

REVELATION 22

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Revelation chapter 22 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Tonight we will finish our study in the book of Revelation and what a journey it has been. My prayer as we have been going through this book is that you would have a better understanding of eschatology or end time events as the book of Revelation ties up what both the Old and New Testaments have spoken of.

And I do realize that as you look at this world. As you look at the diseases that are out there. As you look at the immorality that seems to be growing and growing. As you look at wars and rumors of wars. As you look at how our society has lost the idea of what is right and what is wrong. In other words, as you look at this world, it is bad, very bad and it seems to be getting worse and worse!

Let me share this with you and you will see what I have been saying and then the conclusion of the matter. We are told,

Imagine the anguish you would feel if this scenario were your story: you built a home for your children, planted a vineyard in the surrounding fields, provided everything that your children would need to live and be happy, but despite all that, one of your children kills his brother. Then another one of your children takes grapes from the vineyard, makes strong wine, and gets himself good and drunk.

To your astonishment the bedrooms you built for your children's safety and protection become dens of adultery and smut.

The children continue to kill each other, steal from each other, and lie to one another, and as things get worse and worse they begin to proclaim that they have no father. They have the gall to assert that you, the builder of the house in which they live, the one who fathered them and gave them life, do not exist at all. Imagine the pain of having your own children defile your home, declare that they have no father, and shout that they hate you.

God created this world as a cosmic temple. Contrast the holiness and cleanliness required of the priests who enter the temple with the abominable filth that humans have spread all over this planet that God made to display his glory.

Even those of us who trust in Jesus and try to live by the Bible fall miserably short of the glory of God's holiness.

What would you do if you were God? How would you react to the ruination of the house you built, the misuse of the gifts you gave, and the defiling of the masterpiece – the crown of all creation – the human body and person?

Our God and Father has initiated a cosmic rescue operation. His plan is to save through judgment, to show justice and mercy, and then to bring those he saves into a new heaven and new earth.

Do you want to know how things are going to turn out? Do you want to know what the future holds? Do you wonder whether there is any hope, any resolution, any restoration?

If there is something that makes trusting Jesus and being faithful to the Bible worth persevering through the worst thing that could possibly happen to us, we need to know what it is, right?

If there is something that will bring cleansing from all defilement, healing from every wound, the satisfaction of every longing, and an intimacy that will swallow up every alienation, we need to know about that, right?

Revelation 22:1-9 declares that God is going to keep his word and return those who trust him to a new and better Garden of Eden.

- James M. Hamilton Jr., Revelation – The Spirit Speaks to the Churches, pp.401-402

Keep in mind that the title of this book is *APOKALYPSIS* in the Greek and we get our English word “*apocalypse*” from it.

Now when we think of an apocalypse we tend to think of disaster, catastrophe, a day of reckoning, Judgment Day, the end of the world, destruction and-so-on.

And make no mistake about it, you can truly see this unfold as you read through this book, but that is not what this book is all about, not at all!

How do I know that?

For two reasons and I believe this is so important for us to understand, not only when we began this book a few months ago, but now as we finish it.

First of all, this Greek word, *APOKALYPSIS* means an unveiling or disclosure or a revelation – but of who?

Again, we don’t have to guess for we are told in Revelation 1:1, “**The Revelation of Jesus Christ . . .**”

In other words, it is the *APOKALYPSIS IESOU CHRISTOU* or the Revelation, the unveiling of Jesus Christ in all of His glory! That is what this book is all about. In fact, all of Scripture speaks of Jesus, it was written of Him!

And the second point is that of God not only setting up His Kingdom and ruling and reigning for one-thousand years, but then on into the eternal state with our God!

Yes, there are many other things that will take place, as we have seen.

But the primary focus is Jesus Christ and His return to set-up His Kingdom on this earth.

Then, like I have said, the Lord will create a new heaven and a new earth with a new Jerusalem where He will dwell with us in the eternal state.

Keep in mind that most of Revelation chapter 21 deals with the New Jerusalem. And we are given a description of this New Jerusalem.

It is described as a cube measuring some 1500 miles wide, 1500 miles high and 1500 miles deep.

