

JESUS IS COMING SOON

Lesson 16 Revelation 22



WELCOME

As you think back through your study of Revelation, jot down a couple of things you have learned or that have been especially significant to you.

INTRODUCTION

Much of John’s prophetic purpose in the book of Revelation was to reveal Jesus Christ and to encourage believers to remain faithful through the current hard times and those to come. Yet, the book would not be complete without the vision of the final outcome of the battle between good and evil: God wins. Jesus is the eternal and ultimate Overcomer. Furthermore, God has prepared an eternal home for those who follow the Lamb. The final chapter of Revelation continues the description of the new Jerusalem from Revelation 21, describing the dwelling place of God and His children. In the new Jerusalem, “all the things that have separated us as human beings—race, nationality, gender, profession—exist no longer as barriers. Here the dead will have been raised to life eternal, and ‘time’ itself is swallowed up by eternity, which is time-less.”¹

Tips for meaningful engagement with the Word:

- In this chapter of Revelation, the words directly spoken by Jesus are bolded.
- In Revelation 22, **verses 1–5** describe a new earth—Eden restored. The epilogue in **verses 6–21**, concludes the letter with the promise of Jesus’ return.² This lesson has the text divided into these two parts. There are questions after each section. The verse numbers have been removed from the Scripture passages and footnotes have been inserted. These footnotes are intended to help clarify the passage and provide better understanding.

¹ Fee, 306

² Fee, 307



WORD

As you come to the Word, pause and ask God to make it come alive for you. Ask Him to make it understandable and transformational.

Revelation 22:1–5

Then the angel showed me a river with the water of life,³ clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.⁴ It flowed down the center of the main street. On each side of the river grew a tree of life,⁵ bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations.⁶

No longer will there be a curse upon anything.⁷ For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him.⁸

³ “The water of life is a symbol of eternal life. Jesus used this same image with the Samaritan woman (**John 4:7–14**). It pictures the fullness of life with God and the eternal blessings that come when we believe in him and allow him to satisfy our spiritual thirst.” (*Life Application Study Bible*, 2203)

⁴ The river in the original garden flowed from the land of Eden (**Genesis 2:10**) and in Ezekiel the river flowed from the Temple (**Ezekiel 47:1–2**). Here it comes directly from the throne of God and the Lamb. God’s throne represents God’s powerful presence and it is life-giving and life-sustaining. (Duvall, 313)

⁵ “This tree of life is like the tree of life in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 2:9**). After Adam and Eve sinned, they were forbidden to eat from the tree of life because they could not have eternal life as long as they were under sin’s control. But because of the forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus, there will be no evil or sin in this city. We will be able to eat freely from the tree of life when sin’s control over us is destroyed and our eternity with God is secure.” (*Life Application Study Bible*, 2203) The promise of never-ending provision from both the fruit of the trees and the living water provided in the presence of God banishes all worry. (Duvall, 313)

⁶ “Why would the nations need to be healed if all evil had been eliminated? John was alluding to **Ezekiel 47:12**, where water flowing from the Temple produced trees with healing leaves. He was not implying that there would be illness in the new earth; he was emphasizing that the water of life would produce health and strength wherever it would go.” (Barton, 268)

⁷ Nothing cursed will be in the presence of God, fulfilling **Zechariah 14:11** “*And Jerusalem will be filled, safe at last, never again to be cursed and destroyed.*” Likely, it also refers to God lifting the curse placed on all creation in Eden (**Genesis 3:17–18**). (Barton, 269)

⁸ In the New International Version this verse is translated: “his servants will serve him.” Just as we are called to worship God with our whole life here on earth, we will serve Him with our whole being in heaven. (**Romans 12:1**)

And they will see his face,⁹ and his name will be written on their foreheads.¹⁰ And there will be no night there—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever.¹¹

1. What are you looking forward to about eternal life in the new Jerusalem?

⁹ “The face of God had not been seen by anyone since Adam and Eve sinned. Even Moses, the great lawgiver who went up on the mountain to meet with God, had only been able to see God from the back. God had told him, ‘*You may not look directly at my face, for no one may see me and live*’ (**Exodus 33:20** NLT). Here in heaven, however, God’s people will see him face-to-face. Jesus had promised, ‘*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God*’ (**Matthew 5:8** NIV). John, in another of his books, wrote, ‘*Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*’ (**1 John 3:2** NIV). To be able to see God’s face suggests intimate personal relationship. God will not be a king on a throne in a remote castle; he will be among his people.” (Barton, 269)

