

Revelation 21 & 22 • “Behold, I am making all things new”

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To open your Bibles to Revelation chapter 21, Revelation chapter 21.

In our last study here through Revelation, we came to the end of the great tribulation period and thankfully so. In fact, we've already made our way through the end of the millennial kingdom. It was only covered just very, very briefly. But for those of you who might do with a refresher just on the chronology of events that go through this book, I'll put it up in this time in linear fashion for you on the slide so that you can kind of see it. And I apologize, this is kind of small print.

(slide)

- Rapture of the Church
- Seven Year Great Tribulation
 - Rise of the Antichrist
 - Covenant with Israel
 - Marriage of the Lamb
 - Marriage Supper of the Lamb
 - God's Wrath Poured Out
- The Return of Jesus to the earth
- Battle of Armageddon
- Beast and False Prophet cast into Lake of Fire
- Satan bound for 1,000 years
- Millennial Kingdom
- Satan released from abyss
- Final rebellion
- Great White Throne Judgement
- New Heaven and New Earth

But it begins the next event on the prophetic calendar is the catching away of the church. And this is when Jesus comes for his church and that will be followed immediately by the 7 year great tribulation period.

And under that and during, I guess, that great tribulation period, we will see the rise of the anti-Christ, the covenant that Israel makes with the anti-Christ for at least the first half of the tribulation period. During that time also, the marriage of the lamb and the marriage supper of the lamb take place. And of course, during the tribulation, God's wrath is poured out upon the earth.

Then at the very end of that 7 year period the return of Jesus, which is what we refer to as the second coming takes place immediately followed by the battle of Armageddon which is when the nations of the world, under the leadership of the anti-Christ come against Jesus. The beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire, the beast there being another name for the anti-Christ and Satan is then bound for 1,000 years and cast into the abyss, which of course is going to usher in with the rulership of Jesus over the earth and Satan being bound for 1,000 years. That is going to usher in a 1,000 year period of unprecedented peace and prosperity upon the earth, we refer to it as the millennial kingdom.

And so, and you know, it's interesting here in Revelation, it's barely talked about, I mean, it's mentioned, but it's just, it's barely talked about. We actually have to go to other passages in the Bible to learn more about it many of which are in the Old Testament. And then at the end of that 1,000 year period, Satan will be released from the abyss where he will carry out one final rebellion with the individuals who are still mortal on the face of the earth, that will be quickly put down by the Lord.

And after that, the final resurrection will take place and the great white throne judgment will happen. And then, after the great white throne judgment, we have the new heaven and the new earth and that is exactly where we begin here in chapter 21.

Look with me in verse 1, it says:

¹ "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more." (ESV)

Stop there for just a minute. When it's, it's always interesting to me, when people talk about the end of the world, you know, like the world is coming to an end. The world is really never coming to an end. So, any doomsayers that say, well, you know, there's coming a time when the world comes to an end. Well, the world's going to be changed out for a new one, but that's not really the same as coming to an end. The world is going to continue, it's just going to be remade.

And that's what this verse tells us, not just the earth, but also the heavens. Now you need to take note here because the word “heaven” or “heavens” actually has 3 different potential meanings in the Greek as it relates to I guess, this world and beyond. When you and I hear the word heaven, we immediately think of the place where God dwells, you know, in all of His glory.

Well, that's one meaning of the word heaven, but it can mean other things as well. The Bible refers to the heavens as also just the atmosphere around the earth. And that is, you know, what we would kind of refer to as just the sky, if you will. But the word can also refer to “outer space” or what the Bible would refer to as the “night sky”.

And so, you have these different meanings of the word heaven. And when we talk here in Revelation 21 about a new heaven, we're referring to the, literally the atmosphere and the night sky, if you will, or, the, I suppose you could even, rather than the night sky, you could talk about outer space, I suppose, but those are the things that are going to be remade.

