

REVELATION 22

Eden Restored

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

- These verses give us a glimpse of a few of the sights of the eternal city. The grandeur of our heavenly home.

V-1 The River – A pure, crystal river flows from God’s throne, although there will be no Temple in the New Jerusalem. This river is filled with “the water of life”. It is symbolic of the unending flow of everlasting life given to all those who have believed in Jesus. There is life flowing from the throne to all who will believe! The throne is a source of life and the river that flows from it is symbolic of the kind of life it delivers. That heavenly city is a place of eternal life, peace, prosperity and pleasure.

V-2 The Tree Of Life – In the New Jerusalem people will have access to the “Tree of Life”. When Adam sinned in Eden, he was removed from that place to prevent him from eating the fruit of the Tree of Life and thus living forever in his fallen condition, (Gen. 3:22-24). In Heaven, access to the Tree of Life will be restored. This amazing tree will yield its precious fruit each month of the year. It will bear twelve types of fruit throughout the year. This reminds us that Heaven will be a place of plenty. Obtaining food has always been a constant worry and concern. However, in Heaven, the tree of life will always bear its fruit.

We are also told that the leaves of the tree will be used for the “healing of the nations”. This does not mean that people in that day will get sick, for as we read in Rev. 21:4, sickness and disease are all banished from Heaven. The word translated “healing” gives us our word “therapeutic”. It literally means “service rendered to another”. In other words, the leaves of the trees will serve to enhance our lives in eternity. They will make life there more pleasant.

V- 3 The Curse Removed – There will be “no more curse”. When man sinned, the ground was cursed and man was forced to grow his food by the sweat of his brow. Part of the curse also involved the presence of weeds and thorns that would make man’s job harder. The curse brought sickness, violence, chaos and death to the world, (Gen. 3-9). In eternity, this curse is lifted. The earth will be restored to the perfect state it was in before sin entered. There will be no weeds, thorns, sickness, violence, war, chaos or death in that world!

V-4 Seeing God’s face was something impossible to do in in the fallen flesh (EX. 33:20). With our new holy, righteous, and glorified bodies we will be to. We will also be God’s personal possession with His name on our foreheads.

v-5 The Night Banished – The darkness that haunts this world will be banished over there. There will be no more dark hours when the “prince of darkness” can do his wicked works. No one will need to light a candle to keep from stumbling. There will be no darkness of any sort in that land. No darkness, either physical or spiritual will be allowed there. In that perfect world there will be nothing that can defile it. There will be no sin, no Satan and no sinners. Only those who have been washed in the blood of Jesus and justified by the God of Heaven will be allowed in that city. That truth right there makes Heaven worth going to.

John and the Angel

John has been used of the Lord to reveal to God’s people God’s plan for the future. The Lord has shown us how the church age will end. It will end with the church in apostasy, cold and dead, and with Jesus on the outside (Rev. 3:20). We are already moving in that direction today at breakneck speed. He has shown us what will follow after the church is removed from the world. There will be a terrible tribulation period that will engulf the world. Billions will die from war, disease and the tragedy of divine judgment. This age will also end with the Antichrist and Satan judged and sentenced to an eternity in the Lake of Fire. We have even been given a glimpse of our own future. We have seen a place called Heaven, where death, disease, sin and Satan will be prohibited. We have been given a small foretaste of that wonderful place we will call home some day.

Now at the end of the book these verses serve as the Lord’s conclusion to the book of Revelation. As the Lord closes out this book, He has a few final statements to make.

v-6 The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”

V. 6 The Scriptures Are Accurate – John is assured that everything he has seen is both “trustworthy and true”. There has not been a single exaggeration, nor has there been a single falsehood. Every prophecy made in this book will come to pass in the Lord’s time.

One of the names given to Jesus in the book of Revelation is “Faithful and True”, (Rev. 3:14; 19:11). That name declares Him to be trustworthy and worthy of faith. The Lord can be trusted. When He makes a statement, it is truth. When He makes a promise, it will come to pass. When He issues a prophecy, it will be fulfilled. God has tied the truth of His Scriptures to His integrity. When God speaks, He speaks the truth! Every word in this book is “God-breathed”, (2 Tim. 3:16). You can trust your Bible!

7 “Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll.” 8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. 9 But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!” 10 Then he told me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near.

V-. 7-9 The Scriptures Are Authoritative – With the statement, “Look I am coming soon”, the Lord declares His authority! People can say what they want to about the Bible and about God’s promises and prophecies, but God will have the final say!

The Lord will also bless those who “keep” the words of the Revelation. The Lord will bless the people who read, believe and live out the words of this book. That was also His promise at the beginning, Rev. 1:3, and it is His promise here again at the end.

