

THE FINAL MESSAGE

Rev. 22

INTRODUCTION: 26 sermons

We now come to complete the library of the book of Revelation. The whole system of this library has been given us by one author, one man. And so far, we have a description of many many things -- judgements on up to the exterior of the holy city. And John has just moved within the interior of that holy city in this last chapter. This last chapter is what many scholars call a prologue. It should have been a part of the last chapter. With some final personal words which John had to say. And maybe some disconnected ideas - but all make sense when you put them together about the holy city and the testimony that is given by the angel and John. And even Jesus, as to how this prophesy is supposed to be taken and used.

He is picturing here something of the interior of the city. Psalm 46:4. The picture is a perfect picture in which there is peace, flowers, fruit, and healing, and refreshment. And this holy city has been now translated from the state of death to the state of life. And it is eternal and wonderful.

I want in this final message to divide this chapter in these three ways. Now I am really not satisfied that I have divided this 100% correctly. But just for this message - when we consider the whole chapter - we have to maybe stretch a point on some. First, the paradise of God. V. 1-5. Second, personal testimonies. V. 6-7. This will be the personal testimony of the angels. V. 8-12 the personal testimony of John. V. 13-17 the personal testimony of Jesus. And our third point will be the prophesy protected. V. 18-21.

I. PARADISE OF GOD - V. 1-5.

The garden which symbolized perfect enjoyment and the supply of all needs is brought into place here.

V. 1-And he showed me a pure river of water of life. Clear as crystal.
Proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. Note - proceeding from the throne of God is a river of the water of life. Now in the Old Testament, the picture is John is going to present the valuable provisions that God has made for the church. He presents a parallel in what he sees in the Paradise of God - in the beautiful city, and in what is described in the first book of the Bible - Genesis.

And John sees a pure river of water of life. There was a beautiful river - that watered the garden. And Heavenly Paradise is also glorified with a beautiful river. The (Psalmist) said, "there is a river - the streams thereof shall make glad the city of God." There is nothing so refreshing as clear, cool water. And there is a beautiful stream gushing forth. Remember in the desert in the wilderness in Exodus 17:6. Water came flowing out of a rock.

Zach. 14:6 - It shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem.

Jesus announced, if any man be thirsty - let him come to me and drink.
Out of his heart shall flow rivers of the living water. John 7:37-38.

The river has many sources in the Old Testament. It is the picture of the

Garden of Eden, Gen. 2:8-16. It also states in Ez. 47:1 - the river which issued from the temple. Ps. 46:4. The stream shall make glad the city of God. A fountain Joel says in the 3rd chapter of the 18th verse. Shall come forth from the house of the Lord. Living waters, a fountain of life, here in Revelation. Now in Jer. 2:14 - he complained about broken cisterns. And the righteous man is a well of life. Prov. 10:11. The fear of the Lord is the fountain of life. Prov. 14:27.

Now H. D. Sweet says this definitely identifies the river of life, with the Spirit. The impression here is a river, water, and a fountain, of life. It is in the Scriptures. And it is very simple here. When you go to a water fountain - or to a tap. You will bring cold, clear water into your house, in any quantity. But in the East, water was a precious element. And in the dry desert and the hot sands, literally it meant life. There could be no life.

V. 2 - We read, in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, there was the tree of life. In this garden, there was a fruit tree. And it was for nourishment of God's immortal saints. And that means, that we are going to eat in Heaven. Now I have spoken about this two or three times. Last week I said something about it in my sermon - that it was a delight and an anticipation. And I want to say, who could object to that. The angels ate when they were entertained by Abraham. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead at the solemn institution of the Lord's Supper. He said that he would not eat, and drink, and scorf of the fruit of the vine until that day. When he would drink and eat and move with them. Matt. 26:29. You get to wondering sometimes, what that food in Heaven will taste like. Here is what John has said. This tree of life is going to be here - and it is going to produce fruit every month. There will not be a single month without fruit to eat.

