

# Lesson

# 16

# The Revelation of Jesus Christ

## Lesson 16 (22:1-21)

### 1. The River of Life (22:1-5).

- a. The angel continued showing John details about the New Jerusalem, including a pure river of water.
- b. This river was a river of life for the redeemed in heaven.
- c. The water flowing in the river was as clear as crystal.
- d. The water proceeded from the throne of God and the Lamb who sits at His right hand.
- e. The river flowed down the middle of the street, the only street mentioned, in New Jerusalem.
- f. On either side of the river and the street was the Tree of Life.
  - i. This tree was originally in the midst of the Garden of Eden.
  - ii. After the fall, God prevented Adam and Eve from eating from this tree while they were under the curse of their sins.
- g. This special tree bears twelve varieties of fruit, with each fruit yielding its ripe fruit in one of the twelve months of the year.
  - i. No two fruits would be ripe in the same month.
  - ii. Therefore, this tree yielded a different fruit every month.
  - iii. This description indicates that there is some seasonality in heaven and that the sun, moon, and stars likely continued to be used for times and seasons just as they had been created to do in the original creation (Gen. 1:14-19).
- h. The leaves of this Tree of Life were also used for the healing of the nations.
  - i. Perhaps this is a reference to the glorified bodies that have been granted to believing souls in heaven.
  - ii. Another alternative is that this is a reference to the end of all hostilities, resentment, and anger between all ethnic classifications in heaven.
  - iii. National distinctives and ethnic diversity will likely be present in heaven, but these blessings will be celebrated rather than a cause for division.
- i. There will be no more curse in the New Jerusalem (and in the rest of creation). This is a direct reversal of the corruption introduced by Adam's sin.
  - i. No more adversary crawling along on his belly.
  - ii. No more thorns and thistles.
  - iii. No more sorrow or pain.
  - iv. No more striving for power and position that are contrary to God's order.
  - v. No more sweat in working to produce food from a cursed ground.
  - vi. No more death or the threat of returning to dust.
- j. The throne of God and the Lamb will be in the heart of the city.
- k. The servants of God shall serve before God, the most benevolent King who rules over His subjects.
- l. Everyone in heaven will see God's face, unlike Moses, who could only look upon the back of God's incomparable glory (Ex. 33:18-23).

- m. The name of God (YHWH or another even more glorious name) will be inscribed on the foreheads of the saints in heaven (not written over the number of the beast).
- n. There will never be night in God's presence in Jerusalem.
  - i. Night and darkness are often symbolically used in reference to sin and the nefarious activity of evildoers.
  - ii. Night is not possible because God is light; He does not change (cease to manifest His glory).
  - iii. The Father and the Son provide all the light for the massive city.
- o. The Godhead will reign over this Eternal State forever and ever with absolute authority and power.
- p. However, they will delegate authority to those who have overcome and entered heaven by faith.

## **2. Decide before it's too late (22:6-11).**

- a. Again, John is instructed that the vision he has seen and the words he has heard are "faithful and true."
  - i. These events are absolutely certain to come to pass.
  - ii. Scoffers will certainly claim otherwise, but they are wrong (2 Pet. 3:3-13).
- b. All that John now understood by the holy prophets (Scripture) and by what the angels had shown him must occur when the church age closes (dispensation #5).
- c. "Shortly" implies the speed with which these events will unfold once Daniel's Seventieth Week commences.
- d. Jesus declares, "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."
  - i. Again, the suddenness of the events will be shocking to all those who dwell on the earth.
  - ii. Those who trust in God should not rely on a false sense of security in the current circumstances, but rather always be ready and waiting for the blessed hope of Christ's return.
  - iii. Therefore, believers will receive the blessings of God when they trust in the prophecy revealed in this book (Revelation).
  - iv. No one can justifiably claim the excuse of "I didn't know," or "I wasn't ready."
  - v. John was given this Revelation to ensure all the faithful in Christ will be overcomers and will be like the faithful virgins in Jesus' parable (Matt. 25:1-13).
- e. For the second time, John makes an enormous error by falling down to worship the angelic messenger in his emotional exuberance of receiving this powerful vision.
  - i. As with the first time John did this (19:10), the angel immediately refused John's worship and sternly rebuked him.
  - ii. While angels are categorically different than humans, both are created beings who are called to serve and worship only God.
  - iii. While this was a serious transgression and could open the door to worshipping the fallen angel who intensely craves man's worship, Satan, John's transgression was not unforgivable by God.

- iv. However, John's failure here should serve as a strong warning to all mankind to be careful of who or what they worship. God will not share His glory or the worship that is due only to Him with another (Isa. 42:8).
- f. After this, the angel instructed John not to seal up the prophecy of this book.
  - i. The time was at hand for these things to come to pass (next event on God's prophetic calendar).
  - ii. People everywhere must understand what will happen in the final days of the former heavens and the former earth.
  - iii. Those who fail to read and understand the words of this prophecy (call to faith) will be unable to escape their fallen conditions:
    - 1. Those who are unjust before the judgment will remain unjustified after the judgment.
    - 2. Those who are filthy (immersed in sin) before the judgment will still be in sin after the judgment.
  - iv. Fortunately, those who have been declared righteous by faith before the judgment will forever remain in the righteousness of Christ after the judgment.
  - v. Likewise, those whom God has declared to be holy by faith will be transformed into perfect holiness in the Eternal State.

### **3. Jesus declares truth to the churches/believers (22:12-17).**

- a. Jesus restates what the angel already told John, "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work (deeds)."
  - i. Those with faith will be rewarded with eternal life.
  - ii. Those who reject faith will stand before Christ as judge at the Great White Throne.
- b. Jesus further declares, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." This serves as a bookend to the first chapter of Revelation. Every detail in between is "faithful and true" and must be believed by God's people.
- c. Those who do the commandments of God (Matt. 22:37-39; John 13:34-35) will be granted the right to eat from the Tree of Life and to enter through the gates of New Jerusalem freely.
- d. Jesus declares that those who do not come to Him by faith will remain outside of God's presence forever, and referred to as:
  - i. Dogs
  - ii. Sorcerers
  - iii. Sexually immoral
  - iv. Murders
  - v. Idolaters
  - vi. Those who love to speak and accept lies against God.
- e. The whole message of Revelation was sent to John by Jesus, but through an angel. Here, Jesus removes any doubt as to the authenticity and reliability of this prophecy.
- f. Jesus says, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."
- g. Evangelistic call to every human soul continues till the very end.
- h. However, there will be a time when it is too late to receive eternal life. Therefore:
  - i. The Holy Spirit calls unbelievers to come to Christ.

- ii. The bride (the faithful church) calls unbelievers to come to Christ.
- iii. Every believer has been appointed to call unbelievers to come to Christ.
- iv. Everyone who thirsts for righteousness and for eternal life will hear and come to Jesus by faith.
- v. Anyone (all people, for all time) who desires to be purified and refreshed by the water of life must come to Jesus before it is too late.

**4. John closes the final prophecy of Scripture (22:18-21).**

- a. John strongly warns those who will pick up this book after he has written it down:
  - i. If anyone adds to what was revealed to him, the one who does so will be subject to all the plagues (seals, trumpets, bowls) and suffer as an unbeliever would.
  - ii. Those who remove or deny the words written in the book will have their name removed (blotted out) of the Book of Life and be ineligible for the blessings promised in the book.
- b. While it has already been said, John closes by quoting Jesus again, "Surely I am coming quickly."
- c. John fully agrees with Jesus' declared truth, and he invites Him to come soon!
- d. To the churches and all believers, John offers his benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."