

Revelation 22 – Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Tonight we conclude an 8 year odyssey through the Bible, verse by verse.

In a few weeks, we'll be starting back over again.

By way of introduction to tonight's study we ought to do a brief recap of the last few chapters.

World events reach a dramatic and violent climax at the end of the 7 year-long Tribulation in what is known as the Battle of Armageddon.

This conflict pits the European-based forces of the antichrist against a massive force from the East, probably the Chinese.

They meet in the Holy Land where the antichrist takes the opportunity to attack the remnant of the Jews who are being divinely protected in the ancient Rock Fortress of Petra in modern Day Jordan.

This remnant of the Jewish nation has come to faith and cries out for their Messiah to save them.

In answer to their prayer, Jesus comes again in what we refer to as the Second Coming.

He brings Armageddon to a swift end, casts the antichrist and false prophet into the Lake of Fire, and sets up His earthly throne in Jerusalem.

The devil is bound and thrown into the abyss so that he can deceive people no longer.

The saints who have returned with Christ and are in their glorified bodies are divided up and sent out all over the earth to act as official administrators of Christ's earthly Kingdom.

Earth is liberated from the curse of sin and restored to a place of paradise, peace, and prosperity for a thousand years.

During this time, the population of earth will explode – and those born during the Millennium will be really untried in terms of their true loyalty to God.

So when the thousand years are at an end, the devil will be

let loose for a short time.

He goes forth to sow his seeds of deception and many follow in his bid for one last insurrection against Christ's throne.

The rebellion is immediately put down; the devil is cast into the Lake of Fire, and then it's time for the Final Judgment.

As the whole human race comes before God, if a man or woman's name is not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life, then they are judged by their works – which of course condemn them, and they are cast into the Lake of Fire as well.

At the conclusion of the Final Judgment, once all people have entered their eternal state, then this present universe is no longer needed and it dissolves.

God creates a *new universe*, described as a *new heaven and new earth* in ch. 21.

The *central feature* of the new universe is the *dwelling place* of the saints.

It's called "the holy city," "New Jerusalem," and a "Bride."

Take a look at 21:2 –

2Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Now, this may be a bit confusing because in ch. 19 we saw *the Church* as the Bride of Christ.

The reason why the New Jerusalem is given the same title as the Church is because it's the dwelling place of God's people.

As Warren Wiersbe says – "A city is not buildings; it's people."

In the new universe God creates as the home for His people, it will be *so much a home* that it will be a perfect reflection of who and what we are as the Redeemed.

You can tell a lot about a person from their house.

Our living space is an extension of our inner self.

In the same way, by looking at a city, you can tell a lot about a culture and the people who share it.

New Jerusalem will be built, not by us, but by God **FOR** us!

And He knows us *perfectly* – so the way He forms our individual dwelling places will be perfectly suited to who

and what we are.

Have you ever gone furniture shopping?

There's a nearly bewildering array of sofas, chairs, beds, bureaus, tables, and lamps.

Why so many – isn't a chair a chair? Yes & no.

What makes a chair a chair is that you can sit in it.

But the *style* appeals to different tastes, and those tastes are a reflection of personality, and every one of us has a unique personality.

That's why all of our houses are different, because *we're* different.

No doubt that uniqueness will find perfect expression in our new, eternal home.

God is not only the Master Creator, He's the Master Decorator and will appoint our dwelling place with that which is the absolute perfect reflection of who we are.

That's why it will be the place of perfect peace and safety.

Perfect rest – perfect stimulation – perfect existence – continuously!

And this is why it will be virtually synonymous with us who live there.

As John describes the foundations and walls of the New Jerusalem, he uses things that were the most precious gems and metals on earth.

The idea is that the glory and beauty of the holy city beggars the imagination.

John goes on and continues to describe the New Jerusalem in ch. 22 -

CHAPTER 22

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. 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. 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.

These verses hearken back to the very beginning of the Bible.

