

Alpha and Omega

Rev 22:12-21

SS Lesson for 11/27/2016

Devotional Scripture: Rev 21:1-8

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson reminds us how Jesus is the **Alpha and Omega**. The **study's aim** is to understand more about the eternal nature of Jesus Christ from His names and to think about the return of Jesus, the Alpha and Omega. The **study's application** is to worship Jesus Christ as the Eternal One and as the One who is coming soon.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Rev 22:13

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

22:12. The words with which this verse begins: **Behold, I am coming soon!** are the same as those at the beginning of verse 7. In connection with His return, which will be “soon” (cf. vv. 7, 20), a **reward** is promised to His saints for what they have **done** for Christ. The reference is to the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10-11). The final judgments of both the wicked and the righteous will be judgments of works. This is the joyous expectation of those who are faithful and the fear of those who have not been faithful.

22:13. Once again Christ is described as **the Alpha and the Omega** (first and last letters of the Gr. alphabet), **the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End**. Christ is before all Creation and He will continue to exist after the present creation is destroyed. He is the Eternal One (cf. 1:4, 8, 17; 2:8; 21:6).

22:14-15. The last of the seven beatitudes of Revelation is bestowed on the saints, **those who wash their robes**. They have access to the New Jerusalem and its **tree of life** (cf. v. 19). The other six beatitudes are in 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7. In the manuscripts followed by the KJV, the expression “those who wash their robes” is translated “that do His commandments.” In both cases the words accurately describe the righteous. By contrast, judgment is pronounced on those who are unsaved (**dogs** refers to people; cf. Phil. 3:2): **those who practice magic arts** (cf. Rev. 9:21; 18:23; 21:8), **the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood**. As in the similar description of the unsaved in 21:8, 27, the wicked works which characterize the unsaved are described. Though some saints have been guilty of these same practices, they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb and are acceptable to God. But those who refuse to come to the Lord receive the just reward for their sins. Though the world is excessively wicked, God will bring every sin into judgment. And the time for Christ’s return may be drawing near, when this will be effected.

22:16-17. The entire Book of Revelation was delivered by Christ through His **angel** and is **for the churches**. Christ described Himself as **the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star**. Historically Christ comes from David (Matt. 1:1; cf. Isa. 11:11; Rev. 5:5). Prophetically His coming is like the morning star, the beginning of a bright new day. The Holy **Spirit** joined with **the bride**, the church, in extending an invitation to all who heed. Those who hear are encouraged to respond and also to extend the invitation to others. The wonderful promise is given that all those who are **thirsty** may **come** and will receive God’s **free gift**. This is the wonderful invitation extended to every generation up to the coming of Christ. Those who recognize their need and realize that Christ is the provider of salvation are exhorted to come while there is yet time before the judgment falls and it is too late. As the Scriptures make clear, the gift of eternal life (here called **the water of life**; cf. 22:1; John 7:37-39) is free. It has been paid for by the death of Christ on the cross and is extended to all who are willing to receive it in simple faith.

22:18-19. While on the one hand an invitation is extended to those who will listen, a word of warning is also given to those who reject the revelation of **this final book** of the Bible. A dual warning is given against

adding to it or subtracting from it (cf. Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6). How great will be the judgment of those who despise this book and relegate it to the mystical experiences of an old man, thereby denying that it is the inspired Word of God. Rejecting the Word of God is rejecting God Himself. And those who deny His promises of blessing and subtract from His truths will receive His judgment and will have no part in **the tree of life** or access to **the holy city** (cf. Rev. 22:14).

22:20-21. One further word of testimony was then given: **Yes, I am coming soon** (cf. vv. 7, 12). To this John replied in a brief prayer, **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.** With this tremendous revelation completed, a final word of benediction was pronounced. **The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.** This expression, so common in other New Testament books, brings this final word from God to an end. For those who believe that Christ in His first coming provided salvation, there is the wonderful promise of His coming again to bring full and final deliverance. As the book began by introducing a revelation of Jesus Christ so it ends with the same thought that He is coming again. Probably no other book of Scripture more sharply contrasts the blessed lot of the saints with the fearful future of those who are lost. No other book of the Bible is more explicit in its description of judgment on the one hand and the saints' eternal bliss on the other. What a tragedy that so many pass by this book and fail to fathom its wonderful truths, thereby impoverishing their knowledge and hope in Christ Jesus. God's people who understand and appreciate these wonderful promises can join with John in his prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus."

