

Sunday September 18, 2022

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.
They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. (Psalm 19)*

Almighty God, you are a God who made all things, for the benefit of your glory. In the beginning you made the world around us, and made us to have a special place within your creation. "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." Lord, we live in a world where there are many distractions that draw us away from worshipping You. Thank you that even though we are disobedient you continue to love us as your children and continue to show us your mercy. We give you thanks and praise that because of your grace you have redeemed us and displayed a love to us that we cannot earn, and that is not deserved. We give you thanks that through Christ's obedience, and His death on the cross, that the price for sin has been paid – once, for all so that what was once unclean can be made clean. Thank you, Lord that through the resurrection of Christ and his defeat over death, we can be confident that those who place their faith in Jesus will also be raised to eternal life with You. Father God, we pray that as we continue to study your word in the bible today that we will have soft, teachable hearts that yearn to learn how you would have us live as your people. In Christ's name we pray, Amen

Song – Come People of the Risen King

[Come People of the Risen King \(with lyrics\) - Keith & Kristyn Getty - YouTube](#)

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| <p>1. Come, people of the Risen King
Who delight to bring Him praise
Come all and tune your hearts to sing
To the Morning Star of grace
From the shifting shadows of the earth
We will lift our eyes to Him
Where steady arms of mercy reach
To gather children in</p> | <p>3. Come, young and old from every land
Men and women of the faith
Come, those with full or empty hands
Find the riches of His grace
Over all the world, His people sing
Shore to shore we hear them call
The Truth that cries through every age:
"Our God is all in all"!</p> |
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Chorus

*Rejoice, rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice; O Church of Christ, rejoice!*

2. Come, those whose joy is morning sun
And those weeping through the night
Come, those who tell of battles won
And those struggling in the fight
For His perfect love will never change
And His mercies never cease
But follow us through all our days
With the certain hope of peace

Bible Reading – Revelation 21:1-27 (NIV)

“Then I saw ‘a new heaven and a new earth,’ for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’ ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ ⁶ He said to me: ‘It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. ⁸ But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.’ ⁹ One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, ‘Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.’ ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ¹⁵ The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. ¹⁶ The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. ¹⁷ The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick. ¹⁸ The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass. ²² I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Announcements

Focus for September – Devotions. Our regular (aim for daily!) devotions should include both bible reading and prayer. Prayer is where we respond to what God has just said to us in his word. Where we share our joys, struggles, confidence and doubts with our heavenly Father. Our prayer lives are often the spiritual barometer of our spiritual lives are going. So this week think though how you pray to God each day. Some suggestions. Keep a prayer diary. Pray through passages of Scripture. Pray through the newspaper. Include a world focus. Finish your prayers with your own and your family’s needs, don’t start with them!

Next Term: For the first two weeks of term 4 we are closing down our small groups and running some ministry training times instead. We hope to be running sessions on Sound/ Welcoming/Reading the Bible in Public/Praying in Public/Visiting on behalf of the church/ Connecting with missionaries/ leading a small group/Family & catechism/ Personal Evangelism. You will get to choose the Session you want to do. Unfortunately not every session will be held on every occasion! The plan is that we will meet at the

Charlestown Church/Hall on Tuesday nights (6:45 BYO meal, 7:30-8:30 training) or Wednesday (12:15 BYO lunch, 1-2pm training). You don't need to be in a small group to come, we hope that we can get as many people as possible to grow into their ministry skills which will help us as a Church to better care for our people.

Work Day: Many thanks to those who helped out with yesterday's work day. It was much appreciated.

School Holidays: NSW school holidays begin next weekend. That means this week will be the last week of our regular church activities before they go into recess for two weeks while schools are on holidays.

Kids Spot:

Upcoming Events

- Gala Mission concert
- Gather Round Christmas Celebration

Christmas boxes (Operation Christmas Child. Samaritans Purse). (if room) There are again three options for boxes this year; fill a box yourself, or, collect a box and a \$8 pack and provide some extras, or, pay \$10 to have a box filled on your behalf. Each option also requires \$10 postage per box. For payment, please transfer to the church account (BSB 062 829 Acc 10194850) with the description Christmas box. Info – Kathryn O'Callaghan or alternatively visit Samaritans Purse <https://occ.samaritanspurse.org.au/>

Kids Spot: We are learning about Pentecost this week as we look at Acts 2:1-39. We will learn that God gives his Holy Spirit to his people all over the world so that his people may know Jesus as Lord, love him and tell others about him. Challenge for the week: Find some other passages in the Bible that tell us about what the Holy Spirit does for us in our lives as Christians.

