

24 August 2025  
(Week 52)

### Eternal Life<sup>1</sup>

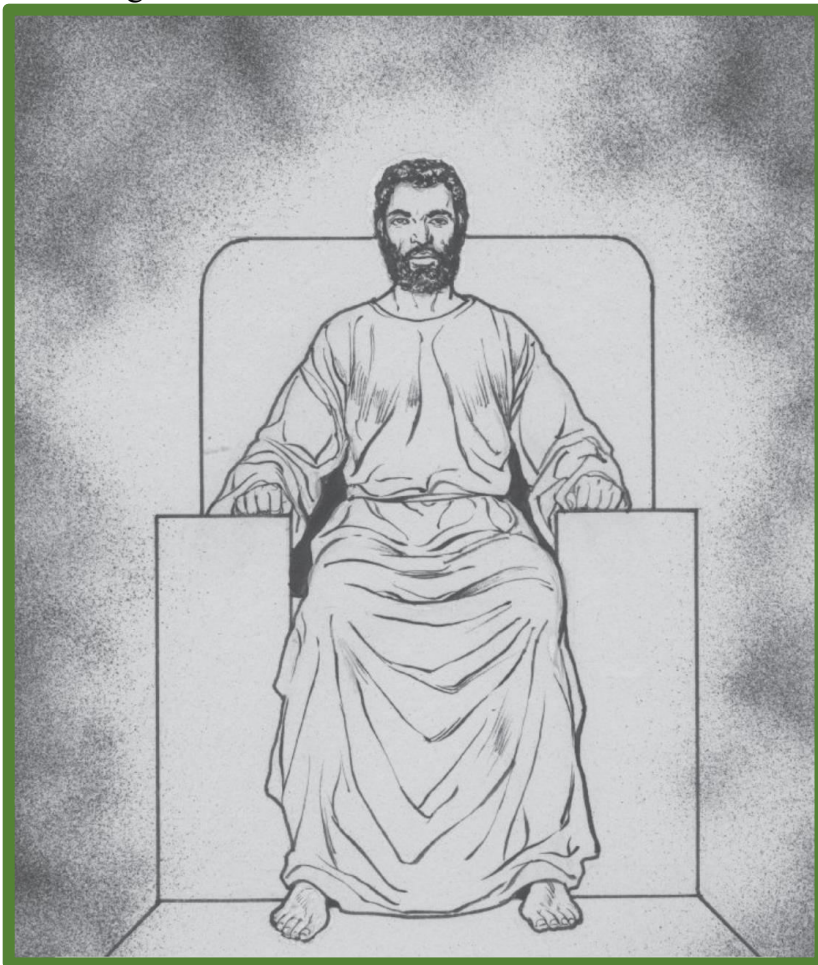
#### Eternal Life in the Alpha and Omega

Lesson Text: Revelation 22:12-21

*Black History Article Below Daily Bible Reading*

#### Aim for Change

We will: **SURVEY** the biblical references to the Second Coming of Christ to see the importance of this hoped-for reality; **REJOICE** with the invitation from Jesus to join the new community continues through the end of all things; and **EMBRACE** the call to become part of God's kingdom.



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<sup>1</sup> Bantu, Dr. Vince L. Precepts for Living: Principles for Living in an Unhinged World (2024-2025) UMI (Urban Ministries, Inc.).

### **In Focus**

Throughout her life, Chanel has struggled in school. She faced developmental issues as a child, and early on, she was diagnosed with a learning disability. Now, however, her moment was finally here. Chanel remembered the day her parents dropped her off on campus. Almost four years passed, she vividly remembered how they reaffirmed her intelligence, encouraged her to be fearless in her pursuits, and cautioned her to make wise decisions.

Chanel distinctly remembered how her journey began—the first day of class, what her roommate, Breana, said when they first met, and even her feelings of anxiety. A lot occurred between then and now. Chanel faced financial aid issues, the stress of maintaining her sports scholarship while working, and academic struggles.

After her parents, Miriam and Craig, dropped her off at college four years ago, this was the day they always waited for: Chanel was graduating with honors. Despite all Chanel faced as a child, her parents believed she would excel. For over twenty-two years, sometimes setbacks made this day seem unlikely, her parent's faith never faltered. They instilled in Chanel the same level of expectation, perseverance, and desire they had for themselves, and finally, it paid off.

