

Revelation 22 Commentary

PREVIOUS [Revelation 22](#)

NEXT

CONTENTS

- [Revelation 22:1](#)
- [Revelation 22:2](#)
- [Revelation 22:3](#)
- [Revelation 22:4](#)
- [Revelation 22:5](#)
- [Revelation 22:6](#)
- [Revelation 22:7](#)
- [Revelation 22:8](#)
- [Revelation 22:9](#)
- [Revelation 22:10](#)
- [Revelation 22:11](#)
- [Revelation 22:12](#)
- [Revelation 22:13](#)
- [Revelation 22:14](#)
- [Revelation 22:15](#)
- [Revelation 22:16](#)
- [Revelation 22:17](#)
- [Revelation 22:18](#)
- [Revelation 22:19](#)
- [Revelation 22:20](#)
- [Revelation 22:21](#)
- [Epilogue](#)

Revelation 22:1

In the previous chapter, John was shown a new order of things. An entirely [new heaven](#) and [earth](#) were created to replace the first heaven and earth which fled away at the [Great White Throne Judgment](#) (Rev. 20:11⁺). In addition to the new heaven and new earth, John saw the holy city, the [New Jerusalem](#), descending from heaven as a bride for the [Lamb](#) (Rev. 21:2, 9⁺). John's vision was given in two parts. The first part provided an overview of the eternal order (Rev. 21:1-8⁺). In the second part, an angel accompanied John on a more detailed tour of the [New Jerusalem](#), providing additional information and measurements of the city. In many ways, the chapter break at Revelation 21:27⁺ is unfortunate because the first five verses of this chapter should really be considered as the conclusion of John's detailed tour of the [New Jerusalem](#).

he showed me

This is the angel who first accompanied John "in the Spirit" to show him the holy [Jerusalem](#), descending out of heaven from God (Rev. 21:10⁺). This is one of the angels having the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues (Rev. 21:9⁺). It may be the same angel which took him "in the Spirit" to see the great harlot, Babylon (Rev. 17:3⁺). The tour contrasts the [New Jerusalem](#), the city of God, with Babylon, the city of man.

a pure river of water of life

This is the fountain of the water of life which God promised to the thirsty in the previous chapter (Rev. 21:6⁺). Its ultimate source is God Himself, for it proceeds from His throne (cf. Ps. 36:8-9; 46:4). A similar river will flow from under the threshold of the [Millennial Temple](#) (Eze. 47:1-2; Zec. 14:8⁺), but that river does not reach all regions, so sin remains in the Millennium (Eze. 47:11). Now, sin is no more and life abounds in all parts of the new creation. See commentary on [Revelation 7:17](#), [Revelation 21:6](#), and [Revelation 22:17](#).

clear as crystal

The purity and clarity of the water is remarkable to John. The clarity speaks of sinlessness and symbolizes the cleansing from sin of those who partake of the river. Although this is a literal river in the eternal state, it also typifies the Holy Spirit Who cleanses and gives life to those who trust Christ in this age (John 4:10⁺; Jn 7:37-38⁺). In the eternal state, there is no more death because there is no more sin (Rev. 21:4⁺). When John first ascended to the throne room in heaven, he saw the sea of glass like crystal, in the midst of the throne (Rev. 4:6⁺). The sea of glass probably symbolized this river which would be the basis of cleansing and eternal life in the new heaven and earth. Although the nations will partake of the tree of life, the tree itself draws from this river of life (cf. Ps. 1:3⁺).

proceeding from the throne of God and of the [Lamb](#)

The river proceeds from the throne because the source of all life is ultimately God (Job 33:4; Eze. 37:9⁺; John 1:4⁺; John 14:6; Acts 3:15⁺; Rev. 11:11⁺).

There is no sea from which waters are raised by the sun, as in the present hydrologic cycle (Rev. 21:1⁺) and thus no rainfall to supply the river with its flow. Rather, it proceeds "out of the throne of God and of the [Lamb](#)," high at the central pinnacle of the holy city. Evidently the mighty Creator is continually creating the waters, then sending them forth to give perpetual life and cleansing and beauty to the city and its inhabitants, and then on out into the uttermost parts of the new earth.¹

The throne is of *God and of the Lamb*. In the eternal state, there is no more distinction between the throne of the Father in heaven and that of the Son on earth (Mat. 25:31; Rev. 3:21+). Jesus rules from the Davidic throne during the *Millennial Kingdom* until the last enemy, death, is destroyed (Rev. 20:14+). Then, He delivers the kingdom to God the Father (1Cor. 15:24-26+) and the throne of David merges with the heavenly throne of the Father (Rev. 22:3+) and both the Father and the Son continue to rule forever. See commentary on [Revelation 3:21](#) and [Revelation 20:14](#). On Jesus as the Lamb, see commentary on [Revelation 5:6](#).

Revelation 22:2

In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree ([xulon](#)) of life ([zoe](#))

The Greek lacks the article: *the tree* ([xulon](#)). There are several trees, each of them a *tree of life*. "It was not one individual tree, but a particular tree as to its kind, as we speak of 'the apple' or 'the oak,' denoting a species of which there are many specimens."² There may have been exactly three trees, or John saw three groups of trees of the same kind in each of the three areas. What John sees is very similar to what Ezekiel saw during the Millennium, but Ezekiel's trees were not the tree of life, but other nourishing trees which provide long life during the *Millennial Kingdom* (Isa. 65:20):

Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow *allkinds of trees* used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine. (Eze. 47:12)

Medicine (Eze. 47:12) is תרופה [t^orûpâ]: either from the root רופ [rûp], to *make small* as in medical powder, or from רפא [rāpâ], to *heal*.³ Translated by רפוא [hybieia cf *hugies/hygies*] in the LXX: *health, soundness of body*. During the Millennium, the leaves of the trees near the river will provide for the physical healing of the peoples, but it is important to recognize that these trees cannot be the tree of life. Those who consume the leaves live to an advanced age, but do not avoid death (Isa. 65:20).⁴ Jesus said to the church at Ephesus that He would give the overcomer "to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7+). He alluded to the original placement of the tree of life in the [Garden of Eden](#) (Ge 2:9) and indicated that the redeemed would once more have access to the tree in a future paradise—the eternal state which John now sees. Those who do His commandments (or *wash their robes*, [MT](#) and [NU](#) texts) will have authority to access the tree of life (Rev. 22:14+). Those who take away from the words of the book of this prophecy will have their part taken away from the tree of life (Rev. 22:19+, [MT](#) and [NU](#) texts). Evidently, access to the tree of life is one and the same as salvation and indicates that all who inhabit the eternal state will have access to the tree on an equal basis. When man rebelled in the [Garden of Eden](#), he was cut off from the tree of life (Ge 3:22-24+). Since then, death has reigned over all peoples, even the people of God—with few exceptions. We rejoice in the fact that in the redemptive counsels of God, history is to be brought full circle to affect a full return to a Paradise without death which was previously lost:

The harmonious unity of Scripture is herein exhibited. The Fathers compared it to a ring, an unbroken circle, returning into itself. Between the events of Genesis and those at the close of the Apocalypse, at least six thousand or seven thousand years intervene; and between Moses the first writer and John the last about one thousand five hundred years. How striking it is that, as in the beginning we found Adam and Eve, his bride, in innocence in Paradise, then tempted by the serpent, and driven from the tree of life, and from the pleasant waters of Eden, yet not without a promise of a Redeemer who should crush the serpent; so at the close, the old serpent cast out for ever by the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who appears with His Bride, the Church, in a better Paradise, and amidst better waters (Rev. 22:1+): the tree of life also is there with all its healing properties, not guarded with a flaming sword, but open to all who overcome (Rev. 2:7+), and there is no more curse.⁵

All worlds move in circles; and the grand march of God's providence with man moves in one immense round. It starts with Paradise, and thence moves out through strange and untried paths, until it has fulfilled its grand revolution by coming back to the point from which it started; not indeed to repeat itself, but thenceforward to rest forever in the results of that wonderful experiment. Genesis is the Book of beginnings; the Revelation is the Book of the endings of what was then begun; and the last laps back upon the first, and welds the two ends of the history into a golden ring of eternity.⁶

See [Genesis and Revelation as Bookends](#). During this present age, where physical death has not yet been abolished, those who follow after God are likened to a fruitful tree typified by the tree of life near the river of living water which John sees in the eternal state.⁷

Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. (Ps. 1:1-3+)

Between the Fall in the [Garden of Eden](#) (Ge 3:22-24+) and the creation of the new heavens and earth (Rev. 21:1+), the cross of Jesus Christ is the *tree of life* for all who trust in His redeeming work (Acts 5:30+; Gal. 3:13+; 1Pe. 2:24+).

which bore twelve fruits ([karpos](#))

Which bore is [ποιο υ](#) [poioun - lemma = [poieo](#)], present tense participle: *continually making*. The text implies fruit is continuously being produced from which we can conclude it is also being consumed on an ongoing basis.

each *tree* yielding

Yielding is [ποδιδο υ](#) [apodidoun - lemma = [apodidomi](#)], present tense participle: *continually giving out*.

every month

The tree produces fruit on a monthly basis. Its ongoing production implies an ongoing consumption of the fruit by the nations, although this is not explicitly said. In the [Millennial Kingdom](#), the fruit of similar trees were used for food (Eze. 47:12), whereas their leaves were used for medicine. In the eternal state, John sees the leaves used for healing, but nothing is said concerning the use of the fruit. We can probably assume the nations will eat of the fruit of the tree. This should not be surprising since Jesus, in His resurrected body, continued to eat food (John 21:12; Acts 10:41+).⁸

And whether they need it for the support of their undecaying immortality or not, [partaking of the **Tree of Life**] is everywhere presented as one of the most precious privileges of God's glorified saints. We cannot suppose that they ever hunger or thirst in that high realm, or that there is ever any waste in their immortal energies needing recuperation from physical digestion; but still the participation of these Life-fruits bespeaks a communion with Life, the joy of which exceeds all present comprehension.⁹

