

God's Final Invitation

Revelation 22

- I. Inside new Jerusalem.
 - A. There will be no sanctuary—Temple.
 - 1. God and the Lamb are its sanctuary.
 - B. The river of the water of life (V.1).
 - 1. Continual eternal life flowing from the throne of God.
 - C. The tree of life (V.2)
 - 1. In Genesis, man was prohibited from the tree of life, in new Jerusalem, man has complete access to the tree of life.
 - 2. Continuous provision of a variety of fruit for the “healing” of nations.
 - a. Healing = *therapeia* = makes things satisfying, soothing, pleasurable.
 - D. What will we do in heaven?
 - 1. The curse is removed—all of creation restored to its prefall perfect condition.
 - 2. We will be God's servants (V.3)—and love it!
 - 3. All that we have seen and heard in Revelation is true—not a myth or hearsay (V. 6).
- II. Jesus is coming soon.
 - A. John is overwhelmed by all that he has seen and his response is worship—Worship God! (Vs. 8-9).
 - B. We are not to “seal up” the message of Revelation—we are to share it! (V. 10).
 - C. Time is running out for a decision for our Savior. When the time is up, there will be no second chances (V. 11).
 - D. “*I am coming soon...quickly... the time is near.*”
 - 1. We are to live in the tension of Jesus returning soon or may tarry.
 - 2. “Soon” is relative.

III. “I am the Alpha and the Omega” (V. 13).

- A. Revelation 1:8 God says He is the Alpha and the Omega.
- B. Revelation 17:1 Jesus says “I am the beginning and the end” which God said in 21:6.
 - 1. Jesus is God!
 - a. Confirmed in Isaiah 44:6
- C. “First and last” – chronological.
- D. “The beginning and the end”—the source and the goal.

IV. The final invitation.

- A. Not all people will go to heaven—those who reject the Savior will go to hell (Vs.14-15).
 - 1. Those with washed robes have been washed by the blood of the Lamb.
- B. Jesus is the “bright morning star”—The brightest star that promises the end of nighttime. Jesus promises us an end to “darkness”, He’s the end!
- C. “Anyone who *wishes* can receive the water of life without cost!”
 - 1. The invitation is not based on personal performance or quality of faith, it is for those who desire the water of life.

COME LORD JESUS!

MARANATHA!

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Revelation 22

This is the last time you will hear someone in this church say “*turn into your Bibles to the book of Revelation*”... at least for a long time...your Bibles should fall open to this wonderful book...it has been quite a journey that began back in March of 2025.

We are not only at the end of Revelation... we are at the end of the Bible! After Revelation 22 God closes His revealed word...

God created man and placed him in a perfect environment; however, man rebelled against God and fell from what God intended him to be. God placed the world under a curse because of sin but immediately set in motion a plan to restore humanity and all creation to its original glory.

Revelation 22 reveals that final restoration of fallen creation... and ends with a completely restored environment.... A completely restored humanity and a completely restored creation....a new heaven and a new earth and a new city.... The New Jerusalem where all redeemed mankind...all those saved by the blood of Jesus Christ will spend eternity.

Last week we began to look at this amazing city in chapter 21...our eternal heaven... we saw mostly the glorious exterior of the city...we got peek inside and saw that there will be no sanctuary, or temple, or any house of worship where we would go to worship our God... there would be no need for one...The Trinity will be dwelling with us...

Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its sanctuary (21:22)... chapter 22 continues giving us a showing on what's *inside* the gates of this city... then leaves us with some final vital words...

I admitted that I was a little sad there would be no “sea” in the new heaven and earth...but I was relieved to find a river...The only thing I miss after moving from coastal California to Idaho is the ocean... but at least there are rivers here!... we have some beautiful rivers. The river in new Jerusalem will overwhelmingly satisfy any longing one has for water!... *this river is the river of the water of life.*

Read verse 1

Most believe this river is symbol... a picture of a continual eternal life flowing directly from God... His throne... to the inhabitants of the city... God will provide His redeemed with everything he needs... everything he could possibly want...(our wants will be perfect!...made new with our new perfect nature.)

But the question has been asked, how literal do we take these verses?... when we get to heaven, will we see a literal river flowing out from the throne of God? Or is this all just imagery?...this is

what I know... John, who wrote these words are telling us *what he saw... what he was shown* by one of God's messengers... this entire book of Revelation was *what John saw... what he was shown...over and over again... so all of this is what John saw... I think there will be a river!*

But it would be a legitimate question to ask is a heavenly river the same as an earthly river?... could that be the only way John could describe it?...*but in fact is was something more, something special?...I don't know....I do know John said he saw a river.*

Read verse 2

As if there's not enough things to argue about...much is made in the commentary world as to if this is A Tree or Many trees...being on both sides of the river... all I know is it says A TREE OF LIFE...When we get there, we will say *there's that tree John was talking about.*

Amazing tree... it bears 12 kinds of fruit [expound]... there will be fruit in heaven... FOOD!... I was worried there wouldn't be any food in heaven...we won't need food, food will be for pleasure... you won't get fat eating all this perfect food!...(my speculation). God-engineered food!

