

INTRODUCTION:

1. We now begin our study of the final chapter of the final book of God's Word.
2. I pray that as we wind down our study of this portion of God's Word, as we reach the end, we will pay heed to the beginning.
3. Revelation 1.3: "Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand."
4. If the time was at hand almost 2000 years ago, it is even closer at hand now. As the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 13.11, "And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed."

(22.1-5) ¹ And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.
² In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.
³ And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:
⁴ And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.
⁵ And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

1. "When the last enemy of God has been put down by our Lord acting as the Mediatorial King, the purpose of His Mediatorial Kingdom will have been fulfilled. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:25). This point in the history of the government of God will have been reached when death itself comes to an end, for "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26). And this point is clearly indicated in Revelation 20:14 where we are told that "death is cast into the lake of fire." With the end of this "last enemy" there can be no more any intermediate state; therefore "Hades" also is abolished. In the inspired record, the destruction of death and Hades appears as the last act of our Lord in preparation for the new and eternal world.

As we pass from chapter 20 into chapter 21 of the Apocalypse, therefore, we stand at the junction point between two worlds and between two kingdoms. It is the end of the "first" or "natural" order of things, and the beginning of the final order of things. Here also the Mediatorial Kingdom of our Lord ends, not by abolition, but by its emergence into the Universal Kingdom of God. Thus it is perpetuated forever, no longer as a separate entity, but in indissoluble union with the original Kingdom of God from which it sprang. What will happen is succinctly described in St. Paul's classic passage on the subject: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that

God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:24, 28). This does not mean the end of our Lord’s regal activity, but rather that from here onward in the unity of the Godhead He reigns with the Father as the eternal Son. There are no longer two thrones: one His Messianic throne and the other the Father’s throne, as our Lord indicated in Revelation 3:21. In the final Kingdom there is but one throne, and it is “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (22:3).¹

2. Should we be surprised that “a pure water of life” proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb? It should not surprise us, considering what the Lord Jesus Christ said to the woman at the well in John 4.7-14:

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

3. Further, notice what the Lord Jesus Christ said in the courtyard of the Temple in John 7.37-38:

37 In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

4. In verse 2, reference is made to the tree of life that spans the river of life. First seen in the Garden of Eden, it reappears in New Jerusalem, and though we will not need its fruit for survival, we will have the freedom to eat its delightful fruit.

¹ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God*, (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), pages 512-513.

5. As well, notice the word “healing.” Apparently, this tree of life will sustain the lives of mortals entering the eternal state. I think that is whom John refers to as “the nations.” Perhaps they will need to eat the fruit of the tree of life.
6. Think about this: No curse, no lack of service to Him, His name in their foreheads, no night, no candle, and no sun light.
7. This is the farthest reach into the future found in the Word of God. Our final fifteen verses form John’s conclusion to the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

(22.6) And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

1. The apocalypse, or the Revelation, is now completed. Remember, “apocalypse,” ἀποκάλυψις, means unveiling. Jesus Christ has been revealed in this book, and our attention is now turned to concluding remarks.
2. The angel who spoke to John assured him that the things he has seen and heard are faithful and true. Further, this angel attested to his credibility.
3. The same Lord God Who sent the holy prophets also sent this angel to show the things of the future, the things contained in this book of Revelation, “the things which must shortly be done.”
4. The word “shortly,” from the Greek word τάχος, does not refer to how soon these things must pass, for we know that almost 2000 years have passed. No, this word focuses on the speed of an activity or an event.² Therefore, they will come to a rapid conclusion once these things begin.
5. Imagine the sound of a battalion of soldiers marching with hobnailed boots on concrete pavement. As those soldiers march, their boots crash to the ground simultaneously and uniformly. Left foot, then right. Left, and right, and left again. Never stopping. In like manner, once the events of Revelation begin, they will march forward without stopping. A seal, a seal, a seal is broken. Then, when all seven seals have been broken, there will be silence in heaven for half an hour, Revelation 8.1. Then come the trumpet blasts. First, one trumpet blasts, then another, and another, and another, until seven blasts of the trumpet have sounded. Then, a vial is poured, and then another, until seven vials have been poured. The wrath and fury of God will consume the whole world. Then, Jesus comes again.
6. Then the nations’ judgment, the millennial kingdom’s establishment, the passing of a thousand years of glorious messianic rule on earth, a final rebellion against the Lordship of Christ, the Great White Throne judgment, and eternity in the New Jerusalem.

² Bauer, Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), pages 992-993.

