

Valley Bible Church – Book of Revelation

"The Conclusion of Revelation"

Revelation 22:6-22

The Conclusion to the Book of Revelation: (22:6-21)

Finally we come to the end of the book of Revelation. John has received the complete Revelation of Jesus Christ. He has recorded the things which he had seen (The introduction and vision of Christ in Revelation 1). He has recorded the things which are (the messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3). He has recorded the things which will take place after these things (the Tribulation Period, the Second Coming of Christ, The Millennial Reign of Christ, The Great White Throne Judgment, & the Eternal State with the new heavens and earth in Revelation 4-22). In this final section of the book, the apostle John is summing things up and bringing the book to its conclusion. In so doing, the apostle includes an epilogue, a final invitation given by Christ, and the benediction to the book.

The Epilogue of Revelation: (vv. 6-11)

This Revelation is Faithful and True (vs. 6).

The angel, who had shown John the New Jerusalem, now affirmed the veracity of all John had seen. He says, "*These words are faithful and true.*" The visions that John had seen are now completed and are certain to be true. The revelation that has been given John in this book is completely accurate, reliable and trustworthy. These events that John has seen will indeed come to pass. This statement seems to make an emphasis that these words as recorded in Revelation should be taken as the literal truth and not reduced to some allegory or system of meaningless symbols. Remember, the words *faithful and true* as previously noted are used as a title for the Lord Jesus (cf. 3:14; 19:11). These events are as faithful and true as the Lord Jesus Christ, who revealed them to John.

Not only does the angel verify the truth of what John had seen, but the angel indicates that this revelation came from the Lord God Himself. The angel says, "*the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must shortly take place.*" The emphasis of this statement is that this revelation is from the Lord God not a figment of somebody's imagination. "This directly contradicts the position held by many scholars that the Book of Revelation is an imponderable mystery for which no key is available to unlock its true teaching today. To the contrary, the writing is God's Word, not John's vague imagination. Its purpose is to describe future events, and it can be properly understood when interpreted literally by those taught by the Holy Spirit, applying the proper interpretation."⁵⁵⁹

This Revelation should result in Obedience (vs. 7).

At this point the speaker is no longer the angel, but is Christ Himself. The term *behold* is a term, which is used to grab the attention of the reader and emphasizes that what is about to be said is very important. Christ announces that His return is imminent. It could happen at anytime. As a result of His imminent return, the words of this book should be obeyed. This is the sixth of seven beatitudes in the book of Revelation (cf. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:14). This beatitude is virtually a repetition of the one that occurs in 1:3. It is a call to obedience. John MacArthur answers the question, "What does it mean to heed the book of Revelation?" in his commentary:

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"It is a general command to long for Christ's return and our eternal fellowship with Him. It calls on believers to desire heaven, to desire holiness, to desire to see Christ vindicated and triumphant over His enemies, to desire the end of the curse, and to desire the glories of Christ's earthly kingdom and the new heaven and the new earth. After reading Revelation, Christians should love Christ more, long to see Him vindicated in His glory, live in light of the reality that they will one day see Him, disconnect themselves from the perishing world system, pursue heavenly realities, seek to be made like Christ, hope for their resurrection bodies, and anticipate their eternal rewards. They should also understand the fearful judgment that awaits non-Christians, and call those sinners to repentance and saving faith in the Lord Jesus." ⁵⁶⁰

This Revelation should result in Worship (vv. 8-9)

At this point the speaker once again changes. This time it is the apostle John, who speaks. In fact he states, "*And I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things.*" John is emphasizing that it is himself, who makes the following statement. As a result of hearing and seeing all these things, John is driven to worship. The problem is that John was overcome by what he had seen and falls down in wonder and worships before the angel that had been speaking to him. It is the exact same action of John as in Revelation 19:10, when he was rebuked for it. Certainly John knew that only God was to be worshipped, but he just was so amazed and overcome that he just collapsed and worshipped.

