

# The End of the Year Outlook from the Mission of Jesus

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Date: 29 December 2024

Preacher: Rev Callum Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, friends, welcome to our service this evening. A special welcome to those who might be visiting with us.! We look to God to bless His Word to us as we worship Him together.! It's my privilege to be here on this final Sunday service of 2024, and we have accumulated much benefit from the gospel during this past year, and we've also accumulated a lot of responsibility. And we trust as we worship God together this evening that He will remind us of that, and we'll be able to respond to the claims of the gospel upon us.

I don't think I mentioned anything about the intimation. You'll remember the New Year's Day service on Wednesday. That will be at 12 noon. So we begin our worship by singing to God's praise in Psalm number 61 in the Scottish Psalter. It's on page 293.

I was saying at the beginning of the psalm, Psalm 61, that verse 1, the tune is Salzburg. O God, give ear unto my cry, and to my prayer attend. From the utmost corner of the land, my cry to Thee I'll send.

We're singing from verse 1 to the verse Mark 6 to God's praise. O God, give ear unto my prayer, and to my prayer attend.

From the utmost corner of the land, my cry to Thee I'll send.

[ 1 : 42 ] What time my heart is overwhelmed, and in perplexity.

Do thou be with me, and to the roar, that I am is the night.

For thou who hast for my refuge been, a shelter by thy power, And for defense against my foes, thou must be not strong, child.

Within thy tower, not will I, forever will abide, And under cover all thy ways, with confidence behind.

For thou the man's that I did make, O Lord, my God is near.

[ 3 : 42 ] Thou hast given me, the heritage of those thy name that will.

Thou hast given me, the heritage of the land, my heart is near.

Thou hast given me, the heritage of the land, my heart is near. Let's join together in prayer. Let's bow our heads to pray. Almighty and most gracious God, who rejoice in you as the only true and living God, who calls us into the worship of your name, who is ready to impart your word and your blessing to us, the God who sits enthroned in heaven, who calls us all to bow down before you, with humble hearts, with sincere hearts, that you may hear what you have to say to us.

As we approach you in worship, we recognize the great need that we have for you to draw near to us, so that we can draw near to you, for you to place your hand upon our minds and our hearts, and to give us to be sensitive to your word and to your spirit as we do worship you.

And so that we might come to that place, where we do indeed hear the voice of the living God, where we do sense the claims of the gospel upon us, where we do sense our lostness without the salvation you have prepared in Christ Jesus, your Son, and where we come to realize the importance and the urgency of having peace with you through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- [ 6 : 09 ] We give thanks to you that you have sent your Son into the world. We have remembered much of his coming in these past days. Help us, O Lord, that we would not be forgetful.
- Help us to remember that his birth is but the beginning. Help us to remember his life. Help us to remember his death.
- Help us to remember his resurrection. Help us to remember that he is in glory at your right hand, that he is seated, and that all power is given to him in heaven and on earth.
- Help us to know tonight the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Help us to know what it is to bow down at his feet. Help us to know what it is to worship him.
- And help us to know what it is to love him, to love him with all of our hearts. To know truly the words of your servant Paul, that Jesus Christ loved me and gave himself for me.
- [ 7 : 19 ] May you grant to us in our hearts that intimate, personal relationship with your Son that will bring to us the joy of forgiveness of sin, that will give to us the assurance of your ongoing care and shepherding of us, that will give us the certainty of the paradise and the glory you have prepared for your people, and that will give to us the assurance of your strength along life's way.
- We do give thanks to you this evening as our God who has been with us in the year that is drawing to a close. We bless and praise your name for every way in which you have been your help.
- You are the God who takes us on paths and on journeys that we do not expect. But we bless and praise your name that your purpose is good and that you work everything for good for your people.
- And we pray that you will bless all I've gathered before you this evening that they may be able to reflect on life and reflect on your presence with them and be able to give thanks to you for every way in which you have shepherded, for every way in which you have cared, for every way in which you have given strength, and for every way in which your eye has been upon them.
- And give especially those tonight who know what it is to have pain in their hearts, to have sorrow, to have grief, to reflect upon a year where they have lost much and lost those who are precious to them.
- [ 8 : 56 ] We do remember the mourning and the grieving and we ask you to draw near to them. Your comfort is beyond description, but your comfort transforms.
- It gives peace. It gives consolation. It gives even rest in the midst of the turmoil of grief. And so we pray for your blessing to be upon those who know grief and sorrow tonight.
- And I do reflect on the pain of losing loved ones in this past year. We pray for your blessing to be upon all of the homes of our congregation, that the blessing of God would filter from the public worship of your name through the witness of your people to touch hearts and lives and homes and families, reaching out to those who are far from you, causing your kingdom to come and praying your blessing upon every effort that is made to make contact with those who live in the town, around it and beyond, and for every effort that is made to raise the awareness of the preciousness of Jesus Christ in the gospel and seeking prayerfully that others would come into your kingdom and that your kingdom would grow and that you would add to the number of your people such as it is your purpose to save.