Ez. 47:12 - You will read about the fruit and the meat there. And then you will read that man who eats will also be healed. So the tree gives life. And it gives many and varied fruits. And fruit symbolizes here that it is special. The grace of God is for each age. And the leaves are for healing. And only the Spirit of God can heal the wounds. So on the other side, in this Paradise of God - are three things that are necessary to sustain life. I wonder if we have caught them -- there is water, there is food, and there is health. And there is something symbolized that all three of these - the water of life, the perpetual fruit of the tree, will furnish food. And the drink. And then there are the leaves that will be for healing. And that will furnish us health. And so God is going to take care of us and take care of his own. How can a man live forever.

Here is the answer -- ~~it comes from the throne of God and of the lamb.~~ And he is going to sustain. The restoration of man's life is going to continue. This will be a remedy for all hunger and disease.

V. 3 - We read, and there shall be no more curse - but the throne of God and the lamb shall be in the midst. And his servants shall serve him. Now this is to emphasize the condition of the blessedness. The inhabitants of this city will be in the presence of God. And they will not only reign but they will be his servant. Forever, and forever.

When the Scripture says there will be no cursed thing there - that is, there will be no infections. Nothing to frustrate, hinder, or harm the Christian. Nothing that will cause him to be impure. And this we find, that he says, the curse - the element of disorder will all be removed. So that is a wonderful vision of the city and the needs.

And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. So, we will not just sit down and do nothing. There is not in Heaven, in this Garden of Eden, before men might dress it and keep it - and have dominion over it. We are going to have increased responsibilities. And it is very meaningful - and they shall see his face. Now this is what it is to be in Heaven. To look into God's face and to be with one another and to live. Now that is Heaven.

Think about the gate of pearl. The streets of gold. The wall of jasper. But think about the Lord - and you can walk on the street. And have a place called home forever. And you can see his precious face.

Fanny Crosby wrote a hymn - My Saviour First Of All.

When my life's work is ended

And I cross the swelling tide

When the bright and glorious morning I shall see

I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side.

And his smile will be the first to welcome me.

Though the gate to the city in a robe of spotless white

He will lead me where no tears will ever fall

In the glad songs of ages, I shall mingle with delight

But I long to meet my Saviour, first of all.

Think about stepping out on that shore of Heaven and taking hold and finding there is God. What greater pleasure could an individual ask for than that.

V. 5 - And there shall be no night. No need for a candle - for God giveth the light and they shall reign forever and forever. What a marvelous thing - that God is going to answer the longing of man's heart, in Heaven - and it will be a perfect place. There will be no more night. And the pageant will be over and the final curtain will be drawn. And John has shown us that we will be in the presence of God. And that is the most impressive thing of this last message.

II. PERSONAL TESTIMONIES

First, the angels. V. 6-7.

Here is a summary of the first paragraph of the book. Chapter 1:1-3. In which Jesus then through this angel comes with authority and with a message. The events that are just beginning to occur are not outside of God's control here as we read. And he said, unto me, these things are faithful and true. God and the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto the servants which must shortly be done. So the angels come to give their testimony of things that must shortly take place.

V. 7 - The angels said, behold, I come quickly. And thus it is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophesy of this book. So the angels impress upon John and upon us - that some things are going to take place. And here is a message of divine authority. And it is pronounced to us and set forth in this book forever.

Second, John's testimony begins in V. 8.

Here is a personal testimony that he vouches for what he has seen and for what he has heard. John saw these things and heard them. And when I had heard them and seen, I fell down and worshipped before the feet of the angel and showed me these things.

V. 9 - The angel said to him, do not do this. I am just a fellow servant. And he point him to the prophets and to the Lord God.

So John in his personal testimony says, that here may be some repetition of what has gone on before. He is saying again, the many themes that run through this book. The many characters. He has finally edited this book and put it in order. The speaker is one angel who interprets these divine things to John - on the reliability of all that he has seen and heard. And the visions which came to John came also to the prophets of the Old Testament.

And of course, Christ is re-affirmed here. John, himself, identifies that he is the author of this book. And he says, exactly the same warning came to him twice. About the danger of angel worship. And that he needed to worship the eternal God.