The mention of *months* may imply that the sun and moon, although not needed for light in the vicinity of the [New Jerusalem](#), continue to exist within the eternal state.¹⁰

The fact that months are identified as such in [the] [New Jerusalem](#) indicates that the orbital and rotational motions of the earth will go on as God established in the very beginning and that the moon likewise will continue orbiting around the earth.¹¹

See commentary on [Revelation 21:23](#). The productivity of the tree in eternity is a model of what the Christian life is to be now. Believers are to be *continuously* yielding spiritual fruit, much of which is also for the healing of the nations. God expects productivity from all who would serve Him (cf. Mt. 21:19; Mark 11:13+).¹² In the same way the tree of life yields fruit because of its position next to the river of life, so must the productive Christian abide in Christ:

Abide ([meno](#) - [aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you [abide in Me](#). I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides ([meno](#) - present tense) in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit ([karpos](#)); for without ([choris](#)) Me you can do nothing. (John 15:4-5)

The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations

Healing is [θεραπεσιον](#) [therapeian]: which can also denote "serving, service, care."¹³ The leaves, in some way, provide "prosperity for the nations."¹⁴ Jesus taught that all who exist in the eternal state with a glorified body are equal to the angels and *cannot die* (Luke 20:35-36+). But here, John is shown the tree of life and told: "the leaves of the tree of life were for the healing of the nations." Even if *healing* ([θεραπεσιον](#) [therapeian]) is taken to mean *service* (Luke 12:42+; Mat. 24:45), there is still the question as to why the nations would need ongoing access to the tree of life? And if the nations access the tree in relation to life, how does that square with Jesus' teaching that those who have been glorified cannot die? Similar questions confront us in the book of Genesis, before the Fall into sin. Adam and Eve are in the [Garden of Eden](#) in a state of sinless perfection, and are given access to the tree of life (Ge 2:9, 16+). Later, when they disobey God, their access to the tree is cut off lest they eat of it and live forever (Ge 3:22-24+). Several things are implied by the Genesis account: (1) the tree of life served a purpose in the [Garden of Eden](#) prior to the entrance of sin and death; (2) Adam and Eve undoubtedly partook of the fruit of the tree before their fall into sin since it was permitted; (3) had Adam and Eve *continued* to eat from the tree after their fall into sin, then they would never have died. It seems that ongoing access to the tree provided eternal life. But how does this fit with the abundant Scriptural teaching that death is a result of sin (Ge. 2:17+; Ro 5:12-15, 21+; Ro 6:16, 23+; Ro 7:5, 11-13+; Ro 8:2+; Jas. 1:15+)? In the absence of sin, both in the [Garden of Eden](#) before the Fall and in the eternal state, what purpose does the tree of life serve?

Why would healing be necessary in eternity? What is the meaning of the healing leaves? What is their purpose? Admittedly these questions are puzzling. However, the concept of healing leaves need not imply sickness. The tree of life existed in the [Garden of Eden](#) before sin and sickness (Ge 2:9+; Ge 3:22+), and it can also exist in the [New Jerusalem](#) without illness. After all, there will be no curse there (Rev. 22:3+).¹⁵

Healing, however, does not necessarily indicate the presence of disease any more than the wiping away of tears (Rev. 21:4+) implies that sorrow still exists in the [New Jerusalem](#). The tears were those caused by the troubles of this creation, tears that will no longer exist in the new creation. Likewise, the disease for which this healing provides is that of the former creation which no longer exists in the [New Jerusalem](#).¹⁶

With such an understanding, we can suggest a relationship between the *tree of life*, *sin*, and *death*. The tree of life serves as a source from which sinless men obtain life. They do not attain eternal life in any sort of *independent manner*, but are completely and forever dependent upon God, the ultimate source of life. This dependence is reflected in their need to access the fruit from the tree for its life-giving qualities. The moment sin enters into the picture, as it did in the Garden and which it can never do again in eternity, *independence* of God results.¹⁷ When sin entered in the [Garden of Eden](#) and independence from God with it, God saw fit to remove access to the tree of life—the very channel by which He had chosen to dispense eternal life. The result was death. To summarize: sin brought independence from God which was manifest in being cut off from the tree of life resulting in death. In the eternal state, man will be sinless and have eternal life, but the creation and the creature will always and forever remain *dependent* upon the Creator as the source of life. The ongoing need to access the tree of life for eternity reflects the continued dependence of the creatures upon the Creator—a reality which God has chosen to manifest via the tree. Some attempt to avoid these questions by taking the tree of life as symbolic of salvation and spiritual life, and not as a real tree in a real eternal city. However, there are numerous reasons why the tree in the [New Jerusalem](#) should be taken as a literal tree:

Some interpreters view the tree as only symbolic. But a literal view of the tree is proper for two reasons. First, since there was a literal tree of life in the historical [Garden of Eden](#) (Ge 2:9+; Ge 3:22, 24+), it is possible for this tree also to be literal. Second, if the city, walls, gates, street, river, and light are literal (and the most reasonable evidence shows that they are), then the tree of life is most likely literal also. However, viewing the tree as literal does not exclude its also having symbolic significance for those who see it and eat of it. Just as the literal walls and foundations of the [New Jerusalem](#) will be memorials to Israel and to the apostles (Rev. 21:12+, 14+), so the tree of life can have a memorial function also.¹⁸

Even those who take the tree literally struggle with the idea that healing should be found in the tree. Some propose that the healing relates to the maintenance of a population among the faithful who still reside in natural bodies in eternity. The “healing problem,” along with the possible differences between the nations and kings of the earth which reside *outside* the city versus the glorified saints *within* the city, have caused some to suggest that the nations in the eternal state may be made up of humans in their natural bodies living in conditions much like that of the original creation. This might answer some of the puzzles which are before us: why God created a new heaven *and earth*, why there are gates to the city which infers some are primarily occupied outside and others inside, and why the tree of life remains if only glorified saints remain? Several expositors suggest such a solution, as we discussed in our commentary on [Revelation 21:24](#). For example:

There are two classes of people who will live eternally upon the earth: (1) the saints, who as co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17) are given glorified bodies (1Cor. 15:52), who possess the kingdom (Dan. 7:18) and rule over the kingdom (Rev. 20:4+, 6+) as its inheritors (Mat. 25:34); (2) natural people, described here [1Cor. 15:52+] as “flesh and blood” who are the eternal subjects of the kingdom, who eternally perpetuate the natural race of earthly men in the flesh (Ps. 72:5; Isa. 59:21; Eze. 37:25+; Luke 1:32-33+. 2Pe. 3:13+).¹⁹

Two classes of people are thus distinctly recognized in the new heaven and earth;—a class in glory who get the fruits of the Tree of Life, and a class in the estate of “nations” who get the leaves; but, whether fruits or leaves, a great and glorious blessing. . . . The meaning is not that the nations are full of sicknesses and ailments; for these remains of the curse are gone then, though it may be from the virtue of these leaves. The meaning rather is the preservation of health and comfort, and not that maladies then exist to be removed. The Life-leaves are for the conservation and augmentation of the Life-blessedness of men on earth, as the Life-fruits are for the joy of the saints in heaven.²⁰

One objection to such a view is found in Paul’s statement: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption” (1Cor. 15:50+). Although Jesus referred to his resurrected body as “flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39+), it was clearly a different body than that which Adam and Eve had in their natural state. Jesus’ resurrected body is the sort of incorruptible body which the saints will inherit when glorified. There is no corruption in the eternal state, for sin shall be no more. And so it was in the Garden of Eden before the fall of Adam and Eve. But the prohibition against *flesh and blood* in the ultimate kingdom of God—beyond the millennium—would seem to be at odds with a restoration of the conditions in the [Garden of Eden](#). Some try to get around the plain meaning of Paul’s statement by postulating two classes of peoples in the eternal state: those with glorified bodies who rule and reign and those in natural bodies who are their subjects.²¹ But such a proposition seems without support in Scripture which knows of only one class among the redeemed in eternity: those who inherit the kingdom, obtain eternal life, are granted the right to enter the city, and partake of the tree of life. The promise to the overcomer at the church of Ephesus and the last blessing of all of Scripture, at the close of the book, imply that *all the faithful are of a single class* in regard to

their access to the tree of life:

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. "To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." (Rev. 2:7[±])

Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. (Rev. 21:14[±])

These are the redeemed, those who obtain eternal life by faith in Christ. The promises they obtain are described in terms which match that of the *nations* and *kings of the earth* in the eternal state who bring their glory and honor through the gates into the city (Rev. 21:24-26[±]) and partake of the tree of life (Rev. 22:2[±]). Dividing up access to the tree of life into two classes, some in glorified bodies who partake of the *fruit* and others in unglorified bodies which partake of the *leaves* is without Scriptural support.

