Revelation 22

Paradise Restored:
Behold, I Am Coming Quickly

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The Bible ends where it began — a garden, a river, the tree of life — but better: no curse, and God's face seen. Jesus is coming quickly. Until then the invitation stands open: whoever is thirsty, come.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

00 The Text

REVELATION 22 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning
★ Violet Promise / blessing
◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And he shewed me a pure river of ★ water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of ▲ the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there ★ the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and 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 Green his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall ★ see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be ◷ no night there; and they need no candle , neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign ◷ for ever and ever.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are ▲ faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 Behold, ◷ I come quickly: ⇄ blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: Green worship God.

10 And he saith unto me, Green Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for ◷ the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is ⚠ filthy, let him be ⚠ filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And, behold, ◷ I come quickly; and ★ my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am ▲ Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 ⇄ Blessed are they that Green do his commandments, that they may have right to ★ the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For ⚠ without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am ▲ the root and the offspring of David, and ▲ the bright and morning star.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, ⇄ Come. And let him that heareth say, ⇄ Come. And let him that is athirst ⇄ come. And whosoever will, let him take the ★ water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall ⚠ add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall ⚠ take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely ◷ I come quickly. Amen. Even so, ⇄ come, Lord Jesus.

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

Marked in the text

- **v1** ★ water of life *(every occurrence)*
- **v1** ▲ the throne of God and of the Lamb *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ★ the tree of life *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ★ healing of the nations
- **v3** ★ no more curse
- **v3** ▮▮ his servants shall serve him
- **v4** ★ see his face
- **v5** ◷ no night there
- **v5** ◷ for ever and ever
- **v6** ▲ faithful and true
- **v7** ◷ I come quickly *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** ⇄ blessed *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** ▮▮ worship God
- **v10** ▮▮ Seal not
- **v10** ◷ the time is at hand
- **v11** ⚠ filthy *(every occurrence)*
- **v12** ★ my reward is with me
- **v13** ▲ Alpha and Omega
- **v14** ▮▮ do his commandments
- **v15** ⚠ without are dogs
- **v16** ▲ the root and the offspring of David
- **v16** ▲ the bright and morning star
- **v17** ⇄ Come *(every occurrence)*
- **v18** ⚠ add unto
- **v19** ⚠ take away
- **v21** ★ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Two manuscript differences: in v14 the KJV says "do his commandments" where the NASB95 says "wash their robes," and in v19 the KJV says "book of life" where the NASB95 says "tree of life."

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 22:3–4 (KJV)

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 And they shall ★ see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Setting

The angel who showed John the city (21:9) keeps showing him: "Then he showed me a river of the water of life" (v1). Then the vision ends, and the last voice of the Bible is Jesus speaking directly to the churches (vv6–21).

Structure

- vv1–5 — **Paradise restored:** "a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (v1). On either side "the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (v2). "There will no longer be any curse" (v3). "His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads" (vv3–4). "There will no longer be any night … because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever" (v5).
- vv6–11 — **the words are true; keep them:** "These words are faithful and true" (v6). "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book" (v7). John falls at the angel's feet a second time and is told again, "Do not do that … worship God" (vv8–9). "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near" (v10). Let each one continue on the path he has chosen (v11).
- vv12–16 — **Jesus speaks:** "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (v12). "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (v13). "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city" (v14). Outside are the dogs, sorcerers, immoral, murderers, idolaters, "and everyone who loves and practices lying" (v15). "I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star" (v16).
- vv17–21 — **the last invitation, the last warning, the last word:** "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' … let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost" (v17). Anyone who adds to the words of this book, God will add the plagues to him; anyone who takes away, God will take away his part from the tree of life and the holy city (vv18–19). "Yes, I am coming quickly." "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (v20). "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen" (v21).

Repeated words

coming quickly (vv7, 12, 20); blessed (vv7, 14); the words of the prophecy of this book (vv7, 10, 18; compare vv9, 19); come (v17 three times, v20); the tree of life (vv2, 14, 19); throne of God and of the Lamb (vv1, 3); water of life (vv1, 17); worship God (v9); testify (vv16, 18, 20).

