

250713 Sermon Rev 22 1-10

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A couple weeks ago, whenever I was watching, I laughed. It's not that difficult, but... I just appreciate you guys all taking the time to come together, allow Melanie and myself to get away for a few weeks. It was well needed, and it was a great time, and we thank you all for that.

We will be coming back to... Let me turn on this mic a little bit. I'm not used to being here anymore. So, I'm going to turn on this volume.

Let's see if that works. That works. I'm going to get this mic out of here.

I thought I was in really good shape in this way, that this morning, I was going to miss Logan, but I figured it would be kind of calm and settled down, because Logan usually changes things up at the last minute. I pulled in here to the parking lot this morning, and I got a call from Chris, and he told me, he said, I put a new song in we've never played before, the last song we played, and I was like, I'm not going to miss Logan today, am I? I'm not going to miss him at all. But that was the first time we've ever played that last song together, and praise God, He just makes it happen every time.

We struggled a little bit in the beginning, but it came together. So, we're so glad you're here today. If you have your Bibles, it's been a long time coming, but we're going to finally open up chapter 22 of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

And whenever I heard Chris talking about the revelation, this book is about the revelation of Jesus Christ. It tells us about Jesus Christ, and we're going to start in verse one. It seems like almost forever since we've been together.

We have to go back some time. Back in June, we took away a week of our studies in June for the women's chirus, and remember, that was way back in the beginning of June. And then, Rod Edmonds came, and he preached on his experiences with Wilder's Lake Church, even though he had only been here twice, because of where he had been and how Wilder's Lake Church had affected him.

Then I came back one week, and we finished up Revelations 21. And then Bob Priser and Chris Brackett filled in while I was away on vacation. So, in the last five weeks, I've only shared with you all one time, and I've been chomping at the bit, I'm telling you.

This is one thing, when God put this on my heart, I did not think I would ever like or want to do it. I never wanted to be up here. But God changes your heart, as you all know.

And He changed my heart where this is the most, the best thing, the most thing I want to do every week is to be in front of you and share the Word of God. I've missed you, and I've missed our time together. And this right here is probably what I missed most.

And I've got to tell you this, Logan is probably feeling it right now. He's on a cruise ship. Whatever you're doing on a Sunday, whenever you're not here, at least for me, you could be visiting another church, which I've done before, spending time with family and friends.

You can even be riding a harp out on the road. And Sunday morning, around 9.30, around 10.30, you just have this feeling come over you that you're missing something. And the thing is you're missing is you all in this place God has made for us.

We had a great time, but we missed you all very much. And I have been looking forward to these last two chat messages of the revelation of Jesus Christ for a long time. It's been over a year and a half, and these last two messages in this book should be worth your time and give you hope and faith as a believer.

And if you're not a believer, hopefully you'll hear what you could be missing and investigate it some more on your own to find the joy that believers have in this life here and the next to come. So it's been a while. You may not remember because it's been a while.

We will read our scripture together like we always do, and then we'll go back and look at it individually. So if you have your Bibles, we'll start at verse one of Revelation 22. And it says this, Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal coming from the throne of God and of the land.

And in the middle of its street, on either side of the river, was this tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were the healings of the nations. Verse three, There will no longer be any curse, and the throne of God and the land will be in it.

And his bond servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no longer any night, and they will not have any need of the light of the land, nor the light of the sun, because the Lord of God will illuminate them, and they will reign forever and ever.

And he said to me, These words are faithful and true, and the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent his angel to show his bond servants the things which must soon take place. And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.

Verse eight, I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of an angel. And he showed me these things.

But he said to me, Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours, and of your brother, and of the prophets, and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.

And he said to me, Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book for the time is near. Let's go to more prayer. Father, it's been a while since I've been here, and I thank you, Lord, that you bring us back here safely.

And I thank you for each one that's coming here today to hear your word, Lord. We thank you for this time that you give us each week in this building, and this purpose, and these people that we love, Lord, because of one reason, your son, Jesus Christ. And we thank you that we're here today.

We've read these verses as we would all read any book. And many times that just goes in one ear and out the other. Now we pray, Lord, that as we go back and look at this more deeply, that you open our eyes and our ears and our heart to what we're about to hear.

That it touches our lives, that we're able to take this to the world and share it with the world. How we love you, Lord, and we thank you for this time that you give us each and every week, and for the time that we have together. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Verse one says, And then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as a crystal coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Yesterday morning, Melanie and I were in Perry, Georgia, and we were in a campground. I got up early and I took a walk, and there was this small lake.

It was a small lake there with a fountain, and it was clear and it was calm. It was beautiful. Reviewing this for the day, I thought how beautiful that water was, but yet how much more this water would be from the throne of God that's coming out here.

