

## Chapter 22

We have come to the concluding chapter of Revelation. Remember that Revelation is presented with the purpose of making known or revealing the Glory of Christ, The Judgments to come, the need to remain faithful and the Glorious future of all the saints of God.

<sup>1</sup>And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb

Remember there will be no oceans on the new earth, no sun or moon. There does not appear to be any water sources necessary, other than “A pure river of water of life.” This however is not H<sub>2</sub>O. This water of life symbolizes the life which Jesus gives. See Joel 3:18; Ezekiel 47:1; Zechariah 14:8; John 4:14,7:37-38

The River of water of life issued from the very throne of God and the Lamb. This simply means that God and the Lamb shall sustain the saints forever. The river is sparkling clear, like everything else to reflect the Glory of God and the Lamb.

. <sup>2</sup>In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

The river runs through the middle of its streets with the tree of life on each side of it.

The twelve fruits, each tree, every month represents the “abundance of grace and life in store for the redeemed.”<sup>1</sup>

“The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations”, can seem confusing, since their can be no illness, disease, etc., enter into the new heaven and earth. A closer examination of the Greek word for healing helps clarify the matter. The word translated healing is *Therapeia*. *We get the word therapy from it.* As MacArthur argues “Healing does not imply illness. Perhaps a better way to translate it would be “life-giving”, “health-giving”, or “therapeutic”. Thus, the leaves of the tree were for preventive in nature not curative. The leaves will promote health, thus life in heaven will be fully energized, rich and exciting.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>3</sup>And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.

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<sup>1</sup> Ray Robbins, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1975), 243.

<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Revelation 12-22* (Chicago: Moody, 2000), 287.

Because of our finitude, it is impossible for us to conceive of living eternally. What will we do? Won't we get bored? These are common thoughts or questions that people have, but this demonstrates our inability to grasp that which is beyond us.

We will spend eternity worshipping and serving God. There will be no night, only eternal day.

<sup>4</sup>They shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads.

Unlike mortal man, all who enter the gates of that New Jerusalem will be able to look upon the Face of God. Because we will be in our glorified bodies and be free from the bonds of sin, we will be able to look upon God. Remember God walking with Adam and Eve in the Garden before the Fall?

We will also be God's personal possession since His name shall be on our foreheads.

<sup>5</sup>There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

<sup>6</sup>Then he said to me, "These words *are* faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

"These words are faithful and true" = All that has been revealed throughout the book of Revelation is trustworthy and correct. Remember the book of Revelation is about the revealing of Jesus' deity, majesty and glory.

<sup>7</sup>**"Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."**

The angel is no longer speaking but Jesus himself.

"Behold, I am coming quickly!"

This phrase has resulted in skepticism among people throughout the ages. It is obvious that the believers of the early church, as well as the apostles, expected Jesus to return in their lifetime.

There are two ways to approach this verse. 1) To understand that the word used for quickly can also be interpreted suddenly or, 2) To interpret this from the thousand years is as one day with the Lord.

Chuck Swindoll captured the meaning as he observed:

It helps to know that the Greek term translated quickly (22:7, 12), however, has less to do with how soon He will come and more to do with the suddenness of the event when it occurs. God alone knows the exact moment of Christ's return, but from our perspective it could come at any moment.<sup>3</sup>

Revelation is the only book that promises a blessing to those who obey its words.

<sup>8</sup>Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

The one speaking is now John. This is the only other place that John identifies himself as being the writer, except in Chapter One.

John's response was one of worship. When he heard and saw he was overcome with awe and a need to bow down to worship. However, John is rebuked for bowing down to worship an angel.

<sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, "See *that you do not do that*. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

John is rebuked and admonished to worship the Only One worthy of worship, God. Throughout the ages people have been enthralled with angels. In the 1980's and 90's, a resurgence occurred on the subject of angels. Hollywood even got on board by producing television series. "Highway to Heaven" in which actor Michael Landon traveled around the country doing good deeds for people in need or down on their luck. Then "Touched by an Angel" became popular. While angels are always a subject of intrigue and curiosity, Christ followers must always give priority and worship to Christ.

<sup>10</sup>And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.

Unlike Daniel, John is told not to seal the words of the prophecy of this book. This simply means that the book is intended to reveal Jesus and the end-time events. Christ's coming is imminent.

<sup>11</sup>"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.