The suggestion that partaking of the Tree of Life pertains to the citizens within the city and entrance through the city's gates relates to the nations, is also faulty. Both are relevant to all believers: authority over the Tree of Life and access to the way that leads to it.²²

A better solution is to understand the mention of *nations* and *kings of the earth*, which come in through the gate to the [New Jerusalem](#), as merely a description of the identity of the redeemed from among the nations and as emphasizing their right to access the holy city which has been their ultimate hope and destiny all along (John 14:2-3; Gal. 4:25-26; Heb. 11:10+, Heb 11:16+; Heb 12:22+; Heb 13:14+; Rev. 3:12[±]). The proposal that human beings, in natural bodies, continue to populate the eternal state as separate peoples from the glorified saints seems to raise as many issues as it attempts to solve.²³ Nor does it account for the ultimate unity among the redeemed of eternity in its proposal that flesh and blood *can* inherit the eternal kingdom of God. Neither does it provide additional insight into the purpose of the tree of life in the eternal state because it proposes conditions no different than those in the [Garden of Eden](#) for which the mystery of the need for a tree of life during conditions of sinless perfection remains. As intriguing as the view may be to some, it seems to go beyond Scripture and fails to provide significant benefit in an understanding of eternity. Probably all that we can safely conclude is that the *healing* provided by the leaves of the tree provides some sort of service to the inhabitants of the eternal state. Exactly what that service is, we are not in a position to ascertain. Since the tree provides both *fruit* and *leaves*, the leaves may have a purpose unrelated to eating from the tree:

The third and preferred explanation is that the healing leaves may represent spiritual service or care. The Greek word for healing is [θεραπεία \[therapeia\]](#), "serving, service, care," from the verb [θεραπεύω \[therapeuo\]](#), "to serve, be a servant." Liddell, Scott, and Jones list many examples where this term refers to serving and has no connection with illness or the need for healing. Only in the sense of care, treatment, or serving the sick did it come to be applied to "healing" or "curing," as in "therapy" and "therapeutic." True, the word is used in Revelation 13:3[±], 12[±] of a wound healed; but in Luke 12:42+ it is used of "service" of a faithful and wise steward, and in Acts 17:25 for serving God. The leaves, then, are there to minister to or serve the redeemed as they serve God (Rev. 22:3[±]).²⁴

The chemical ingredients of the rich foliage of the trees might be available for innumerable uses in the economy of the nations which is to be kept healthy by the leaves of the tree.²⁵

Revelation 22:3

And there shall be no more curse

There shall be no more curse is [π ν κατανάθεμα ο κ σταί τι](#) [pan katanathema ouk estai eti]: *and every accursed thing not it will be still*. "And every curse will no longer be."²⁶ During the [Millennial Kingdom](#), aspects of the curse remained. Sin and death continued and the serpent still ate dust (Isa. 65:20, 25). Now, every last curse is removed, including the curses from God at the Fall of mankind into sin (Gen. 3:15-19+): death is no more (Rev. 21:4[±]). Many of the curses in the [OT](#) were in response to sin and served a corrective purpose (e.g., Dt 27:15-26+; Dt 28:15-68+). In the eternal state, there is no more sin and therefore no more need for correction by God. See [Genesis and Revelation as Bookends](#). This is the time when the "creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Ro 8:19+). At the cross, Christ had redeemed the faithful from the curse of the law, but now this becomes the real physical experience of all creation (Gal. 3:13+).

None will ever age, nothing will ever be lost, all work will be productive and enduring. The entropy law, the so-called second law of thermodynamics, will be repealed. Information will nevermore become confused, ordered systems will not deteriorate into disorder, and no longer will energy have to be expended merely to overcome friction and dissipation into nonrecoverable heat. Entropy will from now on be conserved along with energy and mass and momentum. Though "time" will continue on forever, "time's arrow" will no longer be directed downward.²⁷

It is difficult for us to even consider what such an existence would be like. Our only experience and means of existence is the current order of things, which includes the curse, entropy, friction, and so on. When we begin to consider what removal of the curse in all its

fulness might entail, we run into the near impossibility for our finite minds—so limited by our own experience—to even *conceive* of the ramifications of this pregnant phrase: *there shall be no more curse!*

Eternity is before us, and infinity surrounds us. We shall have an eternity of time to explore and discover the secrets of an infinitely varied and limitless cosmos.²⁸

but the throne of God and of the [Lamb](#) shall be in it

There is no more distinction between the throne of the Father and that of the Son (Rev. 3:21+). The Davidic throne of the Son merges with the throne of the Father in the eternal state. See commentary on [Revelation 22:1](#) and [Revelation 3:21](#).

As we pass from chapter 20 into chapter 21 of the Apocalypse, therefore, we stand at the junction point between two worlds and between two kingdoms. It is the end of the “first” or “natural” order of things, and the beginning of the final order of things. Here also the Mediatorial Kingdom of our Lord ends, not by abolition, but by its mergence into the Universal Kingdom of God. Thus it is perpetuated forever, no longer as a separate entity, but in indissoluble union with the original Kingdom of God from which it sprang. . . . This does not mean the end of our Lord’s regal activity, but rather that from here onward in the unity of the Godhead He reigns with the Father as the eternal Son. There are no longer two thrones: one His Messianic throne and the other the Father’s throne, as our Lord indicated in Revelation 3:21+. In the final Kingdom there is but one throne, and it is “the throne of God and of the [Lamb](#)” (Rev. 22:3+).²⁹

During the [Millennial Kingdom](#), God had been in the midst of the earthly Jerusalem in the person of the Son Who ruled from the Davidic throne. During that time, Jerusalem was called “THE LORD IS THERE” ([Jehovah Shammah](#)) (Eze. 48:35). Now, both Father and Son are permanently in the midst of the [New Jerusalem](#). This is the fulfillment of the proclamation of the previous chapter, “Behold, the [tabernacle](#) of God is with men, and He will dwell with them” (Rev. 21:3+). See commentary on [Revelation 21:3](#). Concerning Jesus as the *Lamb*, see commentary on [Revelation 5:6](#).

His servants shall serve Him.

Shall serve is [λατρεουσιν](#) [latreousin]: “Carrying out religious duties in a spirit of worship.”³⁰ The service will not be a burden, for it will be a form of *worship*. The service of God is a great reward! Prior to the Fall, in the [Garden of Eden](#), Adam was given the task of tending and keeping the garden (Gen. 2:15). Thus, *work is not a result of the curse, but part of God’s perfect design*.³¹

It shows us most clearly that the heaven of the glorified saints is not one of idleness. They have something more to do than tosing, and worship, and enjoy. Indeed the perfection of worship is service, activity for God, the doing of the will of God. And this is to be one of the highest characteristics of the heaven of the saints. They are to do work, heavenly work, the highest kind of work.³²

This service will not be toilsome because they shall behold the Lord and be in His presence:

One *thing* I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple. (Ps. 27:4)

Blessed is *the man* You choose, and cause to approach *You, that* he may dwell in Your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, of Your holy temple. (Ps. 65:4)

Those whom John saw coming out of the Great Tribulation were honored by serving before the throne of God day and night (Rev. 7:15+). Jesus promised that if any servant truly followed Him, then “where I am, there My servant will be also” (John 12:26). This is the role of a bond-servant who willingly forgoes the freedom to leave and chooses to remain in the master’s household to serve forever (Ex. 21:3-6+). The ultimate goal of the saints is to attain God’s presence and serve Him (Rev. 21:3+).

Revelation 22:4

They shall see His face

They shall see is [ψουτοι](#) [opsontai], middle tense: *they themselves will see*. The saints will see His face *firsthand!* The full glory of God has never been available to sinful man, for God’s fire consumes sin (Ex. 24:17+; Num. 16:35+; Dt. 4:24+; Heb. 12:29+). Therefore, God has never been seen *fully* by men in the flesh (1Jn. 4:12+). When God met with the children of Israel “face to face” on Mount Sinai, His presence was so terrifying that the children of Israel requested that Moses mediate between them and God (Dt. 5:4-5+). Even Moses, whom God later said He spoke with “face to face” (Ex. 33:11+; Num. 12:8+; Dt. 34:10+), was afraid to look upon God:

Moreover He said, “I *am* the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. (Ex. 3:6+)

When Moses asked to see the glory of the Lord, God only permitted him a passing glimpse in order that he might not be consumed:

But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." And the Lord said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen." (Ex. 33:20-23+)

Many times, God was represented in the first person by the Angel of the Lord, the preincarnate Jesus Christ (John 1:18+). Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the Lord and called the place *Peniel* (face of God) because he had seen God face to face, but lived (Gen. 32:30). But this was not God's unveiled glory. When Elijah fled from [Jezebel](#) to Mount Horeb, when he sensed God's presence, he took care to wrap his face in his mantle lest he see God's glory directly (1Ki 19:13). When Isaiah saw God in the heavenly [Temple](#), he realized he would be consumed because of his sinful state. But a seraph flew to him with a coal and cleansed his sin (Isa. 6:5-7+). As early as the book of Job, it has been the hope and dream of the redeemed to see God firsthand:

For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. *How* my heart yearns within me! (Job 19:25-27)

The psalmist also understood that one day, in a righteous state, he would see God's face:

As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness. (Ps. 17:15)

In the scene before John, the many promises of Jesus that the righteous would have intimacy with God, now find their fulfillment:

Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Mt. 5:8+)

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. (John 14:3)

Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:24)

Paul and John also looked forward to this day:

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. (1Cor. 13:12+)

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1Jn. 3:2-3+)

See [Hide and Seek](#). See [The Abiding Presence of God](#).

His name *shall be* on their foreheads.

Jesus told the church at Philadelphia that the overcomer would have three names written upon him: (1) the name of God; (2) the name of the New [Jerusalem](#); and (3) Jesus' new name (Rev. 3:12+). His name was written on the forehead of the 144,000 Jews of the Tribulation (Rev. 7:3+; 14:1+). In a similar way to which the [Beast](#) worshipers received the mark of the Beast as an indication of their identity with the Beast (Rev. 13:16+), the servants of God will be dedicated to Him. See commentary on [Revelation 7:3](#) and [Revelation 13:16](#). This name upon their foreheads recalls the dedication of the highpriest who wore a plate of gold upon his headdress which was engraved: "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" (Ex. 28:36).

Revelation 22:5

There shall be no night there

The [NU](#) text and some manuscripts in the line of the [MT](#) text omit *there* implying the general absence of darkness, whether in the city or elsewhere. See commentary on [Revelation 21:23](#).

They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light

Gives them light is φωτισει π' α τους [phōtisei ep autous], present tense: *He is shining upon them*. Those within the vicinity of the [New Jerusalem](#) will receive the radiant light of God's glory. "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1Jn. 1:5+). They will have no *need* of the sun, although the sun may still be

present in the eternal state. See commentary on [Revelation 21:23](#).

they shall reign forever and ever

Their initial reign is for one thousand years during the [Millennial Kingdom](#) (Rev. 20:4-6+). See [Millennial Reign of the Saints](#). After the throne of the Son is merged with the Father, the saints continue to co-reign with Him in eternity. In Daniel's night vision, the angel explained, "the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever" (Dan. 7:18+). Jesus told the church at Thyatira that the overcomer would co-rule with Him (Rev. 2:27+). See commentary on [Revelation 2:27](#). He also told the church at Laodicea that the overcomer would sit with Him on His throne (Rev. 3:21+). See commentary on [Revelation 3:21](#).

