

# Come and Enjoy

Bible Background • REVELATION 22:8–21

Printed Text • REVELATION 22:10–21 | Devotional Reading • GENESIS 1:26–31

## Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will SURVEY the biblical references to the “second coming” in order to see the importance of this hoped-for reality, REJOICE that the invitation from Jesus to be a part of the new creation continues through the end of all things, and EMBRACE the call to become part of God’s kingdom.

## In Focus

Chris laughed along with the audience as he listened to his friend, Jason, a popular comedian, deliver his punch lines with ease. A phone call interrupted him in mid-laughter. It was Jason.

“Are you watching the show I did last week?” Jason asked.

“Yeah, I told you I would. Pretty funny stuff. I can never figure out where you’re headed.” “That’s the secret of a good punch line.” He chuckled.

“Now I got a good one for you. I told you I would start reading the Bible; today I have just finished the last chapter,” Jason said.

“You started with the last chapter?” Chris asked nervously. It wasn’t that unusual. Jason always read the ending before considering any book. But Chris was thinking of the end-of-the-world horrors, which might be too much for a new Christian. “Jason, why would you do that?” Chris asked.

“Nobody told me where to start, so I figured I’d find out how everything was going to come out. You know, to see if the ending was worth it,” Jason replied.

Chris tried to explain, “But Genesis and the walk of Christ.” Before he could finish, he heard Jason howling in laughter.

“Don’t worry, the ending told me what I needed to know. We win in the end! Now I want to know more about how and why.”

*In the book of Revelation, Christians are assured of the ultimate happy ending—a triumphal procession with Christ! How does this joyful knowledge affect your life?*

## Keep In Mind

“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: 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.” (Revelation 22:18–19, KJV)

## Words You Should Know

**A. Prophecy** (Revelation 22:10) propheteia (Gk.) – A revelation from God given through the mouth of a prophet; may or may not deal with the future directly

**B. Rewards** (v. 12) misthos (Gk.) – Wages or payment for services

## Say It Correctly

**Apocalyptic.** ah-pah-kah-LIP-tic

## KJV

**Revelation 22:10** And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

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.

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

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

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.

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

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.

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.

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:

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.

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

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

## NLT

**Revelation 22:10** Then he instructed me, "Do not seal up the prophetic words in this book, for the time is near.

11 Let the one who is doing harm continue to do harm; let the one who is vile continue to be vile; let the one who is righteous continue to live righteously; let the one who is holy continue to be holy."

12 "Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds.

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

14 Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life.

15 Outside the city are the dogs—the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshippers, and all who love to live a lie.

16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this message for the churches. I am both the source of David and the heir to his throne. I am the bright morning star."

17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let anyone who hears this say, "Come." Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life.

18 And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the words of prophecy written in this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book.

19 And if anyone removes any of the words from this book of prophecy, God will remove that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.

20 He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon!" Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

21 May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's holy people.

## The People, Places, and Times

**Alpha and Omega.** Alpha and omega are, respectively, the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. Jesus claims the title "Alpha and Omega" at the very beginning of the vision He reveals to John (Revelation 1:11), here at the revelation of the Church, and one last time near the very end of the vision (22:13). By referring to Himself as "Alpha and Omega," God is making it clear that He is the source of everything. He is the Beginning and the End; He is sovereign, reigning over every aspect of His creation.

## Background

Revelation 21 and the first part of chapter 22 portray, in visions and images, the wonderful future awaiting God's people in the new heaven and the new earth. And just as Christ's first coming was great news for some (the poor in spirit, who believed in Him) and bad news for others (the proud of heart, who rejected Him), so also His unstoppable Second Coming will be wonderful news for those who belong to Christ, and woeful news for those who spurn the message of His Gospel. Revelation, like the Bible as a whole, is both a book of promise and a book of warning. John's remarkable vision calls the church to examine itself, to "give diligence to make [its] calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10), and to take comfort in the incomparable power and mercy of Christ, who comes for His own and for their redemption.

### At-A-Glance

1. Christ Is Coming Certainly and Quickly (Revelation 22:10–11)
  2. Christ Is Coming as King and Lord (vv. 12–16)
3. Christ Is Coming for the Faithful Who Belong to Him (vv. 17–21)

## In Depth

### 1. 1. Christ Is Coming Certainly and Quickly (Revelation 22:10–11)

An angel guiding John through his vision warns John not to close up the record of this revelation, because it will all soon take place. It is almost not worth a person changing their actions, because there is that little time to repent, so the angel encourages the unjust and the filthy to continue in their sinful ways. A significant amount of narrative space is taken up in Revelation by opening the seals of another book, so John leaving his own record open is significant. With it open, anyone is allowed to read it. Everyone may be encouraged to read it, to see the fate that awaits the faithful and the unfaithful, and mend their ways.

