

The Presentation of God's Eternal State

Revelation 22:1-21

Pastor Michael Lynn / West Hampden Baptist Church

August 25, 2024 a.m.

Introduction: H. Morris writes: "In this final chapter of the Holy Scriptures, John continues with his description of the holy city & then, as it were, ushers us on into the eternal ages to come. When he close with a last postscript of invitation, warning, & prayer, the book of God is complete. This climactic revelation with terminate God's written Word to man. All we need to know will have been revealed & recorded, & now we must simply await the fulfilment....The omniscient, omnipotent God has a great & holy, eternal, & unchangeable purpose for His creation, established in His heart before the world began, The temporary intrusion of sin & death can never thwart or deter that purpose. Finally, in the counsels of God, the time has come to renew & fulfill that purpose. The great curse has been removed from the creation, & the kingdom of God has come."

Note with me here in this chapter John's view of paradise, from the inside. We see in this chapter paradise described (:1-5), prophecy detailed (:6-17), & a promise delivered (:18-21). Look with me first at John's description of the river of life, the tree of life, the throne of God, the people of God, & the light of God.

I. Paradise described (22:1-5)

A. The **river of life** (:1)

1. Its substance:
 - a. Foreshadowed?
 - b. Fulfilled (cf. Psalm 46:4).
 - c. For now - this river corresponds to our present experience of the Holy Spirit & eternal life.
2. Its source:
 - a. From the throne of God & the Lamb (Christ still on the throne after the Millennium).
 - b. From the creative power of God (continually creating the waters)
 - c. "As water flowed from the side of the Lamb on the cross (Jn. 19:34), so a pure river of water of life will flow from the Lamb on the throne, & all may drink freely of the water of life forever (22:17)" (H. Morris).

B. The **tree of life** (:2)

1. Its identity:
 - a. Location: Spans the river of life? (or are there "trees" of life, growing prolifically??)
 - b. Identification: Same as the tree of life in Gen. 2:9 & 3:22? (cf. Rev. 2:7) - now for all!
 - c. Application: Note the "tree of life" elsewhere in Scripture > Pro. 3:18, 11:30, 13:12, 15:4.
2. Its fertility:
 - a. It bears 12 different kinds of fruit (one for each month?)
 - b. It bears fruit every month (year round, always producing)
 - c. It bears leaves that are health-giving ("*healing*" - "*therupian*" - our "therapeutic")

C. The **throne of God** (:3a)

1. The absence of the curse.
2. The presence of the throne.

D. The **people of God** (:3b-4, 5b)

1. Serving saints (:3b) > "*His servants shall serve Him*"
2. Communing sons (:4)
 - a. Fellowship with God > "*They shall see His face.*"
 - b. Ownership by God > "*His name shall be in their foreheads.*"

3. Reigning subjects (:5b) > *"they shall reign for ever & ever."*

E. The **light of God** (:5a)

1. The elimination of the darkness.
2. The illumination of the saints.

Note > Verses 6-22 of Revelation 22 are often referred to as the "epilogue" of this Book. Webster defines "epilogue" as: (1) a closing section added to a novel or play, providing further comment, interpretation, or information; (2) a short speech or poem spoken to the audience by one of the actors at the end of a play. In John's day, a classical Greek drama ended with the leading characters addressing the audience with parting comments. They usually consisted of a synopsis of the plot of the story as well as some hint as to the future of the characters. John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, uses an adaptation of the "epilogue" to conclude this drama of human history (with the unveiling of eternity to follow). The "leading" characters of this drama each now give parting words. First is the supporting angelic character, the angel of the Lord. Second is the central divine character, the Lord Jesus Christ. And then there is the sharing (or writing) human character, the apostle John. Note with me, with the help of readers, the inter-play of these characters in John's epilogue to the Book of Revelation (22:6-11).

Consider with me now part of the prophecy detailed (:6-18) which follows paradise described (:1-5). We find here 4 things: the authenticity of God's revelation, the imminency of Christ's return, the validity of John's rebuke, & the reality of Christ's response.

