

Dr. David Mathewson, Revelation, Session 30, Revelation 22: Bride, New Jerusalem, How to Read Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Mathewson, Revelation, Session 30, Revelation 22: Bride, New Jerusalem, How to Read, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Dave Mathewson's lecture analyzes Revelation 22, focusing on the inclusion of nations in the New Jerusalem. He argues against a literal interpretation, suggesting the text uses **rhetorical contrasts** to depict God's complete judgment and salvation. Mathewson connects the imagery to Old Testament passages, particularly Ezekiel and Isaiah, emphasizing the **transfer of allegiance from the beast to God**. Finally, he proposes five ways to interpret Revelation: as a **call to worship, witness, discernment, resistance, and obedience**. The lecture concludes by stressing the importance of living a life of holiness while awaiting Christ's return.

**2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 30 – Double click icon to
play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (New Testament → Revelation).**



**Mathewson_Revela
tion_Session30.mp3**

3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Mathewson's Lecture 30 on Revelation 22, the New Jerusalem, and how to read the Book of Revelation:

Briefing Document: Dr. Dave Mathewson on Revelation 22 and Interpretation

Main Themes:

- **The New Jerusalem: A Vision of Complete Salvation and Judgment:** Dr. Mathewson argues that the imagery of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22 is not meant to be a literal, geographically precise description, but rather a symbolic representation of the complete and comprehensive nature of God's salvation and judgment. He emphasizes the rhetorical contrast, not mathematical precision, of those judged and those saved.
- **Transfer of Kingdoms:** The nations, previously under the rule of the Beast, are now depicted as entering the New Jerusalem, symbolizing the transfer of all dominion to God and Christ. This doesn't mean every person is saved, but signifies the absolute and complete nature of God's victory. The kingdom of this world must become the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ.
- **Inclusivity and Limits:** The New Jerusalem is an inclusive city, welcoming the Gentiles. However, it is also exclusive in that only the pure and those whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life will enter. This highlights the importance of faith and response to Christ.
- **Garden and Temple Imagery:** The description of the river of life and the tree of life in Revelation 22:1-5 merges Garden of Eden and Temple imagery. This alludes to a restored paradise, a return to the original state, where God's presence dwells, and His people serve as priests. The Old Testament Temple was seen as a miniature Garden of Eden, and the New Jerusalem embodies this.
- **The Function of the Vision:** The vision of the New Jerusalem is not primarily a prediction of future events but a call to faithfulness and a motivator for holiness in the present. It contrasts with the corrupt city of Babylon (Rome) and provides an alternative vision for the church. It functions to "engender faithfulness in God's people," providing a promise and reward for those who overcome.

- **Exhortation to the Church:** Revelation 22:6-21 contains exhortations calling the readers to holiness, obedience, and faithful witness. It's a script for how the church is to live, not just a future prophecy. The need to worship God and reject idols is reinforced. The book is to be applied to the reader's current situation, not sealed up.
- **Understanding "Coming Soon":** The frequent phrase "I am coming soon" (or quickly) is best understood as the constant expectation of the church throughout history; Christ can come at any time.
- **How to Read Revelation:** Mathewson concludes by offering five ways to read Revelation:
 1. History is moving towards God's consummation.
 2. A call to worship and allegiance to God and the Lamb, rejecting idolatry.
 3. A call to witness and mission, showing the reality of the new creation.
 4. A call to discernment and resistance against "Babylon" (godlessness, oppression).
 5. A call for obedience and discipleship to Jesus Christ.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Nations in the New Jerusalem:** The presence of nations and kings in the New Jerusalem, previously aligned with the Beast, is a rhetorical device to illustrate the complete transfer of power to God. "The absolute judgment and absolute salvation scene is simply meant to contrast just that. The absolute comprehensive nature of God's judgment, but also the absolute and comprehensive nature of the salvation that he brings."
- **Literal vs. Symbolic Interpretation:** Dr. Mathewson emphasizes the symbolic nature of much of the imagery in Revelation. He states, "Like other images in Revelation, we shouldn't, I don't think, take this too literally."
- **Isaiah's Influence:** He points to the connection between the end-time gathering of nations to God's people in Revelation and prophecies in Isaiah 2 and Isaiah 60. "I think given the end time context of chapter 21 and 22 and given the meaning and function of Isaiah 60 and Isaiah 2 is we should see these nations as nations who are converted at the coming of Christ that enter the New Jerusalem in fulfillment of Isaiah 60."

