

Epilogue: The Last Words of the Angel,  
the Seer, and the Savior  
Chapter 22:1-21

The great drama is over and righteousness has prevailed! God is sovereign; His Lordship is universal. The Seven Churches of Asia Minor have been warned and exhorted. These warnings and exhortations need to be heard afresh in our own day. We have seen the performances of *The Seer*, *The Savior*, and *The Saved* in the drama which depicted the struggle between good and evil, truth and falsehood, light and darkness.

We have spanned the years from the tragedy of *Genesis*, chapter 3, *Paradise Lost to Revelation* - chp. 22. *Paradise Regained* (study and compare the biblical themes and imagery used by Dante and Milton).

*Verse 1*

The refreshing waters of eternal life can come from only one source, "out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Man's primitive innocence has been regained at the expense of "the Lamb slain before the foundations of the world." The imagery John employs reveals the rich abundance of our salvation. The symbolism of the garden paradise points to a perfect environment for perfect man (the new man in Christ). Man was banished from his gardenparadise because of his sin (Gen. 3; He has been restored by God in—Christ). Compare this with the city (the great harlot) which was destroyed in chp. 18:21ff. The light, joy, fellowship are gone forever!

*Verse 2*

In God's city there is the tree of life and the river of life. The tree bears fruit each month (abundance). Even the leaves of the trees are for "healing (*therapeian* - is one of the N.T. words for worship. It is also a medical term found in the medical papyrus of the period. Sinful Man is sick. Only God's work through Christ can make man well again!) of the nations."

Note: God's Holiness is Man's Wholeness!

Contemporary man is seeking therapy for his malady. There is more counseling, pyscho-therapy, etc., being done in our age, both in and out of the Church, than ever before in the history of western civilization. Men are trying to find out what life is all about. What is the

significance of our lives? Can we ever *be* what God made us unless we possess the holiness of God? How is *your* spiritual life? Do *you* actually find healing in your worship (the word *therapein* is one of the many N.T. words translated worship) of the living God on the Lord's Day?

The nations of the earth are seeking wholeness through the medium of councils and discussion groups. John says that God alone can provide the means whereby sinful, fallen man can be whole again. Only "eternal life heals the scars of sin and misery."

#### Verse 3

In the city of God nothing is accursed. The assertion of equal sovereign is most clearly declared by the Spirit guided John. "And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it (the garden paradise); and his slaves will serve him (*latreuousin* - originally means to serve for pay. In both O.T. and N.T. the word in its various forms are used with reference to the public worship of God in Christ. (See Acts 26:7; Romans 9:4; Hebrews 9:1,6).

#### Verse 4

God withheld His face from Moses (Exodus 33:20,23). Our Lord said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Paul said, "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord:"----(Hebrews 12:14). He also declared to the congregation at Corinth that - "Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" - (II Cor. 4:6). "For now we see in a mirror darkly; but then face to face:"----(I Cor. 13:12). All of us who strive to serve Christ are anxiously awaiting that hour when we shall see Him face to face. Praise God - for His coming again!

#### Verse 5

"The light that lighteth everyman that cometh into the world" is the sole source of light in the paradise of God. Those who are citizens" will reign unto the ages of the ages." John has mentioned the glorious eternal reign with our Lord Jesus Christ already in 1:6, 3:21, 5:10. We reign with Him because we have been made into children of the King of kings; therefore, we are in the royal lineage.

## SECTION 71

Text 22:6-7

6 And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true: and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. 7 And behold I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.

Initial Questions 22:6-7

1. What must shortly come to pass - vs. 6?
2. Does it make any difference to God whether or not we obey the words of the prophecy - vs. 7?
3. Does "this book" refer to the entire New Testament, The Book of Revelation, or both - vs. 7?

Verse 6

What is the source of the message which John has received while banned on Patmos? Is the message authentic? Is the man who was "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" writing down the *Word of God* or the *Words of a Man*? "The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets" is the ultimate source of John's *Revelation*. God had "sent His angel to show (to show openly or make public) to his slaves the things which must (*dei* - all degrees of necessity) occur quickly" (*tachei* - shortly when time is the emphasis or quickly when suddenness of the action of the verb is involved). The adverb modifies the verb occur, thus it tells us how it is to occur - suddenly).

