

No Substitute

General Topic: The Great Hope of the Saints

Sunday, August 28, 2022

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Lesson Text: Revelation 22:12-21

Background Scripture: Revelation 22

Rev 22:12-21 (Rev 22:10) And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. (Rev 22:11) 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. (Rev. 22:12) And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. (13) I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. (14) Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. (15) For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. (16) I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. (17) And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (18) For I testify unto every man that heareth 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: (19) 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. (20) He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (21) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Teaching Tools:

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Word puzzles may be developed from the following site: www.puzzlemaker.com. Also, www.dtlk.com has several visual aids that may be beneficial, as well as www.kidssundayschool.com which provide other helps for teaching.

Bible Journaling may be an interesting way to involve older teens in self-expression of the lessons they are

taught. Visit www.lifeway.com/Articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps to find ways to use this valuable tool to learn and reinforce Scripture.

Movie Clips are a wonderful teaching tool to further explain or create topics of discussion for a variety of age groups; www.wingclips.com provides clips divided by movie title, category, scripture, or theme. Clips may be accessed on any electronic device.

The Lesson:

This week marks the end of our cursory look into the book of Revelation. I'm not sure that we've provided a working definition of the word 'revelation'; "the apokalypsis" or some call it in the English, the Apocalypse, which reflects the meaning of the word "Revelation." The word apokalypsis means; an unveiling, laying bare, making naked, a revealing or disclosure. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to show unto His servants, things which would come to pass (Revelation 1:1a). In it, Christ clarifies future events. He gave it to John, one of His servants. If you'll remember in his writing of the Gospel of John, he always referred to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 20:2). While Jesus clearly loved all the disciples, John (one of the sons of thunder) was part of His inner circle (Matthew 17:1) and they were dear friends. Since he (John), was exiled on the Isle of Patmos after a failed attempt to end his life by Domitian, then emperor of Rome, it follows that he would be the one to receive the Revelation in an effort to comfort the Churches who were persecuted for their belief in Christ, as well as himself.

As one would expect, the Bible ends on a high note for believers and serves as proper warning for those failing to believe. Because the mind of man is so twisted (flesh-induced), some may pass it off as hogwash; however, my question is always what if I'm right? What if what I believe is what the end will be like? Where will you be left? It is past time for believers to take a stand against sin and injustice on every plane of life and proclaim that Jesus saves and He is the answer to all of our concerns.

In many instances, Revelation 22 reiterates what has already been revealed in Revelation 21. **Repetition is beneficial for reinforcement.** We need to be clear that Christ means what He says in previous chapters of not only this book, but the rest of the Bible. They all culminate in this book of revealed truths. Nothing can or should be added or taken away from the text (Revelation

22:18 and 19); woe unto those who purposely attempt to misalign any piece of God's Word.

After being prompted to avoid worshipping him, the angel instructed John to reveal the prophecy of the book; to leave it unsealed. The Churches and people all over the world would need to know that God would fulfill His promises. The Revelation speaks to that fact. Then he says that he that is wayward, let him be wayward, etc. Now this may be a hard pill to swallow; however, those who are committed to their sin, will continue to do so and those committed to the Lord will stay committed to Him. In the last days, few attitudes will change,

Christ begins by stating that He will come quickly. We must keep in mind that this message was for the Church at that time who sought relief from the pressure of living under the persecutorial rule of the Roman government. Since we live in a society dependent upon immediate gratification, quickly implies that something will happen sooner than later. Because Christ lives in eternity, not in time, quickly may be as soon as right now. We cannot pinpoint a specific time; however, we do believe that His Word is true; ergo, He is coming back and His reward is with Him; for He is Alpha and Omega. In this passage, Christ reveals several things about Himself:

- He will return; it is guaranteed;
- He speaks as the Great Steward, calling laborers to receive their day's wages; therefore, He is the Judge and the Rewarder (Barclay);
- He is the beginning and the end and there is no substitute; He effected the Genesis (beginning) and the Revelation, for He was present at both events and each is centered around Him and His Lordship;
- In Him rest completion and eternity;
- He has authority; received His power from no one; He shares His power with no one; He is at the end and will not hand His power to anyone (Barclay).

