

## Revelation 22 - They Shall See His Face

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COURSE COMMENTARY

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### 22:1 - water of life

- **a pure river of water of life**

God promised a fountain of the water of life to the thirsty in the previous chapter ([Rev. 21:6](#)). A similar river flows from the sanctuary in the Millennial Kingdom ([Eze. 47:1-2](#); [Zec. 14:8](#)), but does not rejuvenate all regions, so sin and death remain ([Eze. 47:11](#)). The clarity of the river speaks of sinlessness and symbolizes the cleansing of sin of those who partake of the river. It is a literal river, but also typifies the Holy Spirit Who cleanses and gives life to those who trust Christ in this age ([John 4:10](#); [John 7:37-38](#)). The Tree of Life draws from this river.

- **proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb**

The river proceeds from the throne because God is the source of all life ([Job 33:4](#); [Eze. 37:9](#); [John 1:4](#); [14:6](#); [Acts 3:15](#); [Rev. 11:11](#)). In the eternal state, there is no more distinction between the throne of the Father in heaven and that of the Son on earth ([Mat. 25:31](#); [Rev. 3:21](#)). Jesus rules from the throne of David in the Millennial Kingdom until the last enemy, death, is destroyed ([Rev. 20:14](#)). Then, He delivers the kingdom to God the Father ([1Cor.15:24-26](#)) and the throne of David merges with the heavenly throne of the Father ([Rev. 22:3](#)) and both Father and Son rule forever.

### 22:2 - Tree of Life

- **the tree of life**

The Tree of Life was originally in the Garden of Eden ([Gen. 2:9](#)). Man was cut off from the Tree when he sinned ([Gen. 3:22-24](#)) and death was the result. Ezekiel was also shown groups of trees with fruit for food and leaves for the healing of the nations ([Eze. 47:12](#)), but none of these are the Tree of Life because death prevails in the Millennium ([Isa. 65:20](#)). Access to this tree will be restored for those who are saved ([Rev. 2:7](#); [Rev. 22:14](#)). Between the Garden of Eden and the eternal state, the cross of Christ serves as the *Tree of Life* ([Acts 5:30](#); [Gal. 3:13](#); [1Pe. 2:24](#)).

- **which bore twelve fruits... yielding its fruit every month**

"Bore" and "yielding" are present tense participles: the tree continually produces fruit. We are told the leaves are for healing, the fruit is undoubtedly for food, as in the Millennial Kingdom ([Eze. 47:12](#)). Jesus ate food in His resurrected body ([John 21:12](#); [Acts 10:41](#)).

- **the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations**

"Healing" is *therapei'an* : which can also mean *service, care*. In the Garden of Eden, when man was sinless, eating the *fruit* of the tree provided eternal life ([Gen. 2:9](#), [16](#) cf. [3:22-24](#)). In the eternal state, the text implies the *fruit* is eaten, but it is the *leaves* which are said to be for *healing* or *service* of the nations. All those with a glorified body cannot die ([Luke 20:35-36](#)).

### 22:3 - no more curse

- **there shall be no more curse**  
The Greek says: *and every accursed thing not it will be still*. During the Millennial Kingdom, aspects of the curse remained. Sin and death continued and the serpent still ate dust ([Isa. 65:20, 25](#)). Now, every last curse is removed, including the curses from God at the Fall of mankind into sin ([Gen. 3:15-19](#)). Even the creation itself is delivered from the bondage of corruption ([Rom. 8:19](#)).
- **the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it**  
During the Millennial Kingdom, the earthly Jerusalem was called "THE LORD IS THERE" ([Eze. 48:35](#)). This is the ultimate fulfillment of the proclamation of the previous chapter: *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them* ([Rev. 21:3](#)).
- **His servants shall serve Him**  
"[They] shall serve" is *latreu'sousin* : *carrying out religious duties in a spirit of worship*. The service will not be a burden, but will be *worship* and a great blessing for the servants. Adam was assigned the task of tending and keeping the garden *prior to the entrance of sin* ([Gen. 2:15](#)). Work is not a result of the curse, but part of God's perfect design for man. These serve in the role of a bond-servant: one who willingly forgoes freedom in order to remain in the household and serve the master ([Ex. 21:3-6](#)).

