

Chapter Twenty-Two

The New City – Final Words of Promise

These final chapters gave the persecuted early church a glimpse into the future. Not so much a heavenly glimpse, but a future heavenly *reflection*. They would eventually overcome. They would eventually inherit a crown of life. They would reign with the King for all of eternity. These words described their hope. Christ was coming—not in a physical, eyeball sense—but in the hearts of believers that would reach around the globe. Satan, represented in the Jewish and Roman persecutions, would be defeated. In the end, the Evil One will be consigned to everlasting damnation.

Keep in mind that Revelation deals mostly with *conditions*, not so much events or physical reality. The bowls of God’s wrath and the unrepentant recipients demonstrate the *condition* of man’s evil heart. Death is a spiritual *condition* of being separated from God. If not, how can death and the grave be physically thrown into a physical lake of fire?

These final chapters thus reveal the *condition* of the New Covenant found in Christ. This renewal of mankind’s relationship with God is described in heavenly language, which makes it difficult to also see it as a beautiful rendition of our renewed relationship with God. This panorama at Revelation’s close is a marvelous portrayal of the results of the plan of redemption: *salvation offered to all nations through Christ*. This is the primary focus of the symbolism. I don’t believe the human language can adequately describe what heaven will be like.

NOTE

What follows contains a lot of argument that seems opposed to the Second Coming of Christ. So before you toss this commentary into the fireplace, let me specify the terminology. THERE IS GOING TO BE A FUTURE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST TO COLLECT HIS SAINTS. There will be a resurrection of the dead. The physical universe will be destroyed.

What is NOT going to happen is a rapture,—pre-trib or post-trib—an antichrist ruler, a 7-year tribulation, Jesus setting up a throne in Jerusalem, and a thousand-year reign. My primary goal is to ferret out Revelation’s truths, so I’ll not waste a lot of time pinning down the problems with theories promoted by false teachers.

22:1-2 And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 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.

River of the water of life: This river of life, the lack of sun, and other descriptive qualities are also found in Zechariah 14. This river has its origin from God's authority or *throne* and the Lamb. The water of life has already been seen as those words of God (the Holy Spirit) which give life. They are *clear as crystal*, denoting the purity and simplicity of the Gospel. Unlike the river of false doctrine spewed out by the mouth of Satan (Rev 12:16), these waters save humanity.

Middle of its street: The word *middle* appears twice in Revelation. Jesus is the central figure of the church, symbolized by His standing in the middle of the lamp stands. (1:13) The river of the water of life flows through the middle of the city (church and her covenant), originating from the throne of God and the Lamb. The river of life is a *central* theme in the Gospel. (John 7:38-39)

Tree of life: First shows up in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:9), and was the source of eternal life. (Gen 3:22) It is not a literal tree, but a spiritual metaphor located on *both sides* of the river. Thus we have a picture of the Word flowing from the God's throne (authority) of heaven, from which the tree of life draws its sustenance. It is literally the *source* of eternal life finding its beginning in the word and by the authority of God.

12 kinds of fruit: Again, the number '12' is as prominent here as it is in the previous chapter. There are 12 different fruits yielded for 12 months. Fruits are symbols of *results*. They come from the tree as a *result* of being located on either side of the word of God (river of life). They are not the same as the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22), since those are personal fruits. The number 12 speaks to a *national* healing, and a *national* advantage, not a personal one.

Trees in scripture are often depicted as people. (Psa 1:3; 37:35; Isa 10:17; Ezek 31:16-18) If speaking of a single tree, it speaks of a nation or king. (Dan 4:20-22; Luke 13:18-19) The trees being burned up in 8:7 compare with Jesus' parable: "Every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matt 3:10) With this in mind, the tree of life is another symbol for Jesus Christ, who Himself is "the True Vine." Thus, Jesus is the Tree of Life, and the fruit born are those believers from all nations, symbolized in the number 12. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4) As reflections of the Divine Nature, Christians imitate Christ, becoming "trees" in their own right:

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord. For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit (*yielding fruit each month*). (Jer 17:7-8)