There's an unmistakable reference here to the Garden of Eden which bore the tree of life and was crossed by rivers. Once again we see fruit and are told that there's no curse. And so we come full-circle. All that was lost in the Fall has now been recaptured by the victory of Christ and our faith in Him – it's all been restored – and then some!

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.

As we've previously noted, water was the symbol of life in the ancient world.

A river was like a vein of life. It meant refreshment and sustenance.

It provided the water that was needed for crops and watering flocks and herds.

Unfortunately, rivers also became the dumping ground for refuse and could be polluted by heavy rains that would wash down the hillsides and sweep whatever garbage had collected in gullies and wadis.

This happens around here every winter;

All up and down the Southern CA coast we get warnings about going out into the ocean after a big rain because the run off has cleaned out the storm channels of the trash people have thrown in them and it washes out into the oceans and pollutes the water.

The same thing happened on the ancient world – as rivers flowed further downstream and throw more and more towns, they grew increasingly more polluted.

By the time the Tiber River exited the City of Rome, it was choked with sewage.

But John sees a river of absolute purity.

Its water is crystal clear and brings refreshment and renewal to all who drink it.

Its origin is the throne of God and the Lamb.

Note that designation for the throne; it's one throne but applied to two persons –

God, meaning the Father, and the Lamb, meaning the Son.
This throne isn't a single seat, it's more like a couch and both the
Father & the Son occupy it.

**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 image John paints here is difficult to sort out.

But it's cleared up a bit by taking the first phrase of v. 2 and
moving it to the end of the v. 1.

**. . . proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb
in the middle of its street.**

In the Greek text, there was no punctuation so it's not always easy
sorting out the phrases and this is one of those cases.

But this makes for a more clear understanding.

In the ancient world, kings would often layout city plans with
the main thoroughfare leading from the main gate to the
palace and their throne room.

What John sees is the river flowing from God's throne, down
the center of the main avenue of the New Jerusalem.

Along the banks of the river, and so in the center of the street, was
planted the Tree of Life.

This isn't a singular tree – it's a *kind* of tree; a whole grove of
them are found along the sides of the river.

The last time we saw the tree of life was in the Garden of Eden.

Only two trees are given specific names in Genesis 2:9; the tree
of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Of course, the later was the forbidden tree.

It's interesting that when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden
fruit God banished them from the Garden saying, “Lest he
put out his hand and take and eat of the tree of life and eat,
and live forever.” [Gen. 3:22]

In Gen. 3:24 we read -

**So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at
the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming
sword which turned every way, to guard the way to**

the tree of life.

You see, it was God's *desire* that man live forever, but not in the state of sin and spiritual separation from God.

God wanted man to have access to the Tree of Life but only under the *right circumstances*, when sin had finally been done away with and the curse had been lifted through the redeeming work of the Son.

God transplanted the tree of life to the New Jerusalem where we will have access to a whole grove of them.

They are well watered as they stand along the bank of the river. And gaining access to them will be a piece of cake because they are along the edge of the main thoroughfare of the holy city.

The fruit of the tree of life has 12 flavors and bears a new crop every month instead of just one harvest time a year.

Even the leaves of the tree are useful in bringing healing for the nations.

As we mentioned last week – there aren't going to be different geopolitical nations in the New Jerusalem.

This refers to ethnic groups. The healing of the nations means the end of racism.

There will be not a shred or trace of bigotry, prejudice and enmity between the residents of the Holy City.

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.

The curse was part of the old earth which has passed away.

In the new universe, there will be *no evidence* of the curse – and that bears directly on the rest of this verse . . .

. . . but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.

In the original Garden of Eden, God and man *walked* together. That's where man was *closest* to God – but their time together wasn't *continuous*.

When man fell, the communion was broken even more significantly; man was *banished* from the Garden and his regular face to face fellowship with God was brought to an end.