Revelation 22:6

These words are faithful and true

See commentary on [Revelation 3:14](#), [Revelation 19:11](#), and [Revelation 21:5](#).

The angel's words reinforce an important truth: Everything John has seen in Revelation will come to pass. What the inspired apostle has written is not mystical; the Apocalypse is not a record of his bizarre dreams or the result of an overactive imagination. It is not an allegory from which readers can extract hidden meanings of their own concoction. It is an accurate description of events and persons yet to come.³³

the Lord God of the holy prophets

The [MT](#) text has [τ ν πνευμάτων τ ν προφητ ν](#) [tōn pneumatōn tōn prophētōn]: *of the spirits of the prophets*. Regarding the testimony born by the spirits of the prophets, see commentary on [Revelation 19:10](#).

to show His servants the things which must shortly take place

The same Greek phrase occurs in the introductory verse of this book. The expectation of His [imminent](#) coming is found throughout the book. See commentary on [Revelation 1:1](#).

The exactness, detail, and precision with which earlier prophecies already fulfilled came to pass forms the pattern for those yet to be fulfilled. God's prophetic record is perfect. He predicted Israel would go into captivity, and the nation did (Lev. 26:33-39+). He predicted the destruction of Babylon (Isa. 13:1-14:27; Jer. 50-51) and Tyre (Isa. 23:1 ff.), and those cities were destroyed. He predicted that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2+), to a virgin (Isa. 7:14+), and be killed by sinners (Isa. 53:7-10+) and He was. Thus, when God predicts future events, such as the rapture of the church, the rise of Antichrist, the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments, the Battle of Armageddon, the return of Jesus Christ, and His thousand-year earthly kingdom, those events will just as certainly come to pass [Isa. 46:9-11].³⁴

Revelation 22:7

I am coming quickly

I am coming is [ἔρχομαι](#) [erchomai], present tense: *I am presently coming*. The emphasis on the impending arrival of Jesus and the events described in John's vision is intentional (Rev. 3:11+). John is told not to seal the words of the prophecy of this book, "for the time is at hand" (Rev. 22:10+). Jesus is coming quickly with each man's reward (Rev. 22:12+). His coming is [imminent](#): it is as if He is already underway. His impending arrival serves as a great motivator for godly living in the present. It also indicates there are no preconditions on His return for the church at the [Rapture](#) nor for His return as a thief upon an unsuspecting world in the [Day of the Lord](#) (1Th. 5:2). See [When Does the Day of the Lord Dawn?](#) See [Imminency](#). See commentary on [Revelation 3:3](#), [Revelation 3:11](#), and [Revelation 16:15](#). In our discussion of the [Preterist Interpretation](#) of the book of Revelation, we identified two maintypes of [preterism](#): (1) *partial* or *mild* preterism, and (2) *full*, *extreme*, or *consistent* preterism. We noted the dangerous tendency of those who begin as partial preterists (which is orthodox) to eventually embrace full preterism (which is heterodox). This occurs because the position of partial preterism is inherently unstable. It requires one to hold to an inconsistent interpretation of passages, such as this, which teach the soon arrival of Jesus. In order to remain orthodox, partial preterists cannot do away completely with the future, literal Second Coming of Jesus. Yet, they maintain that passages which teach that Jesus is coming "quickly" must have been fulfilled in the past (most often by the A.D. 70 "judgment coming" of Jesus in the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome). But this places them on the horns of an interpretive dilemma because "soon coming" passages which are equivalent must be interpreted differently or the Second Coming will be denied. For example, partial preterist Kenneth Gentry takes this passage in Revelation to describe the future Second Coming of Christ. But the passage is a summary of the entire book of Revelation—including other promises of Jesus' soon coming. This creates an inconsistency:

This creates a contradiction within [moderate] preterism. Since Rev. 22:6+ is a statement referring to the whole book of Revelation, it would be impossible to take *tachos* as a reference to A.D. 70 . . . and at the same time hold that Rev. 20:7-9+ teaches the Second Coming. [Moderate preterists] must either adopt a view similar to futurism, or shift to the extreme preterist view that understands the entire book of Revelation as past history, thus eliminating any future Second Coming and resurrection.³⁵

Thus, the only safe (orthodox) preterism is *inconsistent* in its assertion that passages which teach “soon” or “quickly” *must* be fulfilled within the lifetime of the original recipients of the book—the [Seven Churches of Asia](#). As soon as they consistently take this stance, they deny the future, literal Second Coming of Christ and leave orthodoxy for heresy. As we discuss in our commentary on [Revelation 1:3](#), the solution is found in understanding “soon” as an indication from God’s perspective that no more preconditions remain before Christ could return. Thus, it is an indication of eschatological [Imminency](#) which reflects God’s perspective of time (2Pe. 3:8).

Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

He who keeps is [τηρω](#) [ho tērōn], present participle: *the one continually watching over and guarding*.³⁶ This is one of seven blessings given within the book of Revelation. This blessing is a restatement of an aspect of the first blessing: “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it, for the time is near” (Rev. 1:3+). See commentary on [Revelation 1:3](#). The angel who speaks with John is among those *presently keeping* the words of this book (Rev. 22:9+). Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (Luke 11:28b). The angel tells us that the book of Revelation contains *prophecy*. It is not a devotional work setting forth the ultimate victory of good over evil or general spiritual principles. See [Can’t God Prophecy?](#) Neither is it to serve as a platform for out-of-balance sensationalism without application:

God does not command believers to read Revelation merely to satisfy their curiosity about the future. He did not inspire it to provide material for detailed chronological charts of end-time events. There is a seemingly endless stream of books on prophecy being churned out, with speculative prophetic schemes proliferating *ad infinitum, ad nauseam*. But it was not God’s purpose to give Christians a detailed analysis of the prophetic significance (if any) of contemporary cultural, political, military, and social events or trends. God inspired Revelation for one purpose: to reveal the glory of His Son and call believers to live godly, obedient lives in light of His soon return. The purpose of Revelation is not to provide entertainment, but to provide motivation for godly living.³⁷

In order to *keep* the words of the prophecy of this book, believers must:

1. Guard the text from tampering and corruption.³⁸
2. Guard the proper interpretation of the words. “Believers are called to guard or protect the book of Revelation. It must be defended against detractors who deny its relevance, against critics who deny its veracity and authority, as well as against confused interpreters who obscure its meaning.”³⁹ See [Systems of Interpretation](#).
3. Apply the lessons of the book to their own lives (Luke 6:46; John 14:15; 15:10).
4. Promulgate the message of the book to the church and to those who have not heard.⁴⁰

Those who call Jesus Lord should pay special attention to the attitude of the Master toward the *written text*:

In this final message, the Lord Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, pays great honor to the written Word of God. This fact we should mark very carefully, for we are living in a day when men are attempting to downgrade the written Word in favor of the living Word. Our Lord Jesus Christ in every phase of His ministry was careful to honor the written Word and to submit Himself to it. There can be no doubt of the fact that our Lord joined Himself with God the Father by magnifying the written Word. Thus the psalmist bears witness: “I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for the lovingkindness and for thy truth: *for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name*” (Ps. 138:2). We also remember how the Lord Jesus made it abundantly clear that by His coming He did not intend to destroy, nor even loosen up, the Word of God, but to fulfill it in every jot and tittle [Mat. 5:18].⁴¹

How often Christians today emphasize their devotion and zeal for the Lord, while holding a faulty view of the Scriptures. This is an age-old recipe for disaster, demonstrated by religious but unbelieving Israel at Jesus’ First Coming. Paul called it *zeal without knowledge* (Rom. 10:2). It seems that many believe God can be worshiped *emotionally*, but without truth (John 4:23-24).⁴² This is dangerous and deceptive ground: believing themselves to be exhibiting great devotion and offering true worship, they are in reality worshipping a God of their own creation and holding His word in relatively low esteem. May we study the importance our Lord placed upon the Scriptures and their reliability and then make it our own!

Revelation 22:8

Now I, John

This is one of five places in the book of Revelation where John refers to himself by name (Rev. 1:1⁺, 4⁺, 9⁺; 21:2⁺; 22:8⁺). In every case, he merely gives his first name and assumes his readership will know which “John” is meant. This is evidence of authorship by John *the Apostle*. See [Authorship](#).

saw and heard these things

The [MT](#) and [NU](#) texts have *the one presently hearing and seeing these [things]*. This is a signature of John the Apostle (John 21:24; 1Jn. 1:1).

I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel

This is the second time that John has been overcome by the magnitude of the scene and the revelation provided by the Angel. “No believer, not even one of great spiritual stature as John, is beyond the subtle temptation to worship what is good itself in place of God who alone is to be worshiped.”⁴³ See commentary on [Revelation 19:10](#).

Revelation 22:9

See *that you do not do that*.

See commentary on [Revelation 19:10](#).

I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets

See commentary on [Revelation 19:10](#).

of those who keep the words of this book.

Those who keep is [τ ν τηρο υτων](#) [tōn tērountōn], present tense participle: *those presently watching over and guarding*. The angel is among the blessed ones who conveys and seeks to preserve what God has said to John (Rev. 1:3⁺, 22:7⁺).

Worship God.

Because God is *Creator* and all else is *creature*, He alone may be worshiped. See commentary on [Revelation 4:11](#) and [Revelation 19:10](#).

Revelation 22:10

Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book

Do not seal is [μ σφραγισ ε](#) [mē sphragisēs], *you should not seal*. Daniel was told to “shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase” (Dan. 12:4).

