



Revelation 22

Revelation 22
Tape #8261
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now to Revelation chapter 22. We're there. There is it. The final chapter as we have been in this long journey through the Word of God and have now come to the climax, to the last chapter. In chapter 21, John was describing the New Jerusalem, the city of God, where the bride of Christ will live. And as he describes the New Jerusalem, here in chapter 22, he is continuing at the first part the description of this city. It is the city of God. It is the city that Abraham and the Old Testament saints were looking for. As they were living on the earth, they confessed that they were just strangers and pilgrims here. They were searching for the city, which has foundation whose maker and builder is God. And so John describes for us that beautiful city of God in chapter 21. Chapter 22 continues the description.

He shows me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. And 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. (22:1,2)

So flowing through the city of God, from the throne of God, the spring from which this crystal clear stream flows. The river of life and on either side the tree of life. Now, back in the Book of Genesis when God placed Adam and Eve in the garden, there were many different trees. All kinds of fruit trees from which they could freely eat. There was a tree that was known as the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And God had warned them not to eat of that tree, that the fruit of it was deadly. There was another tree in the garden, and the fruit of that tree seemed to have an antidote for the tree of death, or the poisonous tree, so that man had a choice. A choice of all of the trees, but basically the tree of death and the tree of life. It is fascinating to me that with that choice man would choose to eat of the tree of death. And when he did God banished him from this garden, put the cherubim, you remember, at the gate of the garden to prohibit man from returning into the garden and eating of the tree of life and living forever in that sinful state, the state of rebellion against the commandment of God.

You would think with the choice of the tree of death and the tree of life that surely man would choose the tree of life, first. But such was not the case. Now, we fault Adam for his folly. Why would he ever choose to eat of the tree of death rather than the tree of life? But before we get too severe in our criticism and condemnation of Adam, we need to realize that the same is true today. God has offered to us the tree of life, and that is, of course, in the cross of Jesus Christ, where God has provided that we can have eternal life. And people have a choice today of life and death. God said, see I have set before you life and death. Choose life that you might live. But even so, there are many people who are choosing the path of death today rather than the path of life, making the same foolish mistake that Adam and Eve made there in the garden when they chose to eat of the tree that would bring death rather than the tree that would bring life!

Now, evidently that tree of life has been transferred into heaven, the city of God. And here is this crystal clear stream flowing from the throne of God through the city of God, the streets of gold beside the stream, the river, and there on the banks, the tree of life. And it yields twelve different types of fruit, a different type each month. And the leaves, it said, are for the healing of the nations.

John said I saw a new heaven and a new earth. There is within this new heaven and new earth the city of God, the new Jerusalem. This is where God dwells. God said I'm going to make all things new. There will still be an earth. There will still be nations on the earth. What kind of people will inhabit it? The Bible doesn't tell. There are a lot of things of the future that are just not revealed to us in the Word of God. God's left some surprises for you so that when you get there you can have many surprises of the things God has prepared in that future.

But it talks about the leaves of these trees having a medicinal value in that they bring health to the nations. But in the new heaven and new earth, there will be no sin, there will be no rebellion against God. All of the creation of God will be living in harmony with God, and it will be a beautiful experience. You, who are the church, will have a special place as the bride of Christ. You will have glorified bodies and you will be there and dwelling in the city of God in the very presence of God.

And there shall be no more curse: [the curse is the result of sin going back, again, to Genesis when Adam and Eve sinned] but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: (22:3)

Now, we read concerning the martyred saints that come up out of the great tribulation, that they do stand in His holy temple and do serve Him day and night continually. They are a special class as we saw previously in the 20th chapter. He saw the thrones and those that sat upon it, the church, and then he saw those that were beheaded for their witness, a separate group. The group that are described in chapter seven who do serve Him day and night continually. “And there shall be no more curse but the throne of God and the Lamb in it and His servants shall serve Him.” The bride of Christ will reign with Him.

We shall see his face and his name shall be in our foreheads. (22:4)

The Lord promises unto the overcomers that He would give to them a new name, which no man knew except he that received it. And here His name shall be in their foreheads.