In the New Jerusalem, with no more curse, the fellowship between God and His people will be fully realized in a state of continual communion.

Secondly, there will be no evidence of the curse in terms of our service.

. . . and His servants shall serve Him.

When God created Adam and Eve He told them their duty was to tend and keep the Garden.

The words convey the idea of diligent stewardship of the physical creation.

Because of the nature of plant growth this probably meant they had to prune and direct the growth of the vines and trees.

Their labor was a thing of joy as they lived in perfect harmony with the creation.

But after the Fall and the descent of the curse onto creation, their existence turned into a rough life of largely unfruitful labor as they had to deal with thorns and weeds and constant disease, death, and decay.

We see the result of the curse in *our* daily lives; it's called the *Law of Entropy*.

This is the tendency of any closed system to move from a state of *order* to *disorder*.

In order to *maintain* order, there's the need for a constant input of *new energy*.

And so we have to do the yard every week or two.

We have to pull weeds, water it, rake the dead leaves, fertilize, prune, sweep and then weed some more.

Inside the house we have to dust, vacuum, repair, clean windows, and take out the trash.

In other words, just to maintain our *daily living space* we have to put in a lot of ultimately inefficient work.

On top of that we have our jobs, our careers, which demand a huge investment of our efforts – and not always to what seems like good effect.

One of the great joys of eternity will be *totally efficient labor*.

Our service will be of God Himself and with no curse to hinder or limit it, our work will produce dramatic results.

Don't get the idea that eternity will be unending indolence. Human beings were created by God to be productive – and that potentiality will be realized and maximized in the New Jerusalem.

WHAT we'll be doing as we serve God isn't stated.

That's Volume II - But trust me, whatever it is, it will be a blast!

Now, there are a couple things we ought to take a closer look at here.

First – John gives a time reference in v. 2 when he says the tree of life bears fruit *each month*.

Does this mean time will be measured in the new universe?

It would seem so, but we can be sure the downward lull of time that we experience now will be lifted as part and parcel of the curse being lifted.

Second – will we eat in heaven? I certainly hope so!

Actually, the best answer is that we *can* eat, but probably won't *have* to.

Physical food is for the physical body.

The resurrection body won't *need* physical food – although we do read that after the Resurrection Jesus did eat some food (Luke 24:41-43, John 21:12-14).

He probably did this to convey to the stunned disciple that He *wasn't a ghost*.

As we saw in Rev. 19:9 there's going to be a marriage supper for Christ and His bride.

But eating is probably more a capacity we will have to enjoy the blessings of God than it is a necessity to sustain life.

And it will be one more measure of the way God has lifted the curse.

Even though man fell by what he ate, God *redeems* the act of eating and turns it into one more way to enjoy Him.

⁴They shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads. ⁵There 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.

“They shall see His face.”

These 5 words capture the core of the chief desire of everyone who is

truly born again.

You see, to commune and fellowship with God is the *reason* for our existence; it's what we were created FOR!

So those who have been saved by Christ have this singular motivation renewed in them.

It aches within the breast of each and every one of God's people. It's like a persistent homesickness, a longing for something nothing in this world satisfies.

It's an itch that won't be scratched, a yearning that finds no rest in the way-stations of this world.

U2 expressed it well in their hit – *I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For*.

They caught a lot of flack from some Christians for that song because the guys in the band who wrote it are supposed to be Christians and it seemed to express a certain discontent with the faith.

The critics missed the point – the song is an expression of our hearts desire to put off all that stands in the way of seeing God face to face!

We won't find what we're looking for till we stand before God and see His face with unveiled eyes.

Even Moses was denied that vision – because it would have killed him.

Think of it – Moses was blessed of God more than any other with intense revelations of God's truth and glory.

And the more he got, the more he wanted!

One day God decided to give Moses a boon and asked him what he wanted – God would do it. [Exo. 33]

Moses said, "Show me Your glory!"

