

## ***Christ in Prophecy***

### **Revelation 6: “*Chapters 21 & 22*”**

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#### **Opening**

**Dr. Reagan:** Did you know that the Bible never teaches that the redeemed will spend eternity in Heaven? It teaches instead that those of us who are saved will live eternally in glorified bodies on a New Earth. This earth cleansed by fire and recreated to its original perfection. Stay tuned.

#### **Part 1**

**Dr. Reagan:** Well greetings to all of you in the name of Jesus our blessed hope. I'm Dave Reagan Senior Evangelist for Lamb and Lion Ministries. I am blessed once again, for the sixth week in a row to have two colleagues with me. Dennis Pollock, my Teaching and Preaching Associate, and Don McGee, the Ragin' Cajun who is the Founder, Director and Evangelist of Crown and Sickle Ministries in Amite, Louisiana.

Folks, we are in the process of making a fascinating journey through the book of Revelation. Our theme from the beginning has been that the book of Revelation is not difficult to understand, it is difficult to believe. If you will believe it for its plain sense meaning, you will understand it.

**Dennis Pollock:** In this program we're going to take a look at the last two chapters of Revelation. They concern what is often called the eternal state. In other words, they reveal the eternal destiny of the saved. As we will see, they contain some real surprises for most Christians who are not familiar with Bible prophecy.

**Don McGee:** Let's begin by taking a look at Dave's explanation of these chapters as he presents it in his video program entitled *Revelation Revealed*. Afterwards, we'll return here for a discussion of some of the issues that are raised in these chapters.

### ***Revelation Revealed***

**Dr. Reagan:** Chapter 21 introduces us to a vision of the eternal state, something we're not told a lot about. But what we're told here is very interesting. John says, "I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth." What happens is that God burns up the old earth. We're told in 2 Peter 3, that He will burn away all the pollution of Satan's last revolt. He will take this earth and reshape it like a hot ball of wax, and out of that fiery inferno will come the new heavens and the New Earth. An earth that will be refreshed and beautified and perfected to what God originally created before it was polluted by sin and changed by the curse. It will probably be greatly enlarged because it is going to serve as the foundation for a gigantic city; the New Jerusalem. Just think of it! As God creates that New Earth, we will most likely be suspended in the heavens inside the New Jerusalem watching the greatest fireworks display in the history of the cosmos. And when it's all over, and the Earth is refreshed and renewed, then the Lord will lower us down to the New Earth inside the New Jerusalem. We are going to live eternally inside that glorious city located on the New Earth. That's right the Bible never teaches that we will spend eternity in Heaven. It teaches that we will spend eternity in new bodies in a New Jerusalem on a New Earth. And it further teaches that God will come down to that New Earth and live among us: "I heard a loud voice," says John, "a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them.'" He's going to wipe away every tear from our eyes, and there will no longer be any suffering; no pain, no death,

no sorrow. He is going to make all things new, and we are going to live in perfect bliss in the New Jerusalem.

The rest of chapter 21 describes the incredible New Jerusalem that Jesus is preparing now. It will be shaped like a cube, 1,500 miles in every direction. It will be a city of incredible beauty. Its foundation will be made of precious stones, its gates will be giant pearls, and its streets will be made of gold. God the father and His son will live in the city with the redeemed, and the Shekinah glory of God will illumine the city.

In chapter 22 we move inside the New Jerusalem. We are told that, "a river of the water of life" will flow from the throne of God. This river is most likely a symbolic manifestation of the Holy Spirit. This river will run down the middle of the city's main street, and the Tree of Life that was in the Garden of Eden will grow on each side of the river, "Bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month."

There will no longer be any curse, for when God recreates the earth, the curse will be abolished. All of creation will be restored to the perfection that God intended when He created the original earth. And so we have a great glimpse of that eternal state where we will live eternally with God in new bodies in the New Jerusalem on the New Earth. It's only a glimpse, but it's enough to make us yearn for the glory that is to come, particularly when you consider what is said in chapter 22, verse 4. That verse says, "That we shall see God's face." The Bible tells us that no one has ever seen the face of God. But one day we, the redeemed, will see His face! That means we are going to have intimate, personal, eternal fellowship with our Creator.

