

# **Revelation 22 - Eternal State: River of Life; Description of New Jerusalem**

## IV. After These Things (Rev 4:1—22:21)

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#### (c) The Eternal State (Rev 21:1—22:21)

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## Revelation 22

- (c) The Eternal State (Rev 21:1—22:21)
  - (ii) The New Jerusalem (21:9—22:5)
    - (a) Contents (22:1-5)
      - (1) Its River (22:1)

1 And **he showed me a river** of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the **throne** of God and of the Lamb,

1 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal. It was flowing from the throne of God and the lamb.

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.

- Up to here, the description John has given of his vision has been of the exterior of the New Jerusalem. Now his vision moves to the interior.

- "...he showed me" - John now saw new aspects of the interior of the city

- "...river" - flows from the Throne of God and the Messiah. The river was crystal clear, and flowed through the single street of New Jerusalem.

— Likely a literal river, but also seems to be symbolic of the refreshment and sustenance that God provides through eternal life

— Should not be confused with the river flowing from the millennial temple during the millennium (Ezek 47:1,9,12; Zech 14:8)

- "...throne" - singular; the thrones of God and the Lamb are merged when we get to the Eternal State

— Rev 3:21 speaks of two different thrones: Jesus' throne (Davidic throne, on earth, future) and the Father's throne (in heaven, present) until that time

[OT reference: Ps 46:4; Ezek 47:1; Zech 14:8]

(2) Its Trees (22:2)

2 in the **middle of its street**. On either side of the river was the **tree of life**, bearing twelve *kinds of fruit*, yielding its fruit **everymonth**; and the **leaves** of the tree were for the **healing of the nations**.

2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was 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.

2 Between the city street and the river, the tree of life was visible from each side. It produced twelve kinds of fruit, each month having its own fruit. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

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 everymonth: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

– "...middle of its street" – the throne evidently stood at the head of the main street of the city, so that looking down the street, the throne appeared to be in the middle

– In heaven, God's people will live at the source of the life-giving stream, the very presence of God Himself

– "...tree of life" – the Tree of Life that existed in the Garden of Eden will return. The trunk of the tree will extend to both sides of the eternal river of life, and will be characterized by productivity, bearing fresh fruit each month of the year.

– When Adam and Eve fell, they lost their access to the tree of life in the Garden of Eden (Cf. Gen 2:9; 3:22-24)

– The Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden could perpetuate life forever (Cf. Gen 3:22-24). Evidently this Tree of Life will also sustain immortality.

– In the New Jerusalem, residents will have access to it again

– "...every month" – there will be some form of time there; not solar/lunar, since sun and moon are gone. It's likely that another type of calendar will define the months.

– God is the Author of time and time increments (Gen 1:14); the Eternal State lasts for eternity, but that doesn't preclude the presence of time increments

– Most fruit trees bear fruit only a few months each year. In contrast, God's blessing of fruitfulness all year long will typify life in the new earth.

– "...leaves" – *phyllon*, therapeutic; the purpose of the leaves is not to heal personal sickness, but to give health to the nations. There will be no sickness because of the leaves.

– "...healing of the nations" – the nations were founded in corruption (Gen 11:1-4)

– There is a healing quality in the tree of life, and this is what brings the nations back to health in the Eternal State

[OT reference: Gen 2:9; 3:22-24; Ezek 47:12]

(3) No Curse (22:3a)

(4) God's Presence (22:3b-5)

    a. God's throne (22:3b)

    b. God's Lamb (22:3c)

    c. God's bondservants (22:3d)

3 There will no longer be any **curse**; and **the throne of God and of the Lamb** will be in it, and **His** bond-servants will **serveHim**;

3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;

3 There will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and the lamb will be in the city. His servants will worship him

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:

- "...curse" - the entire creation is under a curse, groaning and suffering (Rom 8:19-22)
- The curse was given by God to the serpent, Eve and Adam after the Fall (Gen 3:14-19)
- In the millennial kingdom, the curse is restrained but not eliminated; it's not until the Eternal State that the curse issued at the Fall (Gen 3) is eliminated
- Entropy will be conserved: the "second law" of thermodynamics will be repealed; information will no more be confused, ordered systems will not deteriorate, etc.
- "...the throne of God and of the Lamb" - in the Eternal State, the two thrones of 3:21 (the Davidic and the Father's) are merged into one throne
- The millennial kingdom is Jesus' rule and reign; the Eternal State is the Father's kingdom. In the Eternal State, the authority of Jesus Christ and the authority of God the Father are merged into one.
- The Davidic Throne merges into the Father's Throne, and both the Father and Son sit on it together
- This does not mean that Jesus ceases to reign. Rev 11:15 say Jesus 'will reign forever and ever.' Jesus' kingdom is simply blended into the Father's Universal Kingdom.
- "...His...Him" - present God and the Lamb as essentially one Being
- "...serve" - *latreuo*, suggests priestly service

[OT reference: Gen 3:17-19; Zech 14:11]

- d. God's face (22:4a)
- e. God's name (22:4b)

4 they will **see His face**, and His name *will be* on their foreheads.

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- "...see His face" - an anomaly in Scripture (Ex 33:20; John 1:18; 1 Tim 6:16), but here is described a situation where we, because the sin barrier is gone, can finally see His face
- Denotes perfect, intimate fellowship with God
- A metaphor in Judaism and early Christianity for a full awareness of the presence and power of God (Job 33:26; Ps 10:11; 17:15; 3 John 11), for worshipping God in the temple (Ps 42:2), or for seeing God in the context of prophetic vision (Is 6:1)
- His name on our foreheads means that we will reflect His divine glory in our persons

— Having God's mark on one's body appears 3x in Rev (3:12; 7:3; 14:1); in each case, it was a great privilege indicating ownership and protection, as well as identification  
[OT reference: Ps 17:15; Ezek 9:4]

- f. God's illumination (22:5a)
- g. God's servant-kings (22:5b)

5 And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illuminate them; and they will reign forever and ever.

5 And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

5 There will be no more night, and they will not need any light from lamps or the sun because the Lord God will shine on them. They will rule forever and ever.

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.

- Previously he mentioned the intensity of God's glory that will illuminate the whole new earth (21:23-25; Cf. Zech 14:6-7,9) to show how glorious the city will be, but now he did so to emphasize what a delightful blessing this will be for the city-dwellers (Cf. Num 6:22-27).

- The Lord is talking about reality. Heaven is more than a destination: it is a motivation!

- This is the fulfillment of God's desire and command that man should rule over His creation (Gen 1:26)

— Evidently faithful believers will have more authority in the new creation than unfaithful believers, as will be true during the Millennium (Cf. Matt 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27).

However, we should not think of it as a type of rule in which some people become the objects of oppression.

[OT reference: Is 60:19; Dan 7:18,22,27; Zech 14:7]

### **Missing from the Eternal State**

You can tell a lot about a place by what is missing:

- No Satan (20:10)
- No sea (21:1)
- No death, crying or pain (21:4)
- No sun (22:5)
- No moon (21:23)
- No temple (21:22)
- No night (21:25)
- No evil (21:27)

- No Tree of Knowledge (22:1)
- No curse (22:3)

- (d) Epilogue (22:6-21)
  - (i) Words of Comfort (22:6-17)
    - (a) Faithful Words (22:6a)
    - (b) Christ's Soon Coming (22:6b-7a)

**6** And **he said to me**, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, **sent His angel** to show His **bond-servants** the things which must **soon** take place.

**6** And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place.

**6** He told me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord God of the spirits and of the prophets has sent his messenger to show his servants the things that must happen soon."

**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.

- Similar statements in 19:9 and 21:5; these words are faithful and true because they come from Jesus Christ, who is faithful and true (19:11)

- Verses 6-7 are very similar in form and content to 1:1-3

- It's easy to study Bible prophecy and get your eyes off Who the prophecy is about: Jesus Christ

— If you study Bible prophecy and you miss Jesus, you miss the entire point of the prophecy (Cf. 19:10)

— "...he said to me" - the angel who had been revealing the new creation to John, one of the angels who had the seven bowls (21:9), continued to speak to him

— "...sent His angel" - see note: **Seven-Fold Method of Communication of Revelation** in Rev 1:10

- "...bond-servants" - *doulos*, someone who exists to execute the will of someone else

- "...soon" - *en tachos*, quickness, speed

— The angel assured John that "the things" prophesied to happen soon (4:1-22:5), which John had just seen, were "faithful and true"

— See note: **Timing Texts** and notes on 1:1

- Immanuel = "God with us" will finally be fulfilled

- (c) Blessing for Obedience (22:7b)

7 "And behold, I am coming **quickly**. **Blessed** is the one who **keeps** the words of the **prophecy** of this book."