The walls are some 216 feet deep and there were twelve gates around this city. Three gates to the north, the south, the east and the west and each gate is made of a single pearl.

The city itself is sitting upon twelve foundations and each one is made of a different precious stone.

The walls are crystal clear like a diamond and the streets are made of pure gold that is so pure it is as transparent as glass.

And in the middle of it all God's glory will light the city like a blazing sun.

Let me share with you the verses that closed Revelation chapter 21 for as we move into Revelation chapter 22 we will move inside the city and see what that is all about.

Let's begin reading in Revelation 21 starting in verse 22, where we are told, **“But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.”** Revelation 21:22-27.

That is the focus of Revelation chapters 21 and 22, this eternal state with Him, the New Jerusalem.

So with that said, let's begin reading in Revelation chapter 22, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we conclude this great book – ***THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!***

REVELATION 22

VERSE 1

Remember that we are moving from outside the city or what the dimensions of the city and its walls to inside the city. And what we will come to see is that there is a beautiful garden in this city, which should remind us of the Garden of Eden back in Genesis when God created the heavens and the earth!

Now try to picture in your mind what this looks like.

The light of God explodes from His presence through all the multicolored stones, the streets of gold and from the throne of God where the Father and the Son sit, comes this pure river of water that I believe speaks of eternal life.

Now is this a literal river or is it just symbolic?

Many believe that it is symbolic only but as we read on, I think you will see that this is a literal river.

And think about it, if the Lamb was not there, we would never have eternal life but because God became flesh and blood, that sacrificial Lamb who came to take away the sins of the world, we can experience that eternal life, and no one can take that away from us!

And notice the description of this water, it is “**crystal clear.**”

Now we don't have many waters that are crystal clear today but even those waters can't compare with these waters flowing in this river.

This river is absolutely free of any pollution, and it has to be free of any pollutants because it flows from the throne of God and the Lamb!

Listen to what we are told in Psalm 46:4-5, “**There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.**”

Now this is interesting to me because it speaks of a river in the city of God and yet, Jerusalem has no river in the city. It is very unique in that way because most cities were built with a river running through it.

So what is this speaking of?

I think there are two points, one that speaks of a near fulfillment and a future fulfillment.

During the reign of King Hezekiah the Assyrians are around the city of Jerusalem. But before the Assyrians arrived, King Hezekiah did an amazing thing.

Outside the city walls, in the Kidron Valley, there was a spring called the Gihon spring. Knowing the Assyrians were coming, Hezekiah ordered his men to dig a tunnel. Half began at the Gihon springs and dug westward. Others began at the pool of Siloam and dug eastward.

Together, they dug a total of one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven feet. And when they were done, water flowed from the Gihon springs into the pool of Siloam within the wall of the city.

Then Hezekiah covered the springs outside so the Assyrians wouldn't know there was a spring there at all. I think that is the near fulfillment of what the Psalmist wrote about.

I think the long term or future fulfillment comes about after the Tribulation Period. You can read of this river that flows from the Temple in Ezekiel chapter 47; this is in the Kingdom Age.

And lastly, after the 1,000-year reign of Christ, when a new heavens and earth are created, we see another river flowing and we are reading of that here in Revelation chapter 22.

VERSE 2

As this river of life flows from the throne of God it travels down the middle of the city and the tree of life is in the middle of the river and its branches span across this river to both sides.

I don't believe that John saw two or more trees, as some believe, because it would be inconsistent with the Scriptures.

What do I mean by that?

Remember where we started some 15 years ago in the book of Genesis. We saw the tree of life there in the Garden of Eden for the first time.

And when Adam sinned, both Adam and Eve were removed from the Garden of Eden and Cherubim with a flaming sword guarding the path to this tree.

Why did God do that?

I believe it was because God did not want man to live eternally in a sinful body, that was not His intentions.

What is interesting to me is that we see here, in the New Jerusalem, the tree of life once again. But how did that door open up for us, for sinful man so he may partake of this tree once again?

