

## Revelation 22      New earth

### Revelation 22:1-5

In the season of Advent we both remember that Jesus came to earth once and that he will come again. This 'again' is very present in Revelation 22. In verses 1-5 John describes the last part of his visions: he now sees that at the heart of the new city of Jerusalem is a new paradise! This is a place of bliss, with no more Covid, no more cancer, etc.

This new world looks very much like the original Garden of Eden as described in Genesis 2-3. There is living water and there is a tree of life. This means that God does not give up on this world, his own handywork. He created the material world and it is good. He will renew it, but not make a new start from scratch. That's why for us it is worth preserving this earth.

The fact that John sees a new earth as well as new heavens means that we should stop talking about 'going to heaven'. God's new world will consist of a new heaven and earth.

### Revelation 22:6-13

John's visions, given by Jesus, have now ended. John begins to wind down and to comment on the book. Here we have 'Declarations of origin' from the angel, John and Jesus.

Verse 13 again makes clear that Jesus is God. He has already won the victory, as we saw in chapter 5.

Verse 10 says that Revelation is not a sealed book. Contrast this with Daniel 12:

"But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge. ... So I asked, 'My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?' He replied, 'Go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end.'"

Daniel's book had to be sealed until the 'time of the end'. John convincingly tells us that this time has now come, because Jesus has been victorious on the cross and on the Easter morning. Since Jesus' first coming we are living in the last days. This shows us that chapter 5 is really the key to understanding Revelation. The main event in history is behind us.

### Revelation 22:14-21

These verses can be hard for us. Jesus says that he is coming soon (verses 7, 12, 20). But we have already celebrated Christmas so many times and still Jesus has not returned. Already soon after Jesus' life on earth, people were asking critical questions, see 2 Peter 3:3-4. Peter reminds us that for God time is different than for us (2 Peter 3:8-9). These words help us to take 'soon' as 'any moment': Jesus can return any moment. He could come before Christmas!

Therefore, this Advent season let us prepare for Jesus' second coming. Christmas is a nice feast to celebrate on earth, but look up to expect Jesus' second coming. Come out of Babylon (Rev 18:4). Follow the Lamb wherever he goes (14:4). Advent is the time to prepare both to celebrate Jesus' first coming and to prepare for his second coming.