*Walking in faith to inherit eternal life in Christ is much like Chanel's journey to graduating from college. How are you waiting in faith, expectation, perseverance, and desire for Christ's return?*

### **Keep In Mind**

***I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”.***  
**(Revelations:22:13 CKJV)**

## **Lesson Text**

### **Revelation 22:12-21**

**12** “And behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be.

**13 I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”**

**14** Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

**15 For outside are dogs and sorcerers, and whoremongers and murderers and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.**

**16** “I, Jesus, have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star.”

**17 And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let him that heareth say, “Come.” And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.**

**18** For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.

**19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life and out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this book.**

**20** He that testified these things saith, “Surely I come quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

**21** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

### **The People, Places, and Times**

**Book of Revelation:** John, who lived in a time of Roman persecution, oppression, and idolatry, began by penning his message as “things which must shortly come to pass” (1:1). Whether the text is interpreted as literal events to take place in the future or as allegorical principles of the kingdom of God, it is clear that initially the text was a prophecy (1:3, 22:18) and a letter (1:4) to the seven churches in Asia Minor, “the region we know today as Turkey John writes from the island of Patmos, where he said his visions occurred.

John. Specifically naming himself as the author of Revelation, John writes with authority to the whole church. From reading these Scriptures, it is apparent the son of Zebedee was a visionary and a prophet. Jesus nicknamed him and his brother James the “Sons of Thunder.” John had a seemingly special relationship with Jesus. In at least three instances, John accompanied Jesus apart from the majority of the twelve disciples (Luke 8:51; Matthew 17:1; Mark 14:33).

### **Background**

The book of Revelation is considered apocalyptic writing. The term “apocalypse” refers to Jewish and Christian literature which uncovers or unveils future events or unseen realms of heaven and hell; conversationally, the word is applied to religious events surrounding the anticipated destruction of the world. Apocalyptic writing is notorious for mysterious language and imagery that could be perceived and interpreted in many ways. In the Old and New Testaments, there are two full apocalypses (Daniel and Revelation), both of which speak cryptically of corrupt, human political realms in contrast to God’s heavenly and eternal realm.

**Eschatology:** the study of end times, and more specifically death, judgment, and heaven and hell, has been closely associated with apocalyptic literature. Both Revelation and Daniel (chapter 9) prophesy that the end is on the horizon. Daniel also introduces the Jewish (and then also Christian) concept of being raised from the dead (12:1–2), and the Book of Life mentioned throughout Revelation is first mentioned in Daniel (12:1).

Another heavily discussed or avoided topic is the second coming of Jesus. This phenomenon has drawn a lot of thoughts that vary widely throughout the faith. In the most literal context, it is the belief that Jesus will literally return to earth and satisfy unfulfilled prophecies.

### **In Depth**

**1. Alpha and Omega (Revelation 22:12–13):** The significance of the “I am” statement stems from the book of Exodus (3:13–15), when God instructs Moses to tell the people of Israel that God sent him. Moses asks God for a specific name, and God’s response is, “I AM THAT I AM,” that is, “I am everything and whatever is required at any given moment.” The term is all-encompassing. God further explains that this will be His name forever.

Jesus employs the “I am” statement as an assertion of His divinity and connection to God. He quotes God’s declaration of being the first and the last who is the one true God (Isaiah 44:6, 48:12). Jesus utilizes the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (alpha and omega) to stress the point further. The phrase occurs four times throughout Revelation (1:8, 11; 21:6; 22:13).

**2. City Gates (Revelation 22:14–15):** Revelation was written to churches in large cities. Thus, John intentionally describes a particular place that contrasts with the metropolitan life the recipients are used to. Chapter 3 introduces this city of God as the New Jerusalem (3:12), while chapter 21 provides the description. The dimensions, ethos, foundation, building materials and jewels, walls, and character of its inhabitants are all detailed. John writes that those who have the right to the Tree of Life will enter the city by the gates; there are twelve of them. Three gates face each compass direction, and there is an angel and inscription of the twelve tribes at all the gates. The people outside the gates are those who are disobedient to God’s commands. They would corrupt the city with their sin.