The Bible begins with a tree of life doesn't it?... Genesis 2:9 **And out of the ground Yahweh God caused to grow every tree that is desirable in appearance and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**

After Adam and Eve sinned... bringing sin into the world...it wasn't the tree of life they ate from... it was the tree of knowledge... God prohibited them to eat from the tree of life, He planted angels as guards so that Adam and Eve couldn't get to the tree of life... or they would live forever in their spiritually lost condition.

The tree is now accessible to us! Eternal life...not in our sinful condition.... 12 fruit, yielding fruit every month... continual provisions... it says the leaves are medicinal... **for the healing of nations** (*ethnos*)...I thought there would be no sickness or death in heaven?

The word translated **healing** in the Greek is *therapeia*... we get the word *therapeutic*...most likely these leaves make things soothing, satisfying, health giving rather than health healing... these leaves will enhance life in heaven.

You want to know what we will do in heaven?... here's where you find the answer

Read verses 3-5

First of all we will live in an environment where there is no more curse... The result of Adam and Eve's disobedience in the garden was the curse on all mankind... the curse affected every aspect of creation...

"Cursed is the ground because of you; through toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it will yield for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your bread, until you return to the ground, because out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:17-19)

The curse is done!... spend an hour or two this week contemplating on what life will be free from the curse!... what will we do in this curseless world?... **we will work and serve Him!**... You're thinking *that's heaven?*... work?... being a servant?...

Before the curse... work was good... work was pleasurable... work was what Adam did in the perfect garden.... And he loved it... after the curse... work was now toil and labor... honoring God in being His eternal servant will be the most satisfying existence!...trust God!

We have NEVER known what work is like without the stain of the curse!.. we will actually see God's face!...no man has never seen the face of God... to be face to face with God is to have an absolutely unrestricted relationship, fellowship and connection with the Almighty!

No moon, no sun... no need for any light source other than the glory of God Himself... living and working in the presence of God Himself.

Read verse 6

Why does John feel the need to tell us these words he has delivered to us are **Faithful and true?**...

He wants us to know everything that we've heard, and read over the last 16 months hasn't been hearsay... hasn't been half-truths... modern day news/fake news... John is telling us that everything he has written in this book of Revelation is true.

Read verse 7

What stands out to me as I look at this passage are repeated phrases... the Bible has often repeated phrases.... What's the repeated phrase we see over and over again in Genesis 1?..... **and it was good...**

That's how the Bible begins... **it was good...** the rest of the Bible is all about how everything is now messed up!... and now... a repeated phrase in chapter 22 **Behold I am coming quickly...**what's the story line of the Bible?

All of creation was created by God and it all was "good".... Then all of creation gets messed up through sin... and now... Jesus is coming soon to set all things right....and he will repeat it.... Well look at this in a minute

Read verse 8

This is a repeat incident isn't it?... this same thing happened back in chapter 19... John is so blown away from everything he's been seeing... it's too much!... his immediate response is to

worship!... he falls down to worship the angel...this already happened back in chapter 19... Did John forget?... or is this a reminder to us that the bottom line in Revelation is who and what we are to worship...isn't that what we've been seeing all these Sunday?

Don't worship the beast... don't even worship something wonderful like an angel... all of your eternity... all of your worship is centered on and is all about God... God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit...

Read verse 9

WORSHIP GOD!

Read Verses 10

What we've been doing for the last 16 months is NOT sealing the words of the prophecy of this book...we've done just the opposite... we've unpacked it!... why?... because the end is near... so many will ignore this book... leave it alone... too hard to understand... too many arguments.... So they basically "seal it"...we needed this book!

But then he says something puzzling:

Read verse 11

I think what he's saying is... the time to make a decision for Christ is coming to a head... **for the time is near... I am coming soon...** don't assume there is going to be time for a last minute repentance... the time is now...

Read verse 12

I am coming soon... Behold I am coming quickly... I am coming soon... it's been 2000 years and He hasn't come yet!... we all have a different idea of what "soon" means... When I tell my wife I'll be going to the beach soon... soon means "right now!"... when I tell her I will do the laundry soon... that might be a month or two...all relative!

All over the New Testament we see this idea of Jesus "coming soon" "quickly" "at hand" meaning which means "close". "nearby"... Paul and Peter and Jesus:

Romans 13:12 **The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.** Peter in

1 Peter 4:7 **"The end of all things is at hand"** Jesus in

Mark 1 **The kingdom of God has come near...** it's here! It's right around the corner!