(22.7) Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

1. This verse begins with the word “Behold.” “It occurs 200 times in the Greek New Testament and always announces what is striking and surprising.”³ The term is found in John’s Revelation 30 times, with at least seven of these times calling attention to our Lord’s coming.⁴
2. This is the first of three times in this chapter when the Lord Jesus Christ says, “I come quickly.”
3. I think this verse powerfully speaks to the imminency of Christ’s return to gather His bride to Himself.
 - a. It cannot refer to the Second Coming because the Second Coming of Christ is not imminent. The Second Coming will occur after the Rapture of the bride.
 - b. Since the timing of the beginning of the seven years of tribulation is not precisely known, though it must follow the Rapture, it is not known exactly how long after the Rapture the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and great glory will occur.
4. “blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” This is the second to last beatitude in God’s Word. Those who adhere to this book’s teachings, predictions, and prophecies are blessed.

(22.8) And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

1. There are two truths in this verse. The first sentence establishes John’s credibility as a firsthand observer of his recorded events. No secondhand stuff here. He both saw and heard the sights and sounds contained in this book.
2. The second truth is a tragic one. In light of John’s experiences in heaven, his proximity to the glory of God, and the brightness of Christ’s countenance, notice what he did.
3. He was so overcome with what he had seen and heard that perhaps he was weakened. I want to think that he sinned in a moment of weakness. Whatever the reason, he fell to worship the angel who had shown him all these things.
4. How very human of John. How very typical of him to, even though he is a consecrated saint of God with a new nature and decades of faithful and devoted service to Christ, to momentarily fall into idolatry. This shows us that sinless perfection in

³ William R. Newell, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1935), page 359.

⁴ Ibid.

this lifetime is not Biblical. It should also serve to warn us about our susceptibility to the sin of idolatry.

(22.9) Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

1. When worshipped by John, the angel responded immediately, admirably, and correctly. He quickly told John to stop worshipping him, and then he gave John a reason why he should stop. The angel, though created with superior intelligence and power, is after all, still just a fellow servant of John, of the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book.
2. Thus, the angel informs John and us that all created beings of God who obey and serve Him, whether supernatural, prophets, or simple obedient Christians, stand on par with each other as equals. Is that not wonderful? So, do you bow down to any creature? No!
3. What John is supposed to do instead of bowing down and worshipping that angel, and what we are to do instead of bowing down and worshipping anything or anyone made by God, is to worship God instead.
4. “Worship God,” the angel said to John. Moreover, we ought to worship God, and we must worship God.

(22.10) And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

1. Notice what the prophet Daniel wrote. Daniel 8.26 and Daniel 12.4, 9:

²⁶ And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told *is* true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it *shall be* for many days.
⁴ But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.
⁹ And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end.
2. Why is it that Daniel was commanded to shut up his vision, to shut up the words he wrote, to seal the book he penned, and to close up the words he wrote till the time of the end, while the Lord Jesus Christ directed John to leave this book of the Bible open?
3. The reason was given to John. It reads, “for the time is at hand.” Things will fall into place soon. Although we will not be on this Earth when the horrors begin, this book of Revelation will help us live right in preparation for the coming things.

4. Christians need to know how God's program will unfold. It is vital to how we live and serve our Savior. Therefore, while this book of Revelation contains truths we will likely not understand this side of heaven, a great deal is highly beneficial to the proper conduct of the Christian's life.

(22.11) He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

1. This verse is very tough to understand. It is a warning that there will be no second chance on the other side. A. T. Robertson wrote, "The language is probably ironical, with a reminder of Da 12:10, in no sense a commendation of their lost estate."⁵ However, what does Daniel 12.10 say?

"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

2. It boils down to this: Jesus is coming soon, and those who have decided to remain in their rebellion despite the truths of this book will not change for anything. Also, those who are saved and who have responded to this book will continue to live right before God.
3. Spurgeon, in his *Spurgeon Devotional Commentary*, wrote, "There is no hope of change of character in another state. Where death leaves us judgment finds us and eternity holds us."⁶
4. I think Spurgeon is on target in assessing this verse. What you are when you leave this phase of your existence, you will be forever. What you are when you pass through the portal of physical death, you will be on the other side. If you are unjust here, you will be unjust there. If you are filthy here, you will be filthy there. If you are righteous here, you will be righteous in eternity. Moreover, if you are holy on this side of eternity, you will be holy throughout eternity.
5. Good old John Gill speaks the same line: "... the meaning of this expression is, he that is now found without a righteousness, and full of all unrighteousness, and acts unrighteously, will continue so; there will be no change made in him, no regeneration, renovation, repentance, or reformation; he will remain the same wicked man he ever was; or he that hurts, or does injury to his fellow creatures, will still do mischief; at least he will have the same inclination, though not the opportunity and power, but will attempt it, of which there will be an instance in the wicked dead, when raised; (see Revelation 20:8)."⁷

⁵ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures In The New Testament, Vol VI*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1930), page 483.