In the context, the search for knowledge seems to be the main idea. . . . John Calvin translated it, “Many shall investigate, and knowledge shall increase.” Leupold interprets the verse to mean, “Many shall diligently peruse it, and knowledge shall be increased.” In the Hebrew, the word for “knowledge” is hadda‘at, literally, “the knowledge,” that is, understanding of this long prophecy. Some consider the sentence as referring to the eyes of a reader running “to and fro” in reading the Word of God (cf. 2Chr. 16:9). . . . As Young goes on to explain, what the angel is saying to Daniel is that for the immediate future, attempts to understand these prophecies will be in vain, but in the time of the end, when these prophecies will become especially pertinent, additional understanding will be given.⁴⁴

Unlike Daniel, John is told *not* to seal the words. What is the primary difference between that which Daniel recorded and the revelation now given to John? In a word, *timing!* When Daniel was given his vision, he was told to “seal up the vision for *it refers* to many days *in the future*” (Dan. 8:26). Much of what was revealed to Daniel could not possibly take place for at least 500 years, for it concerned the time of the end and could not transpire until after the First Coming of Jesus when He died on the cross to accomplish redemption. John’s vision is given after the cross, when no more preconditions remain for the fulfillment of what he is shown. The Second Coming of Christ was not [imminent](#) in Daniel’s day, now it is. There is also the matter of progressive revelation. As we have seen, the book of Revelation is very heavily dependent upon the book of Daniel. In a very real sense, the book of Revelation *completes* the revelation which was originally given to Daniel:

The revelation given to Daniel covered so much territory and expanded over such a long period of time that he was unable to understand much of what he wrote. Daniel was told to seal his book [Dan. 12:4, 8-9] until the time when many of the prophecies would be explained and clarified by later revelation. With the book of Revelation, much of the Book of Daniel has been clarified,

expanded, detailed, and explained. So John, in contrast to Daniel, was told not to seal up his book, for all prophecy can now be understood and its fulfillment could begin at any time.⁴⁵

Since it is *not* a sealed book, it is then obvious that it is *meant to be understood* and not shrouded in undecipherable mystery and allusion:

What a rebuke to the negligence, the neglect, the sneering, ignorant arrogance, shown by most of Christendom toward The Revelation! Our Lord Jesus may declare it an open, unsealed, understandable book; *men* say it is filled with “unintelligible language” and “mystic symbols.” Christ says: “Blessed is he that readeth”; *men* say: “Let it alone, you cannot understand it.”⁴⁶

Dare we suppose that the merciful Jesus would hang his benedictions so high as to be beyond the reach of those to whom they are so graciously proposed? Would he mock us by suspending his offered blessings on terms beyond our power? Yet this is the charge men bring against their Redeemer when they think to plead the incomprehensibility of this Book for their neglect and practical rejection of it. The very propounding of these blessings and rewards is God’s own seal to the possibility of understanding this Book equally with any other part of Scripture. Would he, the God of truth, lie to us? Would he, the God of mercy, mock us? Would he who gave his life for us, and ever lives and ministers in heaven and earth for our enlightenment and salvation, give us a Book to tell us of the outcome of all his gracious operations, command us to note its words, to believe and treasure its contents, and promise us a special blessedness in so doing, if what he has thus put into our hands is not at all within the limits of our comprehension and successful mastery? . . . Therefore these very benedictions pronounce against the common notion that this Book is too difficult for ordinary Christians, and rebuke all who despise and avoid it.⁴⁷

for the time is at hand.

At hand is γγύς στίβ [engys estin]: *near it is*. The almost identical phrase occurs at Revelation 1:3⁺. See commentary on [Revelation 1:3](#). The reason the prophecy is not to be sealed is because the time had arrived in which the contents of the prophecy were relevant to those living even in the time of John. The expectation of Christ’s [imminent](#) return for the Church is evident throughout the [NT](#) and continues among healthy congregations even to our own time.

A natural reading of the New Testament yields the truth that to the early church Jesus’ coming was imminent; that is, that it could happen at any time. They believed that He could come back for them in their lifetime. For the early church, imminence contained elements both of certainty and uncertainty. They were certain that Jesus would one day return, but (unlike numerous modern date setters) were uncertain when. Not knowing when He might return, they wisely lived prepared for and hoping for Jesus to return at any moment.⁴⁸

According to Scripture, Christ could return for the Church before we finish writing the commentary for this chapter! The contents of the book of Revelation concern themes which are vital for the Church to understand. They serve as a motivator for godly living, for evangelization, and guard us from deceiving ourselves into thinking that the world will, by and large, convert to Christ. The exact opposite is shown to be true here. As Paul said, “Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition” (2Th. 2:3).

Revelation 22:11

He who is unjust, let him be unjust

He who is unjust is δικ v [ho adikōn]: *the one acting unjustly, damaging, or doing wrong*. One who violates God’s law.⁴⁹ *Let him be unjust* is δικησάτω [adikēsatō]: active voice participle: *let him do unjustly*. He is unjust as shown by his ongoing actions.

he who is filthy, let him be filthy still

He who is filthy is υπαρς [ho hryparos]: “*morally impure, degenerate, completely bad; . . . a morally filthy person.*”⁵⁰ The opposite of καθαρός [katharos]: clean, pure. After one of Daniel’s visions, he was told that the words were closed up until the time of the end and that both good and evil would continue: the wicked would not understand the things of God, but the wise would (Dan. 12:9-10). The same situation is before us in this age. We have much more revelation than Daniel was given, including the entire New Testament and this book of last things. Yet, the wicked continue to ignore the sure prediction of the judgment of God on the horizon. This will culminate in a generation at the time of the Tribulation who are unique in their blasphemy and unrepentant rejection of God. Even though they will know God exists and that He is the source of their judgment (Rev. 6:15-17⁺), they will continue in rebellion and refuse every opportunity to repent (Rev. 9:21⁺; 16:8⁺, 11⁺). See [Beast Worshipers are Unique](#).

God is saying that men choose to sin because they want to, not because they know no better; and the inference is that even this book, which reveals the ultimate, stark, destiny of sin, will not deter sinners from pursuing their fancy.⁵¹

In view of this reality, the marching orders of the Church are similar to those of the prophet Ezekiel:

But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD.” He who hears, let him hear; and **he who refuses, let him refuse**; for they *are* a rebellious house. (Eze. 3:27) [emphasis added]

It was not Ezekiel’s responsibility to *make the rebellious turn*. His responsibility was to accurately preserve and convey the message of God. Those who would respond did so. Those who would not did not. He did not *own the results!*

Preaching Revelation draws the line. Its truths will melt the hearts of the repentant and harden the hearts of the unrepentant. Those same truths thus become either an instrument of salvation, or an instrument of damnation (cf. 1Cor. 1:18; 2Cor. 2:15-16).⁵²

Paul gave similar instructions to Timothy:

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But **you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of** knowing from whom you have learned *them*. (2Ti. 3:12-14) [emphasis added]

he who is righteous, let him be righteous still

Let him be righteous is [δικαιοσύνην ποιῶν](#) [dikaiosynēn poiōn]: *righteousness let him do*. Those who are righteous evidence their redemption through righteous acts (Jas. 2:18-24). “The fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life, and he who wins souls *is* wise” (Pr. 11:30).

he who is holy, let him be holy still

Holy is [ἅγιος](#) [ho hagios]: *the holy [one]* which is the same root word as *saint*. They are holy because they are set apart to God and indwelt by the Holy Spirit:

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are. (1Cor. 3:16-17)

Revelation 22:12

I am coming quickly

I am coming quickly is [ἔρχομαι ταχὺ](#) [erchomai tachy], present tense: *I am presenting coming quickly*. His arrival is [imminent](#)—He is already underway! See commentary on [Revelation 22:7](#), [Revelation 1:3](#), and [Revelation 1:7](#).

My reward is with me to give every one according to his work

Reward is [μισθός](#) [misthos] which denotes either “*reward or punishment* as the case may be.”⁵³ *To give* is [ἀποδοῦναι](#) [apodounai]: “*give back . . . of divine or human retribution . . . repay . . . pay back.*”⁵⁴ *Every one* is [κάστω](#) [hekastō]: *to each*. The emphasis is on *individual* judgment, either for rewards or punishment. When the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, a proclamation from heaven declared:

The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward [\[δοῦναι τὸ μισθὸν\]](#) [dounai to misthon] Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth. (Rev. 11:18⁺)

The servants of God are judged to receive rewards (Isa. 40:10-11; 62:11; Luke 14:12-14; 1Cor. 3:13-15; 2Cor. 5:10; Col. 3:22-25; 1Jn. 2:28), but the God-rejecters are judged for punishment (1Pe. 4:18; Rev. 2:23⁺; 20:11-15⁺):

The purpose of the return of Jesus is to render to each man according to his works. His coming at the Rapture is to reward the saints for the works done in their bodies since salvation. The purpose of the Second Coming is to render judgment for the works of unrighteousness.⁵⁵

For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. (Mat. 16:27)

“Blessed *is* the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit. “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, *I* test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. As a

partridge that broods but does not hatch, *so is* he who gets riches, but not by right; it will leave him in the midst of his days, and at his end he will be a fool.” (Jer. 17:7-11)

But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Rom. 2:5-10)

See commentary on [Revelation 19:8](#) and [Revelation 20:12](#).

Revelation 22:13

I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End

Alpha (Α) and omega (Ω) are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Thus, Jesus is the *first and the last* (below). Jesus also used this unique title of God in the opening chapter of this book. The Father takes it to Himself in the previous chapter (Rev. 21:6±). See commentary on [Revelation 1:8](#).

the First and the Last

In the [OT](#), this title is uniquely God’s (Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 44:6; 48:12). Jesus applied it to Himself when He told John to write what he saw and send it to the [Seven Churches of Asia](#) (Rev. 1:11±). Jesus is eternal (John 1:1; Isa. 9:6; Mic. 5:2; John 8:58; 17:5; Col. 1:17; Heb. 13:8). As we’ve seen in many different ways throughout this book, *Jesus is God!* See commentary on [Revelation 1:11](#).