We're not talking about the heaven of heavens where God dwells. And by the way, the recreation or the remaking of heaven and earth is something that is made reference to many times in the Bible and particularly, well in both the Old Testament and the new. Let me show you first of all from the Old Testament on the slide from Isaiah 65, it says:

(slide)

Isaiah 65:17 (ESV)

“For behold, (and the Lord is speaking here) I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.”

So here the Lord makes it very clear, this is 700 years before the birth of Christ. God says, I'm going to make a new heaven and a new earth. And of course, this is echoed in the New Testament.

Peter wrote about it from 2 Peter chapter 3. It says:

(slide)

2 Peter 3:12-13 (ESV)

...waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

So here we're given a little insight on how the old heaven and the old earth are to pass away. And this is something that, you know, Jesus told us too. Do you remember in Matthew 24 also up on the slide for you? Jesus said:

(slide)

Matthew 24:35 (NIV1984)

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

But the point that we're focusing on here tonight is that heaven and earth will pass away, and this is something that is corroborated through many passages in the Bible. *"Heaven and earth will pass away"*. But, it's not going to be the end, if you will, it's just going to be a replacement and the new heaven and the new earth.

I want you to also finally notice that John says of the new earth *"and the sea was no more"*. Now that is a particularly interesting and even somewhat challenging statement for us to interpret and we have to kind of wonder, is John speaking literally or is he speaking figuratively?

Because there's a lot of figurative stuff here in the book of Revelation. And are we literally saying that there will be no more seas in the new earth that is created? Well, that's a possibility, but you have to remember that the reference to "seas" in the Bible is often made as imagery for chaos and evil.

You guys remember back in Revelation chapter 13, we saw that the beast rose out of the sea, and that was imagery for the beast coming up upon, from the nations with the, the authority and power of the nations. But this is something that we see a lot in God's word, where the seas of the earth are figuratively spoken of to speak of chaos and sin and evil.

So, whether or not there's going to literally be no more seas on the new earth, we're not honestly really sure, we're just going to have to wait and find out. You know, God did create seas you know, originally on the earth. And so, I've always kind of thought that there's no reason for him not to have seas on the new earth as well in the new creation. But again, we'll have to wait and see how all of that is finally fulfilled.

Then John says, beginning in verse 2, we're going to read down through verse 5.

² *“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”*

³ *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”*

⁴ *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*

⁵ *And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”” (ESV)*

Okay, so the first thing we need to deal with here is this vision that John has of the new Jerusalem that he sees, and he references it as *“coming down out of heaven from God”*. And you'll notice how he describes this new Jerusalem, he says that it is *“as a bride adorned for her husband”*.

And that's just meant to tell you that this city is beautiful because you know every bride on her wedding day is beautiful. I've done a lot of weddings over the years, and I've never seen an ugly bride yet. They are always just decked out and looking gorgeous, and it's just, it's also fun to see the look on the groom's face, you know, as his bride is coming down the aisle, it is just, it's just wonderful.

But, so, this is a descriptive phrase that John is giving, but we'll talk more about the city of Jerusalem; the new Jerusalem, and how it connects as a bride in just a few verses. But more than just the city's beauty, notice that John also uses 2 interesting and descriptive words to describe this city. And these words are important to see, and they are “new” and “holy”. They are “new” and “holy”.

This city is new; it's a new Jerusalem and it's a holy Jerusalem. New meaning like nothing you've ever seen before and holy referring to the fact that this city is set apart from anything that man has ever known.

You know, man likes to dream about creating his own utopia. One of the dreams of Gene Roddenberry, who was the creator of Star Trek, was that man was going to improve himself so much in the future, that he would create literally a utopia where money and jealousy and greed and hunger and all these things would be completely put away. Well, you know, it makes for great sci-fi and I've even always kind of been a sci-fi fan, but I have the ability to separate sci-fi from reality. Amen (from the audience).