⁶ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Devotional Commentary*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com

⁷ John Gill, *The Baptist Commentary Series Volume I, John Gill's Exposition Of The Old And New Testaments, Vol 9* (Paris, Arkansas: the Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., reprinted 2006), page 852.

6. What are these four characteristics our Lord declares to His servant John?

Let me explain a little grammar, and then we will look at the meanings of the words.

- a. “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still”
 - i. The first time we see “unjust” we are looking at a participle. It means “the person who is continually unjust.” The same is true for the first time we see the word “filthy.” This participle means “the person who is continually filthy.”
 - ii. The second time we see “unjust” and the second time we see “filthy” we are looking at imperative verb form of the words. The word translated “unjust” is an active verb, and the word “filthy” is the passive form of the verb. What does that difference mean? It means that when you behave unjustly, you get filthy.
 - iii. “The aor. tenses here indicate the fixity of the state into which these have entered; there is henceforth no break in the downward course, which is indeed viewed as a single act (Swete).”⁸
- b. “and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”
 - i. The first time we see “righteous” we are looking at two words: the Greek article translated by our English word “the” and the Greek noun for righteous. It means, “the righteous person.” The same is true for the first time we see the word “holy.” It is two words that mean “the holy person.”
 - ii. The second time we see “righteous” and the second time we see “holy” we are again looking at the imperative verb form of the words, with both words being active verbs.
- c. “Unjust” is the Greek antonym of “righteous.” Thus, the first half of the verse deals with unsaved people and the moral filth and defilement that results from being an unregenerate sinner who does not seek and has not experienced forgiveness and cleansing. The behavior of the lost person is the key to understanding his spiritual condition and eternal destiny.
- d. The second half of the verse, on the other hand, speaks to those who are justified by faith and live righteously and holily. Such are not righteous of themselves

⁸ Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), page 863.

but know the righteousness that comes from faith and the holiness that results from forgiveness, cleansing, and progressive sanctification in the Christian life.

- e. But how are we to understand this verse? What do these things mean? John Walvoord sums it up very succinctly: “Present choices will become permanent in character.”⁹

- 7. No good comes from rejecting Jesus Christ. Refusing Him is choosing wickedness and judgment, wrath and damnation. He is the only alternative to an eternity of torment.

(22.12) And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

- 1. This verse refers to the impending Rapture. Remember that the first three chapters of Revelation were written to the angels of the seven Churches of Asia. Why do I say that?
- 2. My inclination is that the rewards refer, most probably, to the Judgment Seat of Christ, where Christians will be rewarded for serving Christ since their salvation. This judgment will occur during, or perhaps shortly after, the Rapture.
- 3. What is happening is that we are almost to the end of this book of Revelation. For eighteen chapters, John’s Revelation has been visions of events in heaven and on Earth after the Rapture, from chapters 4 through the first portion of chapter 22. The words of this verse are primarily directed to those addressed in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, the angels of the Churches, and by application, all Christians of this age we presently live in.
- 4. Notice what Paul wrote to the Christians living in Rome in Romans 14.10: “we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”
- 5. Second Corinthians 5.10: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.”
- 6. However, it is in First Corinthians 3.8-15 that we see the criteria by which each Christian will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ:
 - ⁸ Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.
 - ⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, *ye are* God’s building.

⁹ John Walvoord, *The Revelation Of Jesus Christ*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966), page 335.

- ¹⁰ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.
- ¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- ¹² Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;
- ¹³ Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.
- ¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.
- ¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.
7. Two conclusions can be drawn from this reference to rewards:
- First, in light of Revelation chapters two and three being addressed to the angels of the Churches (which are pastors), and from what we see in First Corinthians 3.8-15, the evidence is solid that rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ will be based upon local Church service and ministry and not the at-large type of Christianity we so often see in evangelical circles.
 - In light of the reference, here at the end of John's Revelation to rewards, it is safe to say that a study of this book of Revelation is both essential and profitable for Christians of our day; otherwise, references to rewards being given to us would likely not have been made. To put it another way, studying and taking heed to Revelation helps Christians to more effectively serve God in their Churches, which in turn leads to rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ for those Church members.

(22.13) I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

- The Lord Jesus Christ uttered these words. We are studying the Revelation, or the Unveiling, of Jesus Christ. Moreover, part of that unveiling is a revealing of the identity of Jesus Christ in an undeniable way. "Solemn assurance is thus given that Christ is qualified to be the Judge of verse Re 22:12."¹⁰
- This being true, compare this verse with Isaiah 48.12, seeing from the context of the verse that it is the LORD who is speaking, and tell me by what name Jesus Christ is known in the Old Testament:

"Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I *am* he; I *am* the first, I also *am* the last."