7 "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

7 "See! I am coming soon! How blessed is the person who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book!"

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

- "...quickly" - *tacos*, can be used chronologically or adverbally

— Here, it's used here adverbally (as opposed to chronologically), meaning that once these events begin to take place, they will come upon the earth quickly in rapid-fire succession

— The events will unfold so quickly that the unbelievers who experience these events will be completely caught off guard

— Preterism must always interpret *tacos* chronologically, because they have to show that these events in Revelation happened in the past, not will happen in the future; see note:

#### **Timing Texts** in Rev 1:1

- "...Blessed" - the blessing comes from studying the Book of Revelation (Cf. 1:3)

- "...keeps" - heeds; taking knowledge learned from diligent study, and making it a part of your daily life

— Our spiritual maturity is not based on how much knowledge we accumulate; it's based upon how much of that knowledge is applied to our daily life. This is when we begin to be blessed ((Cf. John 13:17)).

— Our ability to synthesize and understand deeper Bible knowledge is based on our level of obedience to the knowledge we already have

— The Lord will not trust us with additional understanding and insight if we are not faithful with the understanding and knowledge that we currently have

— Have you been faithful to at least what you know from the Bible?

— James 1:22: But prove yourselves doers of the Word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

- "...prophecy" - *propheteia*, foretelling future events

— 5x Revelation is declares itself to be prophetic (1:3, 22:7,10,18,19); same Greek word used in all 5 occurrences

#### **Seven Beatitudes of Revelation**

1. Blessing upon the reader & heeder of Revelation (1:3)
2. Blessing upon the Tribulation martyrs (14:13)
3. Blessing upon the spiritually prepared (16:15)
4. Blessing upon the Marriage Supper invitees (19:9)

5. Blessing upon the participants of the first resurrection (20:6)

**6. Blessing upon the heeder of Revelation (22:7)**

7. Blessing upon the citizens of New Jerusalem (22:14)

*(d) God Deserves Worship (22:8-9)*

**8** I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw *them*, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

**8** I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

**8** I, John, heard and saw these things. When I had heard and seen them, I bowed down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing me these things.

**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.

- John now resumes addressing the reader in the first person, directly, which he had not done since 1:1,4,9

- John affirms the angel's declaration that the prophecy was genuine. He himself had "heard" and seen ("I...saw") these things that he recorded (Cf. Dan 8:15; 12:5). He was an actual eyewitness of these things (Cf. John 1:14; 19:35; 21:14; 1 John 1:1-3; 4:14).

- John confessed that after he had heard and seen these things, he reacted by worshipping the angel who revealed them to him

— The revelation of the new creation evidently moved John to respond this way a second time (19:10). He was truly blown away by what he saw and heard.

**9** And he \*said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brothers the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"

**9** But he \*said to me, "Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God."

**9** But he told me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you, your brothers the prophets, and those who keep the words in this book. Worship God!"

**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: worship God.

- This angel, like the one in 19:10, rebuked John for worshipping him

— The angel presented himself as a "fellow servant" of John; they both served God

- The angel rightly corrects John, and instructs him to worship God instead...

— John did the same thing in 19:10, and was also rightly corrected to worship God in that instance

— God is zealous for His glory (Is 42:8)

(e) Prophecy Unsealed (22:10)

10 And he \*said to me, "**Do not seal up** the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is **near**.

10 And he \*said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

10 Then he told me, "Don't seal up the words of the prophecy in this book, because the time is near.

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

- "...Do not seal up" - do not seal it has the effect of telling John to teach the contents of the book everywhere; shout it from the rooftops

— Not very many evangelical pastors today understand Revelation or much less even try to teach it at all; if they do, it's at such a shallow depth that it can't possibly have an effect on anyone.

