is told not to seal up anything he has been shown because the time is near and the people of God need to know these things. In the book of Daniel God showed Daniel events revolving around the end times, but Daniel was told to seal up the prophecy because it wasn't meant to be revealed yet. Here, John is given the green light to let the Church know what is coming and that Jesus is soon going to return.

The statements of Jesus returning soon are not meant to predict His return, but to call us to live in obedience as we watch and wait for Jesus.

The imminence of the return of Jesus to establish His Kingdom should cause each of us to live actively following Him and daily drawing nearer to Him in relationship. John tells us not only is Jesus coming soon but when He comes His reward is coming with Him and each person will be paid according to what they have done.

- There will be gifts in God's Kingdom for those who live in obedience to Him.
 - o Crowns
 - o Rule and dominion
 - o Authority over cities

The final blessing Jesus pronounces in the books is in line with the call for His people to live in obedience to Him:

:: Revelation 22:14-16

14 “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

15 Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

16 “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

Washing our robes is a symbolic way of saying we have remained pure from the curse of sin and placed our future in God’s hands rather than sullyng our clothes in the kingdom of the anti-christ. All who follow Jesus have access to His Kingdom, while the “dogs” are outside. Calling someone a dog is derogatory. These are people who have rejected the Kingdom of God and are left out of the Kingdom. This isn’t a statement of their physical location outside the city, but of their spiritual exclusion that has kept them isolated from God, and therefore outside of His presence.

That’s a fate we don’t wish on anyone. So John makes one final evangelistic plea as we conclude our study of the book:

:: Revelation 22:17

17 The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

This call to “come” is meant not for Jesus to return, but for those outside a saving relationship through faith in Jesus to join His family.

The Spirit of God and the people of God call non-believers to “come.” Likewise, those who hear the invitation and accept call others to “come.” John adds his own voice to the mix and says the one who is thirsty should come and take the free gift of the water of life.

Don’t keep trying to find fulfillment and satisfaction from things that will leave you empty and constantly thirsting for more. Come to the source of eternal life and give your life to Him as Savior and Lord.

Finally, Jesus speaks a final word: “Yes, I am coming soon!”

John says, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

This should be the prayer of all people who belong to Jesus- come quickly, Jesus! I find myself praying this constantly.

- Every New Year’s eve my prayer is the same: Come quickly, Lord Jesus!
- Every time I lose someone to death: Come quickly, Lord Jesus!
- Every time I experience pain and grief: Come quickly, Lord Jesus!
- Every time I see a beautiful sunset and remember it pales in comparison to the glory of Jesus as the light of the world: Come quickly, Lord Jesus!
- Thinking of my son going to middle school this fall: Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

How often do you find yourself longing for and praying for the return of Jesus?

When He comes it will be glorious! But until Jesus comes, John ends the book by saying, “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.”

As we strive to live obediently in faith, patiently waiting for the return of Jesus, grace is needed every day of the journey.