¹⁰ Robertson, page 484.

3. What does all this mean concerning Christ's relationship to Deity? Saying it three different ways, the Lord Jesus Christ is so much as describing Himself as the Author and Finisher of not only our faith but of everything.
4. How could He more strongly assert His godness than by saying such words as these?

(22.14) Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

1. Doing good things will not earn your way to heaven. Is this verse, then, a contradiction? Does this verse teach salvation by good works, by doing good things? No, it does not, as First John 2.3 will show: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."
2. This verse is a beatitude, the final of seven beatitudes in Revelation, that teaches us that the genuine article, the truly saved person, will have access to the tree of life and may enter through the gates of the city. Those who profess Christ but have had no work of grace in their hearts, which produced holy living and obedience to God, will not be in the picture.

(22.15) For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

1. This is the third passage we have recently seen describing unsaved people.
 - a. In Revelation 21.8, we read, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
 - b. In Revelation 21.27, we read, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - c. The most prominent of the sins listed in all three passages are lies, with idolaters, murderers, whoremongers, and sorcerers mentioned at least twice.
2. "Without" refers to those who do not have access to the city. This refers to unsaved people in the eternal state. Once again, they are described as "dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."
2. "Dog" is a descriptive title of someone whose life is morally defiled and unclean. A scavenger is not above returning to its vomit.

3. The rest of these titles are descriptive names placed upon the entire life of a lost person. Let me hypothetically consider a prescription drug addict. Such a person will not go to the lake of fire for violating the law or being a legal drug addict.
4. Rather, when looking back over the life of that legal drug addict, what will be seen is a life that is characterized and punctuated by drug addiction and narcotic escapism. Similarly, there will be those whose lives are characterized by sexual sin, materialism, selfishness, lying, etc.
5. What a person's legacy should be, and what a Christian's legacy turns out to be, is devotion to Christ. Amen?

(22.16) I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

1. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches."
 - a. To review how this all began, we read Revelation 1.1: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John."
 - b. Six words to note in this verse before we step back and look at the verse as a whole.

"Revelation" This word comes from the Greek word ἀποκάλυψις, and means "unveiling, revealing, revelation."¹¹ Standing as the first word in this last book of the Bible, the apocalyptic nature of John's Revelation is thus declared.

"servants" The things that are to be revealed are to be revealed to His servants, or bond slaves, δούλοις. In a world where people do not want to be told what to do by anyone, the Lord's people loudly proclaim themselves to be His bondslaves. Moreover, remember, slaves are obedient.

"must" We are about to examine things which *must* happen. The Greek here, δεῖ, refers to items that are "binding," something that is "necessary."¹² Why? Because God said so, that is why. Everything that God proposes to happen happens.

¹¹ Reinecker & Rogers, page 811.

¹² Ibid.

“shortly” Indicates a brief period, *τάχος*, “quickly, suddenly, soon,”¹³ the Greek word our word tachometer is derived from, a device that measures an engine’s rpm, or the number of revolutions it turns per minute. But remember, what is brief to God is not necessarily quick to man (Second Peter 3.8: “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”)

“signified” This word, *δείκνυμι*, means to exhibit something that can be apprehended by one or more of the senses, *point out, show, make known*.¹⁴ It refers to indicating or showing something by a sign. It translates the particular word the Greeks used to refer to communication from the gods to men. John used this same word when he wrote First John 4.1: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” However it was done, you can be sure that it had to be *proven* to John that the message he received was from God. He was not about to naively or eagerly walk into some trap set by Satan, as do many today who say that they have received a special message from God.

“angel” Does anyone know what the word “angel” means, *ἄγγελος*? Very simply, the term “angel” means “messenger.” The term can refer to a supernatural being from heaven or a human errand boy. In this verse, I take it to refer to a supernatural being from heaven. In other verses, we must carefully determine whether a human or a supernatural messenger is in view. It should be noted, “no other book in the New Testament speaks more often of angels than the book of Revelation. They are the principle vehicle of communication to John of the truth which he is recording.”¹⁵

- c. But who is the John who describes himself as “his servant John”? “There is no question that the John mentioned in Revelation is the son of Zebedee and Salome and the brother of James (Mark 1:19-20; 15:40). His occupation was that of a fisherman (Matthew 4:21). He heard John the Baptist preach and became a follower of Jesus Christ (John 1:35, 40). He was one of the three whom Jesus took with Him on several special occasions (Matthew 17:1; 26:37; Mark 5:37). John also was one of the two sent by Christ to prepare the Passover (Luke 22:8). He is referred to as “that disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7, 20), and is mentioned three times in the Acts (Acts 3:1; 4:13; 8:14). He wrote five books of the New Testament, and only he uses Christ’s

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Bauer, page 214.

