

INTRODUCTORY NOTES:

- *"All the glorious purposes of God, ordained from the foundation of the world, have now been attained. The rebellion of angels and mankind is all and finally subdued, as the King of Kings assumes his rightful sovereignty. Absolute and unchangeable holiness characterizes all within the universal Kingdom of God. The redeemed, made so by the blood of the Lamb, are in resurrection and eternal glory. Life is everywhere - and death will never intrude again. The earth and the heavens both are renewed. Light, beauty, holiness, joy, the presence of God, the worship of God, service to Christ, likeness to Christ - all are now abiding realities. The vocabulary of man, made for life here, is incapable of truly and adequately depicting what God has prepared for those that love him."*

(COMMENTARY, Wilbur M. Smith)

- *This is the **last description we have in scripture** of what is being prepared for us for eternity. The last chapter was full of amazing pictures of light and jewels. These descriptions were of what could be seen as "cold" beauty. **Now this chapter adds "warmth" to the heavenly environment.** We are told enough to be in awe and have great hope, but not so much that it would be overwhelming. We do not have the capacity to picture or understand what will be there.*
- *It is a good reminder to review the **Beatitudes** spoken by Jesus in Matthew 5 (v3-12). All of these are now fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. **Fellowship with God has been restored!***

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

¹ *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

- *Again we see the "pure river of water of life" that was presented last chapter. In the Middle East water IS life. Reference Ezekiel 47. We are also reminded of a verse in Psalm 46:4 - "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High." (ESV)*

² *In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

- **The Tree of Life is back!** It was once forbidden to us, but now we will freely eat of it. This description is difficult to understand or picture. The tree seems to be on both sides of the river, or there are several trees. We can only speculate here. We are now back in Eden, the Paradise of God, with all things restored. This is truly an amazing thought and future hope! The "healing of the nations" speaks of continual health.



- **COMMENTARY:** As John contemplated the heavenly city, he saw the tree of life, bearing 12 crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. Interpreters have puzzled over this expression that the tree of life is on each side of the river. Some take this as a group of trees. Others say that the river of life is narrow and that it flows on both sides of the tree. The tree of life was referred to in the Garden of Eden, where it was represented as perpetuating physical life forever. Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat of the fruit of this tree. Earlier in Revelation (Rev 2:7) the saints were promised the "right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." While the literal and the symbolic seem to be combined in this tree, there is no reason why it could not be an actual tree with literal fruit. The practical effect would be to continue physical life forever. While the verse does not state that the fruit can be eaten, this is presumably the implication. The tree's leaves... are for the healing of the nations. Based on this statement some have referred this situation back to the millennial times when there will be sickness and healing. However, another meaning seems to be indicated. The word "healing" (*therapeian*) can be understood as "health-giving." The English "therapeutic" is derived from this Greek word. Even though there is no sickness in the eternal state, the tree's fruit and leaves seem to contribute to the physical well-being of those in the eternal state. (Walvoord and Zuck)

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 *They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.* ⁵ *There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*

- In this place there is "*...no more curse...*", and the throne of God and the Lamb are here. Sin in the garden brought on the curse, which caused separation between God and His people. The earth groaned under this curse, as did all creation. Heaven and earth have been recreated and restored. The curse is gone. No separation from God, and no corruption in the creation, including us!

- We, His servants, ***“...shall serve Him.”*** We don't know yet how or what, but we know it will be wonderful and something to look forward to.
- We are told we will ***“...see His face...”***! Can you imagine that? No one now can see God and live. We are can't do that in our corrupt state. But one day...! This was Moses' greatest wish.
- ***“...His name shall be on their foreheads.”*** This implies ownership. We belong to Him completely now. He paid the price. This is in contrast to the mark of the beast in chapter 13.
- ***“No night”*** there implies **no darkness whatsoever**. We won't need any other lights. It is interesting to note that the two "lights" in verse 5 are actually two different words in Greek. The first means light, bright and pure. The second one implies "warmth" - gleaming and blazing.
- **We will "reign" with Him** - we don't know over what or how yet. It may imply our position as kings and priests, or that we will "live like kings" but either way we will be raised higher than angels. Reigning implies position and action.



