

I Am Coming Quickly! Revelation 22

Revelation 22 Introduction

- The Bible ends with a glimpse into “Heaven,” our eternal home – more accurately described as the New Heaven, the New Earth and the New Jerusalem.
- This is the conclusion of John’s travel brochure.
- He’s told us as much as he can. He now expects us to make a decision.
- Of course no one goes there unwillingly.

- Is this where we want to go?
- This chapter will give us one more peek into the wonders of our eternal home.
- That is followed by several reminders that Jesus is coming quickly!
- The Bible ends with a forceful message that the people of God need to be ready and watching for Jesus.

Revelation 22 Outline

- I. Inside the New Jerusalem 22:1-5
- II. The Bible’s Closing Words 22:6-21

Conclusion: Looking Forward to Heaven

I. Inside the New Jerusalem 22:1-5

- 22:1 Ezekiel saw a similar river in the Jerusalem of the millennial earth.
 - See Ezekiel 47:1
- 22:2 Ezekiel also saw something like the trees and fruit spoken of here.
 - See Ezekiel 47:12
- The mention of fruit every month tells us that time will somehow be measured during this eternal state of things.

- 22:2-3 No more curse The tree of the knowledge of good and evil that caused the fall is not mentioned – only the tree of life.
- The devastating effects of sin will be gone forever!
- His servants shall serve Him In eternity we will be busy with glorious service – God’s “slaves” – with none of the drudgery caused by sin’s corruption!

- 22:4 They shall see His face
- See the following:
 - 1 Corinthians 13:12
 - 1 John 3:2
- 22:5 They shall reign forever and ever.
- What was described in v.3 as “serving the Lord” is here described as “reigning” with Him. And it will never end.

II. The Bible’s Closing Words 22:6-21

- All the writing on the seven-sealed scroll is now exhausted.
- The judgments of the seven seals, the seven trumpets and the seven bowls are complete.
- This final section is an Epilogue that connects us back to the Prologue of Revelation 1.

- 22:6 These words are faithful and true
- This sounds a lot like 21:5. Robert L. Thomas points out, *“No book of the Bible has a more pointed attestation, a stronger safeguarding against tampering, or a more urgent recommendation for study and observance than does the Apocalypse, especially in its Epilogue.”*
- Things which must shortly take place
- Here’s a reminder of what we were told back in Revelation 1:1.
- The whole book has a clear literary form making it a very unified work.
- Its end brings us back to its beginning and we are reminded that the time is short.
- Our lives need to exhibit a sense of urgency regarding spiritual things.
- 22:7 Blessed is he who keeps the words
- Think back to Revelation 1:3.
- I am coming quickly!
- This is the first of three times Jesus says this in this chapter. See 22:12 & 20.
- There are similar straightforward references to Christ’s coming in 2:5, 16; 3:11; 16:15.
- There are less direct mentions in places like 1:1; 2:25; 3:3 and 3:20.
- And then there was Chapter 19 where John saw Christ’s actual return in glory.
- The Lord obviously wants us to take all this to heart.
- His goal is clearly to instill a sense of urgent-yet-hopeful expectation in His church.
- 22:8-9 Compare this with 19:10.
- When John fell down before Jesus, in 1:17, he was not reprimanded by Christ.
- Both times he falls before an angel, the angel warns him not to do such things.
- Christ accepts worship – and not just from John. Angels don’t accept it at all.
- As the angel says, *“Worship God!”* Jesus is God incarnate.
- 22:10 Do not seal the words.
- Contrast with Daniel 12:4.
- The time is at hand Another reminder of the nearness of Christ’s return.
- 22:11 The warnings of Revelation are the final warnings in God’s word. Whoever will not respond to them will miss their final chance to repent.
- Charles Ryrie sums it up:
 - *“When Christ comes there will be no more opportunity for a man to change his destiny. What he is then he will be forever.”*
- 22:12 Jesus again reminds us, *“I am coming quickly.”*
- This time He emphasizes His rewards.
- 22:13 If we compare this with what the Father says in 1:8 or 21:6, we see that Christ is clearly referring to His deity.
- More than any other book in the Bible, Revelation has shown us the divine attributes of the Son.
- The title of the book accurately describes its contents, *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ.”*
- 22:14-15 This last of Revelation’s seven beatitudes reminds us who will – and will not – have a part in this amazing, eternal heavenly scene.
 - See also 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6 and 22:7.

