

## Paradise Regained

Rev.22

3/17/21

The twenty-second chapter of Revelation is a continuation of the preceding chapter, which speaks of the New Jerusalem, the eternal home of the saved. It is the final description in the Bible and concludes God's revelation. The first five verses present five facts concerning this New Jerusalem, the abode of the saints. We are told of a river, the tree of life, the government of the city, the illumination of the city, and its eternal duration.

V1. "Pure river of water of life": The water of life is a symbol of eternal life. Jesus used this image with the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:7-14). It pictures the fullness of life with God and the eternal blessings that come when we believe in Him and satisfy our spiritual thirst there. Ezek. 47:1-12; Zech. 14:8; Rev. 7:7; Gen. 2:10; Psa. 46:4.

V2. "Tree of life": Here at the close of the Bible we are reintroduced to the tree of life, which has not been mentioned in the Bible since Gen. 3, where Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. Paradise is restored in the eternal state. All that was lost in the fall is redeemed by the Lamb. Since the eternal state will be that of perfection this is speaking of that perfection of the perpetual blessing that will be God's people. This is teaching abundance, perpetuity, and variety. John is quoting from Ezek. 47:12 where the water flowing from the Temple produces trees with healing leaves. He is not implying that there will be illness in the new earth; he is emphasizing that the water of life produces health and strength wherever it goes.

V3-5 "No more curse": This means nothing accursed will be in God's presence. This fulfills Zechariah's prophecy, Zech. 14:11.

"Throne": The throne of God and the Lamb are in the New Jerusalem.

"Servants shall serve Him": The picture is of endless enjoyable activity. It is indicating the intended purpose for our creation.

"See His face": Finally Moses, along with the remainder of us, will see our Redeemer for ourselves.

"His name": Each of us will be identified in Him. Mat. 5:8; 1 Cor. 13:12; 1 Jn. 3:2; Rev. 3:12.

"God giveth them light": God lights the universe by His presence, for God is light.

"Shall reign": In our eternal state the Bride will reign with Christ.

V6. "Faithful and true": This is declaring that they have been given by the faithful and true creator. This final revelation from God enables us to see His plan for dealing with evil and bringing His redeemed to that perfect state with Him. This book ties the Bible together and answers questions that would have never been understood otherwise. The plan is straight forward. God will execute it precisely.

"Shortly": That is in relationship to eternity. Each hour brings us closer to the eternal state and lake of fire we have been studying.

V7. "Behold I come quickly": Jesus did not say He was coming soon, but "suddenly" which is why we should be ready for His return every day of our lives. "In a twinkling of an eye" 1 Cor. 15:51-52.

This is repeated in verses 12 and 20. This is of course referring to the catching away of the Bride we studied in chapter 4. This event does not happen soon after the completion of the Book of Revelation. It is still in the future as we look on these verses but be sure when it comes it will be rapid. All of believers have believed in the "immanent" return of Christ meaning at any moment. The history of the church must surely be in the last stage of lukewarm activity. The events of 4 thru 19 will take place just as God has shown known as the Tribulation Period. We have a responsibility from God to warn people to not be left behind and be damned by believing the big lie.

"Keeping the prophecies of this book": We must let God speak to us in this book and not try to alter its meaning in any way. Rev. 1:1

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." Revelation is a book of prophecy that is both prediction (foretelling future events) and proclamation (preaching about who God is and what He will do). Prophecy (this is the last one from God) is more than telling the future. Behind the predictions are important principles about God's character and promises. As we read, we will get to know God better so that we can trust Him completely. When John says, "the time is at hand", he is urging his readers to be ready at all times for the last judgment and the establishment of God's Kingdom. We do not know when these events will occur, but we must always be prepared. They will happen quickly, and there will be no second chance to change sides.

