

Chapter 10

The Conclusion

(Rev. 22:6 - 21)

22:6 *The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”*

The book of Revelation begins with the words: “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him *to show his servants what must soon take place*. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John” (Rev. 1:1). It is amazing and, perhaps, highly significant that these very same words are echoed in the conclusion of the book.

The angel who had shown John the New Jerusalem says: “These words are trustworthy and true.” There is no fiction or falsehood in them. The angel is speaking directly for God. Just as God is trustworthy and true, so His words likewise are trustworthy and true; and thus they constitute a sure and solid foundation for a Christian’s faith and hope.

The Lord is called “the God of the spirits of the prophets” because He is the One who guides the spirits of the prophets. This is a reference to the new spirit, or the new spiritual life, which God the Holy Ghost created within the prophets at the time of their conversion and which then motivated the prophets to be willing messengers of God. Specifically, God used the spirit of the prophet when He desired to communicate prophecy to His people. This was accomplished by the divine act of revelation to the prophet’s spirit. The prophet then spoke these words of prophecy to the people and, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, also put these words of the Lord into written form.

God “sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.” The context makes it very clear that the word “soon” refers to the entire New Testament era. Accordingly, we have here positive proof that the book of Revelation is a divinely inspired book. Only God knows what will take place in the future. Without divine revelation, neither John nor any human being could have known in that first century what lay in store for the Christian Church between that time and the day of Judgment. The angel, by divine commission, showed these impending things to John; and John, in turn, served as the Lord’s messenger and, by divine inspiration, recorded in this book what had been revealed to him in a series of visions.

22:7 *“Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book.”*

There can be no doubt that Jesus is the speaker of these words. Three times in this closing chapter does He remind us: “I am coming soon!”

The Christians living in the first century very likely expected Jesus to come again during the days of their earthly sojourn. Since those days, however, nearly nineteen centuries have come and gone, and Jesus still has not returned. Consequently, we may be tempted to ask: Is that

“soon?” To us, indeed, it may not appear as “soon;” for now we are as children, seeing through a glass darkly, and we judge as children. But when Christ’s second coming will have arrived, we will see that His coming really was soon. Ask a child, and the child will tell you that a life-time is a long, long time; but ask a man of 80, and he will tell you that a life-time is very short and that it skips away like a shadow. Furthermore, let us remember that in God’s sight a thousand years are like a day that has just gone by (Psalm 90:4).

By divine inspiration, Peter foretold that in the last days scoffers would appear and say, “Where is the ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation” (2 Pet. 3:4). But then Peter went on to make the following explanatory remark: “Do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness, He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:8-9).

Since we do not know when Jesus is coming again, it behooves us to take to heart seriously His Words: “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.... So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (Matt. 24:42, 44), Jesus is coming soon! These words serve as the keynote in this final chapter of Revelation.

Some commentators are of the opinion that these next words were not spoken by Jesus, but by the angel. However, we see no reason why we should not accept these words also as the words of Jesus. “Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book.” This is the sixth of the seven beatitudes in Revelation, and we are reminded of the words of Jesus, “Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and obey it” (Luke 11:28). As these words of Jesus apply to all the other books of Sacred Scripture, so they most certainly apply also to the book of Revelation. Blessed, indeed, are all those who with believing hearts accept all the prophecies in this book. The prophecies and promises of God recorded in this book should not only be a source of comfort and strength to us and all Christians, but they should also encourage and inspire us to stand firm and to be steadfast amid the many trials and perils that characterize the closing days of the world’s history.

22:8-9 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, “Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!”

As he had done in the opening chapter, so here again John identifies himself as the author of Revelation, asserting that he had been an ear-witness and an eye-witness of the things recorded in this book. Perhaps overwhelmed by what he had heard and seen in the various visions, John fell down at the feet of the angel with the intention of worshiping him; but the angel put an immediate halt to this endeavor and emphatically told John: “Do not do it!”

Although the angels are wonderful and glorious beings, although they are great and powerful spirits, although we thank God for them, yet they are creatures of God, just as you and I are creatures of God; and as such, they must not be given divine honor and glory. Of this did the angel remind John when he told him: “I am a fellow-servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book.” (By the way, it is interesting to note that angels, apostles, prophets, and true believers are in the same category; all are “fellow-servants.”) God is the Creator of the angels and also the Creator of all human beings; and it is His will, yes, it is His command that these creatures of His worship Him alone and willingly serve and obey Him. Hence the angel exhorts John: “Worship God!” These words surely warn us not to participate in any kind of saint or angel worship. Very emphatically has God said: “I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another” (Isaiah 42:8).

22:10 Then he told me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. ”

God and His Word cannot be separated. As God is not to be neglected or ignored, but is to be worshiped and adored, so His Word, the Holy Bible, is not to be sealed up, but is to be an open book; and its sacred teachings are to be proclaimed everywhere in their truth and purity. That is the gist of the angel’s command to John when he tells him: “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book.” In effect, this was a command to publish this book so that people everywhere might read and hear its glorious contents.