So bless, we ask, and bless us together and bless your word to us this evening and bless all that has been done in your name in this past year. We ask you to bless your word and we are thankful to you that you have promised that your word will not return unto you void or empty, that it will accomplish what pleases you.

and we are thankful that you are the God who brings about fruit and blessing in ways that we don't expect and in ways that we never see. And we are thankful to you that you are the God who is working.

[ 10 : 51 ] We pray for your blessing upon our wider community, our island community stream these days. We pray a blessing to be upon the gospel today, a blessing to be upon the gospel across the nation and land to which we belong.

and pray, O Lord, that we may know something of what it means to see the old life and the old things of departing from God replaced by a new life and of a people and of a nation turning to seek you as the fountain of living water and as the only true and living God.

Bless those who rule over us, bless those in authority, bless all those who have influenced you to pray, and may their hearts be in your hands to bring about good and to bring us back to yourself.

Bless the nations of the world, we remember the places where there is grief and sorrow, where there is conflict and strife. Pray that you will bring an end to all of these and pray that peace would reign, O Lord, our God.

We pray for the parts of the world where your people are persecuted for their faith, we pray your protection of them. And we pray for the parts of the world that are still in darkness and that do not know the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[ 12 : 02 ] May we know something of your mission in our hearts and a sense of the great need of the world in which we live to hear the good news. And may you lay it upon all of our hearts, not only to pray, but to be actively engaged in the service of your kingdom for the good of those who are outside of it, even to the far corner of the earth.

And we acknowledge, O Lord, our God, that at times we will need to be uprooted by you and loosened from our comfort zone and be sent to serve you at home and beyond.

And we pray, O Lord, that you will work in people's hearts and lives for their great purpose, for the honour and the privilege of serving you, for going out with the good news of the gospel and for doing so in the fear of your name and regardless of what that may mean as far as their lives and as far as their faith and as far as their suffering is concerned, may you call those who will be strengthened and persuaded and equipped by you to serve you in the gospel.

Be merciful, we pray, to the dark corners of this world and cause your light to shine in it. We pray for your blessing to be upon our worship now as we continue before you this evening.

as we pray your blessing to be upon the reading of your word and the singing of it. We ask that you will draw close to us and give to us a sense of your word truly being the breath of God and may it breathe upon our hearts and breathe upon our minds and may we know a rich blessing coming from you and a sense of your hand being upon us as your word is read and proclaimed.

[ 13 : 48 ] Draw near to us, we pray and be merciful to us and go before us into this evening and go before us into this week we do pray as we commit ourselves to you. May you be your guide as we draw to the close of this year and may you be merciful to us in our needs and whatever may arise in life in the remaining days of this year.

May you continue to be with us and to be gracious to us and to be compassionate and to be merciful and to watch over ourselves, all our friends and all of our families and our wider community.

Protect, we do pray and spare life, we do ask as we commit ourselves to you. So hear our prayer and watch over us now and go before us. Have your mercy, we ask. We ask all these things for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Amen. Now we're going to turn to praise God from Psalm number 42 and sing Psalms. Psalm 42 and verse 1.

It's on page 53 and the tune is Rockingham. Psalm 42 and verse 1. As pants the deer for flowing streams, so long's my soul, O God, for you.