What he meant was to see the fullness of God's glory in the radiance of His countenance.

But God told Moses no one could see His face and live; it would simply be too much glory for mortal man to bear.

So God placed Moses in a cleft in the side of the mount and put His hand over the opening so Moses couldn't peek.

Then He passed by and once passed removed His hand so that Moses could catch just God's back.

That was all the glory Moses could endure and survive.

This is the primary reason why we must put off these mortal bodies – because they aren't capable of entering in to the fullness of what we were created for – to see God's face! These bodies are like the caterpillar that awaits it's metamorphosis so it can climb out of the rotting decay of this dying garden to fly through the air of a new dawn.

In 1 John 3:2, John says –

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Our eternal bodies will be like the Lord's glorified body. Paul says it this way in 1 Cor. 13:12

No we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

Not only will we have new bodies capable of enduring beholding the glory of God, but we'll have intellects capable of grasping the reality and the significance of the glory of God.

Paul says, "Then I shall know just as I also am known."

4 - His name *shall be* on their foreheads.

This speaks of identity – we will be fully identified with God.

5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light.

While we see something of a heavenly marking of time in v. 2, there is no dark and light cycle of the days as we know now.

Darkness is banished from the holy city.

The light of the glory of God irradiates the entire place.

5 - And they shall reign forever and ever.

The state or occupation of those who inhabit the New Jerusalem is that of *royalty*.

Don't think of the service of the saints we read about in v. 3 as *servile*.

It is royal service.

In Rev. 1:6, as John is writing his introduction to the book he says that Jesus has made us kings and priests to God.

Mankind's lost dominion, reclaimed by Christ on the Cross, has now been fully restored to redeemed mankind.

As John moves now to wrap up the book, several different people speak and it's not always easy sorting out who's doing the talking.

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.

A solemn word of testimony and fidelity are now placed upon the words of this prophecy.

And once again we encounter that phrase that sparks the whole preterist position.

. . . the things which must shortly take place.

This same phrase was used in the introduction in ch. 1 where the *preterists* insist it has to mean that the all of the book of Revelation up to the middle of ch. 19 had to occur at a time *close* to the time of John.

They then locate the fulfillment of *almost all* of the book of Revelation in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by the armies of Rome.

I find it fascinating that they demand the *very most strict reading and literalistic interpretation of this one phrase* – "the things which must shortly take place" and then spiritualize away the over 13 chapters!

Think of some of the things we've examined over the last few months in Revelation that are foretold will take place during the Tribulation and ponder how they could possibly have been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

- A third of the sea became blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed 8:8-9
- A third of freshwater became poisonous 8:11
- All seas creatures died 16:3
- A third of light is diminished 8:12

- The sun scorches men with great heat 16:8
- The kingdom of the antichrist is plunged into darkness 16:10
- A fourth of mankind is killed 6:8
- A third of mankind was killed 9:15,18
- The career of the Antichrist & False Prophet 13
- The mark of the beast 13:16-17

By a too-narrow *literalistic* interpretation of this one phrase, they are then forced to come up with interpretations of the rest of the Book of Revelation that make it a meaningless grab-bag.

PLUS – they run into a huge wall because the same phrase is found here at the END of the book, meaning they would have to take EVERYTHING *up to this point* as occurring “shortly,” or within the generation of John’s writing.

Including the Second coming and the advent & conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom, in which Satan is shut up, has been released, judged, sent to hell, the Final Judgement has taken place, and we are now in the New Jerusalem!

Actually – that is indeed the position of what are known as “*consistent*” or “*full preterists*.”

There are only a handful of them. The more popular position is “*partial preterism*” which believes everything up to the middle of ch. 19 and the Second Coming was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Partial preterists like Gary DeMar & RC Sproul believe that all of Bible prophecy has been fulfilled except the Second Coming and the Final Judgment.

They see the Tribulation, as fulfilled in the events of 70 AD and the Millennium as referring to the time of the Triumphant church, which supposedly we’re somehow living in right now!