And the fact of the matter is, is that man is never going to create his own utopia on the face of the earth and the reason is because man possesses a sinful nature, and that's going to keep that from happening. Because we're never going to be able to get away from our base instincts from the standpoint of just the things that drive the flesh. It's, it isn't until we are separated from the flesh that we are separated from the sinful nature.

So, you know, today we have the power through Jesus to put off the sinful nature and to have victory over the sinful nature but that victory isn't perfect. In other words, we don't become holy in the sense that we're sinless or we don't reach that place of perfection this side of glory.

There is victory, that's not to say there isn't, there is victory. We can have victory over those base instincts and we can walk in the victory of Jesus over besetting sins and there's renewal and there's the new creation, and those are all a reality. But it's not going to be a perfect reality until Jesus returns.

And so that means that the world in which we live is never going to take on that perfect reality of utopia or perfection. But this, these descriptive words related to this new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven, from God are they that help us to understand that this is when this is finally going to happen.

It is going to be new and it is going to be holy, set apart, completely different. And the name Jerusalem, I think is also significant. Not only does it tie it to the connection that God has in the past with the earthly city of Jerusalem, but you know, Jerusalem, you know, means "city of peace". You know, it's part of Jerusalem is "Shalom" in the Hebrew, which is peace.

And so, it has always been called the "City of Peace". But let me ask you this, has it ever been the City of Peace? No, it's never attained to that title, but the

new Jerusalem is going to, it's going to attain to that title, and it's going to be everything that the earthly Jerusalem could never be.

And then John hears those words where he says he hears:

³ “... *“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”* (ESV)

God is going to dwell in the midst of man and man is going to dwell in the midst of God in the new Jerusalem.

And that's exciting to think about. You know, we live in a situation today where we understand that God is everywhere present, but there are times, you know, when we just don't, we don't sense the presence of God. He's there, but we just don't sense his presence. And there are times that we can feel very distant from God and even David, when he cried out to the Lord during, in some of the Psalms, he would talk about his, that distance that he felt between himself and the Lord.

And even though we as believers have the Holy Spirit living within us, and that's a reality, and that doesn't go away, we can still feel distant from God. And so, this connection, this relationship that we have with God is not a perfect one, you know, this side of glory. But there is coming a time when there is going to be a completely new relationship in our existence with God. He will dwell with us and we with Him in intimate and close fellowship.

And then in verse 4, these wonderfully comforting words that we hear. It says:

⁴ *“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”* (ESV)

And the reason that God is going to take those things away is because He never intended for them to be here in the first place. He never intended for there to be tears in our eyes, death in our bodies, mourning, crying. The Bible even says, *“sighing will flee away.”* (Isaiah 51:11)

I never knew that you could sigh so much until I hit my 60s. You know, it's just, I sigh all the time, you know? And Sue's like, what's wrong? You're sighing. I

say, it's just me, just old age, I'm sorry. You know, it's just life, you know? Just get used to it, you know? But isn't it great to know that it's going to pass away?

Those things came into reality because mankind corrupted God's creation. We get so used to things, we just assume they've always been around, you know. Sometimes I'll tell a new believer that God never intended there to be death, He didn't create death, and they're kind of like serious? Really? Because it's such a common part of their reality that they just, they figured it's always been around.

I mean, hasn't death always been here? No, death has not always been here, it was not part of God's creation. Sin and crying and pain, the corruption of our bodies. You think God factored that into creation? I'm going to create these people and then they're going to slowly die. How fun is that? I wouldn't call that good.

You know what's interesting about that? When God told Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree in the middle of the garden, which was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he told them that the day they eat of it, they would die. (Genesis 2:1)

But you know in the original Hebrew that actually means “dying you will die.” In other words, He said that you it will begin a process of dying whereby your body will begin to decay and erode until you eventually expire and that's exactly what happened.

They didn't instantly die from a physical standpoint, they were instantly separated from God in a spiritual sense, and there was truly a death there. But the physical body did carry on, in fact, they lived a long time.