Revelation 22:14

Blessed *are* those who do His commandments

Those who do is ο ποιο υτες [hoi poiountes], present tense participle: *the ones continually doing*. The [NU](#) text has *blessed are those who wash their robes*, which speaks of their sin being cleansed by the blood of Christ (cf. Rev. 1:5±; Rev 7:14±).⁵⁶ Those who are born-again and truly known by the Son are the ones who do the will of the Father:

Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but **he who does** (present tense - habitually, not perfection, but direction!) **the will of My Father in heaven**. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, **I never knew you; depart (present imperative) from Me, you who practice (ergazomai in present tense - habitually, as their lifestyle) lawlessness!**’ (Mt. 7:21-23+) [emphasis added]

Our blessing does not derive from merely *knowing* the things of God, but from *doing* them (John 13:15+ cf. Rev. 12:17±; 14:12±). Jesus said that if we love Him, then we will keep His commandments (John 14:15, 21-23). When we neglect to keep His commandments, we demonstrate our lack of love for Him. Our motivation to keep His commandments is also found in our desire to purify ourselves in preparation for His appearing (1Jn. 3:2-3+). The power to keep His commandments is derived from the indwelling Holy Spirit (1Jn. 3:24+). If we call him “Lord,” but do not keep His commandments, we are schizophrenic. How can He be Lord when we will not obey Him (Luke 6:46+)? Worse than that, we are found to be liars concerning our relationship with Him:

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (1Jn. 2:3-4+)

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. (Jas. 1:21-24+)

This is one of seven blessings given within the book of Revelation. See commentary on [Revelation 1:3](#).

that they may have the right to the tree of life

They may have the right to the tree of life is [σταῖ ἐξουσίᾳ αὐτῶν ἐπὶ](#) [estai hē exousia autōn epī]: *it will be the authority of them over the tree of life*. The right to the tree of life is universal to all believers. No mention is made of two categories of the redeemed in eternity: those who require access to the tree and those who do not. Neither is there mention of some who eat the *fruit* and others

who only use the *leaves*. See commentary on [Revelation 22:2](#).

may enter through the gates into the city.

Those who are born-again are the overcomers (1Jn 5:4-5+). [Through the power of the Holy Spirit](#) they will also be those who do the commands of the Lord. They are among the redeemed who are written in the [Book of Life](#) and therefore avoid the **second death** which is being cast into the **Lake of Fire** (Rev. 21:15+). They have full access to the [New Jerusalem](#) whose gates are never closed (Rev. 21:24-26+). All the redeemed have access through the gates. Access through the gates is equivalent with rights to the **tree of life** because the tree is *within* the city. To access the tree, one must first go through the gates. See commentary on [Revelation 21:24](#).

Revelation 22:15

But outside *are* dogs

Dogs is [κύνας](#) [kynes - lemma = [kuon](#)] which refers to those who are impure, “as an unclean animal”⁵⁷ (Ps. 22:16, 20; Isa. 56:10-11; Mt. 7:15+; Php. 3:2+).

“The dogs” ([kuon](#))...is a metaphor for the morally impure as it is throughout Scripture. They represent male prostitutes (Dt 23:18+), Gentiles (Mt. 15:26+), and Judaizers (Php. 3:2-3+), among other things (cf. 2Ki 8:13; Ps. 22:16, 20; Isa. 56:10; Mt. 7:6; Mk 7:27+). In the Orient dogs are scavengers and are objects of great contempt.⁵⁸

sorcerers . . . sexually immoral ([pornos](#)) . . . murderers ([phroneuo](#)) . . . idolaters ([eidololatrias](#)) . . . whoever loves and practices a lie

Whoever loves ([phileo](#) - present tense = as their lifestyle) *and practices* ([poieo](#) - present tense) *a lie* ([pseudos](#)) is [π ς φιλ ν κα ποι ν ψε δος](#) [pas philōn kai poiōn pseudos]: *all while continually loving and continually doing [a] lie*. See commentary on [Revelation 21:8](#). Sorcerers is [ο φάρμακοι](#) [hoi pharmakoi]: those who use drugs for magical arts (cf [pharmakeia](#)). See commentary on [Revelation 9:21](#).

sexually immoral

Sexually immoral is [ο πόρνοι](#) [hoi pornoi - lemma = [pornos](#)]: a prostitute or fornicator. The same root word as [Harlot](#). (cf [porne](#))

The verse does not intend to teach that in the eternal state all manner of wicked men will be living just outside the heavenly city. It simply describes the future with the imagery of the present. The contrast is between the blessedness of the faithful and the fate of the wicked.⁵⁹

Revelation 22:16

I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches

The Revelation of Jesus Christ (the contents of which are recorded by this book), was given by God to the Son Who then sent and signified it by His angel to John (Rev. 1:1+). See commentary on [Revelation 1:1](#). *Testify* is [μαρτυρ σαι](#) [martyrēsai]: *testify or witness*. See commentary on [Revelation 1:2](#). *To you* is [μ ν](#) [hymīn]: *to you all [plural]*. The primary recipients of the testimony which John was told to write to were the [Seven Churches of Asia](#) (Rev. 1:11+). Even so, each letter to the churches includes the injunction: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Rev. 2:7+, Rev. 2:11+, Rev. 2:17+, Rev. 2:29+, Rev. 3:6+, Rev. 3:13+, Rev. 3:22+). This indicates that the message of the book of Revelation is to go out to whomever has *aspiritual* ear to hear (Rev. 13:9+). This is the first mention of the *church* ([εκκλησία](#) [ekklēsia]) since the letters to the [Seven Churches of Asia](#) (Rev. 3:22+). We believe this is another indication of the [pretribulational Rapture](#) of the Church. The church will be excluded from the events of the Tribulation and so is not mentioned after chapter 3 until now. See [Rapture](#). See commentary on [Revelation 4:1](#).

I am the Root and the Offspring of David

Jesus is the **Root** (offspring) of Jesse, David's father (Isa. 11:10+). Thus, He is the **offspring of David** and qualifies as heir to the Davidic throne (Isa. 9:7+; Mt. 1:1+; Luke 3:31+; Acts 13:23+; Ro 1:3-4+). See commentary on [Revelation 5:5](#). There is also a sense in which Jesus is the *source* out of which David came, for Jesus is the origin of creation (John 1:3, 10; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; Rev. 3:14+). This dual relationship of Jesus to the line of David was the source of the riddle which the Pharisees were unable to answer:

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” They said to Him, “*The Son of David.*” He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool” ’? If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?” And no

one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore. (Mat. 22:41-46)

The solution to the riddle is found in the eternity and incarnation of Jesus. In His deity, Jesus is the God of David, hence David's *Lord*. In His humanity, Jesus is in the line of descent from David—the son of David. Thus, Jesus is both David's master and his son.

Jesus . . . in His humanity is the root and offspring of David, but as to His deity, He is the [Shechinah](#) Glory, as seen in the brightness and visibility of the light of the morning star.⁶⁰

the Bright and Morning Star

The bright and morning star is [στην λαμπροσ πρωϊνος](#) [ho astēr ho lampros ho prōinos]: *the star, the bright, the early one belonging to the morning*.⁶¹ John the Baptist was to go before Jesus, *the Dayspring*:

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1:76-79+)

Dayspring is [ανατολη](#) [anatolē]: *the place of rising, the dawn*.⁶² Jesus is the bright and morning star because He is “the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world” (John 1:9+). He is the “Sun of Righteousness” who “shall arise with healing in His wings” (Mal. 4:2+). Jesus promised to give the overcomer in the church at Thyatira “the morning star” (Rev. 2:28+).

His coming in power and glory is the sun-rise for Israel and the Gentiles, the breaking of the millennial day. But for His Church He comes first as the morning-star, as the morning-star in the eastern sky precedes the rising of the sun in all His glory. The Lord will come as the morning-star some time in the interval between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel and as the Sun of Righteousness after that week has come to an end.⁶³

See commentary on [Revelation 2:28](#). Until Jesus returns, we have the prophetic word, such as this very book, to serve as a beacon of hope while we continue in this dark world:

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit. (2Pe. 1:19-21)

The morning star rises in the hearts of men who trust Him by faith even before He arrives to herald the dawn of a new day and the beginning of His [Millennial Kingdom](#) on earth. Only those who are motivated arise before the dawn to look for the morning star which heralds the approaching day:

Yes, the day is not here—but lo, the harbinger of the day, the Morning Star! It shines in the night, but it prophesies the coming sunrise. “The assembly (*ecclesia*—the Church) sees Him in the now far spent night as the Morning Star, recognizes Him, while watching for Him, according to His own Word, in His bright heavenly character—a character which does not wake a sleeping world, but is the delight and joy of those who watch. When the sun arises, He will not be thus known: the earth will never so know Him, bright as the (coming) day will be” (*Darby*).⁶⁴

Revelation 22:17

And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”

Say is [λεγουσιν](#) [legousin], present tense: *they are saying*. The invitation is for the present and is ongoing. *Come* is [ερχου](#) [erchou], a second-person singular imperative command: *you [singular] come!* The invitation is to an *individual*. The invitation is for Christ, the bridegroom, to come and is made by the Church, *the bride of this age* who is destined to inhabit the [New Jerusalem](#), along with other people of God (Rev. 19:7+; 21:2+, 9+). Indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 7:39), she makes intercession for the return of Christ according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26-27). This is seen in the closing invitation by John, a member of the Church, for the return of our Lord: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20+). The mention of the Spirit may also refer to the prophets, through whom the Holy Spirit predicted the coming of Christ.

Throughout the centuries, God's people have waited for, prayed for, hoped for, and watched for Christ's return. They are weary of the battle against sin and long to see Jesus Christ exalted, glorified, and honored. They long for Him to return and take them to heaven to live with Him forever (John 14:3; 1Th. 4:17). They long for the day when their perishable, mortal bodies will be transformed into their imperishable, immortal resurrection bodies (1Cor. 15:53-54). They know that in that glorious day there will be no more sorrow, no more tears, no more crying, no more pain, and no more death. Rebellion will be swiftly dealt with; God and the

[Lamb](#) will be glorified and will reign forever over the new heaven and the new earth.⁶⁵

And let him who hears say, "Come!"

Come!: this invitation is also to an *individual*. Those who have ears to hear what the Spirit says in the book of Revelation will come to faith. They too will then issue an invitation for Christ's speedy return.

And let him who thirsts come.