V8-9. "Worship God": The first of the Ten Commandments is "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exod. 20:3)

The first of the commandments is "Thou shalt have no other gods before me". Exod. 20:3 Jesus said that the greatest commandment was "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Mat. 22:37. Here, at the end of the Bible, this truth is reiterated. The angel instructs John to "worship God". God alone is worthy of our worship and adoration. He is above all creation, even the angels. Are there people, ideas, goals, or possessions that occupy the central place in our life, crowding God out? Worship only God by allowing nothing to distract us from our devotion to Him.

V10. "Seal not": The angel tells John what to do after his vision is over. Instead of sealing up what he has written, as Daniel was commanded to do (Daniel 8:26; 12:4-12), the book is left open so that all can read and understand. Daniel's message was sealed because it was not a message for Daniel's time. But the book of Revelation was a message for John's time, and it equally relevant today. As Christ's return gets closer, there is a greater polarization between God's followers and Satan's followers. We must read the book of Revelation, hear its message, and be prepared for Christ's imminent return.

V11. "He that is unjust": We are still moving in the direction taught us by this book. The church has gone thru the six and is now in the seventh phase shown us. The next event on the calendar is the removal of the Bride of Christ and then the Tribulation Period. Just as predicted throughout the Bible people are waxing worse and worse. A great falling away with the love of many growing cold is the reality we are experiencing today. The terrible truth of this verse is that the condition of the lost gets worse until each becomes a monster of sin.

As in the days of Noah every imagination of evil is being played out in our society. Good is being called evil and evil called good. Jesus tells us when all this happens we are to look up. Be ready!!!!

V12. "My reward is with me": Over and over we are told of the fact that Jesus is coming back after His. From Jn. 14 "If I go away I'll return" to the folded napkin found in the empty tomb and every expectation of His coming after us shown us throughout the New Testament and detailed in this Book of Revelation leaves no doubt to His plan for His Bride. After the Rapture, all believers will face the judgment seat of Christ. He will hold us accountable for the way we have served Him in this life. We shall enter into heaven by faith in Christ, but faithful service in this life is the basis for how we will be rewarded by Him for eternity.

V13. "The first and the last": Rev. 1:8 "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, said the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." This book opens with Jesus declaring His deity and ends the same way. Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12. Exod. 3:14 "And God said unto Moses, 'I Am That I Am'; and He said, 'Thus shall thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me to you.'" Basically this means God is self-sufficient, immediate presence, and self-existent. This means no matter when or where He is there. God's existence is not contingent upon anyone else. His plans are not contingent upon any circumstances. He promises that He will be what He will be: that is, He will be the eternally constant God. He stands, ever-present and unchangeable, completely sufficient in Himself to do what He wills to do and to accomplish what He wills to accomplish. God is the only One who can accurately describe Himself as "I Am". Jesus claimed the title "I Am" to Himself in John 8:58.

For the rest of us, "I Am" is a false claim to self-sufficiency. We are not eternally constant or ever-present. Our only hope is to abandon claims of our own sovereignty and sufficiency and cast ourselves upon the mercy of "I Am".

V14. "May enter in": There is a secular song which declares "I done it my way". This may give entitlement to the minds of many but it is not the way to pass thru this life. 1 Jn. 3:23,24 "And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment and he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him and hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." Mat. 7:24-27; Rom. 2:13; James 1:22-25.

In Eden, Adam and Eve were barred from the tree of life because of their sin (Gen. 3:22-24). In the new earth, God's people will eat from the tree of life because their sins have been removed by Christ's death and resurrection. Those who eat the fruit of tree will live forever. If Jesus has forgiven yours sins, you will have the right to eat from this tree.

V15. "Without": The verse before us declares 'access granted' and this one declares the one to whom 'access is denied'. The list is showing the unbelievers as the wicked and vile: for of such characters the dogs, an unclean animal among the Jews, was regarded as a symbol, Deut. 23:18. Sin separates us from God. This concept is throughout the Bible. Adam no longer could walk with God in the Garden of Eden. Moses was instructed to take the shoes off his feet because he was on Holy Ground. Access was denied into the Holiest of Holies except for one day in which sin was stayed for another year.