*What may we imply about the character of God since He does not want people stopped from hearing this prophecy?*

## **2. Christ Is Coming as King and Lord (22:12–16)**

Hear the powerful, kingly language of Jesus as He promises His coming! Only a king would speak this way, promising a “reward” (v. 12) and daring to examine and understand the fullness of a person’s deeds. In the language of Isaiah (Isaiah 44:6; 48:12), Christ’s voice thunders in testimony to His preeminence. In the Old Testament, this kind of language beginning and ending, first and last (v. 13)—could apply to Yahweh alone. Can there be any doubt that Jesus is laying claim to the same divine status? He sends His angel to do His will (v. 16). He lays claim to David’s lineage (v. 16) and the promises concerning the eternal King to come (Isaiah 11:1). This testimony matters greatly to the Christian not only that Christ might be rightly worshiped, but also that the believer may know the certainty of His coming! When Christ comes as King and Lord, He will “give every man according as his work shall be” (v. 12). Each person acts according to his true nature and the state of his heart toward Christ, and each person is judged by the fruit of that nature.

*Why is it important that Jesus announces His identity in verses 13–16? How does His identity relate to the hope of the Christian?*

## **3. Christ Is Coming for the Faithful Who Belong to Him (vv. 17–21)**

The book of Revelation, with all its vivid imagery and difficult symbolism, is simply a letter. It begins like a letter, with a greeting and a blessing to the seven churches (Revelation 2–3); and it ends like a letter, with a benediction (22:21). Fittingly, this letter concludes with an invitation: in light of the sure coming of Christ as King and Lord, will you be found to belong to Him? Verse 17 reminds us of the full, free offer of Christ in the Gospel. The Holy Spirit extends the invitation to accept Christ as Lord, and even the bride, the true church, is pictured urging all to come unto Christ. Echoing Jesus’ invitation during His ministry (John 7:37–39), John beseeches those in the seven churches and beyond to recognize and satisfy their thirst by receiving the water of eternal life in the Gospel. This closing passage pictures a great law court with four faithful witnesses: the angel, John, the Holy Spirit, and finally Jesus Himself (v. 20). And where there is a law court, there is accountability and justice; all who hear are accountable to respond to the message! John demonstrates the beautiful, simple response of faith: “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

*Why do you think the gracious invitation of verse 17 and the stern warning of verses 18–19 are put next to each other?*

### **Search the Scriptures**

1. For what purpose does Jesus say He will return quickly (v. 12)?
2. To whom does Jesus give the message of Revelation (v. 16)?

### **Discuss the Meaning**

1. How is this last part of Revelation a happy ending? What do you find surprising or unexpected about this ending?
2. How does this passage help you understand the book of Revelation as a whole?

## Liberating Lesson

Throughout church history, countless individuals and communities have predicted with confidence the exact date on which Jesus will return. Without exception, they have been wrong. As a result, the whole idea of expecting a miraculous return of Christ has been largely discredited in the minds of many. The book of Revelation, when it focuses on the return of Christ, does not list a series of mysterious hints that the church is left to decode. Nor does it merely tell us what we want to hear, flattering us by sparing any sense of accountability and judgment at Christ's return. Before a world that mocks its expectation as "pie in the sky" and a church that often misunderstands its message as a riddle to solve, the book of Revelation focuses on the faithfulness and preeminence of Christ. Because Jesus is the first and the last, the King of kings, and the true descendant of David, the Christian can rest in His promises. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

## Application for Activation

If you could have written the last chapter of the Bible, how would you have written it? Often the Spirit uses the parts of the Bible we find most surprising to drive home the Word's significance. Read through these last few verses of Revelation and write down the parts you find unexpected. Think through what each surprising part means for the church and for you individually, and resolve to make that meaning part of your regular prayers and conversation with others in the church.

## Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

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## Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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## More Light on the Text

### Revelation 22:10–21

The context of the last chapter of the last book of Scripture brings human history to a close. Like ultimate bookends of man's inimitable story, our beginning and our end are contrasted and captured by authors Moses and John. In Genesis, the serpent tempts the first Adam, he falls, and Paradise is lost. In Revelation, the serpent is destroyed, the second Adam is victorious, and Paradise is restored. The significant elements of the garden Paradise were two people, the tree of life, and a river that watered the garden (Genesis 2:9–10). In the New Jerusalem the fountain of life flows from the throne of God (Revelation 22:1–2; 4:6), and lining both sides of the river are many trees of life (22:14) that are not only freely accessible, but ever fruitful for the enjoyment and healing of many nations (Psalm 46:4). In Eden, one tree was forbidden; in Paradise, nothing is forbidden.

This succinct picture of our final Paradise supersedes the original, in particular, because of the absence of temptation, death, and evil.

