

The Book of Revelation
Revelation 22 (NIV)
“The Lord's Farewell Address”

Eden Restored

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 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. 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. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 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.

John and the Angel

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

“Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll.”

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. 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!”

Then he told me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near. 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.”

Epilogue: Invitation and Warning

“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

“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. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

“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.”

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.

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. 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.

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

Introduction

On the night before He went to the cross, the Lord Jesus gave some final instructions to His disciples so that they would be able to continue the journey of faith that He had begun with them some three years earlier. It was His urgent desire that they be kept safe in the faith until their time came to leave this earth and be with Him. His teachings on that eventful night were recorded in **John's gospel, Chapters 15 and 16.**

In **Chapter 15**, Jesus told His followers that they must remain in Him (**John 15:4**) in order to accomplish all that He desired of them (to spread the gospel throughout the world). He reminded them that "apart from Him they could do nothing" (**15:5**). He told them that He loved them enough to die for them (**15:13**). In **Chapter 16**, He then promised to send the Holy Spirit to be with them (**16:5-15**), and in chapter 17, He prayed for their eternal security (**17:11-22**). Why did He do all this? Because He wanted them to be with Him forever! He desires this for all who choose to believe in Him. In the final chapter of *Revelation*, Jesus instructed the apostle John to leave all Believers with a final message; remain in Him until the end and spend eternity with Him in the place He has prepared for us. This message from the life-giving word of God is a message of *Restoration, Remaining, Rewards, and Rebuke.*

Restored

The final chapter begins with one last description of life in God's Holy City that has been prepared for us. Flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb (**vs. 1**) is the "*River of Life*". Some have speculated that this river is merely symbolic of the eternal life that we will all find in Heaven. God will be the source of this life and our eternal existence will be found in Him.

I also believe that God is our source of life, but I am inclined also to believe that this is a literal river flowing with real water. I believe this because we are told that along side this river, the tree of life will grow and bear fruit for us to eat. Remember, that in the Garden of Eden, the tree of life was an actual tree, and Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat of it after they sinned. If they had been granted access to the fruit of this tree, they would have never died, thus living in a perpetual state of sin, separated from God.

In Heaven, however, the curse on the fallen world has been lifted (**vs. 3**) and all has been restored to its rightful order. God and man may have fellowship that is unbroken, forever. The redeemed will find healing and life everlasting as we serve our Lord in an endless day of sinless perfection (**vs. 3-5**). We will reign with Him in His majesty. We will serve Him in His sparkling city that is illuminated at all times by His Glory. Neither sin nor temptation will ever enter our thoughts, as we will be as pure as He is. Our innocence shall be restored. What a glorious day that will be.

Remain

“Behold I am coming soon. Blessed is he who keeps the words of prophecy in this book” **Revelation 22:7**

Jesus warns us twice in this chapter that He is coming soon (**vs. 7, 12**). We are given these instructions so that we will live in such a way that we expect to see Him at any moment. Imagine just how effective the church would be if we all truly lived this way. How much of our daily activities would be judged in this light and found to be meaningless? How much urgency would we feel to serve Christ, knowing that we shall see Him in the morning? How would our prayer lives be affected? I read once that the Quakers used to teach their children to pray every morning when they woke, “*Maybe today Lord, maybe today*”, and each night at bedtime “*Maybe tomorrow Lord, maybe tomorrow*”. Perhaps, this is an attitude that we should bestow in our own children as well. Then we might see revival in our own lifetime.

Jesus also says, ***“Blessed is who keeps the words of prophecy in this book”*** (**vs. 7b**). This is the sixth of seven “*blessed*’s” in the book of *Revelation* (**1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14**). The term “blessed” in each of these verses is best described as the happiness that comes from being centered in God’s will. It is used here in **verse 7** to ascribe this joyous condition to one ***“who ‘keeps’ the words of prophecy in this book”***. The word used here for “keeps” (Greek *tereo*) means to guard and hold fast. Jesus promises that we will be blessed if we not only live like we believe this book is true, but defend its truths to others.