Verse 7

Listen! "I am coming quickly." Jesus is coming again - thanks be to God! His coming will be certain, sudden, and silent. Will *you* be ready? In this verse John uses the last of the Beatitudes of *The Revelation*. "Blessed is (not in text) the one keeping (the one who constantly keeps). The person who only keeps God's word when he feels like it or on special occasions will be condemned.) the words of the prophecy of this scroll." We must point out that often we hear people quote this verse and apply it to the entire Bible. Note that John is led by God's spirit to say—"the words of the prophecy of this scroll;" therefore, John's warning actually applies only to *The Revelation*.

(Though in principle it applies to all of God's Word). The only way for us to be ready when He comes as a thief in the night is to be "hearers and doers of the Word." We can "constantly keep the words of prophecy of this scroll, only by doing the truth.

## SECTION 72

Text 22:8-9

8 And I John am he that heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. 9 And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book: worship God.

Initial Questions 22:8-9

1. Should not John know that Christians are not supposed to worship angels - vs. 8?
2. Does the angel accept John's worship - vs. 9?
3. What does the angel command that John do - vs. 9?

*Verse 8*

John failed to learn his lesson from the heavenly messenger in 19:10. John attempted to worship an angel and the angel rebuked him. Here again, John "fell to worship before the feet of the angel" who had revealed the holy secrets to him. The following rebuke is in harmony with the general biblical attack on the flourishing angel-worship in Asia Minor.

*Verse 9*

John was emphatically rebuked the second time. John was so emotionally involved as he was trying to write down the last words of the angel's message that he became more enthralled with the messenger than with his good tidings. The angel declared that he was a faithful follower of the Word of God, but that this did not give him any special standing before God. Even angels are creatures and not the creator.

## SECTION 73

Text 22:10-16

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. 11 He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still. 12 Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. 14 Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. 15 Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie.

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

Initial Questions 22:10-16

1. The angel told John that "the time is at hand." "At hand" for what - vs. 10?
2. What is the relationship between being righteous and doing righteousness - vs. 11? (The same for the filthy.)
3. Does this imply the finality of a man's spiritual condition at the coming of Christ?
4. What is the basis of Christ's reward - vs. 12?
5. What do the names given in vs. 13 tell us about the one coming quickly - vs. 12?
6. What is the basis of discrimination for those who would come to "the tree of life" - vs. 14?
7. Will anyone be excluded from the City of God - vs. 15? How does the content of this vs. harmonize with universalism?
8. Does vs. 16 make it very plain that Jesus is not to be identified with the angel messenger?

Verse 10

Daniel (12:4) was told to "shut up the words, and seal the book," but John is commanded seal not (*mē sphragisēs* - the not is the first for emphasis - certainly do not do it. The word seal occurs 18 times in *The Revelation*. It signifies to confirm or to seal up for security) the words of the prophecy of this scroll;

for the time is near" (*eggus* - means close at hand). The prophecy contained in *The Revelation* was (and still is) relevant. It is to be studied. We are to read and hear its message. It is a time for opening up the sealed mysteries of the book, not for sealing them up.

*Verse 11*

This is a clear refutation of the doctrines of purgatory and second chancism. John claims that the state of both the righteous and the unrighteous will be fixed. There will be nothing nor anyone who can modify their state. "The one acting unjustly, let him act unjustly (*adikēsato* - 1st aor. imperative - signify that the condition of the person is categorically sealed) still; and the filthy one, let him act filthily (this is the same form as above and signifies the sealed condition of the filthy one); and the righteous one let him do righteousness still; and holy one let him be made holy still." The force of this verse is crystal clear. This verse is a complete refutation, from the biblical view point, of universalism—the doctrine that everyone will ultimately be saved.

*Verse 12*

The reward bearer is coming! He will "render to each man as his work (collective noun) is" (*estin* - present tense - as his work is when the reward comes).

*Verse 13*

These titles of the reward bearer have been discussed in the *Special Study on The Titles for Christ in The Revelation*.

*Verse 14*

"Blessed are (not in the text) the ones washing (*pluontes* - present participle) their robes, in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) their authority will be over the tree of life, and they enter by the gates into the city." Every Christian has a robe of righteousness. We weave it by the thread of our thoughts, words, and deeds. There is no power in the entire universe that can cleanse a dirty robe, except the foundation of blood which was opened up on Calvary to cleanse the filth of sin from our souls. Its purging power is adequate! Thanks be to God that we have had recourse to the constant cleansing of the blood of the Lamb. Only those who continually come to the cleansing foundation have a right to the tree of life which is within the walled city of God.