¹⁰ “...God’s people will have his name written on their foreheads. This points out God’s ownership. God’s people had been ‘sealed’ (**Revelation 7:3**), and this seal previously had been described as being in the form of the Father’s name (**Revelation 14:1**).” (Barton, 269) God’s people will bear his name, “meaning they will belong to him, imitate his character, and live safely in his presence.” (Duvall, 314)

¹¹ “This suggests that we will actually share in God’s rule over the new creation much like Adam and Eve were supposed to rule over the original creation. (**Genesis 1:28**)” (Duvall, 315)

2. All of us have encountered the effects of the curse:¹² death, sickness, disease, deprivation, poverty, abuse, oppression, sin, etc. And yet **Revelation 22:2–3** can be summarized as, “Life in God’s presence will mean all healing and no curse.”¹³ What would it look like to live in a world with all healing and no curse?

Since the new Jerusalem will be like that, how does that bring you hope or lead you to worship?

Revelation 22:6–21

Then the angel said to me, “Everything you have heard and seen is trustworthy and true. The Lord God, who inspires his prophets, has sent his angel to tell his servants what will happen soon.”

“Look, I am coming soon!”¹⁴ Blessed are those who obey the words of prophecy written in this book.”¹⁵

I, John, am the one who heard and saw all these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me. But he said, “No, don’t worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers the prophets, as

¹² **Genesis 3**

¹³ Duvall, 316

¹⁴ “From Jesus himself come the words of assurance: ‘Look, I am coming soon!’ The word ‘soon’ (*taxu*) means that his coming will be quick and without delay. It may not be ‘soon’ according to human timing (after all, John wrote this two thousand years ago), but it is certain to occur; it is imminent.” (Barton, 270)

¹⁵ Spoken by Christ, this is the sixth of seven beatitudes found in Revelation. “Like the beatitude [in **Revelation**] **1:3**, the one listed here promises a blessing to those who obey God by heeding the warnings of this prophecy.” (Barton, 271)

well as all who obey what is written in this book. Worship only God!”¹⁶

Then he instructed me, “Do not seal up the prophetic words in this book, for the time is near.¹⁷ Let the one who is doing harm continue to do harm; let the one who is vile continue to be vile; let the one who is righteous continue to live righteously; let the one who is holy continue to be holy.”¹⁸

“Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds.¹⁹ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”²⁰

Blessed are those who wash their robes.²¹ They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life.²² Outside the city are the dogs—the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshipers, and all who love to live a lie.²³

¹⁶ “The angel told John to worship only God. God alone is worthy of worship and adoration. He is above all creation, even the angels.” (Barton, 271)

¹⁷ “The angel tells John what to do after his vision is over. Instead of sealing up what he has written, as Daniel was commanded to do (**Daniel 12:4–12**), the book is to be left open so that all can read and understand. Daniel’s message was sealed because it was not a message for Daniel’s time. But the book of Revelation was a message for John’s time, and it is relevant today.” (*Life Application Bible Study*, 2203)

¹⁸ The angel’s instructions not to seal up this prophecy also included a statement that could read something like: Let people do what they will do, because the time for reckoning is coming and each will receive what is coming to them.

¹⁹ “The Bible records God rewarding his people for good works according to his justice. In the Old Testament, obedience often was rewarded in this life (**Deuteronomy 28**), but obedience and immediate reward are not always linked. If they were, good people would always be rich, and sin would always lead to pain and suffering. The believer’s true reward is God’s presence and power through the Holy Spirit. Later, in eternity, believers will be rewarded for their faith and service.” (Barton, 273)

²⁰ The “Beginning and the End” means that Christ is not only the first in the series, but the source from which the entire universe is built. So, Jesus is the source of all things and all things are ultimately fulfilled in Him. (Johnson, 385)

²¹ This is the final beatitude or blessing of the seven found in Revelation. “The emphasis on a person’s actions extends to the final beatitude. Washing one’s robes (**Revelation 3:5, 18; 7:14; 16:15**), in contrast to defiling one’s garments (**3:4**), refers to persevering in faithfulness to Christ and refusing to compromise with the world, even in the face of tribulation.” (Duvall, 320)

²² “In Eden, Adam and Eve had been barred from any access to the tree of life because of their sin (**Genesis 3:22–24**). In the new earth, God’s people will eat from the tree of life because their sins have been removed by Christ’s death and resurrection. Those who eat the fruit of this tree will live forever.” (Barton, 274)

²³ Living outside the city refers to living under God’s curse, separated from the community of all those who follow God and are His children. “Those excluded from God’s presence are labeled ‘dogs,’ a derogatory term for a wicked, impure person...” (Duvall, 320)

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this message for the churches.²⁴ I am both the source of David and the heir to his throne. I am the bright morning star.”²⁵

The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.”²⁶ Let anyone who hears this say, “Come.” Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life. And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the words of prophecy written in this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book. And if anyone removes any of the words from this book of prophecy, God will remove that person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.²⁷

He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon!”