II. **Prophecy detailed** (:6-17)

A. The authenticity of God's revelation (:6, 10-11)

1. The inspiration of the Scriptures (:6)
 - a. The trustworthiness of the Bible > it is inspired.
 - b. The faithfulness of the Bible > it is infallible (It is *"faithful"* - cf. Rev. 19:11).
Emphasis upon the preservation of Scripture (& all prophecy is sure to be fulfilled)
 - c. The truthfulness of the Bible > it is inerrant (It is *"true"* - cf. Rev. 19:11).
Emphasis upon the perfection of Scripture (its purpose > Ps. 19:7, salvation; I Pet. 1:23-25, security; Psalm 119:11, sanctification)
2. The instruction of the Scriptures (:6b, 10-11)
 - a. Truth revealed (:6b) > the Author; the angel, & the assignment.
 - b. Truth relayed (:10).
 - c. Truth responded (to) (:11)

B. The imminency of Christ's return (:7 & :10)

1. The promise of His return (:7a, *"I come quickly"* & :10b, *"For the time is at hand."*)
2. The preparation for His return (:7b & :10a)
 - a. Obey the *"sayings of the prophecy of this book"* (:7b.)
 - b. Relay the *"sayings of the prophecy of this book"* (:10a)

[[Note the emphasis of Christ's return in verse 12 >

I. The return of Christ > *"I come quickly"*

- A. The promise of His return - He comes surely.
- B. The preparation for His return - He comes suddenly (unexpectedly).

II. The reward of Christ > *"My reward is with Me"*

- A. The rewarding with crowns (the rewarding of faithful service)
 1. The crown of incorruption - the servant's crown > I Corinthians 9:25.
 2. The crown of rejoicing - the soul-winner's crown > I Thessalonians 2:19.
 3. The crown of life - the sufferer's crown > James 1:12.
 4. The crown of righteousness - the separatist's crown > II Timothy 4:8.
 5. The crown of glory - the shepherd's crown > I Peter 5:4.

B. The rendering of crowns (the recognizing of our faithful Savior)

Our crowns will be cast at the Savior's feet > Revelation 4:10-11

1. He enables us to be faithful > I Thessalonians 5:24

2. He empowers us to be useful > Philippians 2:13

Will there be the loss of award to cast at the Savior's feet?

Will there be the look of anguish upon the Savior's face?

III. The requirement of Christ > *"to give every man according as his work shall be"*

A. Our availability to God

1. Availability indicated > I Corinthians 4:2.

2. Availability illustrated > Isaiah 6:8.

3. Availability invited > Romans 12:1-2.

B. Our accountability before God - see Romans 14:10-12

1. Not an interrogation for our sins.

2. But an inspection of our service (works).

3. Yields an invocation from the Savior.]]

C. The validity of John's rebuke (:8-9)

1. John's natural reaction (:8) > he is overwhelmed.

2. John's needed reprimand (:9) > he is ordered

a. The angel's admission - the servant of God (cf. 19:10)

(1) *"Thy fellowservant"* - *"sundoulos"* - "fellow-slave"

(2) *"Of thy brethren the prophets"* - prophets foretell (predict) & forth-tell (proclaim)
cf. I Cor. 14:3) - "fellow-speaker"

(3) *"Of them which keep the sayings of this book"* - note the obedience of the angels,
Psalm 103:20 - "fellow-subject"

b. The angel's admonition - the worship of God

(1) *"Worship God"* - "...in all acts of worship, worship God only" (Walvoord).

(2) John 4:24, *"God is a Spirit: & they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit & in truth."*

(3) "True worship is simply honoring & submitting to the revealed will & purposes of God" (H. Morris).

D. The reality of Christ's response (:13-17)

1. The identification of Christ (:13 & :16)

a. His Deity (:13 & :16b)

(1) He is the *"Alpha & Omega"* (used also in 1:8, 11; 21:6); *"The first & the last."*

(2) He is the *"root of David"* (:16) & cf. 5:5

(3) He is the *"bright & morning star"*

b. His humanity (:16)

(1) *"I Jesus"* - His earthly name, given at His birth - Matthew 1:21 & :25

(2) *"The offspring of David"* - David's descendant - cf. II Timothy 2:8 & Romans 1:3

c. His Sovereignty (:16) > The sending of His angel - cf. Rev. 1:1 & 22:6.

