

What follows represents the unedited lecture notes of Pastor Merritt's teaching of The Book of the Revelation. Please feel free to reproduce all or part for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The teachings of the Revelation represent a compilation of things learned from such men as Col. R. B. Thieme, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Charles Ryrie, Arno C. Gabelein, John Walvoord, Hal Lindsay, Dwight Pentecost, along with an exegesis of the Greek and Hebrew texts.

1. Last week we began the last chapter of Revelation chapter-twenty-two verse one. To prepare for verse two let's use 1Jo 1:9.

KJV

Rev 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

NIV

Rev 22:2 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.

Introduction

1. Revelation 22:2 has caused some difficulty to several expositors. The verse declares that the tree of life straddles the river of the waters of life.

2. The street mentioned is clearly the main street of the city; given the syntax, i.e., the feminine gender (Greek **Autes**) translated "it" in the KJV; we have a reference to the city mentioned in Rev 21:23.

Rev 21:23 The eternal New Jerusalem does not need the light of the sun or the moon for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ gave it its light; the Lamb of God was its perpetual lamp.

3. The visual picture presented is of the river of life flowing through the middle of the city, and the tree is larger enough to span the river, so that the river is in the midst of the street and the tree spans both sides of the river.

4. It would appear that the pure water of the river of life is not a broad body but a clear stream narrow enough to allow for what is described.

5. Swete writes in his book *The Apocalypse of Saint John*, “The picture presented is that of a water of the river of life flowing through the broad street which intersects the city, a row of trees on each side.

6. Many have asked the natural question, “Why should healing be necessary in eternity to come.

7. The word for healing in verse 22 is a translation from the Greek word **Therapeuo**, from which the English word therapeutic is derived, it is almost a direct transliteration from the Greek. Rather than specifically meaning “healing,” it should be understood as “health giving,” as the word in its root meaning has the idea of serving of ministering.

8. The leaves of the tree promote the enjoyment of life in the New Jerusalem, and are not for correcting ills which do not exist. This would seem to be demanded by the fact that there is no more curse as indicated in verse three.

Rev 22:3 No longer will there be a curse on planet earth. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and all of the citizens of the New Jerusalem will serve him.

9. Erich Sauer interprets the healing of the nations as referring to full deliverance from the ills of life which characterized their condition before eternity began and not a reference to illness.

10. The intimation of this passage is that while it is not necessary for believers in the eternal state to sustain life in any way by physical means, they can enjoy that which the tree provides.

11. Now let’s take a look at an expanded translation of Rev 22:2.

Expanded Translation

Rev 22:2 The river ran down the middle of the city's main street. On each side of the river grew the trees of life, that bore twelve delicious varieties of food, one for each month. The leaves of the trees when eaten provided a renewed appreciation for life and service in the New Jerusalem.

12. Now let’s see what we can learn from verse three and four.

KJV

Rev 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

Rev 22:4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

NIV

Rev 22:3 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.

Rev 22:4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

1. To emphasize the blessedness of the new situation, verse 3 states that there is no more curse. The curse has not only plagued us but all of nature suffers from that curse.

Rom 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Rom 8:19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

Rom 8:20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope

Rom 8:21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

Rom 8:22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

2. In the millennial scene, there is a lifting of the curse upon the earth, but not a total deliverance from the world's travail brought in by sin, for in the millennium, it is still possible for a "sinner" to be "accursed" (Isa 65:20) with resulting physical death.

Isa 65:20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

2.1 Keep in mind there will also be capital punishment for certain ones in the Millennium before they can seriously and adversely affect perfect environment.

Isa 11:4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

Isa 11:5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

Isa 11:6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

Isa 11:7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

Isa 11:8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

3. In the new heaven and the new earth there will be no curse and no possibility or need for divine punishment. This broad statement is justified by the fact that the Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in the New Jerusalem, and His servant will give themselves to serve Him unceasingly.

4. Walvoord writes: “who would want to be perpetuated in eternal idleness and uselessness? Even if the New Jerusalem were viewed here in its millennial state, those who are in the New Jerusalem are either resurrected or translated saints; and if it is fitting for them to be servants it is also fitting that they can be servants in eternity. This is a picture of blessedness in service rather than arduous toil.”

5. Now let's see how verses three and four look by way of expanded translation.

Expanded Translation

Rev 22:3 There will no longer be a curse on planet earth. The throne of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ will be evident in the city, and all of the citizens of the New Jerusalem will serve Them.

Rev 22:4 No longer will we have to transform the mind to know Him, each of us will see Him, His presence will pervade the entire city.

6. Now let's see what we can learn from verse five.

KJV

Rev 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

NIV

Rev 22:5 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 for ever and ever.

1. Once again in verse five John repeats the fact that there will be no night in our city and no need of a candle, that is, a lamp, nor the light of the sun, for God is the light of the city.

