



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 22:1-5

“The Consummation of History”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] I would also like to welcome some of you who are here at the 8:30 service, not willing to miss one play of the playoff game, which begins you well know at 11:30 today. We are glad to have you. We hope you are happy at the conclusion of the game. Today we are turning to Revelation chapter 22, verse 1 through verse 5, and the subject is The Consummation of History. Last week the title was The Climax of History, and we touched upon the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ in the great day of atonement of Calvary, and now today we want to follow up as we think about the new year and the anticipations of it, with our thoughts turned to the future. In verse 1 of revelation chapter 22, the apostle writes,

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was there 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. And 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: They shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. 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 for ever and ever.”

One of the very interesting things about this passage is that it says, “They shall serve him.” And then in verse 5, “They shall reign forever and ever.” You would think it would be either one or the other. That is if they serve him they don’t reign. If they reign they don’t serve him, but obviously these individuals regard the serving of him as reigning and reigning forever and ever with him. That is of course what Scripture says and gives us a true insight into what true service of the Lord is. It’s the free service of those who are rightly related to him. May the Lord bless this reading of his word, and let’s bow together in a time of prayer.

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the ministry of the Scriptures to us. We thank Thee that we have this divine revelation and that the revelation has been given to us in writing so that we can have it and read it and ponder it. We thank Thee for the magnificent demonstration of the power of God that down through the years Thou hast preserved these ancient sentiments that came ultimately from Thee by divine inspiration through the Holy Spirit. And we thank Thee now in the year 1991 we can read them and be confident that we are reading the revelation that Thou wilst have us to read. We thank Thee for the great hope that we have in Christ. We thank Thee for the great atonement that has been accomplished and we live in the blessing of it, but we know that that atoning work still has its future consummation, and we look forward to that. And especially, Lord, as we think about a new year that lies before us, we ask that by Thy grace Thou wilt lead us into it, and enable us to be fruitful and enjoy in a special way the marvelous relationship that Thou hast wrought in our lives with our great triune God in heaven.

We are thankful, Lord, for the whole church of Christ. We look forward to the day when all of us all over the face of this world may be gathered together in one in the presence of our God, and we pray that Thou wilt bless each individual believing saint, wherever he or she may be. By Thy grace enable them to grow, and be fruitful, and by Thy marvelous omnipotent power enter Thy presence with joy. We thank Thee for our hope. And now, Lord, as we think about the day before us enable us to be pleasing to Thee in our lives.

We pray for Believers Chapel. We ask Thy blessing upon the ministry of the word of God here. And we pray especially for the many who have requested that we pray for them, some of whom are suffering deeply, we pray especially for them. Lord, undertake for them. May Thy hand be upon them for both physical and spiritual good, and then for the elders and deacons of Believers Chapel we pray for each one of them. May Thy hand be upon them for spiritual good, and for each member, and the visitors who may be with us we commit them to Thee as well. We thank Thee, Lord, for the privilege of prayer, and we know that Thou dost hear us through Jesus Christ our Lord. In whose name we pray. Amen.

[Message] Our subject for today as we think about the future is “The Consummation of History.” The comment of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews on his day I think is suitable. For ours for in the 13th chapter in the 14th verse of that great epistle, he said, “For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” The great privilege of the Apostle John was to see that eternal city in the visions that were given him of the future. And in Revelation chapter 21, in verse 9 particularly through chapter 22 in verse 5 the apostle is given the vision of the lamb’s wife the New Jerusalem. And then in the passage which concludes the section in chapter 22 verse 1 through verse 5, he give us what he saw as a kind of new paradise and lays stress upon the river of life and the tree of life that flowed in the midst of it.

Our text is something of a summary and culmination of his vision of the city of God, and as you think about the Book of Revelation and remember that there is a great deal of symbolism in this book. There are several new elements that appear right here in these verses and one of them that I image is obvious to you is the domination of the thought of the throne of God and the lamb. Notice the first verse where he says, “Proceeding from the throne of God and of the lamb.” And then in verse 3, “And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the lamb shall be in it.” It’s rather remarkable to call this throne the throne of God and of the lamb.

