

## Revelation 22:1-5

Saints Triumphant; November 9 & 10, 2025



It was a 1973 Pontiac Catalina—big, bold, and mine. It was the first car I ever owned. It didn't look nearly as nice as the one in this picture, but I loved it just the same. My grandfather was the one who found it for me, and if I remember right, I only paid about \$300 for it. Sure, it guzzled gas at maybe 10 miles per gallon, but that didn't bother me one bit. Even a college guy like me could afford it. And when I could pile six friends inside and everyone tossed in a couple of bucks for gas, well, that made it even better.

As you can imagine, there were plenty of spots where rust had taken over. I did my best to “restore” it back to life. Let's just say there was a lot of Bondo involved to cover up the dents and rusted areas. I even replaced the front driver's side door because it was too far gone to patch. This was long before the days of YouTube tutorials, so when I decided to try painting it myself, I was completely on my own. I really didn't know what I was doing—and if memory serves, it showed. It wasn't exactly a professional restoration job. I gave it my best shot, but in the end, I had to admit—I failed at restoring that car. There was no way that I was going to bring that car back to a showroom look.

From the very beginning, God planted a garden—a place of perfect beauty, harmony, and life. There, Adam and Eve walked with Him, surrounded by His goodness. But when sin entered the world, paradise was lost. The gates of Eden were closed, and ever since, humanity has longed—for what was lost, for peace, for joy, for the presence of God. We have tried in our own ways to rebuild paradise, chasing comfort, beauty, and security, only to find that everything fades—gardens wither, joys are temporary, and nothing lasts. Yet in Revelation 22, at the very end of Scripture, God gives us an incredible promise: what was lost in Genesis is fully restored in the last chapter of the Bible.

**22:1 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 <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> 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.**

The Apostle John is shown a river, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. The tree of life stands again, not guarded by angels with flaming swords, but freely bearing fruit for the healing of the nations. There is no more curse, no more night, and the greatest gift of all—we will see His face. The story of Scripture has now come full circle – Eden lost becomes Eden restored.

We feel the effects of sin in our lives every day. In the midst of life's routines, it's easy to lose sight of God—just as Adam and Eve did in the garden. Day after day, the same cycle repeats. We get up early to make breakfast for the kids, hurry them through getting dressed, pile them into the car, and rush them off to school. Then it's on to work, where the mountain of tasks on our desks never seems to shrink. The projects we're working on never seem to get finished. We never quite catch up. Then we pick up the kids, make supper, get them to bed, and finally go to bed ourselves—only to do it all again tomorrow.

Maybe that is not your routine any more. Yet, I imagine that you have found yourself rushing through the grind of every day. You look at the calendar and you think: *Yikes! I'm turning 30 now. I'm 50. I'm 60. I'm 90. Where did my life go?*

Then Jesus comes to us and says: **“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. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 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 forever and ever.”**

Last week, our worship focused on how God makes us His saints here on earth and what awaits us in heaven. Today, as we celebrate *Saints Triumphant*, our focus shifts to those who have already gone home. Our Christian loved ones have

triumphed—they are no longer looking forward with hope alone. They are standing before the throne of God and of the Lamb. They are seeing Eden restored. They have triumphed. And one day, we will follow them to that eternal joy.

Yet, waiting can be so hard, can't it? Last week, we flew out to California to see our son and his family. Once again, I had scored a really cheap airfare on Southwest. I love flying, but for me, the hardest part is always being patient while everyone gets off the plane. I understand why some people choose not to check their luggage, but I can't help thinking: *If you didn't have to open the overhead bins and struggle to get your bag out, we could get off this plane so much faster!*

Maybe my view is a little biased—I'm a Southwest credit card member, so we each get a free checked bag—but even so, in my head I can't help thinking: *Surely there has to be a quicker way to get everyone off the plane!*

Patience is hard in so many areas of our lives. We send a text message and wonder why we don't get a reply within two minutes. We send an email and expect an instant response—if it doesn't come, we get frustrated and start thinking, *Why haven't they answered?* And it doesn't matter if it's midnight; somehow, we think they should respond anyway.

Even something as simple as waiting in the drive-thru line at McDonald's can test our patience. Five or ten minutes can feel like an eternity, and suddenly we're tempted to pull out our phone and leave a negative review right then and there. Patience, it seems, doesn't come easily.

Throughout the chapters of Revelation, John gives us glimpses of heaven. Some of the pictures he paints may be difficult for us to fully understand. Even so, our response should be the same: **"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."** Why? Because there are some restoration projects that we simply cannot accomplish on our own. I was never going to get my old car fully restored. And we cannot restore this world to the glory days of the Garden of Eden. But God can—and He has. Through the blood of Jesus, Eden is restored, and so are we. It is for that reason that we can celebrate *Saints Triumphant*. Amen.