Note - *"In the churches"* - first mention since chapter 3 (Church not in the tribulation).

2. The invocation by Christ (:14)

a. The portrayal of believers: Their blessing - 7th & final "blessing"

"Right to the tree of life" > eternal satisfaction (see 22:1) &

b. *"Enter in through the gates into the city"* > eternal security

Summary: John 10:9 > salvation, security, satisfaction - "The right to the tree of life & the right to enter through the gates of the city are one & the same as the right to eternal salvation" (Wal.).

3. The isolation from Christ (:15)

a. The characterization of those *"without."*

- b. The condemnation of those *"without"*
 - (1) The reason for their exclusion: names were not written in the Lamb's Book of Life.
 - (2) The result of their exclusion: They are *"without"* - outside the city, outside heaven, inside an eternal hell. Revelation 20:15, *"...was cast into the lake of fire."*
- 4. The invitation to Christ (:17)
 - a. Asking Christ to come to this world??
 - (1) The response to Christ's words (:12-16), an invitation cried out for all to hear, for Christ to return (cf. 22:7, 12, & 20)
 - (2) The only recorded prayer of the Holy Spirit? - cf. Romans 8:26 with 8:23.
Summary: It is best to see this as occurring for sure in 22:20, *"Even so, come Lord Jesus."*
 - b. Asking this world to come to Christ!!
 - (1) The invitation extended:
 - (2) The invitation experienced: *"whosoever will"* & *"him that is athirst."*

Noe > The invitation of verse 17 has continued to be offered for the past two thousand years. The song writer says, "Though millions have come, there is still room for one, Yes, there's room at the cross for you." Christ has given us His identification - describing His deity, His sovereignty, & His humanity. Henry Morris writes, "It is foundational to know Him as Maker (Creator); it is salvational to know Him as Redeemer, Friend, & Lord; it is motivational to know Him as coming King!" In what ways do you know Him? Are you convinced that He is your Creator (see John 1:1-3)? Are you convicted that He is not yet your Redeemer (see John 3:3 & 5)? If you are saved, are you challenged because you know He is coming again (see Rev. 22:12)?

We come now to the closing verses of this Book of Revelation. As John concludes his epilogue to the Book, there is an emphasis upon the testimony of Christ concerning His prophecy & His promise. We read one more time of the revelation of Christ (His blessed Book) & of the return of Christ (our blessed hope). Previously in this epilogue (:6-21) we noted how the chapter could be outlined according to the 3 promises of Christ, *"I come quickly."* In verses 6-11 there is the authenticity of God's revelation, the imminency of Christ's return, & the validity of John's rebuke. In verse 12 we considered Christ's return, Christ's reward, & Christ's requirement. In verses 13-17, we saw the identification of Christ, the invocation by Christ, the isolation from Christ, & the invitation to Christ. As we finish the epilogue this morning, note with me here the proclamation concerning Christ's words (:18-19), the promise of Christ's return (:20a), the prayer for Christ's return (:20b), & the pronouncement of Christ's grace (:21).

III. A **promise** delivered (:18-21)

- A. The **proclamation** concerning Christ's words (:18-19)
 - 1. Previous O.T. warnings:
 - a. Deuteronomy 4:21, *"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you."*
 - b. Deuteronomy 12:32, *What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."*
 - c. Proverbs 30:5-6, *"Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, & thou be found a liar."*
[Ryrie says, "Supplementing God's Word with man's speculations is foolish business."]
 - 2. Particular N.T. warnings:
 - a. Adding to God's Word "invites" the reception of this Book's plagues
Summary: "...there is surely a most grave punishment specified here by the Lord for anyone who would add anything to the final & complete written Word of God as consummated here in the wonderful Book of Revelation, the final inspired record of the great future events that

will transpire when the Lord returns. In view of the latter-day proliferation of all kinds of cults & winds of doctrine which are now sweeping the world, most of them based on some great charismatic personage & his claims to divine illumination & authority, the warning is more needed today than ever before" (H. Morris).

