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## The Glory of Heaven



**Part 15** (980927 AM )

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When the Bible opens in Genesis we find ourselves transported back to the Garden of Eden, and see a place of perfection and beauty.

When the Bible closes in Revelation 22 we are transported forward to the fringes of eternity and step out again into the very paradise of God, another Garden, again **perfect and beautiful**.

Please join me in Eden for a few moments. To realize how glorious Heaven will be we need to go back and meet the 1<sup>st</sup> two humans on earth. We need to listen to the **inspired, accurate and divine recounting of their experience in the Garden of Eden**.

Try to think with me of life as a perfect human and imagine what it was like in the dawn of creation. Your first memory would be waking up in God's garden, Eden. You would remember a comfortable world with no extremes of hot and cold, no storms, no disasters to fear. A secure home with no pestering bugs, no poisonous snakes, no deadly spiders. Just the continual beauty of fragrant and color filled flowering orchids hanging from the verdant green trees. Blooms that never fell off, never yellowed or wilted. Full, juicy fruit that just hung ripe on the branches but never fell **off and rotted**.

Even more, you would remember when you had a body that never ached, a digestive system that never rebelled, an eyesight that needed no correction, ears that heard the sweet sounds of life all around. No pains, never a sorrow, not even a fear. No weariness, just peace filled living.

In God's perfect Garden it was paradise living. Everyday was an adventure - new colors, new fragrances, new symmetry in flowers, butterflies and all the wonders of a perfect animal world. There were no predators, no scavengers, and no carnivores. Just placid and magnificent creatures reflecting the majesty of God. Around every corner of towering and graceful trees each perfectly planted by God - were flocks, herds and gatherings of exquisite living animals.

Best of all your memories would be remembering the sweetness of the sound of the voice of the Lord. About supper time each day a gentle breeze would whisper by and then you would hear the voice of God. The Gardener and Planner of the Universe was walking amongst His creatures in the cool of the day. He was seeking fellowship with you His best friends whom He had made to look just like Him. And your ears that He created would hear the sweetest sound of all, the Voice of Jesus who created them! But then entered the bad guy to Paradise, The Dragon serpent Satan. But he is no more. God has sealed him with those who refused to stop following him in the Lake of Fire. But we who listened to and followed Jesus are here in the **Garden of God**.

How unlike the 1st Adam is this last Adam. "The Devil challenged the first man. The Last Man challenged the Devil. The Devil ruined the first Adam. The Last Adam spoiled the Devil. The First Adam involved the Race in his defeat. The Last Adam included the Race in His victory. The First Adam stood as the head of the race and falling, dragged the race down with him. The Last Adam stood as the Head of the new race, and being victorious, lifted that race with Him.

- The city is comforting [Revelation 22:1-5](#)
- The City Is calling [Revelation 22:6-21](#)
- God's word is our priority (*vv. 6-11, 18-19*).
- God's work is our focus (*vv. 12-14*).
- godly purity is our goal (*vv. 15-16*).
- Christ's return is our hope (*vv. 17, 20-21*).

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In **Revelation 22:1-5**, we discover[1] that our Heavenly Home the Celestial City is like a beautiful garden. Like we saw a few moments ago it seems like the Garden of Eden. Some differences are, there were four rivers in Eden (**Gen. 2:10-14**), but God has only one river in His Celestial city. When Ezekiel saw a river for cleansing and life, it was flowing from under the altar of the Millennial Temple (**Ezek. 47**); but this river of life flows from God's throne. The Lord God Almighty is the source of all true purity.

In Eden humans were prohibited from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and of the tree of life (**Gen. 2:15-17; 3:22-24**). But in God's Garden we will have unhindered access to the tree of life. As we ponder this heavenly scene we realize that the river and the tree are not only literal, but they symbolize the abundant life we inherit in this glorious Celestial city.

When John writes "no more curse" he is reminding us of the dark days of **Genesis 3:14-19** when the curse began. It is also remarkable that even the Old Testament closes with the warning, "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (**Mal. 4:6**). But with Jesus comes hope, life and liberation from the curse. Because of Calvary God announces, "And there shall be no more curse!" For the Prince of Death, Satan will be consigned to hell; The Prince of Life our Lord Jesus has liberated all of creation, and made it new; and in heaven we see that for ever the curse of sin will be gone.