Commentary from The Bible Expositor and Illuminator

As the book of Revelation comes to a close, the angel's message to the Apostle John (22:8-11) is punctuated by the words of Jesus Christ in verses 12-13. Whether the angel was quoting Jesus or Jesus Himself spoke at this point is not entirely clear, but the words clearly belong to Jesus. The expression "Alpha and Omega" is used as a self-designation both at the beginning of Revelation (1:8, 11) and at the end of the book (21:6; 22:13). In our text (Rev. 22:13), Alpha and Omega is a description of the One who is coming "quickly" (vs. 12), a clear reference to Christ. There is some debate about whether the descriptions in Revelation 1:8 and 21:6 refer to God the Father or Jesus Christ. As God the Son, however, Christ possesses all the attributes of God, so both Father and Son can be described as the Alpha and Omega. The book of Revelation, like the rest of the New Testament, was originally written in the Greek language. Alpha and omega are, respectively, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The words that follow clarify the significance of their use here. For Jesus to describe Himself as "Alpha and Omega" is to declare that He is "the beginning and the end, the first and the last." "Alpha and Omega" thus is a title of Christ, and like all titles it has meaning. In fact, it seems to convey several related ideas. First, the title speaks of His eternity. He is the "beginning and the end." He is "before all things, and nothing survives Him" (Morris, *The Revelation of St. John*, Eerdmans). In other words, He has no beginning or ending; He is eternal. This attribute is further emphasized in Revelation when He is described as the One who is, was, and is to come (1:4; 4:8). Second, the title means that Christ, like God the Father, is "sovereign over history, in control not only of the past but of the future" (Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker). Because He is eternal, He is also sovereign; and because He is sovereign, we are assured that the Holy One ultimately will bring all things into conformity with His perfect will. Finally, the title stresses Christ's deity. Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. We know God the Father through God the Son, the One who has fully revealed the Father (John 1:18; 14:9). Those who claim to follow God but reject the deity of Christ are following a false god. How horrible it would be if the One who is eternal and sovereign over all things were not the God of the Bible! In gratitude for the truth, we acknowledge our eternal, sovereign Lord as the One revealed in Jesus Christ. He is the Holy One, righteous, just, pure, gracious, loving, merciful, and unchanging. He is our Lord, the sovereign God. He is worthy of our trust and complete commitment, and He will in due time establish a "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13). In Christ there is joy, blessing, hope, and peace. And we also have the abiding assurance that there is a purpose to everything, for the One who purposed everything is the eternal, sovereign God, the Alpha and Omega.

Additional Commentary from Tony Garland

Commentary adapted from "A Testimony of Jesus Christ" by Tony Garland

[Commentary on Rev 22](http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/22.html#13249)

http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/22.html#13249

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Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Your flight has been delayed. These words are distressing to the air traveler. In an environment of tight connections and few direct flights, a flight delay can result in disrupted plans and great inconvenience. It is a mark of our impatience as a society how traumatic a few hours' delay can be. Yet delays are part of our everyday life. Car repairs take longer than expected. That package with promised two-day delivery actually takes three. Our food at the restaurant takes 10 minutes longer than we think it should. Delays are a frustratingly common element of life. But what if the delay is for hundreds of years? Thousands? Christians must balance their expectation of Christ's "could be at anytime" return with the awareness that his return has yet to happen after nearly 2,000 years. How do we live expectantly for Christ's return while simultaneously being in an "expect delays" mode? This quandary has faced the church since the first generation of believers.

