

Continuing the vision in the previous chapter, John is astounded at the beauties and glories of the new heaven and new earth, the eternal abode of the believer, the new Jerusalem. In the city of Jerusalem today, there is no river and yet the psalmist wrote of a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High (Ps. 46:4). Ezekiel also referred to a river flowing under the temple (not in the actual city), which brought healing and life to the Dead Sea (Ezek. 47:1-12). And in one of Zechariah's visions, he prophesied, *Zech. 14:8* it shall be in that day *i.e. when the LORD shall be king over all the earth, v.9f*, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem. ... In John's vision, while there is no more sea (Rev. 21:1), the source of the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal (22:1), cascades out from the throne of God and of the Lamb expressing figuratively the eternal life in the new Jerusalem. This is the life Jesus spoke about to the woman of Samaria, *Jn. 4:14* whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The river flows through the middle of the street, and on either side of the river was the tree of life (v.2). ... When God created the earth, He planted the tree of life along with the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the centre of the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9). When He formed Adam and Eve, He commanded they must not eat from these two trees (Gen. 3:3). However, they *did* eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and ^{3:22} the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: ²³ Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden ... ²⁴ So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. ... Eating the fruit of the tree was prohibited, however, in the new Jerusalem access is freely approved, ^{22:2} 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 [*θεραπεία*] of the nations.

As John sought to describe what he was seeing, he used the only language available to him and, therefore, what he wrote was couched in earthly terminology. This accounts for his reference to 'months' and 'healing' for, of course, the eternal Glory has no months or days or years, and neither does it need healing because it does not have any illness (Rev. 21:4). Instead, there is a continuous never-ending triumph of life for all the old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (II Cor. 5:17).

In contrast to John's experience on the island of Patmos, in Glory there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it [*there will be no more temple either*], and his servants [*Ἰδούλω*] shall serve [*λατρεύω, as priests*] him (v.3). Whereas evil characterises this present world, it is absent in the Glory for instead of constantly battling with sin within us (*Rom. 7:19* For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I

would not, that I do.), we shall be eternally committed to the joy of the service of worship we shall render to God.

Previously, to come face to face with God warranted death (Ex. 33:20). In Glory though, we shall see his face (Rev. 22:4), and we shall live forever, “Face to face shall I behold Him ... Face to face, oh, blissful moment! ... Face to face in all His glory”. Our faith will give way to sight, and we shall be able to gaze, *Ps. 17:15* As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. ... *Mt. 5:8* Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. ... *I Jn. 3:2* Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. ... Perfect in Him, perfectly His, his name shall be in their foreheads ... God’s personal and precious possession.

Once again, such is the glory of the new Jerusalem, John repeats there is no night (22:4 ... 21:22-26), no need for a candle or a torch, nor the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light *ἰφωτίζω, to shed rays, to shine!* (22:5). The darkness is completely and forever abolished, and they shall reign for ever and ever as they eternally share the royal office of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John’s prophecy now complete, he finishes the Book of Revelation affirming its authenticity, its assertion of the certainty of the Lord’s return, and an appeal for his readers to heed the words of his prophecy. ... The angel assured him of the veracity of his experiences. They are unquestionably faithful and true, signed with the signature of God and Divinely despatched, the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done (v.6). ... Full and complete inspiration of the Book of Revelation!

Immediately there follows an interjection from the Lord Jesus, ⁷ Behold, I come quickly *without delay!*. Believers should always be living in the expectancy of His coming, for of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only (Mt. 24:36). Therefore, John is instructed, blessed is he that keepeth *heeds, guards, maintains!* the sayings of the prophecy of this book. ... Even if there are parts difficult to comprehend, they are so precious for Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand (1:3).

John humbly reconfirms his identity, ^{22:8} And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen *... he was overcome by what he had heard and seen!*, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Previously, he had fallen to his face to worship the interpreting angel, and he was told, ^{19:10} See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy ... but he does it again, ^{22:9} 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: worship God. ... He had the proper response, but inadvertently, he had directed it to the wrong object!