By another tree called Calvary where Jesus was crucified for our sins, paying them in full and thus, by faith we can enter into that relationship with God once again and partake of this tree of life that will be in the New Jerusalem.

Paul, in Galatians 3:13 wrote, **“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’).”**

And in Romans 8:3-11 Paul tells us, **“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the**

flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

You see, eternal life is only found in Jesus! All the repercussions of sin that permeated our lives, this world, is now gone and we can once again partake of the tree of life in the New Jerusalem!

John also tells us that this tree of life bears fruit and leaves.

But why do we need these leaves for healing of the nations if there is no more death, no more illness in the eternal state?

First of all, the Greek word for “**healing**” is *THERAPEIA* and from it we get our English word “*therapeutic*” from.

I believe the idea here is “*health-giving*” or it is good for you to take in and folks, anything the Lord makes is going to be great!

And, just as the river of life speaks of eternal life or perpetual life, I believe that these leaves from the tree of life speak of the same thing, eternal life!

Now do we eat in the eternal state, in this New Jerusalem?

There is no more meat because the curse has been removed, but we can eat fruit if we want, but we don’t have to.

Now, if there is no time in the eternal state, why does John say each month there will be different fruit?

How do you express time when there is no time?

By using expressions that we are familiar with. I think that is what we see here.

VERSES 3-5

Ever since the fall of man the effects of sin have permeated everything in this world, as I have said.

Even creation itself has been affected by it and waits to be redeemed.

And, even in the Millennial Reign we will see the effects of sin, but on a much smaller level and the Lord will deal with it immediately.

I know, maybe you never thought about that in the Kingdom Age but let me show you what I mean about sin, even though it is rare to find.

We are told in Isaiah 65:20, **“No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.”**

The Amplified Bible puts it like this, **“There shall no more be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who dies prematurely; for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner who dies when only a hundred years old shall be [thought only a child, cut off because he is] accursed.”**

But now, in the eternal state the curse is gone – no more friction, no more fighting, no more sin!

We are also told that we will *SERVE* the Lord. What is that all about?

Keep in mind that the word **“serve”** is a form of a Greek word that speaks of worship.

Let me show you what I mean.

In Romans 12:1 we are told, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”**

I think the NASB gets this correct when it tells us, **“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”**

Let me ask you this question. When the Levites were serving in the Temple what was their service about?

It was about the worship of God as they served.

The Bible says that we are a kingdom of priests and thus, as we serve the Lord, our service to the Lord will be a form of worship!

And don't think of this as work, for everything that we do for the Lord will be done with joy as we worship Him and for eternity, that will never get old!

And we will not only serve the Lord, but in the glorified bodies that our spirit and soul will dwell in, the ones the Lord is preparing, we will see the Lord face-to-face!

We can't do that now, but one day we will be able.

It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 13:12, **“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”** Also, we are told in I John 3:2, **“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”**

We will also have on our foreheads the name of God which speaks of our identification with Him, that we are His.

Think about that for a minute.

You can't see what is written on your forehead so why have it there?

Because it is telling others as they look at you that you are the Lord's.

Folks, when people look at us what do they see? They should see the name of God written on our foreheads, not literally right now, but as we live out our faith, they should be able to see we belong to Him!

Paul, in speaking of the Corinthian believers wrote to them, **“You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.”** II Corinthians 3:2-3.

In other words, people may not read the Bible, but they are reading our lives. Thus, what are they taking away as they read us? May it be the Lord!

Let me summarize this with some conclusions that A. T. Pierson made. He wrote,

“And there shall be no more curse,” perfect sinlessness;

“But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it,” perfect government;

“And His servants shall serve Him,” perfect service;

“They shall see His face,” perfect communion;

“And His name shall be on their foreheads,” perfect resemblance;

“And there shall be no night there,” perfect blessedness;

“And they shall reign forever and ever,” perfect glory.

You see, the Paradise lost in Genesis is the Paradise regained in Revelation.

The way to the Tree of Life that was closed in Genesis is now open in Revelation.

Praise the Lord for that!

As we read on we will see John give some parting words, the conclusion to all of this.

