

Coming Quickly

Revelation 22

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The River of Life – Revelation 22:1-5

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴ They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. ⁵ There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

v1 – Who showed the Apostle John the river of life?

One of the seven angels who had one of the bowels of the final pouring out of God's wrath on the earth, see Revelation 21:9.

What is this pure river of the water of life?

It is a symbol of the cleansing, refreshing ministry of the Holy Spirit...

John 7:37-39 – If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

v2 – What grew by the river of the Holy Spirit?

The tree of life, first introduced in the Garden of Eden:

Genesis 2:9 – out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

How will the tree of life benefit us?

We will benefit from its fruit & the leaves will heal the nations... not sure what that means but suffice it to say there will not be any racism in heaven.

What else can we learn about the Eternal State given the detail that the tree of life will yield a different fruit each month?

We will measure time. Our new physical domain will still have the 4th dimension, time. Our eternal existence will not be outside the confines of time, it'll be closer to what we know in the here & now than we realize.

v3 – What will there not be in the New Jerusalem?

No more curse... painful existence, thorns & thistles

Whose throne will be in the New Jerusalem?

God the Father and God the Son

Who are the servants who will serve the Lord?

Us, the church...

Revelation 5:9-10 – with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God

V4 – What does it mean that we shall see the face of God?

We will have a depth of relationship with Him that is not possible in our mortal bodies...

1 Cor 13:12 – For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

Will we know everything there is to know in eternity?

We will know a lot more about God but only He is omniscient. We will continue to learn throughout eternity:

Ephesians 2:4-7 – God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love... made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Whose name will we have on our foreheads?

The name of the Lord. It will be clear to all that we are His.

v5 – Why will there not be any light?

It doesn't say there will not be any light, but light will not be needed... The Lord will illuminate everything for us and everything will reflect His glory.

What does it mean we will reign forever and ever?

- God's plan has always been for His children to work with Him in managing His creation.
- We will be ruling over animals, plants, and creatures we have not yet seen
- We will be making things that bless others and glorify God

What will it be like to rule with Jesus forever?

The better stewards we are of God's blessings in this world, the greater capacity we'll have to participate in what God is doing in the next world.

Luke 19:17 – 'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'

...and God is in the creation business!

Isaiah 9:7 – Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.

What will our daily lives be like in heaven?

We will have a pattern of work and rest as God demonstrated in the original creation.

Genesis 2:2 – By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work.

Indeed, work was God's plan from the beginning...

Genesis 2:15 – The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

...and God works!

John 5:17 – Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

Our work will be significantly more rewarding because there will be no curse.

- Work will be an outlet for our creativity and we will enjoy the full fruits of our labor. (Isaiah 65:21)

The Time Is Near – Revelation 22:6-11

⁶ Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. ⁷ "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." ⁸ Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." ¹⁰ And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. ¹¹ He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."

v6 – How do we know the words of the angel speaking to John was faithful and true?

- It was the Lord God who sent the angel... the one who revealed Himself through the prophets who were authenticated by fulfilled prophecy.
- This shows the importance of prophecy... how do we know that Scripture is really from God?
Isaiah 46:9-10 – Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure'

What does it mean that these things revealed *must* shortly take place?

They will certainly happen. And from the context of eternity, they will happen soon.

Why, if the Revelation will happen soon has it been so long since Jesus has walked the earth?

Because, from our mortal experience, God's eternal perspective is difficult for us to understand...

2 Peter 3:8 – do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

v7 – Who is coming quickly?

Jesus has to be speaking here. His coming is what the Book of Revelation is all about. And He is reinforcing what the angel told John.

How may we be blessed?

By keeping the words of the prophecy of the book of Revelation.

What does it mean to keep *the words of the prophecy of this book*?

To study them, remember them, teach them and look forward to their fulfillment. Because their fulfillment means the beginning of our spending eternity with Him. And this will be the greatest blessing of all.

If this is such a blessing, why does the church avoid Revelation like the plague?

- Because we are in the Age of Scoffers (2 Peter 3:4); the Laodicean phase of the church where the church is populated with a lot of carnal Christians who are compromising with the world.
- Satan hates Revelation because it reveals his fate and he does not want Christians living with an expectation of the soon return for Jesus... hence date setters, sensationalists and profiteers have given prophecy a bad reputation.

v8-9 – Does anyone else have a sense of *déjà vu* in John falling down to worship an angel in heaven?

The very same thing happened in Revelation 19:10 after the angel revealed to John about the fall of Babylon and the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Why do you think John repeated his *faux pas*?

The visions he was receiving and sights of what was going on in heaven were so fantastic, he just wanted to worship God. And since the angel was with him as God's representative he got caught up in the moment and worshiped whatever moved.

How is it that the angels of God are fellow Servants?

As we are called to do the will of God, so are the angels.

How is it that the angels are of John's brethren the prophets?

They too speak forth God's Word.

How is it that the angels are of those who keep the words of this book?

They believe, study, teach, and look forward to the fulfillment of the revelation as well.

Why might angels look forward to the resolution of all things?

The angels are part of creation and thus have been impacted by the consequences of mankind's sin...

Romans 8:19-22 – ¹⁹ *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.* ²⁰ *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;* ²¹ *because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* ²² *For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.*

It is not clear how mankind's sin has impacted the angels other than there being spiritual warfare in which they have been forced to engage.

- So the Eternal State will bring peace to the angels as well.

v10 – What would it mean to seal the words of the prophecy of the book of Revelation?

Close it up, not read or study it, or share it with others... exactly what the church is doing with Revelation today.