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

That’s our position with Christ, reigning with Him forever and ever. Now, no sun, no need of a sun, because the place will be illuminated by God. The scripture said that God is light. And thus it will just be illumined by the presence of God. No night there. And they shall see His face. Jesus said, blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. What an experience that will be to see the face of God! Moses wanted to see the face of God. God said you can’t do it Moses and live. I’ll pass by. You can see the afterglow but no one can see My face and live. But we will be in our glorified bodies and we shall see the face of God.

And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: (22:6a)

Again, it is so wonderful! It is so far beyond our comprehension! It is so glorious! It is so beautiful that God affirms over and over in these last few chapters that He’s telling us the truth! These are faithful sayings and true. It’s not just some kind of a fairy tale. This is God’s truth that He is revealing unto us.

And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things, which must shortly be done. (22:6b)

The first chapter introduces the Book as the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, which he showed unto His angel who sent and signified it unto John. So John has been guided by an angel through this marvelous revelation, the revelation of Jesus Christ and His future glory. And so here again we have the declaration that these are faithful sayings. They are true. “The Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to shew unto His servants the things which must shortly be done.”

Behold, I come quickly: [Jesus speaks here] blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book. (22:7)

The word quickly there is not shortly, but quickly, and there is a difference. As we have been reading the events of the great tribulation, when these things begin to come to pass, Jesus said look up, “lift up your head, for your redemption is drawing nigh.” The Lord is coming quickly. The coming of the Lord will be very quick! It will be in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. Paul said, “I show you a mystery.” We’re not going to all of us die, but we will all be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. And that’s what the Lord is referring to here. He’s coming quickly. It doesn’t mean that He was going to be coming in the next year after this revelation to John or within five years or ten years. It’s been almost two thousand years. But when it comes, when the time comes, it’s going to be a quick transformation. In a moment, in a twinkling of

an eye, we will be changed. For this corruption must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. Again notice, “blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” Back in chapter one again, as John was given the revelation, there was a built in blessing back in chapter one. “Blessed are they that read the words of this prophecy and keep the sayings.” And so here God has promised again and reaffirming the promise to those that will keep the words of this book.

And I John saw these things, and heard them. (22:8a)

John saw these in a vision. He heard the things. And so it was both by sight and by sound that the revelation was given to John. Taken by the Spirit to the Day of the Lord, hearing the things that would transpire, seeing the things, and thus describing them here in the Book of Revelation.

And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. (22:8b)

So this angel that has been guiding John on this tour of the future, John is so overwhelmed by the revelation and so appreciative, he falls down before the angel that has been guiding him through these experiences.

And the angel said unto him, don't do that for I am your fellowservant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those which keep the sayings of the book: worship God. (22:9)

It is interesting that though an angel is in a higher category of a man, yet the humility as he refuses to receive worship from John, does not allow John to worship him and declares I'm just a fellowservant. I serve God too. And he acknowledged himself just as a servant, a fellowservant and just a brother of the prophets. I keep the sayings of the Book, worship God.

You remember when Satan took Jesus into the high mountain, showed Him the kingdoms of the world and promised to give them to Jesus if He would bow down and worship him. Jesus responded, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only. And so the declaration that only God was to be worshiped. And so the angel worshiped God.

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

Now this is quite different from the Book of Daniel. When you come to the last chapter of the book of Daniel and Daniel is questioning some of the things that he had seen in visions, the Lord told Daniel to seal it up. It is for the time of the end and in the last days knowledge would be increased. And so the prophesies of Daniel were not for the present time. They were for the future. And Daniel was told to seal them up. It is interesting how that the Book of Daniel now has become quite open. The seals, because we are in the last days there is a much better understanding of the prophesies of Daniel because we've been able to see so many of the things that were prophesied already fulfilled. And we now have a clearer understanding.

But the Book of Revelation was not to be sealed. And this is the mistake that so many people make. In fact, there are a lot of pastors, there are a lot of churches that won't touch the Book of Revelation. And if you ask the pastor, why don't you study the Book of Revelation? They'll say well, that's a sealed book. No, the Lord said, don't seal it. It's not a sealed book. It was intended to be read and it was intended to be understood and it was intended to be obeyed. And there are special promises for those who will read and will keep the sayings of this book. So “he saith unto me don't seal the sayings of the prophecy of this book for the time is at hand.”

