

INTRODUCTION:

Part-11 provided a relatively detailed view of the New Jerusalem, which will come down from heaven and replace the original Jerusalem. The original Jerusalem is the center of the Jewish faith located in Israel but subject to the corruption and limitations of this world. The New Jerusalem has been described as a magnificent city 1,500 miles square and high made of gold and precious jewels. It will be the place where God and His people reside together forever. God and the Lamb will provide light for the city which will know no night but only day. Its gates will be always open and ready to receive those whose names are written in the book of life. Nothing unclean or impure will ever enter it. Within it are the tree of life and the water of life, providing food, drink and healing for the nations.

Part-12 will be the final part and provide the closing message of Revelation. It will comprise chapter 22, verses 6 through 21. It is bracketed with Jesus' reminder that He is "coming quickly," which is also its central theme. It also contains warnings to anyone who would add or take away from His message. It is the closing word and final revelation of Jesus Christ found in the Bible.

Revelation 22:6, states: ***"And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and 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."*** This is the fourth time in Revelation we have heard the words "faithful and true." In 3:1, the words coming from the Lord are preceded with "I am." In 19:11, we are told the rider of the white horse "is called" faithful and true. In 21:5, when we were told God will create "all things new," we are told "these words are" faithful and true. Now in the closing of the book, we are being assured one final time that everything that has been written is "faithful and true." The same God, who sent His prophets to speak His words throughout history, has now sent His angel to show His bond-servants what "must shortly take place." Notice that the message is not to a singular "bond-servant" but to the plural "bond-servants." The message is not simply for the apostle John, but for all the servants of God. Regarding the phrase "must shortly take place," as we discussed in the beginning of the book, the term does not necessarily mean will take place in the near future, but when it takes place it "will happen quickly" so we better be prepared.

Revelation 22:7, states: ***“And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”*** This verse is attributed to Christ Himself, interrupting the words of His angel to express the urgency of His message. This is the first of three times Christ will declare to us in this final section of Revelation that He is “coming quickly.” In verse 1:3, John informed us that the “time is near” for Christ’s return. In the letter to the church at Pergamun, Christ warns: ***“Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth”*** (2:16). In the letter to the church at Philadelphia, Christ provided assurance to those who are holding on to their faith, saying, ***“I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown”*** (3:11). The entire book of Revelation is intended to both assure the faithful that Christ will “come quickly” to save them, and to warn the wicked to repent and change their ways because He is “coming quickly.”

Revelation 22:8-9, states: ***“And I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he said to me, “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; worship God.””*** Here, John reminds us of his own response in 19:10, when he beheld the images and message of Jesus’ revelation. John fell down at the feet of the angel that showed him the visions, but was corrected by the angel. The angel told him not to worship him because he was a fellow servant of God, and to worship God alone. It is important to note that the angel, the apostle John, the prophets who have shared God’s word, and all “those who heed the words of this book” will be considered brethren. None of us should see ourselves as greater or less another because we all serve the same Lord, and we should worship and honor the Lord alone.

Revelation 22:10, states: ***“And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.””*** As we were told in the opening verses of the book of Revelation (1:3) we are now told again, ***“the time is near.”*** The word translated as “near” does not necessarily mean within a short time from the present, but that these events could happen at any time so we need to be ready. This interpretation is consistent with Jesus’ words in Matthew 24:42, where He states: ***“Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.”*** We must live our lives

heeding the warning that the future events depicted in Revelation could be very near. And Jesus doesn't want us to keep this message to ourselves but to share it. Daniel was told to ***“conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time”*** (Daniel 12:4), but Jesus is saying that the “end of time” has arrived. Therefore He declares: ***“Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book.”*** Sadly, the book of Revelation is today seldom preached, poorly understood, and its message widely debated. Jesus says it is time for His Revelation to be both “heard” and “heeded.”

