

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 5TH, 2024 // REVELATION

## A GARDEN IN THE CITY (REVELATION 22:1-5) THE IDEA OF THE GARDEN PARADISE

Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all teach an origin from the Garden of Eden. Many themes come from this origin: rebellion against 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.

### BY THIS POINT, ALL ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED

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

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

### THERE ARE TWO LANDMARKS IN THE CITY 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 also alluded to by Jesus in John 4:14. The water indicates **purity** and flows down the city's main street right from God's throne.

### THE SECOND LANDMARK

John also mentions the "tree of life" that "was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month."

- More than likely this is an orchard because it is on both sides of the river. This tree connects Genesis with Revelation, and its fruit blesses us like the water from the river of life.

### TWELVE FRUITS FROM ONE TREE

The water of life provides spiritual nourishment, and the fruit from the tree of life 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 as though the water and fruit of heaven give us perfect health for eternity.

### THIS GARDEN IS BETTER THAN THE FIRST

Eden was similar to the garden in Rev. 22, except that it didn't have the throne of God. This huge difference ensures that **the best blessings** are now available.

- **Purpose:** we serve God forever.
- **Intimacy/face time with God:** we will get to see God's face.
- **Complete contentment**

### THE VISION DIMS (REVELATION 22:6-9)

#### THIS SECTION 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. Verses 6-21 are considered the epilogue of Revelation.

- The thesis 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!"**

- We must understand that God's time (infinite) is different than ours (finite). This book was written over 1,900 years ago, but the message is clear: **be ready, for the time is getting shorter.**

#### URGENCY SHOULD YIELD OBEDIENCE

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

- John's role was to document what lies ahead for the sake of the churches. Like John, **we are called to live and teach the prophecies of Christ.**
- Romans 1:16 (ESV)

#### ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

For the second time, John falls down and worships an angel after being overwhelmed by the splendor of heaven. **An important lesson from Revelation is not all things that appear majestic are of God.**

- **We must use discernment, wisdom, and the Word to know what is God and what is fool's gold/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 created 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 will remain faithful to those who continue in righteousness. This is another 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 now finishes his part, and Jesus steps in.

- Jesus' message is clear, **"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 everything.

### WASHING OUR ROBES

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

- **This means we must be saved (washed) and continually keep ourselves clean through a relationship with Christ (washing).**

### THE CLEAN ARE WELCOMED INTO THE CITY

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

These sins will deny us access to heaven if they characterize us, but if we live a life of repentance, we can grow closer to God and be righteous in His sight.

- **Lying and being a liar are different. We may occasionally fall to sin, but we must never relent. 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.

### NEAR (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 the church is the witness and voice of God on Earth to bring people to salvation.**

#### EVERYONE IS WELCOME

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

- **God's principles are not to be twisted to fit society.** They are given to us to correct humanity.

#### WE MUST NOT ADD TO 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 SUBTRACT FROM THESE WORDS

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

The true Christian takes the Word of God as it stands. Though we may not always understand, we must know that the warnings of Christ in Revelation 22 are 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 and show grace.**

### PREPARATION

- God wants to spend eternity with us, but we must prepare ourselves like "a bride for her husband."
- Have we **washed** ourselves by accepting Christ as our Savior? Do we continually evolve closer to Him through **washing** ourselves via a relationship with Him?
- Do we accept God and His Word in its entirety, or **do we add and subtract the principles we're uncomfortable with?**
- Do we thirst for Him? Can we honestly say, "Come quickly!" or are we in love with temporal things?
- Are we taking on the role of evangelist? **Do we love others and have a sense of urgency to share the truth that sets us free?**
- **Do we honestly know in our heads and hearts that the Creator absolutely adores us?**