

St. Therese Catholic Church

Book of Revelation

Chapter 22

May 27, 2025

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Introduction

- This chapter continues John's vision of the new Jerusalem revealing its resemblance both to the garden of Eden before the fall and to the future temple of Ezekiel's vision (Ezek. 40-48).
- Finally, in solemn epilogue, John reports concluding words from the angel through whom he has received this revelation, from Jesus himself, and a response from the Spirit and the Bride, followed by a greeting from John (357).



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River of Life-Giving Water

- River of life-giving water: Genesis 2:10 describes a river that “rises in Eden to water the garden” and sustains various trees that are “delightful to look at and good for food,” including “the tree of life in the middle of the garden.” God thus creates the ultimate future to be like the beginning, only better (358).
- Produces twelve times a year: Whereas Psalm 1 describes the blessed is like a tree planted near streams of water, that yields its fruit in season, John’s vision sees the tree of life that produces fruit twelve times a year, once each month.
- Medicine for the nations: May symbolize the now-complete healing of body, soul, and spirit that has come to all nations and to every person through the work of the Holy Spirit (358).

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New Jerusalem

- From the throne of God and of the Lamb: God and Christ share one throne, indicating Jesus' full divinity (359).
- Nothing accursed will be found there: Literally, “every curse will be no longer.” Every curse or judgment owing to human sin (Gen. 3:16-19), whether Israel's (Deut. 28:15-68) or that of the rebellious nations (Isa. 34:1-2; Zech. 14:2-3), will be absent (359).
- They will look upon his face: What human beings were not able to do for all of history (Exod. 33:20), they are able to do in the New Jerusalem (360).

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Life in the New Jerusalem

- Night will be no more: Indicates that the redeemed will live in perfect security. God will be so radiant to them – fulfilling Aaron's blessing ("The Lord let his face shine upon you," Num. 6:25) – that they will not need light from lamp or sun (360).
- They shall reign forever and ever: In heaven, they shall fulfill the prophecy of Daniel: "The holy ones of the Most High shall receive the kingship, to possess it forever and ever" (7:18) (360).
- Five Biblical images: They will live in a *new creation*; they are the *Bride of the Lamb*; they inhabit the *New Jerusalem* that has become God's true *temple* on earth; God's original plan reaches fulfillment as the *garden of Eden* is restored (360).

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Life in the New Jerusalem

- The New Jerusalem is the wedding residence that Jesus has built for himself – from those conquering. And the New Jerusalem is his Bride.
- Now if we consider Jesus as the second Adam for a moment, then the New Jerusalem is the second Eve.
- Instead of Adam and Eve dwelling in a garden, the new Adam now dwells, forever, in the new Eve. The New Jerusalem is Christ's paradise, our very destiny is to be Christ's Paradise, where he loves to dwell in the Spirit (McIlraith, 185).

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Life in the New Jerusalem

- Instead of four rivers, this Paradise has the river of life, divine life, zoe, running through it.
- The beloved of Jesus in Smyrna were told to be faithful until death and he would give them the crown of life. This is indeed the bridal crown, the fullness of divine life, forever. (McIlraith, 185).



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Epilogue

- Verses 22:6-21 begin the epilogue of the book. The epilogue remains difficult to interpret since there are obviously several speakers, and their identities are not always stated and must be inferred from the context (362).
- As with the beginning of the book (1:1-3), some scholars read the words by multiple speakers as a liturgical dialogue (362).
- Whether or not the early Christians enacted it as liturgy, John enables his readers to listen in on a conversation between divine, angelic, and human voices at the beginning and the end of this book (362).

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Coming Soon

- And he said to me: The angel speaking to John is the one who showed him the vision of “the bride, the wife of the Lamb,” and explained the new Jerusalem (21:9-22:5) (363).
- Behold, I am coming soon: The double affirmation that all this will happen “soon” reflects Christ’s perspective on time, not ours, and communicates urgency (363).
- Blessed is the one who keeps the prophetic message of this book: Similar to the beatitude in the prologue in Revelation 1:3. Revelation does not convey mere information but teaching to be put into practice (363).

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Fellow Servant

- Worship at the feet of the angel: John and his readers realize this is excessive and improper veneration to give an angel (see Col. 2:18), but John's over-the-top response shows the grandeur of the vision: the message is so awesome that it evokes worship of the messenger (363).
- A fellow servant: The angel responds vigorously, placing himself at the same level – a fellow servant (literally a fellow slave) with John and his brothers, that is, other Christian prophets . Any yet, they are mere creatures and servants, who serve the transcendent Creator God (363).
- Key: John and angel worship and serve God together.