V. 10 - 11 - John is told not to write some things in V. 10 - about the thunders. But in V. 10 - he says, seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He was instructed to leave this book unsealed and these sayings open. That men might have understanding of them.

V. 11 - He said that is unjust - let him be unjust still. He that is filthy, let

him be filthy. He that is unrighteous - let him be unrighteous. But he that is righteous - let him be righteous still. And he that is holy, let him be holy still. So John receives this message and gives a personal testimony of how he is to react to the coming of Christ. He is instructed to lay them up for the distant future. Let this vision be open. And then in V. 11 - He says, there comes a time when it is too late to change. And there comes a time when a man is set in his character. And in any situation - he gets more deeply died in it. Therein lies the human tragedy - a man can so long refuse the way of Christ, in the end, he cannot change. He has sinned against the Holy Spirit. And he says, in effect, just what Jesus said. Let each man do what pleases him. I will not force his choice. I will not use compulsion. I will not put a weapon on it. As a man chooses - let him go on and live that way. What a tragedy.

V. 12 - Behold, I come quickly. And my reward is with me to give every man according to his work shall be. John's testimony is that he is going to come - each person, at the coming of Christ. The Christian who perseveres will be rewarded.

Third, the testimony is that of Jesus. V. 13.

13 I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. The first and the last. This description here is apparently applied to Jesus. It emphasizes the eternal existence of Jesus.

What is eternity was a question that was asked at a dumb and deaf institution at Paris. A beautiful and striking answer was given by one of the pupils. The lifetime of the Almighty.

So, four times in the Book of Revelation - we read, I am the Alpha and the Omega.

1 ✓ The first time - Chapter 1:8. It speaks of the omnipotence of the Lord Jesus. The Almighty.

2 ✓ Rev. 1:10-11 - Here it speaks of Christ as being the Lord of time and of history. The unfolding ages - that all of the future is at his command.

3 ✓ The third time is Rev. 21:5-6 - which says that he is on the throne. And is the Lord of the new order and the new creation.

✓ The fourth time is in Rev. 12:13 - which affirms our Lord Jesus Christ is the judge of all men. And that he will give rewards to each one.

V.16 The deity of Christ is affirmed to in V. 16. I am the root and the spring of David. That is, the great King of Israel. According to the human flesh. I am the root of David. Now the root of a tree - is that from which a tree grows. Isa. 11:10 says - he is called the root of Jesse, the eternal existence is here found in Isaiah.

There is no attribute of perfection that speaks more of the Lord Jesus in his unchangeableness - that he will not change throughout eternity.

He is from everlasting to everlasting. He is the one who forgives sins. The story of the New Testament is the story of Jesus. Were you there when they crucified the Lord - were you there? Sometimes it makes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they crucified my Lord.

Were you there when God raised him from the dead. Were you there when he burst the bonds of death. Were you there. Were you there when he came forth from the tomb. Were you there.

So at last, Christ, is the Alpha and the Omega of our salvation. The beginning and the end, of all of it. He is the one who brings life, to us. This is the idea of completeness. The idea of eternity and authority. He shares his power with no one and he never hands his power over.

14 V. 14 - Now blessed are they that do his commandments. They may have the right to the tree of life and they enter into the gates of the city. The first part of that 14th verse, which we have here - in this chapter, when John wrote this verse down - he wrote it this way. Blessed are they that wash their robes - that they may have right to the tree of life. And may enter in through the gates and into the city.

Now hundreds of years before printing was inventing, and a Scribe copying the Bible, saw the passage in the book of Revelation. Blessed are they that wash their robes. But he said to himself, no man can be saved by trusting Jesus.

Now that is exactly what some people say today. One cannot go to Heaven, through

that beautiful gate, just by washing his robe in the blood of the lamb.

A man has to earn Heaven - said that Scribe to himself. A man has to obey the laws of God. He has to do this in order to be saved. He has to do certain things, in order to get into Heaven.