For two thousand years...did Paul, Peter and Jesus get it all wrong?... that Jesus was coming soon?...skeptics like to point out things like this in the Bible.... *See the Bible got it wrong!*...I think the best way to understand all this is to understand that there is a God designed tension with these intentional words...

Throughout all of Scripture there is a sense that Jesus IS coming soon... but there is also another sense that Jesus may tarry... There is a sense that it could be tomorrow... but at the same time there is a sense it could be in two thousand more years.

In the Old Testament... the Jews lived in the sense that the “**Day of the Lord**” was at hand... or it could be hundreds of years later... we error if we think that Jesus is coming again tomorrow and doesn't tarry....Jesus is coming again tomorrow, don't pay your bills!

Or we could also error in thinking Jesus is tarrying and won't come back tomorrow!...just eat drink and be merry... don't worry He's not coming back for a long time... no...both are errors...

God wants us to live in this tension.

Matthew 25 is this parable told to us by Jesus... this master goes away on a long journey and leaves His servants in charge...you get the sense that it is going to be a long time before the master returns...

Another parable Jesus uses the imagery of planting a field... cultivating a field... which takes time... The Bible is consistent in its teaching that we are to live in the tension of the Day of the Lord is at hand...it could be any moment that Jesus returns...

Or it could be hundreds of years... no contradiction... just a tension on how we are to think about the return of Jesus Christ... time is just a concept... Years ago I would order something... a book or something through how?...mail order!... they would always tell you to “allow three to six weeks for shipping”...

When they started advertising five day shipping... we thought that was *very soon!*... Amazon came along you could get just about anything in three days... now often its one... that is very soon!... the last thing I ordered was supposed to get to me in one day it took four... I was upset!...that wasn't soon!...point is... soon is relative.

God's view of soon is a different view than our view of soon....there is no contradiction here in this passage about Jesus is coming soon... we are to live in the tension between soon ...any moment or He could tarry for hundreds...thousands of years...I think God is giving as many people as much time as He can to for them to repent.

When that time is fulfilled... He will indeed come soon!

[On the brink illustration...parallel]

Read verse 13

This is maybe the climax of the book...this is where we get a picture of the full identity of Jesus Christ... this is amazing...**hang in there with me...**

Go back to chapter 1:8...**I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the **Lord God**, who is and who was and who is to come, **the Almighty.****

Now go over a few verses to verse 17 chapter 1... This is Jesus speaking... **Do not fear... I am the first and the last**... skip forward to Revelation 21... God the Father says... verse 6. ...**I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end**...

Come back once more to our verse... Jesus combines all those Alphas and Omegas and says **I am the Alpha and the Omega THE FIRST AND THE LAST**, that's what He said in chapter 1:17 **the beginning and the end**. Which is what God said in 21:6... Jesus took hold of both statements... that described Himself AND the Father!

Jesus through the pen of John wants to make sure it is unmistakable to us that Jesus is God in every way... Jesus is the Old Testament God who came down and took on human flesh and died on a cross, rose on the third day.

John wants it to be so very clear who Jesus is... **And who Jesus says He is** Jesus is not an angel... He is not a prophet... He is the Alpha and Omega... the beginning and the end... the first and the last period!... Jesus is God in every way!

Now **we are not done with this**... Back in the Old Testament... Isaiah 44:6...

**“Thus says Yahweh, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts:
‘I am the first, and I am the last,
And there is no God besides Me.**

Jesus just said in Revelation 22:13... *“yep!...that’s Me!”*

If you are one of those who thinks Jesus never claimed to be God... or nowhere in the Bible does it say that Jesus is God... and you think He was just a special... good man... a good teacher... or even a prophet... you've got to do something with Revelation 22:13 and company.

We're not done with this yet... when you think about the words **“the first and the last”**... what do you think?... another way of saying **“the beginning from the end”**?... it's not... **the first and the last** is talking about chronology... the order of the way things happened... **but the beginning from the end** is not chronological order... it's talking about source...

So when Jesus says He's **the first and the last**... yes He's the first, before all else... when He says He's **the “beginning”** it is the idea that everything else follows out from Jesus... yes Jesus is chronologically the first... but He also is the beginning... **the actual source from which everything else flows....**

When He says He's the **beginning and the end**... the end is not referring to chronology... the end means *“the goal of something” ... the purpose of something*... what is the end of the church?... another way of saying what is the goal of the church?... What is the end of marriage is another way of asking what is the goal of marriage.... See it?

When Jesus says **I am the beginning and the end**... He is saying *I am the source from which everything comes and I am the goal in which everything is headed*... what is the end or purpose

of the church?... we look to the model of Jesus... what is the end of marriage?... we look to the model of Jesus... see it?

