

**Speaker : Elder John Kinnaird  
September 22, 2000 - Sunday morning service  
Bethany Orthodox Presbyterian Church  
Oxford, PA**

**“Though the Waters Roar and the Mountains Quake”  
[reading Revelation 22 from NIV]**

**Our scripture lesson this morning is found in the book of Revelation. This is a very significant passage because it is the last book in the bible and the last chapter in that book. And as we shall see it is God's final word to mankind.**

**The revelation of God to man is herein completed. There is no more to come. My job today is not to bring you some new word from God, rather it is to help you understand the words already given by unpacking, if I may use that word, by unpacking the Word of God written. I am not a prophet. I am here today as a preacher. The scriptures require that an elder be willing and able to preach and teach and that he must hold the deep truths of scripture with a clear conscience in order that he may encourage the saints to sound doctrine. And that he might guard the church against error by refuting those who oppose sound doctrine. Therefore that is what we will try to do today for you. We will unpack this passage of scripture.**

**When Pastor Foraker indicated the need for someone to fill the pulpit today I volunteered not knowing what my subject would be. Shortly thereafter I was in a worship service where the responsive reading was Psalm 46. As I studied that Psalm and tracked it's themes through the scripture I found myself in the 22nd chapter of Revelation and knew I had found my subject for today. So let's follow that trail in this sermon. Please turn with me to Psalm 46.  
[reading Psalm 46]**

**"Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations He has brought on the earth." Just a few weeks ago my wife and I had opportunity to see some of the desolations God has brought on the earth. This Psalm begins by describing some of them thusly. "Therefore we will not fear though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though the wasters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging." Bertha and I were in Alaska, visiting among other places Anchorage and Valdez. So many mountains surround the city of Valdez that it is sometimes referred to as the Switzerland of North America. These mountains are solid rock founded on the Alaskan continental shelf. Massive as they are they once shook like Jello.**

**On Good Friday in 1964 there was an earthquake in Alaska centered just off Valdez which shook and destroyed major parts of that state. Some of you older people may remember the news reports of the event. The quake was the largest ever recorded on**

the North American continent measuring 9.4 on the Richter scale. To put that into perspective we from time to time read of earthquakes in Japan or Mexico or Turkey that hit 6.0 or 7.0 on the Richter. And which level and destroy major cities and vast regions and which kill hundreds, even thousands of people. They are terrible events. If you take into account that the Richter scale reports the intensity of earthquakes by a measure in which each higher number represents a 10 fold increase in intensity over the next lower number you can begin to get a feel for what I am saying. A Richter 9.0 quake is 1000 times more violent than a 6.0 quake and 1,000,000 times more violent than a 3.0 quake.

The most amazing thing that we saw was a home video camera recording taken in Valdez. An ocean going freighter which I estimate from the photos to be between 500 and 600 feet long, now 600 feet long would be 2 football fields, and which would draw when laden with cargo about 20 or 25 feet of water was tied up at the dockside when the quake hit. The harbor at Valdez has about 90 feet of water, and the city sits about 40 feet above the water. Onboard the freighter was this sailor who was taking video camera pictures of crew members who were tossing candy and fruit to kids down on the dock when the quake began. With courage unimaginable he continued to film throughout the whole event. When the quake hit all of the water in the Valdez arm of Prince William Sound was sucked out of the harbor. And this 600 foot long freighter was plunged to the bottom where it struck the bottom with a mighty force. Then the waters rushed back in in a mighty sumani wave that picked the freighter up. Remember it was sitting 130 foot below the city. Picked the freighter up and carried it with the sailor still shooting film, hanging on to the rail and carried the ship on shore where it was sat down in the middle of the city near the 14th street school building. Next another huge wave came over the city, picked up the ship again and carried it out into the harbor where it again struck bottom. Finally when the quake was over and the water returned to their normal stable conditions the ship was found floating safe in the middle of the harbor. And the camera man was still turning out film. Two men were washed off the ship and presumed dead. One man lost a leg when he was crushed by cargo. But the sailor with his camera came through it all. And you can go to Valdez today and view this remarkable film record of the earthquake.