⁶ Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true.” And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. ⁷ “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

- John is told all the words he has heard and things he has seen are ***“faithful and true.”*** These are meant as an assurance of the "bankability" of this book. You can count on it!
- ***“Shortly”*** in this verse does not mean *soon*. It usually means suddenly, or “in haste.” When it begins, it will be sudden and will transpire quickly until completed. ***“I am coming quickly”*** has the same meaning. Not soon as we define it, but suddenly and without delay.
- Verse 7 contains the words of Jesus. Here is one of 7 **blessings in this book**: ***“Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”*** We need to think on how we "keep" the words of this amazing book. Keep generally means *“to guard as a treasure”* - it is something we live by, with singular focus. What is presented in this book is a guarantee of our future. It should govern who we are, and all we do. We should live our lives by these words.

⁸ Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ Then he said to me, “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

- After Jesus speaks, it's apparent that John is overwhelmed again. He forgets himself for the moment and falls to **worship at the feet of the angel** who immediately forbid him to do that, and "scolded" him with the words "worship God!"

- This is 2nd time John does this. It is a reminder for us that **we do NOT worship angels** or anything/anyone other than God. This is especially timely today, as people have become more and more fascinated with “angels” and some have even worshipped them.
- The angel says he is a *"fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book."* This can either mean that the angels keep God's Word and are in the same company as God's prophets, or it can mean that the use of the word "angel" here is its literal meaning "messenger." This could even be one of the elders if we interpret it that way.

¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.

- John is told **NOT to seal up** this book. This is interesting, as Daniel WAS told to "shut up" much of his vision. It may be because Daniel's vision occurred prior to the Messiah's first coming, and John's is after. God is opening up Daniel's vision for us to understand now.
- The only thing **“sealed”** and not revealed in this book are the words spoken by the voice of the seven thunders in chapter 10. God has given us what we need to know. Everything else would only be confusing and incomprehensible in this time.

¹¹ He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”

- This verse seems a little strange to us. However, it literally means that the unrighteous will become increasing more unrighteous, and that those who pursue God should continue to do so until the end. It also implies that if this book is rejected, there is no other option, and you should just go ahead as you are at this point. It won't matter. It will be too late. Its intention is to relate the suddenness of this event, and not to get caught on the outside of God.
- This correlates to a verse in Ezekiel 3:27 – *“But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD.’ He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse; for they are a rebellious house.”*
- The world is divided into only two groups of people: 1) The **righteous** – those who hear and obey, and are made righteous by the blood of Jesus; and 2) The **unrighteous (unjust, unjustified)** – those who hear and disregard, do not obey, and are thus not covered by the blood, and not saved by it.

¹² “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”

- *"I am coming quickly"* is repeated 3X in this chapter by Jesus. Do we get the point? Don't dally, don't procrastinate...get right with God today!
- The word **“behold”** is used 30 times in this chapter. This word is used throughout scripture as a means to capture attention. In other words, pay attention, something important is coming, you need to know this! Indeed, we need to know what is contained in this book.

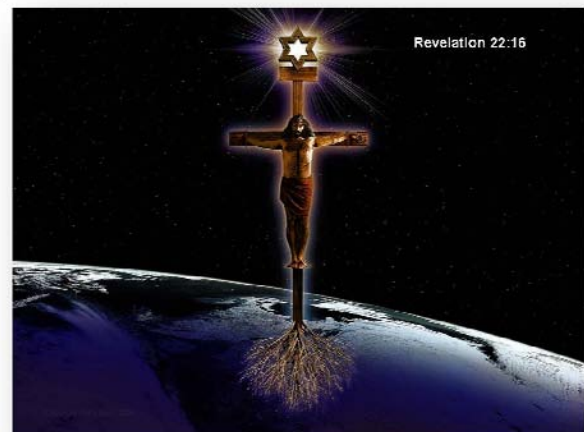
- Jesus says His reward is with Him, *"...to give to everyone according to his work."* We aren't told a great deal about this, but it refers to the **BEMA** or "judgment seat" of Christ. (2Co 5:10 *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."* ESV) We will have to give account to Jesus for what we did with what was given to us. This is not the judgment for salvation, but the judgment for rewards.
- He restates His position 3X in *"...Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End, First and Last."* He is EVERYTHING, and EVERYTHING is in Him. It all began with Him, it is sustained by Him, it will continue in Him. Do we really have a grasp of this amazing concept? Using these titles is also a verification of the extreme importance and authentic authorship of this book.