Gala Concert – Sat 5 Nov. Our famous fundraising Gala Concert is returning on Saturday 5 November. This year money raised will be going to Destiny Haven (a residential place of healing for women struggling with life-controlling issues). We are now putting a call out to performers from our churches – Sally Wright would love to talk to you! Please make contact with her at sallybigtrip19@gmail.com or on 0406 937 634

Prayer Points for 18th September 2022

Psalms 31:3 "For you are my rock and my fortress; and for your name's sake you lead and guide me."

Pray for Iran: Pray for a great harvest resulting from faithful believers sharing bold accounts of their faith. Pray for the church to rapidly multiply and mature despite horrendous persecution against non-Muslim peoples. Pray for Christians to capitalize on unprecedented opportunities to spread the Gospel via Internet, TV, and media.

Pray for the church: Pray for a deeper reliance on the Holy Spirit in gospel work. Pray for the preaching to come not just in words only but in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Pray for Appleby's: Pray for Ruth's protection as she goes into the local prison to help advise on a nasty outbreak of scabies. Pray it would be an opportunity to share Christ's love. Pray for their trip back to Australia at the end of this month. Pray for the spread of the gospel in Cambodia.

Bible Reading – Revelation 22:1-21 (NIV)

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. ⁶ The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place." ⁷ "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll." ⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. ⁹ But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the

words of this scroll. Worship God!" ¹⁰ Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near. ¹¹ Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; & let the holy person continue to be holy." ¹² "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. ¹⁴ "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. ¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." ¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. ¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. ¹⁹ And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll. ²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. ²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

Song – Amazing Grace <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tvt6E9N7AQw>

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| <p>1. Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind but now I see</p> | <p>3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come
This grace that brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home</p> |
| <p>2. It was grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed</p> | <p>4. When we've been here ten thousand years
Bright, shining as the sun
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun</p> |

Sermon – Anew Creation! (Stephen T)

In 1991 musician, Eric Clapton lost his five-year-old son, Connor, after he fell from the window of his Manhattan apartment. Clapton was absolutely devastated and as a musician he poured out his grief in music writing the hit song "Tears in Heaven." In the song he asks a question or two, "Would you know my name, if I saw you in heaven? Would it be the same, if I saw you in heaven?"

We all have questions about heaven, don't we? Will we be able to recognise one another in heaven? Will our family and friends be there in heaven? What about our pets? What are we going to do in heaven? And the big one how can I be sure that I am going to go to heaven?

Slide 2

Well, we come to the last part of the last book of the Bible and we get the most detailed description of heaven. For now John sees "*a new heaven and a new earth,*" *for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.*"

The Bible does not end with the end of the world, it ends with the beginning of a new world. But is it a new heaven and earth or a renewed heaven and earth? Well on that subject the Bible is not completely clear. Jesus says in Matthew 19:28 "*I tell you the truth at the **renewal** of all things, when the Son of Man sets on his glorious throne.*" And yet the apostle Peter can also say in 2 Peter 3:10-11 "*The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be **destroyed by fire**, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.*"

Slide 3

So, will it be a completely new creation or creation anew? Well, the Greek word behind our English word new does not mean new in sense of time but fresh or renewed in purpose. Which means that God is restoring the universe to be what He always intended it to be. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth for mankind to live in perfect fellowship with their God in a garden of delight. But sin, evil and death have come in and trashed the joint. So now God will remake the heavens and earth **anew**.

Slide 4

It will be a bit like our human bodies. The apostle Paul says our earthly body is a bit like the seed and our resurrection body a bit like the plant. There is a real connection between the two. But there has also been a transformation that has taken place. The old body was for this earth and the new body is the old body resurrected, perfected for the world to come.

Slide 5

In the same way God is coming down from heaven so that now he can dwell with us on a renewed earth. Heaven and earth will no longer be two different spheres but one. And because God is there, there will be no tears or death or mourning or crying. Because the old order of things has passed away. And he is making everything new, anew, renewed. Like a producer might turn an old black and white filmstrip into a blockbuster colour production with digital special effects and surround sound, suitable for a movie screen. So, what does this renewed heaven and earth actually look like? Revelation 21 & 22 gives us

Slide 6

1. Three Pictures (Revelation 21: 9-22:5)

With the first picture being that of **the bride**. ²“I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.” This new Jerusalem is very different from the old Jerusalem. Despite its high hopes, the earthly city of Jerusalem, the city of peace, the city where God was to dwell proved to be no different to any other city. In fact, it went after Babylon, the prostitute, tempted by its riches and influence and forgot its marriage relationship with God.