¹⁵ Walvoord, page 32.

title of “the Word” (Logos). (See John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1; 5:7; Revelation 19:13).”¹⁶

- d. Now that we have examined various essential words, let us step back and see the broad view of this verse. We are here told that this is an unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ that came to John via a messenger angel from God and that it concerns future things that must happen in a relatively brief period by God’s standards. In other words, this verse promises that readers are about to see history written in advance.
- e. This book of Revelation brings to light things that have never before been clearly seen. Our subject matter is things the Lord Jesus Christ had been previously asked about. Some things He was unwilling to reveal during His earthly ministry were revealed in this book. Mark 13.4, 32:

4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

32 But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.”

Perhaps 50 or 55 years had passed since the Lord Jesus made the statements we have just read. So apparently, He was ready to speak on some of those subjects to His beloved John.

- f. Revelation 1.2: “Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.”
- g. A brief look at some individual words in this verse.

“Who” Let us remember, from what we considered in the first verse, that we are reading the words penned by John the Beloved. This apostle leaned on the Savior’s breast in the Upper Room during the Last Supper.¹⁷ Reference is made in John 13.23, in John’s peculiar way of noting his presence at an event: “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.” How John did humbly refer to himself in this fashion.

“bare record” This phrase comes from a single Greek verb, an epistolary aorist, meaning that John is placing himself with the readers who consider the writing as taking place in the past.¹⁸ It is the word we get “martyr” from, μαρτυρέω, and it means to give

¹⁶ Lehman Strauss, *The Book of the Revelation*, (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1964), page 22.

¹⁷ William Steuart McBirney, *The Search for the Twelve Apostles*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1973), page 109.

¹⁸ Robertson, page 284.

witness to something you have seen.¹⁹ The term has undergone a transition in its use over the centuries, so the word has come into English to refer to suffering death rather than renouncing your religion.²⁰ In the Bible, however, and especially here in John's Revelation, the word means to tell what you saw or to pass on what you were given without distortion or introducing inaccuracies.

“testimony” This word is also translated from the word for “martyr.” Therefore, the phrase “bare record” and the word “testimony” are precisely the same word, and they both mean to give witness to something or someone.

- h. Now, we focus on “the word of God.” This phrase appears 45 times in our Authorized Version, including three times in the Old Testament. But it is the Greek phrase that should drive our inquiry τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ. An example of this phrase is found in Mark 7.13, where the Lord Jesus Christ said, “Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition,” using this exact Greek phrase. By my count, 38 of the 42 places where the English phrase “the word of God” appears in the New Testament translate this Greek phrase. And by my estimation, this phrase always refers to “the word given by God.”²¹ Thus, John claims to be an agent by which God's Word was transmitted. But no one should ever sever the intimate relationship between God's Word and God's Son, Who this same John describes as ὁ λόγος, “the Word,” in John 1.1, which “was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” John 1.14. This connection is commented on by that old English Baptist, John Gill, who wrote, “Of the essential and eternal Word of God, his only begotten Son.”²²
- i. Consider the phrase “the testimony of Jesus Christ.” About this phrase, John Gill writes, “*And of the testimony of Jesus Christ*; that is, the Gospel, which testifies of the person of Christ, of the truth of his divinity, and reality of his human nature; of the union of the two natures, divine and human, his person: of his several offices, of prophet, priest and King; of what he did and suffered for his people; and of the blessings of grace which they receive by him.”²³ This exact phrase appears two other times in Revelation, 1.9 and 12.17. As well, the phrase “the testimony of Jesus” appears twice in 19.10: “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, *See thou do it* not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

¹⁹ Reinecker & Rogers, page 811.

²⁰ *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1996), page 1180.

²¹ Robertson, page 284.

²² Gill, page 871.

²³ Ibid.