[ 14 : 58 ] I thirst for God, the living God. When can I meet with God anew? We stand to sing from verse 1 to the verse Mark 5 to God's praise. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. singing voy voy voy with no other news.

My tears have been my constant good both in the night and in the day.

While all day long insistent be where is this God of the earth chasing?

As I go around my soul in me these things I do remember still.

[ 16 : 48 ] How with the multitude to thy rent up to God's house on Zion Hill in their possession I would lead as we approached with cheerful song and shouts of joy and thankfulness rejoice in the the festive throne Why are you downcast

O my soul? Why are you so disturbed in me?

Trust God for I will praise him yet My Saviour and my God is he I'll turn to read the word of God together and we do so in the New Testament in the book of Revelation and in chapter 22 the book of Revelation chapter 22 I'm reading at the beginning of the chapter Let us hear the word of God Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life bright as crystal flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city also on either side of the river the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit healing its fruit each month the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations

No longer will there be anything accursed but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it and the servants will worship him they will see his face and his name will be on their foreheads and night will be no more they will need no light of lamp or sun for the Lord God will be their light and they will reign forever and ever and he said to me these words are trustworthy and true and the Lord the God of the spirits of the prophets has sent his angel to show servants what must soon take place and behold I am coming soon blessed as the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book I John am the one who heard and who saw these things and when I heard and saw them I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me but he said to me you must not do that I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets and with those who keep the words of this book worship God and he said to me do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book for the time is near that the evildoers still do evil and the filthy still be filthy and the righteous still be right and the holy still be holy behold I am coming soon bringing my recompense with me to repay everyone for what he has done

I am the alpha and the omega the first and the last the beginning and the end blessed are those who wash their robes so that they may have the right to the tree of life that they may enter the city by the gates outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood I Jesus I sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches I am the root and the descendant of David the bright morning star the spirit and the bride say come and let the one who hears say come and let the one who is thirsty come let the one who desires take of the water of life without price I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophets of this book if anyone adds to them God will add to him the plagues described in this book and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy God will take away his share in the tree of life and to the holy city which are described in this book he testifies to these things says surely

[ 21 : 46 ] I'm coming soon I mean come Lord Jesus the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all Amen this is God's word and we bless to us our reading from it we turn to praise God now in Psalm number 84 in the Sing Psalms page 112 Psalm number 84 page 112 and we're singing at verse number 5 blessed are those whose strength is in you those who have a pilgrim's mind pools from autumn rains refresh them springs and break as veil they find strength increasing signward they go on their way to God and we sing from verse 5 to the verse Mark 10 to God's praise!

praise God for those who have is in you those who have a!

and love shine! For! God has to praise!

voy Almighty, and receive the free I may.

Listen to me, God of Jacob, hear me for your mercy's sake.

[ 23 : 51 ] Look upon our shield and ring, favor to your chosen King.

One day in your courts is better than a thousand days elsewhere.

Let me stay in my house temple, let me be a dormant there.

Brother, can find happiness in the tents of wickedness.

Turn back now to the book of Revelation and chapter number 22, and we can read at verse 12. Revelation 22 and at verse number 12.

[ 25 : 02 ] Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me to repay everyone for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

And so on down to the following verses. Now we know we have thought much of the birth of Jesus Christ as he came into the world, the Son of God, as he was born in Bethlehem.

And we have celebrated his birth in various ways. And in many ways, that is the most significant event that has ever taken place in the history of this world.

But alongside of that, and on a par with that, as far as importance is concerned, is the second coming of Jesus Christ. We are liable and we do tend to remember and celebrate his birth and then fold up our arms and our lives and forget about his significance, forget about his work, and forget about the fact that he is returning to this world.

And bearing that in mind, I want us to look at these verses that we have before us this evening. As we do read this book, obviously it is the last book in the Bible.

[ 26 : 25 ] It's a revelation given to John. It was given to John to encourage those who were being persecuted for their faith, those who were being pressurized into worshipping the Roman Emperor as Lord, and those who were in danger of losing their faith.