Revelation 22 says we are also going to serve the Lord eternally. The Bible does not get specific as to the nature of that service, but I know it will be meaningful and fulfilling. I can imagine, for example, that He will magnify and perfect our gifts. I can imagine that vocalists will sing as they have never sung before, and

artists will paint with a majesty they never thought possible. And all will be done for the glory and honor of our Creator.

In verse 6 of chapter 22 the focus shifts very suddenly from the eternal state to the promise that Jesus will return again. Jesus says, "I am coming quickly," and then He adds, "Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book." Now notice, He says not only the one who hears the words, but the one who heeds the words. He then begins to tell us some things that we're to do as we wait for His return. As I outline these for you, I want you to ask yourself: "Am I doing these things?" In verse 9 we are told to worship God. In verse 10 we are told, "Not to seal up the words of the prophecy." That means we are to share it with as many people as possible. And verse 17 exhorts us to yearn daily for the Lord's return. And verse 18 commands us to protect the integrity of God's Word by not allowing anyone to add to it or take away from it.

In verse 12 Jesus repeats the wonderful promise that summarizes the book's whole theme. He says, "Behold I am coming quickly." He then adds a warning He says, "He will reward every man according to what he has done." Folks Jesus is coming back, and when He returns, there is going to be a judgment of works for both believers and unbelievers. But it will not be for the purpose of determining their eternal destinies that is determined in this life by whether or not we place our faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Believers will be judged at the time of the Rapture to determine their degrees of rewards. Unbelievers will be judged at the end of the Millennium, at the Great White Throne Judgment, to determine their degrees of punishment. Yes, there are going to be degrees of rewards for believers, both during the Millennium and during eternity. Jesus said we would have various degrees of reigning authority during the millennium. And the Bible says that special rewards are going to be given to soul winners, martyrs, elders, those who exercise self-control, and those who live looking for the coming of Jesus Christ.

Well, the final words of Jesus spoken on this earth are recorded in Revelation 22:20. He says to John, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Jesus left us with a glorious promise - a promise to return soon. And notice John's response. He cried out from the depths of his heart, "Amen, come Lord Jesus!" That's the attitude we should have about the Lord's return, one of hopeful expectancy any moment.

There are many indications that we are living in the period of the Lord's return. One of those is found in Matthew 24 where Jesus told the people to watch the fig tree, which is a symbol of Israel. He said when that fig tree blossoms again we will know that He, Jesus is at the very gates of Heaven, ready to return. Well folks, for the past 450 years prophetic scholars have told people, "Watch Israel, watch Israel, watch Israel." And people have responded with laughter, scorn and ridicule. They have said, "Israel will never exist again." Well, nobody is laughing now because Israel was re-established on May the 14th, 1948. We know Jesus is at the very gates of Heaven because He said in Matthew 24 that the generation that sees the re-establishment of Israel is the generation that will see all these things come to pass. That means we are the terminal generation.

Another sign is found in Luke 21:24 where Jesus said He would return when Jerusalem is no longer under Gentile control. Well, folks, Jerusalem fell to the Romans in 70 AD. They were followed by the Byzantines, then came the Arabs, the crusaders, the Mamluks, the Turks, the British, and finally, the Jordanians. But on June the 7th, 1967, praise God, the Jews re-conquered the city of Jerusalem for the first time in 1,897 years. My friends let me say it again, we are living on borrowed time! Jesus is coming soon! He said He would, and that promise of His means all or it means nothing at all. If you have rejected Him, it means nothing to you; if you have accepted Him, it should mean everything.

Well, that's it. I hope you are convinced by now that the book of Revelation can be understood and is worthy of careful study. All I have to say in conclusion is "Maranatha!" that's the prayer of the early church recorded in I Corinthians 16:22.

It is an Aramaic expression that means, "Our Lord come!" Oh yes, come quickly Lord Jesus!

## **Part 2**

**Dr. Reagan:** Well gentlemen let's get into our discussion of chapters 21 and 22 by taking a look at the New Earth that's described in chapter 21. What would you have to say to those who spiritualize this particular concept by saying that the New Earth is just a code word for Heaven?