Yielding its fruit every month: There is no seasonal disadvantage with which to contend; there's no waiting for a harvest. This fruit will be continually available. The symbolism is an exact replica from the OT:

By the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear *every month* because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing. (Ezek 47:12)

Leaves for healing the nations: Herbal medicine was the *de facto* method of treatment in ancient days. Most modern cures find their origin in the plant kingdom. Thus we have here a picture of *sickness* and a *cure* for nations. Jesus spoke of His healing as it was connected to those who followed Him:

For the heart of this people has become dull, and with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, *and I should heal them.* (Matt 13:15)

The *healing* is dependent on the *returning*, which is preceded by *understanding*. “Faith comes by understanding, and understanding comes by God’s word.” (Rom 10:17) The healing could refer to God’s rod upon the nations in order to get them to a condition of repentance. “The Lord will strike Egypt, *striking but healing*; so they will return to the Lord, and He will respond to them and will heal them.” (Isa 19:22)

Just as our salvation is a reflection and taste of the glories to come, so too does this language offer us a reflection and taste of heaven will be like. The symbols—tree of life, leaves for healing, etc—are not pictures of heaven. If so, eternal life will depend on eating literal fruit from a literal tree. Why would healing of nations exist in heaven? Why would there be gates in heaven, where earthly kings bring their glory into it? Can earthly kings enter heaven somehow?

22:3-4 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; and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

No longer any curse: The curse of the Law (death) is intended here. The healing is salvation and the curse signifies death:

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and *death*, the blessing and the *curse*. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them. (Deut 30:19-20)

Deuteronomy shows that God’s blessings on Israel were contingent on obedience:

For as many as are of the works of the Law *are under a curse*; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.” (Gal 3:10)

Most see this as the “curse of sin” or the “curse of death” as opposed to the curse brought by the law. However, those terms appear nowhere in scripture. Paul was quite clear: *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law.* (Gal 3:13) Although sin and death are enemies (1 Cor 15:26), they are nowhere described as curses. Sin cannot exist without law (Rom 4:15), and spiritual death cannot exist without sin. Thus, death and sin find their origin in the Law. Get rid of the Law—the curse—and the other two horsemen follow suit. Satan could not have caused Adam and Eve to sin had there not been a law forbidding their eating from the tree. So although

ridding the earth of death may sound like a positive thing, death finds its origin in sin, and sin finds its origin in the Law. Get rid of the origin, or root, and you rid mankind of the real curse. Law was put into the world to identify sin. (Rom 5:20) Once Jesus paid the Law's price, rules became unnecessary—they had proven their point.

Those who are secure in clutching an abundance of rules and regulations will reject this interpretation outright. Their attitude is, “we *must* have law or we have chaos!” What is the church but a reflection of heaven? The law was given to punish and condemn sinners, not create a structure for Christian living. Walking by Law is not walking by faith. Sadly, many have applied such thinking to issues like the Lord's Supper, church attendance, and even the requirements for becoming a Christian. What was once a love-feast becomes a mandatory formation and a pedestrian ritual. Failure to partake in the Lord's Supper is breaking the law. Failure to keep the “times appointed by the elders” is a violation. Rules surrounding clothing, music, and so forth multiply and abound.

Before I met my wife, she had been attending a Baptist church that enforced a strict dress code for its members. One Saturday, the women volunteered to do some community yard work. All of the women showed up wearing dresses. My wife and a friend of hers wore jeans and sweatshirts. They were pulled off to the side and rebuked by the church elders. These are the kind of suffocating, legalistic, man-made traditions that drive people away from Christ.

Throne of God and of the Lamb: The seat of power, authority and judgment finds its place in the church, a portrayal of the spiritual kingdom on earth.