2. Those who are His servants have the blessed privilege of reigning forever. The eternal character of our reign as servants is another indication that this is the eternal state.

3. There is no contradiction, therefore, in calling us servants and at the same time recognizing us as those who will reign with Him.

4. So much for a description of our ultimate eternal home. Now let me provide an expanded translation of Rev 22:5.

Expanded Translation

Rev 22:5 In the New Jerusalem I could see there was no more need for light bodies. The citizens of the city will not need that kind of light, for the Lord Himself will provide abundant light. And we as believers will reign there forever.

THE CERTAINTY OF THE BLESSED HOPE

KJV

Rev 22:6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

Rev 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

NIV

Rev 22:6 The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."

Rev 22:7 "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

1. In reinforcement of the wonderful revelation just given, the angel tells John, "These sayings are faithful and true."

2. The comment of A. T. Pierson as cited with variations by Smith, in summary of the wonderful blessing of verses 3-5, brings out clearly the marvelous and comprehensive character of the divine provision for us as saints:

"And there shall be no more curse of the perfect restoration. But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it perfect administration. His servants shall serve him in perfect subordination ... And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord giveth them light, perfect illumination. And they shall reign forever and ever"

3. Wilbur M. Smith summarizes the state of blessedness in the holy city in these words.

"All the glorious purposes of God, ordained from the foundation of the world, have now been attained. The rebellion of angels and mankind is all and finally subdued, as the King of kings assumes his rightful sovereignty. Absolute and unchangeable holiness characterizes all within the universal Kingdom of God. The redeemed, made so by the blood of the Lamb, are in resurrection and eternal glory. Life is everywhere - and death will never again invade. The earth and heavens both are renewed.

Light, beauty, holiness, joy, the presence of God, the worship of God, service to Christ, likeness to Christ - all are now abiding realities. The vocabulary of man, made for life here, is incapable of truly and adequately depicting what God has prepared for those that love Him."

4. The angel goes on to remind John, in words similar to Rev 1:1, that the God of the holy prophets has sent His angel to show His servants through the Apostle John the events which will shortly occur.

Rev 22:6 The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."

Rev 22:7 "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

5. The thought seems to be that when the action comes, it will be sudden. It constitutes a message of warning that those who believe should be alert.

6. From the standpoint of the divine program, the events of the age were impending even at the time John wrote this message though some of them were thousands of years future. In verse 7 the wonderful hope of the coming of Christ, especially as it relates to the believer in the present age, is stated:

"Behold, I come quickly." Here John seems to be referring to Christ's coming for the church rather than His second coming to the earth, though both are in the larger context in view."

7. The blessing of God is especially pronounced on the one who keeps the sayings of the prophecies of this book, a special promise repeated from Revelation 1:3, where also the note of immanency is emphasized in the expression "for the time is at hand."

Rev 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

8. Walvoord again writes: "This verse contains the sixth of the seven beatitudes found in the book of The Revelation. 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."

9. 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.

10. Now let's see how verses six and seven appear in expanded translation.

Expanded Translation

Rev 22:6 The seventh angel said to me, "The words and pictures provided to you are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the angels and the prophets, sent his angel Gabriel to show you those things which will one day come to pass. Once the eschatological events begin, the events will occur in rapid fire succession;

Rev 22:7 therefore be alert, for events will occur quickly! Blessed are all of those who perpetuate the words found in this Book of The Revelation."

11. Now let's see what we can learn from verses eight and nine.

KJV

Rev 22:8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

Rev 22:9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

NIV

Rev 22:8 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.

Rev 22:9 But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"

Principles

1. The tremendous impression given to John by these transcending revelations finally overwhelms him, and he records, "And I John saw these things, and heard them."

1.1 John writes, "I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things."

2. 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. (compare Rev 19:10)

Rev 19:10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

3. The angel's command is direct and to the point: "Worship God" (aorist imperative); in all acts of worship, worship God only.

4. Angels are there to serve as are we; they are said to be ministering spirits.

Heb 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

5. Before we move to the angel's command to prophecy, I want to give you an expanded translation of Rev 22:8-9:

Expanded Translation

Rev 22:8 I, John, was overwhelmed that I had been selected to hear and see these amazing things. I was so amazed that I fell down to worship the seventh angel who had been showing me the things to come.

Rev 22:9 I was promptly rebuked, "Do not do that! I, like you, am a ministering spirit to you and your brothers, the prophets, and of all who keep the words of this book, You, like them, must Worship God!"

6. Now let's see what we can learn from verses 10 and 11.

KJV

Rev 22:10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

Rev 22:11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

NIV

Rev 22:10 Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near.

Rev 22:11 Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy."

Principles

1. John has earlier been told there is blessing for the one who keeps the sayings of the prophecies given. (Rev 22:7) Accordingly, John is commanded not to seal the sayings of the prophecies but rather to proclaim them.