The Old Testament teaches in many places that God will send a deliverer for his people. The people of Israel in the first century thought such a person would be a political and military rescuer. God's anointed leader, they thought, would be empowered to defeat their nation's enemies, bringing peace and independence in the process (compare Acts 1:6; etc.). Jerusalem and its temple would be freed from Gentile influence, and pure worship of the Lord could then take place. But two unexpected things happened. First, the Messiah that God sent did not come to be a leader of armies and defeat pagan invaders (John 6:15). He came, rather, to save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). His mission ultimately was for all humanity, for all are sinners. His death was a sacrifice for sins, intended to be effective for all people for all time, for he was the sacrificial Lamb who took away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Most first-century Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah because he did not meet their expectations. Second, the Jerusalem temple was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70 during the horrific War of the Jews. This was something that no Israelite of the time expected. Jewish faith, based as it was on the sacrifices of the temple, went into a downward spiral. Expectations of a military messiah to defeat the Romans were crushed. Some, perhaps most, Christians of the same century found their own hopes under distress as Jesus' return did not materialize as they thought it should (compare 2 Peter 3:3, 4). But Jesus himself promised that he would indeed return in power and glory (Matthew 24:30). His return will usher in the final judgment of both the living and the dead (Acts 10:42; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10). Christians and some Jews both look for the Messiah to come, but their expectations are very different. As today's text opens, the apostle John is still being addressed by the angel of the bowls of plagues, his guide to the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:9; 22:1, 8-10). The angel has just told him that the prophecies he is to write are not to be sealed up "because the time is near" (22:10). This gives a heightened sense of the necessary fulfillment of these prophecies. It causes us to focus anew on the greatest of all of Revelation's prophecies: Christ will return.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Declaration of Sovereignty (Rev 22:12-16)

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."

Sovereign over rewards (12-13)

Rewards that compensates for good works (Isa 40:10)

10 See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.

Rewards for good quality works (1 Cor 3:11-15)

11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. 15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Rewards like the crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4)

4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Rewards for righteousness (Matt 10:41-42)

41 Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."

Sovereign over judgments (14-15)

Judgments at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10)

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Judgments that man is destined to face (Heb 9:27)

27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment ,

Judgments that begin within the family of God (1 Peter 4:17-18)

17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

Judgments that through God's love, we don't have to fear (1 John 4:16-18)

16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. 17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.

Sovereign over the Church (16)

Sovereign over the Church because God keeps us blameless until that day (1 Cor 1:8)

8 He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sovereign over the Church because God cleansed us so we will be ready (Eph 5:25-28)

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

Sovereign over the Church because God sanctified us (1 Thess 5:23)

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sovereign over the Church because we belong to God (1 Cor 15:21-23)

21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

Sovereign over the Church because God is coming to bring salvation (Heb 9:26-28)

26 Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Sovereign over the Church because our citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20-21)

20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Testimony of the coming (16) - Commentary by Tony Garland

I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches

The Revelation of Jesus Christ (the contents of which are recorded by this book), was given by God to the Son Who then sent and signified it by His angel to John (Rev. 1:1). See commentary on Revelation 1:1. Testify is μαρτυρῆσαι [martyrēsai]: testify or witness.

To you is ὑμῖν [hymín]: to you all [plural]. The primary recipients of the testimony which John was told to write to were the Seven Churches of Asia (Rev. 1:11). Even so, each letter to the churches includes the injunction: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29. 3:6, 13, 22). This indicates that the message of the book of Revelation is to go out to whomever has a spiritual ear to hear (Rev. 13:9).

This is the first mention of the church (ἐκκλησία [ekklesia]) since the letters to the Seven Churches of Asia (Rev. 3:22). We believe this is another indication of the pretribulational Rapture of the Church. The church will be excluded from the events of the Tribulation and so is not mentioned after chapter 3 until now.

I am the Root and the Offspring of David

Jesus is the Root (offspring) of Jesse, David’s father (Isa. 11:10). Thus, He is the offspring of David and qualifies as heir to the Davidic throne (Isa. 9:7; Mtt. 1:1; Luke 3:31; Acts 13:23; Rom. 1:3-4 ;).

There is also a sense in which Jesus is the source out of which David came, for Jesus is the origin of creation (John 1:3, 10; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; Rev. 3:14). This dual relationship of Jesus to the line of David was the source of the riddle which the Pharisees were unable to answer:

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” They said to Him, “The Son of David.” He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool” ’? If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?” And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore. (Mtt. 22:41-46)

The solution to the riddle is found in the eternity and incarnation of Jesus. In His deity, Jesus is the God of David, hence David’s Lord. In His humanity, Jesus is in the line of descent from David—the son of David. Thus, Jesus is both David’s master and his son.

