

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 4TH–5TH, 2025 // REVELATION

A GARDEN IN A CITY (REVELATION 22:1–5) ALL ISSUES RESOLVED

By Revelation 22, all repercussions from the fall of mankind have been reconciled, and humanity is completely restored.

- **All rebellion, brokenness, temptation, sin, suffering, and distance from God have been dealt with and corrected.** This is the beginning of a perfect eternity.

THE IDEA OF A GARDEN PARADISE

Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all teach an origin from the Garden of Eden. Many themes come from this origin: rebellion to the Creator, banishment from paradise, pain and suffering, limited access to God, and a Savior will prevail.

- Though we will live in a city, the interior will have a beautiful garden.

TWO MAJOR LANDMARKS IN THE GARDEN

First, John tells us about the “river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb.”

- This river gives **restoration** (Ezekiel 47) and is alluded to by Jesus in John 4:14. The water indicates **purity** and flows down the main street of the city right from God’s throne.

THE SECOND LANDMARK

John also mentions “the tree of life...on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month.” This is more than likely an orchard because it’s on both sides of the river.

- The tree connects Genesis with Revelation and its fruit blesses us like the river of life.

TWELVE FRUITS FROM ONE KIND OF TREE

The water provides spiritual nourishment and the fruit from the tree provides physical nourishment. The leaves on the tree will heal “the nations.”

- We don’t often think of eating and drinking in heaven, but it seems the water and fruit of heaven sustain perfect health for eternity.

THIS IS A BETTER GARDEN!

Eden was similar to this garden except that it didn’t have God’s throne. This huge difference ensures **the best blessings** are to come.

- More than just a beautiful place, we will have a **clear purpose, literal face time with God**, be **completely content**, and **never have to worry about ruining it**.

THE VISION DIMS (REVELATION 22:6–9)

THIS STARTS THE EPILOGUE

The journey through the sights and sounds of the end times has concluded, and John is now back on Patmos hearing but not really seeing. Vs. 6–21 are considered an epilogue.

- A major point of Revelation is repeated here: **“These words are faithful and true.”** All of these events are coming.

“SOON” IS A RELATIVE TERM

Red letters stand out for a reason. These are the words of Christ and must be meditated on. V. 7 says, **“Look, I am coming soon!”**

- God’s time (infinite) is different than ours (finite). Revelation was written over 1,900 years ago, but the message is clear: **Be ready because time is getting shorter.**

TRUE URGENCY YIELDS OBEDIENCE

Jesus says, “Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.” That means **we are to live in obedience to His commands.**

- John’s role was to document the future for our sake. Like John, **we’re called to live and teach the Word for others’ sake.**

THE SECOND TIME JOHN MAKES THIS MISTAKE

John gets overwhelmed and bows to an angel. **Revelation teaches us just because something is attractive doesn’t mean it’s God and to only worship Him in times of pressure.**

- **We must use discernment, wisdom, and the Word to know what is of God and what is counterfeit.**

STAYING CLEAN (REVELATION 22:10–16)

“DON’T SEAL UP THE WORDS...”

The Bible is not designed to conceal truth, but to reveal it. Revelation, in particular, is not a cryptic puzzle, but a book written to bless us when we read and study it (Revelation 1:3).

- **The issue isn’t with Revelation or any parts of the Bible. The problem is our work ethic when it comes to the Word.**

“LET THE FILTHY STILL BE FILTHY.”

V. 11 shows us that many will continue to do evil regardless of the light they see. God will permit those who long for darkness to be overcome by it (Romans 1:28).

- On the flip side, God remains faithful to those who continue in righteousness. This is a reminder that **how we live matters.**

THE TOUR GUIDE IS DONE

By v. 12, the angel who has led John through parts of the Revelation finishes and Jesus steps in with a clear conclusion.

- **“I am coming soon, and My reward is with Me to repay each person according to his work.”** Also, Jesus reminds us that He transcends all things.

