

Revelation 22 • How to Personally Apply the Book of Revelation

Introduction

There have been a lot of people, books and even entire denominations that have drawn and lived the wrong conclusions of their study of the book of Revelation. How should it be applied to our personal walk? What makes us think we'll not repeat their mistakes? The first thing to acknowledge is that it must be approached like every other book in the Bible—**God's Word to be obeyed**. When one makes the wrong assumption that there are great mysteries that only a chosen or really smart few can decipher and thus put into practice, deception and error are not far behind. In the closing chapter of this book, Jesus makes this abundantly clear. The book of Revelation is not something to be “decoded”, but put into practice.

¹Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, ²in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; ⁴they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

[Read v.1-5]

Q: Share and list all the similarities between this passage summarizing God's future plan for us, and His original plan as provided in Genesis.

1. Man originally lived with God face-to-face in a paradise; he is destined to live forever with God face-to-face in a paradise.
2. In the original garden was the tree of life; in the final garden is the tree of life.
3. The curse is initiated because of sin; the curse is resolved because of the taking away of sin.
4. Others?

Point: *God's Word is complete in what was originally intended and how it has been reconciled back to Him. What began in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve is fully completed in the New Heaven and New Earth. God's will for mankind is fulfilled.*

Q: What are the essential elements necessary for life that are listed here and what do they represent?

- “...the water of life...” (v.1)
- “...the tree of life, bearing...fruit...” (v.2)
- “...light...” (v.5)

God is the Source of everything needed not just for survival and sustenance, but life forever.

Q: How are these 3 things offered in THIS life?

A: Among other things, they represent the work of the Gospel, the cross, and the Holy Spirit in the works of justification, salvation, and sanctification. These earthly mechanisms foreshadow their heavenly counterparts.

Application: *The most important things that sustain us in this life's walk with Christ are the things that sustain our fellowship with Him forever in eternity. Our new life actually begins here—death does not change anything but continues whatever we already started in this life.*

⁶And he said to me, “These words are faithful and true”; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place. ⁷And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”

⁸I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.”

¹⁰And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. ¹¹Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.”

[Read v.6-7]

Q: Concerning the book of Revelation specifically, what are we called to do? Are we challenged to obtain wisdom or understanding?

A: We're to heed “*the words of the prophecy of this book*”, “heed” meaning to live our life believing they're true. The biblical definition of someone who “hears” or “listens” is someone that proves it by the obedient actions taken in response to the message.

Q: How would you word the opposite of the last sentence in v.7?

A: “Cursed is he who does not heed the words of the prophecy of this book.” But God's stating it in the positive as a blessing shows not only that we **can** do it, but that He desires to bless rather than curse.

[Read v.8-9]

Q: Many people give the book of Revelation an elevated position in their life. What is the application of these verses that speaks to keeping everything—this book included—in the proper perspective?

A: We are not to worship the message, nor the messenger, but God. These verses could be viewed as feedback to us personally not to become so obsessed with the message that we are no longer focused on God. To whatever we devote our priorities and most attention is that which we actually worship; the Pharisees were examples of people so devoted to the Law that they came to worship it more than the Word Himself when He appeared face to face with them. This is about keeping the proper perspective.

Point: *There will be people that are so convinced that they've learned and interpreted Revelation correctly that when faced with the actual events—not precisely revealing themselves as the person envisioned—that they will not be overcomers.*

[Read v.10-11]

Q: How should you apply the admonition in v.10?

A: Revelation is not a book we should study or discuss rarely; we need **more** exposure not less for both the sake of believers and non-believers alike.

Q: How do these 2 pair of words in v.11 contrast with each other?

A: Doing wrong is the opposite of practicing righteousness; being filthy is the biblical opposite of remaining holy.

Q: What is the meaning of v.11? How does it fit within the overall context of this chapter and even Revelation as a whole?

A: It's a way of saying that however you are living now—whether wrong and filthy or right and holy—is the way that you will live when these events take place. It's a warning to begin to live a changed and proper life **NOW** so that we will have put into repeated practice the qualities necessary to come through God's judgment.

¹²“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

¹⁴Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. ¹⁵Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

¹⁶“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

¹⁷The 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.

[Read v.12-15]

Q: According to v.12, how will we know who is in line to be blessed for having heeded “the words of the prophecy of this book”?

A: Those who have followed through with their listening by obedience. They will be rewarded “*according to what he has done*”, not according to what one knows or observes or even believes.

Q: How are v.14-15 an extension of the teaching in v.11?

A: It’s the contrast of the filthy versus the holy.

Q: How would you apply v.13 not just to this teaching but to yourself personally?

A: Everything consists in Christ, abides in Him. To be an overcomer I must seek and practice **His** righteousness and holiness to show that I am indeed heeding His Word.

[Read v.16]

Q: What is the significance of Christ as “the root and the descendant of David”?

A: He is the fulfillment of all the Word of God going back to the first promises made and everything ever since. He is not something “new” or different, but the promised fulfillment. It speaks to the fact that all these prophecies will work together through Christ exactly as God intended and communicated from the very beginning to find their ultimate fulfillment.

Q: What about Jesus as “the bright morning star”?

A: There are probably many meanings, but a significant one is that the morning star is something that visibly signals to everyone that night is coming to an end and day is about to begin. Whereas the reference to Christ as “*the root and the descendant of David*” speaks of the entire Word of God being fulfilled in Christ, the title of “*the bright morning star*” indicates that something new is about to occur as we commence our new life in eternity with Him. Night is ending, day is commencing.

[Read v.17]

Q: What is the dual meaning of “come” as used here?

A: First, it’s a response to v.12, “*Behold, I am coming quickly...*” We should already be committed to a faithful relationship to Him (such as a bride to a groom) so that we are eager to complete our union with Him. Second, it’s an invitation to all that it’s not too late to approach and find life in Him.

¹⁸I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; ¹⁹and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

²⁰He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

²¹The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

[Read v.18-21]

Q: Based on what we've studied so far about the call to heed the words of this book, summarize the main point of v.18-19 as to their meaning for the overall context of this passage.

A: To heed God's Word is to follow it **exactly** as it has been given; there is no need—and even a hindrance—for adding or subtracting to what has been given. God's Word—as it stands right now—is sufficient to guide us.

Point: Remember when John was told in Revelation 10:4 not to write something that he heard? We don't have to become obsessed with dissecting every detail of Revelation but heed what has been given, knowing that God has said that what has been written is enough. We have been given all we need to fulfill these words as far as it depends on us.

Q: What is the obvious difference between the way the Old Testament ends and the New Testament ends?

A: The New Testament ends with a blessing, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen." The Old Testament ends with a curse:

"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

—Malachi 4:5-6

Overall Application

- How did you feel about studying Revelation before this study? Has anything changed? **SHOULD** something change?
- Do you have prophecy in the proper perspective? Do you see that obedience in your walk and to worship God is more important than a life devoted to the study of prophecy? How do you keep things in balance?
- Do you see that even though you may have gaps in your basic knowledge, that God has provided what you need? When you study Revelation again, will you approach it as a "mystery" or a guide?