The Psalmist wrote "God is our refuge and strength. An ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though it's waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging." Can you imagine being in the place of that sailor with that camera on the deck of that freighter hanging on to the  $\frac{1}{4}$ . he did not have to crank it, it was a video camera, push a button. Holding on to the rail and keeping that camera going. On Friday in 1964 as the mountains began to quake and the waters to roar would you have said under those conditions God is my refuge and my strength, my ever present help therefore I will not fear? Would you have said that and kept right on filming? I hope you would have. Do you notice what comes next in the Psalm? It is an explanation of

why the people of God need have no fears. It reads "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall. God will help her at break of day." It is because the people of God dwell in this city of God with God as their constant companion. God is in that city and with those people. Even when the end of time and the final judgement comes with the break of the eternal day, God's people will dwell secure nourished by the river of life which makes glad the hearts of those who dwell within the walls of God's city.

What a blessing, and what an answer to fear. You should be in that city. There is no other place of refuge. Our scripture lesson for today begins with a complete description of this same wonderful city of God.

[reading Rev. 22:1-5]

It sounds like a wonderful place. A place where every man, woman and child would like to dwell. There they can dwell secure from all the evils that surround us in this life. There will be no fear of earthquakes, no fear of death. But questions possibly in your mind are :

- is there truly such a city?
- can mankind really find residence there?
- who will be in that city?
- who will be outside that city?
- how does one gain entrance to that city?
- how much time is left to gain entrance?

I will start with the last question. Do you have your bible open to Rev. 22? How much time is left to gain entrance? Well, judging by verse 6 the things which must be done shortly. And verse 7, behold I come quickly. And verse 10, for the time is at hand. And verse 12, behold I come quickly.

Judging by that, there is no a whole lot of time left. But, there is a little. How do I know that there is a little, a little time left? Look at Hebrews 4.

[reading Heb 4:1-11]

These verses speak of a present opportunity to enter God's rest when it says in verse 1, "since the promise of entering his rest still remains". Again it speaks of God setting another day, a day in the gospel age, a day known as "today". When people can still enter in. Look at verses 7-9. [reading Heb. 4:7-9]

Finally there is in verse 11 an exhortation to enter. "Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience." Now God would not issue an exhortation to enter if in fact the time allowed for entering had already expired. So we can accurately conclude that so long as the sun rises and falls, so long as we can speak of "today", so long as time remains, there is opportunity to enter the city of God. But that time may not be much longer. It

would not be wise to say "maybe I'll wait for tomorrow". Tomorrow may not come. What then would become of you?

Now as for the question "who will be inside that city?". Well perhaps I should start by asking who will be outside the city. Our passage from Rev. 22 at verse 15 declares "Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood". You may argue, but I am not like that. Well, are you not now? Are you telling me that you have never practiced falsehood? You have never been an idolater? You have never put anything before the worship and service of God? You have never been angry with your neighbor, have you? You are not a murderer you say? You have had no sexually impure thoughts? Really? You want me to believe that? You have never practiced magic arts? You have never flipped a coin or drawn a straw or wished your luck would change or thanked your lucky star? Well, if you can convince me that you have never done any of those things then I will be convinced that you are not in need of a savior. But please don't waste your time trying to convince me of something like that. It won't work.

So then, who is inside the city? Verse 14 puts it succinctly. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city." The question may be what does "they who wash their robes" mean? Well, in verse 7 there is a similar phrase<sup>1/4</sup> chapter 7 verse 14 there is a similar phrase. "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." And in chapter 19 verses 7 and 8 we learn that the robes, which are variously described as "white" or as "fine linen" are the righteous deeds of the saints. It is written "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)" Thus we rightly conclude that those inside the city are those who have kept the law of God and those only. So, a pretty simple answer to our last two questions. Inside the city are those who do righteousness and outside are those who do evil.

