

**The Twitter Commentary on Revelation**  
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**Revelation Chapter 22**

**Rev 22 (Introduction)—**

Rev 22 is the final chapter of the book. It falls into two main parts. The first five verses (Rev 22:1-5) are a continuation of the New Jerusalem vision of 21:9-27. The last part of the chapter is what I have called the Epilogue (Rev 22:6-21).

**Rev 22:1--**

In the OT, several rivers flowed out of the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:10). These predecessors of the waters flowing from the throne here, were likely in John's mind. So what is described here is "the paradise of God" (Rev 2:7).

In the Garden, the serpent questioned whether God had the best interests of His creatures at heart (Gen 3:4-5). Rev 22 answers that question positively. The garden city of the eschaton is bursting with light, life, and abundance. And it's all free.

There is a deliberate contrast with Babylon, who sits on many waters (Rev 17:1, 15, cf. Jer 51:13). Babylon represents the pinnacle of human striving. But the New Jerusalem is a gift of God, rather than a reward for human striving.

In Rev, water can be used in three different ways: 1) as cleansing (Rev 22:14), 2) as threat, (Rev 12:15-16); and 3) as nourishment (Rev 21:6 and 22:17). In association with the Tree of Life (Rev 22:2), the "water of life" here is nourishing water.

Jesus is said to have joined the Father on his throne in Rev 3:21 (cf. Rev 5:6), which may be the source of the current verse, but that position is not made explicit in Rev until here.

**Rev 22:2--**

The river flows down the middle of the main street of the city, forming a boulevard with the river in the middle and the street itself divided on either side of the river.

In using the singular for street (Greek: *tēs plateias*) there is the implication that this is the main street of the city, since the city is far too large to have only a single street.

The language of bearing twelve fruits month by month is ambiguous in Greek. It is not clear whether the Tree of Life bears a different kind of fruit each month, or twelve fruits at once, with a new crop every month.

While the word "tree" (Greek: *xulon*) in this verse is singular, a precursor of this account is the multiple fruit trees on the banks of the river which flowed from the temple in Ezek 47:12.

The idea of monthly fruits in the New Jerusalem may also be related to Isaiah 66:22-23, where a restored Israel gathers before Yahweh both weekly (Sabbath) and monthly (new moons).

Mention of the Tree of Life makes an allusion to the Garden of Eden almost certain. The canon of the Bible ends where it begins, with the Tree of Life.

One of the stronger OT allusions in Rev is the allusion to Ezek 47 here. That allusion indicates that the river of life is as much an image of healing as the leaves of the tree of life are.

The river and tree of life may reflect the water ceremony portion of the Feast of Tabernacles (observed by Jesus in John 7:37-39).

The idea of leaves for healing seems to come from Ezek 47:12. But the author of Revelation qualifies that healing as the healing “of the nations”.

### **Rev 22:3--**

At this point in the vision, there is a shift from a description of the city to a description of its inhabitants.

A curse in this sense is not a swear word, it is the consequences of not living up to a covenant. It is likely John had the curses of Genesis 3:14-24 in mind here, which included banishment from the Tree of Life.

The “no more curse” in this verse an allusion to Zech 14:11. The curse of Zech 14 is war and violence. According to Zech 14:11, the curse of war and destruction will be no more.

The throne is of both God and the Lamb, but “His servants” will serve “Him”. It is ambiguous whether the singular here and in the verse that follows refers to God, the Lamb, or both.

“ . . . and His servants will serve Him . . . ” The words for “servants” (Greek: *hoi douloi*) and “will serve” (Greek: *latrousousin*) are from different roots in the Greek, unlike the English translations.

The verb for serving in this verse (Greek root: *latreuō*) has the additional implication of cultic service, human beings carrying out religious duties, particularly in the context of temples and sacrifices (Acts 7:7; Heb 8:5; 9:9, 14; 13:10).