The second thing that stands out is the imagery of the paradise of Eden. After all in the beginning of the Bible, we read about the Garden of Eden, and we read about the tree of life, and it’s surprising after so long a time for the author to return to that theme near the end of the divine revelation, and of course John, I would presume, that when he was given this revelation would not have known the place that the visions would have in a gathered work of sixty six books of divine revelation, but I think you can see that’s its very obvious that the Holy Spirit has in mind the linking of the end of history with the beginning of history. And so as we think about it, it’s not surprising to us now to realize that at the end of the divine revelation we should come back again to the tree of life, and think of the things that remind us of the opening paragraphs of the word of God.

One of the earlier books usually classified with the Apostolic writings the Book of Barnabas has a word in it that is very much like what we see here because in that little book in the 6th chapter of it we read, “Behold I make the last things as the first.” And so the idea of coming back again to things with which the Bible begins is something that the earliest of the Christian writers noticed as they read the Bible too. And then there is one final thing I think that one should note generally about the passage, and that is the contrast between life in our age, and the life in the one that is to come. If you’ll reflect on the Book of Revelation, and you’ll remember that near the end of the book the Apostle John tells us about Apostate Christendom, and in chapter 17 in verse 1 writing under the

theme of the doom of Babylon, he wrote, “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me saying to me; Come I will show you the judgment of the great harlot, who sits on many waters.” And so the use of the term harlot suggests the kind of world that characterizes the last times and the kind of thing that characterizes our day today, and so the thought of our world as being likened to a harlot is very startling at first, and then in chapter 21 in verse 2, as we draw near the close we read, “Then I John saw the holy city New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” And in the 9th verse, “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me saying, Come I will show you the bride. The lamb’s wife.”

And so we have this marvelous contrast between the harlot, the picture of the world apart from the Lord God, and then the marvelous picture of the bride adorned for her husband, the lamb’s wife reflective of the future. Our age looked at as the age of harlotry the age of the future as the age of the purity of the bride of the Lamb of God the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the verses that I have chosen for our mediation this morning are at the climax of what John was shown. He was shown, he said the New Jerusalem back in verse 3 of 21, he said, “I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and be their God.” And in the 9th verse, “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me saying, Come I will show you the bride the lamb’s wife.” And here in verse 1 of chapter 22, “And he showed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal.”

Now what I’d like to do because this is merely a mediation and a reflection upon these verses is to just lay stress upon some of the things that John was shown here and first of all the pure river of water of life. “And he showed me a pure river of water of life.”

Now there are several things to keep in mind when we read the Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation tells us in the opening words that it is a book of symbolism. We don't mean by that that everything in the Book of Revelation is symbolic, but it is a book that is filled with symbolism. But frequently when people read something like that, they therefore think that everything in this book is non-historical. And in fact something like non-real. But when we say that something is symbolical, we do not mean to deny that it exists, but the apostle is talking about real things, but he is using symbols in order to talk about them. So we are talking about real things in symbolism. They are things that are ultimately beyond the present day comprehension that we have. So we're talking then about things that we can regard as real under the form of symbolism.

Now we're all acquainted with symbolism. We know for example last night on the TV screen the University of Alabama was playing some college out west somewhere, and what do they do? They rush on the field with a buffalo and three or four college students having a hard time controlling that buffalo, and I noticed that they immediately marched him into a truck or something and closed the door behind the poor buffalo. That was a foretaste of what was going to happen. The buffaloes were going to have a hard time. But if we read in the newspaper the Crimson Tide washes over the Buffalos of Colorado, we know that something real happened even though it was described in terms of symbolism. The Crimson Tide standing for the University of Alabama, and the Buffalos for the University of Colorado. So when we think about symbolism we are not to think about something that is unreal. We are to think about something that is real, but it is described for us in symbolic ways, and so here when we read of the pure river of the water of life, we're not to say that this is not real. It is real, but it's beyond our comprehension.

One of the things that we learn from reading the word of God is that the idea that some people have if it's said in symbolic terms that it's pure spirit and therefore unreal and we are free to interpret as we may please. We learn that that is wrong, and that what

someone has said, corporeity or the reality of the real things, the corpus, the body, and corporeity is the end of the ways of God. Ultimately God deals with things that are real, deals with the body, and we learn that as we read the word of God. But the things that are said symbolically, though real, are beyond our comprehension. Who could today properly expound and be certain of his exposition of the words “The pure rive of the water of life.” That is beyond our comprehension but it is real.