- Why did God tell Daniel to "seal up" his book, but God tells John to leave Revelation unsealed?

— The reason is because Daniel wrote 550 years before the advent, ministry, death and resurrection of Christ; John wrote 60 years after these events, after God had disclosed everything that needed to be disclosed in the NT canon

— Daniel only had a jigsaw puzzle with half the pieces; John, writing after the rest of the NT was completed, had a full puzzle set

— The fact that scholars are understanding the prophecies within the Book of Daniel is a sign we're coming near the end

- "...near" - eggys, imminent (Cf. 1:3)

[OT reference: Dan 8:26; 12:4,9]

(f) Destinies Fixed (22:11)

11 Let the one who does wrong still do wrong, and the one who is filthy still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous still practice righteousness, and the one who is holy still keep himself holy."

11 Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy."

11 Let the one who does what is evil continue to do what is evil. Let the filthy person continue to be filthy. Let the righteous person continue to do what is right. And let the holy person continue to be holy."

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.

- The day is coming in human history where each individual's eternal destiny will be fixed, with no chance of change. Whatever decision each individual has made with regard to their acceptance of Christ's sacrifice on their behalf will be set in stone.
- When Christ returns, there will be no more opportunity for a person to change their eternal destiny. What they are then, they will be forever.
- This is why the angel tells John in v10 to not seal up the prophecy...in order to warn people now, while there is still an opportunity to believe. Opportunity will not exist forever.
- This is a strong warning to unbelievers not to put off becoming a believer in Jesus Christ
- It presents the complete hopelessness of the final state of unbelievers; once Christ comes, people will not be able to change their destiny

[OT reference: Ezek 3:27; Dan 12:10]

All four parts of v11 indicate with a tone of irony the fixed state in which the good and the evil find themselves at a time when no further opportunity for repentance remains. The lesson is: change while there is time.

#### (g) Rewards Given (22:12-13)

**12** "Behold, I am coming **quickly**, and **My reward is with Me**, to reward each one as his work deserves.

**12** "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

**12** "See! I am coming soon! My reward is with me to repay everyone according to his behavior.

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

— "...quickly" - *tacos*, describes the manner in which Jesus will return; same Gr word used in v7,20 (see notes there)

— When it happens, it will happen so quick that the opportunity to repent and believe will be taken away once the event described here (Jesus' return) happens

— It is unbiblical to become careless and lazy just because we believe Jesus is coming soon

— "...My reward *is* with Me" - quoted from Is 40:10; the doctrine of rewards for the believer

— The Lord doesn't just want believers to enter His kingdom one day, He wants us to enter abundantly supplied (2 Peter 1:8-11)

— What a word of encouragement, from Jesus' mouth, to these struggling churches. These seven churches in Asia Minor, the original audience for Revelation, seemed to have everything stacked against them when John wrote.

- The power of Rome is coming down on these churches; the nation of Israel, who rejected her own Messiah, hates these people. Satan has wormed his way into many of these churches, and they are struggling in just about every area you can possibly struggle in.
- What these churches are going through was not in vain...Jesus is keeping a record, and at His coming, He's ready to reward them (Gal 6:9)
- God "gives" us His salvation, but he "pays us" for our good works
- The Judgment Seat of Christ can be a time of great regret (1 John 2:28) or it can be an occasion of supreme joy (2 Cor 5:9-11)
- If you go back into America's founding documents, there were requirements for certain office holders as far as their beliefs. One such requirement is the belief that God is a rewarder of good and a punisher of evil.
- The purpose was to ensure that leaders understood that they weren't the pinnacle of authority, and an all-powerful God was always looking over their shoulder and would hold them accountable for their actions while in office.

