

NOON BIBLE STUDY: REVELATION 22 (PART 2)

WE WILL DISCOVER TWO MAIN POINTS THAT ARE HIGHLIGHTED AS REVELATION CONCLUDES:

- 1 - TAKE THESE THINGS SERIOUSLY.
- 2 - THESE THINGS ARE HAPPENING SOON.

REVELATION 22:6-9 - THE PROPHECY ENDS, TIME TO HEED

THE PROPHECY HAS ENDED AND NOW THE ATTENTION IS TURNED TOWARDS THOSE WHO HAVE READ THE PROPHETIC WORD. THE FOCUS TURNS TO AN APPEAL TO TAKE SERIOUSLY WHAT WE HAVE JUST READ. REVELATION 22:6 IS EMPATHIC IN THIS POINT: THESE WORDS ARE TRUE, THESE WORDS ARE FROM GOD, THESE WORDS ARE IN THE TRADITION OF THE OTHER SPIRIT-INSPIRED BIBLICAL PROPHETS (V. 6).

WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH THESE TRULY TRUE TRUTHS? WE ARE ALSO CHARGED TO "HEED" THESE WORDS. THE WORD "HEED" IS THE GREEK WORD "TEREO" MEANING TO "GUARD OR WATCH OVER" AND TO "KEEP". IT'S MORE THAN JUST HEARING AND IT'S MORE THAN JUST DOING, IT COMBINES BOTH OF THOSE ACTIONS AND ASSUMES A SERIOUS ATTENTION TO THAT TASK. TO ILLUSTRATE THE SERIOUSNESS IN WHICH WE OUGHT TO "HEED" THESE WORDS, A CONCLUDING WARNING IS GIVEN AS THE CHAPTER CONCLUDES:

REVELATION 22:18-19 - I TESTIFY TO EVERYONE WHO HEARS THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK: IF ANYONE ADDS TO THEM, GOD WILL ADD TO HIM THE PLAGUES WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK: 19 AND IF ANYONE TAKES AWAY FROM THE WORDS OF THE BOOK OF THIS PROPHECY, GOD WILL TAKE AWAY HIS PART FROM THE TREE OF LIFE AND FROM THE HOLY CITY, WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK.

THE END GOAL FOR JOHN IS NOT TO BE IN AWE OF THE ANGEL WHO HAS GUIDED HIM THROUGH THIS PROPHETIC EXPERIENCE, BUT TO JOIN THE ANGELS AND PROPHETS AND THOSE WHO HEED THE WORDS OF THIS BOOK IN WORSHIPING GOD. HEEDING THE WORDS OF THIS BOOK OUGHT TO LEAD TO THE WORSHIP OF GOD.

Q - WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "HEED" THE WORDS OF REVELATION?

REVELATION 22:10-15 - THE PROPHECY ENDS, AND WILL BE FULFILLED SOON

TIME BASED PHRASES: "SOON TAKE PLACE" (22:6)
"COMING QUICKLY" (22:7)
"THE TIME IS NEAR" (22:10)
"I AM COMING QUICKLY" (22:20)

V. 10 - "DON'T SEAL UP THE WORDS..." IS A REFERENCE TO THE PROPHECY GIVEN TO DANIEL GENERATIONS AGO. AFTER A LENGTHY PROPHETIC WORD, THE LORD TELLS DANIEL TO DO SOMETHING WITH THE WORDS HE JUST RECEIVED FROM HEAVEN:

DANIEL 8:26 ESV - THE VISION OF THE EVENINGS AND THE MORNINGS THAT HAS BEEN TOLD IS TRUE, BUT SEAL UP THE VISION, FOR IT REFERS TO MANY DAYS FROM NOW."

AND AGAIN AT THE END OF DANIEL'S LIFE HE IS TOLD:

DANIEL 12:4 - "BUT AS FOR YOU, DANIEL, CONCEAL THESE WORDS AND SEAL UP THE BOOK UNTIL THE END OF TIME; MANY WILL GO BACK AND FORTH, AND KNOWLEDGE WILL INCREASE."

