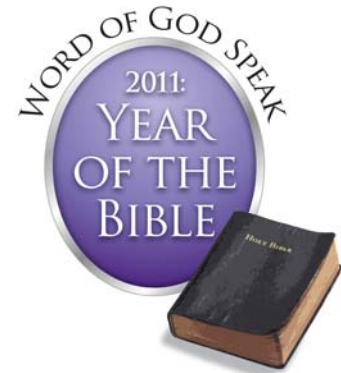


## Week 51: Revelation 20-22

### Study Guide for the week of December 19-25, 2011



#### Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with Revelation 22:18-19. You have spent this last year reading through the Bible. Here at the very end of the Bible you read these verses. What do they mean to you now? Spend time this week reviewing your journey through the Bible this year. How has reading through the Bible changed you? What are the most significant truths you are taking away with you from this year of the Bible? Where were you surprised? Challenged? Comforted? Where were you especially aware of God's presence? The need for change in your life? Of God's incredible love for you? As those things come to mind, thank God for revealing himself to you in a new and deeper way. Ask him to show you how to continue to grow closer to him through his word and through prayer. How do you plan to continue a daily time with the Lord in his Word? Finally, praise him for his word and how it leads to a deeper relationship with The Word, Jesus.

**Discussion starters** *If you are leading a small group, you may not have time for all of these questions. Pick the ones that will work best for your group.*

1. Ice Breaker Question: If you could pick a date for Jesus to return, when would it be?
2. Was there something that jumped out at you, surprised you, encouraged you, or disturbed you from the readings this last week (or two)? Why?
3. Revelation 20:1-6 What do these verses teach about Satan? One interpretation of Revelation teaches that Satan was "bound" or "cast out" for a symbolic 1000 years beginning at the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus Christ now reigns through His Church. (See also, *Revelations 1:5-6, 5:9-10; Matthew 18:18-20, 28:19-20; Luke 10:18-19; John 12:31-33; Ephesians 3:10; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 1:13-14, 2:15*) Traditionally, Lutheran theologians have tended to favor this interpretation over newer interpretations associated with what some call "the rapture," which teaches that the binding of Satan has yet to come. If what is described in Revelation 20:1-6 already took place through the death and resurrection of Christ, Satan is now "bound" and Christ reigns through His Church. If that be true, are we now able to resist and defeat all the temptations and schemes of the evil one? What does that mean for Christ followers and the mission of Christ's Church now?
4. Revelation 21:1-7 These verses are often read at funerals.
  - Vss. 1-3 How does being seen as the bride of Christ enhance your understanding of your relationship with Christ? Picture the beginning of a wedding ceremony when the bride is walking down the aisle to meet the groom. How is your understanding of verse 3 deepened by the image of the bride coming to meet her husband?
  - Vs. 4 Go through the following and describe what it means to you that each will not be part of your experience in heaven: death, mourning, crying, pain. What other experiences in the "old order of things" are you looking forward to not being a part of heaven?
  - Vs. 7 Can you read this verse as a statement from God made personally to you? If so, how does this enhance your relationship with God, your Father?
5. Revelation 21:27 What does this verse teach about whether there will be sin in heaven? What does that mean heaven will be like for us? Take time to explore this question beyond the expected answers.
6. Revelation 22:1-6 The number 12 means perfection in government or ruling. It means there is enough forever, completion. With that in mind, what does the symbolism in these verses teach us about what heaven will be like? In understanding the "tree of life" read Genesis 2:9, 15-17; 3:22-24. Between the trees of life in Genesis and Revelation is the "tree" of Calvary.
7. Revelation 22:7, 12 Twice Jesus says, "Behold, I am coming soon!" Are you ready? *Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

8. Revelation 22:18-19 Share with your group one of the significant truths you have gained, or has been reinforced for you, as you have read through the Bible this year?

## **Bible verse to memorize: Revelation 21:4**

### **Caring Time**

It is important to make time in your group to care for each other. Sometimes that happens during the discussion and sometimes it is best to end your time together praying for each other.

This week do this in whatever way seems best for your group right now.

Remember that prayers do not have to be long. One possibility this week is to pray together out loud three times this concluding prayer of the Bible, "**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**" This could be your entire prayer time or how you conclude your prayer time together.

Also encourage people in the group to get together outside of the group time to foster deeper friendships with each other. Remember that being in a small group is primarily about sharing life together. It has been said that the most important time in small groups is the time people connect outside of the meeting time.