Count Von Zinzendorf the Moravian was a marvelous man, one of the great missionaries, one of the great spirits of a century or so ago, and Zinzendorf believed that one cannot presume to penetrate rationally the problem of God’s being, and he illustrated it in a rather interesting way. He said, “The attempt to penetrate the problem for us of God’s ultimate being may be compared to the effort of a mouse in the basement of a castle to reason with another mouse about the architecture of such a structure. But now the mouse would know there was a structure there, but of course it would be far beyond his comprehension to know the architecture of the great castle, so we read here of the pure river of the water of life. We know there is such a thing. We may not know everything about it.

When we talk about heaven itself, we know that heaven is real, but so far as I know not any of you have been to heaven yet, and I am willing to grant that I have not been. Menken used to say, “A church is a place in which gentlemen who have never been to heaven brag about it to persons who will never get there.” I hope that’s not true. He also said, “A clergyman is a ticket speculator outside the gates of heaven.” One other man, Elbert Hubbard, and American author, editor and printer said, “Heaven is the Coney Island of Christian imagination.”

Well there are many things about heaven that we cannot understand now, but when we look at the word of God and we ponder these great words, we know that there lies a reality behind them. And the truth is that probably and again I realize I have not been there, but probably the greatest stretch of imagination of any human being could

never really fully grasp the glory of heaven itself. John's terms the pure river of the water of life suggests a significant truth to me. In the first place it suggests that the river's source being God and the lamb tells us that life comes from God, “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal proceeding from the Throne of God and of the lamb.” Eternal life comes from God just as physical life comes from God and his creative power. So spiritual life comes from God. That's a fundamental fact the we should never forget and when the Bible speaks about being born again of God as we are told in Scripture that in language that is perhaps more materialistic than this underlines the fact that life, all life, spiritual life comes from God. That's the first thing that I think about when I read this.

Now twice secondly he mentions the throne of God and the lamb. Now that's very interesting, the throne of God and the lamb. It's obvious that there are two persons here. The throne of God and the lamb, and yet there is one God because there is one throne. There is one throne upon which God and the lamb are sitting. Two persons and yet he is not suggesting two God, one God in complete oneness.

Now we read this of course as the throne of the Father and of the lamb, the first and the second persons of the Trinity, and so the two persons yet one God in complete oneness, and later on we'll read something even more significant than that. But the third thing that he talks about is I the second verse. “In the middle of its street and on either side of the river was the tree of life.” In other words paradise is something like a reconstituted Garden of Eden. Our thoughts go all the way back to the book of Genesis and the paradise of the past and the paradise of the future is a remembrance of the past. And the way that it's put suggests to me several things because he says the tree of life bears twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations, and so what that suggests to me of course is the abundance, the variety and the life giving value of the fruit. That is emphasized. It is new. It is full. It is therapeutic.



Now one might ask the question as you look at the second verse, “Why is it necessary for the nations to be healed? The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” That seems somewhat unnecessary does it not? Why should the nations need any healing in that time? Well there are some ways, in which we can think of this, perhaps clarify the point. In the light of the statements of the word of God and particularly in the light of the statement in verse 14, “Blessed are those who do his commandments or who have washed their robes that they may have right to the tree of life, may enter through the gates of the city. You can see, if you look at that verse, that, “Blessed are those who have washed their robes that they may have right to the tree of life.” That the cleansing precedes the authority to eat at the tree of life, and so those who have already washed their robes have right to the tree of life, and so the tree of life, is not that which is responsible for our healing because those who have washed their robes do not have right to the tree of life until their robes are washed so we are forced then to understand this as a statement of the preservation of life rather than the appropriation of it. And I think this is confirmed by its presence in the Garden of Eden. The tree of life, the tree of life did not convey life to individuals who needed healing in the Garden of Eden, but the tree of life apparently did was to preserve the life that God had given.

In other words the tree of life is a kind of sacrament of eternity, and throughout all eternity in symbolic form for John is telling us something of course that is beyond our total comprehension remember, that the tree of life serves to remind us all through eternity that the life that we have is a life given by God. And not only is it a life given by God, but it is a derived life, and it's always a derived life. The life in individuals in heaven is a derived life, and when you and I through faith in Christ reach the presence of God and are actually in the new paradise, we still will have the fundamental sense of the need of the life's derivation from the Lord God himself. The life that we possess is the life that he is given and the life, which he preserves throughout all eternity. We are never self-sufficient and do not need our great tribune God. So it's for the healing of the

nations, the sacrament of eternity, the preservation of our derived life, and look again at verse 14, and you will see how that is necessary. “Blessed are those who do his commandments.” Or the texts I think are a little better, “Blessed are those who have washed their robes that may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.”