But perhaps in your mind there is still a little question here, namely when do they do these things. Is the scripture talking about what they do in the future after the city of God arrives, after Christ returns? Or are we talking about what they do in this life? Is being in the city coincident with, or consequential to the doing of righteousness? I think our passage in Rev. 22 answers this question quite clearly for us. Look at verses 10 and 11. (pause, I have a problem here, excuse me for a minute.) Skip that reference to verses 10 and 11.

When that day is at hand when Christ returns it will no longer be called "today". At that point in time a great determination will be made, a judgement that will forever determine your destiny. "And he sayeth unto me, seal not the sayings of the prophesy

of this book for the time is at hand." That is verse 10 and 11. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still. He that is filthy let him be filthy still. And he that is righteous let him be righteous still. And he that is holy, let him be holy still." Those who were acting sinfully prior to the return of Christ will remain sinful. Those who were acting righteously and with holiness before the return of Christ will continue to do so. Romans 2 puts it this way. "God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil there will be wrath and anger."

Now by this we know the decision, the judgement as to who enters the city and who stays outside for eternity will be made on that great day of judgement in accordance with what you have done in this life. In fact our scripture lesson says the very same thing at verse 12. "Behold I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done."

You say woah, that doesn't sound good for me. How can I possibly get into that city? Well, if you say that, I have good news for you. The situation is very hopeful. I can see that because it is evident you recognize your sinfulness and you realize the teaching of scripture is that all those who live sinful lives in this life will be in big trouble on that day. In some 40 years as working as a mechanical engineer there were two truths I always applied to my problem.

- First, if it is not broke, don't fix it. Well, that truth doesn't apply here.
- The second truth is you can't fix it unless you first figure out and recognize what is wrong. So, if you recognize that in your sinfulness you have a real problem in trying to obtain entrance into the eternal city you are halfway to solving the problem. Halfway to fixing it. But we had better keep moving, we don't know how much time we have before Christ returns. Let's start with verses 16 and 17.

[read Rev. 22:16 - 17]

Christ says "whoever is thirsty, let him come." That sounds like you if you are among those who recognize your sinfulness and your basic unacceptableness to God. You are thirsty, are you not? If so, there is for you a free gift. You may take and drink of that water of life that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. To you the Holy Spirit says "come, drink". To you the bride of Christ, the church, even this church here in Oxford says "come, drink". How to come? And of what to drink? Well, Jesus says "I Jesus have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the church". Christ had, prior to writing the book of Revelation sent his angels, his messengers, prophets and apostles to give testimony to the churches. And now in the book of Revelation he again sends an angel to give testimony. But just what is that testimony?

On the day of Pentecost many people were, like you, convicted of their sin. They had heard of the crucifixion of Christ, of his atoning death and of his resurrection. They

had witnessed the giving of the Holy Spirit to the church. Convicted, they cried out "what must we do to be saved?" Their question, and Peter's answers are found in Acts 2. "When the people heard this", the scripture says, "they were cut to the heart and they said to Peter and the other apostles, brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call."

This account in Acts speaks of the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. That gift is the key to understanding. And that gift is the secret to righteous living and of entry into the city of God. Two passages in particular come to my mind. One, Jeremiah 31:33-34 says [reading Jer. 31:33-34]

A companion passage in Ezekiel 36 says [reading Ezekiel 36: 25-27]

Both of these passages are speaking of the gift of the Holy Spirit and of the change in the human heart that occurs during this life to those who receive the Holy Spirit. Mark that I said "in this life". This is not something that is put off until some future golden age when you may no longer be alive. Neither is it something put off until eternity. These passages speak of God's law being written in your heart now, in this day. And they speak of the resulting walk before the Lord in righteousness. The righteousness of God's people. All those who inherit the eternal city of God. Even as Peter told his audience that they could receive the promise right then and there on the day of Pentecost so I tell you, you can partake of the promised righteousness right here, now. So if you would come and drink of that life giving stream I will give you this instruction. All these instructions in the word of scripture.