Now does that sound familiar to some churches today, in their teachings and in their doctrines. Some churches today will tell you that you have to be baptized to get into the Kingdom. Or they will tell you that you have to be a member of this church. A certain church. And I know there are two or three denominations that preach this, sort of doctrine. That you have got to do thus and so in order to get into Heaven. And it scares the wits out of some people and who believe that this is really salvation. Now, what the Scribe was trying to do was show man's part in salvation.

And so, he copied it down. But, there are several Greek texts, according to Greek scholars in the early days of scholarship, that this man who copied this didn't even have - who translated this into King James - it was not even available to him.

There is a collection that had been discovered - they say, more than 8,000 Latin versions. More than 1,000 other versions of the New Testament. You add all of these up - and there are more than 13,000 manuscripts from which a man can study to find the true and original text written by the Apostle. And that is an amazing total. You see, this was a long time before we learned to write in longhand. As we do in English. Some of this writing was done in capitol letters and it is

all put together in the textus Receptus - which was a standard Greek text for over 300 years. There was this commandment idea. What is the thought. Why did the Scribe change the Gospel message from one of faith. To obedience and work. It is simple - the everlasting tendency of man is to do this for self-advancement. And to find his way into the Kingdom - the system of merit. There are many churches today that believe you are saved by works. That by doing certain things - you are acceptable to God.

Hindus, Confucious, are religions of works.

The Hindu will lift up his hands to Heaven. Until they become stiff. He will lie on a bed of hot coals and spikes. He will crawl on his knees from one city to a Shrine. And say, I deserve the pardon of my God. This is merit.

The doctrine of trying to deserve the favor of Heaven. Trying to be baptized, or trying to do all kinds of good works. Or I take the Lord's Supper--and that will save me. Now this is human pride and I can work out the problem of sin myself.

Here I am, walking down the Golden Streets and I have gotten by the gates of pearl, and I say - look friend, I did some good. I obeyed a few of God's Commandments while I was on earth. I kept every law that he had. You know what that would be - a religion of flesh. Pride.

We have got to look to the Word of God to get forgiveness. Psa. 51 - what did David do. Have mercy upon me, oh God, according to thy loving kindness.

Blot out my transgressions - wash me thoroughly from my iniquities. Cleanse me from my sin. For thou desireth sacrifice as I would give it - he says. Why I would buy a thousand cattle, if that would wash away my sins. I would buy some sheep - but thou only are able to do this. How did he come to verse - 1, 2, and 16. The sacrifice of God, a broken heart, and a contrite heart. So the invitation of God is to come. And we are not justified by works.

In the Protestant Reformation - there was a Monk by the name of Martin Luther. He was attending services at St. John - and he was climbing the holy stairs. The stairway that went up - which the Lord Jesus walked into the judgement hall of Pilate. And on the steps - there are supposed to be little blood drops, of the Lord Jesus. And they have preserved those places where it was - so they wouldn't wear out. They have covered them up with wood and put a little glass in there - so that through those glass holes, you can see the blood drops. The people climb up these stairs on their knees. Kiss these little glass holes where the blood drops of Jesus are supposed to be. If they do that, they get great reward for it. They get indulgences. Hour after hour, people come, in the kingdom of God - in repentance, saying prayers, and kissing spots. Now Martin Luther was climbing up - Scala Santa on his knees - kissing all of the spots. He walked half way up. And like a bell - like a gong or a cannon. Something happened in his soul. Hab. 2:14 - the basis for the book of Romans. And there in his soul - he said, the just, God's forgiveness. Shall live by his faith. He stood up, he turned around, he walked down those steps, he went to Whittenburg, Germany - and there on the door of the steps he nailed 95 theses on the church. And the reformation had begun. The works of righteousness which we have done - according to his mercy. He saved us by washing of our robes.

Dr. B. H. Carroll says there is a marked difference in doctrine as the King

James translators did not have the three oldest manuscripts of the New Testament which are now in a British museum. And the oldest manuscripts - he and other scholars say read like this -- blessed are they that have washed their robes. That have made, that they may have the right to the tree of life.