Bond-servants shall serve Him: Although two thrones are implied, the service is to One God. The term ‘bond-servant’ means *one willingly bound to a master*. The bond is formed from a promise to serve. This service begins when the Christian “puts on Christ” in baptism. (Gal 3:27)

They shall see His face: The word ‘face’ means ‘presence.’ (2 Sam 3:13; 2 Chr 7:14)

- ◆ God knew Moses “face to face.” (Exo 33:11)
- ◆ When God set His face against someone, it meant judgment. (Lev 17:10)
- ◆ An unveiled face means purity and openness. (2 Cor 3:18)
- ◆ It also signifies recognition. (Col 2:1; James 1:23)
- ◆ When Jacob met Esau after years of separation, Jacob said, “if now I have found favor in your *sight*, then take my present from my hand, for I see your face as one sees the face of God, and *you have received me favorably*.” (Gen 33:10)
- ◆ Those who are conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29) find favor in God's sight (face-to-face).
- ◆ Since Christians have the mind (heart) of Christ (1 Cor 2:16), they have the same desire for love, peace, fellowship, and so on.

This is how one “sees” God's face, through a proper understanding of His Word:

For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the *face of Christ*. (2 Cor 4:6)

Concerning innocent children who don't know sin, Jesus said, "their angels in heaven continually beheld the face of My Father who is in heaven." (Matt 18:10) Therefore, it is sin that causes us to ultimately lose sight of God's face. Isaiah wrote, "Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and *your sins have hidden His face from you*, so that He does not hear." (Isa 59:2) When we have our sins forgiven, we can, in a spiritual sense, "see" God's face, in that we have His favor and presence shine upon us.

His name shall be on their foreheads: Christ's name is at the forefront of their thinking. The followers of the beast had their master's name written on their foreheads, signifying mental focus on the beast's authority. Although the issue is discussed more fully in chapter 13, the implication is that our obedience to Christ is in plain *public* sight. The concept is to "let your light shine." Shine where? Before men. This idea is also shown in a negative sense, where the ultimate insult to God is for His followers to publicly defame His name through blatant disobedience. (2 Sam 12:14; Rom 2:24)

Aaron was the first high priest who wore a gold plate on his forehead (fastened to the front of his turban) which was engraved with the words, HOLY TO THE LORD. In the same way, Christians are deemed "Holy to the Lord" as a people separated from others on this earth. "The Lord knows those who are His." (2 Tim 2:19) How? We have His title fastened within our hearts. It should be in plain sight for the world to see.

22:5 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.

Although Revelation describes the establishment of God's kingdom (church) on the earth, there is a subtle transition that extends into eternity. There are conditions that reach from earth to heaven, and are described in such terms as "they shall reign forever and ever." This is the meaning of the mountain in Hebrews 12:22, where the base of the mountain is established on *earth* and the top extends up into *heaven*. Such is the kingdom of God. So also it is with the illumination from God—truth abiding forever. It is this truth/light believers shall enjoy, both here and in the hereafter.

Light of a lamp signifies a light able to light a small area or provide enough illumination for people to walk so as not to stumble. (Psa 119:105; Matt 5:15) This type of light requires constant attention so as not to extinguish. (Exo 27:20) As such, it is not the type of light God desires.

Light of the sun represents natural light. Although it requires no human effort to stay lit, night, weather, smoke, etc can interfere with sunlight. God's illumination has no such barrier or hindrance—it is an eternal light, forever there for mankind's benefit. The text is telling us that it is God's *spiritual* illumination that guides men in the kingdom. (See notes on 21:25) We are to live (walk), not by the world's direction, but by the light of God's truth.

22:6 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.

Faithful and true: Spoken in 21:5, referring to the “making of all things new.” The New Covenant encompasses these “new things.” They are promises of the kingdom, which were in the process of “coming” at John’s writing, and is what Jesus preached in His earthly ministry. (Matt 3:2)

Things which must shortly take place: Jesus told His disciples, “you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.” (Matt 10:23) They would not taste death until they saw the “Son of man coming in His kingdom.” (Matt 16:28) Thus, the *things* coming shortly were the *revealing (revelations)* of Jesus Christ. (Rev 1:1) It’s difficult to reconcile the apostles preaching to all the cities of Israel with a futuristic coming of Christ.

Shortly literally means *a brief space of time*. These things were written “to show to His bond-servants”—simple fishermen, shepherds, and the poor. Promising something to be *coming shortly*, only to really mean “thousands of years,” makes God seem deceitful. Common terms, such as *one day*, *soon to take place*, or *tomorrow*, become cryptic and meaningless. Did God really mean what He said? Scripture was written in simple language that a shepherd could understand. Reading too much mystery into phrases such as “shortly come to pass” negates that simple message.