But can you imagine what it must have felt like for them to be in those physical bodies that in one moment went from perfect and without any decay or deterioration to suddenly (Pastor Paul snaps his fingers) beginning that deterioration process. Can you imagine when, you know, I mean, these are things I think of just because my brain is weird, but I think, you know, what was it like to get, you know, when Adam got his first toothache, you know? And is like, what is this, you know? It's sort of a thing, you know, and we just take it for granted. Call the dentist, I have a toothache, you need to have something fixed. You know, that wasn't meant to be that way.

Then John hears a voice, verse 6 from the Lord:

⁶ *“And he said to me, “It is done!...” (ESV)*

Sounds like a similar cry from the cross that Jesus made, doesn't it? When He said *"it is finished"* (John 19:30) So we asked the question, what is done? What's finished? Well, God's plan from the beginning to overturn man's sin to make all things new, that's what's done. And so, God goes on to say:

⁶ *"...I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. ..."* (ESV)

Alpha and Omega being the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. And then John hears the Lord speak of the contrast between those who are in Christ and those who have rejected Him. He says:

⁶ *"...To the thirsty (and this is those who are in Christ) I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment."*

⁷ *"The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."* (ESV)

And when he refers to the one who conquers, he's talking about the one who remains faithful and who continues to have confidence in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. But then here's the contrast:

⁸ *"But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."* (ESV)

And so, you'll see that there's this contrast created between those who are saved and those who have rejected the salvation that is ours in Jesus. And now John is going to receive a final vision for the book of Revelation and he says, he tells us that:

⁹ *"Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, 'Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.'"*

¹⁰ *"And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,*

¹¹ *having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal."* (ESV)

So once again, we have this visual contrast to something we saw earlier. Do you remember when John saw or beheld the vision of the great prostitute?

(Revelation 17:1) And that was this picture of, you know, the of what they called “Babylon”, the symbol of man's evil and rebellion and you know, defiance against the Lord and so forth and how that that symbol was judged.

And now we see this contrast. And so, Chapter 21 is this interesting kind of series of contrasts that were being shown and now we're seeing this bride, which of course represents the faithful in Christ, but who are seen in this vision as a holy dwelling place for the Lord. And that doesn't mean that you, you and me are going to be a building, you know, in heaven. That's not the point. The point here is that we're giving, we're being given a representative picture of the people of God being the place where God now dwells, literally the house of the Lord and the city of the Lord, where God, you know, dwells and is glorified and magnified and it is in our midst. And that is the picture that, that we are being given here.

And then John begins to describe the Holy City, and it's pretty interesting too. He says:

¹² *“It had a great, high wall, ...” (ESV)*

And you're going to see how high in just a minute. He says:

¹² *“... with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—*

¹³ *on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.*

¹⁴ *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” (ESV)*

It'll be interesting to see who the 12th apostle is, won't it? I can just see we're all going to get to heaven, we're going to go, okay. We're going to, we're going to go right over to the foundation and look, because, you know, the Bible tells us in Acts chapter 1, that they picked someone to take Judas's place and it was a man named Mathias. (Acts 1:26)

But you know, we never hear anything from him. But then we know that there was this supernatural work that God did in bringing this other apostle named Paul into the fold. And there are many people who believe that Paul was actually God's intended 12th Apostle. But it'll, it'll be interesting, you know, when we get there and we find out.

But what's interesting about these inscriptions, both on the gates and on the foundations, notice on the gates we have the names of the 12 tribes of Israel; the Sons of Israel, and then on the foundation we have the 12 apostles of the lamb. And we see this whole thing all put together and we see that Christianity and Judaism, we look at those things as Christianity and Judaism, but that's not the way God looks at it.

It's just, it's just God's plan, it's just God's purpose and it's all one. You know, it's all one. It's, you can see that the inscriptions of the Sons of Israel and the inscriptions of the names of the Apostles are all on the same building. They're, they're all part of the same structure.