The Scriptures tell us that the Lord Jesus the triune God, the Lord specifically the second person has life of himself. Back in John chapter 5, in verse 26 we read these words, which are so important. “For as the Father has life in himself so he is granted the Son to have life in himself.” The triune God has life of itself. We always have and only have derived life.

Now fourthly we read in verse 3, “And there shall be no more curse.” From the continual bondage to sin which is the experience of all of us, before we are converted bound in sin even after we have come to the place where our robes have been washed through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, there still dwells the sin principle within us, and so from continual bondage to sin to continual service in the perfection of environment. “There shall be no more curse.”

We still have the curse with us, you know. If you look about you and you read about the things that are happening in our society and the things that are happening in the church of Jesus Christ the professing church, you know of course that the curse is still with us. What were the great religious stories of 1991? Well the Christian Century liberal periodical that I take in order to keep up with my enemies. The Christian periodical usually at the end of the year has a summary of the great stories of 1991. What are the great stories of 1991 to the Christian century and these are the great denominations, war, sex, dissention. Those are the religious stories of 1991, and then a lengthy article in exposition of them.

What particularly interested me was the sexual ethics that came to the fore in 1991 with homosexuality in our great denominations. That was one of the chief topics of

discussion of the year. Let me just read you a few lines by the editor James Wall.

“Homosexuality was one of the chief topics of the Episcopal General Convention, which decided after considerable debate to study the issue further. However by failing to approve a monition requiring clarity to abstain from sexual relations outside holy matrimony the convention pushed some traditionalists toward the break away Episcopal senate of America. Later the Episcopal bishops and Newark and Washington each ordained a homosexual in the priesthood. In the united Methodist Church a special committee assigned to review the church’s prohibition against homosexual behavior ended up submitting two reports, one calling for appeal of the prohibition, one not. The nomination of seminary Dean Michael Kenneman to the top position in the Disciple of Christ was turned aside by the church’s general assembly in large part because he looked favorably on ordaining gays. American Baptists went on record opposing the homosexual life style and homosexual marriage, but they also appointed a task force to continue to study sexual issues. The United Church of Christ was the only church to take a stand in favor of homosexuality. The general senate called on churches to be open and affirming of gays. The UCC was not immune however to divisions on sexual ethics. A conservative group associated with the biblical witness fellowship charged the church with apostasy on this and other matters.”

One of the great benefits of life in the new paradise is that there is no more curse. Why? Why is there no more curse? Well because the lamb is also the Lord. We turn back to chapter 5 in verse 5 and verse 6. The apostle writing in the first of the great visions has this to say,

“But one of the elders said to me; Do not weep behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David has prevailed to open the scroll, and to loose it’s seven seals, and I looked and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes,

which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then he came and took the scroll out of the right hand of him who sat on the throne and then all heaven breaks forth in marvelous praise of the lamb, and they sang a new song saying; You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals for you were slain and have redeemed to God by your blood out of every one out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation and have made them kings and priests to our God and they shall reign on the earth.”

That’s why there is no more curse. It’s because of the lamb who is also the Lord. We’ll have no articles in that day about brother Bob or any of the others who stand professedly within the Christian tradition but whose manner and lifestyle is far from the standard and lifestyle of the apostles.

Fifth we read, “They shall see his face.” I guess this is something that all believers have in their minds and hearts from the moment that they are born again through faith in Christ. They look forward to the beatific vision when they see his face. And this of course is the expression of it. “And they shall see his face.” One of the assurances of the fact that we, who have believed in Christ shall one of these days look upon the face of our magnificent Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This the ultimate hope of God’s people throughout Scripture, from the Old Testament on through the New Testament here and there appears this fundamental hope. For example in Psalm 17 in the 15th verse the psalmist says, “David this being his psalm. “As for me I will see your face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake in your likeness.” In the 27th psalm and in the 4th verse, David again speaks along those same lines. “One thing I have desired of the Lord that will I seek that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord.” And then in the Psalm 42 and verse 2, and here a contemplation of the sons of Korah, “My soul thirsts for God for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God.”

The Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, said, “The pure in heart shall see God.” Now that was a marvelous statement because it is specifically stated in Exodus chapter 33 that no man can see God and live. Isn’t it startling? Back in Exodus 33 in about verse 20 we read those words, “But he said you cannot see my face for no man can see me and live.” And then in verse 22, “So shall it be while my glory passes by Moses, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and will cover you with my hand while I pass by, then I will take away my hand and you shall see my back, but my face shall not been seen.” Then in the New Testament the apostle John writing in 1 John chapter 3 in verse 2 says, “Beloved now we the children of God, and it is not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when he is revealed we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.” “They shall see his face.”