- j. The last phrase reads “of all things that he saw.” John was particularly well-suited to be an eyewitness. Not only was he the beloved disciple and the last surviving apostle of Jesus Christ, but his character and reputation were unimpeachable, as we see attested to in three passages: John 19.35: “And he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.”; John 21.24: “This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.”; Third John 12: “Demetrius hath good report of all *men*, and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear record; and ye know that our record is true.”
- k. Remember, from verse 1, that John was given a message. To make sure that John knew it was a message from God, the Lord “signified” it, verse 1 indicates. This is profoundly important to take note of. The Lord Jesus Christ gave John some irrefutable proof of the message’s authenticity. How did He accomplish that? He allowed John to actually “see” the message he was to record. What John has written in this Revelation is what he saw as a most credible witness.
- l. As we have studied the book of Revelation, it has been abundantly clear that John was an on-sight observer of what he wrote about. Thus, he was qualified to use the word “martyr” because he was a witness. He simply and straightforwardly wrote down the things of the prophetic future that he saw with his own eyes.
- m. Let me recapitulate from verses 1 and 2 regarding communicating this message to John.

Notice: God gave the message unto Jesus Christ ... and He sent and signified it by an angel unto John.

Therefore, it happens this way: God to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ to an angel, and that angel to John, with proof of the message’s authenticity.

Looking back over verses 1 and 2, who is this book’s primary Author? It is God, the Father. It is His unveiling of His Son. It is also the authenticated and verified Revelation of Jesus Christ.

- 2. In this Revelation 22.16, the Churches are referred to. Do you realize this is the first reference to the Greek word ἐκκλησία since the third chapter of Revelation? This further supports the contention that John has finished his presentation of future events, and we are again dealing with events before the Rapture. We have left John’s future and are now back in John’s present.

3. “root and offspring of David” shows the Lord Jesus Christ to be both the source that produced King David and the descendant of David, which Messianic prophecies forecast.
4. “the bright and morning star” describes the Lord Jesus Christ as that first indication that light is coming and the day will break soon. We live in a period of spiritual darkness in human history in which sin is running rampant and seems, to many people, to be acceptable behavior.
5. But the Lord Jesus Christ indicates that light is about to dawn in human history. This will happen when Jesus comes again.

(22.17) And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

1. Commentators frequently misinterpret this Scripture verse as a four-fold invitation to sinners to come to Christ. However, closer scrutiny suggests what we have in this verse are two two-fold invitations. The first two-fold invitation is directed to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the second is to sinners.
2. The venerable John Gill provides skillful guidance for correctly understanding John’s words in this verse. He observes that hearing Christ say that He should come quickly, in Revelation 22.7 and 12, the Spirit and the bride of Christ express a most affectionate desire for the Savior’s coming.
3. It may be that the reference to “the Spirit” concerns the Spirit of God in the hearts of His people and that the indwelling Spirit not only convinces Christians of and acquaints Christians with the coming of Christ to judgment and gives them reason to expect it, but fills our souls with the love of His appearance, so that we eagerly anticipate it.
4. Galatians 4.6 provides ample justification for this claim, where Paul writes, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Thus, just as the Spirit of God cries out to God the Father in those He indwells, so the Spirit of God would cry out for the return of Christ in those He indwells.
5. As well, look to Romans 8.26-27, where the indwelling Holy Spirit is shown to intercede in the believer’s life in yet another way:
 - ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
 - ²⁷ And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

6. Thus, when we read “**And the Spirit and the bride say, Come,**” we are not looking at an invitation to the lost to come to Christ, specifically. Still, an invitation is uttered by the Spirit of God through the bride of Christ through those saved individuals He indwells, for the Savior to come quickly to reclaim what is rightfully His, to judge the lost, and to deliver His Own.
7. The phrase, “**And let him that heareth say, Come,**” expands the first invitation to Christ to come. However, whereas the first invitation is uttered by the Spirit and the bride of Christ, this second phrase should be likened to encouraging all who agree to join in. Thus, anyone who hears with understanding, anyone with spiritual insight and illumination, is called upon to join in the cry to the Savior to come again. “**Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**”
8. Who would be included in this expanded group? Old Testament saints, holy angels in heaven, and the beleaguered saints on Earth during the Great Tribulation who are being pursued and martyred by the antichrist.
9. Thus, all the redeemed of all ages, both on Earth and in heaven, cry out for the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Joining with us in yearning for our Lord and Savior are all the holy angels of heaven. In addition, all of this is prompted by the executor of God’s plan and purpose for the ages, the Holy Spirit of God.
10. Only those who oppose the plan and purpose of God are not so eager for Christ to stand from His throne, to mount the white steed, and to open heaven so that He might gloriously and majestically return. Who might that be? The devil and his allies, the antichrist, the demons, and the Christ-rejecters of this world. They recognize that the worst possible scenario for them is the triumphant return of Christ.
11. Those two invitations to Christ to return are followed by two more invitations directed to an entirely different audience. However, refrain from being too hasty in concluding whom the invitations are directed toward since careful consideration of what is said might surprise you.
12. The phrase that now commands our attention reads, “**And let him that is athirst come.**” Consider very carefully before answering my question: Is this an invitation extended to all who are lost and in need of Christ? If words have meaning, the answer is “No.”
13. These words seem to invite those who thirst after Christ, long for His grace and righteousness, yearn for knowledge of Him and communion with Him, to come unto Him by faith. The words echo John 7.37, where the Lord Jesus in the Temple courtyard cried, “**If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.**”
14. Of course, it is also possible that this is an invitation to those who thirst after His Second Coming, and the glories and delights of the New Jerusalem state to come

into it eat of the tree of life, and drink of the river of water of life in it. I think this is an invitation not to all lost but to those lost souls who truly thirst after Christ.