And so the revelation was given to John to encourage them. And one of the principles of the way in which this revelation is used is that the people are to be encouraged with information about what is going to happen afterwards.

And that's an important lesson for ourselves, that we live in this moment. But this moment is not an island, not connected to what comes. Where we are is connected to the future.

And to understand what the future holds is the means not only of our encouragement, but the means of helping us to adjust our lives so that we walk along the paths that God has set for us.

And when we come to these last words, obviously they are the last words that Jesus spoke in the Bible. And they are the last words which are reminding us that he is indeed coming back to be here.

[ 27 : 41 ] And so for encouragement this evening, and perhaps as a reminder to us, we want to look at these words and to think of an end-of-the-year outlook from the mission of Jesus.

I want to see first of all that we have a headline. And for the headline we have a herald. And who is the herald?

And the herald we have in verse number 13, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. And as soon as we read in our Bibles, Jesus at any time saying, I am, then we pause and we consider and we think of what he's trying to communicate to us.

And he is reminding us that he is the Lord who appeared to Moses in Exodus chapter 3, the I am who appeared to Moses in the burning bush.

So he connects himself with that great truth and the revelation of God who came to save Israel and who came to make himself known to Moses and to the people of God.

[ 28 : 50 ] But here he moves on to remind us something else about himself and about his passion and about his being. He is the Alpha and the Omega. The Alpha being the first letter of the Greek alphabet and the Omega being the last letter of the Greek alphabet.

And by giving himself that name, he is reminding us of his own supremacy. He is reminding us that he is the first in a series and he's also the last.

He is reminding us of his own importance. And because he is the Alpha and the Omega, that he is in control of everything that takes place in this world.

And for a people who are suffering because of their faith, that was great news. That no matter what the Roman Emperor did, no matter what happened in their everyday lives, Jesus, the Son of God, he was reigning supremely over the whole of the course of the universe, including the detail of their lives.

I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the first and the last. The one who precedes everyone else and the one who comes after everyone else.

[ 30 : 08 ] He is the eternal Son of God who has no beginning and who has no end. And he wants to communicate that as the one who is supreme over the whole of the earth, that he is also the eternal God.

God, that he is the beginning and the end, that he was there in the work of creation and that he is also there at the end or in the terminus, the telos of the whole course of the world, that there he is at the very end of it, waiting to see the conclusion of life in this world and waiting to welcome his people into his own presence.

He is the Alpha, the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. And he is using a title that we see in the beginning of this book, which reflects the way in which this title belongs in verse 8, to Almighty God.

So the herald is Jesus, the Son of God, who is the Almighty God, who was the agent of creation and was there before creation, and everything is running through this world in accordance with his purposes to bring them to a conclusion and to bring an end to his plans.

Their encouragement that this is the herald. And from time to time in our own lives, we need to hear that encouragement. In so many ways, our faith is threatened, our faith is assaulted by life around us.

[ 31 : 45 ] In so many ways, our faith is perhaps forced to the periphery and forced to be invisible. And we face these challenges day by day. And we are encouraged tonight to remember that whatever challenges we face, as in being the children of God, that the Son of God in his supremacy has control over everything and nothing is done outside of his work, his influence, and the direction of our lives.

We have a headline and we have a herald and he is no one and nothing less than the Son of God. So what is the headline then?

If this is the herald, what is the headline? Behold, listen to this, he's saying, take note of this, I am coming soon.

And when we read the story of Jesus in the Gospel, we recognize that the mission of Jesus and the mission of God is all about the coming of Jesus.

He has come to do the Father's will, he says in John 10. He has come in the Father's name in John 5. His coming into the world was through the womb of the Virgin Mary, but that coming was all about the mission of God.

[ 33 : 05 ] And he justifies and testifies to everything that he is doing that he has come in the mission of God to do the will of God and to secure salvation for those who put their trust in him.

But now he's adding another element to the whole mission of God to remind us that he is coming. He is returning. His mission is not yet complete.

He is going to return to this world. And that's a great truth for those who are the people of God who are struggling in the hearing of this lecture.

It's a great encouragement for ourselves that the Son of God, our Savior, as part of the mission of God, that he is coming and that he is coming soon.