**3. Root and Descendant of David (Revelation 22:16–21):** Throughout the messianic prophecies, there is a motif that connects the expectant Savior to the lineage and legacy of King David. The Gospels continue the motif by casting Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecies, and whatever remains void, the New Testament asserts, will be accomplished once Jesus returns. “Based on Scripture and because of their plight as a people, the initial followers of Christ longed for a Davidic king who would conquer the enemies of God in the same way that David did.

Even in the apocalyptic text that was canonized last in sequence, Jesus identifies Himself with the legacy and lineage of David. An interpretation of Isaiah 11:1, 10 is that there is still a constant connection between what was and what will come.

### **Liberating Lesson**

Although Jesus graciously extends the invitation for us to enter the kingdom and offers “waters of life,” we cannot receive these gifts without obligation and investment. Sometimes we can be so preoccupied with the daily routine of life that we have no interest in questions of ultimate significance. These are the things that need to occupy our minds and influence our lives daily.

### **Application for Activation**

Verse 15, gives a few examples of actions and character flaws that can separate us from Jesus. Aside from what was mentioned, can you think of anything that may separate you from fully preparing yourself for Christ? The thoughts, words, or actions do not have to be what some consider “sin” in the conventional sense, but rather anything that could prevent you from dwelling in the closest proximity possible to Jesus.

### **Take Aways**

### **Closing Prayer**

**Daily Bible Reading**  
**Christian Season:**  
**Regular**  
**Season Color: Green**



**Monday:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1-3, Ecclesiastes 5

**Tuesday:** 1<sup>st</sup> John, 1-5, Ecclesiastes 6

**Wednesday:** 2<sup>nd</sup> John, 3<sup>rd</sup> John, Jude, Ecclesiastes 7

**Thursday:** Revelation 1-5, Ecclesiastes 8

**Friday:** Revelation 6-8, Ecclesiastes 9

**Saturday:** Revelation 9-14, Ecclesiastes 10

**Sunday:** Revelation 15-22, Ecclesiastes 11-12

**NOT PART OF THE LESSON**  
**Information Purposes Only**  
**Black History Began in Africa**  
**MARJORIE S. JOYNER<sup>2</sup>**



**Businesswoman | Humanitarian | Educator | Activist**

Marjorie S. Joyner dedicated her life of 98 years to establishing pride and confidence in the Black community. On October 24, 1896, Joyner in Virginia, at a young age, traveled to Chicago, where she committed to cosmetology, gaining the attention of Black beauty extraordinaire, Madam C.J. Walker. In 1916, she became the first Black graduate from A.B. Molar Beauty School in Chicago. In the same year, she married Dr. Robert E. Joyner and opened her own salon. She made it her obligation to restore the unrealized potential God has placed in all individuals.

Joyner was unsatisfied with the length of time her hairstyles would last, which led her to develop the permanent wave machine. In 1982, she was the first Black woman to receive a patent for the wave machine. The device curled a person's hair and lasted for several days. It was a popular item and crossed cultural borders. Joyner signed the rights to her invention to Walker and became the Director of Walker's chain of 200 beauty schools and shops across the country.

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In 1945, she joined with Mary Bethune McLeod, a legendary Black educator, to form the United Beauty School Owners and Teachers Association. The same year, to ensure the integrity and quality in future beauticians, she started the Alpha Chi Pi Omega Sorority and Fraternity. In 1973, at the age of 77, she was awarded a bachelor's degree in psychology from Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona, Florida.

Joyner extended her commitment beyond cosmetology, during the depression, and worked on housing and employment programs. She continued work as a humanitarian and developed Black college funds. Joyner also chaired the Bud Billiken Parade, the largest African American parade in the country, and is the president of the Chicago Defender Charities Inc., a nonprofit organization which raises scholarships. With the respect of many, she began traveling for speaking engagements. One time, traveling to an engagement, she was forced to ride in the baggage carriage because of her race. Joyner never allowed discrimination to slow her down and credited all her determination to God.

Joyner later founded the [Cosmopolitan Community Church](#) in her basement, which grew beyond her expectations. In 1993, the Carter G. Woodson Library in Chicago paid tribute to her accomplishments.

She was recognized by political figures such as President John F. Kennedy and Jimmy Carter.

On December 27, 1994, Marjorie Stewart Joyner passed away. Thank God her organization will continue to inspire generations for years to come.”