

Revelation
Chapter 22
“Happily Ever After”

All scripture references are from the NASU unless otherwise noted

Calvary Chapel Fellowship of Enid
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Announcement: Because I know that all of you read ahead ... we will be going from here to the **Gospel of Mark** in our next study together ... so you might have a look at **chapter 1** when you have an opportunity.

Teaching: Hopefully you remember a bit of our discussions over these last two weeks about the New Jerusalem and about how the New Jerusalem can not be Heaven itself because the text, very plainly, says that the New Jerusalem comes down from Heaven ... from the Throne of God.

The New Jerusalem functions, apparently, as both an elevator and an apartment building ... however that works out is anybody's guess, but that's what we know.

Well John's been getting the tour ... an angelic tour guide leading the way and offering John enough commentary to whet his appetite and to make us anxious for that day.

Well this morning, as the Lord brings us to the conclusion of this prophetic book ... to the end of what is certain of the future of man ... those who receive Jesus and those who reject Him ... the scene seems to change one final time.

John's still describing for us the vision that the Lord has given to him ... sometimes it's been brought to John and sometimes he's been taken to see it. From earth to Heaven to earth to Heaven to earth again. Then the New Jerusalem and, I believe, back to Heaven itself here in the **last chapter**.

If you were here when we started our study of **Revelation**, then you will probably remember the lengthy discussion that we had about the **1st three verses** there ...

Rev 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

In particular, we really camped on that one word in **verse 1** ... en-tachos (en-takh'-os) or in English it's the phrase, **must soon take place**.

It's telling us that once these end time events kick off they will cascade rapidly to the conclusion that God describes here in **Revelation 22**. Once God interrupts human time with the revelation of Jesus Christ ... it will unfold at a staggering pace.

Never the less ... the question of the day is ...

Q. When's it all gonna kick off then? – Well ... you and I don't know, and in fact, can't know, exactly when the Lord's going to return, but there have certainly been a number of signs within this last century and even more of those signs concentrated in the last 50 years [en-tachos (en-takh'-os)], that should cause us to shake off the slumber and get engaged in the Lord's business. For instance ...

1. The reunion of Israel in 1948. An unprecedented world event, but spoken by God and miraculously fulfilled in this world.
2. The recapture of the old city of Jerusalem in 1967 ... predicted by the scriptures.
3. The rise of Russia as a powerful nation and its subsequent fragmentation ... predicted in the scriptures.
4. The increasing polarization of fundamental Islamic groups all over the world.
5. The revival of the old Roman Empire within the European states.
6. The increase in earthquakes and famines and wars as predicted in the scriptures.
7. The departure of so many churches and denominations from traditional, Biblical beliefs.
8. And the rapid progress toward a one-world government and religion.

The prophets knew the Lord was coming back and the early church lived and functioned in an anticipation of that return ... and the Lord has given us plenty of evidential reasons to do the same [en-tachos (en-takh'-os)] ... it is upon us.

So let's listen in as John is given the last portion of this divine tour ...

Verses 1-2: So ... the Throne of God and of the Lamb – it's mentioned 39 times in the Book of Revelation and each time it's described in Heaven ... so I don't think chapter 22 is an exception to that ... I think we're being given a final glimpse of heaven itself here.

And it says of this throne, that under it ... is a street and coming from it a river. The River of Life and ... don't ask me how, but on the left bank and the right bank of this heavenly river ... stands a tree (spoken of singularly), called The Tree of Life.

Q. Where's the last place that we saw the Tree of Life? – Ya ... the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:9, 3:22 & 24).

And not only does this Heavenly Tree bear 12 kinds of fruit, but it does so all year round ... because the season to grow never ends.

And its leaves are for the healing of the nations ... when Adam and Eve lead mankind into a rebellion against God ... a curse came upon the earth and all its inhabitants. Here, at the end of time, we are told that the leaves from this miraculous Tree of Life will heal the nations. The curse is lifted and there will be no more death ... no more sorrow and no more pain.

Verses 3-5:

Q. Did you catch that? – The Lord will illumine them!

Q. "Them", what them ... who's it talking about? – His bond-servants. It means "a slave by choice". And it's a choice I made a long time ago and I pray you have to.

And to those of us who have made that choice, it says here that we will literally glow with the radiance of God.

Q. Anybody remember the name for that? – Shekinah glory.

The curse of darkness is lifted and in our glowing state it says that we will serve Him and reign with Him. Perfect fellowship with God and the other 20 billion bond-servants there.

Verses 6-7: If you haven't lost track of the big picture here ... this is very interesting ... very thought provoking. Because as John finished writing this book ... he didn't wake up in Heaven ... he woke up on Patmos. He woke up and he was still a prisoner in exile. He was still an old man being pressed into hard labor.