It is an encouragement and we can also say that it is a threat. It's an encouragement because he is coming and his recompense is with him.

[ 34 : 16 ] He is coming with his reward, rewarding his people for their work. It's paying the laborer for the work that he has done. And every laborer is worthy of his hire.

It is the reward of God in recognition of people doing the will of God. It's an encouragement. Don't be discouraged because of the Roman Empire.

Be encouraged that as you continue to live in faithfulness to God, doing the will of God, that when I come in the mission of God, I come to give you your reward, that your work is not in vain, and that even through your suffering, that your reward becomes greater and greater.

It is a word of encouragement. And for yourself tonight, if your trust is in God, if your delight is in doing the will of God, and if you're struggling through life and in your faith because you don't think that you can cope with the challenges of your faith, with the testings that you face, you're encouraged to continue to persevere in your faith because the Son of God will reward you for your perseverance.

He will reward you for remaining loyal to Him. And no matter how great the pressure to be disloyal, that you continue in your devotion to your Master, you will have your reward, the encouragement of the reward.

[ 35 : 59 ] But there is also the threat. He will repay everyone for what He has done. It's the threat of the Bible that brings us back to the heart of God, to the purposes of God, to the claims of God upon our lives, that what you and I do, that God is obligated because of who He is and because of His relationship with us, that He is obligated to give to you according to what you have done.

And regularly through the New Testament, that sense of repaying everyone is with regard to judging people for their sin and judging people for the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

And in these words, the Herald, the Son of God, He is saying to all those tonight who have no faith in the Son of God, I'm going to come and when I do come, I'm going to repay you because you failed to put your trust in me.

You failed to believe in me. You loved the darkness rather than the light. You rejected me. No matter how much I claimed your life and claimed your heart and claimed your mind, you rejected me and I'm coming to judge you, to give you in accordance with what you have done.

I am coming. I am coming soon. And perhaps the headline is in particular tonight for anyone who is here who continues to reject the claims of the gospel and the outstretched arms of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

[ 37 : 47 ] hear what is going to happen to you. If you continue to reject, He will reject you at the end.

He will welcome those whom He wants to reward because of their perseverance and their loyalty to Him. But He will reject you. Depart from me.

How do you get in here, says Jesus in the parable, without a wedding garment? Who is that person here without a wedding garment? Take Him out and cast Him away.

The headline, I am coming soon. Let's take that to heart as we close this year, as we think in the providence of God of going into a new year.

If God leaves us to see that, let's remember the headline. Let's remember what it means for those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. And let's remember what it means for those who don't love Him at all, for those who know about Him so much and yet don't yet know Him and haven't yet put their trust in Him.

[ 38 : 58 ] The headline. Secondly, we want to think of the heritage. there is a particular heritage for those who are described here by Jesus, the Son of God in verse number 14.

Blessed are those. There are those who are special in this world. And we can think of blessed in the sense of the blessing of God descending upon us and God empowering us with His blessing and giving us that sense of newness and of well-being because of His blessing.

But the other meaning that we have of blessing in the Old Testament is that we look at a person and we envy that person with desire because they are something that we should have and would have ourselves.

and it's not envy in any kind of wrong or evil way. It's that holy envy that the Old Testament speaks of. Here is somebody and I want to be more like them more than anyone else.

And we hear David in Psalm number 32 saying, Blessed is the one whose sins is forgiven. What does he mean by that? To be envied with desire. That's the person I want to be.

[ 40 : 20 ] The person whose sins are forgiven. And carrying that meaning into these words here, here are our people and we want to be like them more than we want to be like anyone else, even ourselves.

These are the people we want to be like. Blessed are those who wash their robes. There's a sense of being unclean and because of the uncleanness there's a need for washing.

And there's a sense of the need for washing in order to be acceptable. In the Old Testament the unclean person doesn't have the right to have access into the presence of God.

In Exodus chapter 19 the children of Israel were asked to wash themselves and to prepare themselves because God was coming down to meet them. And so Moses commanded them to prepare for the entrance of God on Mount Sinai and for him to speak to the people.