Contrasts

the tree of life guarded by a sword in Eden (Gen 3:24) ⟷ open, with the right to eat (vv2, 14). The curse begins (Gen 3:17) ⟷ "no longer be any curse" (v3). Adam hides from God's face (Gen 3:8) ⟷ "they will see His face" (v4). Those who wash their robes go in (v14) ⟷ those who love lying stay outside (v15). Adding to the book ⟷ taking away from it (vv18–19). The Old Testament ends with "a curse" (Mal 4:6) ⟷ the New ends with "grace" (v21).

Chapter theme (my words)

The Bible ends where it began — a garden, a river, the tree of life — but better: no curse, and God's face seen. Jesus is coming quickly. Until then the invitation stands open: whoever is thirsty, come.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 22:12–13 (KJV)

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. 13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Genesis 2 meets Revelation 22

Guzik calls it Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained. The river that watered Eden (Gen 2:10) flows again — a "better river" than even Ezekiel's (Ezek 47:1–12; Zech 14:8; Ps 46:4). The tree of life, barred after the fall so that man would not eat and live forever in his sin (Gen 3:22–24), stands open on both banks. What Adam lost, the Last Adam restores, and more.

"The healing of the nations" (v2)

Does heaven have sickness? Guzik: the word is *therapeia*, which can mean service or care, so "health-giving" fits — the leaves sustain life rather than cure disease. Twelve kinds of fruit, every month: endless, abundant provision.

No curse, His face, His name (vv3–5)

The curse of Genesis 3:16–19 — pain, thorns, sweat, dust — is gone. Guzik notes that Isaiah 65:20 shows death still possible in the millennium; here it is finished. Moses was told, "no man can see Me and live" (Exod 33:20). Now "they will see His face" — the promise of the pure in heart (Matt 5:8; 1 John 3:2). His name on their foreheads marks ownership and likeness, the opposite of the beast's mark (13:16). Heaven is not idle: "His bond-servants will serve Him" (v3) — and reign forever (v5).

"I am coming quickly" (vv7, 12, 20)

Three times in one chapter. Morgan, in Guzik: the sense is closer to *suddenly* than *soon* — when He comes, He will come swiftly. Mounce calls the church's posture the "tension of imminence": every generation lives expecting Him. The blessing is for the one who *heeds* — keeps, guards, obeys — what

is written (v7), the same blessing as 1:3. Revelation opens and closes with the promise that this book is meant to be obeyed, not just decoded.

John bows again (vv8–9)

He did this in 19:10 and does it again. Even an apostle, near the end of his life, can be dazzled by the messenger and forget the Master. The angel's answer has not changed: "worship God." Only God receives worship — and Jesus does (Matt 8:2; Heb 1:6).

"Do not seal" (vv10–11)

Daniel was told to keep his vision secret, "for it pertains to many days in the future" (Dan 8:26), and to seal up the book (Dan 12:4, 9). John is told the opposite: "the time is near." Revelation is meant to be read, understood and lived. Verse 11 is a sobering word: a day comes when character is fixed. Guzik: the time to repent is now, not after He comes.

Reward by works (v12)

Not salvation by works, but works as the evidence of real faith (James 2:20; Titus 3:8). Believers are saved by grace and then rewarded for faithfulness (1 Cor 3:12–15; 2 Cor 5:10).

Alpha and Omega (v13)

God called Himself "the first and … the last" in Isaiah (Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12). Here Jesus says it of Himself. Guzik: there is no clearer claim to deity.

"Wash their robes" (v14)

The KJV reads "do his commandments"; the NASB reads "wash their robes." Guzik explains the difference is in the Greek manuscripts: *plynontes tas stolas* ("washing the robes") and *poiountes tas entolas* ("doing the commandments") look and sound much alike. Either way the meaning holds — those cleansed by the Lamb's blood (7:14) live in obedience. Outside are "the dogs," a picture of the unclean and shameless (Matt 7:6; Phil 3:2).

Root and morning star (v16)

As the *root* of David, Jesus is David's source — his God. As the *descendant* of David, He is David's Son, the promised King (Isa 11:1, 10; Matt 22:41–45). The bright morning star appears in the darkest hour, right before dawn (Num 24:17; 2 Pet 1:19; Rev 2:28).

The last invitation (v17)

Guzik reads two directions here: the Spirit and the Bride say "Come" to Jesus — come back — and to the thirsty — come and drink. Every believer who hears joins the call. The only qualification is thirst and willingness: "let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost" (Isa 55:1; John 7:37).