And so these words were as much for him as they are for us ... but they're also as much for us as they were for him.

The Lord says to John and to you and to me ...

Rev 22:7 "... behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

So I pray that you've learned a lot through this study, but even more ... I pray that this study has changed you ... that the Word of God has changed you.

Q. Ask yourself what this study has changed about you? – Are you that much more

ready to heed the words of God?

And having been given this vision ... this glimpse into his own future and then dropped back off at the edge of the cliff with a pick in his hands ... I can not imagine that John wasn't changed. His whistling had to have been ratcheted up a notch. The bounce in his 90 year old shuffle had to be noticeable. The passion of his ministry had to be measurably more intense.

Q. But what about ours?

Notice that although this angel has an audience of one as he brings this message from God ... he says that God had sent him to deliver the message of what is to come to God's bondservants ... plural! That's us.

Which means that **verse 7** is also to us ... and it's a promise from The God of the Universe ... you will be blessed if you heed the counsel of the **book of Revelation** ... and for that matter ... the whole of scripture.

And this angel is reassuring John, not just about the Lord's soon return, but that all that he'd seen and all that he'd heard was faithful and true.

Because John would have had the same tendency that we do ... the tendency to talk himself out of truth. As he sat down to describe all this in print ... it would have been so easy for him to say ... "That's just too much. Maybe I didn't really see that or hear this. Maybe I better tone it down a bit or my readers will never believe it."

So the angel reassures him ... "No John ... all that you've seen and heard ... it wasn't a dream ... it was a vision ... a faithful and true vision. Write it down just as it was delivered to you."

In the Old Testament the Lord predicted that Israel would be taken captive ... and they were.

He predicted that their captivity would last for 70 years ... and it did.

He also predicted that they would be restored to the land of Israel ... and they were.

He said the Messiah would come ... and He did.

He said He'd be born in Bethlehem ... and He was.

And the list of such fulfilled prophecies goes on to a count of nearly 2,000.

So why would we doubt it when He says that ...

Jesus is coming back ... He will.

Or in His prediction that there will be a Tribulation ... there will be.

That the Antichrist would come ... he will.

That there will be a new heaven and a new earth ... that too will come to pass.

And He predicted a literal eternity in Heaven as well as a literal eternity in Hell ... and those truths are as certain as the thousands that have preceded them.

Verses 8-9: For the second time since this portion of the tour began, John is overcome by what his senses are taking in and he falls down to worship at this angel's feet (**19:10**).

But the angel says that he's as created as we are ... a fellow servant and that there is one who's to be worshipped. And it's not your boyfriend or your girlfriend or your spouse. It's not your kids or some sports hero or a Hollywood celebrity ... it's God and Him alone.

Verse 10: If you remember back to the **book of Daniel** ... God instructed the prophet at that time to ...

12:4 " ... conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time ..."

But to John He says, "Don't seal it up", because the time is near and people are going to need to understand what God is going to do.

And this message is for us too. If, because of our time together in **this book**, you now have a better understanding of what is to come ... don't seal it up ... go and share it ... warn and encourage and educate as the Lord provides opportunity. Reveal Jesus Christ!

Verse 11: Dr. Ryrie says of this verse,

"When Christ comes, there will be no more opportunity for a man to change his destiny. What he is then he will be forever."

Those who go to Heaven will be righteous and holy forever and those who go to Hell will be eternally wrong and filthy.

Americans have somehow bought into the idea that Heaven is the default eternal destination ... "I'll go to Heaven as long as I don't do anything too bad." But that is pure lie! We are born fully qualified for Hell ... but Heaven requires conscious thought, choice and action.

Hell is "Deserved", but Heaven is a "Free Gift".

It's been said that "The path to Heaven is so narrow that many can go before and many can follow after, but only One can walk beside you." And that one is Jesus Christ!

Verses 12-13: A young preacher once had the words of **John 9:4** inscribed on the face of his wrist watch ... it said ... "**The Night Cometh when no man can work.**"

It reminded him that by his sacrifices, he was storing up treasures in Heaven and encouraged him to redeem the time given to him.

Because salvation is not of works, but rewards are. Salvation is a free gift, but the rewards that will be handed out in Heaven are earned in this life ... and the night is coming when the door to that opportunity will close.

Verses 14-15: "Dogs" here is not speaking of animals, but of people who literally bite the hand that has fed them. People who've rejected their maker and the one who has provided for them and sustained them.

And everyone else who has not washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb ... everyone who has not been empowered by the Holy Spirit of God to overcome their sin natures and not been forgiven of their inequities ... they are referred to here as outsiders.

The best picture is perhaps Noah's Ark. Allow me to paraphrase from **Genesis chapter 7** ...