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Appointed Time is Near

- Do not seal up: Whereas an angel told Daniel to seal up the prophetic message until the end of time (Dan. 12:4), John is told not to seal up the prophetic words of this book.
- For the appointed time is near: John, including us, already live in the end time (364).
- In the meantime, God allows people to make choices just as they did in the time of Daniel, a prophet who used similar words (Dan. 12:10) (364).
- Key: God generously gives people freedom to act in love and truth, striving for communion with Him, or to decide otherwise.

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Righteous Deeds

- Behold, I am coming soon: The Risen Lord speaks again to emphasize the imminence of his return (364).
- Key: In Revelation, we see again the importance of deeds when our life is reviewed in love.

Scripture	Description
Rev. 14:13	Let them rest from their labors, for their works accompany them.
Rev. 19:8	The linen represents the righteous deeds of the holy ones.
Rev. 20:12-13	All the dead were judged according to their deeds.

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Wash Their Robes

- Alpha and Omega: A phrase that has been used in Rev. 1:7 and 2:8. God and the Lamb are both eternal (3650).
- Blessed are they who wash their robes: The seventh and last beatitude makes clear that the call to conversion is truly good news (365).
- Key: Along with the importance of righteous deeds, saints are those who turn from evil to God and receive cleansing and grace from the sacrifice of Christ through baptism (Acts 22:16; Eph. 5:26) and ongoing repentance (365).

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Tree of Life

- Tree of life: Previously kept back from the human race because of the sin of our first parents (Gen. 3:22-24) (365).
- Enter the city: They have a right to dwell in the New Jerusalem as true citizens (365).
- Key: The rich imagery is meant to evoke a desire for heaven.



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Grave Wrongdoing

- John provides a list of grave wrongdoings that is close to 21:8.

Grave Wrongdoing	Description
Dogs	Derogatory term for slave to appetites
The sorcerers	Occult practices
The unchaste	Sexual immorality
The murderers	Taking of innocent life
The idol worshippers	Worship someone / something other than God
All who love / practice deceit	Those who practice self-deception

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God's Promises

- I, Jesus, sent my angel: Jesus himself ratifies its content, confirming that it was he who sent his angel with his testimony, a solemnly attested message for the churches (366).
- Two Old Testament texts (the root and offspring of David – Is. 11:1, 10 and bright morning star – Num. 24:17) depict a ruler whom God will raise up to be victorious over the wicked (366).
- The Spirit and the bride say, “Come”: The Spirit and the Church invites those listening receive life-giving water.

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Thirsty for Eternity

- When I read the immediate context more closely, I saw that the Bride, the Church, in her full glory, calls on the thirsty to come to her.
- She echoes the words of God in Isaiah 55:1. Those thirsty for eternity, for eternal life, will find it in her. The water of life run through her.
- The tree of life is in her. The divine life, can, of course, now be found in her, and she dispenses it through the sacraments especially through the bread of life (Jn. 6:35), the Eucharist (McIlraith, 188).

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Prophetic Words

- Identifying who is speaking in 22:18 – 21 is not easy.
- The prophetic words in this book: Probably John the prophet speaking authoritatively on behalf of God (367).
- Revelation 22:18-19 is directed against false teaching and false prophecy, warning that God will punish interpretations of the Christian faith that allow the idolatry, immorality, and compromise with evil that Revelation condemns (368).
- Key: Do not tamper with the deposit of faith!

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Losing Eternity

- The penalties imposed on anyone who tampers with the message are severe: God will add to him the plagues described in this book (368).
- Similarly, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city. In other words, if such a person once enjoyed the hope of eternal life through faith and baptism, he or she will lose it (368).
- The one who gives testimony: Jesus himself the source of the book of Revelation (368).

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Losing Eternity

- Yes, I am coming soon: The slight change of wording from “Behold” in 22:12 to “Yes” here makes the repetition emphatic (368).
- The response of the Church animated by the Spirit, the Bride of the Lamb, is also an emphatic repetition of what was said in 22:17 – Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! – expressing the earnest longing and prayer of all God’s people for that day to come (368).
- The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all: John prays that as the Bride awaits a future consummation, the Lamb’s grace, his efficacious favor, may rest upon all who read his words (368).