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s holy people.

3. Blessing comes with obeying the words of prophecy written in this book (**Revelation 22:7**). As you think back through this study on Revelation, in what ways has Holy Spirit been calling you to obedience?

²⁴ “What the readers are to hear is that John is only the scribe of this great vision, and that the vision itself comes to them ultimately from the living and reigning Christ Jesus.” (Fee, 312)

²⁵ “Jesus is both David’s ‘source’ and ‘heir.’ As the Creator of all, Jesus existed long before David. As a human, however, he was one of David’s direct descendants (see **Isaiah 11:1–5; Matthew 1:1–17**). As the Messiah, he is the ‘bright morning star,’ the light of salvation to all.” (*Life Application Study Bible*, 2204) “The star image also suggests that a new day dawns beginning with Jesus’s eternal reign, bringing an end to the long night of tribulation.” (Duvall, 320)

²⁶ “Both the Holy Spirit and the bride, the Church, extend the invitation to all the world to come to Jesus and experience the joys of salvation in Christ.” (*Life Application Study Bible*, 2204)

²⁷ “This warning is given to anyone who might purposefully distort the message in this book ... Many have taken this verse to refer to the Bible in its entirety, but it is actually focused on this book of Revelation.” (Barton, 276) “John concludes with a very strong sense that what he has written is indeed what he had received from Christ himself by the Spirit; and therefore these are words to be heard and thus heeded.” (Fee, 314)

What kind of blessings might come from that obedience?

4. John writes twice in Revelation that “the time is near” (**Revelation 1:3 & 22:10**). This is obviously not the “near” that we understand in our human timeline, as this prophecy was written 2,000 years ago. However, throughout Scripture we are instructed to live as if the return of Christ is sure to happen at any moment—as if Christ is already moving toward us, about to break in completely.²⁸ What could it look like to live with this very real expectation?

What emotions arise for you when you think about the possibility that Jesus could return tomorrow?

5. The book of Revelation ends with an urgent plea “Come, Lord Jesus!” Have you ever had an experience that caused you to cry out, “Come, Lord Jesus!” or something similar? Describe that experience below.

²⁸ **Matthew 25:1–13; Luke 12:40; Philippians 3:20; 4:5**

6. The book of Revelation is about Jesus and from Jesus. “An interpretation of the book that does not lead us to his feet is simply off the mark. The whole point of the book is to [lead us to] an encounter with him.”²⁹ This encounter will empower us to follow Him and His way. How have these statements been true for you?

7. As you’ve studied Revelation, in what areas have your perspectives changed? (For example: on evil, Satan, faithfulness, Jesus’ return, suffering, eternity, etc.)

8. How has Revelation motivated, encouraged and strengthened you to be an overcomer?

²⁹ Johnson, 381



WORSHIP

Take a moment to enter into a time of worship—both on your own and with your community—to show praise, adoration and love for God.

As you review some of God’s names and descriptions from Revelation, declare your confidence in Him for today, tomorrow and all eternity.

- God is Eternal (**1:8**)
- God is Sovereign (**4:11**)
- God is Righteous (**16:7**)
- God is the Almighty (**19:6**)
- Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords (**19:16**)
- Jesus is the Bridegroom of the Church (**19:7**)
- Jesus is Faithful and True (**19:11**)
- Jesus is the Lamb (**5:6**)
- Jesus is the First and the Last (**22:13**)
- Jesus was dead but is now alive (**1:18**)
- Jesus is Holy and True (**3:7**)
- Jesus is the One who is the Amen (**3:14**)
- Jesus is the Bright Morning Star (**22:12**)
- Jesus is the Beginning and the End (**22:12**)

If there was another name or description that meant a lot to you, add it to the list.



WITNESS

Believers are called to reflect Christ in the world. This section will help you engage with how to be a witness—reflecting Christ—this week.

Revelation 22:17 says, *“Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life.”*

“Christ invites anyone to come and drink of the water of life. ... This evil world is desperately thirsty for living water, and many are dying of thirst. But it’s still not too late. One day it will be too late, as Revelation has clearly shown, but the invitation is still being offered.”³⁰

As you move forward after studying Revelation, in what way(s) is Holy Spirit calling you to continue to extend that invitation to the people around you?

May you continue to live in hope and share your hope with the people God has put in your life.

³⁰ Barton, 276

