

Three week conclusion to sermon studies in Revelation:  
**The New Creation – Full Communion with God**

4/28 The NEW Heavens and Earth (21:1-7)

5/5 The NEW Jerusalem (21:9-14,21-27)

5/12 The NOW Invitation: Come! (22:1-20)

Grace to you and peace from Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests to God. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

**Revelation 22:1–20 (NKJV)**

- 1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.*
- 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*
- 3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.*
- 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.*
- 5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*
- 6 Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.*
- 7 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."*
- 8 Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.*
- 9 Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."*
- 10 And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.*
- 11 He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."*
- 12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*
- 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."*
- 14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.*
- 15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.*
- 16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."*

*17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.*

*18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;*

*19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

*20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*

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

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

### The New Creation – Full Communion with God

#### **The NOW Invitation: Come!**

(Part 3 of 3)

**PRAY: Lord Jesus, give us to drink of the water which springs unto everlasting life.  
Amen.**

In the name of the Lamb who was slain and has begun His reign, dear fellow pilgrims, What is the difference between an oasis and a mirage? You and I know: An oasis is real; a mirage is an illusion.

*1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

Is this a mirage? An illusion? Or ... is this a vision. Yes, a vision; but no mirage. This is something very real. However, when the Spirit speaks in vision, we have to distinguish between symbols and substance. Even in symbols, though, we still should see something real, definite. This invitation is very real. Your desert journey is very real.

As we have been considering the last three weeks, heaven is not clouds or harps. It is defined not by where go but by how we exist. It is not something afar off, but something right here, right now. It is something that is with you now in Christ, just not fully. It is defined in terms of our communion with God, a communion which we possess by faith and not sight, a communion which is yet to be made full.

These final three chapters of Revelation speak of a time which is NOW and a time which is NOT YET. And at times it says both at the same time. When we speak of communion with God, we speak of something that is ours NOW by faith, and also something NOT YET ours which is reserved for us in the NEW CREATION.

*3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*

For this we thirst. We long to see our beloved God face-to-face. That is, you will see God as He is, where no distraction of sin will interrupt your worship and service to Him. For the curse will be no more.

The NOW invitation: Come!

**[READ v.6-21]**

## **1. The urgency of the invitation**

This wilderness is full of mirages. We face a world wide epidemic. People the world over are dehydrated and they are seeking mirages to quench their thirst.

I recently had someone inviting me to such a mirage. The statement was: “Religions are all part of the same thing. We all worship the same God.”

What if that were true? What if all religions were basically equivalent; just different paths that one way or another all lead to the water of life? If this were true, then the book of Revelation has become a useless mess of contradictions. If this were true, then the mirage is not out there; it is in here. As Paul says, “If Christ is not risen, then we of all men are the most pathetic.” If this were true, then you don’t need Christ and the invitation of the Spirit and the bride together; rather the Spirit can be found anywhere, in any form, in any Mohammed, in any works, in any name, in any means to gain heaven.

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

Jesus speaks as God, because He is God. He is not one among many, He is the First and the Last.

*12 “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*

What will those wages be? We stand before the Alpha and the Omega, the First and Last. He was there since the beginning. He was there when you and I were born and He has been seen every step, every misstep. He saw us dishonored our parents and superiors ... from the anger when they said we couldn't rebellion that did exactly what we shouldn't. He was us dishonored our government ... from speeding and running red lights to pirating copyrighted materials to disrespectful words toward that elected official who was appointed over us by God. He was there when we treated that

other person poorly ... from speaking badly about them when their back was turned to refusal to forgive them for some injury to returning evil for evil when they wronged us.

Yes, we thirst. But we do not thirst like the world thirsts. We thirst for something real and good, not illusions. We thirst because we recognize how we too, just like everyone else, have been distracted, and our service toward God has been interrupted by mirages. *“the time is at hand!”* There is no reason to delay. The time to drown the old man is always NOW – today, tomorrow, and the next – always NOW. The time to hear the invitation and drink is a call we long for every day; it brings you here today, in the presence of the Spirit and the bride.

## **2. The motivation and acceptance of the invitation: the means of grace**

*v.17 The Spirit and the Bride say: “Come!”*

When the book of Revelation and other references of Scripture refer to “the bride” is speaking of: the assembly of all believers. Scripture pictures your relationship to Christ as that of a heavenly marriage, the two have become one. As we considered last week, the heavenly Jerusalem is described as “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” We know this also as “the Holy Christian Church.”