### **Rev 22:4--**

**“They will see His face, and His name will be upon their foreheads.”** This short sentence falls naturally into two parts. The first part focuses on eternal intimacy with God, the second part on the character of the saved.

Within the biblical context, no one but the pre-existent Christ has ever seen God (John 1:18; 1 Tim 6:16; 1 John 4:12). All of the saved, therefore, will be able to do something that even Moses was denied in the OT (Exod 33:20).

When sin has been fully and finally eradicated from the universe, there will be no more walls or curtains between human beings and the Creator, hence no need for a temple (Rev 21:22).

For the ancients, name was an expression of character. To wear God’s name on the forehead would imply that the person’s character has some resemblance to God’s character.

### **Rev 22:5--**

This verse essentially repeats what was stated in Revelation 21:23, but in different words, with one major addition: “They will reign forever and ever”.

It is likely that “Lord God” in 22:5 includes the Lamb, since the light-giving quality of God

applies to God **and** the Lamb in 21:23.

With this verse, the visions of the book of Revelation (1:9 to 22:5) come to a close. The book moves from Prologue (Rev 1:1-8) to Visions (Rev 1:9 – 22:5) to Epilogue (Rev 22:6-21).

### **Rev 22:6-21 (Introduction)—**

I call this final section of Revelation the Epilogue, the conclusion of the entire book. The visions of Revelation have now come to an end, and the author sets out his final words for the reader.

The primary function of the Epilogue of Revelation is to underscore that the content of the book comes directly from God and, therefore, should carry God's authority with the readers of the book (Rev 22:6, 8, 18-19).

The Epilogue contains a series of short speeches by different speakers, interspersed at times by explanations from the author of the book.

One of the most striking things about the Epilogue is the numerous verbal parallels to the Prologue of the book (Rev 1:1-8). Compare 22:6 with 1:1 and 22:7 with 1:3, as two examples.

The author intentionally recapitulates the Prologue and its main themes, bringing us full circle back to the beginning. This is a major piece of evidence that led me to structure the book of Revelation as a giant chiasm (pyramid-shaped literary structure).

### **Rev 22:6--**

This verse functions as a statement of certification that the Prologue (Rev 1:1-8) and all the visions of Revelation are as reliable as Jesus is.

the opening statement adopts the style of ancient oath formulas, which would guarantee the accuracy and truthfulness of what was said previously. It is not clear if this applies to Rev as a whole or just the vision that preceded it (Rev 21:9 – 22:5).

This is a different form of the phrase "spirit of prophecy" in Revelation 19:10. It asserts that behind the writing of Rev lies the inspiration of the Lord God. It is a co-operative work between the divine intention and the human intention.

The angel being referred to here would seem to be different than the one speaking. The speaker is the angel that has been showing John the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:9-10) and was previously in the book a bowl angel interpreting end-time Babylon to John.

### **Rev 22:7--**

Revelation does not portray the second coming of Jesus as a distant event from the perspective of John's time and place. Christians in the first century were expected to live in constant expectancy of Jesus' return.

The readers of Rev are to pay close attention to the words of the book, cherishing its revelation of Jesus. They are also to exert energy in the direction of carrying those words out in daily life.

### **Rev 22:8-9--**

This passage recalls that Rev was written because John heard and saw the testimony of Jesus (Rev 1:1-2). While John did serious research into the OT, the overall direction of the book was delivered from God through an angel to John.

“I, John, am the one who is hearing and seeing these things.” This statement serves as certification regarding the authorship of the book (cf. Rev 1:1, 4, 9). It came from one who heard and saw the word of the Lord.

Barnes suggests that the seeing mentioned here relates to the pictures, visions, and symbols of Revelation, while the hearing involves the parts of Revelation that came directly in words.

It seems odd that John would make the exact same mistake (bowing down to an angel— Rev 19:10) a second time. But perhaps the statement in verse 7, “I am coming soon”, led John to suspect that the person speaking to him in verse 8 was, in fact, Jesus.