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. (22:11)

What the Book of Revelation shows to us is that those who are in rebellion against God and who are unjust and who are filthy, they are going to continue in those same rebellion against the Lord. They're not going to change, and surely we have seen that as we have watched the plagues being poured out upon the earth and people cursing God. On the other hand, those that are righteous will continue in that righteousness.

Those that are holy, let them be holy still.

And, behold, I come quickly; [that is when He comes, it's going to be quick] and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. (22:12)

The Bible does speak about the rewards for our work. Now, salvation is the gift of God through grace. But having received this wonderful gift of God through grace, my salvation; now as He is my Lord, I am obligated to serve Him and to obey Him as my Lord. Jesus said, "Why do you call Me Lord, Lord and yet you don't do the things that I command you?" That's a complete inconsistency. I am to obey Him as Lord. And I will be rewarded according to my faithfulness in doing the things that He has commanded me to do. You will be rewarded according to your faithfulness in doing those things that the Lord commands. It has nothing to do with salvation. It does have much to do with our position in the Kingdom of God.

You remember how Jesus said that the master went away to a far country and left his goods entrusted to his servants? To one he gave the five talents, to another, four, to another, one. And when he returned, he called them in to give an accounting. The one who had five said, lord, I've increased it. I brought you ten. And the lord said good job. Well done good and faithful servant. You've been faithful in a few things, now I'll make you ruler over ten cities. Enter into the joy of the lord. But the one who had taken the one talent and had buried it and did not use it, how that talent was to be taken away from him. He that is faithful in a few things will be faithful and given much. But he who is not faithful will be taken away even that which he hath.

Paul the apostle in writing of the judgment of the saints, he said we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the things that we have done in our bodies whether they be good or evil. And knowing the terror of the Lord, we seek to persuade men. One day, we will give an accounting unto the Lord of what we have done with the things that He has entrusted to us. And this is not a matter of salvation at this point. It's a matter of receiving or not receiving rewards. And so the Lord is declaring here concerning this, "I am coming quickly and My reward is with Me to give to every man according to his work."

You remember in the Sermon on the Mount, how Jesus warned us not to do our righteousness in such a way as to draw the attention of men to ourselves. Because He said, if you do it before men to receive the praise, adulation of men, then you have received your reward. So when you pray don't make a big public display of it, but go into your closet, shut the door and pray to your Father which sees in secret and your Father which sees in secret will reward you openly. When you give, don't make a big public demonstration of your gift so that everybody is "ooing and aahing" at the great check that you gave posted on the bulletin board, your name on the stained glass, and at the end of the pew. Lord, don't You remember I gave two pews to the church? My name was right there on the end of the pew, Lord, donated by me. The Lord says you had your reward. Everybody that came in and sat in that pew saw the little plaque with your name at the end. Give to your Father, which sees in secret. Don't let your right hand really know what your left hand is doing, and your Father which sees in secret will reward you.

The Bible tells us that one day our works will be judged of what manner or sort they are. In other words what the Lord is basically going to judge is the motivation behind the things that we do, and my heart, the motivation of my heart is the issue. Did I do it as unto the Lord for His glory, or did I do it for my glory and to receive the applause of man? It's a very serious business. When the Lord comes, He's going to be judging. "I come quickly. My reward is with Me to give to every man according as his work shall be."

I am the Alpha and the Omega, (22:13a)

Here again Jesus is declaring His deity. It is said of God in chapter one, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. And now Jesus lays claim to that for Himself. God came in flesh to the earth. In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God. And the same was in the beginning with God and all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. And in Him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness but the darkness comprehended it not, and the Word was made flesh, and He tabernacled among us, or dwelled among us, and we beheld His glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus is God manifested in the flesh. Great is the mystery of the Godhead or godliness, for God was manifested in the flesh. "I am the Alpha, the Omega,"

the beginning and the end, the first and the last. [everything in between.] Blessed are they that do his commandments, (22:13b,14a)

James tells us that we need to be doers of the Word and not hearers only because you can deceive yourself. Paul sort of spoke against the Jews who felt that because they had the law they were justified. But he said it isn't having the law that justifies you, it is the doing or the keeping of the law. And we boast that we have the Word of God. We have the New Testament and all, but obedience is the key. Doing the Word, the commandments, not just having the commandments.