Christ then provides blessing to those who keep His commandments. I am reminded of James 1:22-24 that admonishes us to be doers of the Word, not hearers only. Once the Word has revealed to us, and shows us the truth of who we are, we cannot fail to remember what we've seen. The benefit is that those whose robes were washed in the Blood of the Lamb will have the right to the tree of life and are permitted to enter into the New Jerusalem by the gates that lead into the city. God did the hard part which was to reconcile man unto Himself; however, man has a responsibility to accept the act of reconciliation and proceed to live according to God's righteous demands. No one is perfect, but Christ's death on the Cross opened the way for man to go boldly to God's throne that was heretofore unapproachable. Once

emerged in Scripture, man becomes acutely aware of his own responsibility and is able to effectively live out his salvation with fear and trembling (Ephesians 6:5).

We find another listing of those unable to enter the gates; this list includes dogs. According to the pious Jews, the word 'dog' was not used in reference to a household pet, but depicted the street scavenger, the mangy, a pariah, and lastly, everything unclean and savage; hence, their terminology for anyone that was not a Jew. Andreas, an old Greek commentator, suggests that the dogs symbolized not only the shameless and unbelieving, but also the Christian who after baptism, returned to their vomit (Barclay). This terminology puts me in mind of those who take hold of the 'plough' and look back. The Bible declares them unfit for the Kingdom (Luke 9:62). The word 'dog' also denotes a thoroughly immoral person based on the law in Deuteronomy 23:18 where God prohibited the use of a dog for an animal sacrifice. Before I leave this scripture, I want to make the point that the last type of person to be excluded are those who loveth and maketh a lie (Revelation 22:15). For some reason, this statement spoke volumes to me. God hates liars, as do most people. They are not dependable; you cannot trust anything they say unless you were standing with them to witness the occurrence. It is difficult to develop lasting relationships with liars; you are forced to second guess them. Who in their right mind wants that type of individual in their lives? If one loves to lie, they love to tell (make) them. They provide unsolicited lies! I want no dealing with this type of soul. The one thing we can do for them is pray they will eventually see the error of their ways and be led to place their faith and trust in the Lord, asking Him to remove their lying tongue and provide them with the voice of truth. Consequently, this lying sickness can be among believers, as well as unbelievers.

Jesus prompted John to declare the writings of this book among the Churches; we are demanded to do the same as the information provided is essential for believers to grasp and understand. Lastly, Christ notes that He sent His angel to testify of the things written in the Revelation; He also discusses His lineage as the promise of perpetuity made to David (2 Samuel 7:16). He refers to Himself as the Root and Offspring of David (see Isaiah 11:1 and 10); along with the bright and morning star. Royalty usually refers to itself as the answer to the needs of the citizenry. Here, only Christ can make the declaration that He is the Light of the World (John 8:12); consequently, we recognize that the world does not function properly without Him. He was (past), and is (present), and is to come (future).

What is our response? We are to perform the work of evangelism (Matthew 28:19, 20). The Holy Spirit and

the Church stand beckoning those who are lost, 'Come.' To those who need to have their thirst quenched 'Come.' The scripture solicits those who desire to take of the water of life freely. This scripture refers to salvation that is available to all, right now! COME!

Finally, John provides a warning, especially for those who impart understanding of the Word of God, be they called by God or men. The privilege of preaching/teaching this Gospel is not to be taken lightly. I count it a blessed privilege to be used as an earthen vessel to carry this Word of salvation, redemption, and reconciliation to people all over the world, that God places in my path. I have a responsibility to study to be approved unto God (2 Timothy 2:15) and this is my reasonable service as I offer myself as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). The very least I can do is to be prepared when I stand to proclaim this Gospel. This message must hold true for all preachers, teachers, and prognosticators. We must provide the truth, not our own interpretation, of God's Word. People's lives are at stake and we must be careful to avoid leading them astray. The Bible says failure to do so will result in our part being removed from the book of Life and out of the Holy City.

Christ promises a speedy return. It is appropriate that after all the doom and gloom of this final book, we find grace, peace, and joy!

What a mighty God we serve!

Be Salt! Be Light! Be Blessed!