Rev 19:10 follows “your brothers” with “who have the testimony of Jesus”. Rev 22:9 follows “your brothers” with “the prophets”. This correlates with evidence that “the testimony of Jesus” refers to the visionary, prophetic gift that John had.

In context “those who keep the words of this book” are fellow creatures of the angel, none of whom is worthy of worship. The common element of all four categories (angel, John, prophets and keepers of the words) is creatureliness, in contrast to divinity.

### **Rev 22:10--**

A command to not seal the book meant that its contents were to be readily and immediately available. Unlike Daniel, Revelation was intended to be understood from the first.

The book of Daniel, is sealed because it is not relevant to Daniel’s time but to the far future. On the other hand, Rev is NOT sealed, because it was to have immediate relevance to that time with meanings that made sense to those people.

The idea of hiding an apocalyptic book until the end of time is found in a number of extra-biblical apocalyptic sources. Such strictures were evidently not in place when John was writing his revelation.

When the angel says, “the time is near”, he is picking up on the language of Jesus in Mark 13:29 and 33. In Mark 13:29 Jesus says that when you see these things (wars, famines, etc.) taking place, you will know that “it is near”.

### **Rev 22:11-12--**

Usually in Scripture, calls from Jesus or an angel are calls for change (repent, change your ways). But this is a proclamation that from here on nothing will change. This only makes sense after what we might call the “close of probation”.

The bestowing of rewards assumes that the judgment is, in some sense, complete. In the New Testament, it is a regular theme that people are justified according to faith, but they are judged according to works.

**Rev 22:11--**

This statement is placed between a declaration that the end is near (22:10) and an announcement that that Christ is coming soon. It is, therefore, clearly in the context of the very final events of pre-millennial history.

The imperatives in this verse are in third person, a form not common in English. These can express a command directed toward a third party (“make him do that”) or an act of permission (“let her do that”).

Eternal punishment is not so much an arbitrary law, it is the natural result of a train of habitual thoughts and actions. God gives people up so that they can truly “be themselves”.

There is a possible allusion to the Greek translations of Daniel 12:10 in this verse. In both passages, Daniel 12:10 and Revelation 22:11, human actions from the past are continued on into the future.

While we think of the imperative as expressing commands, in Greek it can also express permission. No one is forced to be unrighteous.

The Greek word for “filthy” occurs only here in the NT. Its core meaning as an adjective is “dirty” or “soiled”, as in clothes or a room. But the word frequently has a moral or ethical meaning, behavior that is morally sordid or ritually unclean.

To be righteous is to do what is right in relation to an accepted standard. In biblical terms righteousness means action in harmony with God’s covenant with Israel. This was fulfilled for us in the life and death of Jesus Christ.

The text envisions a time when those committed to their service of God will be fixed in that commitment and never fall away.

**Rev 22:12—**

There is a high likelihood of an allusion to Isaiah 40:10 in the opening clause. Promises made through Isaiah to ancient Jerusalem are here fulfilled in the New Jerusalem of Revelation.

The abruptness introduced by “Behold!” suggests a change of speaker, and verses 12-16 make the most sense as words of Jesus. The only issue is whether the transition from the interpreting angel to Jesus happens in verse 11 or 12.

In ancient Greek, the concept of reward has a core meaning of wages, a return on one’s investment of time and talent, but here the reward is eschatological.

**Rev 22:13--**

Here Jesus claims all the titles and prerogatives bestowed upon God earlier in the book to Himself, a strong affirmation of deity. It reminds the reader of John 14:9 (ESV), “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.”

This recalls Exod 3:14, where Yahweh identifies as “I AM that I AM”. “Tell Pharaoh that ‘I AM’ sent you.” The “I am” applies to all three phrases in this verse. As so often in the NT, Jesus is identified with the Yahweh of the OT.

