Today’s Radio Study:

Woodrow Kroll: The final message of the Bible is an invitation to salvation, and that’s the major feature of the Book of Revelation. After all this is not the revelation of John, this is the Revelation of Jesus Christ to John. The Book of Revelation is not designed simply to fill in details about the future that we don’t know. It’s not designed for speculation. It’s designed to show that God knows where He’s going, that God has a plan, He has an ending plan, He has an exit strategy as well as a beginning strategy—and that plan relates to His Son, Jesus.

We’ve come now to Revelation 22, which is the final chapter of the Bible, the final chapter of this book. Now, remember, with Revelation 22, the apostle John completes his responsibility that was given to him by God in the very first chapter. In chapter 1, verse 19, God told John, “Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.” In other words, write past, present and future. I think that’s the divine outline of the Book of Revelation. There are things in the early chapters that are past. There are things in those chapters that John is writing to actual churches of his day. Yet when you get to chapter 4, and all the way to the end, everything is future.

Now, John has accomplished his goal. He has written down the things that the Spirit of God has revealed to him as he was caught up into heaven. So when we get to chapter 22, verse 6, “Then he said to me, ‘These words are faithful and true.’ And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.” John has been faithful in writing down the things that God has revealed to him that must shortly take place. John has been faithful, has done his duty, written it all down. He doesn’t understand it all and neither do we, but God doesn’t promise us a blessing for understanding. He promises a blessing to those who read the book and obey it.

Just think where this guy John has been. He’s a banished apostle on the island of Patmos, in prison for preaching the Gospel. While banished to this island, God comes to him in a most unique way and gives him a vision of future things. He doesn’t understand them all, but he writes them down. He sees a seven-sealed scroll and weeps because there’s no one who is able to open this scroll and reveal its contents. Then the Lion of the tribe of Judah steps forward, Jesus and only Jesus is worthy to open this scroll. Jesus breaks the first seal and unrolls the scroll a little bit. That first seal is a judgment that God is bringing on the earth. He’s always promised judgment yet withheld it for all these generations because we’ve been living in the day of His grace. Now Revelation is recording the day of His judgments.

The scroll is opened, the seal is broken and he sees the first judgment. Then he breaks another seal, farther into the scroll. He rolls it a little farther, and he knows a second judgment. He
breaks six seals. (There are seven total). When he breaks the seventh seal, that seventh seal reveals seven brand-new judgments. They come springing out of that seventh seal, and they are the trumpet judgments. So, now he's seen seven judgments of God described as seals. He's seen seven judgments of God described as trumpets, the call of God to judgment. Later on in the book, he saw seven judgments of God as goblets or bowls or vials. They simply pour out the judgment of God upon the earth. John has seen seven years of absolutely horrible tribulation on this earth. The sun has become black; the moon is turned red; the water systems and the streams are all filled with blood. The earth is scorched. It's just a horrendous, horrendous time.

During this time, there is going to be a person who will rise to the task and say, "I can lead this world." He will be absolutely opposed to Christ. That's why we call him the Antichrist. He will be the tool of Satan to bring about what Satan thinks is going to be his chance to have a kingdom on this earth. It will be a failure, of course but he doesn't know that. He has a friend who is a false prophet who gets people to worship the Antichrist. The Antichrist worships Satan. During this whole time, John is going to see literally multitudes of people slain. Many, many people die. He's going to see the one-world church be formed, a whole ecclesiastical unit formed in Rome. Then he's going to see the Antichrist use the church to gain power. When the Antichrist doesn't need it anymore, he's going to see the Antichrist destroy it, just throw it away.

In the political arena John's going to see this Common Market of nations in Europe who have banded together and are fueling the cause of the Antichrist, he's going to see God destroy that. Just imagine what John has seen over the course of just a short period of time. Finally, when you get to chapter 19, John sees Jesus Christ riding out of heaven. He's clothed in white. There's blood on His robe. He's riding a white horse. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Everything John sees is absolutely amazing. He now sees Christ as the King of the earth. He now sees the end of time. He sees a thousand years in which Jesus reigns upon this earth. Then, at the end of those thousand years, he sees Satan being loosed out of the bottomless pit to lead one last rebellion against God. That rebellion is put down.

John then is overawed by what he sees at the very end of the book. He's just overawed by what he's heard and seen. The only thing he can do is worship so he falls before God in worship. "He carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:10). John sees this great city, and is commanded to reveal everything we know about the Holy City of God. "And he said to me, 'Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand'" (Revelation 22:10). It is interesting that the first thing John sees is a scroll that's sealed, and no one could break the seals. Now, he gets to the end of his revelation and God tells him, "Don't seal the prophecy of this book. I want everybody to know what's in this book."

Should you be reading the Book of Revelation? Well, I'll tell you what, if you want truth, read Revelation. If you want fiction, read The Da Vinci Code. You want to know the truth, read what God said. That's why we should be reading the Book of Revelation because God doesn't want it sealed. God doesn't want this to be a secret to us. God wants us to understand what His program is going to look like in the future and how all this will work out. "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:11-14).

