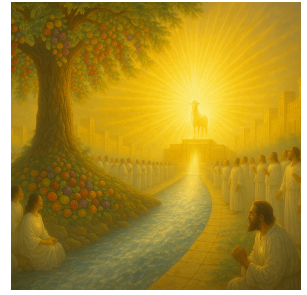


Lesson 33: Chapter 22

Revelation 21 allowed us to admire the New Jerusalem from the *outside*: its descent from heaven, its radiance, walls, gates, and foundations. In **Revelation 22:1–5**, John is brought *inside* to witness the city's inner life. This is Eden restored and magnified under the New Covenant: the river of the water of life flows from the single throne of "God and the Lamb"; the Tree of Life now spans the river, bearing 12-fold fruit without season; the curse is gone; God's servants worship, see His face, bear His Name, and reign forever. There is no night and no need for sun or lamp, for the Lord God gives light and the Lamb Himself is their lamp (cf. **Revelation 21:23**).

These images are present realities in *foretaste* (the Church already drinks of the Spirit; cf. **John 7:37–39**; **Hebrews 12:22–24**) and consummated realities in *fullness* at the end (**Revelation 20:11–15**). Revelation continues to show the *already/not yet* tension of This Age. And though this scene is symbolic rather than photographic, it *points* to a literal consummation, where the people of God will dwell in the very presence of their God for all eternity on a renewed and restored creation. The Bible opens in a perfect Garden (**Genesis 1–2**) and closes in a glorified Garden-City (**Revelation 21–22**).



[1] Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb [2] through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. [3] No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. [4] They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. [5] And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

[6] And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."

[7] "And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

[8] I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, [9] but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

[10] And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. [11] Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy."

[12] "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has 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, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. [15] Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

[16] "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

[17] The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

[18] I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, [19] and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

[20] He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

[21] The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

(Revelation 22, ESV)

Eden Restored and Glorified (vv. 1-5)

John is led from the city's radiant exterior into its inner life, and what he sees is Eden restored and magnified under the New Covenant. A crystal river, the "*water of life*", flows from a single throne, "*the throne of God and of the Lamb*." This is the source and center of the city's vitality: not a temple precinct tucked away in a corner, but God Himself, immediately present, life-giving, and sovereign. The river paints a picture of the Spirit's outpouring (cf. [John 7:37-39](#)): what the Church now lives by faith becomes sight in The Age to Come. These are symbolic images, but they point to a literal consummation in which God's people live forever in unveiled communion with the Triune God.

The street in the heart of the city has an interesting feature: through its middle flows the river of life. On either side of the river/street stands the Tree of Life, no longer guarded and barred ([Genesis 3:24](#)), but spanning the river/street in the heart of the city, bearing a 12-fold harvest without seasons, and offering leaves "*for the healing of the nations*." The tree reappears here as the covenantal sign of unending life with God. The original promise held out in Eden and echoed in Christ's promise to the conquerors ("*I will grant to eat of the tree of life*" in [Revelation 2:7](#)) is now realized in the glorified Garden-City. The "*healing of the nations*" does not imply lingering disease in the age to come, but the final, public wholeness of a once-fractured humanity now gathered into one Bride from every tribe and tongue. In other words, what was promised (the nations streaming to Zion) is fulfilled as they walk by the Lamb's light in the City.

[Revelation 22:3](#) declares the great reversal: "*No longer will there be anything accursed*." The covenant curse that shadowed Adam's race is gone; the Lamb who bore the curse ([Galatians 3:13](#)) now presides from the throne with God, and from that throne flows not judgment but life. God's servants "*worship*" Him. The verb λατρεύω (latreuō) can carry the sense of priestly service, signaling that the priest-king vocation given in creation and recovered in Christ ([Revelation 1:6](#); [5:10](#)) is now perfected. What Israel could only enact in a holy place, the Church now embodies as a holy people in a holy world.