The Bible was not given to us so that we would have something to lay on the coffee table or in the trunk of the car. The Bible was given to us to read, believe and live out. The Word of God has authority over our lives and we are to listen/apply its words to our lives, (James 1:22-23).

When John hears the promises of God given to him through the angel, he gets caught up in the moment and he falls down to worship the angel. The angel rebukes John, reminding him that he is a servant too. Then, John is given advice that we all need to hear. He is told to “Worship God!” God and God alone is worthy and deserving of our worship. It is easy to become like the world and become guilty of worshipping as person or a thing. However, the only Person Who is worthy to be worshipped is the Lord God Almighty! (Matt. 4:8-10) (Ex. 20:3)

V. 10 – John is commanded to “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy.” The word “seal” means “to conceal, or to keep secret”. Many years earlier, the prophet Daniel was commanded to seal up a book he had written, (Dan. 12:4). The time for the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy had not arrived and it was not time to share it with the world. John, on the other hand, is not to hide these things away and keep them secret. He is to publish them so that the world may hear the news that Jesus is coming, and judgment is about to fall on this world. The Bible is not a closed book, but it is open, and its message is available to all who will pick it up and read with an honest and sincere heart. If this book is closed, it is closed to those who refuse to know the Lord and to those who have been blinded by the devil, (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

11 Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy.”

The angel’s words here seem strangely out of place in this context. The truth it conveys is that a person’s response to the proclamation of the Gospel will fix their eternal destinies. Those who do not know Jesus will discover that the day of His return will spell their eternal doom. That is what is meant in verse 11. When Jesus returns to this world, there will be no time to “get ready”. When He comes, how He finds the person is how that person will remain throughout eternity. If I were you, I would be sure that I was saved and ready to meet Jesus when He comes!

Epilogue: Invitation and Warning

12 “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. 14 “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. 15 Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. 16 “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

– Again, we have the Lord’s promise that He is coming again! That was His promise before He left this world, John 14:1-3, and that is His promise now. He is coming!

We know that the Lord’s return will happen in two stages. First, He will return in the clouds above the earth to claim His redeemed Bride, the Church, and take her home to Heaven, (1 Thess. 4:16-18).

Then, He will return in power and glory to claim this Earth for Himself. He will defeat all His enemies, establish His kingdom and rule in righteousness in this world.

For believers, the saints of God, the thought of our Lord’s return brings peace, joy and hope. Just the thought that we might be able to cheat death and leave here in the Rapture is a wonderful thought. It is no wonder that John prayed for the Lord to come, (Rev. 22:20). Every child of God who loves the Lord and believes the Bible is looking forward to leaving this world in the Rapture.

– According to verse 12, the return of Jesus will be a mixed blessing. He is going to reward every person according to “their works”. That is, those who have received Him as their Savior will enjoy a time of blessing when He returns. He will reward them for their works and bless them for their service. Many faithful saints will hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” What a day that will be!

He pronounces a blessing on those who obey the Gospel in verse 14. He pronounces a curse on those who reject the Gospel in verse 15. Those who receive Him will enjoy the blessings of Heaven and of everlasting life, v. 14. While those who choose sin over a relationship with Jesus will be shut out of Heaven, v. 15.

The question you need to consider today is this: where would you be if Jesus was to return today? Are you saved? Are you ready to meet Him? Has your soul been made fit for Heaven by the blood of the Lamb? Is your name in the Lamb’s book of life? Jesus is coming! For some it will be a time of rejoicing. For many more it will be a time of horrible rejection and retribution

V- 13, 16 A Word About His Authority – In these two verses, Jesus declares His ability to make these statements and to bring them to pass. He reminds us that He was here when everything began and that He will still be here when all things wind up, v. 13. He reminds us that He is the Alpha and Omega, the King of Kings, v. 16. He is the “root” of David. That is, He is David’s ancestor. He is the “offspring” of lineage of David. He is David’s descendent. Jesus is the ultimate authority! He will occupy the throne for all eternity.

He is the “bright and morning star”. To be called a “star” in that culture was to be “elevated”. The “morning star” signaled the advent of a new day. Jesus is reminding us that He, who is greater than all, will return to destroy the darkness of this world forever. The light of His glory will fill both heaven and earth when He comes again! Can I hear an Amen!!!! Jesus can make the promises He made because He has the power and the authority to bring them to pass. He is coming and He will rule and reign in righteousness and power some day!

17 The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life 18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll.