2. The justification for this urgent command is that the time is at hand. The word for "seal" (Greek **Sphragises**) is in the aorist subjunctive with the Greek adverb **Me**, the negative, meaning "do not seal" or "do not begin to seal" the prophecy.

3. John is especially commanded not to seal-up the sayings of the prophecy of this book because the time (from the Greek word **Kairos**, or proper season), is at hand from the Greek **Engus**, meaning near.

4. 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.

5. In view of this, in verse 11 a seemingly strange command is given which has proved to be an enigma to some, namely, that John states, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still."

5.1 Walford explains: "In effect, he advocates a status quo for both the wicked and the righteous. By this I do not think he means men should remain unmoved by the prophecies of this book, but rather that if the prophecies are rejected, there is no other message that will work."

5.2 This is in keeping with what I have repeatedly taught. You can only do so much without violating one's volition. If the warnings of the book are not sufficient, there is no more you or God can say or do! The wicked must continue in their wicked way to be judged by the Lord when He comes.

6. The same rule, however, applies to the righteous. Their reaction to the prophecy, of course, will be different, but the exhortation in their case is to continue in righteousness and holiness.

7. It is an either/or proposition with no neutrality possible. There is a sense also in which present choices fix character; a time is coming when change will be impossible.

8. Present choices will become permanent in character. Before we move to verse twelve I want to give you an expanded translation of verses ten and eleven.

Expanded Translation:

Rev 22:10 The seventh angel then said, "Do not seal up the words of this book. Why? Because the time is in fact near.

Rev 22:11 In fact let the unbeliever who has rejected God's protocol keep on doing wrong; the vile should continue to be vile. But as for the believer positive to the word, they should continue following God's protocol; so, let those who are holy continue to be holy."

9. Now let's see what we can learn from verse twelve where we find the Lord Jesus speaking.

KJV

Rev 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

NIV

Rev 22:12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.

Principles

1. The second announcement alerting the reader concerning the coming of the Lord is found in verse 12 (also compare Rev 22:7) again introduced by the word behold and the same expression, "I come quickly," with the verb in the present tense indicating a futuristic but impending action.

Rev 22:12 "Behold, I am coming soon ..."

2. Added here, but not in verse 7, is the promise that the Lord is bringing His reward when He comes.

3. It is noteworthy that all final judgments relate to works whether they are in connection with Christians who are being rewarded or the unsaved who are being punished.

Rev 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

4. Before we look at Rev 22:13-16, I want to give you an expanded translation of Rev 22:12:

Expanded Translation

Rev 22:12 "Now listen up and pay attention, I am coming soon! I am bringing My rewards with me to be given to those who have produced divine good.

5. Now let's see what we can learn from verses thirteen, fourteen, fifteen and sixteen as the Lord continues His discourse.

KJV

Rev 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Rev 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Rev 22:15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Rev 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

NIV

Rev 22:13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

Rev 22:14 "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.

Rev 22:15 Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

Rev 22:16 "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."

Principles

1. Though the means of earlier communication was the angel, it is Christ speaking here; and as in Rev 22:7 and 12, the first-person pronoun is used.

Rev 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Rev 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

2. Christ again repeats that He is the Alpha and Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) which means the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

3. When the One who exists from all eternity states, "Behold, I come quickly," it means that from the divine point of view, end-time events are impending.

4. The three pairs of titles given in Rev 22:13 all communicate the same truth, Christ is the beginning and source of all things as well as the goal and consummation of all, in a word, the eternal God.

Rev 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

5. Here is the seventh and last beatitude of the book of the Revelation. (For previous beatitudes see Rev 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6 and 22:7.)

6. The final beatitude is obscured by a debate concerning the text, several manuscripts differ from the KJV for they read "that do his commandments" instead of "that wash their robes."

7. "Good authorities can be cited for both readings" writes Walvoord. "Walter Scott much prefers the reading for verse 14 'Blessed are they that wash their robes,' rather than Blessed are they that do his commandments.' Scott observes, 'Every critical scholar of note rejects the reading in our English Bibles ... It is God's gift to all who believe.'"

Joh 5:24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

Joh 6:28 Then said they unto Him, what shall we do that we might work the works of God?

Joh 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He hath sent.

8. In verse sixteen the term "I Jesus" is used. Joseph A. Seiss in his book *The Apocalypse* writes of the phrase "I Jesus":

"Thus, the very God of all inspiration, and of all inspired men, reiterates and affirms the highest authority for all that is herein written."

Rev 22:16 "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."

9. As you can see He calls Himself "the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

10. Christ is also called "the root and offspring of David" in Isa 11:1 and "the bright and morning star" in Num 24:17 and Rev 2:28.

Isa 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

Num 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

11. Christ, as the morning star, heralds the coming day in His role as the One who comes for the church at the rapture.

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