The last warning (vv18–19)

Adding to or taking from this book brings judgment (compare Deut 4:2; Prov 30:6). Guzik notes that the warning assumes the book can be understood. Poole sees it as a seal on the whole canon. It is a warning to every teacher — and every student — to handle prophecy with fear and humility.

The last word (vv20–21)

"Come, Lord Jesus" is the Aramaic prayer *Maranatha* (1 Cor 16:22), on the lips of the earliest church. The Old Testament ends with "a curse" (Mal 4:6). The New Testament ends with "grace."

Word study (Greek)

- **river — *potamos* (G4215):** a river, a flowing stream.
- **tree — *xylon* (G3586):** wood, a tree — the same word Peter and Paul used for the cross (Acts 5:30; Gal 3:13; 1 Pet 2:24).
- **healing — *therapeia* (G2322):** service, care, healing — our word "therapy."
- **curse — *katathema* (G2652):** an accursed thing.
- **serve — *latreuō* (G3000):** to serve in worship, priestly service.
- **face — *prosōpon* (G4383):** face, presence.
- **quickly — *tachy* (G5035):** swiftly, suddenly, without delay.
- **heeds / keeps — *tēreō* (G5083):** to guard, keep, observe.
- **seal — *sphragizō* (G4972):** to seal up, close.
- **reward — *misthos* (G3408):** wages, reward.
- **wash — *plynō* (G4150):** to wash, especially clothing.
- **robes — *stolē* (G4749):** a long flowing robe.
- **root — *rhiza* (G4491):** root, source.
- **morning — *prōinos* (G4407):** of the early morning.
- **come — *erchou* (from *erchomai*, G2064):** a present imperative — "come," and keep coming.
- **grace — *charis* (G5485):** undeserved favor — the last word of Scripture.

Cross-references

Gen 2:8–10; Gen 3:8, 17–19, 22–24; Exod 33:20–23; Num 24:17; Deut 4:2; Ps 36:8–9; Ps 46:4; Prov 30:6; Isa 11:1, 10; Isa 44:6; Isa 55:1; Isa 60:19–20; Ezek 47:1–12; Dan 12:4, 9; Zech 14:8; Mal 4:6; Matt 5:8; John 4:14; John 7:37–38; 1 Cor 13:12; 1 Cor 16:22; Titus 2:13; 2 Pet 1:19; 1 John 3:2–3; Rev 1:3; Rev 2:7; Rev 7:14–17.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 22:17 (KJV)

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, ⇄ Come. And let him that heareth say, ⇄ Come. And let him that is athirst ⇄ come. And whosoever will, let him take the ★ water of life freely.

Command to obey — "heed the words of this book."

Revelation opens and closes with a blessing for those who keep it (1:3; 22:7). Now the question is what I'll do with it. I'll pick one thing from these final chapters — come out of Babylon, worship God alone,

come thirsty — and live it this week. For the men I disciple, prophecy should produce obedience, not just charts.

Sin to confess — worshiping the messenger

John did it twice. I can be dazzled by a teacher, a ministry, a study tool or my own insight, and lose sight of Jesus. Everything I build — every study, every app, every film — has to point past itself: "worship God."

Warning to heed — character is being set

"Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong … the one who is holy, still keep himself holy" (v11). The choices I make now are shaping who I'll be when He comes. Don't add to His Word, don't take from it, and don't put off repentance.

Promise to trust — "they will see His face."

Everything in me that longs for home is pointing here. Not just a better place, but Him — face to face (1 Cor 13:12). For the man who carries shame and can't look anyone in the eye: one day you will look into His face, washed and unashamed.

Example to follow — the Bride says "Come."

The church's last recorded word in the Bible is an invitation. I want to be an inviter: to Jesus, "Come back"; to every thirsty man, "Come and drink." No one is too far gone. "Let the one who wishes take."

Worship

Alpha and Omega. Root and descendant of David. Bright morning star. The Bible begins with "In the beginning God" and ends with the grace of the Lord Jesus. My life is held between those two.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You are the first and the last, and You are coming quickly. Wash my robes. Keep me from worshiping anything but You. Make me a man who heeds Your Word and carries Your invitation to every thirsty man I meet. Until I see Your face — Maranatha. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

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