- **The River of Life:** The river of life flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb connects to the river in Ezekiel 47, but now the source is God Himself, as God and the Lamb are the Temple. "The water that flows out is the river that flows out from Ezekiel 47. Now John calls the water of life. But this is not inconsistent with Ezekiel because Ezekiel makes clear that the water that flows out gives life to all the creatures, and it gives life to everywhere it flows."
- **Tree of Life:** The single "tree of life" on both sides of the river is a deliberate allusion to the Garden of Eden, demonstrating a restored and renewed paradise. "So here the backdrop for the tree of life is Genesis 2 verse 9, the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. So this is John's I think this is a deliberate illusion by John back to Genesis 2 verse 9 and moreover I think it's his way of further demonstrating this is the restored Garden."
- **Healing of the Nations:** The leaves of the Tree of Life are for the healing of the nations, suggesting a restoration of wholeness and a liberation from the ravages of the Beast and Satan. "But I wonder too if part of the healing is not also these are the nations that are no longer ravaged by the rule of the beast... Now, they experience eschatological salvation. Now, the leaves bring them healing."
- **Absence of Curse:** The absence of curse is linked to Zechariah 14:11, meaning an end to destruction and the beginning of healing for the nations.
- **Priestly Role of Believers:** Believers will serve as priests in the new creation, directly seeing God's face and bearing His name, fulfilling both Old Testament expectations and the initial purpose for Adam and Eve in the Garden.
- **Kingship of Believers:** Believers will also reign forever, fulfilling the promise given to overcomers in Revelation 2-3, and reflecting the original dominion given to humanity in Genesis 1:26-28. "I think here we find the final fulfillment of what God intended for Adam, that is to rule over creation; now you find God's people fulfilling the mandate given to Adam of ruling over creation, now they rule over the new creation, in fulfillment of Genesis 1, 26 through 28."
- **"Adding to" or "Taking Away From" the Prophecy:** This warning in Revelation 22:18-19 is not primarily about physically altering the text but about disobeying the book's message and compromising with idolatry. It is a call for obedience. "In other words, what does it mean to add and take away? I think this is metaphorical for disobeying the word of God and refusing to keep it, especially by compromising with the idolatrous pagan world."

- **Babylon as a Symbol:** Babylon represents humanity's attempt to establish paradise without God.

Quotes:

- "John is not interested in quantifying the categories... but John speaks in rather absolute terms."
- "Part of that means also that the nations, those who are under the rule of the beast, must now be transferred to the rule of God and Jesus Christ."
- "This is not an additional place, something that is to be understood as separate from the New Jerusalem Temple so far. 22, 1 through 5 is a different way or further description of the New Jerusalem, New Creation Temple from chapter 21."
- "Now John is told not to, why? Because it is directly relevant to his readers, they cannot afford to simply see this as something for the future."
- "Revelation is not a script of the end times, it's a script of the church."
- "Babylon is humanity's attempt to set up paradise while leaving God completely out of the picture."
- "So if Revelation does not evoke at least those five responses in us when we read it, we probably have not heeded the call to have ears to hear the book of Revelation."

Conclusion:

Dr. Mathewson's lecture provides a nuanced understanding of Revelation 21-22, emphasizing its symbolic nature, its call to faithfulness and holy living, and its vision of God's ultimate victory. He urges readers not to see Revelation primarily as a timeline of future events but as a call to worship, witness, discernment, and obedience in the present. It is a book about the church and how it should live in light of the hope of the new creation.

4. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 30, Revelation 22: Bride, New Jerusalem, How to Read

Revelation: A Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Dr. Mathewson, who are the nations and kings entering the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21?
2. What is the main point of John juxtaposing images of judgment and salvation regarding these nations?
3. How does Mathewson interpret the "river of the water of life" in Revelation 22, in relation to Ezekiel 47?
4. How does the New Jerusalem differ from the Temple in Ezekiel's vision, and why?
5. How does Mathewson connect the Tree of Life in Revelation 22 with the Garden of Eden in Genesis?
6. What is the significance of the leaves of the tree of life in Revelation 22, and who are they meant for?
7. How does Mathewson explain the statement, "no longer will there be any curse" in the New Jerusalem?
8. What priestly functions do the people of God perform in the New Jerusalem as described in the text?
9. What is the overall function of the New Jerusalem vision, according to Mathewson, for the church?
10. How should we understand the phrase "I am coming soon" in Revelation, according to Mathewson?

Quiz - Answer Key

1. Dr. Mathewson suggests that the nations and kings entering the New Jerusalem are not necessarily those redeemed throughout history. He believes they represent a rhetorical device demonstrating God's complete salvation, including those who were previously under the beast's rule, now transferred to God's rule.