PROBATIONARY WORLD ( <i>Genesis</i> ) [2]	ETERNAL WORLD ( <i>Revelation</i> )
Division of light and darkness (1:4)	No night there (21:25)
Division of land and sea (1:10)	No more sea (21:1)
Rule of sun and moon (1:6)	No need of sun or moon (21:23)
First heavens and earth finished (2:1-3)	New heaven & earth forever (21:1)
Man in a prepared garden (2:8,9)	Man in prepared city (21:2)
River flowing out of Eden (2:10)	River flowing from God's throne (22:1)
Tree of life in the midst of the garden (2:9)	Tree of life throughout the city (22:2)
Gold in the land (2:12)	Gold in the city (21:21)
God walking in the garden (3:8)	God dwelling with His people (21:3)
The Spirit energizing (1:2)	The Spirit inviting (22:17)
Garden accessible to the Liar (3:1-5)	City closed to all liars (21:27)
Man in God's image (1:27)	Man in God's presence (21:3)
Man the probationer (2:17)	Man the heir (21:7)
<b>CURSED WORLD (<i>Genesis</i>)</b>	<b>REDEEMED WORLD (<i>Revelation</i>)</b>
Cursed ground (3:17)	No more curse (22:3)
Daily sorrow (3:17)	No more sorrow (21:4)
Sweat on the face (3:19)	No more tears (21:4)
Thorns and thistles (3:18)	No more pain (21:4)
Eating herbs of the field (3:18)	Twelve manner of fruits (22:2)
Death and Returning to the dust (3:19)	No more death (21:4)
Coats of skins (3:21)	Fine linen, white and clean (19:14)
Satan opposing (3:15)	Satan banished (20:10)
Drive From Garden Kept From The Tree of Life (3:24)	Access to the tree of life (22:14)
Banished From The Garden (3:23)	Free entry to the city (22:14)
Redeemer promised (3:15)	Redemption accomplished (5:9,10)
Evil continually (6:5)	Nothing that defileth (21:27)
Seed of the woman (3:15)	Root and offspring of David (22:16)
Cherubim guarding (3:24)	Angels inviting (21:9)

So, the end of history[3] and the beginning of history belong together. The last leaf of the Bible corresponds with the first. Holy Scripture begins with Paradise (**Gen. 1:2**); with Paradise it ends (**Rev. 22**)

But the conclusion is greater than the beginning. The Omega is more powerful than the Alpha. The future Paradise is not only the lost and regained, but above all the heavenly and eternally glorified Paradise.

- In the lost Paradise there was danger: "On the day on which you eat thereof you will die the death" (**Gen. 2:17**); in the glorified Paradise full security reigns. "There shall be no more curse" (**Rev. 22:3**).
- In the lost Paradise, the serpent said: "You will become as God" (**Gen. 3:5**); in the glorified Paradise in Scripture itself says: "His name (that is, His nature) shall be on their foreheads" (**Rev. 22:4**).
- In the lost Paradise stood a tree of knowledge (**Gen. 2:9**); in the glorified one it is no longer required (**Rev. 22:1-5**); for we behold with direct vision the face of God (**Rev. 22:4**).
- The lost Paradise had an end through the defeat of man (**Gen. 3:24**); the glorified Paradise abides eternally for the overcomers (**Rev. 2:7**). "They shall reign for ever and ever" (**Rev. 22:5**).

So the celestial city is comforting and glorious as we await that day, but -

The City Is calling **Revelation 22:6-21**

- God's word is our priority (vv. 6-11, 18-19). KEEP THE WORD
- God's work is our focus (vv. 12-14). SERVE GOD
- Godly purity is our goal (vv. 15-16). STAY PURE
- Christ's return is our hope (vv. 17, 20-21). WATCH FOR JESUS

Heaven is more than a destination; it is a deeply moving call to action from God in Heaven, for us on earth. Our Heavenly destiny should make a difference in our lives here and now. When the Old Testament saints learned of their heavenly city it challenged them to walk with God and serve Him (**Heb. 11:10, 13-16**). When Jesus needed to be encouraged as He faced the Cross it was the hope of returning to His Father in heaven that strengthened Him. (**Heb. 12:2**). Our Heavenly Home is an anchor of our soul. It pulls us ever upward, Heavenward, Homeward and Godward.