And that tells you and me, that we're talking about God's one redemptive program that makes its way from the Old Testament into the new and ties them both together; they are together. This is why we study the Old Testament. This is why we study it along with the New Testament. They are all one; it's not two religions. It's one program of God, one redemptive plan.

And he goes on in verse 15 to say:

¹⁵ “And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls.” (ESV)

And this is where it gets interesting, he says:

¹⁶ “The city lies foursquare, ...” (ESV)

In other words, it's like a cube and, and he tells us here that:

¹⁶ “... its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width (get this) and height are equal.

And 12,000 stadia is somewhere between 1,400 and 1,500 miles. So, this city is going to be 1,400 to 1500 miles square and high, yeah, I know, sounds crazy to me too.

But that's, you know, God can do anything He wants to do. I think about 1,500 miles and that's a really easy distance for me to think about because every time, in all the years that Sue and I have lived here, that we packed up our family and drove to Minnesota to visit our family, it was almost exactly 1,500 miles.

And, you know, that's about, I mean, driving nonstop, that would take you like 24 hours to go about 1,500 miles, depending if you go to the speed limit or not, which I do. (Laughter from the audience) But you know, and we, we would never go 24 hours straight, of course. But yeah, it's a long, that's a long trip.

This is the city, this is the new Jerusalem, it's going to be big. I can't imagine a city 1,500 miles high. But anyway, verse 17 says:

¹⁷ *“He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.” (ESV)*

So whatever men came up with for a cubit, the angels went, hey, that's right, that's what we do too. (Laughter from the audience) But anyway, I don't know, that it's good to know I guess. When you get to heaven, you can, you, if you measure things in cubits, you'll know that you got a consistent measurement going on. But a cubit, by the way, is 18 inches, okay. So, this is, the wall is 144 times 18 inches, you do the math. I was never good at that, but that gives you a little sense.

And he tells us here in verse 18 that:

¹⁸ *“The wall was built of jasper, (which is apparently some kind of a reddish brown quartz) while the city (itself we’re told) was pure gold, (it was) like clear glass.” (ESV)*

Gold that was clear, okay, gold that you can see through, which doesn't seem to us like gold at all. But anyway, it's going to be pretty cool. Verse 19:

¹⁹ *“The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. (and then he names them all) The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,*

²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.” (ESV)

I don't even know what many of those even looked like.

²¹ *“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, (get this) each of the gates made of a single pearl, ...” (ESV)*

That is a big clam, (laughter from the audience) that's a big clam, yes sir, right. To make a pearl big enough for a single gate.

²¹ *“... and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.” (ESV)*

There again, and he says:

²² *“And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.*

²³ *And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.*

²⁴ *By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,*

²⁵ *and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.” (ESV)*

So, there's going to be nations and kings. That's interesting too, isn't it? And it says that in verse 26 that:

²⁶ *“They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.*

²⁷ *But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.” (ESV)*

Because, those people aren't going to be around and that's why they're not going to be coming into it.

So, chapter 22 this is our final chapter in Revelation, John says:

¹ *“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb*

² *through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” (ESV)*

And this has brought up questions in people's mind and they're kind of thinking, you know, this is, we're really in that time called eternity now. This is past the

time of the millennial kingdom, this is when the new heaven and the new earth are come about. The new Jerusalem is established on the earth as this incredible city where the light is given from the glory of God. And yet we read here that the leaves of the tree, of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations.

And so, people have asked the question, what do they need healing from? Because, we would assume that all, we already heard that death and dying and, and pain and suffering, all those things have passed away. Well, interestingly enough, I discovered that the word “healing” that is used here in the Greek, which by the way is where we get our word “therapeutic”, interestingly enough, can also be translated “health giving”.

So, in other words, it doesn't necessarily mean that something is being healed from having been hurt or wounded or sick, but it's just a perpetuation of health. In other words, it's a constant health. And so that could very well be the meaning that is being used in this passage.

