

# CHAPTER 22

In this chapter we have,

- I.** A further description of the heavenly state of the church (v. 1-5).
- II.** A confirmation of this and all the other visions of this book (v. 6-19).
- III.** The conclusion (v. 20, 21).

## REVELATION 22:1-5

### THE NEW JERUSALEM

The heavenly state which was before described as a city, and called the new Jerusalem, is here described as a paradise, alluding to the earthly paradise which was lost by the sin of the first Adam; here is another paradise restored by the second Adam. A paradise in a city, or a whole city in a paradise! In the first paradise there were only two persons to behold the beauty and taste the pleasures of it; but in this second paradise whole cities and nations shall find abundant delight and satisfaction. And here observe,

- I.** The river of paradise. The earthly paradise was well watered: no place can be pleasant or fruitful that is not so. This river is described,
  - 1.** By its fountain-head — *the throne of God and the Lamb*. All our springs of grace, comfort, and glory, are in God; and all our streams from him are through the mediation of the Lamb.
  - 2.** By its quality — *pure and clear as crystal*. All the streams of earthly comfort are muddy; but these are clear, salutary, and refreshing, giving life, and preserving life, to those who drink of them.
- II.** The tree of life, in this paradise. Such a tree there was in the earthly paradise, ~~(v. 9)~~Genesis 2:9. This far excels it. And now, as to this tree, observe,

**1.** The situation of it — *in the midst of the street, and on either side the river*; or, as might have been better rendered, *in the midst between the terrace-walk and the river*. This tree of life is fed by the pure waters of the river that comes from the throne of God. The presence and perfections of God furnish out all the glory and blessedness of heaven.

**2.** The fruitfulness of this tree.

**(1.)** It brings forth many sorts of fruit — *twelve sorts*, suited to the refined taste of all the saints.

**(2.)** It brings forth fruit at all times — *yields its fruit every month*. This tree is never empty, never barren; there is always fruit upon it. In heaven there is not only a variety of pure and satisfying pleasures, but a continuance of them, and always fresh.

**(3.)** The fruit is not only pleasant, but wholesome. The presence of God in heaven is the health and happiness of the saints; there they find in him a remedy for all their former maladies, and are preserved by him in the most healthful and vigorous state.

**III.** The perfect freedom of this paradise from every thing that is evil (v. 3): *There shall be no more curse; no accursed one* — *katanathema*, no serpent there, as there was in the earthly paradise. Here is the great excellency of this paradise. The devil has nothing to do there; he cannot draw the saints from serving God to be subject to himself, as he did our first parents, nor can he so much as disturb them in the service of God.

**IV.** The supreme felicity of this paradisiacal state.

**1.** There the saints shall see the face of God; there they shall enjoy the beatific vision.

**2.** God will own them, as having his seal and name on their foreheads.

**3.** *They shall reign with him for ever*; their service shall be not only freedom but honour and dominion.

**4.** All this shall be with perfect knowledge and joy. They shall be full of wisdom and comfort, continually walking in the light of the Lord; and this not for a time, *but for ever and ever*.

## REVELATION 22:6-19

### THE NEW JERUSALEM

We have here a solemn ratification of the contents of this book, and particularly of this last vision (though some think it may not only refer to the whole book, but to the whole New Testament, yea, to the whole Bible, completing and confirming the canon of scripture); and here,

- 1.** This is confirmed by the name and nature of that God who gave out these discoveries: he is *the Lord God, faithful and true*, and so are all his sayings.
- 2.** By the messengers he chose, to reveal these things to the world; the holy angels showed them to holy men of God; and God would not employ his saints and angels in deceiving the world.
- 3.** They will soon be confirmed by their accomplishment: they are things that must shortly be done; Christ will make haste, *he will come quickly*, and put all things out of doubt; and then those will prove the wise and happy men who have believed and kept his words.
- 4.** By the integrity of that angel who had been the apostle's guide and interpreter in these visions; this integrity was such that he not only refused to accept religious adoration from John, but once and again reproved him for it. He who was so tender of the honour of God, and so displeased with what was a wrong to God, would never come in his name to lead the people of God into mere dreams and delusions; and it is a still further confirmation of the sincerity of this apostle that he confesses his own sin and folly, into which he had now again relapsed, and he leaves this his failing on perpetual record: this shows he was a faithful and an impartial writer.
- 5.** By the order given to leave the book of the prophecy open, to be perused by all, that they might labour to understand it, that they might make their objections against it, and compare the prophecy with the events. God here deals freely and openly with all; he does not speak in secret, but calls every one to witness to the declarations here made, v. 10.
- 6.** By the effect this book, thus kept open, will have upon men; those that are filthy and unjust will take occasion thence to be more so, but it will

confirm, strengthen, and further sanctify those that are upright with God; it will be a savour of life to some and of death to others, and so will appear to be from God, v. 12.