DANIEL IS TOLD TO "SEAL UP HIS VISION" BECAUSE IT'S NOT GOING TO BE HAPPENING FOR SOME TIME. THAT IS NOT THE CASE WITH REVELATION'S PROPHECY. JOHN IS TOLD TO *NOT SEAL UP THE VISION* BECAUSE IT'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN! IT'S NOT FOR THE FAR OFF FUTURE, IT'S "SOON TO TAKE PLACE". WOW.

YET, AS WE SPOKE ABOUT ABOVE, THE PROPHECY IS NOT TO JUST BE READ AND THOUGHT ABOUT. THERE IS A RESPONSE THAT IS REASONABLE AS WE PROCESS THE WORDS OF THIS BOOK. EVEN IN THIS FINAL CHAPTER ALONE, WE READ A NUMBER OF "ACTION" WORDS:

ACTION WORDS:

- "BLESSED IS HE WHO HEEDS THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK" (22:7)
- "WORSHIP GOD" (22:9)
- "LET THE ONE WHO IS RIGHTEOUS STILL PRACTICE RIGHTEOUSNESS, THE ONE WHO IS HOLY, KEEP HIMSELF HOLY" (22:11)
- "DON'T ADD TO OR TAKE AWAY WORDS FROM THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK" (22:18)

SO, WHAT OUGHT WE DO IN LIGHT OF THESE THINGS HAPPENING SOON? HERE ARE THREE TAKEAWAYS FROM THE CALL TO ACTION FROM REVELATION 22:

- 1 - STAY FAITHFUL
- 2 - STAY AWAKE
- 3 - STAY HOLY

STAY FAITHFUL - V. 11 - IN SORT OF AN ODD WAY, WE ARE TOLD THAT IF YOU'RE RIGHTEOUS, STAY RIGHTEOUS, IF YOU'RE UNRIGHTEOUS, STAY UNRIGHTEOUS. IN OTHER WORDS, THERE IS NO TIME TO MESS AROUND. IT'S AN EXAGGERATED WAY TO SAY THAT THE NEARNESS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS SO IMMINENT, THAT IT'S ALMOST AS IF WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO CHANGE!

STAY AWAKE - V. 12 - THE PHRASE "BEHOLD!" IS COMPARABLE TO "HEY! LOOK HERE!" JESUS IS COMING BACK QUICKLY, AND HE IS GOING TO GIVE TO EACH ACCORDING TO WHAT THEY HAVE DONE. THE LANGUAGE HERE IS ABOUT WAGES AND WORK. THE RETURN OF CHRIST IS PAYDAY - AND THE MASTER IS BRINGING THE PAYMENT EARNED BY EACH PERSON. THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH, THE WAGES OF FAITH IS LIFE AND BLESSING. THE WORD "RENDER" (ESV: REPAY) IS FROM A GREEK WORD (*APODIDOMI*) WHICH APPROPRIATELY MEANS BOTH "TO PAY" AND "TO PAY BACK".

STAY HOLY - V. 14-15 - ARE YOU IN OR OUT? AS WE DISCUSSED LAST WEEK, THERE IS NO GRAY AREA OR PURGATORY-LIKE MIDDLE OPTION AS IT RELATES TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD. THE PURE ARE CITIZENS OF THE HOLY CITY, AND THE IMPURE ARE "OUTSIDE OF THE CITY". THE IMPURE ARE "DOGS, SORCERERS, IMMORAL PEOPLE, MURDERERS, IDOLATERS, AND EVERYONE WHO LOVES AND PRACTICES LYING." THE PURE ARE NOT THOSE WHO HAVE LIVED PERFECTLY OR NEVER SINNED OR HAVE THE HIGHEST INTELLECT OR MOST RICHES - THEY ARE THOSE WHO HAVE "WASHED THEIR ROBES" AND AS A RESULT HAVE RIGHTS TO THE TREE OF LIFE AND ACCESS INTO THE ETERNAL CITY. WHO ARE THESE ROBE-WASHED CITIZENS?

