

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
9-12-18

Revelation 22

Eden Restored - Verses 1-5

¹Then 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 ²down 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. ³No 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. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵There 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.

22:1 The water of life is a symbol of eternal life. Jesus used this same image with the Samaritan woman (John 4:7-14). It pictures the fullness of life with God and the eternal blessings that come when we believe in him and allow him to satisfy our spiritual thirst (see 22:17).

22:2 This tree of life is like the tree of life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9). After Adam and Eve sinned, they were forbidden to eat from the tree of life because they could not have eternal life as long as they were under sin's control. But because of the forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus, there will be no evil or sin in this city. We will be able to eat freely from the tree of life when sin's control over us is destroyed and our eternity with God is secure.

22:2 Why would the nations need to be healed if all evil is gone? John is quoting from Ezekiel 47:12, where water flowing from the temple produces trees with healing leaves. He is not implying that there will be illness in the new earth; he is emphasizing that the water of life produces health and strength wherever it goes.

22:3 "No longer will there be any curse" means that nothing accursed will be in God's presence. This fulfills Zechariah's prophecy (see Zechariah 14:11).

John and the Angel- Verses 6-11

⁶The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place." 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.”

22:8-9 The first of the Ten Commandments is “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). Jesus said that the greatest command of Moses’ laws was “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). Here, at the end of the Bible, this truth is reiterated. The angel instructs John to “worship God,” and worship is a major emphasis in Revelation. The first step toward meaningful worship is a desire to know God. If we thirst for him, the Bible promises that he will provide for us and satisfy our needs. Would you like your worship to be completely transformed? Confess any sins that might be hindering your fellowship with God. Then ask God to stir your heart, to instill within you an unquenchable thirst to know him. Meditate upon how God has revealed himself in the Bible, and ask him to reveal himself to you again. When you see God in a new way, worship will be your only fitting response.

22:10-11 The angel tells John what to do after his vision is over. Instead of sealing up what he has written, as Daniel was commanded to do (Daniel 12:4-12), the book is to be left open so that all can read and understand. Daniel’s message was sealed because it was not a message for Daniel’s time. But the book of Revelation was a message for John’s time, and it is relevant today. As Christ’s return gets closer, there is a greater polarization between God’s followers and Satan’s followers. We must read the book of Revelation, hear its message, and be prepared for Christ’s imminent return.

Epilogue: Invitation and Warning - Verses 12-21

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. 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.” 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. ¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. ¹⁹ And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll. ²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. ²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

22:12-14 Those who wash their robes are those who seek to purify themselves from a sinful way of life. They strive daily to remain faithful and ready for Christ's return. This concept is also explained in the second note on 7:14.

22:14 In Eden, Adam and Eve were barred from any access to the tree of life because of their sin (Genesis 3:22-24). In the new earth, God's people will eat from the tree of life because their sins have been removed by Christ's death and resurrection. Those who eat the fruit of this tree will live forever. If Jesus has forgiven your sins, you will have the right to eat from this tree.

22:15 Jesus will exclude from the holy city "everyone who loves and practices falsehood." These are people whose lives have gone so wrong that they resemble Satan, who deceived the whole world (12:9; 13:13-15; 16:14). They are hypocrites, trying to live one way while pretending to believe another. They are like the Nicolaitans, mentioned in 2:15, who were among the believers but compromised their faith in order to also include worship of the Roman emperor. John records Jesus' statement that Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44).

Today we see leaders who twist the truth to serve their purposes. Many people have lost the ability to distinguish what's true from what they wish was true. Dishonest people soon begin to believe the lies they construct around themselves. Then they lose the ability to tell the difference between truth and lies. By believing your own lies, you deceive yourself, you alienate yourself from God, and you lose credibility in all your relationships. In the long run, honesty wins out.

22:16 Jesus is both David's "Root" and "Offspring." As the Creator of all, Jesus existed long before David. As a human, however, he was one of David's direct descendants (see Isaiah 11:1-5; Matthew 1:1-17). As the Messiah, he is the "bright Morning Star," the light of salvation to all.

22:17 Both the Holy Spirit and the bride, the church, extend the invitation to all the world to come to Jesus and experience the joys of salvation in Christ.

22:17 When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, he told her of the living water that he could supply (John 4:10-15). This image is used again as Christ invites anyone to come and drink of the water of life. The gospel is unlimited in scope—all people everywhere may come. Salvation cannot be earned, but God gives it freely. We live in a

world desperately thirsty for living water, and many are dying of thirst. But it's still not too late. Let us invite everyone to come and drink.

22:18-19 This warning is given to those who might purposefully distort the message in this book. Moses gave a similar warning in Deuteronomy 4:1-4. We, too, must handle the Bible with care and great respect so that we do not distort its message, even unintentionally. We should be quick to put its principles into practice in our lives. No human explanation or interpretation of God's Word should be elevated to the same authority as the text itself.

22:20 We don't know the day or the hour, but Jesus is coming soon and unexpectedly. This is good news to those who trust him, but a terrible message for those who have rejected him and stand under judgment. Soon means "at any moment," and we must be ready for him, always prepared for his return. Would Jesus' sudden appearance catch you off guard?

22:21 Revelation closes human history as *Genesis* opened it—in paradise. But there is one distinct difference in Revelation—evil is gone forever. *Genesis* describes Adam and Eve walking and talking with God; Revelation describes people worshiping God face to face. *Genesis* describes a garden with an evil serpent; Revelation describes a perfect city with no evil. The Garden of Eden was destroyed by sin; but paradise is re-created in the new Jerusalem.

The book of Revelation ends with an urgent plea: "Come, Lord Jesus." In a world of problems, persecution, evil, and immorality, Christ calls us to endure in our faith. Our efforts to better our world are important, but their results cannot compare with the transformation that Jesus will bring about when he returns. He alone controls human history, forgives sin, and will re-create the earth and bring lasting peace.

Revelation is, above all, a book of hope. It shows that no matter what happens on earth, God is in control. It promises that evil will not last forever. And it depicts the wonderful reward that is waiting for all those who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.