Jesus . . . in His humanity is the root and offspring of David, but as to His deity, He is the Shechinah Glory, as seen in the brightness and visibility of the light of the morning star.¹

the Bright and Morning Star

The bright and morning star is ὁ ἄστηρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωῒτης ὁ νόσ [ho astēr ho lampros ho prōhignos]: the star, the bright, the early one belonging to the morning.² John the Baptist was to go before Jesus, the Dayspring:

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the

Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1:76-79)

Dayspring is ἀνατολή [anatolē]: the place of rising, the dawn.³ Jesus is the bright and morning star because He is “the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world” (John 1:9). He is the “Sun of Righteousness” who “shall arise with healing in His wings” (Mal. 4:2). Jesus promised to give the overcomer in the church at Thyatira “the morning star” (Rev. 2:28).

His coming in power and glory is the sun-rise for Israel and the Gentiles, the breaking of the millennial day. But for His Church He comes first as the morning-star, as the morning-star in the eastern sky precedes the rising of the sun in all His glory. The Lord will come as the morning-star some time in the interval between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel and as the Sun of Righteousness after that week has come to an end.⁴

Until Jesus returns, we have the prophetic word, such as this very book, to serve as a beacon of hope while we continue in this dark world:

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2Pe. 1:19-21)

The morning star rises in the hearts of men who trust Him by faith even before He arrives to herald the dawn of a new day and the beginning of His Millennial Kingdom on earth. Only those who are motivated arise before the dawn to look for the morning star which heralds the approaching day:

Yes, the day is not here—but lo, the harbinger of the day, the Morning Star! It shines in the night, but it prophesies the coming sunrise. “The assembly (ecclesia—the Church) sees Him in the now far spent night as the Morning Star, recognizes Him, while watching for Him, according to His own Word, in His bright heavenly character—a character which does not wake a sleeping world, but is the delight and joy of those who watch. When the sun arises, He will not be thus known: the earth will never so know Him, bright as the (coming) day will be” (Darby).⁵

Notes

- 1 Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 546.
- 2 Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 725.
- 3 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 62.
- 4 Arno C. Gaebelin, *The Revelation* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1961), Rev. 22:16.
- 5 William R. Newell, *Revelation: Chapter by Chapter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994,c1935), 365.

Declaration of Responsibility (Rev 22:17-19)

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.

Responsibility of responding to call (17)

Responding to call by spending time with God (John 1:38-39)

38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.

Responding to call by seeking to be near God (Isa 55:6)

6 Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

Responding to call by seeking fellowship with God (1 John 1:3-7)

3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete. 5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Responding to call by getting to know Jesus (John 17:3)

3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Responding to call by knowing it is irrevocable (Rom 11:29)

29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

Responding to call by knowing God's calls are faithful (1 Thess 5:23-24)

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

Responsibility to honor God's Word (18-19)

Honor God's Word because it is useful to equip for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17)

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Honor God's Word because it is trustworthy and true (2 Peter 3:5-7)

5 But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. 6 By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. 7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

Honor God's Word because it is living and enduring (1 Peter 1:23)

23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

Honor God's Word because it revives the soul (Ps 19:7)

7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

Honor God's Word because it provides a rebirth by God (James 1:18)

18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Plea of the coming (17) - Commentary from Tony Garland

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"

Say is λέγουσιν [legousin], present tense: they are saying. The invitation is for the present and is ongoing. Come is ἔρχου [erchou], a second-person singular imperative command: you [singular] come! The invitation is to an individual.

The invitation is for Christ, the bridegroom, to come and is made by the Church, the bride of this age who is destined to inhabit the New Jerusalem, along with other people of God (Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9). Indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 7:39), she makes intercession for the return of Christ according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26-27). This is seen in the closing invitation by John, a member of the Church, for the return of our Lord: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20). The mention of the Spirit may also refer to the prophets, through whom the Holy Spirit predicted the coming of Christ.