- The translation “wash their robes” (ESV) probably has a bit more credibility than “do His commandments” (NKJV) – emphasizing what Christ does rather than what we do.
- Dogs are corrupt people with impure minds – especially those who turn from following Christ.
 - For reference, see also 2 Peter 2:20-22 and Philippians 3:2.
- 22:16 in the churches Know with certainty that this book is meant to be read by people in churches. (Compare 1:3-4)
- Though some would prefer to avoid the book, Jesus wants us to know what it says.
- Jesus is the Bright and Morning Star.
- When He returns, the coldest, darkest hour of history will give way to the eternal brightness of the day of God.
- 22:17 The voices seem to be as follows:
 - The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”
 - The bride is the church. This is best understood as a prayer for Christ to return.
 - Let him who hears say, “Come!” This is Jesus issuing a command to all who hear to join in the chorus of prayer.
- him who thirsts ... whoever desires
- Christ also gives a wide open invitation for all to come to Him.
- And as He said earlier, back in John 6, *“the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”*
- Alexander Maclaren comments,
 - *“He delays His coming; for this among other reasons, that all the world may hear His gracious invitation. Then there are two comings in this verse – the final coming of Christ to the world; the invited coming of the world to Christ.”*
- 22:18-19 This is most likely spoken by Jesus, indicating with due severity the importance of the words of Scripture.
- Those who doubt the accuracy of our current copies of the Bible are simply uninformed.
- Ancient copyists, beginning among the Jews and carrying over into the early church, were outrageously meticulous, believing their work to be a matter of life and death.
- For example, listen to Irenaeus in the 2nd Century.
 - *“Whoever you are that are making a copy of this book, I adjure you by our Lord Jesus Christ and by his glorious advent when he comes to judge the living and the dead, that you compare your copy and correct it carefully by this original manuscript; and likewise transcribe this adjuration and set it in your copy.”*
- Nonetheless, the warning is not issued only to copyists, but to “everyone who hears.”
- So this is first of all a caution to those in the churches to take the words of Revelation seriously.
- It also points to the closing of the canon of Scripture. Prophetic revelation comes to an end with the end of this final book.
- 22:20 And one more reminder. The third time in the chapter that Jesus tells us.
- “Come Lord Jesus!” seems to have been a common saying, catch phrase or prayer in the early church. See “Maranatha!” in 1 Corinthians 16:22.
- 22:21 Fittingly, both the book of Revelation and Bible end with grace.

Conclusion: Looking Forward to Heaven

- Warren Wiersbe notes,
 - *“Heaven is more than a destination; it is a motivation ... The vision of the heavenly city motivated the patriarchs as they walked with God (Hebrews 11).”*
- Jonathan Edwards of colonial New England, summed up the experience of those who arrive in heaven like this:
 - *“They have obtained that delight which gives full satisfaction; having come to this pleasure, they neither do nor can desire any more. They can sit down fully contented, and take up with this enjoyment for ever and ever, and desire no change ...*
 - *“After they have had the pleasure of beholding the face of God millions of ages, it will not grow a dull story; the relish of this delight will be as exquisite as ever, there is enough still for the utmost employment of every faculty.”*

In closing, let's consider the following:

1. The Glories of Heaven
 2. Our Service in Heaven
 3. The Worship of Heaven
 4. The Happiness of Heaven
 5. Love in Heaven
1. The Glories of Heaven
 - In Revelation 21 we talked about the size of the New Jerusalem – a cube measuring about 1400 miles on each side.
 - The city was built of precious materials that are even difficult to describe (21:11, 18-21).
 - And the Shekinah glory of God was the single, all-sufficient source of light (21:23)
 - Conclusion:
 2. Our Service in Heaven
 - Looking back at 22:3, we are right to associate service with some kind of work.
 - Though in the absence of the curse, work will never again be tainted with drudgery.
 - Some translations (like ESV) render the word “serve” as “worship.”
 - It is also described as “reigning” in v.5.
 3. The Worship of Heaven
 - A good starting point for this topic might be back in 4:8-11.
 - We might then jump ahead to 5:8-14.
 - And that just seems to be a hint of it.
 4. The Happiness of Heaven
 - As C.S. Lewis put it, *“Joy is the serious business of heaven.”*
 - But the word “happiness” is not so far off.
 - Look again at 21:4.
 - Heaven will be a truly happy place – happier than we can currently imagine. Sadness will cease to exist.
 5. Love in Heaven
 - Consider for a moment, as the apostle says in 1 John 4:8 and 16, that “God is love.”
 - Consider further that the presence of God is the chief characteristic of heaven (21:3).

- Then consider the importance of love in the Christian life. (1 Cor. 13, Galatians 5:22).
- And finally consider that nothing will stand in love's way – no curse, no sin, no corruption.
- So all of these – and probably more:
 1. The Glories of Heaven
 2. Our Service in Heaven
 3. The Worship of Heaven
 4. The Happiness of Heaven
 5. Love in Heaven

will work together to make heaven wonderful beyond anything we have ever dared to imagine.

- One last bit of speculation, based on the whole created universe as we see it today:
- Heaven will never be boring.
- Admittedly, there may be no direct Bible verse for that, but if we think about it:
- It was death that entered the world through sin – life already involved growth and progress and development.
- Heaven will give God an eternity to continually display new wonders.
- And we will experience more and more joy.

One Last Scripture

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”

▪ *Philippians 3:20-21 (NKJV)*

Our Father in Heaven,

Lord, please teach us and grant us that ability to withdraw our thoughts, affections, sentiments, desires and expectations entirely away from the world. And cause us to fix them upon that eternal heavenly state. Help us to see it as it really will be – a place where there is fullness of joy; a place of heavenly, sweet, pure, delightful and uncorrupted love; where love reigns supreme; where love and loved ones are eternally enjoyed; where those who appear so lovely in this world, will really be inexpressibly more lovely, and completely full of love to us.

Help us to look forward to that place where we will join together to sing the praises of God and the Lamb; where our senses will be filled to the most complete and final satisfaction, and we will rejoice in You continually; and it will never come to an end, but will last to all eternity. Please grant us this frame of mind, so that we will always think of heaven as our home, that our hearts might be always inclined in eager and hopeful expectation of Christ's return.

(Loosely based on a prayer from the diary of Jonathan Edwards)