

THE CULMINATION OF ALL THINGS

The book of Revelation

Day 5

June 2008

Here we are then, at the end of quite a marathon, and we haven't really started on our study of the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Today to end, I want us to look at the very last chapter of the bible, Revelation 22 and the book of beginnings, Genesis. First then, book of Revelation, and Revelation 22:1-5

'And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb .²In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. ⁵And there shall be no night there: they need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.'

These 5 verses are the last verses of prophecy found in the Bible, verse 3 shows us that there will be no more curse. When Adam fell all of creation fell as well. Disease, death and sickness came with the fall. This verse shows us disease, death and sickness will no longer be around – everything will be perfect. However, verse two seems to contradict verse 3.

²In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations

Healing of the nations. If there is no more sickness why do the leaves of the tree bring healing to the nations? Once we know that that it will give a wonderful picture of what God has in store for us.

The tree is called the tree of Life, and this is not the only place that the tree of Life is mentioned. God knows the end from the beginning, and in Genesis the tree of Life is mentioned. I want us now to look at the Garden in Eden and see the concept of the garden.

But just before we look at Genesis 1 and 2, we should remember that the garden in Eden is not the first Eden found in the Bible – does that surprise you? The first Eden is found in Ezekiel 28:1-10.

This is a chapter that deals with prophecy against Tyre and deals with the judgement against the human ruler of Tyre, but that is not what I want us to look at. What we want to look at is found in verse 11. This section is talking about Satan. Verse 2 talks about a human ruler of Tyre, verse 11 talks about the King of Tyre and as we read on from verse 12 you can see that the description concerning the King of Tyre is no a description of a man, but an angel.

So what this passage is saying this is – although mankind looks at its earthly rulers, those earthly rulers are controlled by someone in authority over them. We know that there are angelic forces which have an effect on the history of the earth, you can see that today with Iraq and the middle east generally, and this passage in Ezekiel says that the ruler of Tyre is being given his directions from above – this is who is the **real** king and the ruler of Tyre is being given his direction from him. So the ruler of Tyre sitting on the throne just follows the orders from the angelic being and the King of Tyre referred to here in Ezekiel is Satan himself and at this time, Tyre which was a very evil place, was Satan’s throne on the earth. Even today he has a throne on the earth.

Revelation 2:12,13 *“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, these things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: I know your works and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.”*

Satan has had and will have a throne on this earth until God destroys him. Adam gave away the title deeds to the earth, which Jesus won back on the cross – we see this when Jesus begins to open the scrolls which are the title deeds. Satan’s throne is mobile and he moves it around.

Ezekiel 28:12-17 ‘Son of man take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God:

“You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ¹³You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold, the workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. ¹⁴You were the anointed cherub who covers: I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. ¹⁵You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. ¹⁶By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned: therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God: and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. ¹⁷Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendour I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you.”

Verse 13. Eden the Garden of God. Notice also this person was **created**. God created one man, Adam. So we can see that this passage does not refer to mankind, but to Satan. When Satan appeared in the garden, he appeared as a serpent, but the Garden in Eden is not in Eden the Garden of God. What we know is, before the earth was created there was an Eden in the heavenlies, which was around the throne room of God, which is where Satan was. So the first Eden is an angelic one and Satan lived there. A heavenly Eden.

Verse 15 – when Satan was created he was created sinless, but Satan like us, was created with free will and that free will has a positive side and a negative side. Free will has a right to choose and Satan had the right to choose for God or against Him and Satan chose to go against God and as a result he became sinful. Satan was in the heavenly Eden, but he sinned against God and was thrown out. God created on this earth,

another Eden, the word means delight, pleasure, and in Genesis 2 we get an earthly Eden with man created on the earth.

Genesis 2:8-17 ⁸The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. ⁹And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. ¹¹The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which encompasses the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹²And the gold of that land is good. Bdelium and the onyx stone are there. ¹³The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which encompasses the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴The name of the third river is Tigris it is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates. ¹⁵Then the Lord God took man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶And the Lord God commanded the man saying "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Adam is put in the earthly Eden and when Adam was created he was sinless. Now also we have the tree of life and in verse 9 we have the two main trees of the bible. Why is it, in the middle of this garden was this tree of the knowledge of good and evil – it was the only tree that Adam could not eat from, he could eat from any other tree, including the tree of life, but he could not from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That's going to be the one he's going to most want to eat from!

You know the answer to this question – the tree was there because of free will. Unless free will is tested, it isn't free. Adam, like Satan had free will and he could choose to use his free will totally for God or against Him. Every one of us in this room as the same challenge every day in our lives. Do we use our free will for God or against Him?