First, god is calling for us to make his word is our priority (vv. 6-11, 18-19). So, we

What does it mean to "keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book"? ([Rev. 22:7](#)) Jesus told us if we obey His Word we love Him. To love Him thus entails a hunger of His Word, a diligent interaction with His truth and a yieldedness to His Holy Spirit to bring us more and more into conformity with Jesus

#### REMEMBER THE BLESSINGS OF REVELATION?

1. Christ's Word IS A BLESSING. Blessed readers, hearers and keepers [1:3] Emphasizes the importance of Word of God. [Revelation 1:3](#) Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.
2. Christ's GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE IS A BLESSING. Happiness of dead who die in Lord [14:13] Emphasizes blessing of eternal life. [Revelation 14:13](#) Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."
3. Christ's COMING IS A BLESSING. Envious status of those watching and keeping their garments white. [16:15] Emphasizes Lord's return. [Revelation 16:15](#) "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."
4. Christ's PRESENCE IS A BLESSING. Blessed delight of those invited to Lamb's supper [19:9] Emphasizes the joy of Christ's presence. [Revelation 19:9](#) Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."
5. Christ's ASSURANCE IS A BLESSING. Blessed participants of first Resurrection [20:6] Emphasizes deliverance from death. [Revelation 20:6](#) Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.
6. Christ's SERVICE IS A BLESSING. Joy of heeding this book [22:7] Emphasizes obedience to Word of God. [Revelation 22:7](#) "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."
7. Christ's HOME IS A BLESSING. Happy result is a clean robe and access to tree of life [22:14] Emphasizes eternal sustenance. [Revelation 22:14](#) Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

Does [Revelation 22:11](#) suggest[4] that God does not want men to repent and change their ways? No, because that would be contrary to the message of Revelation and of the Gospel itself. The angel's words must be understood in light of the repeated statement, "Behold, I come quickly" ([Rev. 22:7](#), 12), as well as his statement, "For the time is at hand" ([Rev. 22:10](#)). Jesus Christ's coming will occur so quickly that men will not have time to change their characters. [Revelation 22:11](#), therefore, is a solemn warning that decision determines character, and character determines destiny. Suffering believers might ask, "Is it worth it to live a godly life?" John's reply is, "Yes! Jesus is returning, and He will reward you!"

The warnings[5] in [Revelation 22:18-19](#) do not suggest that people who tamper with the Bible will be brought back to earth to suffer the Tribulation's plagues, or that they will lose their salvation. Nobody fully understands the Bible or can explain everything in it; and those of us who teach the Word sometimes have to change our interpretations as we grow in knowledge. God sees the heart, and He can separate ignorance from impudence and immaturity from rebellion. It was customary in ancient days for writers to put this kind of warning at the close of their books, because the people who copied them for public distribution might be tempted to tamper with the material. However, John's warning was not addressed to a writer, but to the hearer, the believer in the congregation where this book was read aloud. By analogy, however, it would apply to anyone reading and studying the book today. We may not be able to explain the penalties given, but we do know this: it is a dangerous thing to tamper with the Word of God. The one who guards the Word and obeys it will be blessed; the one who alters it will be disciplined in some way.

Secondly, God is calling for us to make His work our focus. So we need to SERVE GOD v. 12-14

#### WE SERVE GOD BY SPEAKING OF JESUS

The early preachers were supremely concerned with exalting the name of Jesus Christ. It was in that name that they baptized ([Acts 2:38](#)) and healed ([Acts 3:6](#), 16:4:10). Even the church's opponents recognized how central the name of Jesus was in apostolic preaching ([Acts 5:40](#)). Philip preached the name of Jesus ([Acts 8:12](#)), as did Paul ([Acts 9:27](#)). The Jerusalem council commended Barnabas and Paul as "men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Acts 15:26](#)), and Paul expressed his willingness to die for that name ([Acts 21:13](#)).

The Bible refers to our Lord by many names—by some estimates more than 200. They include such familiar ones as Alpha and Omega ([Rev. 22:13](#)), Beloved ([Eph. 1:6](#)), Bread of Life ([John 6:48](#)), Bright and morning star ([Rev. 22:16](#)), Firstborn from the dead ([Col. 1:18](#)), Holy One ([Acts 2:27](#)), Immanuel ([Isa. 7:14](#)), Lamb ([Rev. 5:6](#)), Light of the world ([John 8:12](#)), Lion of the tribe of Judah ([Rev. 5:5](#)); Lord ([John 13:13](#)), Lord of lords ([Rev. 17:14](#)), Lord of the Sabbath ([Matt. 12:8](#)), Man of sorrows ([Isa. 53:3](#)), Mighty God ([Isa. 9:6](#)), Prince of peace ([Isa. 9:6](#)), Righteous Judge ([2 Tim. 4:8](#)), Root of David ([Rev. 5:5](#)), Savior ([Luke 2:11](#)), Servant ([Acts 3:13](#)), Shepherd ([John 10:11](#)), Son of God ([Mark 1:1](#)), Son of Man ([John 5:27](#)), and Word of God ([John 1:1](#); [Rev. 19:13](#)). But of all the names of our Lord, the most common is Jesus, which appears more than 800 times in the New Testament.