“I am coming quickly” is used 4 times in Revelation, once in chapter 3, and three times in chapter 22. The word *quickly* means *without delay*. The phrase is properly rendered, *I come without delay*. Jesus told the church in Philadelphia that He was coming quickly, to hold fast so that no one took their crown. (3:11) The Philadelphia church disappeared 1,900 years ago. Did Christ come in their time, or was He just “motivating” them towards faithfulness? Did they hold fast as He had instructed? Did they get their crown? Of the 75 times *quickly* is used in the bible, *never* does it refer to the far future. If we are to understand Revelation by other scriptures, we need to understand the word by how it is used elsewhere in the bible. If God was consistent in what He revealed, we need to be consistent also. He didn’t use *quickly* to mean one thing throughout the entire bible, and then suddenly, at the end of Revelation, make it mean just the opposite. The understandings we embrace *must* be understood in light of scripture, not as a “matter of one’s own interpretation.” (2 Pet 1:20)

Revelation is a panorama showing how the church kingdom was established on the earth. That fact has been extant for two thousand years, and was brought to inception when the Old Covenant was done away with. The “old heaven and earth” passed away.

When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old *is ready to disappear*. (Heb 8:13)

How long was the old covenant to remain in this state? Is it still “ready to disappear”? Again, the theme of the kingdom is summed up in Jesus’ own words: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is *at hand*.” It was not several thousand years down the road. Peter’s words have become the old standby whenever this issue arises:

Beloved, do not let this fact be hidden from you: one day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.” (2 Pet 3:8)

Peter simply meant that Time has no meaning to God. He didn’t intend it as a key to interpreting prophetic language. Quite frankly, if “I’m coming quickly” meant “I’m coming

centuries from now,” the disciples reading this would have been scratching their heads. Daniel was plainly told his vision related to the distant future. (Dan 12:9) The same claim can’t be justified for Revelation.

Note

The “coming” in Revelation and Matt 10:23, etc, refer to Jesus establishing His presence in the church. This was the coming kingdom to which he referred: “Repent, for the kingdom is at hand.” Making reference to an event thousands of years in the future would have had no meaning. The future coming of Christ, however, deals with the Final Judgment of all mankind, where the heavens and earth will pass away in a roaring inferno. (2 Peter 3) Preachers are responsible for this dichotomy. God holds out this “carrot,” and the church plods after it, making Christianity seem like a fool’s mission. Since this belief has been promulgated for such a long time, it’s impossible to get folks to see things any differently.

22:7 “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”

Blessed is he who heeds: This phrase is at the beginning (1:3) and end (22:7) of Revelation. There are six descriptions of blessings, all of them referring to remaining faithful and holding fast the promise of salvation:

1. *Obedience*—Those who read and heed what’s written in the book of Revelation.
2. *Perseverance*—Those who die in the Lord from now on.
3. *Vigilance*—Those who stay awake and remain ready.
4. *Invited or called*—Those invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.
5. *Saved*—Those who have part in the first resurrection.
6. *Repent and confess*—Those who wash their robes.

The scriptures contain many blessings regarding those who trust in the Lord. His salvation is extended to those individuals who trust in Him:

How **blessed is the man** who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. (Psa 1:1-2)

How **blessed is the man** who has made the Lord his trust, and has not turned to the proud, nor to those who lapse into falsehood. (Psa 40:4)

How **blessed is the one** whom Thou dost choose, and bring near to Thee, to dwell in Thy courts. (Psa 65:4)

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account. (Rom 4:7-8)

22:8-9 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.”

At this point the Revelation itself seems to end with Christ’s promise of coming quickly and the pronouncement of blessings on those who abide by the words of the book. The powerful imagery was enough to cause John to prostrate himself before the angel, who quickly corrects the apostle’s error. The messenger places himself on the same level as a “fellow servant,” alongside the apostles, prophets, and those who heed the Revelation. His instruction is simple: *Worship God*. Give homage to Him and no one else. That excludes the Virgin Mary and various saints exalted by men’s error.