REVELATION 7:9-17 - AFTER THESE THINGS I LOOKED, AND BEHOLD, A GREAT MULTITUDE WHICH NO ONE COULD COUNT, FROM EVERY NATION AND ALL TRIBES AND PEOPLES AND TONGUES, STANDING BEFORE THE THRONE AND BEFORE THE LAMB, CLOTHED IN WHITE ROBES, AND PALM BRANCHES WERE IN THEIR HANDS; 10 AND THEY CRY OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING, "SALVATION TO OUR GOD WHO SITS ON THE THRONE, AND TO THE LAMB."

11 AND ALL THE ANGELS WERE STANDING AROUND THE THRONE AND AROUND THE ELDERS AND THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES; AND THEY FELL ON THEIR FACES BEFORE THE THRONE AND WORSHIPED GOD, 12 SAYING, "AMEN, BLESSING AND GLORY AND WISDOM AND THANKSGIVING AND HONOR AND POWER AND MIGHT, BE TO OUR GOD FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN."

13 THEN ONE OF THE ELDERS ANSWERED, SAYING TO ME, "THESE WHO ARE CLOTHED IN THE WHITE ROBES, WHO ARE THEY, AND WHERE HAVE THEY COME FROM?" 14 I SAID TO HIM, "MY LORD, YOU KNOW." AND HE SAID TO ME, "THESE ARE THE ONES WHO COME OUT OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION, AND **THEY HAVE WASHED THEIR ROBES AND MADE THEM WHITE IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.**

15 "FOR THIS REASON, THEY ARE BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD; AND THEY SERVE HIM DAY AND NIGHT IN HIS TEMPLE; AND HE WHO SITS ON THE THRONE WILL SPREAD HIS TABERNACLE OVER THEM. 16 "THEY WILL HUNGER NO LONGER, NOR THIRST ANYMORE; NOR WILL THE SUN BEAT DOWN ON THEM, NOR ANY HEAT; 17 FOR THE LAMB IN THE CENTER OF THE THRONE WILL BE THEIR SHEPHERD, AND WILL GUIDE THEM TO SPRINGS OF THE WATER OF LIFE; AND GOD WILL WIPE EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES."

THE WORDS OF REVELATION ARE TRUE AND ARE COMING TO PASS SOON! THESE WORDS OUGHT TO BE HEEDED - AND THE CALL IS TO STAY FAITHFUL, STAY AWAKE AND STAY HOLY! HALLELUJAH AND AMEN!

SOMETHING THAT IS AMAZING ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF SCRIPTURE IS THAT WHEN WE READ THE BOOK OF REVELATION COMPLETELY AND AS WE HEAR THESE FINAL CHARGES THAT CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND THAT THESE THINGS ARE HAPPENING SOON, WE FEEL IT. WE HAVE READ THESE CHAPTERS AND HAVE SEEN THEIR TRUTHS IN THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE AND WE HEAR THE CALLS OF KING JESUS IN OUR SOULS TODAY TO BE READY FOR HIS COMING. MY POINT IN HIGHLIGHTING THIS IS BECAUSE THE PHRASE "*BEHOLD I COME QUICKLY*" WAS WRITTEN OVER 1900 YEARS AGO. A SKEPTIC WOULD THINK THIS IS A FOOLISH LINE, YET THE BELIEVER FEELS URGENCY AS THEY READ IT TODAY - AND THAT IS THE SPIRIT OF GOD AT WORK. EVERY GENERATION OF CHRISTIAN IS CALLED TO "DENY UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY DESIRES AND TO LIVE SENSIBLY, RIGHTEOUSLY AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE (TITUS 2:12)" AND "*NOT PUT OFF TILL TOMORROW THAT WHICH SHOULD BE DONE TODAY* (BENJAMIN FRANKLIN)."