Consistent Preterists point out the inconsistencies of Partial Preterists by pointing out that if they are going to allow the time passages of ch. 1 to determine their interpretation of the book up through half of ch. 19, then they have to take the same phrase in c. 22 as the book

end and see it as applying all the way to the end of ch. 21
– which means THIS is the New Jerusalem!

What's the answer to all this?

Simple – the word “shortly” doesn't have to mean what the preterist pour into it, that all the things John saw had to occur in a generation of the time he wrote.

It's δί ὀλίγον (en taki), which has the primary meaning of quickly, speedily.

We get the word *tachometer* from this word – a gauge for seeing how fast an engine is running.

Tachycardia is a racing heart, where one beat comes hard on the heels of another.

And that is the way the word is used here.

John is saying that the things he's seen, once they begin, will come in rapid succession.

He means to be understood as referring to a definite period of time in the last days when history will be wrapped up in short order.

This dispenses with the historical and the idealistic views of Revelation which see the visions of Revelation as occurring over long periods of time and portraying the general battle of good against evil.

I realize this has gotten a little technical, but it's important we cover it because preterism is a fast growing school and you need to know how to refute it.

Now Jesus speaks –

7 Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

In the same way that these things will take place *quickly*, Jesus's coming is not going to be some epic spanning slow immersion into the affairs and institutions of man as the Church incrementally and progressively takes over the many seats of power on earth.

When He comes, it will be like lightening!

So – those who *interpret* the words of the Book of Revelation as speaking of the future will be blessed because they will realize

that Lord Jesus could return for the Church at any moment!
Believing that – they will be motivated to living like that, ready
for His return.

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*. [or literally – “See! Not! Just as in 19:10] For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

John did the same thing in ch. 19:10.

He was so overcome by the visions he was having that he fell down and started worshipping at the feet of the messenger who stood before him.

And both times the messengers tell him to abstain – God alone is to be worshipped.

The word for *angel* here literally means messenger – and by how the messenger identifies himself, it’s better to understand this not as one of the heavenly angels but was one of the saints.

So twice now John has been moved to fall at the feet of glorified saints.

This may give us a clue as to the coming glory of the people of God; it’s so awesome that if one of us were to see it now we’d be tempted to worship!

Both messengers show an immediate negative reaction to John’s act.

They utterly refuse worship!

This is in contrast with Jesus, who receives the worship of angels in Hebrews 1:6 and of men in Matthew 8:2; 14:33; John 9:38.

This is a powerful evidence for the deity of Christ.

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

When we were in chs. 2 & 3 we saw that the 7 letters to the 7 churches of Asia Minor, in the precise order they’re given, parallel the outline of Church History with amazing clarity.

As John received the visions that came to comprise the Book of

Revelation in the 90's, the Church was just then entering into the Ephesian phase of church history.

So truly, the things of the Book of Revelation were about to commence.

For that reason, this book was not to be sealed and put away.

Unlike Daniel's prophecy which was to be shut and left sealed until the time of the end when knowledge would increase and people would be able to interpret it with clearer understanding. [Daniel 8:26; 12:4, 9-10]

It's interesting that as we look at the Book of Daniel today, in light of history, and in light of the further prophecies of the NT regarding the Tribulation and the Second Coming, Daniel is *no longer* a sealed book.

In fact, the Book of Revelation helps us to unseal it.

So John is told NOT to seal off the book – it is to be open and studied because it's tale has already started to be told in the things of chs. 2 & 3 – the Church age.

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."

The idea behind these words of the messenger is that since Jesus will come *so suddenly*, there won't be time to clean up your act.

There'll be no time for last minute repentance.

When the trumpet blows and the Church rockets to heaven – it take place in the twinkling of an eye.

No one will be able to mumble a quick prayer and catch the last plane out!

So the time to repent is when? NOW!

12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."