Thirdly, god is calling for us to make his purity our goal . So we need to AVOID SIN v. 15- 16

By whatever name He is called, the testimony of Scripture is that Jesus Christ is the only person who can provide salvation. All spiritual blessings come through His name, including

- Adoption as God's children ([John 1:12](#)),
- Salvation ([Acts 4:12](#)),
- Forgiveness of sins ([Acts 10:43](#)),
- Answered prayer ([John 14:13-14](#)), and
- The Holy Spirit ([John 14:26](#)).
- It is at His name that every knee will bow ([Phil. 2:10](#)).
- Believers are to do everything in His name ([Col. 3:17](#)), so
- That His name will be glorified ([2 Thess. 1:12](#)).
- Those who name His name must turn away from sin ([2 Tim. 2:19](#)).

Peter was the first to preach in the name of Jesus, and all who truly preach the gospel stand in the tradition deriving from him. On the Day of Pentecost, against the backdrop of the Spirit's coming, he preached the first sermon in the church's history. The theme of that sermon was Jesus Christ.[6]

Finally, God is calling for us to make His Son's return our hope So we need to WATCH FOR JESUS v. 17-21

#### WHILE WE WATCH GOD'S MERCY IS WAITING

Three times in this closing chapter John wrote, "I [Christ] come quickly" ([Rev. 22:7](#), [12, 20](#)). But He has "delayed" His return for nearly 2,000 years! Yes, He has; and Peter tells us why: God wants to give this sinful world opportunity to repent and be saved ([2 Peter 3:1ff](#)). In the meantime, the Spirit of God, through the church (the bride), calls for Jesus to come; for the bride wants to meet her Bridegroom and enter into her home. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" ([Rev. 22:20](#)).

#### WHILE WE WATCH OUR HEARTS LONG FOR JESUS

Revelation concludes with the promise of Christ's soon return, an offer to drink of the water of life that flows through the great street of the New Jerusalem, and a warning to those who read the book ([22:12-21](#)). May we pray with John, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus! for our responsibilities and opportunities may well increase beyond all imagination. We shall see His face and this will be our highest glory.

Our Lord's last promise is, "Surely I am coming quickly." It is interesting to note how the Word concludes with:

- An assurance of the Second Coming,
- The motivation of rewards,
- The urgency of being saved, and
- The danger of modifying the inspired revelation.

#### WHILE WE WATCH GOD'S SALVATION IS OUR MISSION

The message of salvation is the theme of all Scripture. God's promise to Adam and Eve after the Fall was that their descendant one day would bruise the serpent's head ([Gen. 3:15](#))-a figure of Christ's conquest of Satan.

Through Isaiah, the Lord pleaded, "Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other" ([Isa. 45:22](#)); and again, "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost ... Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live" ([55:1, 3](#)).

Among the last words of Scripture is a final invitation to mankind to be saved: "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" ([Revelation 22:17](#)).

As the hymn writer F. W. Faber reminds us,

There's a wideness in God's mercy

Like the wideness of the sea.

There's a kindness in His justice

That is more than liberty.

For the love of God is broader

Than the measure of man's mind;

And the heart of the Eternal

Is most wonderfully kind.[7]

#### WHILE WE WATCH WE MUST BE FAITHFUL

The mission that flows out of our loving fellowship, our spiritual growth, and our praise is that of being God's faithful and obedient instruments in His divine plan to redeem the world. That plan began in eternity past, before the foundation of the

world. But it did not go into effect until Adam chose to sin, fell from fellowship with God, and was spiritually separated from Him.

Since that fateful day in the Garden of Eden, fallen, natural man has been trying to hide from God, and God has been redeeming men back to Himself. From that first time of sin, it has always been God who, solely out of His own gracious love, has taken the initiative to restore men to righteousness. God has always taken the initiative for man's salvation and restoration, from His first call to Adam, "Where are you?" ([Gen. 3:9](#)), to His last call in Revelation: "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" ([Revelation 22:17](#)).[8]

This chapter ends the Word of God with the same themes of practical Christian living that have wound their way across most of God's Holy Scriptures. This last section has four points:

- KEEP THE WORD v. 6-11
- SERVE GOD v. 12-14
- AVOID SIN v. 15-16
- WATCH FOR JESUS v. 17-21

The same Jesus that bids us come calls us to keep on the same path He starts us on, the path of grace through faith. [Colossians 2:6](#) As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him

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[1] Adapted from wiersbe, Revelation 22 comments.

[2] Morris, Revelation Record, p.

[3] Sauer, p.

[4] Quoting Wiersbe Revelation 22.

[5] Quoting Wiersbe Revelation 22.

[6] MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

[7] MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

[8] MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

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