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

**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.**

In one of his visions, Daniel is given the command to “shut thou up the vision” and not yet reveal what the Lord says (Daniel 8:26). Even in a different part of John’s apocalyptic vision, he is instructed not to record the sayings he hears (Revelation 10:4). But now the message or “saying” is given for publication. While the imagery of Revelation and the final chapters of Daniel are similar, their relationship is disputed by scholars. Some believe both are dealing with the same end times events. Others believe they describe separate events occurring closer to the time of the writers. While we cannot be sure of how these apocalyptic prophecies relate to each other, Christians can all affirm the significance of the second coming of Christ, even though they may differ in interpreting the details of it.

“At hand” is the Greek term *eggus* (eng- GOOS), which means near, nigh, or ready. This is breaking news the church needs to hear, so it can begin to watch and pray for Christ’s second coming. This is an evangelistic word for the church, the Gospel of Christ is to be revealed, proclaimed, and told to all who will hear, for all too soon there will be no more opportunity to repent and receive the grace of God. While urgent, the message is still positive because it implies that right up until the end of life, there is still time to choose (Hebrews 9:27).

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

It is difficult to translate the Greek word *tachu* here, but King James translators chose “quickly” over the possibly more literal rendering of “suddenly.” Both, as a result, intend for the church, the bride of Christ, to prepare herself and be ready at any time for the return of her beloved Bridegroom. Whether He returns “quickly” or “suddenly,” both achieve the intended result of urging believers to be prepared for Christ’s return because no one really knows when it will happen. The main point, repeated over and over in Scripture, is to be ready for Christ’s return whenever it happens.

Christ here says He is bringing a reward with Him to give to everyone “according as his work shall be.” Each of us is familiar with being rewarded for a job well done. Christians can look forward to being rewarded with eternity in the presence of God. Some might point to this verse to suggest a works based salvation, but this is to take this verse out of context. First, this verse alludes to two passages (Isaiah 40:10; 62:11), both of which use the same word (“reward,” or “recompense”) and both of which refer to God coming to bring salvation (not to reward good behavior). Second, the New Testament elsewhere makes clear that God brings salvation to His people on the grounds of Christ’s righteousness alone (Titus 3:8; James 2:20). They receive that righteousness by faith, not by works. So in what sense does Christ reward each one according to His works? Verse 11 reveals the key: each person acts according to his true nature and the state of his heart toward Christ. Even in light of Christ’s decisive second coming, only those God called will persevere to the end, through the faith the Spirit has given them. This verse is not intended to make a doctrinal statement, but rather was an exhortation to preparedness, which includes an ever ready, healthy, fruitful (works producing) faith. A positive take on the verse is that Jesus will come with “rewards” (Gk. *misthos*, mis-THOS), like wages

or payment for services, for those who have been faithful. While no one is saved by works, those who are saved will be rewarded according to their “works” (Gk. ergon, ER-gon, employment or labor).

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

Alpha is the first letter of the 22-letter Greek alphabet and Omega is the last, thus the connection to the beginning and the end, and the first and the last. If Genesis and Revelation are the bookends of human history, Jesus is the holder of the bookends both preexisting and post-existing our temporal time frame. This is true not only in the sense of existence, but in character and holiness, without beginning or end, and without change (Malachi 3:6). Alpha and Omega, moreover, is one of many self-proclaimed images of Christ found in Scripture. The same names are applied to God and here are specifically applied to Christ. Jesus often applies to Himself titles elsewhere applied to God: Alpha and Omega (cf. 1:8; 21:6), first and last (cf. Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Revelation 1:17; 2:8), beginning and end (21:6). This gives another insurmountable argument for His deity. God is from “everlasting to everlasting” (Psalm 90:2), and He is the same “yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8).

Knowing this identity of Christ gives the Christian peace. If Jesus is the faithful and true King, on par with the perfections of Yahweh, how could He fail to come through on behalf of His beloved ones?

### **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.**

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

These verses remind the audience of what is at stake: eternal blessing in the City of God, or exclusion from it. We might fear how exactly the world will end. Will humankind bring about the end of the world through selfishness or carelessness? Believers do not have to worry about this though, but can accept that just as God brought the universe into being, God will bring this age to a close. We know to avoid the company of dangerous and disreputable people, and instead urgently offer others Jesus’ invitation to enter the Kingdom.

While dogs are a favorite pet today, dogs in this time were denigrated. While hunting dogs could be useful, most dogs are simply strays. The word for “dogs” (Gk. kunes) is used in the New Testament to denote spiritual scavengers and predators who work to undermine the saving faith of others (Matthew 7:6; Philippians 3:2; 2 Peter 2:22). When referring to a pet or puppy, the diminutive (Gk. kunarion) is used (Matthew 15:26–27; Mark 7:27–28). In addition to these street scavengers, the city also excludes many of the same kinds of people just mentioned in the last chapter (Revelation 21:8): sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and liars. This listing clarifies that the liars excluded from the heavenly kingdom are those who love lying.