There is that sense of the need of cleansing in order to be acceptable in the presence of God. And the cleansing here is quite specific.

[ 41 : 36 ] The detergent, the agent that we're going to use for the cleansing is quite specific. Blessed are those who wash their robes so that they may have a right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

When we go back to Revelation chapter 7 we read of those who wash their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. It's in their relationship with Jesus that they are cleansed.



It's in their relationship with Jesus that their sins are forgiven so that they do have access into the presence of God. But also and especially in Revelation 7 and in this passage here there is the sense of which washing their robes reflects their loyalty to Jesus.

And we can read in chapter 19 at verse number 8 that the fine linen and the white robes they are the righteous deeds of the saints. Who are the blessed ones?

Who are the ones that we want to be like more than anyone else? It is those who put their trust in the Lord Jesus and to remain loyal to him throughout the whole of their lives.

[ 42 : 50 ] And no matter the difficulty no matter the persecution no matter the challenge no matter the test or the temptation they continue to put their trust in the Lord Jesus.

And in that sense kept their garments from being soiled by becoming like the world or taking up the habits and the behaviors of the world they remained loyal to the passion of the Lord Jesus.

These are the ones that we need to be like. Those who are holy because God is holy. Those who have a lifestyle conformant to the word of God.

Those who have a lifestyle that speaks loudly of their devotion to the Lord Jesus. They are the ones that we want to be like. And we need to ask ourselves this evening are we the kind of people that others would say about us we want to be like that Christian more than any other person in the world because we see there a Christian devoted to the Lord Jesus.

That's what God requires of us. That's what Jesus our Savior requires of us. And tonight if we are not the children of God and if we do not have the faith in the Lord Jesus then we need to look around in the light of what the Bible says and to find for ourselves the most Christ-like person in the world and to see what makes them Christ-like and to say to yourself in your heart that's the person that shows me that the Bible is true that the salvation of Jesus is real and that's the person that persuades me that I must know this Jesus for myself.

[ 44 : 44 ] There is that description of a people who are special who are special because God has made them special and to continue to be special because by the grace of God they are kept and remain loyal day by day.

But what is the heritage? They are special because of who they are in the first place. But they are special because they have a right to the tree of life that they may enter the city by the gates.

They have a right to close fellowship with God. And tonight when we think of the tree of life I simply want us to think of three images.

And the first image is in the garden of Eden where we have the flaming sword guarding the way to the tree of life. Image number one. The second image is in Ezekiel chapter 47 where all kinds of trees are growing by the riverside and they are for food for the people.

Image number two. The way is barred in image number one. That's the promise of the openness to all the nations of the world in image number two. And here in this chapter we have the third image that the promise of this new way being opened that does away with the sword that blocks the way into the fellowship of God in the paradise of the garden of Eden that here now that promise has been fulfilled.

[ 46 : 28 ] And those who remained loyal to the Lord Jesus who put their trust in him who is the way, who is the truth and who is the life, through their faithfulness to him they have their reward and they have access to the tree of life, to the renewed paradise of the garden of Eden that whatever sin brought into life has been removed by the saving work of the son of God and at last there is that inheritance of walking into the bliss of the presence of God without fear but comfortable with our deep sense of new health and well-being that we never experienced before but perhaps in small glimpses but now to be sitting in the kingdom of heaven and satisfied by the fruit of the tree of life that is satisfied with our fellowship with God they have access to the tree of life and they may enter the city by the gates what does the city mean to the readers what does it mean to the people of God that John was writing to what does it mean to

John himself again we have the image of the city of Jerusalem where Solomon built his temple we have image number two where the temple was destroyed because God's people were rebellious we have image number three in Ezekiel 47 where the temple is restored restored and there is the waiting for the return of the presence of God and here we have all of that now fulfilled there is the entrance to the city by the gates and we'll read down at the beginning of this chapter and at chapter 21 the beauty of the city of God and the beauty of the gates of the city of God but it is having that right of access into the new heavens and the new earth and into the renewed Jerusalem it is the right to enter in to the new creation of God it's a place of close fellowship with God and a place of separation from all appearances of evil that we read of in the following verse outside the city on the other side of the gate are dogs and socialers the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters and everyone who loves and who practices false suit every other person in the world whatever their sins are however they may look like