From the midst of the Church, the Spirit cries out: Come and drink! For here in the midst of the Church flows forth the water of life. Picture this heavenly vision – a river of water flows from the throne. It is pure; no need for water softening; no metals, no contamination, nothing earthly or sinful is in this water. It is the source of life.

Of course we thirst. The wages of sin is death; that is what we deserve for our works. However, for this reason, God has given the “free gift of eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.” Take freely; there is no cost, no upfront payment, no backend debt. From beginning to end, Jesus has given us something free, something perfect. He has accomplished the forgiveness of all your sins by His perfect acts in life and sacrifice in death. This river is alive in His resurrection.

*14 ... whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”*

From the God and Lamb proceeds the Spirit. We say it in the Nicene Creed: “who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the Prophets.”

The river begins in heaven at the throne of God. But we cannot limit this to the New Creation. For we are called to drink of it NOW. How is it that the Spirit gets from heaven to earth so that we can take freely?

In its midst of the river grows a tree. A tree which brings life and brings forth life.

*It bore twelve fruits, yielding its fruit every month.*

That number 12 is used throughout the book of Revelation as a symbol of the Church. And it is the Church who administers the water of life. As we read, the Spirit and the Bride call out: Come! God has indeed brought something from heaven to earth through the means of grace. The earthly means by which the Spirit bridges the gap from us to Him are baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the preached gospel. Here in the midst of those who believe, these gifts of life are offered and treasured, given and received, spoken and heard.

A tree is rooted the water of life will not cease to bear fruit. "Every month." That is, constantly this tree is producing.

We wonder how this can be. As we look to ourselves we can hardly say there is a steady flow of good works in every season. Quite the opposite seems to be the case. But remember how these fruits are produced. They come as the Church administers the means of grace. It is through the forgiveness of sins that good fruits come forth. Christ's work has cast out your bad fruit and you are a new vine. This is why all we do centers in word and sacrament. This is how we quench our thirst.

*Psalm 1:1–3 — 1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*

We have found the oasis – rooted in the Word of Christ you are a tree what never withers. ***11 ... he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.***

By faith that status remains true until the last day – righteous on account of Christ. By works we reflect that faith within. Our works make known what cannot be seen; our works declare what cannot remain hidden – your love for Christ.

This is how we understand Christ's promise: "My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work." Your status in Christ has already declared your judgment: "not guilty." The only works that remain are those which the Spirit has produced through faith in Him. Christ will judge on the basis of faith and He will make this evident for all to see by pointing to the works which reflect a living faith. These are the fruits of the Spirit.

*Galatians 5:16–25 — 16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are*

*contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ... 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

By His cross, your flesh has been crucified and avails no more. The old man is drowned in repentance. And we arise to an ongoing walk of the Spirit. For in such a humble step, we walk in Christ and walk as Christ. We now produce the fruits of faith which are well pleasing to God. This includes the fact that we apologize to those we wrong. We seek to obey our parents; we raise our children to love the Word of God; we honor our government even when we don't agree with their laws or decisions, for we know that the powers that be were appointed by God. We serve our neighbor, forgiving those who have wronged us, righting those whom we have wronged, and always speaking in a way that will help and be a friend to them.

***Revelation 22:14 — 14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.***

### **3. The invitation kept and extended.**

Nothing could be more dear to us than this tree of life. Nothing could be a greater treasure than to be assured that God is with us, loves us, and promises us a resurrection to life. For this reason we guard His Word. We disdain any who would take away or add corruption to this source of life.

To again use the analogy of a water shortage... if your community had the only good spring of water in the whole state, would you want to protect it? Let's say someone had come with the intent of sabotage. Someone comes to drop chemical sewage into that well. Would you not guard it with your life? For your family? For your community?

As Christians, we have been entrusted with the one and only oasis in a world of desert draught.

Do not seal up the prophecy of this book! Let us drink of this vision again and again. Though we approach it with humble awe, we should not shy away from teaching the truths of this revelation. "Do not seal it up! Let it be heard!" This applies to all of God's revealed word. *Matthew 28:20 — 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.*

What is the difference between an oasis and a mirage? An oasis is real; a mirage is an illusion. This is no mirage. However, we have still not fully reached the oasis. Though we drink of the water of life, still, while on earth, we will get thirsty again. Oh, how we long for the final the final oasis where both our souls and bodies will be brought into

full communion with God. How we long for an end to the curse as the Morning Star dawns upon the New Creation.

*3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.*

**Even so, come, Lord Jesus!**

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