[OT reference: Ps 62:12; Is 40:10; 62:11]

| Scripture's Four Judgments |                                |                              |                                 |                                  |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Name                       | Sheep and Goat                 | Judgment of the Jews         | <u>Bema Seat</u>                | Great White Throne               |
| Scripture                  | Matt 25:31-46                  | Ezek 20:33-44                | <u>1 Cor 3:10-15</u>            | Rev 20:11-15                     |
| Place                      | Earth, Jerusalem               | Earth, wilderness            | <u>Heaven</u>                   | Earth                            |
| Audience                   | Gentile Tribulation survivors  | Jewish Tribulation survivors | <u>Church Age believers</u>     | All unsaved                      |
| When                       | After Tribulation              | After Tribulation            | <u>After rapture</u>            | After Millennium                 |
| Purpose                    | Saved Gentiles enter kingdom   | Saved Jews enter kingdom     | <u>Reward believers</u>         | Degree of punishment in hell     |
| Evaluation                 | Treatment of Christ's brethren | Passing under shepherd's rod | <u>Works taken through fire</u> | Not in the book; judged by books |

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

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

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

- Jesus offered three titles of Himself that give believers assurance that He both can and will fulfill His former promise to reward: "the Alpha and the Omega"; "the first and the last"; "the beginning and the end"

— This is how we know that Jesus is qualified to reward believers...He sees everything perfectly, nothing is hidden from His eyes, from beginning to end

— He has complete knowledge of both history past, the present, and history future

[OT reference: Is 44:6]

(h) Redeemed Blessed (22:14-15)

**14** Blessed are those who **wash their robes**, so that they will have the right to the tree of life, and may enter the city by the gates.

**14** 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.

**14** "How blessed are those who wash their robes so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city!

**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.

- "...wash their robes" - Eph 5:26 clarifies how you get your robe washed, and Who does the washing...

— Describing Christ's relationship with the Church, Paul says: so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word

— We are washed in the blood of Christ because of the word of Christ. The moment we trust in the Gospel, our robes are washed.

- What are the two privileges believers will receive?

1. Free access to the tree of life; after the Fall, humans were barred from access to the tree of life (Gen 3:22-24)

- The Eternal State will be a place where we no longer struggle with the consequences of our sin. The nature of sin is that it brings consequences, the nature of which cannot be reversed.
- There are relationships in your past that you can't get back into today, you can't clean up, even through apologies and forgiveness, the hurt that was done.
- Think about how much time of your life is spent dealing with the consequences of past sin

2. Free ingress/egress to/from the New Jerusalem through the gates

- The Eternal State will be a place where we no longer struggle with the consequences of our sin. The nature of sin is that it brings consequences, the nature of which cannot be reversed.
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### **Seven Beatitudes of Revelation**

1. Blessing upon the reader & heeder of Revelation (1:3)
2. Blessing upon the Tribulation martyrs (14:13)
3. Blessing upon the spiritually prepared (16:15)
4. Blessing upon the Marriage Supper invitees (19:9)
5. Blessing upon the participants of the first resurrection (20:6)
6. Blessing upon the heeder of Revelation (22:7)
7. **Blessing upon the citizens of New Jerusalem (22:14)**

15 **Outside** are the **dogs**, the **sorcerers**, the **sexually immoral persons**, the **murderers**, the **idolaters**, and everyone who loves and practices **lying**.

15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

15 Outside are dogs, sorcerers, immoral people, murderers, idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

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

- "Outside" - this verse is often taught as referring to Christians struggling with sin; however, it actually refers to non-believers, who are "outside" of where the believers are

- This list of behaviors that characterize unbelievers is the same list given in 21:8. That verse states that these people will be in the lake of fire and experience the second death, thus they are unbelievers.

- The reason these verses are included in messages to the believer is to demonstrate to us that when we wander back into the sin nature, we're living like an unbeliever, which is something we shouldn't do because it's inconsistent with who we are and inconsistent with our identity in Christ.

- In contrast to the blessings given to believers in v14 is the lack of blessing in v15

- "...dogs" - Paul uses the expression "dogs" in Phil 3:2 to describe unsaved Pharisees who were false teachers coming into the church at Philippi. It's likely that John uses the same expression here to describe the same people Paul was describing in Phil 3:2.