"*They will see His face*" ([v. 4](#)) is the climax of Scripture's pilgrim hope. What Moses was shown only in part ([Exodus 33:20-23](#); [34:29-35](#)) and what even the high priest could approach only once a year, the redeemed will enjoy without veil or fear: direct sight of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "*His name will be on their foreheads*", sealing identity, ownership, likeness, and security. The counterfeit marks of the beast are long forgotten; the saints wear the Name that blesses them ([Numbers 6:24-27](#)) and conforms them to Christ's image ([Romans 8:29](#)). This is the "Holy of Holies" reality toward which all biblical worship pointed. This is the consummation of temple communion.

Finally, [Revelation 22:5](#) gathers the scene into a single, focused brilliance: "*Night will be no more... they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever*." The abolition of night signals the end of threat, sorrow, and limit; the Lord Himself is our everlasting light, and the Lamb is our lamp. The Church's flickering witness in a dark age ([Revelation 1:20](#)) becomes permanent radiance; her contested reign ([Revelation 20:4](#)) becomes unhindered dominion "*forever and ever*". This is precisely the point made at the end of [Revelation 21](#): the absence of sun or moon is not a denial of heavenly bodies but a declaration of uncreated glory. The Lamb illumines all.

Two pastoral implications flow from this vision. First, it is *already/not yet*. *Even now* we drink the Spirit's water, bear the Name, and serve as priests; *even now* the nations stream into Christ's Church. Yet we await the day when the curse is finally gone, vision replaces faith, and our service becomes unending joy. That is why the imagery functions symbolically in the present, sustaining pilgrims, while anchoring our hope in a real, future consummation.

Second, this inner life of the City defines the goal of redemption: God with His people in a renewed creation. Revelation's last Garden is not a retreat from the world but the healing and glorifying of it. The New Jerusalem is Eden restored and glorified, the end of our pilgrimage and the destiny of the whole, redeemed Church.

The Angel's Conclusion (vv. 6-II)

The angel affirms the trustworthiness and urgency of everything John has seen: *"These words are faithful and true"*, and the Lord has sent His angel to show what *"must soon take place"* (v. 6). Christ Himself speaks: *"I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book"* (v. 7). Revelation is not a puzzle to admire from a distance. It is an unsealed prophecy that must be kept. The time is near, so obedience cannot be postponed (vv. 7,10).

At this point John again collapses in awe before the messenger and begins to worship at the angel's feet (vv. 8-9; cf. 19:10). The angel forbids it: *"You must not do that! I am a fellow servant... Worship God."* The warning is plain. Even good and glorious gifts from God are not to be treated as God. Angels refuse veneration. We humans must refuse it, too. The Church must not confuse the messenger, the medium, the ceremony, or the experience with the Lord Himself. John's near-mistake is instructive for us. If an apostle can be tempted to give divine honor to a created minister of God's presence, then we must be vigilant against subtler forms of idolatry: celebrity devotion, fixation on novel 'revelations', aesthetic or liturgical sentimentalism, or treating eschatology as spectacle rather than summons. The command stands over all Christian life: *"Worship God."*

The angel also commands John not to seal the book, in deliberate contrast to Daniel's sealed vision (v. 10; cf. Daniel 12:4). Revelation speaks to the church age. Its promises, warnings, and comforts are for ordinary disciples in ordinary congregations. The blessing of Revelation 22:7 (the 6th in the book) is tied to keeping the prophecy, not decoding it. The test of our reading is our obedience. And the assumption is that we are all capable of understanding enough for obedience.

Finally, Revelation 22:11 names the sobering reality of gospel ministry: *"Let the evildoer still do evil... and the righteous still do right."* This is not permission to sin. It is the recognition that the same unsealed word that softens the humble will harden the impenitent. Revelation trains saints to persevere. Those who are holy are to keep being holy. Those who refuse the Lamb expose their character by continuing to love sin. Preaching does not leave people unchanged. It reveals them. Hence the urgency of *"keep"*, the necessity of *"worship God"*, and the motivation that the Lord's coming *"soon"* (seen again in v. 12) requires obedience now.

Christ's Conclusion (vv. 12-16)

Jesus now speaks in His own voice. *"I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done"* (v. 12). Judgment is according to works, not as the root of salvation, but the fruit to reveal what we are in Christ. Grace justifies believers before God; works justify believers before the world (i.e., showing us to truly belong to Christ). The nearness of His coming presses the conscience now. We are not meant to file this away. We are meant to live ready.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (v. 13). The titles we heard of God earlier (Revelation 1:8) are here on the lips of Jesus. He is true God, Lord of history, both source and goal. The One who comes to judge is the same One who authored creation and redemption. Our hope and our accountability meet in Him.

"Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates" (v. 14). This is the 7th and final blessing in the book (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14). Textual note: some manuscripts read *"do his commandments"*. Both truths stand together in John's theology. We are washed in the blood of the Lamb, and the washed are a people who keep His commandments (John 14:21). Entrance is by grace, and grace produces obedience. The blessing holds out both privilege (*"the tree of life"*) and place (*"entry by the gates"*).

"Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood" (v. 15). This is not saying there will be sinners living just beyond the wall in the new creation. Remember that the city is not a literal city, but is a symbol of the people of God, protected and glorified. Rather, this statement is a solemn exclusion. Those who cling to these loves (their sin) remain outside. Revelation 21:27 has already said nothing unclean enters the city. John's list names the loves that keep people from Christ and shows the moral clarity of the final state.

Ultimately, Hell (really, the lake of fire) is the destiny of unbelievers because God gives them what they want (**Romans 1:24**). They desire rebellion rather than submission, sin rather than holiness, enmity with God rather than reconciliation. Think of all who say “I would never serve a God like that.” Be careful what you wish for.

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches” (v. 16). Revelation is for the churches. Not for a secret class. Not for a future generation only. For ordinary congregations then and now. *“I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star.”* He is both David’s source and David’s son: the promised King who secures the kingdom. In **Revelation 2:28**, the church in Thyatira was promised that conquerors would receive the morning star, which is Jesus Himself. As the morning star He is the herald of the new day. The Age to Come is already dawning in Him, and His appearing will be the full sunrise.

Christ’s conclusion leaves us with clear work: keep the words of this prophecy, rest in the washing He provides, turn from the loves that exclude, and fix our hope on the King who is both the end and the beginning... and is coming soon.

John’s Conclusion (vv. 17-21)

“The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price” (v. 17). Here the invitation moves in two directions at once. The Church, animated by the Spirit, turns outward to the nations with a free gospel call: *“Come.”* At the same time, every hearer is enlisted into that same call: *“Let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’”* Evangelism is not a specialist’s task; it is the Bride’s voice, carried by every worshiper. And the invitation is without precondition: thirsty and willing are the only qualifiers. **Isaiah 55** stands in the background: *“come, buy wine and milk without money and without price”*. Revelation now brings that promise to its climactic clarity in Christ. The water of life is without price because the Lamb paid the price for His people.

This universal call sits comfortably with particular grace. We gladly affirm the free offer of the gospel to all, while knowing that those who come do so because the Spirit makes them willing in the day of His power. The text keeps both truths in their biblical order: the invitation is sincere and indiscriminate; the response is real and God-wrought. Our task is not to sort the thirsty from the not-thirsty, but to hold out the water of life and say, *“Come.”*

The warning follows hard on the invitation: *“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, [19] and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.” (vv. 18-19).* This is not a ban on careful explanation but a prohibition against tampering, adding burdens God has not spoken or subtracting truths God has revealed. **Deuteronomy 4:2** and **Proverbs 30:6** sound the same note at the head and heart of Scripture. Here, at the close, the Lord marks out the boundary lines again. Revelation is an unsealed prophecy, but it is not an open canvas. We are stewards, not contributors or editors.

Textual note: **Revelation 22:19** reads *“tree of life”* in the critical text and *“book of life”* in the TR. Either way, the threat is clear. To mutilate the prophecy is to imperil one’s portion in what the prophecy promises. Handle this book with reverence. Read it. Preach it plainly. Keep (obey) it.

“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (v. 20). The conversation that began with *“Come”* to sinners now speaks *“Come”* to the Savior. The Church that invites the nations also longs for the King. This is the right eschatological posture: mission without delay and desire without embarrassment. We are meant to live ready.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all” (v. 21). The last word is grace. Not fear. Not speculation. Grace for all who hear, all who come, all who keep. Revelation ends the way the gospel begins: gift, not price; promise, not threat; the Lord Jesus with His Church until the Day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts.

Maranatha!