We can see this water, and if you think of it as just a picture of a pond and the beautifulness of it, banks all clear. It just looks beautiful, but this throne of God, this water coming from here, it's in one glimpse into the future. John sees the river flowing from the throne of God.

It is the source of life. It emanates from God. Even in heaven, we will drink and eat food, probably not out of necessity for our health, but for the pleasure and fellowship it brings sharing a meal.

This is symbolic of internal life. This is like no river on earth, no hydraulical cycle, which is the continuous movement of water on, above, and below the earth's surface. This cycle includes various processes like evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and runoff.

The water of life symbolizes the continual flow of eternal life from God, a throne to heaven's residence, this symbolic of this water coming out. Jesus told the woman at the well, if she drank from the water he gave her, she would never thirst again. This here is that water that he talked about.

The water possesses life-giving powers. The source is the life and the land, and this water springs up into everlasting life. In our days today of pollution, it's hard to think of water this clear or this pure.

Even that beautiful small lake that I described this morning with the fountain I described to you, I don't know if I would want to drink from it. It looked beautiful, but I'm not sure how clean that

was if I would want to drink from it. This is when the soldier pierced Christ's side, water and blood came out.

This is the water of life. Just like all else in New Jerusalem, the river was clear as crystal, so that it reflects the glory of God. And as it comes down from the throne of God and the lamb in a dazzling, sparkling, never-ending flow of everlasting life from God's throne to his people.

Verse 2 says, In the middle of its tree, in either side of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. It's a symbol of both eternal life and then continual blessings.

The tree bears twelve fruits, one for each month, and is symbolic of the abundant variety in heaven. The English word therapeutic comes from a Greek word translated into healing. And these leaves somehow enriched the heavenly life, making it full and making it satisfying.

The tree of life was present in the Garden of Eden, but Adam and Eve did not eat of it. I think we can make a case of this, that that tree, the tree of life, is Jesus Christ. We can partake of what he offers, then we have life.

This tree has twelve different kinds of fruit, that yields fruit every month, giving us the idea of infinity, a variety of heaven. The tree offers perpetual life and health, as well as food. It says monthly.

Since time exists, no more emphasizes the expression of joyous provisions of eternity using familiar terms of time. So we would be familiar with that when we say monthly with twelve. Nations meaning the people of heaven.

Sickness will no longer be, so the healing doesn't apply any illness here. The leaves must then promote general health, or another way of telling us life will be fully energized, rich, and exciting continuously. The scripture also doesn't tell us if we eat these leaves or the fruit.

The angels ate food on earth with Abraham, if you think about it, remember, and Sarah, as did Jesus after the resurrection with his disciples. So perhaps the saints in heaven will eat for enjoyment, not necessity. Hopefully calorie free, so we can eat ice cream, and chocolate cake, and foods we all enjoy, that bring us joy.

That's what we hope for whenever it comes there, it'll be joy, and I can eat whatever I want. After gaining five pounds, after being gone, it doesn't work here. That ice cream, and cake, and chocolate just added to you.

Verse three said, there will no longer be any curse, and the throne of God and the Lamb will be in it, and his bond servants will serve him. There will no longer be any curse. Think of that.

The curse is on humanity, and earth, because of Adam and Eve's disobedience. That will now be finished. It will be over.

God will never have to judge sin again, since it will never exist in the new heaven and the new earth. The one associated with the curse, the old serpent, has been blown off to the lake of fire. The curse of the land is gone, and God will not present here if anything is cursed was left.

The effects of the past, some call it the ending curse, will be totally gone forever. There will be no more curse. God's saints will serve him.

Revelations 5, 7, 15. And then they'll reign with him forever. Daniel 7, 18 through 27.

The picture of life here is we will be busy serving God. We will serve and we will reign with him. Since he is an infinite God, we can be sure he will have infinite things for us to do.

We, Christians, have been bought and paid for with the blood of the lamb. And we will be with the Father, but we will not be equal with him. We will be with him, but not equal.

Because that was part of the sin, if you think about it. We want to be God. In our lives today, we want to be God.

We want to be equal with God. And that'll be very clear there, as it is with many believers, that we aren't equal with God. But the world, the world, thinks they are.

Thinks they're better than God. Thinks that they can do it all on their own. But without God, there's nothing.

Verse 4 says, They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. No unglorified human could see God's face and live. No, none could.

But the residents of heaven can look on God's face now because they're holy. The greatest blessing in eternity is they shall see his face. Though this is now impossible, today, it will happen in an eternal state.

The name of God is on him. It shows who we declare and who we belong to. We know throughout the Bible we are taught we cannot look upon the face of God and live.