**7.** It will be Christ's rule of judgment at the great day; he will dispense rewards and punishments to men according as their works agree or disagree with the word of God; and therefore that word itself must needs be faithful and true.

**8.** It is the word of him who is the author, finisher, and rewarder of the faith and holiness of his people, v. 13, 14. He is *the first and the last*, and the same from first to last, and so is his word too; and he will by this word give to his people, who conform themselves to it, *a right to the tree of life*, and an entrance into heaven; and this will be a full confirmation of the truth and authority of his word, since it contains the title and evidence of that confirmed state of holiness and happiness that remains for his people in heaven.

**9.** It is a book that condemns and excludes from heaven all wicked, unrighteous persons, and particularly *those that love and make lies* (v. 15), and therefore can never be itself a lie.

**10.** It is confirmed by *the testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of prophecy*. And this Jesus, as God, is *the root of David*, though, as man, his offspring — a person in whom all uncreated and created excellencies meet, too great and too good to deceive his churches and the world. He is the fountain of all light, the *bright and the morning star*, and as such has given to his churches this morning light of prophecy, to assure them of the light of that perfect day which is approaching.

**11.** It is confirmed by an open and general invitation to all to come and partake of the promises and privileges of the gospel, those streams of the water of life; these are tendered to all who feel in their souls a thirst which nothing in this world can quench.

**12.** It is confirmed by the joint testimony of the Spirit of God, and that gracious Spirit that is in all the true members of the church of God; *the Spirit and the bride* join in testifying the truth and excellency of the gospel.

**13.** It is confirmed by a most solemn sanction, condemning and cursing all who should dare to corrupt or change the word of God, either by adding to

it or taking from it, v. 18, 19. He that adds to the word of God draws down upon himself *all the plagues written in this book*; and he who takes any thing away from it cuts himself off from all the promises and privileges of it. This sanction is like a flaming sword, to guard the canon of the scripture from profane hands. Such a fence as this God set about the law (~~390E~~Deuteronomy 4:2), and the whole Old Testament (~~390E~~Malachi 4:4), and now in the most solemn manner about the whole Bible, assuring us that it is a book of the most sacred nature, divine authority, and of the last importance, and therefore the peculiar care of the great God.

## ~~621~~ REVELATION 22:20-21

### CONCLUSION

We have now come to the conclusion of the whole, and that in three things: —

**I.** Christ's farewell to his church. He seems now, after he has been discovering these things to his people on earth, to take leave of them, and return to heaven; but he parts with them in great kindness, and assures them it shall not be long before he comes again to them: *Behold, I come quickly*. As when he ascended into heaven, after his resurrection, he parted with a promise of his gracious presence, so here he parts with a promise of a speedy return. If any say, “Where is the promise of his coming, when so many ages have passed since this was written?” let them know he is not slack to his people, but long-suffering to his enemies: his coming will be sooner than they are aware, sooner than they are prepared, sooner than they desire; and to his people it will be seasonable. The vision is for an appointed time, and will not tarry. *He will come quickly*; let this word be always sounding in our ear, and let us give all diligence that we may be found of him in peace, *without spot and blameless*.

**II.** The church's hearty echo to Christ's promise,

**1.** Declaring her firm belief of it: *Amen, so it is, so it shall be*.

**2.** Expressing her earnest desire of it: *Even so, come, Lord Jesus; make hast, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or like a young hart on the mountain of spices*. Thus beats the pulse of the church, thus breathes that

gracious Spirit which actuates and informs the mystical body of Christ; and we should never be satisfied till we find such a spirit breathing in us, and causing us to *look for the blessed hope, and glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*. This is the language of the church of the first-born, and we should join with them, often putting ourselves in mind of his promise. What comes from heaven in a promise should be sent back to heaven in a prayer, “*Come, Lord Jesus, put an end to this state of sin, sorrow, and temptation; gather thy people out of this present evil world, and take them up to heaven, that state of perfect purity, peace, and joy, and so finish thy great design, and fulfil all that word in which thou hast caused thy people to hope.*”

**III.** The apostolical benediction, which closes the whole: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen*. Here observe,

**1.** The Bible ends with a clear proof of the Godhead of Christ, since the Spirit of God teaches the apostle to bless his people in the name of Christ, and to beg from Christ a blessing for them, which is a proper act of adoration.

**2.** 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*.