The angel however got John's attention and told him, "*Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book.*" The angel asked John not to partake in worship of angels. He emphasized that angels are simply fellow servants of believers. They are servants to the prophets and they are servants to those who obey the words of this book. In fact as noted in dealing with 19:10, it was noted that throughout Scripture angels are servants of God's people. Hebrews 1:14 drives home this point as it states, "*Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?*"

The angel issues the command, "*Worship God!*" John was certainly right in being driven to worship. In fact as one reads through this wonderful book of Revelation, they should indeed be driven to worship. The right response when considering the imminent return of Christ, His rightful judgment upon the unbelieving world, His return to the earth and the establishment of our eternal future in the New Heaven and New Earth should most definitely be Worship of our Lord!

This Revelation should result in a Right Response (vv. 10-11).

The angel concludes his comments to the apostle here in these two verses. The angel begins by commanding John, "*Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book.*" This is the opposite command given to Daniel in Daniel 8:26 and 12:4. The reason John was not to seal up the prophecy of this book was that the time is near. The return of Christ is imminent therefore the book of Revelation is to be proclaimed. "That the specific words of Revelation are not to be sealed up stresses again that there is no hidden, secret meaning apart from the normal sense of the text." ⁵⁶¹

After the initial command the angel's next statement seems strange. The angel says, "*Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and let the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and let the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.*" The implied connection with verse 10 is that of cause and effect: "the time is short, so let people go their own way." This is another way of expressing the hopelessness of the final state of the wicked. Here

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is indirectly the formulation of a powerful warning against putting off one's decision to become a faithful follower of the Lamb. The time remaining is short, and once it is up, no more opportunity to change remains. Because of the imminence of Jesus' coming to initiate the events of this book, the response of a person to its message may very well be the decision that will carry him to his eternal state, whatever that may be."⁵⁶² "People's response to the proclamation of the truth will fix their eternal destinies. Those who hear the truth but continue to do wrong and be filthy will by that hardened response fix their eternal destiny in hell. On the other hand, the one who continues to practice righteousness and keep himself holy gives evidence of genuine saving faith."⁵⁶³ So what is the right response to the prophecy of the book of Revelation in addition to obedience and worship as mentioned earlier. **First**, it is not to be sealed up, but proclaimed so that all may know what the future will be and that it is indeed imminent. **Second**, we must continue to practice righteousness and continue to strive for holiness. That is a proper response to reading the book of Revelation.

The Final Invitation of Revelation: (vv. 12-20)

In these verses the speaker once again changes. This time it is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is speaking. This section is a series of closing statements made by the Lord. "In these concluding verses, the Bible comes full circle. It opened with the promise of a coming savior, who would redeem His people from their sins. That promise, which came immediately after the Fall, is recorded in Genesis 3:15...Just as the Bible opens with the promise of Christ's first coming, so it ends with the promise of His second coming... The inspired canon of Scripture closes with an urgent invitation, pleading with sinners to come to Jesus Christ and receive the free gift of eternal life before it is forever too late."⁵⁶⁴

A Statement Concerning Christ's Coming (vs. 12).

This verse begins a section that rapidly moves to His final invitation in verse 17. The verses that precede verse 17 seem to offer a variety of incentives to motivate the reader to accept Christ's invitation in verse 17. Christ begins once again with the term *behold*, which is used to grab the attention of the reader or listener and emphasizes the importance of the following words. Christ here repeats the statement made in verse 7, "*I am coming quickly!*" Christ is making the point that His coming is imminent. Nothing else has to happen before He comes back. It expresses the same truth that Christ made in Mark 13:33-37: "*Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the [appointed] time is. [It is] like a man, away on a journey, [who] upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, [assigning] to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. Therefore, be on the alert-- for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cock crowing, or in the morning-- lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all, 'Be on the alert!'*"

Jesus goes on to make the statement that: *My reward [is] with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.* Jesus is instructing believers that their reward will be based upon their faithfulness in serving Him, while on this earth (cf. 1 Cor. 3:9-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; Matthew 25:14-30). "The knowledge that Jesus could return at any moment should not lead Christians to a life of idle waiting for His coming (cf. 2 Thess. 3:10-12). Rather, it should produce diligent, obedient, worshipful service to God, and urgent proclamation of the gospel to unbelievers."⁵⁶⁵ But this statement also drives those who are not believers to recognize that they too will be rewarded justly for their wicked works. After reading this book, they should recognize that their just reward is

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eternal damnation in the lake of fire. This statement offers incentive for accepting Christ as He offers an invitation in verse 17.