Slides 7

But now we see this city has been radically renewed from a hotbed of evil to a pure, stunning bride. Verse 9 picks up this idea and runs with it, ⁹“One of the seven angels... said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” ¹⁰And he carried me away ... and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹It shone with the glory of God & its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.”

This bride is stunning! Beautiful! Decked out perfectly for her husband. Now one of the privileges that I have as a minister is to see a lot of weddings and to be close to all the action as well. And I have yet to see a bride walk down the aisle to get married, with a pair of ripped jeans, an odd coloured T-shirt and a fag hanging out of her mouth. It just doesn't happen. The bride looks radiant. She has taken the time to look at her best. As my wife always says, “you never see an ugly bride!”

Slide 8

And God has prepared a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. This is a marriage made in heaven. God has taken the role of a matchmaker and brought two of the most precious things in his life together to form this unbreakable bond. For the bride is the Church, his people, including you and I. And the bridegroom is his son, Jesus Christ. The Church has been purified, washed clean by the blood of Jesus so all sin and evil is removed from her. And God now presents them, presents us, to Jesus to live with him forever and ever.

Slide 9

In the words of Nancy Guthrie, “*The marriage is going to be so much better than the marriage of Adam and Eve in Eden. Our groom, the second Adam, will not fail to lovingly lead us to feast on the tree of life. He will not fail to protect us from evil. He will not dominate or abuse or ignore. He will not abandon. He will not die. His love will satisfy us forever in a home even better than Eden.*” He will give us a “love stronger than death.”

Friends that is you and I involved in this wedding. We are not just spectators but participants. You see what heaven will be like? It will be like your wedding day, when you have found the perfect partner. Listen to Nancy Guthrie again, "Whether we're married or single, divorced or widowed, our lives are meant to be spent nurturing our longing for this better marriage. And someday that longing will be fulfilled. Don't stuff down those desires to be loved in this way; direct your desires toward the only one who can love you this way forever." Jesus!

Slide 10

One picture of heaven is like the bride but another is it is like **a city**. The most amazing city that you have ever seen. Now I looked up on the internet which city topped the list of the most liveable city in the world. Last year it was Auckland but this year it was Vienna. But here in Rev 21 is an even more liveable city, the holy city, the new Jerusalem. Now to us the image of the city brings forth the idea of crime, of isolation, of the rat race. But the idea behind the city in this part of the book of Revelation is that of the home for God's people.

Slide 11

¹¹"It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal." In Revelation 4, the appearance of God was like jasper, so now this city reflects God's glory. *¹²"It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel."¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."*

Walls indicate security. The wrong people are kept out, which means the right people can stay comfortably. And the gates talk to us about access. People from the four corners of the earth can go through these gates because at the heart of this city is the message of the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles of Jesus. The gospel gives you and I access to this city.

Slide 12

¹⁶"The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 2,200 kms in length & as wide & high as it is long."¹⁷ The angel measured the wall using human measurement & it was 65m thick. ¹⁸The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass.

Slide 13

This is one big city. The size of Adelaide to Darwin to Cairns to Wollongong. And as tall as it is wide. Friends there I enough room to fit everyone into this city. But notice it is a cube, just as the holy of holies was a cube. You see its proportions are perfectly in order. And there is a beauty about this city. *¹⁹"The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone."* How valuable would that be? And how beautiful! Precious stones, gates made of pearls, street of pure gold. Fort Knox hides away is gold bullion, but the new Jerusalem shows it off in all its glory.

But it is missing a few elements of the original city Jerusalem. There is no temple. Why do you need a Temple though when you have access to God 24/7 and there is no need to make sacrifices for sin because your sins have been forgiven? And no sun or moon because just like you don't need a torch in the middle of the day, you will not need the sun and moon's illumination when you are living amongst the light of the world. When glory shines forth from our god stronger than the light of the sun.

This is our second picture of heaven. A city, a holy city pointing to a holy people of God living with their holy God. Imagine a city like that being your home. Married to Christ. At home with the Lord. And thirdly enjoying a garden paradise.