Verse 3 says:

³ *“No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.*

⁴ *They will see his face, (and that’s something we’ve never been able to do) and his name will be on their foreheads.” (ESV)*

And that again, we talked about that during the time of the mark of the beast, that speaks of ownership, belonging. That's why the anti-Christ did that.

⁵ *“And night will be no more. (isn't that interesting?) They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.” (ESV)*

Who's going to reign forever and ever? His servants, because that's the context of verse 3.

⁶ *“And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”*

⁷ *“And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.” (ESV)*

Now that's an interesting statement, isn't it? We're told to pay attention to the things that have been laid out and I believe that the reason is because this book is for you and me. It's meant to keep us alert, to remember the coming of the Lord is at hand, that the next, for us, the next prophetic event is the catching away of the church. There's nothing else that needs to happen prophetically guys before Jesus comes for his church.

I get that question all the time. People, and people assume that there are things, and so people will ask me, what needs to happen before Christ returns for his church? And I write him back and its one word response: "Nothing, nothing." Jesus could come at any time and, and so, you know, that's the purpose of this book. So, there's a blessing, blessing to the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

Verse 8 says:

⁸ *"I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me,*

⁹ *but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.""* (ESV)

Boy, we've had that come up here several times, haven't we already here in the book of Revelation. And John is told in verse 10:

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 evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy."* (ESV)

And I know that that can sound pretty confusing, what you read there in verse 11 and I want you to know as you look at that verse, that the angel is not encouraging people to keep living an evil lifestyle. That's not what's being said here, he's not saying, so, you know, whatever you're doing right now, just keep it up and just go for it. You know, if you're doing evil, just keep doing evil.

Because you see this comment in verse 11 comes directly on the heels of what was said in verse 10, and that is "*the time is near.*" "*The time is near*" and the warning that is given to you and me in this book, or frankly to anybody, is that

when Christ returns the chance to change one's life will have passed, it's going to be over.

And so, you know, this is, the whole purpose of this comment is to essentially exhort people to get right with God, come to the Lord now. You know, I've actually heard people say, you know, life is a little too fun for me to come to Christ in my youth, I'll just wait till I'm older. I mean, what a ridiculously stupid comment. ("Amen, fact" comment from a member of the audience).

Because you know, you don't know if you're going to ever be older. ("That's right" comment from a member of the audience) You know, you don't, you don't even know which way the wind blows, let alone what's going to happen tomorrow. So, the exhortation is, don't delay, today is the day of salvation, today is the day to get right with the Lord. Today is the day to come to Christ. Don't wait, because when it's, when it's over, it's over and you don't want to be caught in that sort of a situation.

Verse 12:

¹² *"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done."* (ESV)

And you know that, that first, the repayment for believers takes place at the Bema Seat judgment, we call it the Bema Seat judgment because that's a word that describes a judgment of rewards for believers, and that's the recompense that you're going to receive for what you've done, and meaning what you've done for the Lord.

In other words, how you've taken what the Lord gave you, his resources, the talents and abilities that he's bestowed upon you and how you've used them for the Lord, he's going to reward you accordingly. But that's all that you're going to receive, you're not going to receive recompense for sins and I've said this many times, I'm going to repeat it again, you are not going to stand before the Lord for your sin. Jesus already stood in your place and He did it perfectly and He finished that sacrifice.

So, your sacrifice is not going to be needed in that respect. What we do is we sacrifice our lives today to serve the Lord, to give our lives the way in service to the Lord, and to do what we have, you know?

