

Week of January 20-26

FINALLY!

Scripture Reading: Read Revelation Chapter 21

Have you ever noticed how human beings are fascinated with wishes? We wish each other a Merry Christmas or we offer our best wishes to someone. We encourage folks to make a wish before they blow out the candles on their birthday cake or we wish upon a star. We tell someone that we wish they were here. We even drop our hard-earned coins in wishing wells hoping that our wish will come true. Our lives seems to be filled with wishes.

In today's chapter reading, you almost get a sense that God had a wish too. A wish that goes back to the beginning of time, or at least our time. It shows up in the 3rd verse: *"Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them."*

The wish is not directly mentioned but it certainly is implied: *"Now, the dwelling of God is with men."* It's almost as if God is saying, "Finally!" What he originally planned for humanity when he formed the first couple from the dust of the ground and the rib of the man has finally come to pass. What he longed for when he walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden in the cool of the day is at hand. The agony he felt when he looked for them after the fall and cried out, "Adam, where are you?" and the wish he longed to have fulfilled that we would be restored to him has been satisfied. Finally! Through ups and downs. Through triumphs and tragedies. Through both the faithful acts and the failures of humanity, God's purposes were still accomplished. His wish fulfilled. As the writer of Proverbs declares, *"There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord."* His dwelling place will be with a redeemed people where there will be no more death or mourning. No more crying or pain. Every tear will be wiped away from our eyes. Everything will be new as the old order of things passes away. We will enter through pearly gates and walk on streets of gold. The Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End (and everything in between!) will be our God and we will be his children.

The apostle John shares this vision with the beleaguered saints of the 1st century (and for the saints of all centuries) as more than just a roadmap of the future or the "WOW" factor it produces. He shares it with us so that we will choose the Father's wish over the devil's lie. In the Garden, Adam and Eve doubted God's goodness and ate the fruit. The result was sin, depravity, despair and death for the human race and hope deferred for the Father. Millennia later, the church faced another challenge under the Emperor Domitian, the dress rehearsal beast of the 1st century who spews out God-defaming lies that he is lord and god (much like the beast at the end of the age will do.) The temptation to cave, compromise or quit is strong. To let go of one's hope was a real possibility. By laying out the end result of the devil's lies and God's wish, John wanted the church then and the church now to remain faithful to Christ. Finally!

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Skim through Revelation 21-22 and jot down all the blessings that will come our way in a new heavens and a new earth. Pray that you could live daily in light of those future blessings and share your faith with others.

Take-a-way: *Be the fulfillment of God's wish.*