

THE INVITATION

Part 4 of The Return of Christ. Revelation 22.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. July 30, 2023.

THE END

This is our final teaching in our long Revelation series.

SUMMARIZING THE MESSAGE OF REVELATION

Chapter 22 summarizes the message of the Book of Revelation.

- Follow Jesus. Stand firm in the Christian faith. Be courageous. Be bold. Don't bow down to false gods and false ideologies.

Chapter 22 gives us three reasons to apply the message to our lives.

THREE REASONS TO APPLY THE MESSAGE OF REVELATION

Reason 1: Apply the message because it is God's Word.

- It's a letter from God through his angel.
- "Prophet" and "Prophecy" are used six times in chapter 22. The point is not that it tells the future but that It is God's Word, his message.
- That's why verse 6 reads: *"These words are trustworthy and true."*
 - Every word of God is true (Proverbs 30:5-6).
 - It's impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18-19).
 - Jesus prayed, "Your word is truth" (John 17:17).
 - All Scripture is breathed out by God ... (2 Timothy 3:16)
- The Book of Revelation is true and reliable. We can count on it. That's why verse 7 reads, *"Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."*

Reason 2. Apply the message because Jesus Christ is coming soon.

- First century Christians had the same cares and concerns as us.
- What should they have done when pressured to compromise their faith?
- This is why verses 7, 12, 20 all read, *“I am coming soon.”* It’s the organizing framework of the chapter. So what? Verse 12 has the answer:

Revelation 22:12-13 (ESV) Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

- When Jesus returns, he will call us to account. Were we faithful?
- When Jesus returns, he will reward his faithful followers.
- Be faithful now because you’ll share in Christ’s victory in the end.
- Can Jesus do this? Of course! He is *“the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end”* (verse 13). He is the sovereign, supreme, ruler of all.

Reason 3. Apply the message because Christ is inclusively exclusive.

- Christ is exclusive in the sense that some people will exclude themselves from Christ and his Kingdom.
 - False teachers will be excluded - they twist the Christian faith to fit in:

Revelation 22:18-19 (ESV) I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

- False believers will be excluded - they claim to follow Christ but deny him by habitually following their own ways:

Revelation 22:15 (ESV) Outside are the dogs (NT = false teachers) and sorcerers (occult) and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

- If you don't want Jesus in your life or you don't want the struggles that come with faithfully following him, that is your prerogative. But you will be excluded from Christ and his life in the eternal city.
- Christ is inclusive in the sense that everyone is invited to Jesus.

“The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty (spiritually) come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.”

- No one is so far from God that Jesus cannot restore them. He is able to forgive your sins, cleanse your guilt, take you from spiritual death to eternal life.
- If you want Jesus and all he offers, you can have him.

WASHED!

There is one condition that all who come to Jesus must meet:

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

What does it mean to “wash their robes?”

- It means forgiveness for sins and freedom from the controlling power of sin: Revelation 1:5 (ESV) ... To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ...
- It results in access to God: Revelation 7:14-15 (ESV) They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple;
- Blood is a graphic representation of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

WASHED: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Adapted from <https://www.gotquestions.org/sins-washed-away.htm>

When the Bible speaks of our sins being washed away, it means we are forgiven, spiritually clean, and right with God. Just as washing with water makes us physically clean, so being cleansed by the atoning death of Christ makes us spiritually clean.

This concept is first introduced in the Old Testament. For examples, see Numbers 8:7; Isaiah 1:16; Exodus 30:20; Numbers 19:21; Joel 1:13. From ancient times, God's people understood that sin makes us spiritually dirty so to speak and unfit to enter into the presence of the Lord. David wrote of his need to have his sins washed away (Psalm 51:17).

The New Testament continues the theme of washing sins away. Ananias told Paul to "be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16). The blood of Christ is what washes our sins away (1 John 1:7; 1 Peter 1:19). Hebrews 9 contrasts the old methods of cleansing with the new covenant cleansing that came through Jesus Christ whose blood cleanses our conscience from sin's pollution and guilt (Hebrews 9:13-14).

When we, through faith, apply the blood of Jesus to our lives, God pronounces us clean (Titus 2:14; 3:5). He washes our sins away, as it were; He places our sin debt upon His own Son and declares us righteous in His sight (Colossians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 5:21). God chooses to forget our sin and remove it far from Him (Psalm 103:12).

So it is with us. Our sins are washed away the moment we place our faith and trust in the saving work of Jesus on our behalf (Acts 2:21). The joy of the Christian life is that, even though we are not perfect, we can live every moment confident that our sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus and we are restored to God (Romans 3:21-26; 5:1; 8:1).

For more insights: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/freedom-through-christs-blood>