VERSES 6-7

Today, as in the past you have all kinds of people making predictions about things and declaring that they will come to pass, even Christians. And they don't!

Because of that, when the Bible declares things, people don't believe it.

Folks, I do and the reason I do is because the Words that God has spoken are faithful, what He has promised He will bring to pass.

Not only that, but His Words are also true, He does not lie to us, He does not lie at all!

How can I believe that?

Because everything that God has said so far has come to pass and thus, I have no reason not to believe Him.

You see, there are over 300 prophecies of the Lord's first coming that were all fulfilled down to the tiniest detail.

Thus, as He speaks of His second coming, over 500 times, I have no reason to doubt the One who is faithful and true, Almighty God!

Now here is a problem for some. When John wrote that these things must "**shortly take place**" many feel that since it has been almost 2,000 years since the writing of this book of Revelation, and nothing has happened, how can we believe it?

Please understand that these words speak of happening rapidly or suddenly. When they begin to happen, it will move very quickly!

And when we read in Revelation 22:7 of Jesus saying, “**I am coming quickly**” many laugh again at that because it has been almost 2000 years now since this was written.

Folks, the Greek word for “**quickly**” is *TACHEI* and it speaks of suddenly once again.

Like I have said, when things get started, they will happen very quickly!

James tells us, “**... Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!**” James 5:9.

Here comes the Judge you might say! And He is coming to judge the wicked!

And let me also say this. The early church believed in the imminent return of Jesus Christ, it could happen at any moment, and we too should feel that way as Paul said, “**looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.**” Titus 2:13-15.

Now, what does Jesus mean when He said in Revelation 22:7 about keeping “**the words of the prophecy of this book**”?

The idea here is to guard or watch over, don't negate them and we are also to obey what the Lord has said.

Folks, as you study prophecy or end times, don't just do it to find out what the future holds, kind of an inquisitive heart.

You see, we are not only to hear God's Word, but we are also to keep them, apply them to our lives!

There is that blessing as we obey!

God's Word is here to draw us closer to Him, to learn from Him and to grow in Him. God, in His great love for us, has shown us what is going to happen, what is going to transpire down the road, and now we must choose what to do with that information!

But keep in mind the main focus of prophecy is Jesus, to draw us to Him, to trust in Him, to obey Him, and apply the truths of God found in the Word of God to our lives!

And with the Lord's return getting closer, the attack against the Word of God is growing, false doctrine is growing and thus, we must guard the truths of God found in the Word of God and share those truths with others.

Jude warned us as he wrote, **“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Jude 1:3-4.

VERSES 8-9

Now this is interesting because John had a similar experience back in Revelation 19:10, where we are told, **“And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, ‘See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.’”**

How could he forget so easily?

I think John is just so overwhelmed by what he sees, and he loses his focus and hits his knees to worship this angel.

And what we see is that this angel quickly corrects John once again telling John that he too is just a servant of God!

Thus, you don't worship the instrument, but you do worship the Master, you worship God, you worship Jesus!

God is eternal and everything else is a created being and thus, no created being should every be worshipped, ***NEVER!***

What is interesting is that in Hebrews 1:6 we are told, "**But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.'**"

God the Father is speaking of God the Son, that all the angles should worship Him!

I thought we are only to worship God!

We are and thus, the point being made is that Jesus is God!

Not only are angels to worship Jesus but so are we. In John 9:38 we see the man who was born blind, and we are told, "**Then he said, 'Lord, I believe!' And he worshiped Him.**"

The blind man worshiped Jesus and Jesus did not correct Him because He is God and worthy of worship! (See Matthew 8:2, Matthew 14:33)

We are not to worship anyone else but God, as Seiss points out for us. He wrote, "***If it was wrong to worship this glorious heavenly messenger, in and through whom came forth the very voice of Jesus, how can it be right to worship and pray to the Virgin Mary, to whom is assigned no such dignity or office? The impulse and intention may be devout and good; but it is a great mistake.***"

Now listen to what we are told next, because it is important for us to understand as some are challenging us on this.

VERSE 10

Notice that John is told that this book is not sealed, it is for us today!