The angel continues, ¹⁰ Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. ... The Book of Revelation is not to be hidden, nor avoided. Do not close the book, John is instructed, but keep it open for its message is for every generation. There is no hidden and secret meaning apart from the normal sense of the text. God means for it to be grasped and understood by His people, - His saints, - as they faithfully contend for the faith which has been delivered to them (Jude, v.3). ... There is coming the time when wickedness and evil will be so pervasive and the sinner will refuse to repent, ¹¹ He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still. ... But, for the believer striving to please the Master, he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. ... An individual's response to the truth of God's Word determines their eternal destiny.

Without warning, the Lord Jesus speaks again, ¹² behold, I come quickly; and my reward *[μισθός, payment for service]* is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be *[cf. Mt. 25:14-30]*. He is coming again as Judge *[cf. Mt. 25]*, and the ground of His authority is the fact He is God, ¹³ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last *[Is. 44:6]*. Concerning the redeemed, as Judge He will declare, ¹⁴ Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. They enter the new Jerusalem not on the basis of their own righteousness, but on the merits of their righteousness in Christ Who died for them on the cross. The new Jerusalem is exclusively for those who have been cleansed from their sins by faith in the blood of Christ and whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. In contrast, there is only one other place outside the city to contain forever the unbelievers, the dogs *[despised scavengers, immoral persons, cf. Phil. 3:2; Ps. 22:16,20]*, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie (v.15) and that is the lake of fire (Rev. 20:13-15).

As the Revelation approaches its conclusion, John hears again what he heard in the opening chapter (1:1), how the message had been given to the angel by the Lord Jesus, and how the angel had brought the message to John, and through John to the churches, ^{22:16} I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. He affirms the veracity of His credentials, I am the root *[Is. 11:1; 53:2]* and the offspring of David *[Mt. 1:1; 9:27; 15:22; 21:9; Rom. 1:3; II Tim. 2:8; Rev. 5:5]*, and the bright and morning star *[cf. Num. 24:17, there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel]*.

A closing invitation is extended, which is the final call to unbelievers to believe and receive Christ as Saviour while the opportunity remains, ¹⁷ And the *[Holy]* Spirit and the bride *[the Church]* say, *Come*. And let him that heareth *[engage the mind to comprehend]*

what is being heard say, *Come*. And let him that is athirst *come*. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely *as a free gift*. ... Such is God's goodness and grace!

The invitation to drink the waters flowing from the throne (cf. v.1) is such a defining message a solemn warning is given, 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 *[Dt. 4:2]*. 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. ... How fatal it is to corrupt, or pervert God's Word! Instead, accept what He says as He has said it. Don't add to it, nor take away from it. Do not tamper with it but receive it for He means what He says, and He says what He means.

Finally, in His last recorded words in Scripture, the Lord Jesus, - He which testifieth *μαρτυρέω*, *witnesses* these things, - declares, ²⁰ Surely *Ἰναί*, *yes* I come *[present tense, 'I am coming']* quickly. From his imprisonment on the island of Patmos, confident in the blessed hope, John responds on behalf of all true believers, Amen. Even so, come *μαράν ἀθά*, *I Cor. 16:22*, Lord Jesus. ... Fittingly, he ends with the Christian salutation shared among believers, ²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Concluding his own commentary, Matthew Henry (1662-1714) wrote, "Nothing should be more desired by us than that the grace of Christ may be with us in this world, to prepare us for the glory of Christ in the other world. It is by His grace that we must be kept in a joyful expectation of His glory, fitted for it, and preserved to it; and His glorious appearance will be welcome and joyful to those that are partakers of His grace and favour here; and therefore to this most comprehensive prayer we should all add our hearty *Amen*, most earnestly thirsting after greater measures of the gracious influences of the blessed Jesus in our souls, and His gracious presence with us, till glory has perfected all His grace towards us, for He is a sun and a shield, *He gives grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from those that walk uprightly.*"

Rev. 1:3 **Blessed** is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Rev. 14:13 **Blessed** are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Rev. 16:15 **Blessed** is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Rev. 19:9 **Blessed** are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Rev. 20:6 **Blessed** and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Rev. 22:7 **blessed** is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Rev. 22:14 **Blessed** are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.