**Dennis Pollock:** I think I'd start with a two word question, "Says who?" How do you come up with that? Again, this comes from the attitude that says we cannot possibly take these things to be literal. A lot of people have a problem with the physical aspects of eternity. A lot of people have a problem with, for example, the golden streets in the New Jerusalem or the gates of pearl, and they say, that can't be, really pearly gates and transparent gold? My response is why not? Why can it not be? God is a God of beauty, He has created a beautiful eternity for us and it is a physical eternity. One of the proofs of that is Jesus in His resurrected body. He went out of His way to show his disciples I am a physical person, not just a spirit. He said touch me, grab me. He said a spirit doesn't have flesh and bone. So if Jesus is physical, there's no reason to think, and the Bible calls them the first fruits, He's the prototype of the resurrection. We're gonna be just as physical. Now, if we're physical beings, spirit, soul and body, we're gonna need a physical place to inhabit and the New Jerusalem will be that, and the New Earth as well will be physical places as well as spiritual.

**Don McGee:** If you think back to when you were a kid, remember the caricatures and cartoons and things that you saw of Heaven? What were they? Well, they were based upon some guy's opinion of what Heaven might be like. You see this cloud out there and you see somebody sitting on this cloud playing a harp with wings sticking out of their shoulders. That's based upon a wrong

concept of what Heaven is. And it was taken into areas where education was offered and people would view this and look at it and read Bible stories and this is the mindset that people developed, and when you say Heaven, a picture forms in people's minds and it's based upon those caricatures.

**Dr. Reagan:** Very much like the concept that most people have of Hell is that people are in big boiling caldrons and Satan and all of his demons are poking them with pitchforks. When Satan and his demons are the ones who are going to be tormented there because the place was created for them and they're gonna take a lot of people with them. But they're not gonna be in charge of it, that's for sure. It's amazing how these ideas get into our mind and you know, Dennis, when you think about Heaven, I think that probably the invasion of eastern religions into the United States and the western hemisphere in recent years has served to reinforce this idea that there's not gonna be anything tangible about eternity. But it's just gonna be spirits floating around becoming one with the great spirit of the universe and all and that's so much more ethereal and spiritual than the idea of a city with gold streets and bodies and all that sort. Don't you think that eastern religions had an impact?

**Dennis Pollock:** Yeah I do and it's a shame because you know what I find? I find that when I go out and hold prophecy conferences and I teach what it's really gonna be like and the physical dimensions and what the New Jerusalem is and the New Earth, I find Christians get very excited because suddenly it becomes real to them. And if they think it's just a lot of ethereal stuff and playing harps and running around clouds, it's so unreal, it's so mystical it's hard to get excited about that. So it's exciting to realize we have a very tangible future, it's gonna be very physical, very real, as well as spiritual. Just as Jesus was physical, yet He could go through walls and He could appear and disappear. So it's gonna be both.

**Don McGee:** Can I beat a dead horse one more time?

**Dennis Pollock:** Beat that horse, brother!

**Don McGee:** I think we need to emphasize this one more time. If you look at the people who are doing the teaching in churches today, you will see why people believe what they believe, because the people who are actually doing the teaching really don't have an understanding of what this means. And if they don't understand, how can we expect people who view us, who read books and publications, how can we expect them to understand?

**Dr. Reagan:** Well that goes back to the problem of seminaries, not only in America but around the world, where there has been a major rejection of Bible prophecy. I've had many people tell me that they'd go all the way through a seminary course on Isaiah, for example, and never once consider its prophetic implications. It was just reading Isaiah and talking about who Isaiah was and that sort of thing, but not having anything to do with the prophetic implications. It's just not taught.

**Dennis Pollock:** And what a disservice to the people of God.

**Dr. Reagan:** That's right. You know one thing that's always been intriguing to me is the fact that the Bible tells us a lot about the Millennial Reign of Jesus. For example, the whole book of Isaiah's about it from beginning to end and there's a lot in the Bible about what nature will be like, society will be like, the spiritual atmosphere, and so forth. But it tells us almost nothing about the eternal state. It tells us that we'll be in glorified bodies, in a New Jerusalem, on a New Earth, and it tells us two things beyond that. That we will see God's face, and we will serve. Maybe that's so exciting and so great we don't need to be told anything else. But what do you see is the significance of those two promises in particular, that we'll see God's face and we'll serve Him?