Those who heed the words of this book: At the beginning of Revelation are these words: “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.” (Rev 1:3) Revelation holds as many truths as do the rest of God’s inspired word, and requires equal attention from us. Self-appointed commentators, false teachers, wannabe teachers, and Hollywood have all conspired to turn it into a misguided and fanciful science-fiction fairy tale. This wholesale rape has turned Revelation into something that just doesn’t square with the rest of the bible. As a result, trying to “heed the words of this book” requires spiritual discernment and a whole lot of unlearning the nonsense we’ve accumulated.

22:10 And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

This stands in harmony with Daniel’s prophecy concerning the establishment of the kingdom and the resurrection of the dead: *Conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time.* (Dan 8:26; 12:4) The *end of time* was understood by the ancient Jews as meaning the *end of the age*, or the end of the Mosaic dispensation. They did not read “the end of the world” into that meaning as we do today. (See the comparisons in the chart on pages 388 & 389.) Daniel’s prophecy pointed towards Jesus’ discussion concerning the coming kingdom (church) and the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. “When you see the abomination of desolation *which was spoken of through Daniel...*” (Matt 24:15) This was the end of that age to which Daniel referred. It was to be the end of the old covenant and the Mosaic Dispensation.

The time is near: Another clue that Revelation was fulfilled near the time of its writing. The context and reference to Daniel’s prophecy all point to its relationship to Jerusalem’s destruction. Those who misdirect its intent to the future are denying themselves and others the blessings promised by the book.

22:11 “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.”

Concerning those who would follow the “man of lawlessness,” Paul writes, “...for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.” (2 Thess 2:11-12) There are many admonitions for Christians to hold onto their salvation:

Now I make known to you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached to you...by which also you are saved, *if you hold fast the word* which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. (1 Cor 15:1-2)

Examine everything carefully; *hold fast to that which is good.* (1 Thess 5:21)

Christ was faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, *if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.* (Heb 3:6)

We have become partakers of Christ, *if we hold fast* the beginning of our assurance firm *until the end.* (Heb 3:14)

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope *without wavering*, for He who promised is faithful. (Heb 10:23)

What you have, *hold fast until I come.* (Rev 2:25)

Of particular note is this last reference of holding fast *until Christ came.* The church at Thyatira disappeared centuries ago. Jesus specifically told this church to *hold fast until He came.* For Jesus to mean that His coming was to take place in the distant future tests the scripture's credibility and would have deceived the churches in Asia Minor. It's like a man serving a life sentence in prison while telling his wife to "hang tight until I get out."

22:12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

Behold, the reward and punishment were coming upon believers and haters of the Gospel. The difficulty in what is happening here is due to *perspective.* Most see this as a *singular* event, relegated to the future. As already pointed out, Daniel was plainly told that his prophecy was to be sealed up; it concerned the end of the age; that it had to do with the *distant future.* (Dan 8:26) That is a plain statement, not couched in ambiguity. There is absolutely no doubt as to what Daniel meant. Daniel was told: This concerns the future—seal it up.

Revelation, however, says nothing about the end of the age or the distant future. The repeated phrase, "I am coming quickly" says just the opposite. The angel didn't tell John, "seal up this book, for it concerns the distant future." He said that events were going to happen *very soon.*

22:13-14 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." 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.

Alpha and Omega: These three phrases verify that Christ encompasses all of Time. They are fully explained in chapter one.

Blessed are those who wash their robes: Robes were the common clothing worn by Palestinians, just as we wear jeans and T-shirts today. The Laodiceans were told to buy "clean robes" so that their shame of guilt (nakedness) would not be seen. These clean robes are

symbolic of the “righteousness of the saints.” (19:8) They are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb (7:14), showing how that righteousness is obtained. There is no other name by which men can be saved (made righteous). (Acts 4:12)

Right to the tree of life: Once we are made righteous through the blood of Christ, we now have authority to eat from the tree of life, which is indicative of Christ Himself. Adam and Eve and their descendants were barred from accessing this tree because of their rebellion against God’s one law. Through the first Adam, we were denied fellowship with God. Through the second Adam, that fellowship is now restored. (Rom 5:12ff)

Enter into the gates of the city: We see then a three-fold process of forgiveness (washing the robe), salvation (tree of life), and entrance into the covenant (gates). Remember that the Holy City is coming down out of heaven like a mountain (chapter 21). While most tend to think of the city descending like a helicopter, the better view is of a road coming down a mountain. Part of this mountain (road) is on earth (the church in the world), while the apex (destination) reaches into heaven (the church in glory). It is the difference between the outer court, the holy place, and the holy of holies as seen in the singular OT tabernacle.

DANIEL 12	COMING OF CHRIST
There will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time	There will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. (Matt 24:21)
At that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.	I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. (Rev 20:12)
Those who have insight (understanding of God’s will) Will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.	He gave some as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (Eph 4:11-13)
Conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.	For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. (1 Cor 13:12)
“How long will it be until the end of these wonders?” And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.	As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matt 24:3) “Truly I say to you, This generation shall not pass until all these things are fulfilled.” (Matt 24:34)

DANIEL 12	COMING OF CHRIST
Many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.	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. (Rev 22:11)
And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.	When you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place let the reader understand. (Matt 24:15)
How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!	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. (Rev 22:14) Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. (Matt 24:46)

Comparison table between Daniel and Jerusalem's Destruction

22:15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

Dogs: Those uncircumcised of heart. Those who claim circumcision and trust in works of the law to save them. (Phil 3:2-3) Galatians 5:19–21 declares that those engaging in fleshly deeds will not inherit God's kingdom. Some may be faithful churchgoers, but they are not in the kingdom from God's viewpoint if they engage in such sin.

Outside of these gates are everyone who loves (present tense) and practices (present tense) lying. This is not a future state in hell, where those who *used* to sin while alive on earth are being punished. They *love* the lie, and also *practice* the lie. One cannot love falsehood and practice deception while roasting in Hell. Again, these are situations taking place on earth.

22:16 "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."

This echoes back to the first chapter: *Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches.* (1:11) The churches were those certain congregations in Asia Minor.

Root and offspring of David: Jesus is human and divine, both the Offspring and the Origin of the human line. He is the heir and termination of the throne of David, the final Messianic king of the Jewish nation.

Bright morning star: Christ is the heavenly ruler (See notes on 2:28). The name *Lucifer* means *morning star*. Although Lucifer is a name applied to Satan, there is no scriptural evidence for this interpretation. The term is found only in Isaiah 14:12, and is relegated to the king of Babylon. There are no scriptures supporting any reference to Satan being named Lucifer.

22:17 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.

The words of the prophets and apostles are the words of the Spirit, all pointing to Christ and the Gospel message. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be satisfied. (Matt 5:6)

“...whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.” (John 4:13-14)

All one needs is a desire—whoever *wishes* can have eternal life. There is no cost except to abide in God’s word and to emulate His Son. (Rom 8:29)

22:18-19 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.

Curses from God on those who alter the meaning or intention of this book. Some mistakenly apply this warning to the entire bible, when the context clearly says otherwise. There are other scriptures warning against tampering with any part of God’s word. (Deut 4:2; 1 Cor 4:6; 2 Jn 1:9, 10) Like the last book in the NT, the OT closes with a similar admonishment: “Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel.” (Mal 4:4) This warning at Revelation’s close is surrounded by the testimony of the Holy Spirit (vs. 17), the church (vs. 17), those who hear it (vs. 17), he who speaks it (vs. 18), and Christ Himself. (vs. 20) They are all part of the “great cloud of witnesses surrounding us.” (Heb 12:1) Their testimony is secured, proven, and confirmed—don’t try and change it!

22:20 He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

To sum up the thread of Christ’s coming, let’s list the Revelation texts here. The first three are to churches in Asia Minor. Sufficient argument has already been set forth showing Christ’s coming to be an event that those congregations foresaw in *their* life span:

Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; *or else I am coming to you*, and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent. (Rev 2:5) (A contingent coming)

Repent therefore; *or else I am coming to you quickly*, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. (Rev 2:16) (A contingent coming)

I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown. (Rev 3:11). (A definite coming)

The final words of Revelation contain three testimonies, to which, John does an “amen,” saying, “Come, Lord Jesus.” Note:

Behold, I am coming quickly. (Rev 22:7)

Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me. (Rev 22:12)

He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” (Rev 22:20)

Jesus said that His coming *would not come with observation*. (Luke 17:20) In three passages (Matt 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27), He was plainly speaking of coming with His angels, and those to whom He was speaking *would not taste death* until they saw that event. Was Jesus lying?¹

To “see” in scripture typically means “to understand.” Jesus also said, “If a man keeps My Word, *he shall never see death*.” (John 8:51) Does this mean that Jesus has failed everyone who has died since then? Or was the Lord describing a *spiritual* death? The Second Death?

Folks see a *spiritual* coming of Christ as rather ho-hum, while a physical, *observable* coming of Christ is what gives them hope.² Jesus stated, “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Matt 18:8) The implication is that so few faithful would be on earth, that the Second Coming would only be experienced by very few Christians living at the time. Even the Thessalonians understood that Christ’s coming was not a physical event:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. (2 Thess 2:1-2)

Why had the Thessalonians been fooled into believing that Christ’s coming had already taken place? You can’t miss a *physical* coming, but you could very well miss a *spiritual* one. That’s why Paul had to calm their distress. Even this infant church understood the Coming to be unseen and had been convinced it had passed them by. They knew it wasn’t physical or observable or else they wouldn’t have been upset.

To put it simply, the Second Coming was done “in the saints.” The mechanics are spiritual. It was done when His Word went forth into all nations, transforming human beings into images of Christ. (Rom 8:29; Gal 2:20) Through the Word, Jesus Christ “returned” to the earth and began establishing His kingdom.

The early church certainly expected Christ’s coming in their lifetime, as did some of the apostles. Soon after the apostles died, however, misconceptions borne out of a *physical* coming caused many to suspect that it all been an elaborate hoax. Many began to doubt due to a misunderstanding. “Where is the sign of His coming?” was the question of the day. (2 Pet 3:4)

Although some of the early church fathers understood the spiritual aspect of Christ’s coming, doctrines of a future coming began to gain more and more acceptance as the decades turned into centuries. Attempts were made to clarify what Jesus meant. The prophecies He revealed in

¹ Many assert today that Paul’s hope in the “Second” Coming was misguided. Doctrines perpetrated by Darby, Scofield, Hal Lindsey, etc, have badly skewed the truth.

² I’ve read various articles and have known friends who use the Second Coming of Christ as a hope to escape life’s problems.

Matthew 24 and its sister gospels were plainly aimed at Jerusalem's destruction in 70 AD. Yet hundreds of books have been written to support the false notion that Jesus was speaking of a future time of trouble.

There are a few churches and bible colleges who understand and teach the Second Coming of Christ as the scriptures teach it. These are not radical groups or cults. They are, however, a minority.

22:21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

Thus ends the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Those who took the time to actually read this work may ask, "Why did God tell this 'simple' story in such panoramic language?" In retrospect, Revelation is essentially

- The triumph of Good over Evil
- The Plan of Redemption
- The Divorce of Israel
- The Marriage of the Church to Christ
- The Reward of Good and the Judgment of Evil

The entire bible comes to focus in this one book. To tell it in any other way would have diluted the strength and beauty of God's plan and its purpose for mankind. There is no other book in the bible that can give the serious bible student such tremendous faith and spiritual reassurance.

About the Author

Terry DeLaney never went to seminary school or bible college. He never finished high school, but got his GED after being thrown out of the 10th grade. He worked as a professional painter from the age of 13. At 22, he was baptized into the church of Christ. At 25, he joined the Air Force due to the poor economy. He served 26 years in the military, where he fell away from the faith and became the Prodigal Son. In September of 2001, the Sunday prior to the attack on 9/11, he repented and was baptized in the church of Christ in Mountain Home, Idaho. Years of alcoholism and addiction to pornography disappeared in an instant's time.

Although his desire was to become a preacher at the small church in Mountain Home, fate determined differently. He moved to Boise shortly after a bitter falling out with other church leaders, joined the Christian Church, and has settled comfortably into his role as a servant rather than a preacher.