WASHING OUR ROBES

Wash here is different from *wash* in 7:14. The *washing* in 7:14 is a one-time cleansing, but here, it is in the present tense, meaning to continually *wash*.

- **We must be saved (washed) but must also continue to keep ourselves clean via a relationship with Christ (washing).**

A CITY OF CLEAN PEOPLE

Jesus says the washed may enter the city that sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood will not be able to enter.

- Once again, we see **there is a standard by which we must live in order to receive eternal life.**

WE CAN LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY!

Sin will deny us access into heaven if we are **characterized by it**, but if we live a life of repentance, we can be righteous in His sight.

- **Lying and being a liar are different. We may occasionally fall to sin, but we must never relent to it. We must keep going back to the cross!**

THE “ROOT” AND “MORNING STAR”

Jesus refers to Himself as the Root of David which shows the fulfillment of the OT prophecies and promises. He also calls Himself the Bright Morning Star which shows us that night and darkness will end, and the NT promises have been fulfilled.

ANTICIPATION (REVELATION 22:17–21)

JOHN THE EVANGELIST

As John concludes his account, he takes on the role of evangelist for Christ.

- “Both the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’” shows us that **the Spirit of God inspires and empowers, but it is the church that is the witness and voice of God on Earth to bring people to salvation.**

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Those who are thirsty and desire God are welcome to “take the water of life freely.” In order to take the water, **we must not alter the gospel message given to us by God in Revelation or the Bible as a whole.**

- **God’s principles are not to be twisted to fit society but are to correct it.**

WE MUST NOT ADD OR SUBTRACT FROM THESE WORDS

We must not add our personal convictions or speculations to Revelation or the Bible in general. If we add to this book, God ensures plagues will be added to us.

- **We must not remove the teachings of sin and their repercussions** mentioned in this book. If we do, we share Satan’s fate.
- Galatians 1:7–8 (CSB)

WE MUST TAKE THIS IN ITS ENTIRETY

True Christians take the Bible as it stands. Though we don’t always understand, we must heed the warnings in Rev. 22 because He is “coming soon” and will judge our deeds.

- **The true Christian is not afraid of this, but echoes the words of John, “Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!”**

THE END ECHOES THE BEGINNING

The most dominant theme of Revelation and the entire Bible is grace. **God loves us and will move all heaven and earth for us if we will just have Him.**

- **God doesn’t need us, but He loves and wants us! He is quick to forgive, show grace, and welcome us into His Kingdom.**

WHAT GOD WANTS FOR US

- God loves us and wants good things for us (Jeremiah 29:11). He also wants us to **be holy as He is holy** (1 Peter 1:16).
- **God would not call us to be holy if it were not possible.** He gave us His Word, His Son, grace through repentance, and the ability to live correctly through His Spirit.

THE REWARD OF A PERFECT PLACE

- Living “holy” in this life via a relationship with Jesus through **prayer, the Word, and obedience ensures that after this life we will inherit an eternity with God in heaven.**
- Heaven will be a perfect culture/society, city, earth, and universe where we will be in perfect bodies with perfect minds.

PREPARATION

- To enter heaven, **we must be prepared at any time to see God face-to-face.** Even if His return is centuries from now, **we are not promised tomorrow** (Proverbs 27, Matthew 6, James 4).
- In a culture that rarely thinks long-term, **we must be cognizant that there is an eternal life after this one!**
- To prepare, we must **desire to know the truth and be willing to receive it, respond to the invitation to have a relationship with Jesus**, build that relationship through **prayer, study, and obedience**, and anticipate His return by **trusting Him regardless of the state of the world.**

THE BENEFITS OF THE KINGDOM NOW

- **If we will invest in eternity, we will also receive amazing benefits in this life.** A relationship with Jesus **bears the Fruit of the Spirit** (Galatians 5), **the gifts of the Spirit** (1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, Romans 12), and the **comfort, counsel, security, and confidence** of being a **friend of God** (James 2:21–23).
- **Are we prepared?**