

Weekly Bible Study group – March 3, 2010

This week's reading: Revelation 19:11 – 22:5

Reflection by Bob Zurinsky (bob@spu.edu)

There are some very important things to pay attention to in this week's text. Life-changing things; faith-changing things. If we pay close attention, this even has the potential to re-frame how we explain the Christian message. These are essentially the closing chapters of the book of Revelation (except for a short epilogue, which we'll talk about next week). And since these are the closing chapters, it means that they are also the culmination, the end that everything in this book has been moving toward. And not only that, but we have to keep in mind that Revelation was placed very intentionally as the last book in the Christian Bible. This means that when we read these chapters, we're reading not only the conclusion, the consummation, of this one book, but also *the end and the goal of the whole Bible*.

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

(Rev. 21)

This is the one beautiful truth that all the covenants, promises, judgments, waiting, longing, dancing, singing, and living have been bending towards. This is what it looks like for God to redeem and restore the world. It's all been leading up to this. In the end of the story, GOD COMES HERE, dwells fully with the people, and all that is broken is healed. The teaching of all the prophets throughout the Bible points toward this goal. The life and teaching of Jesus himself points toward this goal. Even on the eve of his own betrayal and death, Jesus promised his followers that he would be traveling with them toward their final home in the restored, perfected kingdom of God that is to come. "I tell you the truth, I will not drink the fruit of the vine again until I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

We have before us the central promise of God in the scriptures. It is the definition of our hope, and the definition of the incredibly good news we have to share with a hopeless world – in word and action.