And they that do his commandments will have the right to the tree of life, and they may enter in through the gates into the city. (22:14b)

I like to sometimes just meditate on what it will be like when I step through pearly gates into the city of God. I behold that beautiful crystal clear river proceeding from the throne of God and go up and pick the fruit off of the tree of life and taste of it. That is the privilege that will be offered to those who do His commandments. They can enter in through the gates of the city.

*For those that are refused entrance into the city, the Kingdom of God, are the dogs, the sorcerers, [and the word sorcerers there, the root word, is *pharmakia*, those who have been drug users] the whoremongers, the murderers, the idolaters and whosoever loves and makes a lie. (22:15)*

The young man who came up this evening, earlier in the service, gave me a little note here to pray for an abortion outreach that is planned Saturday at 7 o'clock in the city of Newport Beach on the corner of Birch and Mac Arthur. God has laid it upon the hearts of many people to express their disapproval of the courts' decision that have been the cause of over 30 million abortions. Taking of a life deliberately. Now, I think that abortion on demand is one of the most horrible things that a nation can do or provide for the people. I think that it is a sin to take a life when it is in the womb.

In the same token, if a person has deliberately aborted a child from their womb, God's love and God's grace is sufficient and there is forgiveness and cleansing if you will repent and ask the Lord for forgiveness. And you don't need to have that on your conscience. I destroyed a life. That doesn't need to hound you or to hound your conscience because there is forgiveness. Jesus said all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven man. The only thing that keeps you from the forgiveness is your coming and asking for forgiveness. And so we have dealt with so many people who have had an abortion and their conscience is so plagued that they have almost developed a neurosis because they haven't been able to receive this pardon and the forgiveness of Jesus.

So Paul as he gives a list of the thing that is are done by the people in the world, he said, and so were you as one time. We were all there. We were all guilty. We were all under the penalty of death. We were all at one time excluded. But you who are far off, Paul said, He has brought nigh through the blood of Jesus Christ. So that you're no longer a foreigner or an alien to the promises of God, but you've been made a part of the family of God. Oh, the wonderful grace of God that reached down and picked us up out of the pit, washed us and cleansed us from all of the past and made us heirs of the Kingdom of God. We don't look around with self righteousness and think oh, those horrible people. How can they do such things? Because we understand how they can do them. We've done them! But oh, how grateful we are for the grace of God that reached down and washed and cleansed us and made us children of God. And so here are those who are excluded. Why? Because they haven't come to God for the cleansing. They continued in their rebellion and in their acts of unrighteousness, and thus, because they rejected the invitation of God to receive the pardon and the cleansing, they will have to then face the judgment of God for these things and will be excluded from God's kingdom.

This certainly puts the lie to the teaching that Satan brought along the final restitution of all things that God will finally restore everything and everybody including Satan will one day enjoy the kingdom of God and the glories of God's kingdom. Not so. Without, there are those who have not come and received the forgiveness.

And now in the last part Jesus is addressing John along, of course, with the angel that John tried to worship, but now Jesus again is speaking.

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. (22:16a)

And so this is for the church. Jesus said I have sent my angel to bear witness of these things in the churches. The Lord intended the church to study this.

I am the root and the offspring of David, (22:16b)

God promised to David that from His seed there would be one that would be sitting on the throne forever. And Jesus declares I am the Root, the Offspring of David, the fulfillment of that promise of God.

I am the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. (22:16b,17a)

God's Spirit giving the invitation. This church being given the invitation to come to Jesus Christ to receive the cleansing and the pardon of their sin because God is offering the forgiveness. Come, come to Jesus! Come and receive God's love! Come and receive God's forgiveness! Come and be made a child of God! Come and be blessed by becoming an heir of God, a joint heir through Jesus Christ!

Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, (22:17a)

Open to everybody! God hasn't closed the door to one person! He has left it up to us and to our choice, whosoever wills. When God created us, He created us in His likeness and in His image. And one of the characteristics of God's nature is that of self-determination. The power to will. Your ability to choose and to determine your future. God has given to us that gift, self-determination. I can determine my future by exercising my choice and my will. And thus the invitation is to

whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely. (22:17b)

It can't be any easier or more simple than that! God has left it up to you. You'll have no excuse for rejecting God's love. No excuse for turning down God's offer of salvation. "Whosoever will may come, drink of the water of life freely."

For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: [or don't tamper! Don't mess with this Book!] (22:18)

If you seek to add to it, God will add to you the plagues that are written in the Book. In the same token,

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (22:19)

Now, we're at the end of the Bible. Is this sort of summing up the totality of Scriptures? Are we talking about the Book of Revelation or are we talking about the Bible and God's revelation over this period of time to man in the Book that we have, the Bible. And is God saying concerning the whole Bible, don't add to it or don't take away or is He just talking about the Book of Revelation? We don't know, do we? It could very well be the whole Bible. We don't know. And as far as I'm concerned, the consequences being what they are, I want to play safe. I don't want to mess with it.

And you know, it is interesting how that so many times people are wanting to add or are wanting to take away. There is a group of "scholars", who meet at Claremont College to take away from the Book and to go through the gospels and tell you what parts were inserted by the apostles and what parts are genuine. The things that Jesus really did say and the things that the writers said that Jesus said, but He really didn't. Interesting that two thousand years later, they are capable of so dividing the Scriptures that they can tell you now, that this is genuine. Jesus really said that, but no Jesus didn't say that. That Mathew sort of embellished the story to make it sound grander than it really was. That Mathew said that the shepherds—well, no that's not really exciting, so Mathew made them wise men who came from the East and were following a star and came to Herod and all. But in reality they weren't really wise men but Matthew's using his imagination and embellishing the story to make Jesus sound more important.

I wouldn't mess the Scriptures like that. I take seriously the warning of Jesus not to add to and not to take away from the words of this prophecy, from this Book.

I reverence the Bible as the Word of God. And God has given to us all is that is necessary for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him given to us in this book. Everything that we need is in this book. You don't need any more. This is sufficient. This is all that you need. Everything is here for you to live the

life of godliness, the life that God would have you to live. It's all here.

I'm really not searching for new truth. I'm interested in new experiences in the old truth. There are enough things that are in this Book that I have not yet experienced that I desire to and would love to that I don't have to go to some of these new exotic thing that is people are talking about, exotic experiences and all. I'm not looking for something new. I'm wanting new experiences in the old. I'm open to that! I'm open to the things that are here in the Word of God. But I'm not really open to the things for which you do not have a solid Scriptural base. I'm not interested in adding. I'm not interested in taking away.

He which testifieth these things saith, [Jesus is talking] Surely I come quickly. Amen. [That's sort of the final. The word of Jesus, I'm coming quickly. So be it. And John responds,] Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (22:20)

And I'm sure that that's the response in all of our hearts this evening, even so, come, Lord Jesus. And John closes with,

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (22:21)

Someone wrote me a note this morning and said, you know, wouldn't it wonderful that after the study tonight the Lord would say, okay, that's a wrap. Let's bring them home. But if it doesn't happen, next week we'll start in Genesis and we'll see how it all began, and we'll start through once more.

Father, we do again want to thank You for the Word of God. Oh, how rich. And for these wonderful promises, Lord, and the assurance that these are true and faithful sayings. Lord, we look forward with eagerness to that city of God and entrance into the city, dwelling there, looking upon You, worshiping You, serving You. Oh, Lord, how blessed we are that we've had the privilege of coming and drinking from the water of life. Thank You, Lord, for the gift of salvation, for Your grace unto each of us, for the pardon and the cleansing of our sins, for the blood of Jesus Christ, Your Son, which has cleansed us from all sin. And Lord, we look forward to having the entrance into the kingdom, into the city of God, because of what Jesus has done for us. He paid the price, He paid it all for us. Lord, we pray that You'll help us as the bride to get the message out to the lost world around us that we might invite them to come and experience the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. May we, Lord, as a church, get the message out to this lost world. May we bring to them the glorious light of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the hope of eternal life through Him to this dark and hopeless world. May we be true and faithful witnesses. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.