Christians and are not all of them are on the outside and because of that the pain is on the outside the testing is on the outside everything that brings sorrow is on the outside it's entering into the final paradise of God where all that sin has brought into the experience of the world is undone and is reversed by the grace of God so that we the blessed ones who remain loyal to the Lord Jesus so that we may enter in to everlasting bliss that inheritance that Peter describes that is incorruptible and undefiled reserved in heaven for us the herald has great news he is coming the herald has great news because there is a heritage there is an inheritance that we're going to enjoy at the time of his return and tonight again as we come to the close of this year we're asked to reflect upon that who is blessed who must we be like and where do we want to be when the

Son of God returns the herald the heritage and thirdly the harmony there is harmony in these verses that speak to us of the mission of God the harmony comes through this word that Jesus himself uses in verse 12 behold I am coming and we read the harmony of verse number 17 the spirit and the bride say come come Jesus the Son of God has announced that he is coming and as soon as he says that there's a harmonious tune going across the whole of the existence of the people of God when he says come they are longing for him to come and it reminds us of the way which the mission of

God is about coming and the way in which that mission impacts upon the hearts and the minds of the people of God I am coming and as soon as he says that the spirit and the bride say come the Holy Spirit who works through the preaching of the gospel the word of God to bring us alive to keep us alive to unite us to Jesus to bring about the new birth that Holy Spirit sent by Jesus into the world to fulfill the mission of God he is saying Lord Jesus Son of God come the spirit longs for his own work of redemption to be completed for all of the people of God to be gathered together to bring the whole of the experience of the people of God through the power of the Holy Spirit to a new level and to raise it up to the kind of platform never before experienced the Holy

[ 52 : 59 ] Spirit saying come and joining with the Holy Spirit is the bride the Holy Spirit and the bride say come and when we read this book of the Revelation we see that the bride is the bride of the Lamb of the Son of God we read in chapter 19 of the marriage supper of the Lamb and the bride has made herself ready and when we think of the bride here we are thinking of those believers who went before us down through the generations who have passed on from the scene of time and to have entered into the glory of God the bride of Christ around the throne of God waiting for the end of time waiting for the day when their bodies will be raised and when they will be in glory as body and soul to enjoy the full satisfaction of the salvation and the redemption of

Jesus Christ the bride is saying come and in chapter 6 we read that the people of God in heaven are saying how long before you come and judge those who put my people to death there's that sense come son of God and it's it's a wonderful thought that reminds us of the fact that those who have gone before us the believers who remained faithful and who have gone to glory that they are looking for something more that they are looking for perfection and for completion which they haven't had yet and because of that they are saying son of man alpha and omega come the spirit and the bride say come there's a choir building up of those who are saying to the son of

God come let the one who hears say come the ones who are hearing this letter in its reading this revelation who are hearing it the hearers of the gospel the hearers of the word of God yourselves this evening we are here to hear the word of God and let the hearers the one who hears let them say come there is an imperative and the imperative is calling on all of you this evening to reach out to the son of God who has said I'm coming soon and out of a sense of longing in your heart to say to him come Lord Jesus come oh son of God and come in the mission of God and do what you have purposed to do and read some of the psalms 42 and psalm 84 of the longing of the people of

God when shall I appear again before God blessed are those who have the mind the will the ways of God in their hearts journeying on to the temple of God where God's presence is found and tonight if you are the child of God and your faith is in the Lord Jesus there should be a sense of longing there should be a sense of reaching out it's in the very nature of the salvation that is gifted to us that we are not completely satisfied with what we have now and the more we experience of salvation now the more it awakens us to the realization that there is more and better still to come and that's why Paul in Romans 8 and 2 Corinthians 5 speaks of groaning of longing because he knows that there is something better than what he has in