And what you have is what is right in front of you. Let me just say that in case you're wondering, well, what do I have? Whatever's right in front of you, if

you're raising children, that's what you have, that's what's right in front of you. Raise them for the glory of God, raise them to know Jesus, raise them to know Christ, to know His word, you know? And if you're, and whatever you're doing, whatever is in front of you right now, do that for the glory of God. And so, Jesus says, I'm going to:

¹² *“...to repay each one for what he has done.” (ESV)*

Verse 13. Once again:

¹³ *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” (ESV)*

Who's talking here in verses 12 and 13? Well, we know it's Jesus, don't we? And the reason we know that is because He says, I'm coming soon, Jesus is coming soon. So, He refers to himself as the Alpha and the Omega. But at the beginning of this book, you might remember that we hear those words, those same words. *“I am the Omega,”* the Lord God. And so, the Alpha and the Omega is the Lord God. So, but, once again, we're hearing this repeated exhortation to be ready for the return of the Lord. Let me show you something from Luke chapter 12, Jesus said to you and me:

(slide)

Luke 12:35-38 (ESV)

“Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants!”

The second and third watch of the night, those are toughies. Those are toughies to stay awake; that's the middle of the night, those are the wee hours. It's very difficult to stay awake in the wee hours, but we need to stay awake and that's what we're being told to do right here.

Verse 14 says:

¹⁴ *“Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.” (ESV)*

“Blessed are those who wash their robes.” How are we washed? How have we washed our robes in the blood of the lamb. But again, the contrast:

¹⁵ *“Outside (he says) are the dogs...” (ESV)*

And that's a biblical term for the morally impure. I know for you dog lovers, you might not like that very much, but it's too bad, it is what it is.

¹⁵ *“...and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.” (ESV)*

And, I want you to notice there in verse 15, it says:

¹⁵ *“Outside are the dogs...” (ESV)*

Well outside of what? Well, the city, because in verse 14 it says,

¹⁴ *“Blessed are those who wash their robes, ... that they may enter the city by the gates” (ESV)*

And then it says:

¹⁵ *“Outside are the dogs...” (ESV)*

But I want you to know there that when it says “outside”, it doesn't mean that just outside the new Jerusalem you're going to be, you're going to see the lost who are unable to get in. This is figurative language to simply say that those who had rejected Christ and his salvation are nowhere near the place of blessing.

And now Jesus speaks once again saying in verse 16:

¹⁶ *“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. ...” (ESV)*

Now isn't that interesting? This is the very first time that the church or the churches has been mentioned since we read about the letters that Jesus dictated

to the 7 churches of Asia Minor in the opening chapters of this book, we haven't heard the word churches since that time.

This is the very first time and what does He say? He says:

¹⁶ *"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. ..."* (ESV)

And we know that they represent all of the body of Christ. So, this has been given to us. And then I want you to notice here what Jesus says about Himself, He says:

¹⁶ *"...I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."* (ESV)

I want you to notice that Jesus refers to himself as both the root and the descendant of David, your Bible may say the offspring of David.

What is a root? It is the source, right? It's the source of something. What is the offspring? Well, it's the fruit, it's what comes after when the root grows up. After it takes, root grows up and the tree grows, it bears fruit. And that would be a similar, this is a picture of that being like offspring.

So yeah. I want you to notice here that Jesus is saying I am both the source, I am both a source of David and I am a descendant of David. This is an interesting statement because he's declaring both His deity and His humanity. As God, He is the source of David, as man, He is the offspring of David, but He is both. He says, I'm both.

And so, we, we hold those truths intention that Jesus is God in human flesh. He is God and He is man. He is together, the God man. And He is still that today when he died on the cross and was raised and ascended into heaven, He did not cease to be a man. He is still a man. He is still the man God. There is a man representing us on the throne of God to God the Father interceding on our behalf. A man, one of us, crazy as that may sound, you say, well, pastor Paul how can that be? Don't ask me. It's far beyond my pay grade, that's simply what the Bible says. He says, *"I am the root"*, I am the offspring of David, the divine and the human.

Verse 17.

