

**Rev. 22:12-14,16-17, 20-21** – *The reward of embracing Jesus' sacrifice*

**The water of life is freely available to all who choose to receive.**

12 "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.

*"I am coming soon" – in this epilogue, Jesus, Messiah and Sovereign Lord is coming, and faithful believers will receive their reward; 'wrongdoers' who refuse to believe will receive their recompense.*

*"According to what they have done" – primarily, belief or unbelief. Only works tested by fire are worthy of reward, 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 4:1-5; 2 Cor. 5:10.*

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

*"Alpha and Omega" – this title of Jesus shows Him sovereign over history, Rev. 1:8.*

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.

*"Wash" – in the blood of the Lamb, Rev. 7:14.*

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."

**IN PRACTICE** The ultimate reward that Jesus holds out, a blessing and being with Him for ever, comes at the end of the age – a future occasion that is difficult to imagine. We are more used to instant benefits. This is so big, it is hard to see. What we need is what management strategists call a 'parachute view', taking a perspective that flies above worldly time and space, to see the conflicts and injustices and human friction of our earthly lives for the limitations they are. Then, the reward of an eternal timescale, and spending it in close fellowship with the King of kings, not because of what we have done but as our reward for what He has done – this is worth waiting for.

**QUESTION** *How does it help us, to see an eternal timescale to the events and tensions of everyday life, and God's long-term purpose?*

**PRAYER** (attributed to founder of the Jesuit order, Ignatius of Loyola) Lord, teach me to be generous, to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to look for any reward, save that of knowing that I do your holy will.

*"Bright Morning Star – the morning star was a name for the Messiah, who ends mankind's night, Num. 24:17, 2 Peter 1:19.*

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.

*"Come..." – invitation repeated for emphasis. The bride is the Church, the believing people of God, those who are thirsty and drink freely of the living water, see Rev 21:6 and 22:1; Ps 42:1, Isa 55:1; John 4:10-14.*

20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

*"Come Lord Jesus" – marana tha, "Our Lord, come", 1 Cor. 16:22, an Aramaic prayer of the early church.*

*"Coming soon" – but giving the church time to do its job and proclaim salvation in Jesus, for an unbelieving world to turn and believe.*

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

*"Grace... be with God's people" – John's desire that the church would have the enabling grace understand Revelation's message – and obey.*

# The Living Word

www.thelivingword.uk PRINT EDITION

The Bible readings for Sunday, June 2, 2019 with commentary notes

Revised Common Lectionary readings for **June 2** in Bible order

*Prepare for Sunday by reading the Bible passages beforehand – read again to reflect on Sunday's teaching*

**Theme Embracing the gospel brings eternal rewards and temporal costs**

John 17:20-25 – Jesus prays for His followers' reward of seeing His glory

Acts 16:16-34 – Faithful obedience to the gospel call brings its own 'rewards'

Rev. 22:12-14,16-17, 20-21 – Embracing Jesus' sacrifice brings eternal reward

Read also: Psalm 97

**John 17:20-25** – *Jesus prays for followers rewarded by seeing His glory*

**The Lord intercedes for us to be one in Him, our witness to the world**

20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message..."

*"My prayer... not for them alone" – following Jesus' prayer for His close disciples, He now includes all who will come to believe through their proclamation – both spoken and written.*

21 ... that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent Me.

*"May they also be (one) in us" – brought about by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit who works to bring alignment with God and with each other.*

• For further study, see John 14:20, 23; 1 John 4:13

22 "I have given them the glory that you gave Me, that they may be one as We are one..."

*"The glory that You gave Me" – Jesus, humble in incarnation, noble in death, exalted in resurrection, showing God's excellence. Believers grow to display this, as those who are "in Christ Jesus", 1 Cor. 1:2, 30.*

23 ...I in them and You in Me – so that they may be brought to complete unity.

Then the world will know that you sent Me and have loved them even as you have loved Me.

*"I in them and You in Me" – brought about by the interactions of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the same interactions which empower believers today.*

*"May be brought to complete unity" – a church that shares the same spiritual life around the truth that saves, can be knit together as one body, as 1 Cor. 12:12-13, Eph. 2:14-22.*

24 "Father, I want those you have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory, the glory you have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world.

*"Before the creation of the world" – God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit existed eternally before the material universe was created. The reward for those that belong to Jesus is to see how this love has always existed.*

25 "Righteous Father, though the world does not know You, I know You, and they know that You have sent Me."