As children of God, we should be unwavering in our defense of The Word. As **Romans 3:4** boldly says, ***“Let God be true and every man a liar”***. Those who refuse to believe The Bible, are not simply of another “religious persuasion”, they are in fact, wrong! And this to their eternal damnation. There are no alternate theories. God’s truth is absolute. Defend the faith, for one day its foundation, the Rock of Jesus Christ, will be all that enables us to endure, when all the world burns. Blessed are they who guard these truths indeed!

Jesus goes on to instruct those who will believe to remain in Him, just as he told His disciples to remain. **Verse 11** says, ***“Let him who does wrong, continue to do wrong; let him who is vile, continue to be vile; let him who does right, continue to do right, and let him who is holy, continue to be holy”***. This does not mean that the Lord wants some people to keep on sinning. It simply means that those who refuse to listen will get what they deserve, while those who remain in Him will endure to the end and receive their reward. It would be truly wise of us to heed the words of Jesus, and finish the race we have begun to run. ***“I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing”*** (**John 15:5**).

Rewards

“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.” **Revelation 22:12**

Once again Jesus urges us to be ever watchful for His return so our deeds will bring glory to Him. He promises to reward those who heed the words of this book and live accordingly. Our works as servants of God will determine our rewards. Though it is not possible for us to earn our salvation (This is only obtained by Grace through Faith), we will be honored in Heaven by our righteous deeds. We do well to remember this truth, so that we will not be ashamed at His coming. We should all earnestly desire to hear the words ***“Well done, good and faithful servant”*** (**Matthew 15:23**).

The seventh and final “*blessed*” in all of Scripture can be found in verse 14 of this chapter, and it is a most fitting description of those who are truly blessed from among all of humanity. They are the ones who have been washed clean by the blood of Christ. These are those who have been redeemed from sin and shame, and are able to enter into the New Jerusalem wearing robes of spotless white, unafraid and ashamed. They are granted the privilege to eat freely from the tree of life that was originally placed in the Garden of Eden. Only this time, no curse shall ever spoil their inheritance. Eternal life is their reward, and they shall live in the presence of The LORD forever. They are the faithful servants of Christ.

One of my favorite parables taught by the LORD can be found in **Luke 12:42-48**. In this story Jesus likens an obedient servant of God to a **“faithful and wise manager: whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time” (vs. 42)**. I love that verse. It reminds me of the old westerns I used to watch as a kid. The cowboys would all drive the cattle to market through horrible storms and hardships, but at the end of the day, they would all gather around the “chuck wagon” to get a hot meal from the trusty camp cook.

That camp cook was always there, ever faithful with supper on the campfire. He rode through every storm and every hardship alongside them. But his only task in life was to feed them. To them, he was valuable. He kept them going. All the cowboys *loved* the man who drove the chuck wagon. May God help us as Christians to be the camp cooks of this world. Let us ride alongside those who face hardship and suffering and feed their hungry souls with the nourishment of God's word. This is the noblest of all tasks upon this earth; to serve others, knowing that our Master is coming soon with our reward. Those who serve only themselves, by heaping on their plates piles of sinful pleasures, have their “reward” coming as well (**vs. 15**), but I long to be a camp cook in the Kingdom of God.

Rebuke

I warn everyone who hears the words of prophecy of this book; if anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. An if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this book. He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' (vs. 18-20).

In the book of *James* we are told, **“We who teach will be judged more strictly.” (James 3:1)**. The book of *Revelation* ends in a sharp rebuke for those who add or take away from its teachings in any form. The prophecies of this book are given so that those who will believe, will come to Jesus (**vs. 17**) and have life. The message of this book is simple; Come to a saving faith in Jesus, the Lamb of God. Remain in that faith and be saved. Live each day in expectancy of His return. Those who reject these truths will face a horrible tribulation and spend an eternity in the Lake of Fire.

The contiguous message of *The Bible* is laden with life or death consequences. To discredit it in any way is a serious offense to Almighty God. It is imperative therefore, to teach *The Revelation*, and every other book of *The Bible* with accuracy and clarity. Anything less and we would bring wrath down upon ourselves and to any who listen. It is my sincere hope that all Christians trust in the reality of this great book of prophecy as we live our lives in expectation of the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the Glory and Praise forever. He is coming soon. Even so, come LORD Jesus. Amen and Amen.

Truth!