¹⁴ Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

- We see another **blessing** here for all who are obedient to Him. There is a difference in translation on this verse. Some versions say "those who wash their robes" while the KJV says *"those who do his commandments..."* This is one of the few places where there is disagreement on original Greek word structure, but either way it means the same thing. Those who obey have washed their robes and have a right to the tree of life.
- Once again we are told **what will NOT be inside** the gates of this holy city. Remember our chart from the last chapter lesson of what will be and what will NOT be in this place. We can add the unrepentant ones listed above to who will NOT be there.

¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." ¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

- Jesus verifies His **authorship** of these words and this plan, and tells John to testify them to the churches. This is the first time this word ("**churches**") is mentioned again since it appeared in chapters 2 and 3, another indicator that the church is not present during the Tribulation. He also provides two more titles for Himself: Root and the offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star. He is the promised Anointed One, the Son of David. The morning star is the one that signals approaching dawn. These are Old Testament titles claimed by the Messiah, by Jesus. The Jews in that day would have recognized them as such.



- Verse 17 implies that there is **urgency** for all to hear. We are to pray and long for His coming. Two groups say **"Come!"** here: The Spirit and the Bride (Church), and anyone who hears.

- **“Anyone who hears”** should ask Jesus to come into his or her heart (Revelation 3:20). He also appeals to those who "thirst" (seeking God) to drink the water of life. It is a choice. (**“whoever desires”**) We must constantly remember that this is a free gift, offered to us freely. The only thing we can add is our belief.

¹⁸ For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

- Then Jesus slaps a big **warning label** on this book! This indicates the extreme importance God places on the message in this book. You cannot dismiss it by saying it is all symbolic. God's Word will be perfectly fulfilled. He warns anyone who tampers with it, and that includes false interpretation. Unbelief causes distortion of God's Word and this is a solemn warning of the sacred nature of it. It is His invitation to salvation, and His consequences for living a life that opposes Him. The book, and the warning, must be taken seriously.

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! ²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

- Jesus concludes the book by repeating that He is coming suddenly and John aptly answers, **“Amen”** (so be it!). Even so, come Lord Jesus!" This should be the **heart cry of every believer**.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

(An excerpt of a commentary by Joseph Seiss in his book “The Apocalypse” [circa 1900])

(his comments on the Book of Revelation...)

If we are interested in the story of the manger and the cross; if we can draw strength for our prayers and hopes by invoking Christ by the mystery of his incarnation, fasting, temptation, agony, and bloody sweat; if we find it such a precious treasure to our souls to come into undoubting sympathy with the scenes of his humiliation and grief; what should be our appreciation of this book, which treats of the fruits of those sufferings, and tells only of that wronged Saviour’s glory and triumphs, and shows us our Lord enthroned in majesty, riding prosperously, and scattering to his ransomed ones the crowns and regencies of empire which shall never perish, and celestial blessednesses without number and above all thought!

(His comments on the last verses of Revelation...)

Fiction has painted the picture of a maiden whose lover left her for a voyage to the Holy Land, promising on his return to make her his beloved bride. Many told her that she would never see him again.



But she believed his word, and evening by evening she went down to the lonely shore, and kindled there a beacon-light in sight of the roaring waves, to hail and welcome the returning ship which was to bring again her betrothed. And by that watchfire she took her stand each night, praying to the winds to hasten on the sluggish sails, that he who was everything to her might come. Even so that blessed Lord, who has loved us unto death, has gone away to the mysterious Holy Land of heaven, promising on his return to make us his happy and eternal Bride. Some say that he has gone forever, and that here we shall never see him more. But his last word was, "Yea, I come quickly." And on the dark and misty beach sloping out into the eternal sea, each true believer stands by the love-lit fire, looking, and waiting, and praying and hoping for the fulfillment of his work, in nothing gladder than in his pledge and promise, and calling ever from the soul of sacred love, 'EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS.' And some of these nights, while the world is busy with its gay frivolities, and laughing at the maiden on the shore, a form shall rise over the surging waves, as once on Galilee, to vindicate forever all this watching and devotion, and bring to the faithful and constant heart a joy, and glory, and triumph which nevermore shall end."

We all say,
"Even so, COME, Lord Jesus!"
We are waiting.