The righteousness of unsaved people is declared as filthy rags before God. By the shed blood of the Lamb of God being applied to our sins is the only way to gain access to God. The statement is again repeated that there will be those who will be left out because of their refusal to receive God's gift of salvation, Jesus Christ.

V16. "I Jesus": Our Lord uses the name which means Savior that He took when became truly God and truly man. He is the focus of this last Book as well as the entire Bible. He will be the focus in the Eternal State. It goes hand in hand that He must become our focus on this earth by surrendering ourselves to His plan for us. Heaven will be one eternal celebration of Him. Be ready!!!!

"Root and offspring of David": Jesus is both David's root and his descendant (offspring). As the Creator of all, He existed long before David. As a human, however, He was one of David's direct descendants. (Isa. 11:1-5; Mat. 1:1-17).

"Bright and morning star": As the Messiah, He is the 'bright and morning star'. He is the light and salvation to all. Num. 24:17; Zech. 6:12; II Pet. 1:1:19.

V17. "Take the water of life freely": This is a two-fold invitation in this verse. We will look at this one first. This is stating, based on the truths of this book as well as the entire Bible, that God has provided a finished plan of salvation to all. It has been completed by Jesus. We are the ones who must receive this salvation. The Holy Spirit is performing His work in the world today in converting and convicting men. He works through the church which proclaims His Word. Isa. 55:1 "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters...without money, and without price." Jn. 7:37 "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

"Sift and bring up what is good" - but we must recognize "what is good" is verses 1, 12, and 21 of this chapter. It is the desire that we will capture the truth from the words of verse 21st because both the Holy Spirit from the words and the truth from the words, we will remove the truth because we are not "disposed unto the work".

V28: 28. "The work which ye do" - The Greek word *ergon* translated "work" is where we get our word "labor" - here we are being warned against any who would exclusively "add unto these things" - meaning the prophecies of this book) or "take away" any of its revealed truth. Since Revelation is the culmination of all Bible prophecies, we have no need for additional prophecies; indeed, we need to study and heed the prophecies that have already been revealed in the book of Revelation. Moses gave a similar warning in Deut. 4:1-4, but too, must handle the Bible with care and great respect so that we do not distort its message even unintentionally. We should be quick to put its principles into practice in our lives. No human explanation or interpretation of God's Word should be elevated to the same authority as the Word itself. Deut. 12:32. Provs. 30:6. Eccl. 12:13. Psa. 68:28. Rev. 1:3.

V29: "Open thy door" - The cry of all believers. We don't know the day or the hour, but Jesus is coming soon and unexpectedly. This is good news to those who trust Him, but a terrible message for those who have rejected Him and stand under judgment. "Good means 'at any moment', and we must be ready for Him, always prepared for His return. Would Jesus' sudden appearance catch you off guard? Is His



V21. "The grace": The Old Testament ends with a curse; the New Testament ends with a benediction of grace upon the believers. Grace is offered to all, but if any man (regardless of his merit) refuses the offer which is extended, he must bear the judgment pronounced in this book. Grace is still offered to man. It is God's method of saving sinners.

Rom. 16:20, 24; II Thess. 3:18.

Revelation closes human history as Genesis opened it—in paradise. But there is one distinct difference in Revelation—evil is gone forever. Genesis describes Adam and Eve walking and talking with God; Revelation describes people worshipping God face-to-face. Genesis describes a garden with an evil serpent; Revelation describes a perfect city with no evil. The Garden of Eden was destroyed by sin; but paradise is re-created in the New Jerusalem.

The Book of Revelation ends with an urgent request: "Come, Lord Jesus"! In a world of problems, persecution, evil, and immorality Christ calls us to endure in our faith. Our efforts to better our world are important, but their results cannot compare with the transformation Jesus will bring about when He returns. He alone controls human history, forgives sin, and will re-create the earth and bring lasting peace.

Revelation is, above all, a book of hope. It shows that no matter what happens on earth, God is in control. It promises that evil will not last forever. And it depicts the wonderful reward that is waiting for all those who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.