First, salvation is found in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

Secondly, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Will be saved.

Third, if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the scripture says, anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.

Now if you have made that profession I would comfort you with these words from the first several verses from Ephesians chapter 2. [reading Eph. 2:1-5]

So I invite you, come and drink.

How do we know that what I have just taught you is true and final and unchangeable? Suppose someone were to come with a different message saying he had received a new message from God. Would you not be uncertain as to whether what we had taught you is worthy of your relying on for your eternal salvation? Suppose it were possible for

**God to send another messenger or prophet with a different message. Would this not shake your confidence? Fortunately it is not possible that there could be such a messenger with yet another message.**

**We have yet to look at the last several verses of Revelation 22, the last verses in God's revelation to mankind. Two of those verses, number 18 and 19 merit consideration at this point. But I will begin that study by looking once again at the first part of verse 16. "I Jesus have sent my angel to give this testimony for the churches". Jesus sent his angels to John the apostle with a message, a testimony. John as an apostle stood between God, or God's angel, to receive that message and to pass it on to God's people in the churches. Both those at that day and those of all time yet to come, even to us. In this John the apostle functioned much as did the prophets of the old testament churches. Now at verses 18 and 19 we come to a wholly new situation. Read with me please. [reading Rev. 22: 18 - 19]**

**The angel that God sent to John the apostle gave words to him and God caused him to infallibly write those words. And those words are preserved for us. They say that there will be no more prophesy. If there is to be no more prophesy then there will be no more prophets. The book, God's word is finished and complete and there will be terrible curses and plagues upon anyone who dares to presume to add or take away from those words.**

**Please turn with me to the book of Hebrews chapter 1. [reading Heb. 1:1-3]**

**First note that there is somewhat of a difference between the old testament prophet and the new testament apostle. In the past, in the old testament God spoke to the prophets. In the first century of the church age God and His Son, (correcting) God had His Son Jesus, the living word of God speak to us. As we saw in verse 16 he sometimes did this through angels. At other times the risen Lord spoke direct to an apostle as he did to Paul on the Damascus road. Even earlier while still here on earth he had spoken very directly face to face to his apostles and disciples. The apostles in turn wrote his word under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in scripture. When Christ had finished speaking, and when he had finished his task of providing purification for sin he sat down. He sat down at the right hand of God thus signifying that there would be no more words to come. It is much like God resting on the seventh day, there was no more creation to come. All the creation had been done the first 6 days.**

**His work of speaking and redeeming is done. Hence, there is no further need for prophets and apostles. They no longer exist. There are none in the church today.**

**Turn over to chapter 2 of Hebrews verses 1-4. [reading Heb. 2:1-4]**

**As you read this admonition we realize that we are not among those who directly heard**

**the apostles bring the word of God. Rather we have read the word written and had it explained to us by preachers, as I am doing today. Notice that those words are binding, they are final, there is no more. Notice that those words were confirmed by the apostle, by those who heard him directly face to face. Then they were further confirmed and testified to by gifts given in the first century in the apostolic age. This confirmation means that they are complete, there is no more to be added. There will therefore be no more prophets and apostles in the church for there is no further need for them. The word is given, there is no more to come. There is no one in the church today that receives a message from God and gives it to the church.**

**This is good. This is vitally important and very good. It means that we stand on a solid foundation that can not be shaken. The terms of God's promise to mankind will not, and can not be changed. When he says "come, whoever is thirsty, let him come, and whoever wishes let him take the free gift of the water of life" we know that that word is still good. That promise is still with us. So again I say to you "come and drink".**

**Therefore we will not fear though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our fortress.**

**Shall we pray.**