2. The juxtaposition of judgment and salvation demonstrates the complete nature of both, showing that God's salvation is comprehensive, and that even those under Satan's rule are now transferred to God's rule in the New Jerusalem. It is a rhetorical contrast, not a literal quantification.
3. Mathewson says the "river of the water of life" in Revelation 22 parallels Ezekiel 47, but the source is changed from the Temple to the throne of God and the Lamb since God and the Lamb are the Temple. He says that just as the water in Ezekiel gives life, John calls this water the "water of life."
4. In Ezekiel's vision, the river flows from the Temple's threshold, but in Revelation, since there is no physical temple, it flows from God and the Lamb's throne. Mathewson says the entire New Jerusalem is now infused with God's presence making the whole city the temple.
5. Mathewson says the Tree of Life in Revelation 22 alludes to Genesis 2:9, which is a way for John to show the New Jerusalem as the restored Garden of Eden. In his view, this demonstrates how God has completed his plan for all of creation.
6. Mathewson says the leaves of the Tree of Life are for the healing of the nations, which refers to the nations that now participate in eschatological salvation by being redeemed. They also are healed from the rule of the beast and Satan.
7. Mathewson explains "no longer will there be any curse" as an allusion to Zechariah 14, where destruction is replaced with salvation, emphasizing the absence of God's judgment because of his presence in the city. He says it also references the original curse in the Garden.
8. The people of God serve as priests by serving God, seeing His face, and having His name on their foreheads. These actions demonstrate the people's intimacy with God, and they now function as the priests Adam and Eve were meant to be.
9. Mathewson states the New Jerusalem vision functions to contrast the prostitute Babylon, engender faithfulness in believers, provide a reward for overcoming, and encourages the church to model the new creation in the present. He says it is more than just a prediction; it is for the church now.
10. According to Mathewson, "I am coming soon" should be understood as a reflection of the church's constant expectation of Christ's imminent return throughout history. He states that this anticipation adds urgency to the ethical calls for the church to live in obedience.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Answer each question in a well-organized essay format.

1. Discuss the significance of the merging of Garden of Eden and Temple imagery in Revelation 21-22. How does this relate to the broader themes of creation and redemption in the book of Revelation?
2. Explain how Dr. Mathewson interprets the inclusion of "nations" in the New Jerusalem, considering the different ways this passage can be understood. What does this interpretation reveal about the scope of God's salvation?
3. Analyze the role of the reader/listener in Revelation. How does Mathewson argue that the book is primarily a call to action and faithful living, rather than a detailed prediction of the future?
4. Compare and contrast John's vision of the New Jerusalem with Ezekiel's vision of the restored Temple in Ezekiel 40-47. What are the significant similarities and differences, and how do they contribute to our understanding of Revelation 21-22?
5. Critically evaluate Dr. Mathewson's five-point framework for how to read the Book of Revelation, considering its emphasis on worship, witness, mission, discernment, resistance, obedience, and discipleship. How do these interpretative keys inform the relevance of the book for contemporary Christians?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **New Jerusalem:** The final, heavenly city of God, depicted in Revelation 21-22, representing the culmination of God's redemptive plan and the dwelling place of the redeemed.
- **Lamb's Book of Life:** A metaphorical book containing the names of those who are saved and destined for eternal life in the New Jerusalem.
- **River of the Water of Life:** A symbolic river flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb in the New Jerusalem, representing spiritual life, healing, and the presence of God.
- **Tree of Life:** A symbolic tree bearing twelve crops of fruit, located in the New Jerusalem, representing eternal life and healing for the redeemed.
- **Nations:** In the context of Revelation 21, these refer not only to ethnic groups but are symbolic of God's salvation and the transference of power. Mathewson also believes they could be understood as those who are converted at the coming of Christ.
- **Temple:** A sacred place where God is worshipped. In Revelation, the New Jerusalem replaces the physical temple, with God and the Lamb being its temple.
- **Babylon:** A symbolic representation of the idolatrous, oppressive world system that opposes God; often associated with Rome in the book of Revelation.
- **Eschatological Salvation:** The final and ultimate salvation of God's people, realized at the end of time, including the new creation and New Jerusalem.
- **Priestly Function:** The role of serving and worshipping God. In Revelation, all believers are described as functioning as priests, serving God in the New Jerusalem.
- **Overcomer:** A term used in Revelation for those who remain faithful to God and overcome the challenges and temptations of the world.
- **Hortatory:** The practice of encouraging or urging to a desired action or behavior.
- **Rhetorical:** The practice of using persuasive language and figures of speech to convey a message.
- **Telic:** The idea of having an ultimate goal or purpose.