This of course is Jesus speaking again.

The judgment He refers to here is a judgment of rewards – "My reward is with me."

And it's based on works – in this case, works done by faith in Him.

Paul tells us about this in 1 Cor. 3:9-15 2 Cor. 5:10

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.*”

Alpha & Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet.

Jesus is saying He's the inception and the culmination.

This term is applied directly to God in 1:8 & 21:6.

Here Jesus says it of Himself.

To say that Jesus never claimed to be God is simply to say you don't know the Bible!

In Isaiah 41:4 we read – “I, the Lord (Yahweh), am the first; and with the last I am He.”

Here Jesus takes that title.

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.*”

Jesus is saying that He is the purpose and the reason of all that is.

I like what Charles Spurgeon wrote in comment on this passage -

“Preach orthodoxy, or any form of doxy; if you have left out Christ, there is no manna from heaven, no water from the rock, no refuge from the storm, no healing for the sick, no life for the dead. If you leave out Christ, you have left the sun out of the day, and the moon out of the night, you have left the waters out of the sea, and the foods out of the river, you have left the harvest out of the year, the soul out of the body, you have left joy out of heaven, yea, you have robbed all of its all. There is no gospel worth thinking of, much less worth proclaiming in Jehovah's name, if Jesus be forgotten.”

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.

Who's Bible in v. 14 reads something like, “Blessed *are* those who washed their robes?”

This difference is due to a few texts which have an alternate spelling for one word –

HOIPOIOUNTESTASENTOLAS (do His commandments)
becomes

HOIPLUNONTESTASSTOLAS (*washed their robes*)

The King James reading is preferred here for numerous textual reasons.

Obedying the commandments does not earn us eternal life, but obedience is evidence that we have been granted eternal life.

James makes this crystal clear in the first chapter of his epistle when he deals with the faulty idea about faith that had risen in his time.

Some maintained the idea that a bare profession of faith was enough to merit salvation.

While we are indeed justified by faith alone, James said we are not justified by a faith *that is* alone.

Saving faith, the kind that truly believes in Christ, will result on a changed lifestyle that rejects sin and obeys God.

In other words, *faith* justifies the *man*, but *works* justify the *faith* of the man who is justified.

That's what James means when he says that faith without works is dead.

As Jesus has been speaking of the rewards He will give to the faithful, He speaks a blessing on those who obey God; they will be the ones who enjoy the bounty of heaven.

The rest are locked out – eternally.

Look at the list – v. 15

But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

By “outside” we might get the idea that outside the walls of the New Jerusalem is the beggar’s village - but that is not at all the case.

This simply means these kinds of people will NOT BE IN HEAVEN.

Where will they be? The lake of Fire – hell!

Also, what does Jesus mean by “dogs.” Does this mean there’s no

“doggie heaven?”^[1]

By “dogs”, Jesus is referring to people who are driven by their mere animal urges and desires, people who in terms of their morality, live like animals.

They're driven by only one thing – Me! Me! Me!
That last phrase is remarkable in what it reveals; “And whoever loves and practices a lie.”

Listen – those who practice deceit, habitual liars, people who regularly play fast and loose with the truth, those given to exaggeration and boasting that spins yarns about great accomplishments – all these are indicative of someone who is lining up under whose fatherhood – the Father of Truth or the Father of Lies?

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.”

Jesus is putting his official stamp of approval on this book.

Its contents have come in the form of visions, direct messages from heavenly angels, glorified saints, and even Jesus Himself. Jesus here gives the *audience* the book is directed to – “the churches.”

This book is not some esoteric and secretive affair, knowable only by an elite.

It's for all believers.

Also – take careful note of the fact that this is the first time we've encountered the word “*church*” since the letters to the 7 churches in chs. 2 & 3!

That's right – not once, from ch. 6 which begins the Tribulation right up through the end and final judgment do we see the church.

Why – Because it was raptured *BEFORE* the Tribulation began!