Let him who thirsts come is [καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω](#) [kai ho dipsōn erchesthō], present tense participle: *and the one [presently] thirsting, let him come*. This invitation is to those who have not yet come to salvation, both within the church assembly and outside, which thirst for God:

Though this invitation could address the stranger who sometimes attended Christian worship (cf. 1Cor. 14:23-24) (Moffatt), plenty of regular attenders had not yet attained the category of an overcomer, as the seven messages of chapters 2-3 make very plain.⁶⁶

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. (Isa. 55:1)

The only requirement is *thirst*. Without thirst, the free water of life will not be attained (Rev. 21:6⁺).

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? (Ps. 42:1-2)

Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Mat. 5:6)

Those who thirst for God in the present age, and trust in faith, are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, the Church (1Cor. 12:13):

On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39)

Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Whoever desires is [ὁ θέλων](#) [ho thelōn], present tense participle: *the one [presently] desiring*. This is essentially the same invitation which the Father made: "I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts" (Rev. 21:6⁺). See commentary on [Revelation 21:6](#).

Revelation 22:18

I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book

The message of the book of Revelation is not just for the [Seven Churches of Asia](#) nor just for the saints, but is given to *all who have ears to hear*. The message is not conveyed in imprecise, generalized ideas, but by the *very words of this book*. This speaks of the verbal [inspiration](#) of the written text.⁶⁷ Thus, John recorded, "Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear **the words** of this prophecy, and keep those things which are **written** in it" [emphasis added] (Rev. 1:3⁺). Jesus Himself said, "Blessed *is* he who keeps the **words** of the prophecy **of this book**" [emphasis added] (Rev. 22:7⁺). The emphasis upon the *written revelation* of God is nothing new. Jesus and the apostles spoke extensively on the topic: the phrase, "it is written," occurs 61 times in the [NT](#) alone.⁶⁸ See commentary on [Revelation 1:3](#). This should be ample indication that *there can be no Christianity without the Bible*. The latest generation of believers, who have little desire for the Scriptures and even less knowledge of them *cannot and will not survive as true Christians!* They may call themselves "Christians" and even do works "for the Lord." But Christianity without knowledge of God's word is not Christianity. It is a deception and an imposter. Knowledge of the Scriptures is not optional, but absolutely essential! Without it, Christians are no different than the Elks, Masons, or any other group which undertakes beneficent works without knowledge of God's priorities. Without God's word, Christianity is deception and bondage:

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, **'if you abide in My word**, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'" (John 8:31-32) [emphasis added]

This tremendous promise of true freedom has an important precondition: *If you abide in My word . . .* And where is His word to be found in our day? In the midst of emotional worship? In "goose bumps" we get in our devotional time? In the Scriptures! The Scriptures *alone* are the objective measure of God's will and person. Without knowledge of the Scriptures, maturity is impossible and

deception is the certain result. See commentary on [Revelation 13:13](#).

If anyone adds to these things

The *things* are the events and facts which are recorded by the words of the prophecy of this book. Early on, God gave a general prohibition against adding to or subtracting from His inspired word (Dt. 4:2+; Dt 12:32+; Pr. 30:6; Jer. 26:2). This principle applies to all of Scripture, including the book of Revelation. The words of the inspired text are considered:

1. God's.
2. Understandable to those who read the text in its plain sense.
3. The primary source by which man can understand the requirements of God.
4. A reliable means of understanding the way of eternal life.

These factors support a literal interpretation of the text using the Golden Rule of Interpretation. If the text were to be primarily figure or allegory, then how could it be possible for God to hold man accountable to a message so obscure?

That the specific words of Revelation are not to be sealed up stresses again that there is no hidden, secret meaning apart from the normal sense of the text. If the truth is not clear in those words then this command is nonsense. If the plain, normal understanding of the words of Revelation does not convey the meaning God intended its readers to grasp, then those words *are* sealed.⁶⁹

God is surely capable of speaking plain words, through His angel and through John, to us, and we had better let Him say what He says. This is a book of revelation, not mystification, of apocalypse, not apocrypha.⁷⁰

Although the warning against adding or removing apply specifically to *this* book, by both implication and experience, the [canon](#) of Scripture is complete with the book of Revelation:

Chafer well concludes: "The formal closing of the New Testament canon is at least intimated in Revelation 22:18[±]. The dissimilarity in the manner in which the two Testaments end is significant. All the unfulfilled expectation of the Old Testament is articulate as that testament closes and the last verse gives assurance of the coming of another prophet. But no continued revelation is impending as the New Testament is terminated: rather the announcement is made that the Lord Himself will soon return and the natural conclusion is that there would be no further voice speaking from heaven before the trumpet heralds the second advent of Christ. Of no small moment is the fact that since the canon of the Bible was divinely closed no attempts have been made to add to it."⁷¹

These two warnings against additions and subtractions in their context are concerned specifically with the book of Revelation, and the primary emphasis is not on the Bible as a whole. However, since the book of Revelation is the final revelation of God's Word, the principle behind the warning can be extended to the Bible as a whole, for the Bible as a whole is complete only with the book of Revelation.⁷²

The main examples in our own day of those who add to the inspired text are numerous cults which append extra-biblical writings to the text by elevating them on a par with the inspired Scriptures:

Examples of those who add are the numerous cults that accept other writings as inspired and authoritative and place them on equal grounds with the Bible (i.e., the Mormons with *The Book of Mormon* and Christian Science with their *Key to the Scriptures*).⁷³

Some, such as Mohammed, have led whole nations away from the truth, and the total effect of all of them has been incalculably tragic.⁷⁴

God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book

These plagues are the various judgments of God which will be poured out during the Tribulation (Rev. 9:18[±], Rev 9:20[±]; Rev 11:6[±]; Rev 15:1[±], Rev Rev 15:6, 8[±], Rev 16:9[±], Rev 16:21[±]; Rev 18:4[±], Rev 18:8[±]; Rev 21:9[±]) and include receiving the wrath of God and being tormented in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 14:10[±]; 21:15[±]). Those who add to the words do so in order to modify God's message to suit the dictates of their own heart. Like Israel of old, such a person will be separated for adversity, "according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law" (Dt. 29:21). This may also be an indication that attempts to add to the contents of the book of Revelation may increase at the time of the end and that those who participate in such activities will find themselves in the midst of the Great Tribulation. In any event, those who add to His words are no doubt destined for the Lake of Fire for eternal torment as described herein (Rev. 20:15[±]).

Revelation 22:19

If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy

No one is to add to or take away from God's word (Dt. 4:2+; Dt 12:32+; Pr. 30:6; Jer. 26:2). This warning concerns those who would deliberately tamper with the actual written words of this book. They are the ones who could not be saved and thus will not enjoy the blessings set forth for the redeemed. There are also other ways in which the words of this prophecy can be seriously distorted to great detriment. By maintaining that only *some* of the words are faithful and true and that other words contain *error*, it becomes possible to dismiss those portions thought to be in error, thereby excising portions of the message of God:

Examples of those who subtract are those who refuse to accept the entire body of Scripture as God's inspired Word and hold to concepts of partial inspiration or no inspiration.⁷⁵

The cults add to the words of the book of this prophecy, the liberals take away from them, and both are regarded by the Lord as blasphemies deserving of the most serious punishment.⁷⁶

As we saw in our discussion of various [Systems of Interpretation](#), it is also possible to seriously distort the message of the book, without changing the individual words, by means of incorrect interpretation. If the place of the book within the [canon](#) is unassailable, then the next means of attacking the message of the book is often by distorting the interpretation of the text in order to remove aspects deemed objectionable. For example, if unfulfilled passages or prophecies are interpreted in such a way as to effectively relegate them to the past, then the import of what the words teach is lost on present and future generations. This is the travesty of the [Preterist Interpretation](#) which removes whole prophecies of benefit for the church and misapplies them to the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome in A.D. 70. In a similar way, the [Idealist Interpretation](#) undermines the effectiveness of many passages in this book. Instead of describing future events in history, the passages are interpreted as teaching general spiritual principles with no specific application within real history. It is not sufficient for the Church of God to merely protect the written words—as important as that may be. She must also protect and maintain sound principles of interpretation so that the meaning of the words is the intended one originally given by the Holy Spirit through John. This has been a primary concern of our treatment of the book: a belief that the value of what was written is being *undermined from within* by Christians whose theology is incompatible with its plain meaning and who desire to “reinterpret” the book to suit their own notions and agenda for the Church.

This constitutes a most serious indictment and sober warning to any who would tamper with the Holy Scriptures. Lest anyone still object that it applies only to the Book of Revelation, it may be noted, historically, that the various atheists and humanists, as well as the motley array of modernists, liberals, higher critics, and other pseudo-intellectuals in Christendom who have rejected or questioned, ridiculed or allegorized away the books of Daniel, Isaiah, Jonah, Acts, Peter, or any other books of the Bible have also, invariably, done the same to the Book of Revelation, to the Book of Genesis, and the other books of the Pentateuch. The first and last books of the Bible have constituted a touchstone, as it were, so that the attitude of men and women toward those books always seems to determine their real attitude toward all the Scriptures. Therefore, the Lord had Moses stress the divine integrity of his writings (Deuteronomy 4:2+) and John stress the inviolability of Revelation.⁷⁷

God shall take away his part from the Book of Life

The [TR](#) text stands alone having [Book of Life](#). The [MT](#) and [NU](#) texts have *tree of life*. It appears that the word *Book* is an artifact reflecting the reliance of Erasmus on the Latin [Vulgate](#) for the last six verses of the book of Revelation.