- "...sorcerers" - *pharmakos*, persons who, for whatever reason, are not depending upon the Holy Spirit for their source of power, but have tapped into foreign substances

- Often without understanding it, they've opened their minds up to spiritual realities of a negative sort
- "...sexually immoral persons" - those who no longer care about God's standard for sexuality (Gen 2:24; Heb 13:4)
- The grace of God does not change the fact that there is a standard of God
- "...murderers" - hands that shed innocent blood are an abomination to God (Prov 6:16-17)
- "...idolaters" - anything we look to for security or prestige outside of God Himself
- "...lying" - these are not just people who tell lies, but they "love" lying and the "practice" lying
- All five of these sins are listed previously in 21:8. These must be describing unbelievers because that verse says that they will be sent to the Lake of Fire, which is the second death.
- This doesn't mean that you can't be a Christian if you have done or do any of these sins, as that would eliminate virtually every single person alive
- The point of listing these sins is an encouragement to believers about why would you want to ever commit these sins if these are sins that are common among unbelievers? They are clearly going into the second death, and you are not, so don't imitate their actions/behaviors.

[OT reference: Deut 23:18]

- (i) God is Gracious (22:16-17)
  - (1) Revealer (22:16a)
  - (2) Covenant Keeper (22:16b)
  - (3) Morning Star (22:16c)

**16** "I, Jesus, have sent **My angel** to testify to you of these things for the **churches**. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

**16** "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

**16** "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give this testimony to you for the churches. I am the root and descendant of David, the bright morning star."

**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.

- "...My angel" - the main angel who revealed this material to John (Cf. v6)
- "...churches" - Jesus' specially appointed angel gave the whole revelation ("these things") to John, but it was ultimately for all the churches, not just the seven churches in Asia Minor
- This is the first and only reference to the church since the letters to the seven churches in Rev 2-3

- "...the root and the descendant of David" - symbolized by the "Root" (Cf. 5:5), the Davidic Ruler will rise out of difficult circumstances

- "...morning star" - the signal in the sky that alerts that time is moving from night/darkness into a new day full of light (Cf. 2:28; 2 Peter 1:19)

Jesus is gracious because:

1. He gave the Book of Revelation to the churches (v16a)
2. As the son of David, He will fulfill Israel's promises (v16b)
3. He is the morning star, the precursor of the new day (v16c)
4. He offers the water of life freely (v17)

#### (4) Offers the Water of Life (22:17)

**17** The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is **thirsty** come; let the one who desires, take the water of life without cost.

**17** The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

**17** The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let everyone who hears this say, "Come!" Let everyone who is thirsty come! Let anyone who wants the water of life take it as a gift!

**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.

- An invitation to unbelievers to partake of living water, without cost, with which you will never thirst again

— This is not a limited invitation...it is a universal invitation

- "...thirsty" - the one who is thirsty is the person who senses their need (Cf. Matt 5:6; John 4:10)

- The ability to abide with Jesus Christ in the Holy City is available to all simply for the asking...and that's the gospel we declare today

Religion says...

Jesus Christ did 90%

You must  
do 10%

This is salvation by works.

God says...

Jesus Christ did 100%

This is salvation by God's grace.

(ii) Words of Warning (22:18-19)

**18** I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

**18** I testify to everyone who hears the words of the of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book;

**18** I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy in this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will strike him with the plagues that are written in this book.

**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:

- A very strong warning to not add to Scripture...

- Both Adam and Eve took the original command from God, which was simple (Gen 2:16-17; Cf. 2 Cor 11:3) and made it complicated by both adding to it ("or touch it," Gen 3:3) and subtracting from it ("any" tree; eat "freely," Gen 2:16-17)
- Eve likely received a poor interpretation of what God actually said from her husband, since Eve didn't exist when God commanded Adam about the Garden
- The serpent, in its response to Eve, also both added (not eat from "any" tree, Gen 3:1) and subtracted from God's original command ("not die," Gen 3:4)
- God is saying that adding to and subtracting from God's divine revelation is what got humanity into the sin mess in the first place, which cost Him His only Son to get humanity back into a place of right standing before God.
- Since adding/subtracting started this mess, God is saying, Don't ever do it again.
- God does not take well to His created being, people, assume the role of God Himself and get into the business of editing God's Word. This command is given throughout Scripture (Deut 4:2; 12:32; Prov 30:6; Gal 1:8-9).
- The consequences given for adding or subtracting from God's Word here are so severe, many use it to call into question the security of the believer
- However, these verses must be viewed in light of the near context, which beginning with v17 is talking about unbelievers. John is referring to what unbelievers do with God's Word, which is add to it and subtract from it.