God’s presence mediated in many marvelous ways in the Old Testament the prophetic word, the theophanies, the dreams, through the angels, through the cultist, God’s provision for them. The Lord Jesus bringing in the incarnation the presence of God to men in his own person, but before his glorification to see Christ of course he said, is to know as see the Father, for we see the Father in him. “Ye that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. How sayest thou then Phillip show us the Father.” But this vision is the vision of the unglorified Son of God while he is here in the flesh to be realized in the future in the seeing of our Lord in his glorified person.

One German commentator said that, “The blessing of the pure in heart seeing God relates not to the mystical experience of God’s presence but the freedom to look into the eyes of the almighty judge of the universe without shame.” That’s a magnificent statement. To look into the eyes of the almighty God without shame in contrast to those from whom God hides his face in wrath against their misdeeds. They shall see his face.” Not like Moses, will not see the skirts of the Lord, will not see the back parts of the Lord, will not see the hem of the garment, will not see his feet. Well I guess all of those things may be included, but we shall see his face. That’s what it says, “They shall see his face.”

What I understand that to mean is more than simply of course the physical looking upon the face of someone. We shall look upon our Lord's face, but more than that we shall see his heart. “In his face shall be his heart, or at least revealed. We shall understand his work. It's the kind of reality that one experiences only in measure when he sits around the Lord's table and reflects with the elements in hand upon what the Lord Jesus the Lamb of God has done for us. “They shall see his face.”

I always like what Mr. Spurgeon has said. He said, “You know a little child that dies and goes to heaven has the experience that the greatest of the theologians never have until they are there too.” It's really a somewhat astonishing we like to use the expression, “It blows my mind.” But it does blow our mind to reflect upon the fact that a little child, a believing child, who has entered the presence of the Lord at that moment knows more theology than the greatest of the theologians. Those little children, who died in the days of Agustin before he died, knew more than Agustin. The little children who died in the days of Luther and Calvin, before Luther and Calvin died knew more than the great Luther and the magnificent Calvin, and in our day those who died before Warfield, little children, knew more about heaven than Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield. And I dare say that today the little child with faith in Christ who has the magnificent blessing of entering the presence of the Lord understands Christian theology more than any Christian theologian still alive today.

One of the nice things about heaven to me is that heaven is a place in which one day we are not near and then the next day far off from the Lord. That's the experience at least that I have. I have the experience of being very close to the Lord it seems on some days, and then some things happen and it's not long before I feel it necessary to go into my bedroom and get down upon my knees. I am so thankful that my bedroom is right next to my office, and I go in and get down upon my knees and have to confess my failures, and to feel a sense of restoration to the presence and the enjoyment of the presence of God. So there is no near one day far off the next. Success one day, failure

the next up and down, and down and up, but in heaven we shall see his face and live in the presence of the beatific vision of the Lord God.

Fifthly we read, “The Lord gives them light. And there shall be no night there. They shall need no lamp nor light of the sun for the Lord God gives them light.” The association of the name and the light of God marks their belong to God. You know the ironic Benediction is a wonderful benediction, and in wedding ceremonies it’s frequently used at the conclusion of the service. I always use it in the wedding ceremonies that I have performed in the past. You remember it well. “The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord makes his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace so they shall put my name on the children of Israel and I will bless them. The Lord makes his face to shine upon you.” Well in one sense the shining of the face of God upon us reaches its climax and its fulfillment in the new paradise. “They need no lamp nor light of the sun for the Lord God shall shine upon them.” Shall give them light. The ancient benediction of Aaron finds its consummation in the new paradise.

And finally we read in the last clause of verse 5, “And they shall reign for ever and ever.” This is the ultimate reach of the bliss of God’s people, participation in the sovereignty of God and the lamb and forever. Note, “And they shall reign forever and ever.” This is the final realization of something that John mentioned back in chapter 3 in verse 21, where he said, “Our Lord is speaking to him who overcomes I will grant to sit with me on my throne as I also overcame and sat down with my father on his throne.” And so we, think of it my Christian friend, we are given this magnificent privilege of ruling and reigning forever with him. Sitting upon the throne with our Lord Jesus Christ, who sat down with his Father on his throne, magnificent participation in the sovereignty of God and of the lamb forever, the final sharing of the royal office of the Lord Jesus Christ. Service, yes, yet sovereignty, sovereign service of the Lord God.