Slide 14

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of

life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

This environment is teeming with life. The water of life flowing directly from God is its centerpiece. We can't live without water, well here there is an abundance clear, pure, thirst-quenching water. The tree of life from the garden of Eden has morphed into trees of life yielding different fruits every different month. We can't do without food, well the food is abundant, accessible, constant and of a stunning variety.

Slide 15

This is like Eden, no it's even better than Eden. Because ³*"No longer will there be any curse."* Sin's curse has now been removed permanently. *"The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads."* You see God doesn't just walk in the garden in the cool of the day, he lives there every day. ⁵*"There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever."*

Slide 16

I love how Nancy Guthrie puts it, *"While the tree of life in the midst of Eden held out to Adam and Eve the promise of a superior quality of life if they were obedience, the tree of life in the new creation will provide unending, abundant life and healing to all who have put their faith in the obedience of Christ. This means that the story of our lives doesn't have to be about always grabbing for the good life as we define it but about trusting God to provide a better than good life in his way & in his timing."*

That is John's picture of heaven. Married to Christ. Living in the holy city. Surrounded by a lush environment. It's a wonderful picture, a stunning picture. Of a place even better than Eden with no more pain or sickness or death but living constantly in the presence of God. How amazing is that? How stunning? How beautiful & how different to our current world.

Slide 17

I read a while back about the story of a girl born blind who only knew the beauty of this world through her mother's descriptions. Flowers in spring. Trees in autumn, snow in winter, the beach in summer. But at 12 years of age, she had experimental surgery to help her see and it worked. And she ran to the window and took it all in and said "Mother, why didn't you tell me it was so beautiful?" Her mother replied, "I tried to but words just wouldn't suffice."

Friends John's words don't suffice. Even John's pictures are frankly not good enough, but they are a start & if you are like me, my mouth is already salivating, my imagination is going wild & my senses are popping but if that is good, let me explain to you what is the best thing

Slide 18

2. Three pictures, one person.

You see the real treasure in the new heaven and earth is God Himself. Listen to preacher Jim Hamilton, *"Look how casually what is treasured by sinful hearts is used in the new heaven and new earth. They take the largest pearls in the world and make them into gates; then they leave the gates open, even though the city is made of pure gold; and they have the audacity to take all that jasper & built it into a wall, all that gold & use it to pave the streets. All this shows that the real treasure of the new heaven and the new earth is God Himself."*

You see at the centre of this passage is not a what we do in heaven or a when will heaven come but a who, who is the centre of heaven. God Himself. Heaven is like being a holy bride, married to Jesus. It is like living in a city where we see God face to face. We are surrounded by the environment when the Holy Spirit produces life like streams of living water.

Slide 19

Let me give you one last picture. The tree of life, no the trees of life that provide sustenance for life and healing with its leaves, the word tree is not a live tree but a dead tree. A dried piece of timber. A Cross! Jesus' death on the cross gives us healing. Jesus' death on the cross gives us access to life. Jesus' death on the cross fills our hearts and stomachs completely.

Slide 20

You see heaven is not really about me. About me eating at the wedding supper of the lamb. About me riding the perfect wave down the river of life. About me, my friends & my family it's about God. The bliss of heaven is about being with him, knowing him, enjoying him, worshipping him. Annie Johnson Flint's poem, *The Lord Himself*, captures this perfectly.

*"It is not for a sign we are watching... For wonders above and below
The pouring of vials of judgment, the sounding of trumpets of woe;
It is not for a Day we are looking, not even the time yet to be
When the earth shall be filled with God's glory as the waters cover the sea;
It is not for a King we are longing to make the world-kingdoms His own;
It is not for a Judge who shall summon the nations of earth to His throne.*

*Not for these, though we know they are coming; for they are but adjuncts of Him,
Before whom all glory is clouded, beside whom all splendour grows dim.
We wait for the Lord, our Beloved, Our Comforter, Master and Friend,
The substance of all that we hope for, beginning of faith and its end;
We watch for our Saviour and Bridegroom, who loved us and made us His own;
For Him, we are looking and longing; For Jesus, and Jesus alone."*

Slide 21

3. Three Pictures, One Person & thirdly One Message (Revelation 22:6-21)

A little boy once walked into his Dad's study as his Dad finished reading a book. The son asked, "Dad what were you reading?" And the Father replied I was reading the book of Revelation the last book of the Bible." What's it all about? "It's about God's final battle against evil." The boy excitedly asks his father, "So, who wins?" And the father stoops down to the boy's level and says "God did!"