Throughout the centuries, God's people have waited for, prayed for, hoped for, and watched for Christ's return. They are weary of the battle against sin and long to see Jesus Christ exalted, glorified, and honored. They long for Him to return and take them to heaven to live with Him forever (John 14:3; 1Th. 4:17). They long for the day when their perishable, mortal bodies will be transformed into their imperishable, immortal resurrection bodies (1Cor. 15:53-54). They know that in that glorious day there will be no more sorrow, no more tears, no more crying, no more pain, and no more death. Rebellion will be swiftly dealt with; God and the Lamb will be glorified and will reign forever over the new heaven and the new earth.¹

And let him who hears say, "Come!"

Come!: this invitation is also to an individual. Those who have ears to hear what the Spirit says in the book of Revelation will come to faith. They too will then issue an invitation for Christ's speedy return.

And let him who thirsts come.

Let him who thirsts come is καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω [kai ho dipsōn erchesthō], present tense participle: and the one [presently] thirsting, let him come. This invitation is to those who have not yet come to salvation, both within the church assembly and outside, which thirst for God:

Though this invitation could address the stranger who sometimes attended Christian worship (cf. 1Cor. 14:23-24) (Moffatt), plenty of regular attenders had not yet attained the category of an overcomer, as the seven messages of chapters 2-3 make very plain.²

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. (Isa. 55:1)

The only requirement is thirst. Without thirst, the free water of life will not be attained (Rev. 21:6).

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? (Ps. 42:1-2)

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Mt. 5:6)

Those who thirst for God in the present age, and trust in faith, are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, the Church (1Cor. 12:13):

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39)

Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Whoever desires is ὁ θέλων [ho thelōn], present tense participle: the one [presently] desiring. This is essentially the same invitation which the Father made: "I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts" (Rev. 21:6). See commentary on Revelation 21:6.

Notes

1 John MacArthur, Revelation 12-22: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 22:17.

2 Robert L. Thomas, Revelation 8-22 (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 22:17.

Declaration of Promises (Rev 22:20-21)

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.

Promise to come soon (20)

Promise to come soon for those who keep God's Word (Rev 22:7)

7 "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

Promise to come soon because salvation is nearer than we may believe (Rom 13:11)

11 And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

Promise to come soon because the Lord is near (Phil 4:5)

5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Promise to come soon because Jesus will not be delayed (Heb 10:37)

37 For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay.

Promise of grace (21)

Promise of Grace through the grace of one man - Jesus (Rom 5:15)

15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

Promise of Grace because there is always enough grace to cover sin (Rom 5:20-21)

20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Promise of Grace because it is a gift from God (Rom 11:5-6)

5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. 6 And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

Promise of Grace because of God's love (2 Thess 2:16)

16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope,

Promise of Grace because God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim 2:3-4)

3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The return of Christ is a key theme of the book of Revelation. We joyously celebrate his first coming, his first “advent,” in the Christmas season. But daily we should also anticipate and pray for his return, his second “advent,” to take us home to be with him forever. This morning I did so by praying “Maranatha,” an Aramaic word meaning “Come, Lord” (see 1 Corinthians 16:22). I am ready for Christ to come again. When I read the news of another mass shooting, of another suicide bomber, of another outrage to my Christian conscience, I am ready for Christ to come again. Despite the efforts of people of good faith, the dark side of humanity seems an unquenchable source of evil. I am ready for Christ to come again. I don’t know exactly how his coming or our residence in the new Jerusalem will work. The closing chapters of Revelation give answers, but in all honestly they raise questions as well. Yet I don’t need to know everything, and I am at peace with that. I am ready for Christ to come again. Are you ready as well, or does part of your heart fear that you will be among those excluded from the holy city? Being able and willing to pray for Christ to return right now is a great test of one’s spiritual health, a test of one’s relationship with the Lord Jesus. Practice the Maranatha prayer for a week. Pray it sincerely, in true faith. If you take this seriously, it will make a difference.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. When Jesus comes back, evil will be punished and good rewarded (Rev. 22:12)
2. We can trust Jesus' words because He has always existed and always will exist (vs. 13)
3. In order to enter the New Jerusalem, you must be washed of your sins (vs. 14)
4. The unrighteous will remain outside the city and will be punished for their sin (vs. 15)
5. Jesus bids all who seek Him to come (vss. 16-17)
6. Anyone who alters Jesus' words will forfeit salvation (vss. 18-19)
7. Followers of Jesus should long for His arrival (vss. 20-21)