5. FAQs on Mathewson, Revelation, Session 30, Revelation 22: Bride, New Jerusalem, How to Read, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about Revelation 21-22 and Interpreting Revelation

1. **Who are the "nations" and "kings of the earth" mentioned entering the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21, especially after their judgment in earlier chapters?**
2. The "nations" and "kings of the earth" are likely not meant to be taken literally as a precise group. While some interpret them as the redeemed from all time, the text juxtaposes images of final judgment and final salvation. Instead, their inclusion in the New Jerusalem symbolizes the complete and comprehensive nature of God's salvation and the transfer of all earthly rule under the beast to the rule of God. It's a rhetorical contrast highlighting God's ultimate victory, not a quantifiable statement about who survives judgment, and also presents the option available to nations, either salvation or judgment. John wants to show the comprehensive nature of God's Kingdom and that it incorporates those previously under the rule of the beast, which may also refer to nations converted at Christ's coming according to Isaiah 2 and 60.
3. **Does the inclusion of nations in the New Jerusalem mean that everyone is saved, and how does the book balance inclusivity with exclusivity?**
4. No, the inclusion of the nations does not imply universal salvation. Revelation emphasizes that only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life enter the New Jerusalem. The city is inclusive, incorporating Gentiles, but it also has limits: nothing impure will enter. This balances inclusivity with the need for faith and trust in Jesus Christ. The nations coming to the New Jerusalem's light is the same as the nations being healed and no longer ravaged by the beast.

5. **What is the significance of the river of the water of life and the tree of life in Revelation 22, and how do they relate to the Garden of Eden and the Temple?**
6. The river of the water of life and the tree of life in Revelation 22 are not new locations, but a further description of the New Jerusalem, drawing heavily on imagery from both the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9) and the Temple (Ezekiel 47). The river flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb (instead of the Temple) and the tree bearing fruit for the healing of the nations evoke the idea of a restored paradise and a temple city. These images merge, suggesting that the New Jerusalem fulfills both God's original intent in the Garden and the purpose of the Old Testament Temple as a place where God dwells with his people. The leaves being for the healing of the nations symbolizes that the redeemed participate in eschatological salvation.
7. **What does it mean that there will be "no more curse" in the New Jerusalem?**
8. The statement "no longer will there be any curse" in Revelation 22:3 refers to the removal of the ban on destruction of cities and nations that occurred because of their sin. Instead of destruction, there will be healing of the nations, and they will now inhabit the New Jerusalem. This is due to God's presence in the city, and the presence of God and the Lamb guarantees that there will no more destruction of nations. This references back to Zechariah 14 and its ending vision of eschatological salvation.
9. **How does Revelation portray God's people in the New Jerusalem, and what is their role?**
10. God's people in the New Jerusalem are portrayed as both priests and kings, fulfilling God's intention for humanity from the beginning. They serve God, see his face, and have his name on their foreheads, reflecting priestly functions. They also reign forever, fulfilling the promise of ruling with God. This echoes the roles of Adam and Eve in the Garden as priests and rulers and also alludes to Exodus 19:6, where God intended for his people to be a kingdom of priests.

11. What is the purpose of the New Jerusalem vision, and how should readers respond to it?

12. The New Jerusalem vision in Revelation 21-22 serves multiple purposes. It contrasts with the image of the prostitute Babylon, offering an alternative "city" for God's people. It encourages faithfulness by offering a promise of reward for those who maintain their witness. It also reminds people that they are already kings and priests and should model the new creation now. Readers should respond by worshipping God, recognizing the dangers of idolatry, being faithful witnesses to the gospel, discerning evil, resisting unrighteousness, and living lives of holiness and obedience. The book should not be seen primarily as a prediction of future events, but as a script for how to live now.

13. What does it mean when Revelation says "I am coming soon," and how should that affect our understanding of the book?

14. The phrase "I am coming soon," spoken by Jesus in Revelation, doesn't necessarily indicate a specific timeframe but reflects the church's ongoing expectation of Christ's imminent return. This "soonness" should add urgency to the ethical appeals of Revelation, calling believers to holiness, faithfulness, and obedience in anticipation of Christ's return, which could happen at any time. It is an indication that Christ has come to inaugurate his salvation and could come back at any time to wrap it up and bring it to its consummation.

15. What are the primary ways we should interpret the book of Revelation?

16. Revelation should be interpreted in at least five ways. (1) As a telic vision of history moving toward a goal set by God. (2) As a call to worship and allegiance, recognizing that only God and the Lamb are worthy of worship. (3) As a call to witness and mission, because God's people are already a kingdom of priests they should be witnessing the life of the new creation. (4) As a call to discernment and resistance, encouraging believers to identify and confront injustice and evil. (5) As a call to obedience and discipleship, urging believers to follow Christ completely, no matter the consequences. Revelation is not primarily a book of predictive prophecy to help us know exactly how the end times will play out, but rather a call to faithful living in the present.