15. This aligns with our Lord's invitation in Matthew 11.28: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." There, too, the invitation is most definitely not extended to all sinners but to those sinners who are contrite, to those sinners who are weighed down by their load of guilt and sin, by those sinners who are brought to conviction by the Holy Spirit of God.
 16. The last phrase parallels the one before it: "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The water of life has to do with God's free favor and love and the communication and display of that love in the New Jerusalem, including the comfort and glories to be enjoyed there.
 17. But notice that the invitation is extended, not to all who are lost, but to "whosoever will." But what do we know from God's Word about "whosoever will"? In John 5.40, the Lord Jesus Christ declared, "ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." As well, there are the words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2.13: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure."
 18. Therefore, the final invitations to come to Christ are not invitations extended to every sinner. Instead, they are invitations extended to sinners mindful of their sinfulness, very aware of their need, sinners who have been convicted of their sins, sinners whose hearts have been pricked.
 19. "But pastor, I am a lost sinner and I do not thirst after Christ. Neither has my heart been so affected by the Holy Spirit that I want to become a Christian. I am not one of those who "will" come to Christ. What should I do?" Luke 13.24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 20. A final word to Christians. You and I should long for the soon return of our Savior. The Spirit of God works in the Christian's life to create that longing and to anticipate His coming. And what about the lost? Our first priority with the lost seems to get them lost, for only when they are genuinely lost do the invitations found in God's Word apply to them.
- (22.18-19) ¹⁸ For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:
- ¹⁹ And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book.
1. Some general comments before we carefully scrutinize the passage:

- a. These two verses, written at the close of the first century, ought to be weighed by those who feel that the foretelling aspect of the gift of prophecy is for today. They ought also to be considered by those who suggest any version of God's Word in any language is superior to the Hebrew Old Testament or the Greek New Testament Scripture that was initially written.
 - b. There are similar curses in other books of the Bible, but none so strong as this warning. If you attempt to add to or take away from the Word of God, watch out!
 - c. Therefore, the person who tries to give a word of prophecy, which is adding to the predictions already provided in the Word of God, is on dangerous ground, as is the textual critic who tries to change the Word of God or who claims a version of the Bible is inspired.²⁴
 - d. For readers curious about the vast topic of Bible translations who want to avoid the extremities of the eclectic text on the one hand and the prohibition of resorting to Hebrew and Greek texts advocated by the Roman Church and others on the other hand, I recommend as a first read a book by Alan J. Macgregor, retired London Metropolitan Police Inspector, *400 Years On: How does the authorised version stand up in the 21st century*.²⁵
2. "For I testify" I fully agree with both John Gill and A. T. Robertson that the speaker in this passage is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.²⁶ It is unthinkable that anyone but the Lord Jesus Christ would dare to speak with such authority about so serious a subject as this passage deals with.
 3. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book"

The Lord Jesus Christ is with this, putting everyone on notice who has exposure to this book of Revelation. No matter your level of education, your sex, your age or level of maturity, your social standing, or anything else, if you have heard the pronouncements of this book, which is to say that you have been exposed to the truth contained in this Revelation, you are responsible for its contents.

4. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book"

²⁴ The Roman Catholic Church insisted the Latin Vulgate was an inspired translation of God's Word, but our forbears resisted all efforts to deprive them of their Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, per, among others, David Otis Fuller, *Which Bible?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1975, Fifth Edition), pages 194-215.

²⁵ Alan J. Macgregor, *400 Years On: How does the authorised version stand up in the 21st century*, (VisionSolutions, 2010).

²⁶ Gill, page 872 and Robertson, page 487.