*Verse 15*

John says again what he has already stated in 21:3, 27. Will anyone be excluded from the city? Emphatically the answer is Yes. We have a new outcast in this verse that has not been mentioned before - dogs. The dog is an image of the lowest, most defiled object in the East. (The dog in the East is like the frog - hated and despised).

*Verse 16*

Jesus Christ provides the divine attestation of *The Revelation*. He has authorized John to write down the vision and send them to the Churches. Who is the one who gave the divine stamp of approval? He is "the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star." (See the *Special Study on Titles for Christ in The Revelation*). The Messiah - Redeemer has authorized this work be sent to the Churches in the name of the Lord of the Universe.

## SECTION 74

## Text 22:17

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely.

## Initial Questions 22:17

1. How does the Spirit call men - vs. 17?
2. Who is the Bride - vs. 17?
3. How does the Bride call me - vs. 17?
4. Is the individual Christian responsible to invite those outside of Christ to accept Him as Lord - vs. 17?

*Verse 17*

The great invitation is extended—"Come" (*erchon* - the command is sounded). "The Spirit and the Bride" give the

invitation by co-witness. Both, the Holy Spirit and the Church of Jesus Christ bear the same testimony. "And the one hearing (this is singular and means that every single Christian is to issue the invitation) let him say, Come." The personal responsibility of *each Christian* to bear testimony to the Lordship of Christ is here asserted. The contemporary Church is snarled up in the clergy - system. Congregations hire "a minister" to do the work that God gave the entire Church to do (see Ephesians 4:11-16). (Compare Paul and John's metaphors for the Church of Christ. See the brilliant work by L. Cerfaux, *The Church in The Theology of Paul*, Herder and Herder, New York, 1959; Excellent, by Roman Catholic Biblical Theologian). "And the thirsting one let him come. The one wishing (wanting to) let him take the water of life freely."

## SECTION 75

## Text 22:18-19

18 I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: 19 and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book.

## Initial Questions 22:18-19

1. What warning does God give us in vs. 18?
2. What will God do to those who disobey - vs. 18?
3. Does God condemn taking away as well as adding to this word - vs. 19?
4. How severe is God's judgment upon all adders or subtracters of His Word - vs. 19?

## Verse 18

Jesus is still speaking (see vs. 16). "I witness to everyone hearing the words of the prophecy of this scroll, if anyone adds

to these things (*auta* is a neuter plural - to them), God will add upon him the plagues having been written in this scroll:" We must all heed Jesus' warning - do not tamper with the Word of God! God revealed it just as He wanted it. If He would have needed our advice, I am quite certain that He would have asked us. The emphasis in this verse was do not add (*epithē*) to God's revelation.

#### Verse 19

In this verse we read the same warnings being issued to those who would subtract from the Word of God. This is such a serious matter that God imposes a very severe judgment upon the person who takes away (*aphalē*) from the Words." What is judgment? "God will take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city"-----.

Either adding or subtracting from God's Word are explicitly condemned. God expects us to witness to His Word - neither more nor less!

## SECTION 76

### Text 22:20-21

20 He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: Come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen.

### Initial Questions 22:20-21

1. Will the committed Christian be waiting for Christ's return?
2. John expressed his desire for Christ's coming again. How did he show this concern - vs. 20?
3. What does the word grace mean - vs. 21?

### Verse 20

"The one witnessing these things says, yes, I am coming quickly." The phrase "I am coming quickly" is used three times

in this chapter 22:7,12,20. John heard this majestic declaration and responded with a shout of joy - "Amen, Come, Lord Jesus."

### Verse 21

The man who suffered persecution on Patmos rather than to deny his Lord, concludes *The Revelation* which he received "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" with "the grace of the Lord Jesus be (not in text) with all."

We can thank our heavenly Father that He vouched safe these holy visions to *The Seer* who continues to inspire *The Saved* with the thought of the coming again of the cosmic conqueror - *The Savior*, Jesus Christ.

This great N.T. book is not for the curiosity seeker or religious fanatic, but for all those who would continue to the end - for the same shall wear the robe of righteousness and the crown of life. We must guard these with our very life because the righteousness is not our own but His; the crowns we do not merit either.