**Don McGee:** To see His face, Dave, means that we're gonna be in His presence.

**Dr. Reagan:** Intimate fellowship.

**Don McGee:** That's right. That's the greatest thing that I've drawn out of this. We're gonna actually be in the presence of God. Now, my Dad's been with the Lord for a number of years now, and I long to see him, to be in his presence. I have memories of him and I have pictures and I see things that he had written years ago, but those cannot take the place of actually being in his presence again. It's the same thing with God, we're gonna be where He is.

**Dennis Pollock:** You know, Don, speaking of that reminded me of something that I sometimes hear that I think is really sad. Sometimes you hear about an older person who has lost their spouse and the surviving spouse will say, "Yeah I just want to go be in Heaven so I can be with my loved one again." Well, that's understandable, but believe me, that's not the ultimate goal of Heaven, is just to rejoin a loved one, although that's gonna be great, but it's to be with God, and be with Christ and to see Him again. I mean, He's the star of the show in Heaven and you know, when you think about the beauty that's in this world. The mountains, the trees, streams, and all the things that are so beautiful and lovely, those are all simply pale reflections of the beauty and the glory that is found in God and in Christ and we are going to see him face to face. It shows we're gonna be changed because there's no way you could do that in our present state.

**Don McGee:** That's right.

**Dennis Pollock:** But we are going to be so admiring His beauty, His glory, it's gonna take a long time just to kind of catch our breath at that point.

**Don McGee:** If we think back, God hasn't been in the presence of man since the Garden of Eden. It's been a long time ago it's been a long time since humanity has had the experience of being in the very presence of God. And we're gonna be able to serve Him there and the idea of serving God in His

presence is not the idea of toil, it's the idea of work and work is not bad work, it's good. The problem was in the Garden with the curse, was not work, it was the toil associated with it. And we're gonna be in His presence and we're gonna serve Him, we're gonna have obligations and responsibilities and things that we're going to do. And they're going to just help us to grow spiritually with us learning more and more about God every day while in His presence. We're gonna actually sit at His feet and learn.

**Dr. Reagan:** You know, that gets me excited! When I was growing up in the church I was basically told I was gonna spend eternity floating around on a cloud playing a harp, and I couldn't get excited about that, I mean, there was nothing about that, that made me cling to this world. But when you begin to read the tremendous promises that God has about the future you understand why Paul said that, "The sufferings of this present time are not even worthy to be compared to the glory that is yet to be revealed to us." Or when he said, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has the mind of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him." But the next verse says, "He has revealed those things to us through His spirit."

Now, in the presentation that we presented just a few moments ago from the video called *Revelation Revealed*, I skipped over something in these two chapters that I didn't even mention, that is, I'd like to get into right now. And that is that in Revelation 21 we have one of the greatest mysteries of Bible prophecy. In verses 24-27 it mentions that on that New Earth there are going to be nations living outside the New Jerusalem on the New Earth. And that there's going to be sin it appears among these nations and that they will not be allowed to come into the New Jerusalem. It even mentions that there's going to be, the leaves of the tree of life will be used for their healing. Who in the world are these nations living outside the New Jerusalem on the new planet? Do any of you have any idea? I mean, this is a great mystery of Bible prophecy.

**Dennis Pollock:** Well, Dave, I tell you, we don't and you know we don't. But I will say this, it shows us something exciting, and that is that God's process of creation and working and all that He's doing doesn't come to an end when we go to be with the Lord and reign with Him. There's going to be an ongoing work of God, both in the New Earth and who knows, throughout the universe. You know, God is a creative God, and He's a busy God. He's gonna be doing stuff for all of eternity and there's one other word that we need to throw in, in terms of, we talked about serving Him. We talked about seeing his face. One other thing that the scripture mentioned, we will reign with Him, R-E-I-G-N. We will reign.

**Dr. Reagan:** We're told that over and over, we're gonna reign with Him eternally.

**Dennis Pollock:** Yeah.

**Dr. Reagan:** Doesn't that imply that you have to reign over somebody?

**Dennis Pollock:** Well that's right, there's gotta be somebody to reign over, it implies government, it implies administration, it implies activity, so it's gonna be more than just singing, it's gonna be more than just playing a harp. There's gonna be all kinds of stuff to do, believe me folks, you will not be bored.