This phrase is used only of Jesus Christ in Rev (see also 1:17 and 2:8). But it is prominently used in relation to Yahweh in Isa 44:6 and 48:12.

Alpha and Omega are at opposite ends of the Greek alphabet. The First and the Last are

at the opposite ends of any numbered list. The Beginning and the End expresses the opposite ends of time and experience.

### **Rev 22:14--**

This is the seventh of seven beatitudes in the book of Revelation. To be “blessed” is to be fortunate or happy on account of one’s circumstances. But in the NT, it has the extended meaning of divine favor and positive spiritual circumstances.

This verse speaks of those who have the right to enter the New Jerusalem. The next verse (Rev 22:15) speaks of those who will be excluded from it.

The Greek text behind the King James Version reads, “Blessed are they who do His commandments.” Most modern translations reflect a Greek text that reads, “Blessed are those who wash their robes.” Why such a big difference?

A factor in manuscript errors is the fact that the earliest manuscripts did not have spaces between the letters (paper was scarce and expensive). As a result, the exact same letters could be divided into different words by changing the spacing.

The two options in this verse are very different in English, but not only look similar in Greek (especially in the ALL CAPS format), they also would sound similar when spoken. Either way a scribal error is easily possible.

While the majority of later and less reliable Greek manuscripts read “do His commandments”, the earlier and better manuscripts generally read “wash their robes”.

If “wash their robes” is correct, it would highlight the forgiveness and cleansing available to believers. If “do His commandments” is correct, the text would be highlighting the ethical dimensions of the Christian faith.

Textual scholarship leans toward “wash their robes” as the original reading of Rev 22:14. While those who emphasize obedience might regret the loss of “do His commandments”, this text is not necessary in order to make that point (Rev 12:17; 14:12).

There is a close parallel with Rev 2:7. The “one who overcomes” will have access to the Tree of Life. Here it is those who wash their robes that have access to the Tree of Life. So “overcoming” and “washing robes” define each other in Rev.

Robes are garments worn on the outside, but in a figurative sense they represent the moral and spiritual character of the one wearing the robe (see Rev 19:8).

Those who have been conferred a title to eternal life have permission to eat from the source of that life. This clause is likely an allusion to the narrative of Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the Garden in Gen 3:22-24.

“Entering the gates of the city” recalls the Good Shepherd narrative in John 10:1-9 here. Entering the sheepfold by the door demonstrates both legitimacy and good intentions. Thieves and robbers climb in over the wall, but not with good intentions.

### **Rev 22:15--**

In contrast to the earlier exclusion texts, the first five items in this vice list have the article in the Greek, which expresses categories more than groups of individuals.

The one category in this verse which is unique among the exclusion texts in Rev is that

of dogs. Roaming packs of dogs, unattached to humans, scavengers, hungry, dirty, and wild, were common outside cities in the ancient world.

In Bible times, the term “dog” implied defective character or low social status. Perhaps the “dogs” in Revelation 22:15 are the equivalent of those who commit abominations in Rev 21:8 and 21:27.

### **Rev 22:16--**

Within the Epilogue (Rev 22:6-21), the work of Jesus and His angel is so intertwined that it is often difficult to tell which of the two is speaking. But here the two are clearly distinguished.

In a sense, the first clause of 22:16 acts as a summary of the entire book of Revelation. It clearly states that the entire book, including the visionary portions, were originally intended as a testimony for the seven churches of Asia Minor.

Who is the “you” (plural) in this verse? I would suggest the most likely answer is the “angels” (probably pastors) of the seven churches (Rev 1:20). They are the first recipients of the book and the ones responsible for its public reading in the churches.

This is one of five full “I am” (Greek: *egō eimi*) sayings in Revelation (cf. Rev 1:8, 17; 2:23; 21:6). The use of “I am” with a predicate is a common self-reference of Yahweh in the OT prophets.

As God, Jesus is the ancestor of David, the one who formed him. In His humanity, Jesus is also the descendant of David. In the first sense, He is the source of David, in the latter sense, David is the source of Jesus.