God wins. God wins. Evil is going down. It will be deep cleaned out of every nook and cranny of this earth. And God will transform what is left. Make it holy. Make it beautiful. Make it eternal. John is blown away by what he sees and then ⁶ *"The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."*

"Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll." God wins. So believe God's word to you today. Trust in God's word today. Follow God's word today. And let it loose. " Slide 22 *Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near."... "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city."*

Not everyone will make it to heaven. Those who are doing wrong will continue to do wrong. Those who are vile will continue to be vile and they will end up outside. With all those who haven't had the robes washed by the Lord. Who have chosen the cheap thrills of Babylon rather than the pure perfection of Jerusalem. Who have decided to ignore the word of God. Or add to the word of God. Don't do that. Jesus is coming soon. Be men & women of grace.

And that is how our book ends. ²¹ *"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen."* The last book of the old testament, the book of Malachi concludes with a curse, *"he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, or else I will come and strike the land with a*

curse." But the word of grace begins the last book of the NT & ends it. For that is what we need more than anything else. Grace, God's Grace.

Slide 23

4. Which leaves us finally with **Three Responses.**

Come. *"The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

Come. Come to God. Come to Jesus. Don't miss out. If only those who have been forgiven, who have allowed Jesus to die on the cross in their place are going to be in this place then make sure that you ask for forgiveness for your sins, make sure you give yourself fully to God. Come. Come back to God for he has placed before you this picture of heaven because his desire is that you won't miss out on it.

So come. Just as the sprinter focuses on the finish line and not those around him. Just as the marathon runner looks to the prize and forgets about the pain. Just as the greyhound will do anything, go anywhere to catch that rabbit, so we are to realise that God has our present and our future under his control. So today let's come to him.

Slide 24

Come and overcome. *"To those who overcome will inherit all this and I will be their god and they will be my children."* Friends it will be worth it in the end. You may be persecuted. You may fall for Satan's temptations. You might be rejected by friends. You might be labelled a loser. But if you are Christ's, you will end up on the winning side. And will inherit all of this.

DL Moody's house was burnt down in the Great Chicago fire of 1871. A friend came to see him, "I hear you lost everything." "You heard wrong," Moody told his friend "I have a great deal left than I lost." He then opened his Bible and read Revelation 21:7 *"to those who overcome will inherit all this and I will be their God and they will be His people"*

Slide 25

Come, overcome, so lastly, we call out to the Lord, Lord Jesus, come!" Come soon. Don't wait any longer. I want to go home. I want to have that close and personal relationship with you. I want to know you. I want to worship you. I want to enjoy you forever.

Friends Is that what you want today? Or do you want to stay here in a world that decayed and frayed and going down? Surely this picture of heaven will make you long for it even more. And it will give you strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, no matter what road we are called to walk down in the days to come. It will be all be worth it. But let me end these sermons on Revelation with a quote from the last paragraph of CS Lewis last book in the Narnia series, the Last Battle about what is in store for those who follow Jesus.

Slide 26

He writes, *"the things that began to happen after that was so great & beautiful that I cannot truly write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world & all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and title page; now as last they were beginning chapter one of the Great Story which no one on earth has read; which goes on for ever and ever, in which every chapter is better than the one before."*

That my friend is what awaits those whose names are in the lamb's book of life. So make sure that your name is there by today repenting from your sins & putting your trust in Jesus.

Song – Chorus of the Saved

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilpVNCSOH8k>

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. See the radiance of God Risen Son
All the angels rejoice at his name
All creation sustained by the power of his word
And his throne will endure for now and ever</p> | <p>3. Through his blood our forgiveness is sure
By his Spirit within we'll endure
Holding on to this hope as an anchor for the soul
And our eyes fixed on Jesus the one who saves us</p> |
| <p>2. Perfect Son sacrificed once for all
Power of sin, fear of death now destroyed
Raised to life, raised on high, Jesus name above all names
His acclaim will resound beyond the ages</p> | <p>Bridge. Now let us draw near the holiest place
Our hearts full of faith, our lips full of praise
So let us draw near the holiest place
Now pure through his blood, our sins washed away</p> |

Chorus

Come join the song in earth and heaven voices raised
In the chorus of the saved
Come shout his name, come lift a sacrifice of praise
With the chorus of the saved

Benediction. *"Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. ²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen." (Revelation 22:20-21)*