And that is the reading of the best text. In order to get the right - to go to the tree of life - you must come by the blood. Now by works, by faith, by not doing. You remember the great salvation by faith as Namen has illustrated. He never lost the battle in all of his life but he was unclean. He went down before the prophet of Samaria, to buy his cleansing. He had great wealth with him but the prophet told him to go down to Jordan, to dip seven times, and his flesh will come again like the flesh of a little child. That insulted the great man - he went away in a rage. But as he rode, his servants said to him. Now listen, you go do something great, build a big monument, or crawl on your knees a few miles, but he said - just wash and be clean. Live and trust. And so he went down to the Jordan River and when he came up the seventh time - he was like a little child. He was clean. No works, but there was faith and there was trust.

So the simple analyze here is salvation is dependent - not upon us - but upon Jesus and he never fails. Now we can have a supply of soap and water - but nobody can compell us to wash in it. And here is the blood of Christ - and you can wash your robe clean. And you fail to do this.

V. 15 - He tells us about some who are going to be debarred from Heaven - from this Paradise. For without are dogs and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

The dog was a symbol of everything unclean, a savage in the East. And now he is not talking about some little old household pet. But this old dog was homeless, fleas, a thieving. And so, he said - it was disgusting and unclean.

There is also that idea in Deut. 23:18 - you remember, thou shalt not bring the hire of a prostitute, or a price of a dog to the house of the Lord. Now that is clear. It is forbidden to offer money made by prostitution. Or the price of a dog. In the temple they had priestess, they were prostitutes. They had priests who were male prostitutes. And they were commonly called dogs. Thoroughly immoral people. And one who loves and acts falsehood - he says, is shut out.

V. 16 - The testimony of Jesus is that he has sent his angel to testify of these things of the churches. God's appointed agency for lighting the world is in the churches.

Now the whole of this book is a sacred deposit which reveals truth that is given to the churches. That is why the church is said to be the pillar and the ground of truth, and the message here is founded and grounded in the church.

Jesus guarantees that this truth shall be heard and shall be told because he is the morning star and this light is going to go out through the church.

V. 17 - There is a mighty invitation extended. And the Spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is a thirst come.

And whosoever will, let him come. And here is a magnificent illustration. The custodian of this truth offers an invitation. You are invited to come. Let him that is a thirst come. If you are thirsty - then come. And the Holy Spirit has invited you to come.

Now the church united - gives this invitation. Give it to your nearest neighbor. Whosoever that drinketh of the water of life - I will give him - and he shall never thirst.

Do you notice here that there is very little red tape in the invitation of the Gospel. You may be by yourself. You may have no preacher. You may not even be in reach of any church. There may be a longing in your soul for salvation. And the invitation is - come. Don't wait for anybody else. Don't wait for anything.

You may not even have that thirst. You may only have a conviction. You cannot feel it - and yet you are willing to come. Whosoever will, let him come. Without price. How it falls in line with all the Bible invitations.

The 55th chapter of Isaiah, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money - come and buy and come and eat. Therefore, why do you spend your money for that which is not bread. What glorious results. The choice is left to each individual man. And here is the invitation - the appeal with a promise. That the second coming of Christ is nearby.

The invitation here of the Spirit and the bride. The bride, we know as the church. And here is the Spirit who has been operating and all the prophets - in all the ages, calling men back to God. The regular ending of the letters of the seven churches. There was an invitation to hear what the Spirit had to say. Chapter 2:7, 11, 17, and 29.

Now the speaker here is the risen Christ. Let him that hears - everyone that hears. Every Christian must be a missionary. Send out this invitation - and this invitation goes to the thirsty souls as we have said.

So the bride of Christ, his church, has been praying and waiting. For Jesus to come. And the church, filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks and cries. Let him that heareth, that is, every individual member of the congregation. Who is a member of the household of faith. And let him that is a thirst come.

The word come is a favorite word of God's book. Moses stood outside the camp and said, let him who is on the Lord's side come and stand by me. Isaiah says come, let us reason together. Saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet. Isaiah 1:18. When Jesus passed by the sea - the first Disciples fishing, said come follow me. I will make you fishers of men. To Zacchaeus he says, salvation has come to your house, come down from that tree and I will give you rest.