¹⁷ *"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.'"* (ESV)

So, we know what the cry of the Holy Spirit is, we know what the cry of the church is. And I hear this from people all the time. You know, we'll be talking, we'll be talking about the world. We'll be talking about what they're going on in their life or what's happening in their body or whatever and there, we will just kind of having a talk and then they'll just say, you know, kind of the way of ending the conversation is "come Lord Jesus", you know? And that's just kind of what we say: "Come Lord Jesus, Lord, come." And that's, it's the cry of our heart, the spirit and the brides, they come. The Spirit within us is urging us to cry out, come Lord Jesus, Maranatha!. That's what that means.

¹⁷ *"...And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; ..."* (ESV)

Now, there's an interesting switch where we were saying, Jesus, you come. Now we're saying if you're thirsty, if you desire the things of the Lord, then you come, you come to him.

¹⁷ *"...let the one who desires take the water of life (because it's free, it's) without price."* (ESV)

And that's such a beautiful reminder. So first we bid Jesus to come, but you know, in the midst of that, we can't get caught up in that and just say, oh Jesus, come, I'm just going to go up on the roof and wait for you. No, there's work to be done. We're to occupy until he comes, we're to be busy. We're to be out saying let him who hears come. If you're thirsty, come, you want Jesus, come drink from the waters of life, it's free, and that's what we're supposed to be doing until he comes.

I want Jesus to come. If he comes in my lifetime, I want him to find me being faithful, don't you? Just being faithful to what God has given you to do and to share the love of Jesus and to invite people. Be inviting people. Come, don't wait, don't delay, come, come now. Now is the time to come.

And then we have a warning. It says:

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

And this is a warning to those who would purposely distort the words of this prophetic book? And, we're not talking here about somebody who mistakenly

misinterprets because that's happened a lot. We're talking about a premeditated effort. But you know, Moses gave a similar warning when it came to the word of the Lord that was given through the Mosaic Covenant.

Let me put Deuteronomy up on the slide for you. Deuteronomy, chapter 4. Is it there? Did I not put it there? Well, then I won't put it up then, I'll just read it to you. Here's what it says:

Deuteronomy 4:2 (ESV)

“You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you.”

Now, who were those commands given to? They were given to the Nation of Israel. Did the Nation of Israel add to the word or take away from the word? Yeah, big time and Jesus rebuked them for it.

When He, when He came to the earth, you know, in His first coming, He rebuked the people of Israel saying that you set aside the word of God in order to keep your own traditions, you set aside God's word so that you can just keep things you've made up. And so, they did add to the word and they were soundly rebuked, and it led many astray. And so, we're told not to do that. Be careful not to make the same mistake.

Verse 20:

²⁰ “He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (ESV)

And John's response is, amen, come Lord Jesus. And then Revelation ends with these words.

²¹ “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.” (ESV)

And with that, we complete our study of the Book of Revelation, so let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we are so thankful that you've given us your word. Your word is true and your word is life and we consume it and we receive life and wisdom, and insight and understanding. And we praise you, Lord, for those things, we praise you, that you have given us this word and kept it for us, and we receive it by faith and we trust, Lord God, that you are the ones speaking to us through it

and reminding us of all of these things that we might be ready for the coming of our groom, our bridegroom, to catch away the church.

Lord, may we be ready, may we keep our lamps lit and burning, may we be busy and about the work that you've given us to do. May we be faithful.

Lord, forgive us for all of the distractions that we have allowed to take place in our lives, to keep us from doing the work that you've called us to do. Forgive us, Lord, forgive us for being so distracted by the things of the world that don't last.

And that don't really mean anything in the grand scheme of things, but Lord, that we have put so much time and so much energy and so much effort into, and yet we know that these things will not last. Help us, Lord Jesus, to seek first the kingdom of God, to serve you with a whole heart, to live for you with undivided devotion.

We thank you Lord for the wonderful blessings you've given to us in this life. And I know that you enjoy when we enjoy the blessings of this life. But help us, Lord, just to keep them into perspective. Not to live for them, but to enjoy them, but to live instead for you. We look to you to keep us by faith until that day. Come Lord Jesus, for it is in that name we pray and all God's people said together Amen.

God bless you.