What is the end of man?... we look to the model of Jesus... what is the end of life?... we look to the model of Jesus... what is the end of all of history?... look to the model of Jesus Christ!...this is what this book of Revelation has been showing us. **JESUS IS THE SOURCE AND GOAL OF EVERYTHING!**

Read verses 14 & 15

Here's a reminder of the truth we've been seeing in these chapters... not everyone will be going to heaven... there is a theological school of thought called "Universalism" which says the work of Jesus on the cross paid the price of all the sin in the world past present and future so that everyone will be saved...there is no hell or eternal damnation... *When we ALL get to heaven.*

I'm sure you have friends, know people who are the furthest from being saved... Jesus Christ is an expression for when you hit your thumb with a hammer... who think when they die they will go to heaven.

I've done funerals for heathens who would have never been caught dead in a church, who lived wretched lives yet friends and family would say *at least he's in a better place*... If you remember the Columbine massacres that took place back in 1999...I read this week.

High school senior students Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold murdered 13 students and one teacher in a school shooting and attempted bombing at Columbine High School in Columbine, Colorado, United States. Twenty people were injured by the gunfire, and three others were injured while trying to escape. The attack ended when Harris and Klebold died by suicide.

Klebold wrote just before he did the shooting in his diary...*At least I know I'll go to a better place.*

These verses tell us *no, that's not the case... there is black and there is white... there are those who are in there are those who are out... there are those who have accepted Jesus Christ and are saved by His blood on the cross as full payment for sins... and those who have rejected Jesus Christ and will spend eternity in hell....*

There are those **who wash their robes**...are those cleansed by the blood of the Lamb... the **dogs and the sorcerers** are those who have not been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb... they remain in their filthy sinful state...

Read verse 16

Why would Jesus call Himself the **Bright morning star**?... He said He was **the Alpha and the Omega**... why doesn't He end with *I am the King of Kings* or something hugely magnificent?... well... this is hugely magnificent.

Bright morning star... what is it?...it is the star that appears when the night is the darkest... the star is very bright because there still is probably three to four hours left of night...but the morning star is a sign that the time of the night has come to an end...

That star is an assurance that even though things seem dark and seems as though it is night...it is an assurance and a promise that the night is over and the day is coming!... Isn't that amazing?...those words are the very last words that Jesus Describes Himself... **I am the bright morning star!**

Today... look around... the news... the night is winning right?... look around in your own lives... the struggles... the battles... the strife... darkness all around.... You're a Christian yet you're dealing with things you know are not from above...

You get discouraged... you start thinking this *life is hopeless... I want to give up...* it's not worth it... the battle is too bloody...What Jesus is telling us...there's an end to the night....He is telling you is *I'm the sign that all this darkness has been defeated... the nighttime WILL come to an end... even though it is a few hours away... light is going to come!...I am that light!*

In these last verses in Revelation....all attention is on Jesus Christ... not the streets of gold... the gates of pearl... the jasper...sapphire...onyx....topaz...it's all on Jesus.... The Holy Spirit and the church are witness to the message of Jesus:

Read verse 17

Who can come? **Anyone who wishes to come!** ...hear that!... some translations say **anyone who desires to come...** it's an open invitation!... He who hears can come to Jesus... You have to hear Him first... but when you do... COME!... are you hearing Jesus?...Did you hear the message in Revelation?

You won't come until you're thirsty... but when you get thirsty... come!....you got to hear and you got to be thirsty!.... COME! WHOEVER DESIRES CAN COME! And it is all free!... NO COST!

Who is excluded from heaven?... those who do not want the water that is offered to them freely!... those who are not thirsty... those who won't listen... those who do not desire the water of life... those who shun Jesus Christ.

"I don't get all this Christian theology and doctrine stuff"

It doesn't say *whoever understands all the Christian theology and doctrine stuff can come freely*...Whoever wishes!.... Whoever desires!

I have doubts in my spiritual life?... I don't live the way I should.

It doesn't say *only those without doubts and live the way they should come freely to the water of life without cost.*

I don't feel bad about my sins the way I should

It doesn't say only those who feel as bad about their sins the way they should come freely to the water of life without cost.

I don't think I'm worthy of living the Christian life

It certainly doesn't say only if you are worthy come to the water of life without cost.

IF YOU DESIRE JESUS CHRIST AND HIS SALVATION...COME!

If you don't desire it?...don't blame God!

A warning:

Read verse 18-19

I think this is specifically talking about the book of Revelation... but I think it is applicable for the entirety of Scripture.

Read verse 20

Maranatha!!! Our Lord Come!

Let's all read together the last verse:

THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS BE WITH ALL. AMEN