The only Greek text of Rev available to Erasmus in Luther’s day ended with “David” in 22:16. The rest of his Greek text of the NT (basis for the King James Version) was created by translating back from Latin into Greek.

In Greek the “morning star” is called *phōsphoros* or “light-bearer”, while the Latin equivalent of that term is *lucifer*.

The “morning star” suggests a possible allusion to Num 24:17, where Balaam foresees a star that will come out of Jacob. Jews in John’s day read Num 24:17 as messianic.

“Bright and morning star” is a possible allusion to Lucifer in Isa 14:12, but only if John is working from the Hebrew rather than the Greek of Isaiah. If so, Jesus claims right to the title that Lucifer had claimed as his own.

Just as the morning star is the signal that a new day is at hand, so Jesus’ resurrection was the “first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15:20).

### **Rev 22:17--**

The invitations in this verse are verbs in the imperative. So, these are general exhortations appropriate to every reader of the book throughout its history.

“The Spirit” is a singular voice speaking on earth in behalf of heaven. The “Bride” is a collective voice, representing readers who were members of the church before they read Rev.

In 21:2, 9 the “bride” is a metaphor of the New Jerusalem. The narrative of the New Jerusalem is itself an appeal to the reader to take the water of life, in order to be designated a

citizen of the future city.

“Everyone who hears” is set in contrast with the Bride. My sense is that this refers to readers who may be hearing the story of the cosmic Christ for the first time. They are called to give voice to their new-found faith in Jesus and in His soon return.

In the third part of this verse, the more marginal members of the churches are invited to join in with the Spirit and the core members in prayer for the soon return of Jesus.

The imperative middle singular of “come” appears seven times in the book of Revelation (Rev 6:1, 3, 5, 7; 22:17 [2x], 20). It is not clear if the “come” here is a gospel appeal to the unsaved or an appeal to Jesus to hasten His return.

The appeal of parts three and four of this verse is directed to all readers who have not yet understood the full implications of connecting with Jesus and need to make an initial commitment to Jesus and to the church.

Hunger and thirst in John’s day were often used as metaphors for the spiritual desires only God can fulfill. The word translated “without cost” (Greek: *dōrean*) is the equivalent of “without money and without price” in Isa 55:1.

The “water of life” (cf. Rev 21:6; 22:1) is a metaphor for salvation, as is the fruit of the Tree of Life. The human need for salvation is expressed in terms of thirst. It is those who sense their need for salvation that are drawn to it.

The “water of life” here recalls the river of the water of life in Rev 22:1. While that river is a future reality, this verse brings that future reality into the present.

### **Rev 22:18-19--**

This passage places the highest level of seriousness to the study of the book of Revelation. This is a fitting ending to Revelation, and in its canonical location is a fitting ending to the entire Bible.

The immediate context of this passage is the free gift of 22:17. The salvation offered in Revelation is free, but the current passage makes it clear that the free gift is not forced on anyone, it comes with a choice.

I take from this text that the book of Revelation, just as it is, grammatical flaws and all, is just the way God intended it to be. Both expanding on it or seeking to diminish it will have serious consequences.

An allusion to Deuteronomy 4:2 (ESV) is probable here: “You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you.”

In the immediate sense, this is a for the copyists of Rev who may be tempted to adjust the book’s wording. In the canonical sense, it refers to selective readings that do not do justice to the divine intention for the Scriptures.

The “I bear witness” in this passage suggests an ancient oath formula intended to verify the reliability of the material being presented.

The language here is somewhat reminiscent of Rev 1:1-3. In 1:3 a blessing is pronounced on all who hear and act on the words of Rev. Here a curse is passed on all who add or take away from it.

In the OT, prophetic oaths are always spoken by Yahweh, never by the prophet. If that pattern is continued in Revelation, the speaker in verse 18 would certainly be Jesus Christ.