A Statement Concerning Christ's Person (vs. 13).

This is a title assigned to the Lord Jesus Christ in Revelation 1:8, and 21:6. Jesus is also referred to as the first and the last in Revelation 1:17; 2:8. Alpha (A, a) is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, while Omega (W, w) is the last letter of the Greek alphabet. This expression emphasizes Christ's eternity. Christ is eternal, which means that He is infinite in relation to time. He is without beginning or end. He is not bound by time, but is the cause of time. "He is the Alpha and Omega; there is nothing before or after Jesus Christ. He is the beginning and end; the one who created, controls, and will consummate all things. He is the first and the last; He was before creation in eternity past and will be present in eternity future—the author and finisher of all things (cf. Heb. 12:2)." ⁵⁶⁶

A statement Concerning Christ's People (vs. 14).

In this verse Christ gives the last of the seven beatitudes in the book (cf. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7). "This final blessing deals with the ultimate issues of life—access to the Tree of Life (22:2) and entrance to the Holy City (21:25). The blessed ones are those "who wash their robes in order to gain these supreme privileges... These described in this beatitude have repented and clothed themselves in the pure white linen that stands for the righteous deeds of the saints (cf. 19:8)." ⁵⁶⁷ "The phrase those who wash their robes graphically portrays the believer's participation in the death of Christ... Soiled clothes represent sinfulness in Isaiah 64:6 and Zechariah 3:3, whereas Psalm 51:7; Isaiah 1:18; and Titus 3:5 speak of the cleansing of sin that accompanies salvation. The agency through which that cleansing comes is the blood of Christ (cf. Rev. 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; Matt. 26:28; Acts 20:28; Rom. 3:24-25; 5:9; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:12, 14; 10:19; 13:12; 1 Pet. 1:2, 18-19; 1 John 1:7)... Heaven is exclusively for those who have been cleansed from their sins by faith in the blood of Christ and whose names have been *written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain* (13:8)." ⁵⁶⁸

A Statement Concerning Christ's Adversaries (vs. 15).

"Jesus continues His proclamation regarding eternal destiny by focusing on those who fail to qualify because they have not washed their robes... To be outside the Holy City means a final destiny in the lake of fire (20:15; 21:8)." ⁵⁶⁹ The list given by Christ here is similar to the other lists in Revelation, which refer to unbelievers (cf. 9:21; 21:8). "*The dogs* is a metaphor for the morally impure as it is throughout Scripture. They represent male prostitutes (Deut. 23:18), Gentiles (Matt. 15:26), and Judaizers (Phil. 3:2-3), among other things (cf. 2 Kings 8:13; Ps. 22:16; 20; Isa. 56:10; Matt. 7:6; Mark 7:27). In the ancient times dogs were scavengers and were objects of great contempt. IN this verse they are perhaps not just impure persons, but the impudently impure, those addicted to unnatural vices." ⁵⁷⁰ "*Sorcerers* (from *pharmakos*, the root of the English word "pharmacy") refers to those engaged in occult practices and the drug abuse that often accompanies those practices (cf. 9:21; 21:8; Gal. 5:20). Immoral persons (from *pornos*, the root of the English word "pornography") are those who engage in illicit sexual activities." ⁵⁷¹

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Murderers will also be excluded from eternal life and the Holy City (cf. 21:8). *Idolaters* are those who worship images and false Gods (including the Antichrist). *Everyone who loves and practices lying* is a reference to those who love falsehood and are caught up in habitual deception. "It is not all who have ever committed any of these sins who are excluded from heaven (c.f. 1 Cor. 6:11). Rather, it is those who love and habitually practice any such sin, stubbornly cling to it, and refuse Christ's invitation to salvation, who will be cast into the lake of fire."⁵⁷²

A Statement Concerning Christ's Person (vs. 16).