- a. How would one go about adding “unto these things”? I would answer that critical question in two ways:
 - i. First, let me strongly assert that this is not a warning against misinterpreting the book of Revelation. Anyone’s ability to interpret any portion of Scripture is related to that illumination of the Holy Spirit, which is sovereignly granted to that individual, and no one can claim to have an error-free understanding of this or any other portion of Scripture. Therefore, you are not risking eternal damnation by studying and trying to understand John’s Revelation.
 - ii. Second, on the other hand, I would (as strongly as I know how) warn those people who claim to possess certain charismatic gifts that they are perilously close to stepping over the line our Lord has drawn here in the dirt. Whether it be some supposed word of knowledge or the claim to be able to predict the future utilizing a gift of prophetic utterance, such people do not know enough of God’s Word to understand how dangerous a predicament they place themselves in with their tomfoolery and with their pretended gifts of the Spirit.
 - b. What will God do to you if you violate Christ’s proscription? The warning is that the plagues of this book will be suffered by anyone who adds to the prophecies of this book. This is a serious matter. To comment and expound is one thing, but to add to this book by claiming you have a word from the Lord or by pretending to speak a prophetic utterance?
 - c. Those who suffer the plagues of this book are lost people. Whether they are trumpet judgments or bowls of wrath, or whatever, only lost people suffer those things. Therefore, our Lord is warning us that anyone who adds to John’s Revelation is lost and will suffer the hot anger of God’s wrath for trying to tamper with His Word.
5. “And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Again, I am convinced that this warning has most directly to do with those who are lost.

- a. Who would take away the word of the book of this prophecy? There were those in the past (as there are those alive today) who took it upon themselves to function as editors of holy writ. In the second century after Christ, one man was Marcion, who took it upon himself to exclude portions of God’s Word that he did not like.²⁷

²⁷ Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki & Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1999), page 75.

- b. There are also modern-day textual critics who ascribe to themselves sufficient knowledge and wisdom to decide that important portions of the Biblical text should be excluded.
 - c. Whoever they are, and whenever they lived, such men put at risk their very souls by playing fast and loose with God's Word.
 - d. This warning must also apply to those living during the future, after the Rapture and before the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when the antichrist and the false prophet will categorically reject many of the prophetic portions of God's Word, specifically this Revelation.
 - e. People do now what the antichrist and the false prophet will do in the future: reject the prophetic portions of God's Word and discount the truthfulness, accuracy, and authority of the prophetic parts of God's Word.
- 5. Perhaps you think, "Well, at least don't add to God's Word or tear passages out and pretend that they are not applicable." In thinking like that, you justify yourself. It is virtually the same as ignoring portions of God's Word and tearing the pages out of the Bible. What is the difference?
 - 6. By what right does anyone decide which portions of the Bible he will obey and which portions he will add his homespun wisdom and philosophy to? Does that not smack of arrogance on our part? Sure it does. Therefore, I urge you to be careful with the Bible, especially this book of Revelation.
- (22.20) He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.
- 1. Here, we have a promise, a signature at the end of the letter, and an inspired response. The promise is that Jesus Christ will come quickly. The signature is "Amen," for He is called "the Amen" by John. The inspired response is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."
 - 2. Look at the promise, "Surely I come quickly." Does that promise speak to the issue of when the Lord Jesus Christ will come again, or does that promise speak to the issue of how the Lord Jesus Christ will come again? If you look back to Revelation 22.7 and 12, you will notice that this is a reaffirmation of the same promise that has been only recently stated twice. The promise is that when He comes, He will come suddenly.²⁸
 - 3. However, there is something else about this promise that you should take note of. It is not only a promise. It is also a goodbye. These are our Lord Jesus Christ's last words to the Churches for almost 2,000 years. This is the Bridegroom's farewell to

²⁸ Bob Kollin, *Revelation Unlocked*, (Springfield, Missouri: 21st Century Press, 2003), page 209.

His bride until He appears suddenly to whisk her off to the Marriage Supper. Therefore, when it is time to come, He will not dally. He will come suddenly and swiftly.

4. His signature, the word “Amen,” is very appropriate since “Amen” means so be it, and is an affirmation. Is not our Lord Jesus Christ the reliable One, the dependable One, the One Who can be trusted not only to do what He promises but also to do what is needful?
 5. Then there is the inspired response: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Who would answer with these words? Every thinking Christian would respond in this way. The thinking believer knows that in this life, we are guaranteed tribulation. Indeed, all that live godly in Christ Jesus are promised tribulation. So, the Christian life is a life of forgiveness and great joy, but it also promises to be difficult and with suffering and persecution. That does not count the constant struggle against our sinful natures. Therefore, all but the most immature Christians look forward to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the more experienced and mature the believer is, the greater is his longing for his precious Lord and Savior.
- (22.21) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

This salutation closes the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The reference to grace speaks to the issue of God’s favor and enablement mediated to us through the Lord Jesus Christ, the One Who is the sole Mediator between God and men.

Amen.