Revelation 22:11, states: ***“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.”*** Many times throughout the book of Revelation we have heard that some will refuse to repent. We are told they will continue in their evil ways, blaming God for the consequences they have brought upon themselves. In 2:21, to the “woman Jezebel” who lead people astray in the church at Thyatira, Jesus said, ***“I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality.”*** Upon the sounding of the sixth trumpet and after three plagues of fire, smoke and brimstone had killed a third of mankind, we were told that ***“the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts”*** (9:20-21). Even when the final bowls of wrath were poured out, the wicked refused to repent and continued to curse God. Revelation 16:9 and 11 say, respectively, ***“And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent, so as to give Him glory,”*** and ***“they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.”*** What Jesus is trying to help us understand is that many of the wicked will never repent. In their pride and stubborn foolishness they will remain defiant against God to the very end. This does not mean we should not offer the good news of the gospel and attempt to lead people into repentance; it just means that some will never change. On the other hand, those who practice righteousness and holiness are encouraged to continue to do so. God will help those who struggle to keep the faith.

Some see this verse in another way. They see Jesus telling us that a time will come when it will be too late for repentance. We all have a bad habit of putting off to tomorrow what we can do today. Many put off doing the right thing while they continue to do the wrong, assuming they will have time later to get right with God. Perhaps Jesus is warning us to not delay in our repentance, and start living right before it's too late.

Revelation 22:12, states: ***“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”*** This is the second time in the closing verses of Revelation that Jesus has reminded us the He is ***“coming quickly.”*** As in 22:7 above and 22:20 to follow, the three-fold emphasis cries out as both warning to those who haven't repented, and as an assurance to those who are repentant but continue to be persecuted and suffer for their faith.

Regarding the “reward” that Jesus will bring with Him, while Scripture testifies that in this life our reward will be children (Psalm 127:3), and riches and honor (Proverbs 10:4), upon Christ's return our reward will be salvation and eternal life. Christ was lifted up from death and exalted because of His dedication to His Father and willingness to sacrifice Himself for the sake of us all. He received the inheritance of His Father, the Lord God almighty. Our reward is closely tied to this example. When we remain obedient to the Lord's teachings, loving our neighbors as ourselves, and being willing to live our lives as a living sacrifice for others out of love for Christ, then we too will inherit divine salvation. In the story of the divine judgment found in Matthew 25:31-46, in which the righteous (sheep) are separated from the wicked (goats) based on their willingness to help others, Jesus says: ***“Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.”*** Therefore, what we do to help those in need we do for Christ. Paul states in Colossians 3:23-24: ***“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.”*** Paul is saying we should not work to make people happy with us, or to impress them with our good works, but to serve and honor our Lord. Jesus makes this clear in Matthew 6:1, saying, ***“Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.”*** Our reward is tied to what we do for God and for others out of love for

God, and not what we do for ourselves or our own self-glorification. Actually, even when we make sacrifices and suffer persecution for the sake of our faith in Christ, we will gain reward because we are following Christ's example. In Matthew 5:11-12, Jesus declares to us, saying, ***"Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*** If we are to receive the reward that Christ brings with His return, then let us be about His business, making disciples and serving our neighbor to His glory.

Revelation 22:13, states: ***"I am the Alpha, and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."*** This is the third time in Revelation that we have heard God declare that He is the ***"Alpha and Omega."*** The previous occurrences were 1:8 and 21:6. The words apparently come from Christ, but there is no distinction now between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit for they are One with one another. This verse is a declaration that God is eternal, and that He has been present from our creation through to our judgment and reward. He was there at our beginning and now we can be confident that He will be there for us in the end. These words are an assurance to those who place their faith in the Lord. They are a terror for the wicked that reject and despise Him.

Revelation 22:14, states: ***"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city."*** Immediately our thoughts should go back to the "great multitude" in heaven "standing before the throne and before the Lamb," and "clothed in white robes" (7:9). The angel of the Lord told John: ***"These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"*** (7:14). When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and live our lives according to His commands, then our sins are washed away through His blood sacrifice, and we are allowed to enter the place He has prepared for us. That place is the New Jerusalem. There, we will be allowed to partake of the tree of life and live with the Lord forever and ever in paradise.

Revelation 22:15, states: ***"Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying."*** This verse may seem confusing because at this point in the book of Revelation the judgment has come and all whose names were not written in the book of

life have been cast into the lake of fire which is the second death. The reality is that the moment we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior and begin to follow Him down the path that leads to salvation, the New Jerusalem becomes destined as our permanent home. We are like those who have come before us who believed in the promises of God, ***“having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth”*** (Hebrews 11:13). But for those who refuse to repent and accept the gift of salvation, continuing to love evil and put themselves first rather than putting God first in their lives, they are destined to be excluded from salvation and the place God has prepared for the faithful. These closing words in Revelation are a warning to those who have not repented, and an assurance to those who have.

Ultimately, the wicked will be excluded so that the righteous may live in peace.

Revelation 22:16, states: ***“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star.”*** Jesus now clearly affirms that the message of Revelation comes directly from Him and is intended for the churches. As we have previously discussed, this means His message is for the Church. Jesus claims to be “the offspring of David,” which was proclaimed by one of the twenty-four elders in 5:5. Indeed, Jesus as the Messiah is a descendant of King David, but He existed before David and is the One David called Lord. This historic reference to David is matched with His identification as the “bright morning star.” In Revelation 2:28, those in the church at Thyatira who would “hold fast,” “overcome,” and “keep My [Christ’s] deeds until the end,” were told they would receive the “morning star.” Peter also spoke of the “morning star” arising in the hearts of faithful believers, saying, ***“And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts”*** (2 Peter 1:19). Christ is declaring that He is both our “past” and our “future.”

Revelation 22:17, states: ***“And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.”*** Here is the Christian invitation to “come” to Christ and “receive” life. First the invitation is extended through the Holy Spirit and the Church, where the Spirit of God resides and bears witness that Jesus is Lord. Remember

from Revelation 1:20, that we were told that the **“seven lampstands are the seven churches,”** and that the **“seven lamps burning before the throne of God” are the “seven Spirits of God”** (4:5). The light of Christ shines in the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit. The invitation continues through those who hear and heed the word of God, for if we are one mind with Christ, we also will extend the invitation to others, saying, “Come.” And finally, we hear a call to all who are thirsty for the only One who can quench our thirst, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has already paid the price for our salvation and offers life to anyone who is willing to accept His precious gift. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus says, **“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give your rest.”** In John 7:37, Jesus declares, **“If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.”** Jesus desires for all to come to Him in repentance and receive the life that only He can provide. A life that will last forever.

Revelation 22:18-19, states: **“I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book; if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.”** Here is the warning and the reason so few pastors preach or teach the book of Revelation. To distort the meaning of the book by “adding” something it doesn’t say, or by “subtracting” something that you disagree with, will result in one receiving both the curse of the plagues it describes, and the loss of eternal life. Using Scripture for one’s own personal gain or out of context to support one’s own personal viewpoint will have tragic consequences. We must be careful to allow Scripture to speak to us as God intends without adding or subtracting from its meaning. This applies not only to the book of Revelation but to all Scripture contained in the Bible.

Revelation 22:20-21, states: **“He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.”** For the third and final time in the closing verses of Revelation Jesus declares He is “coming quickly.” Another way of looking at verse 20 is that he who witnesses what is testified to in Revelation will be compelled to tell others that the Lord is coming quickly. In either case the intent is to share the news that Christ is returning, and that everyone should be prepared for His return. The final verse and words in the book extend a blessing, saying,

“The grace of the Lord Jesus” be with those who hear and read the prophecies of the book. The final word is *“Amen,”* the word we use to close a prayer, and to affirm belief in what has been said and shared. Therefore, let us raise a resounding *“Amen!”*

Summary:

The final verses of the book of Revelation are intended to affirm the truth contained within the entire book. This is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the uncovering of what is to come. It is a warning to those who are not right with God, and it provides assurance and comfort to those who walk by faith in spite of persecution and tribulation. While the message of Revelation may seem complex and mysterious, it is actually very simple: Christ will return and we better be ready when He does. The letters to the churches provide insight into the many ways we error and what we can do to correct our errors. The insights regarding how Satan operates provide us new understanding and will help us to recognize and stay clear of His deceptions and traps. And clearly, these visions of the end make it clear that God will keep His word and there will be consequences regarding how we live our lives, and who we follow as our Lord. Let us all prepare ourselves and help others to prepare for the Lord’s return. And let us say, *“Come, Lord Jesus,”* knowing we are ready and we have done all we can to help others be ready.

(End of Part-12)