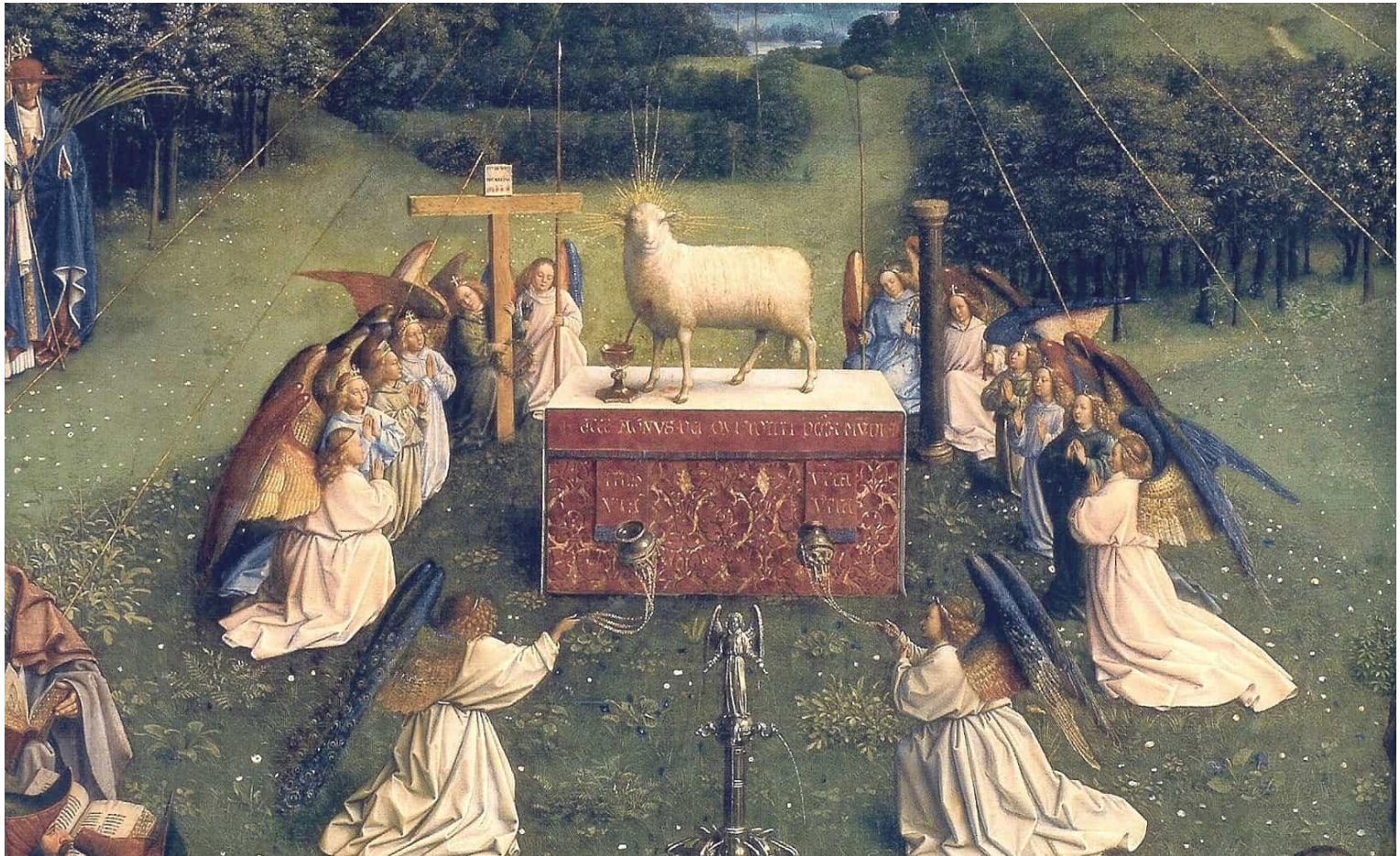
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New Creation



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Bride of the Lamb



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New Jerusalem



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True Temple



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Garden of Eden



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Beauty of Heaven

- While Revelation is a very challenging book to interpret with heavy chapters that contain long series of judgments (breaking seals, blowing trumpets, pouring out of bowls), it is the Cinderella story, God's story, and the best love story of all time.
- St. Paul summarizes the beauty of heaven beyond all imagination by saying, "But as it is written: 'What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him'" (2 Cor. 2:9).
- Key: The sufferings of this present age are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us (Rom. 8:18).