Why was John told not to seal the Revelation?

for the time is at hand – The return of Christ is coming soon. Thus, people need to be warned about the coming of God's wrath. And they can benefit from the blessings that come from knowing Jesus as their Savior and Lord at the resolution of all things.

v11 – What is the point of this verse?

This mortal life is important... it is a test. Those who are unjust and filthy at the resolution of all things will remain so for eternity. Likewise, those who are righteous and holy because of their relationship with Jesus Christ at the resolution of all things will remain so forever. It really is all about Who you know.

Jesus Testifies to the Churches – Revelation 22:12-17

¹² *“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.* ¹³ *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”* ¹⁴ *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.* ¹⁵ *But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices*

a lie. ¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” ¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

v12 – What does it mean Jesus is coming quickly?

He is coming soon and His coming will be very fast when it occurs. For the church, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Corinthians 15:51-52); for unbelievers, like a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:2).

Daniel 9:26 – *The end of it shall be with a flood*

How is it that Jesus will reward everyone when He returns?

- For those who know Him as Savior and Lord, we will receive crowns recognizing our works along with the promise of assignments with authority in acting for God during the Millennial Kingdom and the Eternal State.
- For those who rejected God’s plan of salvation, they will receive the consequences of being separated from the Creator. Their works will fall short of the glory of God.

v13 – How did Jesus describe Himself?

He is the Eternal One... He was before the beginning of all things and will exist beyond the resolution of all things.

v14 – How are those who obey God blessed?

- They may have access to the tree of life... thus live forever.
- They may enter the New Jerusalem... where we will find the abode of God.

v15 – What will we find outside the New Jerusalem?

dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie – sinners, those who rejected the salvation of God

How is that possible? I thought all Christ-rejecters would be confined to the lake of fire... does that mean they can get out to be on the New earth?

No, there is no escape from the lake of fire... At the Great White Throne judgment, “*there was found no place for them*” (Rev 20:11), only the lake of fire.

- So, this comment might just be rhetorical emphasizing the special privilege of having access to the New Jerusalem (Christian Privilege).
- Or, there could be some future creative work of God necessitating the promise of an eternal sanctuary for glorified humanity.

Speculation: We know God is Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Scripture also reveals that there was an Age of Angels involving a different earth that preceded the Age of Mankind. Might there be a future use for the earth for some future Age in a new creation of God? God, the Son was our Creator & Savior, was the Father or Holy Spirit the Creator & Savior of the angels? Does the third person of the Trinity get to be Creator & Savior for a new creation? We don’t want to miss out on the answers to these questions.

v16 – Why did Jesus have an angel reveal the future to John?

So that we in the churches may know what is to come

Amos 3:7 – Surely the Lord God does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

Why does God want us to know what is to come?

It blesses us. Knowing that this fallen world will pass away to a new one where everyone will know the Lord is a blessing...

Habakkuk – For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea.

How does Jesus describe Himself here?

Root and the Offspring of David – He came as a descendant of King David as prophesied to be our Savior. *the Bright and Morning Star* – He is the personification of the promise of a blessed New Day

v17 – What is the desire of the Spirit and the church?

For Jesus Christ to come... return to earth as the conquering hero that He is.

What should those who hear about the Revelation of Christ say?

They too should say, come, desiring the return of Christ to the earth. If you’re not looking forward to the return of Christ, you need to wonder if you are really a follower of Jesus.

Who are those who thirst?

Those who long for more than they find in this mortal life.

What should those who thirst for more than this mortal life do?

Come to Jesus to drink from the water of life...

John 7:37-39 – On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.” ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his

heart will flow rivers of living water.”³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

How do we drink from the water of life?

Be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit listening to and obeying what He reveals to our human spirits.

How do we recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit? How do we distinguish what He is saying to us from our own brilliant thoughts?

Knowing God’s Word... the Spirit is not going to contradict Himself.

A Warning – Revelation 22:18-19

¹⁸*For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

What is the warning here?

Don’t add to or take away from the book of Revelation. This principle applies to all of God’s Word.

How to people add to or take away from what is written the book of Revelation?

They take away from it by ignoring it; by being a “pan-millennialist” (it will all pan out in the end) They add to it by spiritualizing it... saying it means something other than what is says.

What does it mean to suffer the plagues described in the book of Revelation?

That people would suffer the same fate of unbelievers.

Why would God take away a person’s part in the Book of Life?

Those who neglect or twist what is revealed in the book of Revelation are in danger of spending eternity in the Lake of Fire.

What are the implications here for Christians who neglect the Bible prophecy of the Revelation?

Those professing Christians who don’t look forward to the return of Christ enough to study Revelation taking it for what it says really need to evaluate if they are a true follower of Christ...

Matthew 7:21-23 – ²¹“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he

who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²²Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Bible doctrine matters... Jesus’ warning in Revelation makes a case for having a correct understanding of eschatology as an essential for salvation.

- eschatology is a part of theology concerned with the final events of history, or the ultimate destiny of humanity

I Am Coming Quickly – Revelation 22:20-21

²⁰*He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*

²¹*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

Why did Jesus emphasize that He is coming quickly?

It is important to live ready for His return... getting done today what He is calling us to do.

This implies imminency of His return for the church... it reinforces the pre-tribulation rapture expectation.

What should our attitude be about His return?

We should look forward to it and pray for Jesus to return.... Maranatha, come Lord Jesus!

What would you say to the Christian who isn’t excited about the return of Christ because he didn’t want his daughters to miss out on the joys of marriage and motherhood?

They will not miss out on anything this world has to offer that will not be eclipsed by the joys of being with Jesus in eternity.

What were John’s last words of encouragement to us?

That we should all experience the grace of God; the abundant life that only comes from trusting in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross as full payment for our sins. And Amen – that we as he does agree with God.