## 22:4 - His face

- **They shall see His face**  
God has never been seen *fully* by men in the flesh ([1Jn. 4:12](#)). Even Moses only was given a passing glimpse of God's glory ([Ex. 33:20-23](#)). Seeing God fully, face-to-face, has been the ongoing desire of the godly ([Job 19:25-27](#); [Ps. 17:15](#); [Mat. 5:8](#); [John 17:24](#)). Eventually, the saints will see Him *face-to-face, as He is* ([1Cor. 13:12](#); [1Jn. 3:2-3](#)).

## 22:5 - no night there

- **the Lord God gives them light**  
"Gives them light" is *photi'sei ep autou's* : *He is shining upon them*. They bask in the Shekinah glory of God's presence. There is no need of the sun or moon ([Rev. 21:23](#)).

## 22:6 - to show His servants

- **to show His servants the things which must shortly take place**  
The same Greek phrase occurs in the introductory verse of this book. The expectation of His imminent coming is found throughout the book. The pattern for the fulfillment of the events predicted in this book is found by examining how prophecy was fulfilled in the past: *in literal detail*. Approximate fulfillment is incompatible with His character ([Isa. 46:9-11](#)).

## 22:7 - keep the words

- **I am coming quickly!**  
"I am coming" is *e'rchomai* , present tense: *I am presently coming*. His arrival is imminent--He is already underway!
- **Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book**  
"He who keeps" is *ho tero'n*, present tense participle: *the one continually watching over and guarding*. This is one of seven blessings in the book of Revelation and is like the first one given to those who *read, hear, and keep* the words of this prophecy ([Rev. 1:3](#)). Revelation is not a

devotional book about the general triumph of good over evil. Nor is it an allegory teaching general spiritual principles. It contains *prophecy* -- predictive events concerning real history. *History* is **HIS story**. God's truth is conveyed by *words* in His *written* revelation which He has elevated even over His own name (**Ps. 138:2**)!

## 22:8-9 - fell to worship

- **I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel**

This is the second time that John has been overcome by the magnitude of the scene and great revelation provided by the Angel (**Rev. 19:10**). See our discussion of [Revelation 19:10](#).

## 22:10 - do not seal

- **Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book**

Daniel was told to *seal* his revelation until the time of the end (**Dan. 8:26; 12:4**). The events were far away and not imminent. Not so with John's revelation--what is written is useful *now* to the church! Since the book is not sealed, it is obviously *intended to be understood*.

- **for the time is at hand**

"At hand" is *engy's e'stin* : *near it is*. The reason why the prophecy is not to be sealed is because the time is near for its fulfillment. A natural reading of the New Testament yields the truth that to the early church Jesus' coming was imminent: that is, it could happen at any time. This serves as a powerful motivator for godly living and evangelization. See our discussion of [Revelation 1:3](#).

## 22:11 - let him be

- **He who is unjust, let him be unjust**

After one of Daniel's visions, he was told that both evil and good would continue, that the wicked would not understand the things of God (**Dan. 12:9-10**). Even now, with much more revelation and evidence than was available in Daniel's day, the wicked continue to reject God. It is not a matter of ignorance, but *willful choice*. Our job is like that of Ezekiel: we speak the message of God which some will hear and some will not (**Eze. 3:27**). *We don't own the results--God does!*

- **he who is righteous, let him be righteous still**

"Let him be righteous" is *righteousness let him do*. Those who are truly saved will have lives which are characterized by righteous works. Our faith is demonstrated by the works which proceed from our salvation (**Jas. 2:18-24**).