When Christ comes again, at His Second Coming, there will be no time then for us to fix all the things in our lives that we're not proud of. That's going to be true at the Rapture of the Church too. But here He's saying, "When a person is just and I come, that person will be just for all eternity forever. If a person is unjust when I come, that person will remain unjust for all eternity, forever. If a person is holy when I come, they will be holy. If they're unholy, they will
be unholy still. That means forever and ever.” So, the event of the return of the Lord Jesus is the most single and singular event of the future that impacts how we approach the future, how we enjoy the future. That’s why Jesus can say in verse 13, “I am Alpha and Omega. I’m the Beginning and the End. I am the bookends of history. I am the first. I am the last” (Paraphrase).

“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star” (Revelation 22:16). It’s significant that Jesus uses so many descriptors here of Himself. He’s talking about who He is and why He has the right to be the first and the last. He said, “I want you to write these things to the churches?” What is important about that is in Revelation 2 and 3 the word church or churches occur again and again. The early part of Revelation is all about the Church. Yet from chapter 4 all the way until this verse, chapter 22, verse 16, the word church or churches is never mentioned. Not once and there’s a reason for that. Revelation 4 and following is all about the Tribulation period. The reason the Church isn’t mentioned is we aren’t here. This is all about God turning His attention to His people again during the time of their greatest Tribulation.

When you get to eternity we are back in view. You can talk about the Church again because the Church is going to roll on forever. This is the final record of the mind of God to the minds of men. There are no other books of God written by God—given by God to holy men who wrote them down—that we’re missing, that are not here. There are no addendums. In fact, it’s kind of like a business meeting when you think about the Bible. There are no additions or corrections necessary. This is the final message of God.

Tami Weissert: It’s interesting to note that the Church will be back when we get to heaven but the role of the Church will be different.

WK: You’re right on both accounts. It will be back and the role will be different. One of the most interesting things to me in the Book of Revelation is the way these 22 chapters are laid out. The Church is mentioned again and again in chapters one and two all the way through chapter 3. Then in chapter 4, verse 1, we have this strange call from heaven, with a trumpet, that says, “Come up here!” That’s awfully symbolic of the Rapture of the Church. It seems to indicate to us that the Church is caught up into heaven at that point. What happens immediately thereafter the Tribulation starts. That’s where all the trouble on this earth—all the wrath of God is poured out on this earth. God has promised the Church that we will not see the wrath of God. So if the Church is taken up to heaven, we see all of this only from heaven. Now we get to the end of the Book of Revelation and again, the Church in heaven takes center stage. At this point, we are not the suffering or struggling Church, we are the Church triumphant.

You can feel the excitement now. “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take of the water of life freely” (Revelation22:17). This is God’s final call to the world. The Holy Spirit says, “Come on and join us.” The Bride of Christ says, “Come on and join us.” God says, “Any of you who’ve thirsted spiritually, you come and we will quench that thirst forever. Let him take of the water of life freely.” This is the final call of God in the Bible. Someday each of us is going to hear God’s final call to us. That may come quicker for some of us than others because death may be around the corner for some of us but whenever the final call of God comes, it is the final call.

There is a time in which God will say, “This is the last opportunity you have to trust My Son as Savior because if you don’t trust Him now, the opportunity stops and you will be unrighteous forever.” Now, that’s scary. That’s why it’s important for us to take seriously the claims of the Bible with regard to salvation. God has a final call. Here it is: “Come! Join Me now while there’s still time.” Adjacent to that final call, notice, there’s a final warning, verse 18: “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book.” If you’ve been with us in this study, we’re not talking about ten silly plagues in Egypt. We are talking about horrendous
plagues occurring again and again.

He says, “If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18-10). That’s a stern warning. See, God expresses His grace, “Come, join Me now while there’s time.” He expresses His warning, “Don’t wait because if you do wait, what awaits you is the most terrible fate possible.” You get down to the last two verses, verse 20 and 21, it says, “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming quickly.’” Now, in my Bible those words, “Surely I am coming quickly,” are in red (maybe yours, too, if you have a red-letter edition). That means those are the words of Jesus.

So, the One who testifies to all these things—God’s revealing them through His Spirit to John and Jesus is standing there saying, “Yup, yup, that’s right; it’s true; it’s going to happen. It’s exactly the way we planned it.” Jesus says, getting His final word in to you, “‘I am coming quickly.’” Don’t delay about this. “‘I am coming quickly.’” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” Could I say this to you as we close this eight-week series on the Book of Revelation? The Book of Revelation isn’t designed to scare us. It’s not designed to cause us to know who the Antichrist is or the Common Market nations, who they are. Some people get so taken back by all these things.

The Book of Revelation is designed to show us that God means business. When God said, “Look, if you sin and rebel against Me, there are consequences for that sin.” And just because you and I haven’t seen those consequences, doesn’t mean they aren’t coming. He’s just withheld them because of His grace. The Book of Revelation shows us God meant every word He said, and it will happen. In His time, and yet future, but it will happen. Now, the most amazing thing to me about God is while it’s happening God is constantly saying to people on the earth, “Come to Me. Let me put My arms of love around you. Just trust My Son as Savior, trust what He did at the cross to be what I required to pay for your sin. And I will accept you in My heaven. Not on what you do—but what He did for you.”

The very last verse of the Bible, Jesus says, “Please do it because I’m coming quickly” (Paraphrase). The Book of Revelation is designed to help us know that God always keeps His word. If He says there is trouble coming, if He says there is judgment coming, you can mark it down. It is coming. If He says, “You come to Me today, and I will keep you from that judgment,” mark it down. God always keeps His word.

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