Even Moses, and he was so close to God, and God told Moses he could not look. He put his hand over Moses and he passed by him. And Moses always saw his backside in Exodus 33, 22.

There in paradise, we will be in his presence all the time. And we can look upon his face anytime. We will be holy and righteous.

We'll be able to endure the blazing glorious light from the Lord's presence without being consumed by it. That was impossible, or is impossible for mortal men. Verse five.

And there will no longer be any night, and they will not need of light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illuminate them and they will reign forever and ever. There will be no need for other light sources as God's glory will illuminate them. We have talked a lot

about our Lord Jesus Christ being the light.

He is the source of the light. And when lights are turned on, you don't need a candle. The sun has no more purpose for us.

The presence of this light is all that is needed. The kingdom has no end. It's all for eternity.

Our verse says they will reign. Heavenly citizens are more than servants. As a final word describing saints' heavenly experience, they are told again that it will never end.

There shall reign forever and ever. Verse six. And he said to me, these words are faithful and true.

And the Lord, these God of spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his bondservants the things which must soon take place. His bondservants. Who would that be? The members of the seven churches.

Remember in the beginning of the book of the Asia Minor that we received in Revelations 1 and 11? And then also all believers who have read, who will read and since that time have read this book. The things which must take place soon, it says. This involves the entire revelation which John has related to us throughout this book.

These verses, six through 21 to end this chapter, form a conclusion or a summary to this book. And it emphasizes two themes. The authenticity of this book as a revelation of God and the coming return of Jesus Christ.

These things refer to the entire book of Revelation. They're authenticated as genuine by the angel who sent to give God them through John to his servants. This is to the members of the church that we saw with Revelations 1, 3, and 11.

Here is just a reassurance that all this is not to be taken lightly. None of this is to be taken lightly. This is the absolute truth.

The prophets such as Daniel, Ezekiel, and Isaiah to name just a few, have all spoken of this special time in history. We even read this in Matthew chapter 24 and Luke chapter 21 and 22. It's the same information regardless of who pens it because the author is God.

The angel's words reinforce an important truth. Everything John saw in Revelation will come to pass. John's words are not mystical and they're not apopolis, apopolis, excuse me.

It's not a record of his bizarre dreams or a result of an overactive imagination. Further, it's not an allegory or a translation from where readers can't, they can find a hidden meaning of their own. They make it their own concoction, turn it into whatever they want.

This is an accurate description of events and persons that are yet to come. And verse seven says, and behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the word and prophecy of this

book.

See, Jesus is speaking and Jesus is retuning his eminence. Blessed is he who heeds the prophecies of this book. This is referring to the reading of the book of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

But how can you heed words of prophecy if you don't understand what they're saying? Most people, myself included, before we started this study, avoid revelation of Jesus Christ like a plague. Most people will just shy away from it. But if we must heed the words, then we must read it to understand what they are and what they mean to us.

I believe in saying this book also means the entire Bible, just not the revelation of Jesus Christ, because the whole Bible is the revelation of Jesus Christ. We as believers are calling to guard and protect the book of revelation, to defend against detractors who deny its relevance, against critics who deny authority, as well as against confused interpreters who obscure its meaning to some degree. Not only call to guard scripture, but yet obey it.

Not just guard it, but obey it and live it. We might ask what it does, what it means to obey the book of revelation. Think of it as a general command to long for Christ's return and our eternal fellowship with him.

It calls believers to desire heaven, to desire holiness, to desire to see Christ vindicated and for him to triumph over his enemies, the desire to end the curse and desire glories of Christ's early earthly income and new heaven and new earth, to see God's face, to see an end of the Mamelonian harlot and the corrupt commercial and political systems which we've talked about through this book, to look forward to a life of peace and happiness. The purpose of revelation is not for entertainment and it's not merely satisfying curiosity of believers for the future, but to reveal the glory of God's son and call believers to live godly lives, obedient in the life of the soon return. Verse eight says, I, John, and the one who heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angels who showed me these things.

It says heard and saw. This is saying John, now speaking, confirms the validity of this revelation with his own eyes, his own witness, his own testimony, the basis of any reliable witness. There has been several times we have seen John in this book overwhelmed by the presence and the power of angels.

He, being overwhelmed, started worshipping the angels. And some people have false doctrine centered on angel worship. We don't worship angels.

They are created beings. We worship the creator. We are warned over and over again not to worship angels.

And John is told several times in Revelation not to worship this angel. Think about that. I was thinking about it.

He's an apostle. He saw Jesus Christ. He probably knows so much more than I would ever think about knowing.

But he was so overwhelmed that he started worshiping the angel that that just took it over him. And how that can be. You can see that in people that they get so overwhelmed with the word and then they worship things that they shouldn't.