When a preacher stands in a pulpit with an open Bible, and the Holy Spirit encourages sinners to come - that is the bride saying come. People have prayed for you - you need to be saved. Come, we love you.

That wonderful hymn that says, I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest. Lay down thou weary one, lay down, thy head upon my breast. I heard the voice of Jesus say, behold, I freely give. The living waters, thirsty one, stoop down, drink and live. I came to Jesus and I drank of that life-giving stream. My thirst was quenched. My soul revived. And now I live in him.

And the summation of this whole thing is - whosoever will - let him come. Do you desire Christ, then take Christ. Do you desire life. Then take life. Do you desire Heaven, then take Heaven. You want reconciliation and forgiveness. Then take forgiveness. Do you desire Jesus - then take our blessed Lord Jesus and this marvelous invitation today. And say, in my hand no price I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.

III. THE PROPHECY PROTECTED - V. 18-21

V. 18 - 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.

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

Then here is a most solemn warning. Since this book makes known the way of life to the lost people, since this book has the way to the only tree of life, and the only new Jerusalem of God, and since this book has the way through the blood of Jesus Christ, as the only way for a man to enter. How terrible it must be

an offense to take away any part, any portion of this book. Now, he tells us that it is possible for people to be blotted out of the book of life. And it is very plain here - that he talks to people here who would change something in this book.

This is John, that wonderful man of God. Giving us the unveiling and the uncovering of Jesus Christ. The vision of the exaltation of our Lord. According to him. And when he talks about the book of prophecy, at times he calls that Chapter 1:3, 22:10, 18, 19. He says, blessed is the man who reads and hears this word of prophecy. Just to read and to hear this book. From a minister reading aloud, to a congregation. He said a man can be blessed, by this book. And now for somebody to say - we are going to find the secrets somehow to the hereafter, with magic, fortune-telling or ten thousand other ways. Even the rich man in Hell wanted to go another root. He told Abraham, now look, why don't you send somebody to go and tell my brothers about this. And they have the light though, Abraham says. Oh, he says, now if you send somebody from the dead, they will resurrect somebody, they will repent. Now listen, whosoever is not willing to be saved by this revelation, and the precious treasures of life who is deposited with the churches, then how can he be saved.

No man can be saved after Christ comes. All of this saving light is deposited with the church. That is why I prefer to take my stand with the church and with Jesus Christ, rather than out here with some man's idea or some loose organization that doesn't even have the semblance of the church. He established the church as an institution and he has given to it the privilege of being a candlestick and they are to light up the world. I count being a church member a great honor. And I don't go too much for this free-lance, independent type of church-ology.

The certain thing here is a warning. I don't think it refers here to each individual word. Some people take literally. What it does warn against is tampering. Interfering with and changing the teachings of this book. I think Paul meant that when he said, any man preaching any other Gospel than that which you have received, let him be a curse. Gal. 1:8-9.

In Deut. we read, you shall not add unto the word which I shall command you. Neither diminish aught from it, Deut. 4:2. Every word of God is pure. Add thou not unto his word, lest he reprove thee. Prov. 35.

Therefore when men were hand-copying this book - he is going to come and judge the quick and the dead. He is going to compare these manuscripts in ancient days. This book was hand-copied by Scribes. And John knew how easy it would be for Scribes to make mistakes.

V.20 First Testifies The Certainty of His Coming - I Come Quickly.
Second - Last Works of Man - Last Prayer - Even so come Lord Jesus.
(1st work) - garden I was afraid - reached - hid myself. Fear & shame.
(Last) :1 Men heard precious - hand covered blood Lamb no " " come Lord Jesus.
Zella Horton - Last Work - Prayers I wanted Be at the Sunday - Always Tithed
10% of income to ch. - church and mo. Bank so many 5's 10's - said Evins mo - Talk -
But 10 cash with mo. - left us - Eternal Sabbath last night - loved
picnic - Place happy - World for Dept - 9-12 yr olds. Responsell
visit - touch - excited -

V.21 - Benediction Remembrance Love - Sweet Grace -
O.T. - Mal. "I will come & smite the earth with a curse."