### **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.**

Jesus places His stamp of approval on the testimony of the message of Revelation to the church (the word “you” in the Greek is plural), which includes our present age. No mortal could be both root (the Creator) and offspring (Isaiah 11:1); Jesus is both the Lord of David and the son of David (Matthew 22:42–45).

The fallen angel, Lucifer, once called a morning star (Isaiah 14:12), has from the beginning lied to mankind and falsely presented himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). Jesus affirms that

He alone is the true Morning Star. Here two ordinary Greek words are combined to form a unique metaphor: orthrinos (or- thrin-OS) for “morning” and aster (as-TARE) for “star.” The Greek word phosphoros (foce-FOR-os) means light bearing, and is translated both “daystar” and “morning star.” It is used only once in the rest of the New Testament (2 Peter 1:19) and is applied to Christ both there and in Revelation. The Morning Star will continue to shine, as He always has shone for eternity.

**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.**

Both the Spirit of God, who indwells God’s church, and the bride of Christ (the church, believers) are invited. Those who have yet to decide for Christ are also invited to come to the water of life! We, along with the Spirit, wait expectantly but we also serve as a testimony that the human heart is satisfied by coming to Jesus, and any who comes to Him may freely drink of the water of life (John 7:37–39; Revelation 22:1), both now and forever.

**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:**

**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.**

This invitation is strengthened and complemented by the following warning: no one must add or take away from the words of Revelation (vv. 18–19). John’s stern words call to mind Deuteronomy 29:19–20, John urges the people of God to spurn false teaching and idolatry. The seven churches (indeed, the whole church) receives so much through this prophecy, this peek into God’s plan for the ages! The church’s faithfulness is demanded in return—a faithfulness springing from true faith.

Adults want important stories and accounts to be relayed correctly. Although the warnings of verse 18 seem to be applied only to John’s vision, the warning not to add to or subtract from God’s Word is found elsewhere to apply to all of Scripture (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:5–6). God will judge appropriately offenders for their violation of His logos. The clearly promised curse balances the previous promised blessing offered to the faithful (v. 12) and together retain a familiar blessing/curse theme from the Old Testament as the New Testament closes.

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

Christ’s parting words are filled with mercy and hope. When Jesus ascended after His resurrection, He promised to be with them by His Spirit; now He promises He will soon return. The Greek word for “testify” is martureo (mar-too-REH-oh) and means to give or bear witness, just as the apostles were eye-witnesses who became those who testified throughout the New Testament. His coming will be fulfilled as completely as the fulfillment of sending the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and Teacher of the church. The primary message for the church is to be and remain ready.

The book of Revelation started with the Spirit (1:10), the church lives and exists because of the Spirit, and individual believers are raised to newness of life only through being born of the Spirit (John 3:5, 8; Galatians 4:29). The heartbeat of every Christian (the body and bride of Christ) is the Spirit. The Spirit has been our teacher of truth, always leading us toward Christ. The Spirit within you will confirm these words, “that when I come, whatever the day and year, it will seem to happen suddenly, and will take many by surprise.” All born again believers, will be ready because of the Spirit and will wait expectantly, no matter how long it takes.

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

It is no coincidence that both the book and the Word end with a word of grace. The only other time John uses this word, actually, is at the very beginning of his record of the revelation, wishing “grace” (Gk. charis, KHAR-ee-se) on all the seven churches receiving letters from his first vision (Revelation 1:4). This was a common greeting at the time, which helps to center the speaker’s and the hearer’s thoughts on Christ. Christ came to bring us grace. By His grace, we can grow more and more into His image as His beautiful Church.

When Christ’s work on earth was finished, He left to prepare a place for us, and as surely as He came according to His promise, He will return as promised for His bride. Until we are perfected in Him, we can find no better comfort, stronger peace, or more enduring hope, than the presence of His grace to sustain us until His return.

# Daily Bible Readings

## **MONDAY**

Invited to the Heavenly Banquet  
(Luke 14:16–24)

## **TUESDAY**

Preparing for God to Appear  
(Exodus 19:9–15)

## **WEDNESDAY**

The Alpha and Omega  
(Revelation 1:3–8)

## **THURSDAY**

The Ending Declared from the Beginnings  
(Isaiah 46:8–13)

## **FRIDAY**

God Is Your Husband  
(Isaiah 54:1–5)

## **SATURDAY**

God's Steadfast Love Never Ceases  
(Lamentations 3:21–31)

## **SUNDAY**

Come, Lord Jesus!  
(Revelation 22:10–21)