The message of this book is relevant in every age. It is true, millennialists and others have taken many passages of Revelation out of their context and have twisted other passages of this book to make them suit their own preconceived notions and ideas. This misuse of the book has caused some sincere Christians to become confused and has even prompted them to shy away from Revelation as much as possible. However, God wants this book to be read and studied; and if it is studied and interpreted in the light of the clear passages of Scripture, it will soon be discovered that this book is a source of great enlightenment, encouragement and comfort in the midst of all trials and persecutions, imparting to us divine promises of eternal joy and bliss in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The words of the prophecy of this book are to be published and proclaimed, because “the time is near.” This does not only mean that the time of Christ’s second coming is near. It also implies that the revelations recorded in this book will soon be fulfilled, Final victory over the enemies of the Church is imminent! The hour of triumph is at hand! Indeed, the time is near!

22:11 “Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy. ”

Warning enough has been given to the evil-doers and the filthy. If that is the life-style they want, so be it! With the second advent of Christ, man’s time of grace will have come to an end, and there will be no further opportunity for repentance and forgiveness. Having chosen to persist in their course of wickedness and immorality, their end will be eternal perdition. There is

nothing more to be done. What a serious warning this is to every sinner not to postpone or delay his own repentance!

On the other hand, those who are righteous and holy through their acceptance of the righteousness of Christ should continue to walk in the paths of righteousness and holiness, knowing that a glorious future is in store for them. The new life, which had its beginning at the time of their conversion, will have its full and perfect consummation in the New Jerusalem, where they will dwell forever in the presence of the holy God. What a blessed encouragement this is for every devout Christian to remain faithful unto death!

As we ponder the two classes of people referred to in this verse, we are reminded of the words which St. Paul wrote to Timothy: “Evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:13-15).

22:12-13 *“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”*

The return of our Lord to judgment may be expected at any moment, For the second time in this chapter Jesus says: “Behold, I am coming soon!” At that time He, the righteous Judge, will reward everyone according to the works that he has done in this life. As we have stated several times previously, this in no way contradicts the cardinal doctrine of Christianity, namely, that we are saved, not by our works, but by the grace of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

However, only true believers can perform good works in the sight of God. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. And so, although good works do not save us, they nevertheless are proofs or fruits of our faith. Therefore, it really makes no difference whether Christ judges us on the basis of our faith or on the basis of the fruits of our faith; for, as St. James points out, a faith that is not accompanied by good works is a dead faith, - and a dead faith saves not.

Once again Jesus identifies Himself as the First and the Last (Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet), as the Beginning and the End. He is God’s Revelation from the first to the last. In Jesus we have God’s saving work from its inception to its consummation. He is the same yesterday, today and forever, - the eternal and almighty God, whose coming to judgment will be a day of comfort and joy for the believers, but a day of terror for all unbelievers.

22:14-15 *“Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. ”*

We have here the last of the seven beatitudes in Revelation, a beatitude which speaks of the blessedness of all true believers. Theirs is the privilege and blessing to have their filthy, sin-stained garments washed in the blood of the Lamb; theirs is the privilege and blessing to appear before God's throne clad in the pure, white robe of Jesus' righteousness; theirs is the privilege and blessing to go through the gates into the heavenly Jerusalem; theirs is the privilege and blessing to partake of the fruit of the tree of life. Can you possibly name a greater privilege and blessing? How great and abundant are the mercies and kindnesses of our great God and Savior! Not all people, however, will be privileged to inhabit the holy city; not all are included in the Church Triumphant. "Outside are the dogs," the unbelievers, namely, the sorcerers, the adulterers, the murderers, the idolaters and all who love to practice falsehood. By nature, of course, all people are sinners; and therefore all people are guilty of the sins just enumerated. True believers, however, as we have heard, are people whose robes have been cleansed in the blood of the Lamb. By faith they have received the forgiveness which Christ has procured for them, and thus they are assured of an eternity of bliss. But all who reject the forgiveness which Christ extends to them, and persist in their sinful ways, have no part in the heavenly Jerusalem. They are "outside." That is another way of saying that eternal damnation in the lake of fire is certain for all who reject Christ and die in their sins. For their eternal torment, however, they will have no one to blame but themselves.

22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

"I, Jesus, –." It is interesting to note that our Savior here calls Himself by the name which was given to Him by His heavenly Father at the time of His incarnation and birth. To Joseph an angel of the Lord appeared with the message: "She (Mary) will give birth to a Son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Prior to that, the angel had told Mary: "You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus" (Luke 1:31). It is this Jesus who is speaking the words here recorded.

There can be no doubt concerning the authenticity of Revelation and John's authority in writing it. In verse 6 of this chapter, the angel said to John: "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place." In verse 8, John says: "I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things." And now here in verse 16, Jesus says: "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches." For any matter to be properly and legally settled, the testimony of at least two witnesses is required. Here we have them: (1) The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets and (2) Jesus. In addition, we have John's personal verification of the fact that he had received these visions. These solemn attestations are given to erase any traces of doubt from our minds and to make us absolutely sure.

Jesus says that He sent His angel to give this testimony for the churches. The visions recorded in Revelation, and the messages contained therein, were intended not only for the seven congregations in Asia Minor; they are intended for the members of all Christian congregations throughout the New Testament era.

