

Bible Study #31

5/17/22

Revelation 21

From Father Sebastian's Parish Presentation

Revelation 21

- **Revelation 21:1-3** *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth;...prepared as a bride for her husband...the dwelling of God is with men”*
 - Father asked us to look at the **Genesis** imagery related to God creating the heavens and the earth and the removal of the waters within the first three days
 - The bride coming down from heaven is the heavenly Jerusalem which can also be seen as the earthly new Jerusalem (the church militant, suffering, and triumphant) *

Revelation 21 (Cont)

- We also hear of God dwelling among His people
 - **1st Kings 6** where God will dwell among His people in the temple
 - **Exodus 25** where God dwells among His people in the sanctuary that Moses was instructed to construct
 - Both of these are based on the Genesis image
- The purpose of God creating man was so that He could dwell with man, and man could dwell with God in a relationship
- Here (at the end of salvation history) we hear of the end of the world with the resurrection from the dead, followed by a new heaven, a new earth, and a new creation

Revelation 21 (Cont)

- **Revelation 21:3-8** *“He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them;...the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death”*
 - The Alpha and Omega is a framing device for the **Book of Revelation**
 - I will be your God and you will be my son (**Prologue, John 1:13***)
 - The water from the fountain of life is very Johannine (**John 4**)

Revelation 21 (Cont)

- Calling us to be God's son should remind us of the Prologue where we are called to be His children
- The second death tells us that eternity for humanity is of two parts: one group will be in the lake of fire, and the other group will be with God in the New Jerusalem; the new Garden of Eden

Revelation 21 (Cont)

- **Revelation 21:9** *“Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, and spoke to me saying, Come I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb”*
 - At this point, John was taken to a very high mountain where we are introduced to the contrast between the city described as the harlot and the city described as the bride of the lamb
 - There is an intended parallel or juxtaposition between the bride of Christ (the Church) and the harlot (city) of **Revelation 17** (support for Jerusalem being the harlot city)

Revelation 21 (Cont)

- **Revelation 21:10-21** *“And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great high mountain,...transparent as glass”*
 - As discussed before, the 24 elders (**Revelation 4:4**) were the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles
 - Here, we are returned to the image of the “measuring rod”
 - **Ezekiel 45-47** * was called to measure the Temple in the New Jerusalem
 - **Revelation 11** discussed the temple (the church) was to be measured (while the city outside the temple was to be trampled)
 - Here, we go back to the same image where the glorious New Jerusalem was to be measured
 - The city is a perfect cube like the Holy of Holies *

Revelation 21 (Cont)

- **Revelation 21:22** *“And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the lamb”*
 - Father pointed out that the New Jerusalem will not have a temple because Jesus Christ is the temple (a theme throughout John’s Gospel)
 - Jesus is the temple that **Ezekiel** saw where they will worship the Father in spirit and truth
 - Once again, according to John, Jesus is the truth

Revelation 21 (Cont)

- So, if we are in Jesus (via our baptism), we worship the father in spirit and truth
- Jesus is the temple in which we dwell
- If you are in Jesus from your baptism, you have become Jesus
- Therefore, there is no need for a temple that would be distinct from the city itself

Revelation 21 (Cont)

- **Revelation 21:23-27** *“And the city has no need of the sun or moon to shine upon...but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life”*
 - Again, very Johannine language, as Jesus is the light of the world
 - We also see the image of the Torah which was the light by which one walked
 - The Torah was the light to all the nations who came together (Old Testament Imagery of the restored Jerusalem)

Revelation 21 (Cont)

- Here is the image of a glorious city where all the peoples gathered to give glory and praise to God
- This is imagery from the end of the **Book of Zachariah** concerning salvation
- It concludes with all of the unclean beings cast into the lake of fire, while the righteous enter the city of God
- We will conclude our study of the **Book of Revelation** with a look at **Revelation 22**

Revelation 22

From Father Sebastian's Parish Presentation

Revelation 22

- **Revelation 22:1-5** *“Then he showed me the river crystal,...and they shall reign for ever and ever”*
 - The water of life is a reference back to **Genesis 2**
 - This passage is talking about a new “Garden of Eden”
 - **Ezekiel** discusses the restoration of *Jerusalem* as being like a new Eden
 - We also see a reference to the tree of life, and to the name being on their forehead as in **Revelation 7**
 - For ever and ever is a framing device which we saw in **Revelation 21:22** which reflected back to **Daniel 7** where the saints will inherit the kingdom and reign forever

Revelation 22 (Cont)

- **Revelation 22: 6-7** *“And he said to me, ‘These words are trustworthy and true...Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book’”*
 - Father pointed out that everything we see from here to the end is a part of the “Epilogue”
 - There is a shift in tone as John seems to be waking up from his dream and he gives us language that reflects back to **Revelation 1** and the “Prologue”
 - There seems to be a change in tone at this point

Revelation 22 (Cont)

- Once again, Father discussed the importance of “soon,” and “near”
- It does not refer to the end of the 1000-year reign
- In fact, it is taking us back to the beginning and reminds us that the entire book is about the Christians of Asia Minor who were tempted to apostatize because they could not see the finish line
- They were worried that they were about to die, and if that happened, what would happen to them
- Father reminded us that the book was written to encourage those Christians to patiently endure the present persecutions because they were about to end

Revelation 22 (Cont)

- If this was occurring in the 90's under *Domitian* (as stated by *Irenaeus*), it ended very quickly
 - Domitian was murdered in 96 and a few months later Nerva released all of the political and religious prisoners
 - They went from intense persecution to freedom to worship as they pleased
- Thus, this passage is calling them to be patient as He will be coming soon
- He goes on to say blessed is he who keeps the words of prophecy in this book
- Again, in the beginning of **Revelation**, it said blessed is he who hears it and reads it for the time is coming soon

Revelation 22 (Cont)

- **Revelation 22:8-15** *“I john am he who heard and saw these things...and everyone who loves and practices falsehood”*
 - “Near” at this point was obviously for John
 - Father reminded us that the *Domitian* persecution ended very quickly
 - “Wash your robes” is a reference to Baptism
 - “To eat from the tree of life” is a foretaste of the eternal life that is from the Eucharist
 - That means that this is both on an earthly and eschatological level (those inside and outside the church)

Revelation 22 (Cont)

- **Revelation 22:16-19** *“I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches....which are described in this book”*
 - The “churches” refer (back to **Revelation 1**) to the seven churches of Asia Minor
 - This warning should remind us of what was said at the beginning, “everyone who hears the prophecies and read it of this book because the time is near”
 - Those who heard this were the members of the congregations of the seven churches

Revelation 22 (Cont)

- The warning about modifying the book was designed to prevent anyone from copying the text and from adding or omitting anything from the original
- All of this critical information was needed to avoid people from apostatizing and falling into sin
- This impacted on the salvation of all those who heard this message

Revelation 22 (Cont)

- **Revelation 22:20-21** *“He who testified to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.*
 - Father suggested that John ended the book with a wonderful conclusion

Conclusion

- Father suggested that if you wanted to make a further study of Revelation, the following would be very useful
 - Bernard Orchard's *A Commentary on Holy Scripture* (the section on Revelation)
 - G.K. Beal *Commentary on the Book of Revelation*
 - Hank Hanegraaff *The Apocalypse Code*