Jesus then attaches more majestic titles to Himself.

He is the “Root and offspring of David.”

One of the premier Messianic titles from Isaiah 11:1 was the rod of Jesse and the Branch who would come forth from David's roots.

This was a promise of the restoration of David's throne over the nation.

When Jesus takes the title the Offspring of David, He is calling Himself the Branch, the Rod foretold by Isaiah.

But he is more than that – he is not only the descendant of David, He is also the origin of David – the root. Jesus is both the Creator God and the Son of Man. Jesus challenged the Pharisees one day with a riddle. They had been pestering Him with a bunch of what they considered insoluble dilemmas, all of which Jesus dispatched without breaking a sweat. So to silence them he decided to pose one to them - Matthew 22.

41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, **42** saying, **“What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?”** They said to Him, **“The Son of David.”** **43** He said to them, **“How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying:**

44 *“The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool”?* **45** *If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?”* **46** And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

Finally – Jesus is the “Bright and Morning Star.”

This is another Messianic title from Numbers 24:17.

The planet Venus is the Morning star.

At certain times it sits in the sky as a bright star that fires up as the new day prepares to dawn.

The idea as a title for Jesus is that not only is he the original Creator, He is the creator and Lord of a New day = The New Day when the New universe arises.

Now we have John speaking as he moves to wrap up the book with some final comments.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”

This is simply an invitation to Jesus to return.

17 - And let him who hears say, “Come!”

John urges his readers to join in and invite Jesus back.

After all, it's the national plea of the saved Jewish remnant calling

for their Messiah that will see Him come back.
Then John changes the appeal and makes it an invitation to those who read this book but who are lost.

17 - And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

This is going to be the focus of my message Sunday – so I’ll leave further comment till then.

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.

These things apply *specifically* to the Book of Revelation.

As Jesus has stamped the book with an official seal of inspiration and authority in v. 16, John now adds his own comment that to add to or subtract from these words is to incur the wrath of God.

There’s no clearer way of identifying this book as sacred scripture. Indeed – what other book of the Bible makes such a vehement claim for inspiration as this?

Some commentators take note of the fact that the placement of the Book of Revelation at the end of the Bible may be designed by God as a way of showing secondary inspiration for all the canon of scriptures, so that John’s words in vs. 18 & 19 then apply to the entire Bible.

It is certainly true that since scripture is inspired it ought not be tinkered with in terms of adding to or subtracting from it.

20 He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

For the 3rd time now Jesus says, “I am coming quickly!”

There is a sense of urgency to be grasped here.

Jesus could come at any moment.

As David Guzik says it history is not moving forward *toward*

some great precipice called the Last Days.

There is a sense in which history is moving parallel to the edge of the precipice and we could tip over at any moment with the Rapture of the church.

So as Jesus gives His final urge to readiness, John says, “Bring it on!”
“Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

This is an Aramaic expression well known in the early church
“*Maranatha!*”

Literally – “Come Lord!”

We find this word written in some of the earliest manuscripts and Christian tombs.

It’s a bold and clear evidence of the early church’s steadfast conviction in the deity of Christ and a profound faith and expectation in his Return!

I like Mounce’s comment - “At the very close of the book is the confession that the answers to the problems of life do not lie in man’s ability to create a better world but in the return of the One whose sovereign power controls the course of human affairs.”

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Oh friends, take careful note of this – the Bible ends with GRACE!

The more you read and study the Bible, the more you come to realize that it’s a book that reveals a God of Grace who longs to shower favor on people if they will only look to Him!

Malachi 4:6, the last verse of the Old Testament bears a curse:

Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

But the last verse of the NT is a word of grace.

Grace is possible because Jesus bore the curse on the Cross.

The stroke of God fell on Jesus – and now the floodgates of grace stand ready to be turned loose on those who will come in simple faith in Him.

[\[1\]](#) Thanks to David Guzik for this one!