[OT reference: Deut 4:2; 12:32]



## Dennis Rokser

“A common characteristic of cults and religions that profess to be ‘Christian’ is that they invariably add other books, creeds, council decisions, or ‘inspired’ writings of their founder or leaders to the Bible, and they put these on a par with God’s Word.”

Dennis Rokser, *Shall Never Perish Forever*, p. 274

19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his **part** from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.  
19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.  
19 If anyone takes away any words from the book of this prophecy, God will take away his portion of the tree of life and the holy city that are described 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.

- "...part" - *meros*, in Revelation, a future experience that people have not yet partaken in; it is used to describe both believers (20:6) and unbelievers (21:8)
- In this verse, "take away his part" is referring to the future experience of the believer
- The one who is adding to/subtracting from Scripture, evidencing the fact that they are unsaved, will have no future experience in the Eternal State, enjoying the "tree of life" and the "holy city"
- A believer who perverts the teaching of this book may lose part of their eternal reward

— Revelation opened with a blessing on all who obey its instructions (1:3) and it closes with a strong curse on all who pervert or disobey it  
[OT reference: Deut 4:2; 12:32; 29:19-20]



## Dennis Rokser

“To unbelievers who would add to God’s Word in this fashion, the Lord promises to ‘add to him the plagues that are written in this book.’ The plagues spoken of in the book of Revelation occur during that future period of God’s judgment on the earth known as the Tribulation. If anyone reading Revelation accepts the invitation of v17 and becomes a believer in Christ prior to the Tribulation, that person will experience the pretribulational Rapture of the saints (1 Thess 4:13-18) rather than the plagues of the Tribulation (1 Thess 5:1-3). Therefore, the warning of Rev 22:18 applies only to unbelievers. This is not a warning to believers to stay saved or to be rewarded for their perseverance.”

Dennis Rokser, *Shall Never Perish Forever*, p. 274



## Dennis Rokser

“Verses 18-19 follow with a grave warning to unbelievers who would add to or subtract from the words of this book. Either adding to or taking away from the Word of God is characteristic of unbelievers who cannot simply accept by faith what God says in His Word. When God speaks, the response of the believing heart is simply ‘Amen.’ But the unbeliever does not accept what God says at face value, and so he must change the Word to suit himself.”

Dennis Rokser, *Shall Never Perish Forever*, p. 273.

2 Peter 3:16-17:

16 as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which there are some things that are hard to understand, **which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.**

17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not **carried away by the error of unscrupulous people** and lose your own firm commitment,

### Test the Spirits

- Deut 13:1-5
- Is 8:19-20
- Acts 17:11
- Gal 1:8-9
- 1 Thess 5:20-21
- 1 John 4:1
- Rev 2:2

(iii) Words of Benediction (22:20-21)

**20** He who testifies to these things says, **"Yes, I am coming quickly."** Amen. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

**20** He who testifies to these things says, **"Yes, I am coming quickly."** Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

**20** The one who is testifying to these things says, **"Yes, I am coming soon!"** Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

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

- "...quickly" - *tacos*, describes the manner in which Jesus will return; not a chronological statement based on John's time of writing (Cf. v12)

- "...Come, Lord Jesus" - you would think, after John sees in a vision all of the horrific judgments that will one day come upon planet earth, the widespread death and suffering, the non-repentance of the earth dwellers and the evil on the earth...that he would not want these events to come quickly.

— However, John beckons the Lord to come, because he sees what these events will accomplish...the eviction of Satan, the rule of reign of Christ on the earth for 1000 years, and the Eternal State.

— These events, detailed in the latter section of Revelation, are so compelling to John that he is able to set aside his emotions and feelings of the horrors of judgment that led to these things.

— In 10:10, John is told to eat a book; the book is the message of God. It was sweet as honey for a moment, but his stomach was bitter. His stomach was bitter because John saw the judgments of God; it tasted was sweet because he saw what these judgments would produce: the eviction of Satan, the ushering in of God's kingdom, and the Eternal State.

**21** The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

**21** The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

**21** May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.

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

- Let us remember that this book was written not only to inform the believer, but was also written to warn the lost of their eternal doom and to bid them to seek the Savior who alone can deliver them from a godless eternity.