

Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Creation Renewed – Revelation 22:1-7 by Jean Davies w/c Sunday 27th September 2020

“BEHOLD, I AM COMING SOON!” This direct promise by the Lord Jesus Christ in Rev 22:7 forms some of the most important words in the Bible, so much so that they are repeated as the Book of the Revelation ends (Rev 22:20). This verse also contains a blessing for all who “read, hear and keep” His words; and this means us!

Read Rev 22:1-7 a few times, asking the Lord to help you to “read, hear and keep” His words.

The Revelation of the now enthroned Jesus to the author, John, was for the encouragement of the early church in John’s day who were about to enter a time of persecution as the Roman authorities were beginning to enforce emperor worship. To worship Jesus Christ as God, but to compromise and worship the Roman emperor also, e.g. Nero, would be a temptation hard to resist when to refuse would mean certain death. However, this word of encouragement is as important for our own day when the persecution of Christians is even wider globally, and just as severe as ever in history. In some countries, not to “dethrone” Christ means severe restrictions by governments if not certain death by extremist groups. **Ponder: Which countries can you name that make being a Christian difficult or even dangerous?** Even in more liberal countries, there is the temptation for Christians to fit in with popular, even legal, views rather than face ridicule or ostracism by holding to the faith. So, this is a warning to some as well as an encouragement for others.

Our passage describes creation renewed, restored, “Paradise Found” as some have termed it. For a better understanding, it is perhaps useful to read in Genesis 3 of what exactly had been lost. There we see the entry of sin by Adam and Eve’s disobedience to God’s single command (Gen 3:2), the result being the broken relationship with God, and the suffering by creation of God’s curse and man’s sin. What redeemed humankind’s relationship with God, of course, is found in that well-loved verse of John 3:16 at the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, already promised in Gen 3:15. But as creation has been “groaning” for renewal ever since for His promised return (Romans 8:22), we find that this indeed will take place, and it is described in Rev 22:3 “No longer will there be any curse ...” . **Ponder: In what ways do you observe the creation “groaning” for renewal?**

Everything speaks of life in our study verses – the crystal, clear water of life (v1); the tree of life bearing abundance and healing for the nations (v2); everlasting light and everlasting life (v5); and

“They shall see his face....” (v4). This is particularly poignant in these days of Covid where enforced separation and the wearing of masks has brought home to many the longing to see the whole face of loved ones, to sense their touch of a kiss or a caress on our faces. Someone recently related to me that her “adopted” son had phoned requesting he come and visit following a separation due to Covid. During their time together, he expressed his heart’s desire and need “just to see her face”, and he brought good news of a newly expected baby, new life, a new creation. **Ponder: As God’s “adopted” child, how much do you long to see the Lord Jesus “face to face”, and what do you think your first words to Him will be?**

“BEHOLD, I AM COMING SOON!” But how soon is “soon”? The Apostle Peter speaks to the scoffing and impatience of his day, and our day, too (2 Peter Chapter 3). When Jesus does come, our prayer “Your kingdom come” will be answered. **Ponder: In response to The Lord’s promise, can we say with the Apostle John “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus”? Would you prefer Him to delay His coming, and why?** John ends the Book of Christ’s Revelation to him – “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen”; and this means us. May God bless us!