Corinth and in Rome there is the harmony of the coming of the Son of God come Lord Jesus and what a blessing it will be as we as we leave the service this evening we are seeing this in our hearts to the Alpha and the Omega who has impressed upon our minds that he's coming soon that we long for him to come that we're reaching out to him not that that's going to change God's timetable but it reflects our ongoing loyalty our understanding of who we are and our longing to be with Christ which is better by far but the harmony is not yet complete there is the coming as I've said with regard to the mission of God as Jesus came to fulfill that mission but there is also the coming that is at the very center of the gospel invitation at the mission of God for a lost world has at his very center the same word come the same word draw near the same word come near to embrace the same word come and believe come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden

[ 58 : 55 ] I will give you rest whosoever will not take up this cross and come after me and follow me cannot be my disciple there is that sense of coming that impresses upon those who are still outside of the kingdom of God their need to be at peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ and Jesus the Alpha and the Omega he makes that clear in this verse that there is a responsibility for those who are yet unbelievers let the one who is thirsty come let the one who desires take the water of life freely the one who is thirsty the psalmist in psalm 42 was thirsty for God Jesus the son of God on on cross at calvary was thirsty for God in the midst of his forsakenness he cried out

I thirst and here is an invitation an imperative for anyone here this evening who is thirsty for God who has discovered that this world and all that it offers offers no satisfaction who have learned of the emptiness of everything that once filled their hearts and lives if you are thirsty for God this evening this is for you thirsty for God let him come let the one who desires take the water of life without price the one who desires what is the desire of your heart this evening thirsting for God naturally means or supernaturally means that there is that desire that willingness to embrace and that's the recognition that

God is working you may say that you desire the salvation of the gospel offers but are you willing to accept it that's the nub of your relationship with the Lord Jesus your willingness or your unwillingness tonight if you desire and if you are willing take the water of life freely Jesus stood in the temple in John chapter 7 and in the midst of the feast of tabernacles where water was poured around the altar if any man is thirsty let him come unto me and drink because he says out of his heart will flow rivers of living water that's out of the heart of Jesus the living water comes from him it's the living water that's around the throne of God that's in the river of life that the people of God will drink of in the paradise of

God but tonight the harmony is complete as the people of God say to the Son of God come and come soon Jesus also saying to you if you desire if you are thirsty come and join in the chorus join in the harmony what an end it would be to 2024 if we all left here this evening with the same tune and the same cry to the Son of God as our Savior having come at last to understand what is coming at the end of the world means and what is coming in the manger means and I've learned the truths and the preciousness of the work that all of that tales and that we are ready to go forward waiting for his return without fear because he has promised to reward those who put their trust in him may

God bless to us his word may let us hear the headline take note of the heritage and may we join in this glorious harmony that is to the glory of the Son of God let's bow heads in prayer Lord our gracious God we rejoice in you you are the great God of our salvation you have spoken so wonderfully and marvelously in your word drawing to our attention the many different ways in which you reach out to us and we are thankful tonight that our salvation is not yet complete but that the day will come when it shall be and we shall be called and summoned into your near presence give thanks to you also that your kingdom is not yet complete and that you are calling others into your kingdom this evening and bless every heart here this evening that is still outside of your kingdom convict and convert and give them to drink with joy from the wells of salvation and to know what it is to have peace with God through our

[ 64 : 14 ] Lord Jesus Christ bless your word to us who pray and hear us we ask for Jesus sake Amen glory psalm is psalm number 24 in the Scottish Psalter it's on page 230 and we're singing at verse number 7 to the end of the psalm and the tune is St George's Edinburgh psalm 24 at verse number 7 ye gates lift up your heads on high ye doors that last foray be lifted up that so the king of glory enter me now to the benediction I'll go to the main door we'll stand to sing these vessels to God's praise!

Amen to the king slid up your heads of night He would us for name He lifted up the soul of glory entering the doom of glory is the king that mighty Lord resist in that sin Lord that gate in mine and strong in matters He has saved

Lord that gate in mine and strong in matters He lifted up your head doors have to last for aim He waked up the soul and King of glory enter name but truth is he that is the King of glory who is this the Lord of hosts and number team the

King of glory is the Lord of hosts and number team King of!

of glory! Jesus Alleluia! Alleluia!

[ 67 : 34 ] Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen.

Amen. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore.

Amen.