AND AS WE WAIT FOR THE SOON COMING OF OUR KING, WE ARE CALLED TO REMAIN FAITHFUL, REMAIN HOLY AND CLING TIGHTLY TO OUR WASHED ROBES, ROBES BRIGHT AND CLEAN FROM THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF THE CROSS. ROBES WHITE, "NAUGHT OF GOOD THAT I HAVE DONE", BUT WHITE FROM "NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD OF JESUS."

UNLIKE GOD'S DIRECTIVE TO DANIEL, JOHN WAS TOLD TO "NOT SEAL UP THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK, FOR THE TIME IS NEAR (22:10)." IN OTHER WORDS, GOD WANTS THE WORDS OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION TO BE KNOWN AND HEED! BEFORE WE STARTED THIS STUDY MANY MONTHS AGO, WE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WAS SOME HESITATION TO STUDY REVELATION FOR VARIOUS REASONS - IT'S SCARY OR FRIGHTENING, IT'S CONFUSING OR HARD TO UNDERSTAND. SOME CHRISTIANS HAVE NEVER READ REVELATION. EVEN SOME CHRISTIANS LEADERS SHY AWAY FROM IT BECAUSE OF IT'S COMPLEXITIES OR CONTENT. YET, GOD'S OPINION ON THE CONTENTS OF REVELATION ARE CLEAR - HE DOES NOT WANT THE BOOK OF REVELATION SEALED UP FOR ANOTHER TIME NOR SEALED UP TO BE KEPT SECRET.

AS WE NEAR THE END OF OUR STUDY, WE MAY HAVE MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS, WE MAY HAVE NEW THINGS TO SORT OUT, AND PERHAPS EVEN FEEL OVERWHELMED BY ALL THAT WE'VE READ (THOUGH I HOPE THIS IS NOT TRUE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE). THINGS MAY HAVE BEEN SCARY OR FRIGHTENING, CONFUSING OR HARD TO UNDERSTAND. BUT, YOU HAVE JOURNEYED WITH THE SPIRIT'S LEADING THROUGH A BOOK OF THE BIBLE THAT HAS BEEN SUPERNATURALLY PRESERVED FOR GENERATIONS AND THAT GOD WANTS HIS PEOPLE TO READ AND HEED! IN FACT, NOT ONLY ARE WE TOLD THAT THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR GOD'S PEOPLE TO READ AND UNDERSTAND, BUT THAT THOSE WHO READ AND HEED WILL BE BLESSED BY GOD AS THEY DO!

REVELATION 1:3 (NLT) - GOD **BLESSES** THE ONE WHO READS THE WORDS OF THIS PROPHECY TO THE CHURCH, AND HE BLESSES ALL WHO LISTEN TO ITS MESSAGE AND OBEY WHAT IT SAYS, FOR THE TIME IS NEAR.

REVELATION 22:7 - "AND BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY. **BLESSED** IS HE WHO HEEDS THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK."

GOD WILL BLESS YOU AS YOU READ AND WRESTLE WITH REVELATION. IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY BOOK IN THE WORLD THAT THE AUTHOR IS PRESENT WITH YOU AS YOU READ IT. GOD PROMISES TO BLESS YOU AS YOU READ AND HEED THIS BOOK. AS WE TURN TOWARDS THE CLOSE OF OUR STUDY, WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE WITH OUR HEADS FILLED WITH INTERESTING FACTS - WE MUST BE RESOLUTE TO RESPOND TO THIS READING WITH LIVES OF SURRENDERED DEPENDANCE ON OUR GOD. WE CANNOT READ REVELATION WITHOUT HIM AND WE CERTAINLY CANNOT RESPOND TO REVELATION AS WE OUGHT TO WITHOUT HIM. IF WE CONCLUDE OUR STUDY OF REVELATION WITH WELL CONSTRUCTED TIMELINES AND NOT LIFE TRANSFORMATION, WE HAVE MISSED THE POINT OF IT ALL.

SO, WORSHIP GOD. CHRIST IS COMING QUICKLY. BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO HEEDS THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK.