

## Revelation 22:1 - 21 Pt.1

*1 And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming 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, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him; 4 and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever.*

*6 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. 7 "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."*

*8 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. 9 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."*

*10 And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11 "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." 12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. 13 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." 14 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. 15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.*

*16 "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."*

*17 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.*

*18 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; 19 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.*

*20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

*21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.*

*-----snapshot of a composite of endings of pauls letters-----*

*Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.*

*11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. 12 Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.*

*17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. 18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. 19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil. 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*

*The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*

*21 Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.*

*22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.*

*23 Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.*

*25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.*

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The reason I've taken the time to read to you a compilation of sorts of a couple of Pauls signatory pages of his letters is just to get the flavor of how an ancient letter ends.

During the main body of the letter there is just one voice. It's all Paul. Or it's all John. Or in this case, in the Revelation, it's mostly an angel speaking to John.

But at the end, similar to the cast taking a bow at the end of a play, the players come out and greet the audience, and take a bow.

So at the end of the book we can expect to hear different voices and also some final words, final thoughts. A signatory page if you will, where the different signors can say a word if they like.

In Paul's case he might authenticate that it really was his letter by writing a sentence or two with his big clumsy hands and poor eyesight. *See with what big letters I write to you with my own hands.*

Then the amanuensis sends a greeting and signs off. Other players who have had a portion in the labor send a greeting. Final concerns are stated. Then the

final final words. The Doxology.

So, now I'm going to stick my neck out here and say I think that's what we have exactly at the end of the book of Revelation. Except it's the final words of the Book of books, and the voices are from the Trinity.

I think the main body of the Revelation to Saint John ends in Vs. 5 of Ch. 22, and then in Vs. 6 we'll switch gears. From Vs. 6 - 21 is the epilogue, not just of the Revelation of Saint John, but of the entire Bible. After vs. 21 the Revelation of God to men is closed and sealed.

These are the final words in God's book. The whole book. Genesis to Revelation.

We've got several players we can identify. Several voices. The angel who speaks to John. The spirits of the prophets, the authors of all the other 65 books. John himself. The Alpha and Omega, God Himself. Jesus, the bridegroom and Son of God, co-equal, the Spirit, also co-equal with the Father, and the bride (that's us!!)

Now, I'm out on my limb here. I don't know of any scholars I've read that would say that after vs. 5 you have the epilogue not only of Revelation, but of the whole Bible. Maybe somebody has, but I'm not that well read. So if that causes you any heartburn, fair enough, you can dismiss the idea as just Jim.

But the comparison is weighty enough to consider what I say, and if I'm wrong, no harm comes. It just seems as though it's written, complete with warnings about tampering, to close and seal the entire revelation of God.

So let's quickly go through these final words and thoughts.

*Vs. 6 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 slaves the things which must soon take place.*

This is the angel who speaks to John signing off.

*“These words are faithful and true”* We spoke about this statement last week just a little. What words?

Well, if you buy into my argument that this is the epilogue of the entire revelation of God to men . . . all of them. All of them!

Earlier this week I registered for a Summit conference at Grace Community Church in Southern California where scholars from all over the world will come together for a week next March to re-affirm in our generation, the innerrancy of Scripture.

The men who are putting together this Summit (that's why I registered early. There's only so many seats for pipsqueaks to sit and listen in to the greatest minds of our generation speaking on the most important topic facing the church!) are aware that the Bible is under relentless attack.

If you're Satan, and you want to undermine ground zero and cause a collapse at the center, you go at this Book from every possible angle. Every generation of christians needs to be at war continually from every possible angle protecting and preserving the veracity of this book.

The battle is relentless and the enemy is coming at it from 360 degrees. Every time you think you've got the wall patched up on one side, there's a breach and someone attacking it from some where else. Relentless.

*“These words are faithful and true”* Until the day that we see Him face to face, words are all we've got. This revelation, this book, these words of God, are what call us out of this world of sin and chaos and brokenness.

They seperate us from everyone else who ignores them. Satan's world. Satan's kingdoms. God's world. God's kingdom.

It's words that turn the lights on. It is words that first tell me I'm a sinner

under the judgement of an angry God. It's words that inform me that the whole world is in that condition. Words cause me to understand that this world and its men are in a rebellion against a God who will righteously judge them.

It's words that cause the light to dawn that God has made a way to come out of that rebellion, to be cleansed of the sin that has separated me from a Good and Loving God.

It's words that tell me that God Almighty has sent His own Son into this world of angry rebels to die in my place and pay the propitiation for all of my sin.

It's words that tell me that I need to live wisely on this earth as one who has had his garments washed, but who is now separate and different from the ones in rebellion. They hated Jesus. They will hate me.

It's words that tell me that Jesus after dying for my sins, rose from the dead and returned after 40 days to heaven to finish the war on earth and prepare a place for all of the purchased ones who will come out of this world and go into His.

It's words that tell me that I must be an ambassador in this place and tell others how they can also escape the judgement, snatching some as it says, out of the very fire.

It's words that tell me that if necessary, I might have to lose everything, even my life, because I've become an alien in a foreign land surrounded by enemies of the gospel and the Book.

*"These words are faithful and true"* Do not kid yourselves. The battle lines are being drawn over this book. These words of this book have made us citizens of another place. They have made us aliens and enemies and dangerous in this place.

*and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to*

*His slaves the things which must soon take place.*

I think those words transcend John's book and include all of the books in the bible. Verbal plenary inspiration. All of the words. God is the God of the prophets. He is the God of their very spirits. Angels are involved. The Book is written and God is in control of the minds and spirits of the prophets and by the agency of angels He gets the very words to us intact.

Revelation is God breaking into this fallen world with His message, by the agency of His angels, given to the spirits of His prophets, and given perfectly to us His slaves. **THESE WORDS ARE FAITHFUL AND TRUE**

Every word given in a controlled environment even in the midst of enemy territory, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. It is HIS book.

And then, as though right on cue, in case anyone is thinking, well, it's just John, or it's only an angel, the voice changes. The affirmation of everything I've said about the words above, is in the next verse, and it isn't the angel, or John who affirms it, it is none other than the great I AM, the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking in His own voice;

*7 "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."*

So if you're on board with me, let's break down what Jesus just said. *And behold, I am coming quickly*

All of us are one heartbeat away from this statement. The world scoffs. The fathers have fallen asleep. 2000 years have passed. So much for 'quickly'.

But God's time is not our time. In heaven, if there is a clock, the hands do not move. We're trapped in this time - space - continuum for now. We sit as children in a boring school class, or perhaps some of you are experiencing what I'm talking about "as we speak". Time moves so slow.

God doesn't live in that world. He lives in eternity. Our little brains can't comprehend His time. A day is a thousand years and a thousand years is a day. Both at the same time. Quickly means it's the next thing that's going to happen. It's a heartbeat away. A blink and we'll be translated into eternity.

*"Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."*

Happy is he who teron's (holds tightly, clasps onto, clutches to himself, protects, keeps, preserves, guards as of highest importance) the words

*the words* the logous. The words. Again, it's all about words. Words mean things. Words are how ideas are conveyed. Revelation is by words. Jesus is God revealed. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*of the prophecy* prophéteia; the telling forth of revealed truth. Prophecy. We think of men with white beards getting revelations from God and forth-telling them, writing them down, for us.

The word means telling forth of revealed truth. What I'm doing right now.

One of my favorite speakers is a man named Ligon Duncan. I've listened to everything I can get my hands on easily and have sat in audience one time at a conference. And when he begins he gruffly says prior to preaching about the passage he will read; "This is the Word of God. Hear it."

We'll see if I ever have that kind of confidence. I'm looking forward to speaking on Sunday mornings in the future, because I understand that if I clutch tightly to the words of this Book, I actually am in a long line of forth tellers.

I have at my disposal more authority than presidents and kings! Look out. My confidence is right here. *"Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."*

What book? This one! All of the revealed truth of God Almighty. I'm a one trick wonder. The only trick I've got is to teach this book.

*8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things.*

Here's John's signature. I! John! I 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. 9 But 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."*

I have this famous quote of C. S. Lewis;

“It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree helping each other to one or the other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all of our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - These are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.”

— C.S. Lewis,      The Weight of Glory

I'm sure Lewis' quote is based here and in Ch. 19 where John did the same thing. Angelic creatures so beautiful and glorious that our first impulse is to worship. But no. Listen to what the angel says and find out some things about yourselves.

*I am a fellow slave with you, your brothers the prophets, and those who keep*

*the words of this book.* holman

Angels are just fellow slaves but I love the company we keep. It's qualified, at the end, but he says I'm just a slave, like you, John, and your brothers the prophets, and everybody else who keeps the words of this book.

Words again! If we are those who place ourselves under the authority of the words of this book, then we are fellows with John and this angelic being, and brethren with the very prophets who wrote the book.

And then he says. Worship God. Worship God.

*10 And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near."*

This is the angel relaying information. The book of Revelation is not sealed. Remember Daniel in the last chapter, Daniel was trying to figure out when all these things would happen. And God said, seal it up until the time of the end.

Not so, this book. The book of Revelation is the revelation of the glory of Jesus. Both now and forever. Do not seal it. It is to be read and studied in the churches from the moment John wrote it down until all is fulfilled.

*Vs. 11 "Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy."*

This is an unusual saying in a book that spends a LOT of time trying to help us repent and turn away from this fallen world into a better one.

I can think of one other time when this verse could have been said and been right for the moment.

Noah preached for 120 years. On the day that they sealed up the door of the ark with pitch and nailed it shut, and it began to rain, this would have been the

right thing to say.

It means there is a day when grace, the door of grace will be slammed shut. And it's coming quickly.

Just now, each of us will see it when our eyes are closed in death. Too late to change, then. Maybe if I ever get asked to do a funeral I'll use this passage and explain it. That would pretty much guarantee me only being asked once. This isn't what people want to hear.

Jesus often referenced to Noah. When the doors were shut and the rains came.

In Matthew 25, the story of the 10 virgins illustrates this very truth;

*5 “Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. 6 “But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 “Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 “The foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 “But the prudent answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ 10 “And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. 11 “Later the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ 12 “But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ 13 “Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.*

*After that threshold is crossed, . . . 11 “Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.”*

Now, the voice changes; Same message, but it is given with all the authority of the one who it originates with instead of one who delivers.

*12 “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 signatory page with the voices of all of the co-authors.

Jesus says      12 *“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.*

*. . . to render to every man according to what he has done . . . we never do get completely free of works, do we. Even Paul who is the base line for Sola Fide says, **work** out your salvation with fear and trembling.*

James says *show me your faith without works, and I'll show you my faith . . by my works.*

Real regeneration is a gift that comes by faith alone, but if it is real, if we really are quickened from the dead, God will work through us.

I'm sure we'll cover that ground many more times, but suffice to say, Jesus at the close of this book says, I have a reward with me that is in direct relation to what each man has done.

**Now** is the time to change direction. On that day, it's too late.

Next on our page of signatures is God the Father;

*13 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” 14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. 15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.*

God, who cannot look on evil says blessed are the washed. Blessed are the ones who have the right to the tree of life. Blessed are the ones who can enter into the City. Mt. 5:8 *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

Excluded from the presence of God are those who are impure. Dogs. These are the religious folks who are phonies. Sorcerers, satan worshippers whether they knew it was Satan or not. Sorcerers are very spiritual. But they're all wrapped up with false, evil, spiritual beings.

Immoral persons. This covers a lot of territory. We think first of the sexually immoral, but this is wider than that. Every kind of evil is here. Murderers. Men slayers. People who wrongfully take other peoples lives. Certainly abortion is here along with the worst degraded serial killers.

Idolaters and liars. People who refuse to worship the God of creation. People who practice lying. It's their lifestyle. It's interesting that in our generation, evolution is an idolatry that steers you clear of ever having to worship a creator God who might have standards. And it is based on such a whopper of a lie that it actually takes a bigger leap of faith to believe it, than to believe in God who created the world with intelligent design.

This is a broad group. So broad that without the gracious call of God who quickened us from the dead and made us alive together with Him, and called us out of this world, we'd be in there several times over.

Now Jesus adds His signature; *16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."*

Origins and glory are mentioned here. How can the same person be both the root of David and the descendant of David. Only God can make that claim. He is both root and branch.

He is also the source of light. Nothing in heaven will outshine Him. The bright and morning Star.

Finally, the Spirit joins in the signators for this book. And the Spirit does what He always does. He directs all the glory all the attention back onto Jesus. Even here!

*17 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.*

The Spirit and the Bride both say Come! Don't miss out on the water of Life!

This invitation is wide open. It is all encompassing. Come to the water!  
Drink for free. Everyone!

No one will stand at the judgement seat and say, I wasn't invited.

Notice that the bride joins the Spirit in this invitation. The bride is us. The church. We say come! Or do we? This is the occupation of the church in the world. This is what we do.

The Spirit joins with us and we tell everyone. Come! Come away from the city of destruction. come to the waters and drink. come to the refuge. Come to Life.

That's what the Spirit and the Bride do. In the future as we ask ourselves what is our purpose and what do we want to accomplish as a church, I suppose many answers might come forward. But none is more important than this bottom line. Our job is to join the Spirit in a missionary call . . to everyone who is lost.

The signatory's have all spoken. Now a final warning;

*18I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; 19and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.*

This is grave. This warning is not to be taken lightly! The cost is dear and it

is eternal if you tamper with God's words.

Take it to mean just the Revelation of John, or to mean all of the words of the entire book from Genesis to Revelation. I take the latter.

People who tamper with God's book will not see life. They will see the lake of fire in greater wrath than regular normal liars.

Liberal theologians subtract from the book. They emasculate the book so that it is powerless to save. Hell will have increased fury for such as them.

Cults who twist and disfigure this book and write their own book that they claim supercedes the authority of this book will have the torments of hell increased to them.

I am painfully aware of the responsibility of rightly dividing this book. Pray for the Spirit to help me as my responsibilities increase even more.

Finally, 2 doxologies. One by Jesus, and one by John.

*20. He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly."*

**Amen.** *Come, Lord Jesus. 21. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.*

And so closes the final book of the Revelation of God to fallen men.

My hope is that even if you haven't understood all of the nuances (your teacher certainly hasn't) my hope is that you have seen broadly and throughout this book the Glory of the risen Jesus who has had victory over the god of this world and who is in full control of every event, and who will return to reign, with us, for a 1000 years, and then will uncreate this universe and re-create a new heaven and a new earth.

When you think that broadly, all of a sudden, *Yes, I am coming quickly* begins to take on a new meaning. Compared to that, a few years is indeed, quickly!

