

Revelation 22

As the Bible opens with the story of 'Paradise Lost,' so it here closes with the story of 'Paradise Regained'.

What did the angel show to John next (v. 1)? The river of the water of life, as clear as crystal. Throughout the Old Testament, prophets used the picture of a river as a powerful expression of richness, provision, and peace (Isaiah 48:18; Ezekiel 47:1-9).

Where did the river come from and where was it going (vv. 1-2)? It flowed from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. Because it comes from God, it cannot be anything other than pure and abundant. Note who was sitting on the throne.

What grows along each side of the river (v. 2)? The Bible begins with a tree of life (Genesis 3:22-24) which man was not allowed to eat from and concludes here with a tree of life that will nourish the inhabitants of heaven.

How would you describe its fruit? The tree bears twelve crops of fruit, no longer forbidden, yielding its fruit every month. Evidently the new creation will not have a lunar calendar, since there will be no moon (21:23), but rather another type of calendar will define "months." Most fruit trees in the old creation bear fruit only a few months each year at most. In contrast, God's blessing of fruitfulness all year long will typify life in the new earth.¹

What will not be there (v. 3)? The curse of sin and death.

What relationship will people have with God? His servants shall serve Him. Heaven will be a place of work and service for God's people. However, this is a picture of the pure blessedness of service rather than arduous, curse-stained toil.

What is the meaning of "They shall see His face" (v. 4)? Heaven will be a place of intimate, face to face fellowship with God. Moses was denied the privilege of seeing God face to face (Exodus 33:20-23), but everyone in heaven shall "see His face."

Explain the significance of God's name on the forehead (v. 4). Ownership. God's people will forever be identified with their God, and there will never be any doubt that they belong to Him.

Why is no night there (v. 5)? They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light (21:23).

When were these things to take place (v. 6)? Soon. The word "soon" or "quickly" in the ancient Greek isn't exactly the same as our word for soon. The word soon might best be rendered as "suddenly."

What did Jesus say He would do, and when (v. 7)? He is coming and soon. The climax of all this will be the glorious coming of the Savior. **What blessing (beatitude) does He pronounce?** Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book. The main intent of prophecy is to lead us to trust and obey God, and apply His truth to the way we live, i.e. living in the hope of His Coming.

What mistake did John repeat? He fell down to worship at the feet of the angel – another created (not divine) being. **Where else had he done that?** Revelation 19:10,

What was John not to do (v. 10)? John received instruction from the angel to leave his book open ("do not seal up"). **Why not?** He was not to close (seal) it, because the fulfillment of the events predicted was near, and people needed to be aware of them (1:11). God had told Daniel, on the other hand, to "seal up" and "conceal" his prophecy, evidently because there was more prophecy to come (Daniel 8:26; 12:4, 9-10). As an artist covers his work when it is under construction until it is complete, so God covered His picture of the future until He finished it.²

What does John mean by his instruction (v. 11)? The angel gave John this warning to pass along because "the time is near" (v. 10). This is a strong warning to unbelievers, not to put off becoming a believer in Jesus Christ. It presents the hopelessness of the final state of unbelievers. When Christ comes, people will not be able to change their destiny. What they are then, they will remain forever! People should not expect some second chance in the

future. There will come a time when change will be impossible—when no further opportunity will be given for repentance on the one hand or for apostasy on the other."³

What promise is repeated (v. 12)? I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.....the repeated theme of judgment on the basis of works.

How does the speaker describe himself (v. 13)? As the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. **Where else are such terms used? Who is speaking here?** These are terms used interchangeably to identify Christ and God Himself. The two are equal. They occupy the same throne (vv. 1, 3).

Who may enter this city (v. 14)? This final blessing in the book announces God's favor on those who cleanse themselves ("wash their robes") by turning to Christ for salvation (7:14; 14:13; 21:27).⁴ They have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. What a privilege they will have there!

Who will be outside the city (v. 15)? Outside are the dogs (the morally impure), those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. This verse does not intend to teach that in eternity, outside the walls of heaven, multitudes will throng, longing to get in. It simply describes the future using the imagery of the present.

Who revealed this message? How does He describe Himself (v. 16)? *I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.* The Root and offspring of David is a precious Messianic title (Isaiah 11:1). It shows that Jesus is both the ancestor of King David (His deity) as well as His descendant (His humanity).

What invitation is offered (v. 17)? Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. This is an open invitation for whoever to receive salvation from Jesus. He will not exclude anyone who comes to Him. An invitation is both an opportunity *and* a responsibility. If we decline an invitation, we have only ourselves to blame.

What warning is given (vv. 18-19)? Adding to or taking away from the words of the prophecy of this book will result in eternal, disastrous consequences. What Jesus meant here was that anyone who perverts the teaching of "this book" (Revelation) will experience a judgment from God that is similar to the judgments that will come on the unbelievers during the Tribulation.⁵ This does not apply to minor differences in interpretation but rather an outright attack on the inspiration and/or completeness of the Bible. **What are some examples of how people might violate this principle.**

The Book of Revelation opened with a blessing on all who obey its instructions (1:3), and it closes with a strong curse on all who disobey it.⁶

What promise does Jesus give to close the book (v. 20)? Yes, I am coming soon. To the very end, the Book of Revelation emphasizes readiness and watchfulness. If we miss this practical lesson from the Book of Revelation – the lesson of readiness – then we miss the essential message of the book.

How did John end the book (v. 20)? Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The book closes with John's longing for the return of Jesus for His people.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ begins (1:4), and concludes the Book of Revelation (v. 21). As in revelation, so in history: grace shall have the last word!"⁷

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Revelation, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 247

² Ibid. p. 253

³ Ibid. p. 254

⁴ Ibid. p. 256

⁵ Ibid. p. 257

⁶ Ibid. p. 258

⁷ Ibid. p. 259