What does this verse mean? Surely the Bible is not encouraging sinful people to practice their sin or the sexually immoral person to continue in their illicit affairs.

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<sup>3</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's New Testament Insights: Insights on Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 292.

One needs to focus upon the entire context of this chapter in order to fully understand what is being said here. The coming of Christ will be sudden and without warning, thus, those who are engaged in rebellious living will be practicing their sinful ways when Jesus comes. It will be too late for them then.

The spiritual character of the individual will be cast permanently at Christ's coming. So if one is living in rebellion against God and His precepts that will determine his eternal destiny. If one is living in relationship to Christ, then they will experience the joys of God's eternal presence and peace.

John Phillips offered:

Apart from faith in Christ and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, a person goes on sinning until, at death, his character is forever fixed and set in a final, terrible mold. The wicked go on being wicked for all eternity. The one died blaspheming and no doubt is blaspheming still. The lost go on sinning and therefore go on suffering. The righteous, on the other hand, continue being righteous, and because they are eternally holy, they are eternally happy. The cross of Christ stands between the sinner and the saint, separating the one from the other in time and in eternity.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>12</sup> “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. <sup>13</sup>“I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.*”

Jesus now speaks again. He repeats the earlier message of his imminent coming. This serves as both a warning to the lost, in order that they might repent, and as an encouragement to His people.

Every believer's work will be tested.

“For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* God's building. <sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. <sup>11</sup> For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. <sup>14</sup> If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” (1 Cor. 3:9-15, NKJV).

Rewards will be determined by what is left behind that was genuinely to God's glory.

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<sup>4</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring Revelation: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004), 260.

<sup>14</sup>Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

This is the seventh and final beatitude in Revelation. One's relationship to Christ is witnessed by their obedience to His commands—"Blessed are those who do His commandments."

Some translations have "Blessed are those who wash their robes." The idea here is not one of works salvation. Phillips accurately noted:

It is the finished work of Christ alone that opens up the way through the gates of the city to the tree of life. So then, John tells of those who will be with him and who have this double anchor for their souls as they wait for His coming.<sup>5</sup>

Salvation is always a free gift given through the agency of the Holy Spirit when one places their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. (Eph 2:8-10).

<sup>15</sup>But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

"Dogs" has three possible meanings. 1) Deut. 23:18, Male Prostitutes, 2) Matt. 15:26. Gentiles, and, 3) Phil 3:2-3, Judaizers.

"Sorcerers are those who engage in the occult, for example, witchcraft, mediums, Satan worshippers, drug abusers who use drugs for the purposes of black magic, etc.

Sexually immoral – those who live a lifestyle of sexual promiscuity, perversions of all sorts, adulterers, etc.

Murderers – Blood thirsty killers who engage in murderous acts. But remember Jesus taught that one does not have to literally kill someone to be guilty of murder in God's eyes. "You have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt. 5:21-22, NKJV).

Idolaters – Those who make objects or things their god.

Liars – Those who live a life of deceit and falsehood. Those who have no integrity. Such a life style would indicate their relationship with the father the devil, since Jesus called him "the father of lies." See John 8:44.

<sup>16</sup>"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 261.

Jesus is speaking again. He speaks of the veracity and trustworthiness of what he has said to the churches. “I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” This speaks of His deity and humanity. He is exalted.

<sup>17</sup>And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

The Spirit and the bride say Come!

The Holy Spirit desires the coming of Jesus.  
The True Church desires the coming of Jesus.

“And let him who hears say, Come!”

This is an invitation to the lost to come to Christ and experience the Life Giving Water of Salvation that He provides to all who will call upon him in faith.

<sup>18</sup>For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; <sup>19</sup>and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

A warning is issued to anyone who would dare add too or diminish (take away from) the truths and prophecies of this book. The judgment of God will be upon them.

This is not talking about minor differences of interpretation but about those who would seek to alter the teachings and truths of this book.

Phillips noted:

God’s wrath abides on those who tamper with His Word, cutting out the parts that offend them and adding their own ideas thereto. The initial scope of the warning has to do with the Apocalypse. God guards this book that so many have scorned: He guards it with a terrible warning.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>20</sup>He who testifies to these things says, “**Surely I am coming quickly.**” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! <sup>21</sup>The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

What wonderful comforting words to God’s people.

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<sup>6</sup> Phillips, *Exploring Revelation*, 264.