**“. . . the words of the prophecy of this book. . . .”** This is a Hebraic way of writing. The Hebrew language is very limited when it comes to adjectives, so it uses nouns strung together (the construct state) to take the place of adjectives.

The language of “add” and “take away” is not mere addition or subtraction. These words in Greek include a sense of tampering or hostile intent. This text is not talking about innocent mistakes.

Elsewhere in the NT, as in Luke 12:9, conditional curses tend to use divine passives in the apodosis. Here, on the other hand, God is the subject of active verbs.

### **Rev 21:20-21--**

This passage contains four brief sentences. In these concluding verses of Rev, the language of “coming” becomes the language of response. In the midst of Rev’s accounts of plagues, judgments, and the lake of fire, grace is still available.

**“Yes, I am coming soon. Amen.”** The declaration that Jesus is coming soon is in response to the invitations of the Spirit, the Bride, and those who hear in verse 17.

“Yes” and “amen” often function as a word pair to certify the truthfulness of what is being said. As is the case here, “yes” is more likely to precede a statement and “amen” is more likely to follow.

The word “soon” is attached to “coming” six times in Rev. The first three relate to events in the near future of the seven churches (Rev 2:5, 16; 3:11) and the latter three refer to the Parousia (Rev 22:7, 12, 20). In all six cases, the phrase is spoken by Jesus.

If Jesus speaks here with full knowledge of the future, His use of the word “soon” could seem like a deception. “Soon” here should not be read in terms of absolute chronology, but as expressing Jesus’ eagerness to return.

“Come Lord Jesus.” In Greek outside the Bible, present imperatives are used in situations of severe emotional distress. The delay in the Parousia has stressed John and his followers and he closes this book with a fervent plea for Jesus’ return.

“Come Lord Jesus” is a Greek transliteration of the Aramaic phrase *marana tha* (“Our Lord, come!”). Early Christians seem to have adopted this Aramaic expression as part of their longing for Jesus to return.

The differences among the Bible versions of this verse are due to the fact that the ending of Revelation has at least five major variations, so there was some kind of problem in the transmission of this text.

The last word from heaven in the book of Revelation is “Yes indeed, I am coming soon.” The last word from John is an offer of grace to all who long for Jesus’ appearing.

### **Rev 22:6-21 (Conclusion)—**

As we have seen, the Epilogue of Rev is rightly so called because it matches the Prologue (Rev 1:1-8) in its essential contents, drawing the book to a satisfying conclusion.

Rev is the end of the biblical story. It is the finale of the biblical symphony. It is the place

where all the books of the Bible meet and end. But in another sense, it is a beginning, continuing in the lives of the book's readers.

### **Rev 22:6-21 (Spiritual Lessons)—**

In this life, we face the results of a lot of things that we have done. Most of us live with many regrets. But a time is coming when all that is wiped away and we get to make a new start in a new earth.

The very best part of the life of heaven will not be the streets of gold or the ability to travel the universe and see amazing sights for eternity. The very best part of heaven will be to see the face of God.

In the person of Jesus, we have some idea of what meeting His Father and the Holy Spirit will be like. Knowing God will be so great that it will provoke endless praise.

### **Rev 21-22 (Excursus on the Life of Heaven)—**

The life of heaven, as popularly understood, seems limited and does not appeal to many people. It is a child's view of heaven, full of harps, choirs, and gardens, but not much to get the juices flowing.

The life of heaven will far transcend anything that the "natural" man can conceive. In other words, human beings, with all their creative talent, can only scratch the surface of what God has in store for us.

Our lives today are strongly influenced by the kind of vision we have of the future. For example, how we treat people today will be affected by our vision of their status in eternity.

Would you want to do exactly what you are doing now for an eternity? Simply living forever is not enough. You might not want to do what you are currently doing forever.

There seem to be three main tasks for the redeemed to perform throughout eternity. The saints in eternity will be kings, priests, and scholars.