## 22:12 - My reward

- **My reward is with me to give every one according to his work**

"Reward" is *mistho's* which denotes either reward or punishment, as the case may be. The emphasis is on individual reward or punishment: *each one*. The servants of God are judged for **rewards**, but not for salvation (**Isa. 40:10-11; 62:11; Luke 14:12-14; 1Cor. 3:13-15; 2Cor. 5:10; Col. 3:22-25; 1Jn. 2:28**). The God-rejectors are judged for degree of **punishment** in the Lake of Fire (**1Pe. 4:18; Rev. 2:23; 20:11-15**).

## 22:13 - alpha and omega

- **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End**

The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a unique title of God used by both the Son

(Rev. 1:8) and the Father (Rev. 21:6).

- **the First and the Last**

In the Old Testament, this title is uniquely God's (Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 44:6; 48:12). Jesus applies it to Himself both here and in the opening chapter of the book (Rev. 1:11). Jesus is **eternal** and therefore is before all things and outlasts all things (Isa. 9:6; Mic. 5:2; John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5; Col. 1:17; Heb. 13:8). Jesus is God!

## 22:14 - enter through the gates

- **Blessed are those who do His commandments**

"Those who do" is *hoi poiou'ntes*, present tense participle: *the ones continually doing*. Those who are truly born-again will do the will of the Father (Mat. 7:21-23). We are to be both *hearers* and *doers* of the word (John 13:15; Jas. 1:21; 1Jn. 2:3-4). (The critical text has *blessed are those who wash their robes*.)

- **right to the tree of life... enter through the gates**

"Right" is *exousi'a* : *authority, capability*. Those who have a right to the tree also have access through the gates because the tree is *within* the city. These are two ways of saying the same thing: all the redeemed have full access to the city and partake of the Tree of Life.

## 22:15 - outside are dogs

- **But outside are dogs...**

"Dogs" refers to those who are impure, as an unclean animal. Examples include male prostitutes (Deu. 23:18), Gentiles (Mat. 15:26), Judaizers (Php. 3:2-3) and others (2K. 8:13; Ps. 22:16; Ps. 22:20; Isa. 56:10; Mat. 7:6; Mark 7:27). These are outside, but not at the gates. They are in the **Lake of Fire** (Rev. 20:15).

## 22:16 - to testify

- **I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches**

Jesus reiterates the purpose of His communication by an angel to John and to the Seven Churches of Asia (Rev. 1:1, 11). Ultimately, the message is for all who have a spiritual ear to hear (e.g., Rev. 2:7). This is the first mention of the word "church" (*ekklesi'a*) since the end of Chapter 3--another indicator that the Church is not present on earth during the events of the Tribulation.

- **I am the Root and Offspring of David**

Jesus is the root of Jesse, David's father (Isa. 11:10). He is the offspring of David and qualifies as heir to the throne of David (Isa. 9:7; Mat. 1:1; Luke 3:31; Acts 13:23; Rom. 1:3-4). As the Creator, Jesus is also the *source* out of which David came (John 1:3, 10; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; Rev. 3:14). This dual relationship of Jesus to David, in His deity and His incarnation, was the source of a riddle which Jesus used to stump the Pharisees (Mat. 22:41-46).

- **the Bright and Morning Star**

John the Baptist was to go before Jesus, the *Dayspring* (Luke 1:76-79). Jesus is *the true light which gives light to every man coming into the world* (John 1:9). He is *the Sun of Righteousness who shall arise with healing in His wings* (Mal. 4:2). Until He returns, we have the prophetic word which shines as a light in a dark place (2Pe. 1:19-21).