19 And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll. 20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

V- 17 – Here we find the “Spirit” and the “Bride” inviting us to “come”. I believe that there are three distinct invitations here. The first one is for Christ to come. The second one is addressed to the church. The Lord would always to the 7 churches in Revelation, “Whoever has ears let them hear...” The church is join in the call for Christ to come. The Third is to unbelievers.

There is a longing in the heart of the redeemed for the advent of the Redeemer. How many here can identify with that desire? There are times when the burdens of life press us down and we long for Jesus to come. There are times when sin and Satan harass us and they seem so strong, and we long for Jesus to come. There are times when this world seems like a foreign place, and we long for Jesus to return. Well, hang on a little longer your Redeemer is coming again to take you unto Himself.

Here on the last page of the last chapter in the last book of the Bible the Spirit of God offers one last invitation to lost sinners to come to Jesus for salvation. Anyone who sees their need of a Savior and understands that Jesus Christ can save their soul can be saved. They can drink the water of life and “pass from death life”, (John 5:24). Even as the Lord brings things to a close, people are still being inviting to come to Him for their soul’s salvation. (I thought all the unredeemed were already cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20), but obviously there are some who still need to hear the invitation to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Have you ever trusted Jesus as your Savior? If you haven’t, let me invite you again to come to Jesus and trust Him to save your soul! If you will come to Him, He will save you and prepare you for an eternity in Heaven, (John 6:37-40).

V- 18-19 – People are warned not to tamper with the words of this book. The Lord pronounces a curse on those who would add to or take away from the words of the Bible. This is not a new warning, but it is a warning that runs like a thread through the pages of Scripture, (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Pro. 30:5-6). In fact, the warning given here is two-fold.

1. People are warned not to add to the Bible – The Bible is a complete book. When the Bible was finished, the revelation of God to man was brought to an end. There are no more new revelations being given today! Every person who stands up and claims to have a “new word from the Lord” is guilty of adding to the Word of God! They are bringing the threat of divine judgment upon themselves. One of the hallmarks of the charismatic movement has been the inclusion of new revelation. Someone will stand in a service and claim to have a word from God. That is dangerous and it is heresy! We have all the words from God that we will ever have, right here in the Bible! Prophecy is not fortune telling, but forthtelling. Applying the truth of God’s Word to a present situation. Besides, why do we think we need a new Word from God, if we don’t fully know/obey His Word that we have now?

These verses should also alarm us the false religions of the world that got started because their leader claimed to have a new revelation from God. Every book written by man that claims to be Scripture is a lie of the devil! How do I know? Read 1 John 4:2-3 and Gal. 1:6-9.

The book of Mormon, by Joseph Smith; the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, which is neither Christian nor scientific; the writing of the Koran by Muhammed; are all

attempts by Satan to undermine our faith in the Word of God. Those who add the Word of God will face divine vengeance and judgment. God does not want His Word tampered with!

2. People are warned not to subtract from the Bible – Many people are guilty of picking and choosing what they want from the Word of God. They may not add to the Bible, but they are guilty of subtracting from its words. Many are guilty of diluting the message of God. They deny its truth; water down its doctrines; and ignore its warnings, don't talk about sin or Hell. They too will face divine judgment!

J.A. Seiss, in his commentary on Revelation, said, "O, my friends, it is a fearful thing to suppress or stultify the word of God, and above all 'the words of the prophecy of this Book.' To put forth for truth what is not the truth,—denounce as error, condemn, repudiate, or emasculate what God himself hath set his seal to as his mind and purpose, is one of those high crimes, not only against God, but against the souls of men, which cannot go unpunished."

God does not take it lightly when people tamper with His Word. And, neither should we! I take the matter of handling the Word of God very serious! I do not want to add to it or take away from it. I want to present it just as it is given to us in the pages of the Bible. I want to preach it clear and straight! If it makes folks mad, so be it! I would rather offend you by preaching the truth than offend God by diluting and changing the truth. (2 Tim. 2:15). Every preacher, every Sunday School teacher, everyone who leads in a devotion, take WARNING as to how you handle the Word of God! It deserves our best effort! We should study it, meditate over it and present it in the power of the Spirit, and being careful not to add to or take away from its divine message! See James 3:1

This old world is winding down! The Lord is coming! These are exciting days to be alive. I am glad that I know Him and that I am ready. Jesus wants you to know that he is coming again. He is coming to put down evil and raise up His kingdom. He wants you to be ready to meet Him when He does come. Are you? If you are not ready, you can be. Come to Jesus today and He will save your soul and make you ready for Heaven. If you are ready, then you should shout AMEN and praise Him for His grace in saving you from your sins and from Hell.