Just as Jesus in His incarnation was made "for a little while" lower than the angels, so the human race was "for a little while" made lower than the angels, but it is destined to transcend the angels in its future role (Heb 2:5-9).

The human race was created to be more like God than any other creature, including the angels (Heb 2:5-9). God doubled down on the original plan for the human race by sending Jesus to incorporate humanity into the godhead.

In Rev 7:15 the saved "serve" God day and night before the throne, in the governing center of the universe. The language here implies that the saved become members of God's ruling cabinet.

God's universe will not be static in eternity. God will continually unveil new plans and goals for the universe that were delayed because of sin, and as His co-rulers, we will be carrying out those plans, organizing, and coordinating them.

Priests were individuals chosen by God to represent Him among other human beings. The saved in their priestly role will make a difference in the lives of others throughout eternity.

The greatest joy in life is found in relationships. In eternity we will take up relationships that we had on earth, but without the pressure of time or the threat of absence and death.

In eternity there will be unlimited opportunity to overcome all external emotional barriers and truly get to know each other intimately. With full emotional recovery, there will be no internal barriers to intimacy either.

If God brings an end to sin, how can we be assured that it will never rise up a second time? The stories redeemed sinners tell will enlighten new creations who do not know the tragedy of sin from personal experience.

According to Eph 2:6-7, "in the coming ages" God's treatment of humanity in the cosmic conflict will be a lesson book for the universe. Human beings will be channels of grace to the rest of the universe.

Every moment of life is a school. The life of heaven will not be static, there will be constant growth and development.

Happiness includes our ability (or capacity) combined with experience. A person with a large capacity to learn and grow, who also has a lot of experience, will find fulfillment.

Earthly moments of dramatically enhanced capacities are foretastes of the normal heavenly reality.

I'd like to think our physical capacities will also be enhanced in eternity. I suspect our eyes will be enhanced to see the microscopic world. I similarly expect that our ears will be able to hear things that are inaudible to us today.

"You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." Psalm 16:11, NIV. In eternity, we will be able to achieve the deepest desires of our hearts.

If you could do your life over again, what profession would you choose? What kind of life would you pursue? What are the desires of your heart that could only be fulfilled in eternity?

Perhaps in eternity you might want to be an artist. You will have access to all the great artists among the saved. You can also learn from the Master Artist, the one who shaped and reshaped the universe.

### **Rev 21-22 (Excursus on Preparation for the Future Life)--**

The things we do and learn now will make a difference in eternity. The little things you face each day have potential to shape your eternity.

People are rewarded in eternity according to the effort--not the talent--that they put out on earth. Salvation is by faith alone, but saving faith is never alone (Luke 19:26; FE 49).

Preparation for eternity involves developing the talents and gifts God has given us, and particularly being faithful in the little, everyday things that may otherwise not seem so important now.

Rulership is about service and is to be done in humility. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Only those who have been truly humbled can handle great power without falling into pride and corruption.

Study, prayer, and communion with the unseen Jesus today prepares us for a much deeper, face-to-face relationship in the future (2 Cor 4:17-18).

There are many distractions in today's world and many "lesser things" that we often waste time on. Developing one's relationship with the invisible Christ invites one to abandon as many lesser things as we reasonably can.

Our attitude toward the future affects our behavior now (Heb 11:24-26). John's vision of the New Jerusalem encourages readers to focus steadily on the reward to come.

A temple in heaven is mentioned a number of times in Rev. But in the New Jerusalem there is none. God and the Lamb themselves are the temple, reminding the reader of the Garden of Eden at the beginning.

In the OT, God introduces a temporary solution to the problem of sin, a tent sanctuary (Exodus 25:8) in which the people as a whole could not meet God face-to-face, but had representative access through the priests.

The book of Revelation ends with a picture of everything beautiful and the absence of everything evil. Temptation, sorrow, tears, death, and the curse have all been banished from the universe.