**Don McGee:** I think we could go back to Matthew 25 and at least get a glimpse of what this might be. And we can't be dogmatic about it but I think it can give us some room to think about this. In that chapter there's the judgment of the sheep and the goats and Jesus is going to say to those of you who gave me water when I was thirsty and clothes when I was naked, I want you to come over here at my right hand, and those of you who didn't at my left hand, the sheep on the right, goats on the left. And I've heard some folks talk about this, see, that's the judgment, that's the Great White Throne Judgment. Well, it's not the Great White Throne Judgment and the reason is because, number one, believers are present in that judgment in Matthew 25 and you don't see any believers at the Great

White Throne. And number two, there's a third group of people there, "The my brethren." I believe that it's possible that the sheep nations of Matthew 25 could be associated with the nations that we find here in the book of Revelation, because of the way they treated the Jewish people, Jesus' "my brethren" during the terrible time of Tribulation that's coming on.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well, no one knows for sure. This is gonna be one of those things that we'll only find out when we stand face to face with the Lord, where we look through that mirror dimly right now. Now fellows, we have one minute left for our discussion and I want to end it with a very important question. Jesus says two times in Revelation 22, "I am coming quickly." What in the world did He mean by that? It's been 2,000.

**Don McGee:** He meant how, not when.

**Dr. Reagan:** How not when.

**Dennis Pollock:** Another word is suddenly, coming suddenly. You know, a lot of times when we were kids we couldn't wait for Christmas to come and it seemed to drag so slow and take so long, and then suddenly, suddenly, it was here, it was gone. Jesus said, you know, I'm coming suddenly, very quickly.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yes, in fact, in one passage it even talks about like lightening across the sky, it's gonna be BANG, just like that. And certainly He is coming quickly. And I think He is coming soon. I think He's coming very soon. We ended this whole particular video clip talking about the signs of the times, the Jews are back in the land, their back in their city, the whole world is coming together against them over the issue of Jerusalem. And the Bible says that when all those things come together, and that European Union rises from the dead, Jesus will be at the very gates of Heaven. And folks, let me tell you, when you know that, you know the Rapture is right around the corner.

**Dennis Pollock:** Maranatha!

**Don McGee:** Suddenly.

**Dr. Reagan:** That's right. Thank you very much.

### **Part 3**

**Dr. Reagan:** Revelation 21 and 22 contain a lot of glorious promises such as eternal life in a beautiful New Jerusalem on a New Earth in the presence of our Creator and our Savior. Revelation 21:7 says, "All these promises will be inherited by those who are overcomers." Don, give us a definition of an overcomer.

**Don McGee:** Dave, an overcomer is a person who has overcome the penalty of sin by placing his or her faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. A good definition of an overcomer is to be found in 1 John 5:1-5 where it says that, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. And whatever is born of God overcomes the world." The passage then concludes with a summary question, "And who is the one who overcomes the world?" The answer he gives is he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

**Dr. Reagan:** Dennis, let's assume for a moment that someone's sitting there watching this program right now and they are thinking, well, you know, I really want to be an heir of those promises, I want to be an overcomer. Well, tell us specifically what must a person do to become an overcomer?

**Dennis Pollock:** Glad to, Dave. Well folks, I have some good news for you, and some bad news. Let's go with the bad news first. You have a mighty army of enemies arrayed against you. This wicked world, the demons that flit through the air, the devil himself, and your own sinful flesh are all working together to keep

you from God and from inheriting his promises. The Devil's great desire is to drag you down to the same Hell that is his own destiny. That's the bad news. Now for the good news, there is a God in heaven who loves you with an everlasting love and He's provided a way for you to escape, God's provision is in His Son Jesus Christ. He died on the cross as your substitute He took all the wrath, all the judgment, all the agony that you and I deserve. And God says that if you will trust in what Christ did on the cross, and believe that He was raised from the dead and receive Him as your Savior, every sin you've ever committed will be blotted out and you will receive eternal life as a free gift. You'll find a place reserved for you in the New Jerusalem. Your name will be found in the Lamb's Book of Life and you will enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit forever and ever and ever.

**Dr. Reagan:** Thank you, Dennis. Well, folks, that brings us to the conclusion of our survey of the book of Revelation. I want to thank once again both Dennis and Don for all of your insights and observations and encouragement during this particular study and I want to ask you to stay tuned now as our announcer tells you how to obtain some valuable study resources related to the book of Revelation.

**End of Program**