## 22:17 - Come!

- **And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"**  
"Say" is *le'gousin*, present tense: *they are saying*. It is an ongoing invitation. "Come" is *e'rchou*, second-person singular imperative command: *you [singular] come!* The invitation is to an **individual**. The *bride* is the Church (**Rev. 19:7**), who longs for the bridegroom in the age between His First and Second Coming. The *Spirit* refers either to the Holy Spirit Who intercedes through the Church (**Rom. 8:26-27**), or may refer to the passages predicting Christ's return which were given by the Holy Spirit through the prophets.
- **And let him who hears say, "Come!"**  
This invitation is also to an individual. Those who have ears to hear and respond in faith will also invite the return of their newfound Lord.
- **And let him who thirsts come.**  
"Him who thirsts" is *ho dipso'n*, present tense participle: *the one presently thirsting*. The only requirement is **thirst**. Without thirst, the free water of life will not be attained (**Ps. 42:1-2**; **Mat. 5:6**; **Rev. 21:6**). Those who thirst in this present age partake of the water by being baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (**John 7:37-39**; **1Cor. 12:13**).
- **Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.**  
As we discussed in our last session, the water of life is *free* because it is infinitely expensive and no man could possibly purchase it. Therefore, God purchased redemption and gives it to those who respond in faith (**Rev. 21:6**).

## 22:18 - adding words

- **I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book**  
The message is not conveyed in generalized ideas, but by the *very words* of the *written text*. This speaks of the **verbal inspiration** of the Scriptures, reflected in the appearance of the phrase "it is written" 61 times in the New Testament alone. There can be no Christianity without knowledge of God's written word!
- **If anyone adds to these things**  
There are numerous prohibitions against modifying the words of God (**Deu. 4:2**; **12:32**; **Pr. 30:6**; **Jer. 26:2**). Examples in our day of those who add to the words are numerous cults which append extra-Biblical writings to the text by elevating them on a par with inspired Scripture: Islam (*Qur'an*), Christian Science (*Key to the Scriptures*), Mormonism (*Book of Mormon*).

## 22:19 - taking away words

- **If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy**  
This warning explicitly concerns those who would tamper with the actual words of the text. Yet there are other ways in which the words of this prophecy can be seriously distorted to great detriment.
  - 1) Faulty views of inspiration (only some words are God's).
  - 2) Incorrect interpretation (moving the future into the past or dismissing prophetic predictions as figures teaching general spiritual truths).
- **God shall take away his part from the Book of Life**  
The *Textus Receptus* is the only Greek text which has "book." All other manuscripts have "tree." This is probably due to Erasmus having translated the last six verses from Latin into the Greek in such a way that incorporated an error in the Latin *Vulgate* where a scribe miscopied the correct word for tree (*ligno*) by the word for book (*libro*). Whether it is the *tree* of life or *book*

of life that is taken away, the result is the same: those who take away from the text will not be among the redeemed.

## 22:20 - I am coming quickly

- **Surely I am coming quickly.**  
 "Quickly" has lasted over 1900 years so far. How is this to be understood? Peter gives us several keys (2Pe. 3:1-9).
  - 1) Perspective - From God's perspective, one thousand years are as a day. From His vantage point, He has not yet been gone two full days!
  - 2) Grace and Mercy - God is not willing that any should perish. His delay allows more to come to faith during this age of grace.
  - 3) Judgment Building - One day, *the iniquity of the earth-dwellers will be complete* (cf. Gen. 15:16) and Christ will come as a thief upon an unsuspecting world in the Day of the Lord.

The promise of His return is a powerful motivator for the saints to deny the world and live in expectation of His imminent return (Php. 3:20-21; Tit. 2:11-14).

- **Even so, come, Lord Jesus!**  
 Saints, such as John, are in full agreement with His promised return! They love His appearing (Sos. 8:13-14; 2Ti. 4:8; Heb. 9:28).

## 22:21 - grace be with you

- **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**  
 Unlike other prophetic books, the book of Revelation is *epistolary*, it is written as a letter. Thus, it includes a closing benediction. Shortly after John wrote it, it would be circulated to the Seven Churches of Asia.
- **How has this book affected You?**  
 If you are among the **faithful**, then this book is in itself a tantalizing taste of the waters of the River of Life. In its pages are found the knowledge of Christ's certain return and the restoration of all things as God originally intended. No more death, no more suffering, living in God's presence forever!

If you are among the **faithless**, and this book has not drawn you toward salvation, then it may further harden you in your rejection of God.

This is my prayer: **Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts... Now is the day of salvation!** (Heb. 3:15; 2Cor. 6:2).

For additional information on this topic, see the [commentary](#).