"Though angels communicated the Apocalypse to John (vs. 6; 1:1; 17:1, 7; 21:9), its source was Jesus. The expression I Jesus appears only here in the Bible. It establishes that this final invitation in Scripture is not a human invitation, but a divine call issued personally to sinners by the Lord Jesus Christ."⁵⁷³

Christ then provides His credentials. He calls Himself both the root and offspring of David. The term root means ancestor, while offspring means descendant. Jesus claims to be both the ancestor and descendant of David. "That phrase sums up the Biblical teaching on Christ's two natures; only the God-man can be both David's ancestor and descendant. In His deity, Christ is David's root (cf. Mark 12:35-37); in His humanity, He is David's descendant (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 132:11-12; Matt. 1:1; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8)."⁵⁷⁴ "The bright morning star is the brightest star announcing the arrival of the day. When Jesus comes, He will be the brightest star who will shatter the darkness of man's night and herald the dawn of God's glorious day."⁵⁷⁵

A Statement of Christ's Invitation (vs. 17).

There seems to be a three-fold invitation made here. The first phrase is a reference to the Holy Spirit and the Church as they look forward to the imminent return of Christ. We as believers are to pray for, hope for and watch for Christ's coming. The second is a reference to those who hear or read the Book or Revelation. Hearing, reading or studying the book of Revelation should motivate us to desire the coming of the Lord. The third phrase is a petition or invitation for the unsaved to receive Christ. It refers to those who are spiritually needy as the thirsty. "Thirst is a familiar biblical metaphor picturing the strong sense of spiritual need that is a prerequisite for repentance (Isa. 55:1; Matt. 5:6; John 7:37)."⁵⁷⁶ With out cost emphasizes that this is an unlimited offer of grace and salvation to all who desire to have their thirsty souls quenched."⁵⁷⁷ This is the final invitation to sinners in the Scripture to come to the Lord Jesus, and is urgently offered by Christ Himself.

A Statement Concerning Christ's Word (vv. 18-19).

In this passage Christ puts forth a solemn warning against anyone who would tamper with the words of this book. It is a two-fold warning against *anyone who adds to them* and against *anyone who takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy*. The result of adding to the book is the infliction of the plagues, which are written in the book of Revelation. The result of taking away from the book of Revelation is the removal of any possibility of having eternal life in the New Jerusalem.

Now the question arises, "Who does this warning apply to?" Is this a warning directed toward true believers in Christ? NO! Those who will be recipients of the plagues of this book and those who will not be allowed into the New Jerusalem are unbelievers. Therefore this is a warning against

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those who are critical of the Scriptures. "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. Though not stated in detail, the point of these two verses is that a child of God who reveres Him will recognize at once that this is the Word of God."⁵⁷⁸

Obviously this in a direct and narrow sense applies to the book of Revelation. But because of the consistent repetition of this command throughout the Scripture, there is implication that this applies to tampering with the whole of God's Word and serves as a fitting final warning against anyone who might do injustice to God's Word (cf. Deut. 4:12; 12:32; Prov. 30:5-6; Jer. 26:2). "Revelation and the rest of Scripture are true, and the redeemed will believe the Bible, guard the Bible, love the Bible and obey the Bible."⁵⁷⁹

A Statement Concerning Christ's Coming (vs. 20).

Jesus our Lord Himself testifies and affirms the words in this book of Revelation. Jesus closes His words by affirming the fact that *"Yes, I am coming quickly."* Jesus attests that His coming indeed is certain and it is imminent. This is an important statement as it is repeated and emphasized in this concluding chapter of Revelation (cf. vv. 7; 12; 20). John responds to Christ's comments by saying, *"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."* This is the right response for any believer as we should be *"looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus"* (Titus 2:13).

The Benediction of Revelation: (vs. 21)

"Christ began His message to the church with a prayer of grace (1:4) and closed it with the same: *"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen."* (v. 21). The Old Testament closes with a curse (Malachi 4:6). The New Testament closes, as it begins, with grace. The Book of Revelation does pronounce a curse on all who reject God's love and salvation provided through Christ, but it also sets forth the blessing of God on all who put their faith in Him for salvation."⁵⁸⁰ Let us all respond to this blessed message of Revelation as John did: *"Even so, Come Lord Jesus!"*