

## Revelation Chapter 22 Handout

as was mentioned in the introduction, Chapters 21 and 22 complete the Biblical narrative. This narrative is that God creates a wonderful creation in which love of God and neighbor are at its heart; human beings rebel and warp this good creation; God covenants with a family through which creation will be restored; God sends God's Son Jesus to make restoration possible; and now, the restoration occurs and God returns in all God's fullness to restore creation to its original condition.

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; 4 they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

*River of the water of life - Ezekiel (47:1) has an image of the water of life flowing from the Temple... which is the renewed Temple (worship center) of God's people. Here since there is no temple, with God serving that purpose then the river will flow from the throne.*

*Tree of life - we have returned to Genesis. The tree which Adam and Eve were not allowed to partake of is now there for everyone since the world has been redeemed.*

*Twelve fruits - it produces constantly thus there is no "starving time" when there is nothing to eat... it is the perfect tree.*

*Leaves... healing of the nations - there will be no more conflict between nations because all the people left are those who have given their lives to the Lamb and to God.*

*Nothing accursed - it is a place of great peace and love. The people were cursed when they were expelled from Eden. Thus the curse has been lifted and there is direct access to God, the tree of life and the living river.*

*Servants will worship - people will now live life rightly... the center of their lives will be the Lamb and God and their worship will be for them and not for the beast... or self.*

*See his face - again a return to Eden. In Eden God walked in the garden and there was an intimate relationship with Adam and Eve, we are returning to such a relationship.*

*No more night - again a return to pre-Eden when light was created before the sun and the moon..light is an expression of the very presence of God when all can be seen clearly*

6 And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true, for the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."

*These words are trustworthy and true – this is the first of the final declarations... that the words of the prophecy can indeed be trusted... people can stake their lives on them. They can be believed because an angel has sent them.*

7“See, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

*I am coming soon – this is the second of the final declarations... that not only can you trust the prophecy but it will occur soon enough that one does not have to worry*

*Keeps the words – this is the third of the final declarations...in order to gain anything from what has been read and heard one must actually do what is here... meaning living a particular quality of life in which one remains faithful to Jesus.*

8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me; 9 but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!”

*Worship God – this is the fourth of the final declarations... that worship only belongs to God. There will come many spiritual people and spiritual apparitions that will demand our worship (i.e. – the beast) but we are not to be fooled. There is one and only one who deserves our worship.*

10 And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11 Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

*Do not seal up – this is the fifth of the final declarations... the words of John are so powerful that unlike previous apocalyptic visions they should be available to all. The necessity of having people know what is coming... both good and ill are so important that it needs to be proclaimed and not hidden.*

*Let the evildoer – this is the sixth of the final declarations... people are going to be people and the task of the church is not to stop anyone from the route they are going...however by having the book opened and allowing people to know what is in it, it allows them to make their own choices.*

12“See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone’s work. 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, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. 15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

*I am coming soon – this is a restatement of the urgency of the letter... again we return to the focus on the immediacy of the content of the prophecy*

*My reward is with me – This is the seventh declaration... Jesus has good for the good and evil for the evil. We will in the end reap what we sew. This does not*

*do away with grace, however it is a reminder that faith in Revelation is more than mental assent... it is a style of life.*

*I am - this is the eighth declaration... a recognition that there is no power that was before God and no power after God... thus God is the only one in whom one can place one's trust*

*Blessed are those - this is final benediction... those who are willing to trust in Jesus' death (washing robes) will have the right to eternal life and access to the city. This is also the final, seventh, benediction in the book. This again excludes those who refuse to allow the new life of Christ to change them.*

16 "It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come."

And let everyone who hears say, "Come."

And let everyone who is thirsty come.

Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

*It is I - this is the ninth of the declarations... Jesus himself declares that he is the author of all that has been put down by John.*

*I am the root - Jesus continues with a self definition in order to clarify his standing in the world and in God's work of restoration... and in the book itself The spirit and the bride say - this is the tenth declaration... everyone is invited to come and partake. If someone is reading this book at this moment it is not too late to change their minds and accept Christ as the center of their lives. The water of life is open to everyone.*

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book; 19 if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

*I warn - this is the eleventh declaration... this is prophecy and as such is not to be taken lightly. The book is to be left as it is because it has meaning for all believers of all times. This is also about this one book and not about all of scripture. Revelation was only added later to the scriptures and so the ending here has nothing to say about the other books.*

20 The one who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

*Surely I am coming soon - the final of the three pronouncements of the immanent return of Jesus.*

*Come Lord Jesus - this is the twelfth pronouncement... that we are to call upon Jesus to return as soon as possible. They were used by the early church at the close of the Eucharist. This is also close to the Aramaic "Maranatha" or "come Lord." This then ties the end with the beginning since John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.*

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

*Grace - this is the final benediction. This would be unusual for a Jewish apocalyptic, however for a Christian proclamation of God's work in the world and a letter to the churches, it is most appropriate.*