- b. Taking from ("cutting off") God's Word "invokes" the removal from this Book's promises [Does this suggest the possibility of losing one's salvation? "No one can dare add to the Word of God except in blatant unbelief & denial that the Word is indeed God's own message to man... the point of these 2 verses is that a child of God who reveres Him will recognize at once that this is the Word of God... This passage assumes that a child of God will not tamper with these scriptures. It is the contrast of unbelief with faith, the blinded, fallen intellect of man in contrast to the enlightened Spirit-taught believer" (Walvoord).

3. Partakers of God's wrath:

- a. The cults which add to God's Word (Koran, etc.)
- b. The liberals which take from God's Word (illustrate: "Jesus Seminar")

B. The promise of Christ's return (:20a)

1. Surely He comes:

- a. The certainty of His return > cf. 2:5, 16; 3:11; 22:7, 12)
- b. The expectancy for His return > cf. Acts 1:10-11; I Thessalonians 4:16-17, Titus 2:13

2. Suddenly He comes ("*quickly*"):

- a. The word choice > "*quickly*" - The noun form of the word used in vs. 6, "*shortly be done*" & the adverb form of the same root word, "when the action comes, it will be sudden."
- b. The warned challenge > His coming is imminent .

C The prayer for Christ's return (:20b)

1. The affirmation by John > "*Amen.*"

- a. His "*amen*" - a Hebrew particle meaning "confirming, so be it," translated often by "verily."
- b. His acknowledgment - Christ's return is certain.

2. The anticipation of John > "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*"

- a. John's prayer in response to Christ's promise - "What comes from heaven in a promise should be sent back to heaven in a prayer, '*come, Lord Jesus,*' put an end to this state of sin, sorrow, & temptation; gather thy people out of this present evil world, & take them up to heaven, that state of perfect purity, peace, & joy, & so finish thy great design, & fulfill all that word in which thou has cause thy people to hope" (M. Henry).
- b. Our prayer in response to Christ's promise?? - "The final prayer of the Bible, beseeching the Lord to come quickly as He had promised, was John's prayer, but it has also been echoed on the lips of countless Christians through the centuries ever since... & believers will continue to utter this prayer until the very moment He returns" (H. Morris).

D. The pronouncement of Christ's grace (:21)

1. The definition of grace:

- a. Described in words > "unmerited favor" - "God's Riches At Christ's Expense" - "Grace is what God may be free to do, & indeed what He does, accordingly, for the lost after Christ has died on behalf of them" (Chafer). - Compare & contrast "grace" with "mercy."
- b. Demonstrated in Person > II Corinthians 8:9, "*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.*"

2. The distribution of grace:

- a. John "wishes" it upon his readers (his prayer for his friends)
- b. John "wants" it upon all believers ("all the saints") - "The Christian life begins by grace, is sustained by grace, & thus should always manifest grace" (H. Morris).

Conclusion: John's closing benediction is a fitting conclusion to this Book of Revelation. His address is to the "saints," believers. Erdman says, "All who believe in Christ & serve & love Him are 'saints.' They are 'holy,' because purchased by His precious blood & separated unto His service & 'joint-heirs' of His eternal glory. All can depend upon Him for 'grace' in every hour of need." To which Walvoord would add, "This final book of the Scriptures which began with the revelation of Jesus Christ ends with a prayer that His grace might be with those who have witnessed the scene through John's pen. Probably no book in the Bible presents in more stark contrast the grace of God as seen in the lives & destination of the saints as compared to the righteous judgment of God on the wicked. In no other book are the issues made more specific. The Book of Revelation is the presentation in the Word of God of what the saints will witness & experience in the glorious consummation of the ages. With John we can pray, '*Even so, come, Lord Jesus*'." Is that your prayer here this morning? Do you really believe that Christ could return at any time? Are you ready if the Lord should come today? It has been said that the second coming of Christ is one of the prominent themes of the N.T., being referenced in one out of every 25 verses. Seiss records, "...there is no greater or gladder promise in all the Book of God, than this last word of Jesus to His people, '*Yea, I come quickly*'." Do you answer this promise with John's prayer, "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus*"?

How about you this morning? Is this "*blessed hope*" yours? Are you prepared to meet Him? If not, why not make preparation for His coming today!