*"Righteous Father" – with betrayal and suffering imminent, Jesus emphasises the OT teaching that God is righteous and just e.g. Ps. 116:5, 119:137, Jer. 12:1.*

**IN PRACTICE** The reward of seeing Jesus' eternal glory may seem rather remote, but experiencing unity in Him is immediately relevant. It is how the church finds its witness. It is about Jesus' glory passed on, because it is about God's character. Father, Son and Holy Spirit live in perfect unity, and the more we know them, the more we will be one with them – and the more the world will see Jesus through His Church, His body of believers.

**QUESTION** *What does it mean for us to know we are in Christ Jesus, and also that we have Him in us?*

**Acts 16:16-34** – *Obedience to the gospel call brings its own 'rewards'*

**Paul and Silas get a taste of rough justice but also gain a strategic convert**

16 Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.

*"A spirit by which she predicted the future" – literally a 'python' spirit. She was a medium with a demonic spirit, deceiving people by speaking enough truth to appear plausible. See Deut. 18:10; 1 Sam. 28:8; 2 Kings 17:17; Micah 3:11*

17 She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved."

*"Most High God" – El Elyon, a common title among both Jews and Greeks, also used by the man in the grip of an impure spirit, Mark 5:7.*

18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

*"Paul became so annoyed" – because he could not let a fortune-teller appear to be his partner in the gospel.*

*"I command you to come out" – like Jesus, Paul speaks directly to the demonic spirit, as Jesus instructed His disciples to do, Matt. 10:8, Luke 10:17.*

19 When her owners realised that their

hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.

20-21 They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

*"Before the magistrates" – each Roman colony had two, to uphold Roman law.*

22 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods.

*"Beaten with rods" – the crowd forced a hasty and illegal punishment because Paul and Silas were not brought to trial. Paul later reflects on being treated outrageously in Philippi, 1 Thess. 2:2.*

23 After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.

*"Guard them carefully" – a euphemism for extra severity with the torture of the stocks thrown in, a rash action against fellow citizens, vv. 37-39.*

24 When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

*"Praying and singing hymns" – a common theme in Acts is joy for the honour of suffering in the name of Jesus, Acts 4:24-30. Despite pain and imprisonment they experienced a strong presence of the Holy Spirit giving them joy and praise, 1 Peter 2:19-21; 4:12-14.*

26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose.

*"A violent earthquake" – although tremors were common, a miraculous intervention following Paul and Silas' praise in the face of adversity.*

27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.

*"About to kill himself" – preferable to the penalty for losing a prisoner.*

28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

29-30 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

*"What must I do to be saved" – the jailer would have heard that Paul and Silas were preachers of salvation, verse 17, and their singing and praising about salvation through Jesus Christ.*

31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord

Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household."

*"Believe in the Lord Jesus" – a concise, true expression of the way of salvation, which comes simply and essentially through believing the gospel, the content of which is Jesus Christ.*

• **For further study**, see Acts 15:7; Mark 1:15; Rom 1:16; Acts 8:12, 11:17, 19:4, John 3:16, 36, Romans 3:22.

32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.

*"Spoke the word of the Lord" – he believed, but would have had questions.*

33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptised.

*He... was baptised" – following his understanding of who Jesus was and making a declaration of faith and trust. Others in the household would have heard and made their own response, v.34 below, therefore not infants and none are mentioned*

34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God- he and his whole household.

*"Filled with joy" – translates the Greek agalliao, a NT word which describes deep spiritual joy, Matt. 5:12, Luke 1:46-47, 10:21, Acts 2:26, 1 Peter 4:13. Joy is the consistent experience of conversion.*

**IN PRACTICE** The gospel of who Jesus is and what He has done for us is not just a philosophy, but a call to be involved in it. We can 'manage' the impact of the gospel on us by keeping it at arms' length. But once it lands on our hearts, Jesus becomes real, living and reigning and very much involved with our broken world. That's where the call comes – where do we play our part? That is when the spiritual battle becomes evident. Paul and Silas were followed around by a demonised girl shouting out half-truths, and then were beaten and cramped in the stocks without trial. What reward was that for their faithfulness? But the devil, the prince of this world who holds people's souls captive and blinded, doesn't give them up to new life in Jesus, without a fight. The reward of assurance of eternal life brings with it joy and peace – and must expect some less welcome 'rewards', too.

**QUESTION** *Jesus warned us there was a down side to being a disciple. How do you evaluate the cost of being a follower of Jesus?*