Remember what we were told back in Daniel 8:26 **“And the vision of the evenings and mornings Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For it refers to many days in the future.”**

Also, in Daniel 12:4-9 we are told, **“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.’ Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, ‘How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?’ Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished. Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, ‘My lord, what shall be the end of these things?’ And he said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.’”**

When was the book of Daniel to be sealed till?

Until the time of the end or the days we are now living in, and the book of Daniel has been opened up to us, that which was once sealed.

How do we know that we are in the last days or the time of the end?

Because in Hebrews 1:1-2 we are told, **“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”**

These last days began with Jesus and thus, this is all for us.

Now, tragically, the book of Revelation is not sealed, and many have sealed it up.

In Revelation 1:3 we are told, **“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”**

By sealing up this book you are keeping a blessing from people or yourself. Folks, what once was closed in the Old Testament is now opened up to us to understand, but the book of Revelation is not closed just as this angel tells John.

It is amazing the people who don't read the book of Revelation today, the number of churches that don't teach through this book because they say it is too difficult to understand or that it is a sealed book, which it is not.

Way back on July 7, 2000, some twenty-two years ago, The Herald Times Reporter had a story on the Left Behind series and this is what a local pastor had to say in that article regarding the book of Revelation, “. . . *that many Protestant churches rarely have a reading from Revelation as part of worship service. ‘You don’t always have the time to help people understand’ the often complex passages with fanciful images that 21st century churchgoers may have great difficulty deciphering . . .*”

You don't *“have the time to help people understand”* – isn't that what a pastor is to do, help people understand the Word of God? Of course it is!

Listen to what I am talking about where leaders, pastors are encouraging us to stay away from Prophecy.

We are told,

Many who were once looking for the return of Jesus have fallen asleep. We now live in a period of time where numerous prominent Christian leaders are telling the Christian masses that paying attention to the signs of our times in light of the Bible is a waste of time. And many of them take it a step further and accuse those who believe what Bible prophecy says about the end of the age of being negative and self-centered.

In the *Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren was actually laying ground work for the emerging church's new reformation, a reformation that rejects thinking about the return of Christ and works more at convincing the multitudes that Christ is already in them as a global christ-consciousness.

As you will see in the following documentation, Warren has a low regard for Bible prophecy. Perhaps this helps explain why so many who once were anticipating the return of the Lord have become occupied with worldly ambitions.

Warren writes:

When the disciples wanted to talk about prophecy, Jesus quickly switched the conversation to evangelism. He wanted them to concentrate on their mission in the world. He said in essence, "The details of my return are none of your business. What is your business is the mission I have given you. Focus on that!" (PDL, p. 285)

I find it simply astounding that a statement of this sort would be in a *New York Times* best-seller in the present-day Christian book market.

Jesus was telling the disciples they could not know the day or the hour, but nowhere does Jesus ever indicate that “the details of my return are none of your business.”

Rather than quickly changing the subject, we find in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 two of the longest passages in Scripture quoting Jesus’ own words, and what’s more, where He details the signs of His coming.

In essence, Jesus was saying, because you cannot know the day and hour of my return, you need to educate yourself in Bible prophecy and take heed of my words about the end times. Later on, one of those disciples, John, was given an entire book to write on the details of Jesus’ coming. Jesus continually said to be alert and ready for when He returns.

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My heart’s desire for the people of Calvary Chapel of Manitowoc, and for those listening on-line is that you would be blessed by the Word of God being taught.

And as we finish up Revelation here tonight, we will be going on our third time through the Scriptures!

VERSE 11

Kind of a strange verse, what is this verse teaching us?

I think the point being made is that in eternity nothing can be changed, your fate has already been sealed at that point.

Thus, now is the day of salvation, now is the time to repent, don’t put it off.

When the Lord returns at the end of the Tribulation Period, it will be too late to repent!

Paul, in Hebrews 9:27-28 wrote, **“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”**

If you read through this book and yet there is no change in you, I guess there is not much hope.

Don't let the day slip by without making Jesus your Lord and Savior because, like I said, now is the time for salvation.

