

A Journey Into the Heavens
The Epilogue - Final Words of Comfort and Warning
May 11, 2016

During our long “journey into the heavenliness” we have come through a variety of scenes. We saw the splendor of the very throne of God in chapter four, but then we were required to witness disease, rebellion, suffering, global war, famine, and death. After all the smoke of destruction cleared away, we entered into the clear, glorious beauty of God as He made *all things new* (21:5). John then began to describe the beauty, dimensions, materials, and landscape of the New Jerusalem.

Now, as we come to the end of our “journey,” John writes the epilogue to his great apocalyptic vision. The actual revelation of the risen Lord ended in 22:5; and then John was inspired to write the closing words to his book.

I. The Certainty (22:6-11)

The statement, *These sayings are faithful and true*, in 22:6 is a divine stamp upon the pages of this book, declaring the words are authentic and irrefutable. The prophecy in this book has been inspired by *the Lord God of the holy prophets, who sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done* (22:6). The God who spoke through the prophets in the Old Testament to tell of the birth and life on earth of the Messiah is the same God who inspired John to write of His return to earth to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

In 22:7a we find the phrase, “*Behold, I come quickly*,” which occurs twice more in this chapter (22:12 & 22:20). The adverb quickly does not mean “shortly.” It has been 2,000 plus years, and the major part of the events described in this book have not yet transpired. Instead, the word *quickly* means when the action starts it will be sudden, and the events will take place in rapid succession.

Also in verse seven we find the sixth beatitude in the book of Revelation, which is similar to first beatitude we find in Revelation 1:3.

How ironic this final book of the Bible should carry these special and unique promises to those who read it, and yet it is one of the most neglected books in the Bible!

Once again, John is so overwhelmed by these revelations that he falls *down to worship before the feet of the angel* who had showed him *these things* (22:8). Of course as has been done before the angel tells him not to worship him but rather worship the Lord. (22:9).

One of the greatest dangers we have as Christians is to worship something other than God Himself. The phrase *worship God* literally means “worship God **ONLY!!**” Sometimes we are tempted to worship the Scriptures. We should love the Bible, study the Bible, and live by the Bible, but we should never worship it. At other times we maybe tempted to worship people God has used through the centuries, such as Moses, Peter, Joseph, or Mary. Their lives should teach us and inspire us, but we are to **worship God only!**

John’s revelation cannot be sealed because its contents are to be a special blessing to those who read it and because *the time is at hand* (Revelation 22:10b). The conditions described in the letters to the seven churches in chapters two and three already existed, and believers need to be warned it is only a matter of time until the events in chapters 4-20 begin to rapidly transpire.

Another reason for not sealing the book is if it does not move people to change, then there is no message that will. The same applies to righteous people - their reaction to this book should be to continue in righteous living. Also, there is a sense in which the present choice fixes our character forever, for a time is coming when change will be impossible (22:11). A persons state at death or at the second coming of Christ is the state in which he will remain forever. The message of this book will draw and win some people while it will repel and harden others. Therefore, it is important this book be not sealed.

II. The Comfort (22:12-16)

In verse 12 Jesus Himself speaks, *And, behold, I come quickly: and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.* This is a statement of great comfort, for while Christ will be coming to judge the world, He will also be coming to reward His saints according to their works. We are saved by grace but rewarded by our works.

Once again the Lord refers to Himself as *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last* (22:13). Four times in the book we have read this awesome statement - twice at the beginning of the book (1:8 & 11) and twice at the end of the book (21:6 & 22:13).

Now we come to the last beatitude in the Bible in 22:14. Obedience to the Lord's commandments is the basis for our rewards, but the privilege of eternal life is based totally on my acceptance of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Titus 2:5).

According to 22:15, outside the city are those whose presence would defile it, *For without are dogs...* (those of contemptible and malicious nature). All the others mentioned in this verse were also listed in Revelation 21:8 and were discussed when we studied that passage. These have all been banished to the lake of fire (see 20:15) and are forever without.

In 22:16 we find the unusual phrase, *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.* It is as though Jesus is saying "I have personally sent my messenger to give you this revelation exactly as I want it." Thus, Jesus again emphasizes the highest possible authority and authenticity of this book.

For comments on the phrase *the root and offspring of David* (22:16), go back and refer to our discussion of Revelation 5:5. Jesus also refers to Himself in Revelation 22:16 *as the bright and morning star.* This title is not applied to Christ anywhere else in the New Testament, so it has special significance when used here at the end of the book of Revelation. He is the Bright Morning Star, assuring that a new day will dawn.

III. The Conclusion (22:17-21)

The conclusion of the book of Revelation contains the last evangelical appeal in the Bible, *And the spirit and the bride say, Come* (22:17). It is as though all the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem give the invitation, *Come*. John's vision is still future, but the need to *come* to Christ is present. The *Spirit and the bride* saying *Come* echoes the invitation of the Groom, Jesus. This is not a new invitation, we find this invitation throughout Scripture.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matthew 11:28-29

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. John 6:35

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. John 7:37

Revelation 22:17 also says, *And let him that heareth say, Come*. Therefore, the individual Christian, who has heard and believed, is to invite others to *come* to Christ. It is our personal responsibility to invite people to come now, not matter who, or where they are!

Now that the final book of prophecy is complete, we find one of the most solemn warnings in the Bible in verses 18-19. The Lord Jesus revealed this prophecy directly through His angel (see 22:16), and no one should be guilty of adding to it or deleting from it. Anyone guilty of adding to it, *God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book* (22:18). Anyone guilty of deleting something from *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 the book* (22:19).

We find similar warnings in two other places in Scripture:

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you. Deuteronomy 4:2

Every word of God is pure:he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. Proverbs 30:5-6

For the third time in this chapter the Lord Jesus says He will *come quickly* (22:20). This prayer was often used by the early church, primarily at the close of the Lord's Supper. The phrase *come, Lord Jesus* is the equivalent of the transliterated Aramaic word, *maranatha*, in I Corinthians 16:22.

This benediction in Revelation 22:21, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all*, emphasizes nothing less than God's grace can enable us to be overcome and enter the New Jerusalem where we shall live and reign with Christ forever. *Amen* (22:21).