As we all know in the garden God gave Adam one test of his free will, he was commanded not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – Adam could choose for God, or against Him, so Adam, who was sinless like Satan in the beginning, went negative, and he chose to go against God with the result that he became sinful and fallen.

Genesis 3:22-24 ²²Then the Lord God said "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever... " ²³therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴So He drove out the man; and He placed a cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.'

Verse 22, the tree of life was to give eternal life to Adam and Eve. It was the source of eternal life. The tree of life is a picture on the earth of the Lord Jesus Christ who provides eternal life. We now have fallen mankind in a garden and God has to make sure that Adam and Eve do not get to the tree of life and eat or they will live forever in that state, as will their progeny. Verse 23 shows us the saddest thing, the garden is now closed to Adam and Eve, they have been dispossessed by their action. Verse 24 and the tree of life must now be guarded by the flaming cherubim. This is one way that the gospel was preached before the

flood because you could take the kids for a trip out on Sunday to see the cherubim guarding the garden, and you would tell them that that is where Granma and Granddad used to live.

It appears to have made little difference because the flood came and the earth was covered with water because man's wickedness was so great. After the flood the garden in Eden was no more, before the flood mankind was excluded from it because of Adam's failure.

Now let's look at Jesus. The moment Adam fell Jesus had to come. That is why Jesus is called the second Adam. Jesus came as a man, as a human being just like us, and was tested in exactly the same way, but without sin. There was never a day when Jesus was not having His free will tested and He chose for His Father every, single, time. And at the end of His earthly life He was able to say, Father I have done Your will absolutely to the letter. I love You.

Hebrews 4:15 *'For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.'*

He was tested and tempted all day every day but He said 'yes' to God and 'no' to Satan and to the sin. One day we really must look at the Old Testament sacrifice and the High Priestly function and you will understand then exactly what Jesus did and still does for us. So, when He died on the cross at Calvary, He threw back the curse and the results of the curse and He has opened Eden to us again.

This is why in Revelation 22 we have a description of the new Jerusalem, but it is simply the garden in Eden again on the earth. You have a river and the tree of life. The bible shows us failure in the beginning but it ends with success in Revelation.

'And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb .²In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. ⁵And there shall be no night there: they need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever'

The prophecy at the end of Revelation is a restatement of God's aims and intentions in Genesis. We will be with Him face to face. You notice in Revelation 22 there is no tree of the knowledge of good and evil because every person who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ receives His righteousness. We do not have to have our free will in this area tested again. We received the righteousness of Jesus automatically because Jesus was successful in the test. That is why all we now have here in Revelation is the tree of life and it celebrates the work of Christ. Everything about the New Jerusalem show us something about the character of God – so on the new earth in the new Jerusalem, first of all the garden in Eden is opened up again.

The river is there, the water of life, salvation will flow forever and every as a testimony to God's provision. God did not just see mankind in their fallen estate, He did something about it, and this river is there as a testimony to God's salvation that was opened wide, and it always has been.

Why is the tree of life there and always fruiting, is it for the people of the city? No. The tree of life is there as a testimony that God provided every step of the way – this fruit is a statement for ever of the character of God, His love. He never changes, He is sovereign, and these wonderful things are what the new creation is all about. That is what is stated here in Revelation.

Bible prophecy has to end here in Revelation. The bible has to finish in the new Eden because God's plan must be fulfilled.

And the new heaven? We know very little about it, but we know it will contain certain things. It will contain the lake of fire which will burn forever with Satan and Antichrist and the false prophet and all unbelievers, death and hell. We have seen that the unbelievers will be there not because God wants them there, but because they have rejected God's provision for them – His salvation.

So, up in the new heaven the lake of fire will burn forever. You may think why? Just as the new earth is a testimony of God's character, so is the lake of fire. The lake of fire stands for the God who is and was and always will be absolute righteousness and more than that absolute justice. We live in a day when people emphasise the love of God and forget all His other characteristics. God is a God of love, that is why Jesus came. But if you reject Jesus, God's love, then there is nothing left but God's justice. God is righteous and just, that is why He cannot overlook sin.

At the end of Revelation all the strands of God's purposes are brought together –

Revelation 22:6-21 *'Then He said to me "These words are faithful and true". And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. **'Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.'** Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, 'See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.'* And he said to me *'Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still'. **"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."** Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. **I, Jesus have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."** And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that*

are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He who testifies to these things says, "Surely, I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.'

We stand on the edge of the fulfilment of God's plan.

May God bless you and strengthen you as you seek to fulfil His plan for your life.