Having identified Himself by His personal name “Jesus,” the Speaker proceeds to describe Himself as “the Root and Offspring of David.” He is both David’s Lord and David’s Son. As the root of David, He is David’s Creator and thus is David’s Lord. As the Offspring of David, He is David’s Son. Accordingly, Jesus identifies Himself as the God-Man, possessing both the divine nature and the human nature.

Then Jesus also calls Himself “the bright Morning Star.” Surely, most of us have had occasion to see the morning star. It is a bright star in the east, prominent just before the dawning of a new day. Jesus came into the darkness of this world as a “bright Morning Star,” assuring all who accept Him as their Savior and Lord that a new day is in prospect for them in the New Jerusalem, where there is no darkness, but everlasting light in the presence of God and the Lamb.

22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

We have before us one of the most gracious invitations in the entire Gospel, an invitation which surely shows that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all people everywhere should come to repentance and live (2 Pet. 3:9). Judgment Day has not yet come; the door of salvation is still open. And so, the Holy Spirit, through the proclamation of the Gospel, extends the invitation: “Come!” The bride, the Church, in its missionary outreach, extends the invitation: “Come!” The true believers, who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, extend the invitation to those with whom they come into contact: “Come!” Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that is basically the mission task of the Church and of every individual member within the Church. Our Lord has not asked us to convert sinners. That can be accomplished only by the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, But He has asked us to make known to others the good news of the Gospel and to extend to starving and perishing sinners the invitation to come and partake of the great supper prepared at tremendous cost by the Lamb of God. Since the time is growing short, we ought to put forth every effort to bring this glorious Gospel invitation to every creature throughout the entire world.

The gift of salvation is there for all. “Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.” The thirsty ones are those who realize their sinfulness and feel their need for complete forgiveness. Let them come and partake freely of the water of life. The blessed Gospel of the crucified and risen and living Redeemer, which alone can quench man’s spiritual thirst, offers and imparts eternal salvation as a free gift of God’s grace. There can be no doubt that Christ fills the vacuum in our lives. In Him we have the abundant life. Yes, in Him we find all that we need for this life and for the life which is to come.

22:18-19 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Since all Scripture is inspired by God, it is a serious matter to tamper with any portion of the Bible, either by adding thereto or subtracting therefrom. In the closing days of his earthly sojourn, Moses told the Children of Israel: “Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you” (Deut. 4:2). In Proverbs 30:5-6 we read: “Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.” In no way should we ever seek to amend or improve God’s words either by adding to them or by subtracting from them.

Jesus tells us that this applies especially also to the book of Revelation, thereby testifying once again to the inspiration and authority of this book. It is not for finite human beings to set dates or make all kinds of wild speculations on the basis of the words of the prophecy here recorded; nor are they to manipulate the words of this prophecy to fit their own preconceived eschatological views. Whoever adds to this book, God will bring on him the plagues described in this book; and whoever subtracts anything from this book will be deprived of his share in the tree of life and in the holy city. The severity of these threats ought to impress upon every one of us how serious a matter it is to try to change the words of our God.

In this connection, permit us to make a personal remark. In this book, “A Journey Through Revelation,” it has been our fervent and prayerful endeavor to treat every word of Revelation as the inspired Word of God. If we have erred in any part of our presentation, we here and now ask God’s full forgiveness. His Word is the eternal and abiding truth; and we respect it as the final authority in all matters of doctrine and life.

*22:20-21 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.
The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people, Amen,*

For the third time in this chapter, our Lord Jesus, He who testifies to all the things written in this book, says: “Yes, I am coming soon.” Soon our Lord will come to free us from the sufferings and ills of this present life; soon He will come to rescue us from all our enemies; soon He will come to deliver us from the many dangers that continually threaten us; soon He will come to take us home, – to the Father’s house of many mansions, where eternal bliss and glory await all who remain faithful to their Lord even unto death.

As we view present-day conditions in the world, – a world that literally is being flooded with all kinds of heretical and satanic teachings and cults, - a world so immersed in immorality and vice that it has become one large “Sodom and Gomorrah,” - a world in which the things that we Christians count holy and sacred are trampled upon by the ungodly and the godless, – yes, as we view these and many other rampant evils, we join the pious Apostle John in the prayer: “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people.” With this beautiful benediction, the book of Revelation is brought to a close. Grace, – what an amazing and comforting word! By

nature, we sinful human beings have deserved nothing from God, nothing whatsoever, nothing except God's wrath and displeasure, temporal death and eternal damnation. But God showed us His amazing grace. He sent His only-begotten Son into the world to be our Redeemer. And because of the atoning work of Christ, think of all the blessings that now are ours. In Christ Jesus we have the forgiveness of sins, abundant life in Him, comfort and hope, peace and joy, love and kindness, goodness and mercy, - and at the end of our journey through this life, life eternal in the New Jerusalem, the Church Triumphant! Through the grace of God in Jesus we have been made His very own. May His grace preserve us in the true and saving faith! To Him alone be all honor and glory, now and forever and ever! Amen! So be it!

Amen.

SOLI DEO GLORIA