I like the way that Harry Ironside summed this up for us. He wrote,

It is a divine emphasis upon the solemn truth that as a man is found in that coming day, so shall he remain for all eternity. In this world God is calling men to repent. Here, and now, He waits to renew, by divine grace, those who commit themselves to Him. But in the eternal world there will be no power that has not been in exercise here, to make the unjust righteous or the filthy clean.

- Harry Ironside

Also, Robertson put it like this, *“It is the hopelessness of the final state of the wicked which is here pictured. The states of both the evil and the good are now fixed forever. There is no word here about a ‘second chance’ hereafter.”*

And Walvoord said, *“If the warnings of this book are not sufficient, there is no more that God has to say.”*

I think that does sum it up!

VERSES 12-13

The message of Jesus to us is to be ready, why?

Because He is coming quickly!

And I think the focus here is the Rapture.

Now I thought we are saved by faith and not by works, why is Jesus rewarding us for our works?

First of all, it speaks of reward, not salvation and secondly, actual faith, real faith will have works, not for salvation, but for the evidence for our faith and the Lord will reward our faithfulness in what He has entrusted to us!

When the Lord comes for His bride, the church, He will bring with Him our rewards for service.

And for us, the saints of God, these rewards will be given to us at the Bema Seat of Christ.

Paul speaks of this in II Corinthians 5:9-10. He tells us **“Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”**

And Paul gives to us more details of this, of what the Lord will do, what He will receive and what He will reject, in I Corinthians 3:11-15. We read **“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it**

endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

You see, why did you do the work?

What was your motivation for doing it?

That is what God is looking at. And God will place all our works into the fire to see what is going to be burned up and what will make it through the fire and will be rewarded.

Now please, understand this, this has nothing to do with our salvation, for we are saved by grace, through faith, and not by our works. Our works are a by-product of our relationship with Jesus. And it is our works that we will be rewarded for, but our salvation was and is a free gift of God!

I want you to also notice here the deity of Jesus as He says that He is the Alpha and Omega, a title for God.

Not only that, but He is the first and the last, another title for God as Isaiah 41:4 tells us, **“Who has performed and done it, Calling the generations from the beginning? ‘I, the LORD, am the first; And with the last I am He.’”**

Notice **“LORD”** is capitalized, it is speaking of *YAHWEH* here.

And folks, here is another incentive for us to be ready. God is coming back! If we take Christ out of this position, that He is not God, we are left with nothing.

Spurgeon put it like this,

Preach orthodoxy, or any form of doxy; if you have left out Christ, there is no manna from heaven, no water from the rock, no refuge from the storm, no healing for the sick, no life for the dead.

If you leave out Christ, you have left the sun out of the day, and the moon out of the night, you have left the waters out of the sea, and the foods out of the river, you have left the harvest out of the year, the soul out of the body, you have left joy out of heaven, yea, you have robbed all of its all.

There is no gospel worth thinking of, much less worth proclaiming in Jehovah's name, if Jesus be forgotten.

- C. H. Spurgeon

VERSES 14-15

Here we see two groups of people contrasted.

The first group are believers who will enter into the eternal state with the Lord, and what a blessing that will be.

And the second group are the dogs or those who have rejected Jesus and they will spend eternity apart from Him in the Lake of Fire, outer darkness. They will be kept out of the new heavens, the new earth with its New Jerusalem!

VERSE 16

Who is this message for?

The churches throughout Asia Minor back then and throughout the world today.

And we are to not only hear and apply these things to our lives today, but we are to share this message with others.

And the one who is declaring these things is the root and offspring of David, which speaks of His humanity and is also a Messianic title (Isaiah 11:1-2).

Also, He speaks of Himself as the bright and morning star, another Messianic title (Numbers 24:17).

The Messiah, the offspring of David is like a bright and morning star that is promising us a new day, a day of eternal life with Him!

VERSE 17

Notice the invitation here, the invitation that God is giving, to come to Jesus.

He does not force anyone to come, but He does invite us to come!