You know I want you to really reflect, I could not ever explain it to you. I don't have words to explain it, and I do not have the thoughts to give it proper closing, but the grace of God is the grace of God unfathomable. I am not surprised to read something like this of course, but it is an unfathomable thing. I was rather interested in reading an editorial of one of the papers this last week, in which reference was made to the movie JFK. And in the editorial which was something of a critique of the movie, it went on to speak of the blurbs that accompany the movie, and this is some of the things that are said about JFK, “electrifying, a knockout, breathless, enthralling, sensational, terrific.” Those are the words of the editor of Time magazine. The adjectives could never express what Scripture talks about when it says, “They shall see his face and shall reign forever and ever.” That's a knockout. That's unfathomable. That's breathless. That's enthralling. That's sensational. That's terrific. Well this great vision leaves us someone has said, dazzled if not dazed by what is stated with reference to the future. But how evident it is as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews said, that here in this world 1991. We Christians have no abiding city. We look for one to come. We look for the New Jerusalem and the new paradise within it.

I read yesterday and account again of James Chalmers life, marvelous Scotsman. Lived in the last century. Grew up around Inverary, and many of you have been to Inverary because when you go to Scotland if you take a little trip up north that's one of the places you go, one of the Campbell castles is there, marvelous castle. You have probably walked the streets of Inverary, and it was there that James Chalmers as a young man of fifteen found the Lord, a marvelous missionary to New Guinea. When Chalmers died he was eaten by the Fly River Cannibals. When he died they had about a hundred and twenty five stations that had been built in up in New Guinea. His death was a tremendous shock to Britain. The preachers and others in the land put the death of James Chalmers on the front pages of their newspaper. Chalmers a marvelous man, wholly devoted to the extension of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his great text as he



put it was chapter 22 in verse 176 of the Book of Revelation, and it bears on what we are talking about because the text says, “And the Spirit and the bride say come, and let him who hears say come, and let him who thirsts come whoever desires let him take of the water of life freely.”

What a marvelous life text, “And the Spirit and the bride say come.” The Spirit says come. The bride says come. And let him who hears, that is hears and believes, say come.” Every individual born of the Lord God has implanted within him the desire to see others come, and so he says, “Let him who hear say come.” That’s what we do to all of our friends, we say come if we have come. And then we read, “Let him who thirsts come.” Chalmers said, “I was thirsty and so I came.” “Let him who thirsts come, and let him take of the water of life freely.”

The last clause points to our responsibility and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews words here we have no continuing city but we seek. We seek one to come. You look at that in the original text it’s a bit intensive. It’s the directive use of a particular word that’s an intensive word we seek. That is we seek earnestly. We seek one to come. How? Well Matthew tells us that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled, so there is a passionate desire accompanied by earnest effort. We don’t merely gaze but under the Lordship of Christ, and the guidance of the Spirit with the word of God in our hands we serve and call upon others to come. “Let him who hears say come.”

What a marvelous it would be in 1992, if we reach 1992, that each of us might take it upon himself to be the means by which we say to someone come to the knowledge of him that leads ultimately to the experience of the river of the water of life, of the seeing of his face, of eternal service and sovereignty co-sovereignty with the Father, Son in the Spirit. May God give us grace as we approach the new year to make some marvelous steps forward in devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ? If you are here and you have never believed in him, we invite you to turn, believe in him who offered the atoning sacrifice for sinners, the way is always open. The Spirit and the bride say come. Let him

who hears say come, and for him who has a thirst let him take of the water of life freely without charge we come to Christ not by joining the church, not by praying through, not by observing the ordinances. We come through simple trust in him. Come to Christ. Believe in him. That's something that only you are able to do by God's help through the Spirit. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we are so grateful to Thee for these magnificent expressions of the Christian hope as we look forward to the paradise of the presence of God of seeing the face of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we rejoice. We look forward to those marvelous days and we pray Lord in the intervening time for evidentially, Thou hast a purpose for us that each of us may serve that purpose to the pleasure of our triune God. Oh Lord, if there should be someone here who has never believed in Christ at this very moment, touch their hearts to turn to him, and as thirsty individuals drink of the water of life freely. For Jesus' sake. Amen.