1 Then the LORD said to Noah, "Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me ... 5 Noah did according to all that the LORD had commanded him. 6 ... Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of water came upon the earth. ... 16 ... as God had commanded ...; and the LORD closed [the door of the ark] behind him.

There were those on the inside and those on the outside. And once God closed the door ... it was closed. Those on the outside had made their choice and perished.

It is said that, "There is only one way to **stay** out of Hell, but there is no way to **get** out of Hell."

Verse 16: From Jesus, through John, to us!

And it's an interesting reference that He makes to Himself here ... that He is both the root and the descendent of King David. He preceded David in His deity, but followed David in His humanity. Something that could only be said of Jesus because only Jesus is both God and man.

Verse 17: Because we are still sitting here this morning ... having read of all that's to come ... Jesus beckons to the unsaved to come to Him. To the weary and the empty, he says come!

And the Holy Spirit of God and the church ... the Bride of Christ join with the Lord in saying "come to Christ and receive salvation".

Verses 18-19: Now ... in neither case is there a reference to the loss of salvation, but certainly to the loss of reward and comfort.

And although this is the only New Testament Book that comes with such a warning, **Deut 4:2, 12:32 and Prov 30:6** say the same thing in a way that seems to apply to all of God's Word.

It is to be preserved read and taught as it is! As Pastor Chuck has said for years ... simply teach the Bible simply!

Verses 20-21: "Maranatha" is the term that Paul uses in **1 Cor 16:22**. It's not translated ... just copied from the original Aramaic from which Paul borrowed it. Maranatha ... it means come quickly Lord.

Q. Let me ask you ... can you cry that with passion? Maranatha ... come quickly Lord?

Q. Can you cry that without hesitation or reservation? Can you cry that without fear?

Conclusion: It's been said that all of man's existence hinges on three trees:

- 1.** The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil ... from which Adam and Eve ate and cast man into a fallen and cursed state.
- 2.** The Tree of Life from which man was banished at the time of his fall and will remain banished from it until we walk across the threshold of the Heaven.
- 3.** And the Tree which held our Savior's surrendered body on Mount Calvary. The tree that determines the eternal destiny of every human being ... the cross of Jesus Christ.

Invitation as the Spirit Leads:

Down below the surface of the quiet pond lived a little colony of water bugs. They were a happy colony, living far away from the sun. For many months they were busy scurrying over the soft mud on the bottom of the pond. They had noticed that every once in a while, one in their colony seemed to lose interest in going about with his friends ... clinging to the stem of a pond lily, he gradually moved out of sight and was seen no more.

"Look!" said one of the water bugs to the others, "one of our colony is climbing

up the lily stalk.” “Where do you suppose he’s going?” they questioned. Up, up, up he went slowly. Even as they watched, the water bug disappeared from sight. His friends waited and waited, but he did not return. “That’s funny” said one water bug “wasn’t he happy here?”

The water bugs were greatly perplexed by this and although several answers were put forward ... none seems to satisfy the questions of where their friends had gone and why they would leave their happy colony.

Finally, one of the water bugs ... a leader in the colony, gathered all of his friends together ... “I have an idea” he announced. “Let’s make a pact right now that the next one of us that goes up the lily stalk, will return and report what has happened.” All the water bugs agreed that it was a terrific idea and entered into the pact.

One spring day, not long after that, the very water bug who had called the meeting, found himself climbing up the lily stalk. Up, up, up he went and before he knew what was happening, he had broken through the surface of the water and landed on the broad green leaf of the lily pad above.

When he awoke, he couldn’t believe what he saw ... a startling change had come over his old body. His movement revealed four silver wings and a long tail. Even as he struggled he felt an impulse to move his wings and the warmth of the sun dried his new wings and body. He moved his wings again and suddenly he found himself above the surface of the water ... he’d become a dragonfly.

Swooping and dipping in great curves he flew through the air. He felt exhilarated in the new atmosphere. By and by, he lighted happily on a lily pad to rest and then it was that he chanced to look below ... to the bottom of the pond and found himself ... right above his old friends. There they were still scurrying about just as he had been doing not long before.

Then he remembered his promise ... “The next one of us who climbs up the lily stalk, must come back and tell the others where he went and why.” Without thinking, he darted down and suddenly hit the surface of the water. “I can’t return”, he said in dismay, “At least I tried, but I can’t keep my promise. Besides, even if I could go back, not one of the water bugs would even know me in my new body. I guess I’ll just have to wait until they become dragon flies too. Then they’ll understand what happened to me and where I went.” And the dragon fly winged off happily into his wonderful new world of sun and air.

There’s a new world that awaits us. Jesus said that He was going to prepare a place for us.

Q. Are you being prepared for that place? The Lord, the Spirit and the Bride all say ... come!