And notice that it is free, you just need to come to Jesus because Jesus has paid the price for us, as he said, “**It is finished!**”

Thus, you can't buy your way in, you can't work your way in, you can't even earn your way in, but you can freely come and partake of Him, the giver and sustainer of life!

Salvation is a free gift so “*Come and receive Jesus before it's too late!*”

VERSES 18-19

Folks, the canon of Scripture was closed at the end of the first century when the book of Revelation was completed.

Thus, we are not to add to or take away from God's Word because it is complete.

There are no new revelations regarding Scripture no matter what Joseph Smith said, or Mary Baker Eddy said, or the New Apostolic Reformation and their apostles and prophets tell us, as well as the many other false prophets that have come down the pike.

And I believe the Emergent Church fits into this category of adding and taking away from the Word of God when you listen to what they are teaching and that is very dangerous to do.

Now I am not talking about minor interpretational differences but for those who deny the inspiration of the Scriptures and challenge what the Scriptures are saying, denying the Word of God!

Why is God so hard on this issue, so much so that those that practice these things will have their names removed from the book of Life?

Because by altering the Scriptures you are not only usurping God's authority, but you are leading people astray, leading people to a different Jesus.

And I believe that Jesus is not only speaking of the book of Revelation, but from Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21, the whole council of God! (See Deuteronomy 4:2)

Don't mess with it, God is not joking!

You see, Paul makes that point in II Timothy 3:16-17 as he wrote, "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**"

All Scripture is given to us from the mouth of God, and it is profitable for us, thus –
DON'T MESS WITH IT!

Walvoord put it like this, "***What a solemn warning this is to critics who have tampered with this book and other portions of Scripture in arrogant self-confidence that they are equipped intellectually and spiritually to determine what is true and what is not true in the Word of God.***" May we take heed!

VERSES 20-21

The Lord says, **“Surely I am coming quickly.”**

And what does John say? ***“Bring it on!”***

Now I am paraphrasing of course but John does say, **“Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”**

This was an Aramaic expression that was well known in the early church –

MARANATHA or **“Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”** May that be the passion of our hearts too!

In the last book of the Old Testament, the book of Malachi, we are told in the last two verses of that book, **“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”** Malachi 4:5-6.

God is speaking of judgment here, wrath, of striking the earth. That is how the Old Testament closes.

But now, in the last book of the New Testament, in the last verse of the Bible, we are told, **“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”** Revelation 22:21.

The book closes with the grace of God, His unmerited favor towards us giving us eternal life freely.

You see, God now deals with man on the basis of the New Covenant, His shed blood that cleanses us from all our sin.

I like what Spurgeon said regarding His grace, the grace of God, ***“Whatever you may miss, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ always be with you. In whatsoever points you or any of us may fail, may we never come short of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

We can’t!

Sin has separated man from God, and we are cursed, but now, through Jesus Christ we can have that fellowship with God once again.

Paradise was lost in Genesis, and now, as we conclude here in Revelation, we see Paradise regained through Jesus Christ!

As I close this evening, let me leave you with these words to think about as we conclude our study in the book of Revelation and we conclude our study for a time in the New Testament.

William MacDonald, in his commentary on the book of Revelation, had this to say:

With this tremendous revelation completed, a final word of benediction was pronounced.

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

This expression, so common in other New Testament books, brings this final word from God to an end. For those who believe that Christ in His first coming provided salvation, there is the wonderful promise of His coming again to bring full and final deliverance. As the book began by introducing a revelation of Jesus Christ so it ends with the same thought that He is coming again.

Probably no other book of Scripture more sharply contrasts the blessed lot of the saints with the fearful future of those who are lost. No other book of the Bible is more explicit in its description of judgment on the one hand and the saint's eternal bliss on the other.

What a tragedy that so many pass by this book and fail to fathom its wonderful truths, thereby impoverishing their knowledge and hope in Christ Jesus. God's people who understand and appreciate these wonderful promises can join with John in prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus."

- William MacDonald, Believers Bible Commentary, p. 990

Keep looking upward for our redemption is drawing nearer, He is coming back, it is our blessed hope, and don't let anyone rob you of that joy.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ and all I can say as I close is – ***MARANATHA!***