But the Bible tells us here and now, right now, to worship nothing else but God. Verse 9 says, But he said to me, Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours, of your brethren, the prophets, and of those who read the words of this book.

Worship God. The angel right away tells him that he was created also by his declaration. Not only his, but also John's brother, the prophets.

And of all the believers that are defined here as those who heed the words of this book. The angel commands him to worship God and only God. And this is one thing that may get me in some trouble here, but it needs to be said.

It's the truth, and some people will like it. The Bible forbids worship of anyone else, including saints, angels, the Virgin Mary, or any other created being. Period.

End of story. That's it. Verse 10 said, He said to me, Do not seal up the words of prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

See, previous prophecies were sealed up. Daniel 8, 26 and 12, 4 through 10. These here prophecies are proclaimed so they can produce the readings of worship.

The command not to seal this prophetic prophecy is different than what the Lord told Daniel. In Daniel 12, 4, it says this, But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time, for the time is near. This refers to Himmelton, which means the end is next.

The reason for the difference is simply for the time is near. Until death and resurrection of Christ, the time for this prophecy had not come. Since Jesus had already opened the seven seals, prophetically, in Revelations chapter 5 and 6, to reveal the future is only appropriate that the entire book remain open for us as well to read.

In contrast with Daniel, who was told to seal up his book of prophecy, since the end was still way off, it was in the distant future. But here, John was told to leave his book open. The Messiah had come.

His second coming is imminent and the time is at hand. The difference simply stated is one, John lived after the time of Christ's crucifixion. The other didn't, which was Daniel.

In John's day, it was possible to see the unfolding of the events, prophesied in Daniel's time. They were long gone. See, chapter 22, the beginning of this book, is a beautiful description of what paradise will be like.

If you think about it, I was on vacation for two weeks and I got to see some beautiful things. I got to see a boardwalk. I got to see the largest instrument in the world.

People sharing Christ on the boardwalk. They just had signs out there, you're going to heaven, and they would talk to them. A beautiful ocean with crashing waves.

I got to see big, large cities. I got to drive through around Philadelphia and through Pittsburgh and around Cincinnati. I got to see smaller cities.

Ocean City, Fombelle, PA, Gas City, Indiana, Zelion, Oakland, Pennsylvania. Small, little towns. Mountains and valleys and rivers and streams.

I got to see the incline in Pittsburgh. I don't know if you know that or not. There's only two of them in the United States, San Francisco and Pittsburgh, where they go up to Mount Washington on an incline.

That's the way they used to get up to the mountain. I got to see some zoos with some animals in it. I mentioned the Arkham County and Christ being shared with millions of people every year.

I got to see the rolling mountains of Kentucky. I got to spend time with my wife and my granddaughter. What a great time of joy that was.

All great things and all really beautiful. But they won't compare to this place that we just read about in chapters 1 and 2. Heaven. To be with God.

Glorious. And that's not to say I'm here and I'm alive right now. I'm waiting for heaven to come and I'm just not going to do it even.

We're here. We can go see those things. And we can have joy here on earth.

But we have to remember what is important. If you notice in the world itself, the descriptions there, a lot of the things were of nature, which are of God. And a lot of that is out there and we need to enjoy it.

But a lot of things are a man of the world. And there's a few things that I kind of threw in there on that boardwalk where we saw these young kids asking with signs held up, are you going to heaven? Tell me how you're going to heaven. How do you know you're going to heaven? And they just had a talk with them.

And then I described some of this morning about the cartoonists of those young kids walking through the Ark Encounter and seeing the story of a young girl, especially with the lineage, who's only eight and a half. But she saw the story of a teenage girl who was going out and drinking and then she got drunk and then she got in a car with somebody and then there was an accident. And then she saw all that go on and her father, and she's blaming God for her father being sick.

And then you go all through this and it comes back and it all points to Jesus Christ. It all points right to them. The greatest things on this earth are not going to compare to what eternity is going to be in heaven with our Lord and Savior.

And it's just amazing to me that we've gone through this book. We're in verse 22. And we saw all the things that are going to happen.

The things, the terrible things that are going to happen. And it ends with this quorum here of what we as believers will be able to live in. And the thing is is that it's for non-believers too.

Because each one of us here probably knows someone or are a believer. And that we can share this glory of God with them of what we heard today. What heaven is going to be like? I don't know about you, but I think of some people, somebody right now, a face is coming in my mind of somebody that maybe doesn't know Jesus Christ and maybe it is to your face right now in your mind.

That you can share this with. That the glory of God is there just for the taking. And it's just for believing.

It's simple but yet very hard. It's simple. It's just believing.

But the hard part is making it real in your life and living it. So I pray right now for anyone that isn't a believer.

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