### Discussion Questions Chapter 22

1. What other section of O.T. Scripture does the imagery of vs. 1-3 describe?
2. What does being "blessed" in vs. 7 imply?
3. Is it ever acceptable with our Lord to worship a creature, even if an angel - vs. 8?
4. How does the angel's command to John differ from God's command to Daniel - vs. 10?
5. Will a lost sinner who has died ever get another opportunity to accept Christ - vs. 11?
6. What is the condition which must be met before we have a right to the tree of life - according to vs. 14?
7. Who sent His angel according to vs. 16?
8. Who issues the great invitation in vs. 17?
9. What will happen to the person (or persons) who add to or take away from God's Word according to vs. 18-19?
10. How does John respond to Christ's declaration in vs. 20?

Note: "Christ in You The Hope of Glory!" (Col. 1:27)

Contemporary man is seeking for a source of hope, but he is more than reluctant to accept the biblical ground of hope - "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Ibsen depicts modern man in most penetrating imagery. He wrote of a man who viewed the crucifixion and had a toothache; he remembered the toothache but forgot about the crucifixion.

Man could not exist long without the grace of hope. What is unique about the Christian's hope? Why should all men turn their hope toward Jesus Christ?

Hope is always our aspirations projecting toward the future. Paul says that—"Now abideth, faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. 13:13).

The Christian's hope does not come from within himself, but is grounded in the work and victory of God in Christ. The Christian's hope is not ultimately grounded in a doctrine, but in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter tells us that God - "begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Peter 1:3). He also admonished us to be in a state of readiness"---to give an answer (*apologia*) to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you,"---(I Peter 3:15).

In order to provide some basic *sermon suggestions on the biblical doctrine of hope*, we shall provide an outline of Wm. Barclay's study listed below in the bibliography. (See pp. 42-46 of that work. Also check the various vocabulary of O.T. and N.T. usage in a concordance).

- I. In what does the Christian hope consist?
  1. Hope of the resurrection (Acts 23:6).
  2. It is the hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:2).
  3. Hope of the new covenant (II Cor. 3:12).
  4. Hope of righteousness (Ga. 5:5).
  5. Hope of salvation (II Cor. 1:10).
  6. Hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2; 3:7).
  7. Hope of the second coming (Titus 2:13; - I John 3:3).
  8. Hope which is laid up in heaven (Col. 1:5).
- II. What are the Sources of Hope?
  1. Product of Experience (Romans 5:4).
  2. Product of the Scripture (Romans 15:4).
  3. Being called of God (Ephesians 1:8).
  4. Product of the Gospel (Col. 1:23).
  5. Dependent on work of our Lord (Col. 1:26; I Tim. 1:1).
- III. What great things happen by Hope?
  1. Hope comes through grace (II Thess. 2:16).
  2. Through hope that we rejoice (Romans 12:12).
  3. Saved by hope (Romans 8:24).
  4. Keeps Christian steadfast (Hebrews 3:6; 6:11,18).
- IV. What are the Foundations of Hope?
  1. Hope is in Christ (I Thess. 1:3).
  2. Hope is grounded in God (I Tim. 4:10).
  3. Hope looks to God (I Peter 1:21).

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- Wm. Childs Robinson, *Christ—The Hope of Glory: Christological Eschatology*, Eerdmans, 1945. Good study by basically conservative Calvinist who was aware of the relevant literature which had been published up to time his work became available, 1945. (See also George E. Ladd's two works listed in general bibliography. Dr. Ladd is professor of the Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. The school is now in a time of crisis because of a general attitude toward The Bible. Some there are taking a mediating position toward The Scriptures.
- X. Leon Dufour, editor, *Vocabulaire de Theologie Biblique*, 1962, Editions du cerf, Paris, (Roman Catholic).
- Kittel, editor, *Article-ilpis* (Greek for Hope); Wörterbuch, Austria.
- Alan Richardson, editor. *A Theological Word Book of The Bible*, MacMillan and Co., New York, 1956, (now in paperback).

Note: These works do not always show a high regard for the scripture, except Ladd's and Robinson's works.

We have now come to the end of our journey through the blood-stained pages of a period of history of the Church written by Martyrs' blood. But we can only say with the author of the great hymn—

*My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*

My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and  
righteousness;

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in  
Him be found!

Dressed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne!

*Refrain*

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand. A-Men.