Deficiencies other than typographical are not all Erasmus' fault, or only partly so. He had the use of less than twenty manuscripts and used mainly only two or three. His only manuscript of Revelation lacked its last page; so Erasmus himself translated the Latin Vulgate back into Greek for the last six verses.⁷⁸

Instead of [π το ζύλου](#) [apo tou zylou] (from the tree), the Textus Receptus (followed by the King James Version) reads [π βιβλου](#) [apo biblou] (from *the* book), a reading that occurs in no Greek manuscript. The error arose when Erasmus, in order to provide copy for the last six verses of Revelation (which were lacking in the only Greek manuscript of Revelation available to him), translated the verses from the Latin Vulgate into Greek. . . . The corruption of “tree” into “book” had occurred earlier in the transmission of the Latin text when a scribe accidentally miscopied the correct word *ligno* (“tree”) as *libro* (“book”).⁷⁹

Whether his part is taken from the [Book of Life](#) (Rev. 3:5+; Rev 13:18+) or the tree of life (Rev. 2:7+; Rev 22:2, 14+), either way the one who takes away from God's words will be excluded from among the saved.

from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book

The one who adds to God's word receives plagues (Rev. 22:18+). The one who takes away has no part in the [New Jerusalem](#) and the many other blessings (e.g., the promises to the overcomer) which the book describes.

Revelation 22:20

Surely I am coming quickly

Surely is [υα](#) [nai]: “yes, indeed, certainly, in solemn assurance.”⁸⁰ It has been over 1900 years since Jesus spoke these words to John. As Peter predicted so long ago, many scoff at the idea that “quickly” and “soon” could refer to a yet future, literal, physical Second Coming of Jesus to overthrow the rebellious kingdoms of the earth. Even the [preterists](#) ridicule the idea that the many promises of a *soon* return could actually be describing Christ’s second advent and so they find them fulfilled by invisible and unverifiable *spiritual comings* in the past. In this, they are in agreement with non-believing skeptics:

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that **scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”** For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, **do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.** The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2Pe. 3:1-9+) [emphasis added]

Peter’s words are a source of great encouragement for those who await the return of Christ—Whose promises are better than gold and more sure than the ground we walk upon. The reason for the 1900 years and counting, between this promise and our day, are explained by Peter:

- **Perspective** - From God’s perspective, one thousand years are as a day. God is timeless. From His perspective, the time between this promise and our own is short: “To Him, His absence has not yet been two days long!”⁸¹
- **Grace and Mercy** - The lengthy delay *from our perspective* is a great testimony to the grace and mercy of God. Once the events described in this book begin, things will escalate rapidly and ominously. Each year that Christ’s return is delayed is another year of unmerited favor poured out upon a rebellious earth wherein those who fear God and thirst after Him have opportunity to attain salvation by faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Yet, men “are not only indifferent to the love of God, they despise it, misreading it as a sign of God’s weakness instead of His grace.”⁸²
- **Judgment Building** - Those who reject Christ continue to push the world further and further from God. One day, *the iniquity of the earth-dwellers will be complete* (cf. Gen. 15:16). When that day occurs, Christ will come as a thief upon an unsuspecting world and [The Day of the Lord](#) will begin (Mt. 24:43; Luke 12:39+; John 10:10; 2Pe. 3:10+; Rev. 3:3+). The judgment which is awaiting this world ultimately results in the “perdition of ungodly men” (Rev. 20:11-15+).

This precious promise closes the book of Revelation and the [NT](#). Those who love the Lord Jesus Christ eagerly await His return:

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. (Php. 3:20-21+)

The promise of His return is a powerful motivator for the saints to deny the world and to live lives in preparation of His [imminent](#) return:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works. (Titus 2:11-14+)

History is strewn with the foolish who have attempted to establish dates, even general ones, at which Christ will finally come in fulfillment of this promise. Such attempts are dangerous and ill-advised:

Well has Archer Butler said, “To seek to penetrate more closely into these awful secrets is vain. A sacred obscurity envelops them. The cloud that shrouded the actual presence of God on the mercy-seat, shrouds still his expected presence on the throne of judgment. It is a purposed obscurity, and most salutary and useful obscurity, a wise and merciful denial of knowledge. In this matter it is his gracious will to be the perpetual subject of watchfulness, expectation, conjecture, fear, desire,—but no more. To cherish anticipation, he has permitted gleams of light to cross the darkness; to baffle presumption, he has made them *only* gleams. He has harmonized with consummate skill, every part of his revelation to produce this general result;—now speaking as if a few seasons more were to herald the new heaven and new earth, now as if his days were thousands of years; at one moment whispering into the

ear of his disciple, as if ready to be revealed, at another retreating into the depth of infinite ages. It is his purpose thus to live in our faith and hope, remote yet near, pledged to no moment, possible at any; worshipped not with consternation of a near, or indifference of a distant certainty, but with the anxious vigilance that awaits a contingency ever at hand.⁸³

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

The saints are in full agreement with Jesus' promised return, for they love His appearing (2Ti. 4:8+):

So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. (Heb. 9:28+)

The closing words of the Song of Solomon illustrate this desire:

[The King to the Shulamite:] You who dwell in the gardens, the companions listen for your voice—Let me hear it! (Song. 8:13+)

[The Shulamite in response:] Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices. (Song. 8:14+)

The Shulamite desires the king's speedy return. . . . Christ is to make haste to return at His second advent and is portrayed figuratively as a fleet gazelle or stag bounding over the mountains of spices, overcoming all impediments (Ps. 2:1-12) to manifest His fragrance in Kingdom rule . . . which will be a sweet aroma to Israel and the nations of the millennial earth.⁸⁴

Unlike the Adam and Eve who hid in shame, the redeemed long for God to come looking for them:

The first word we hear man address to the Lord in the Bible is the solemn word "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid" (Gen. 3:10). The last word addressed to the Lord by redeemed man is "even so, Come, Lord Jesus." And between these two utterances in Genesis and Revelation is the story of redemption.⁸⁵

Revelation 22:21

The [grace](#) of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

The [MT](#) text has *with all of the saints*. "The Greek witnesses present seven different endings (not counting those that append 'Amen')."⁸⁶

A benediction of this type is quite unusual at the conclusion of an apocalyptic writing, but it is quite fitting for this one which incorporates epistolary features for the churches and is to be read in them (Rev. 1:3-4+).⁸⁷

Epilogue

For the faithful, the book of Revelation is itself a taste of the river of life, for it refreshes hope in the coming of Christ and gives certain knowledge of the overthrow of evil and the ultimate restoration of all things:

It has been a weary time, a waiting time, a suffering time, but His Coming or presence shall turn the gloom of night into gladness and everlasting joy. The shadows of time are passing away, and the first faint streaks of an eternal day, which knows neither evening nor tears are almost discernible. Hold on, ye wearied pilgrim host! Joy cometh in the morning. We wait for *Him*, not for the fulfilment of prophecy. Is His Coming a reality in our souls? Does it influence the life, and shape the conduct, and impart vigour, as we press on?⁸⁸

For the faithless, the book pushes him further in his hardened rejection of God:

I doubt not, that this Apocalypse has been and will be the rock on which many a one's salvation is wrecked by reason of the offense taken at its presentations. To the savants and scientists of this world, there is no part of all the Scriptures which seem so absurd and impossible. They can get on with everything else a thousandfold better than with the outlines of the future which this Book gives. To their philosophy it is the very consummation of nonsense. And if this is the scheme and outcome of the Gospel system, they will have none of it. They know better. They have got beyond all such puerilities. They would not swallow such things for their lives, and scorn to take for divine what embraces them as the consummation of this world. Their sneers, contempt, and blasphemy nowhere rise to such a pitch as when they are asked to accept and believe that this Book is of God, and means what it says.⁸⁹

The question, dear reader, is which are you? Will you reach out to take the promises which Christ gives the overcomer throughout the pages of this book and become one who believes in Him? Will you respond in faith to the open invitation to partake of the living waters, freely given? Will you be among those who are kept from the hour of trial which is to come upon the whole world (Rev.

3:10±)? Will you love the appearing of the Lord Jesus and say, with the rest of the saints: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" Or will you remain among the skeptics, the sophisticated, the independent and self-sufficient, who have no need of God and would just as soon He did not exist? Have you already hardened your heart beyond the point of return such that you will be one of those destined to stand before the Great White Throne, whose name is missing from the [Book of Life](#) (Rev. 20:15+)?

Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts . . . Now is the day of salvation! (Heb. 3:15+; 2Cor. 6:2+)

Notes

¹Henry Morris, [The Revelation Record](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 22:1.

²J. A. Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 505.

³Wilhelm Gesenius and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, [Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures](#) (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2003, 1810-1812), 874.

⁴"The trees in both cases line the river; but in the earthly order they are outside the city; and though bread trees, they are not the Tree of Life. The heavenly River issues not from the sanctuary but from the throne. It does not flow into the sea, but through the avenues and streets of the city."—Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#), 506.

⁵A. R. Fausset, "[The Revelation of St. John the Divine.](#)" in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, [A Commentary. Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments](#) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 22:2.

⁶Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#), 503.

⁷"The tree of life is mentioned four times in Proverbs (Pr. 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4), metaphorically depicting wisdom, fruitful works, hope, and the benefits of the wise use of the tongue."—Daniel K. Wong, "[The Tree of Life in Revelation 2:7.](#)" in [Bibliotheca Sacra](#), vol. 155 no. 618 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, April-June 1998), 211.

⁸"The Saviour after his glorious resurrection did eat, even of the course food of mortals. The angels did eat of Sarah's cakes and of Abraham's dressed calf (Gen. 18:6-8)."—Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#), 506.

⁹Ibid., 507.

¹⁰Fruchtenbaum believes a monthly calendar will continue, but without the benefit of the moon: "It should be noted that the word *month* is used, so some kind of dating system will be present in the Eternal Order. Since there will be no sun, moon, or night, it will be a radically different dating system than the one in which we presently live."—Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), rev ed (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 539.

¹¹Morris, [The Revelation Record](#), Rev. 22:2.

¹²We speak here of productivity *as measured by God*, not the constant activity which so often characterizes Christian work, which has more in common with Martha than Mary (Luke 10:38-42).

¹³Frederick William Danker and Walter Bauer, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 358.

¹⁴Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 196.

¹⁵Wong, [The Tree of Life in Revelation 2:7](#), 219.

¹⁶Robert L. Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 22:2.

¹⁷A viable definition of sin is simply *independence from God*.

¹⁸Wong, [The Tree of Life in Revelation 2:7](#), 213.

¹⁹Jerome Smith, [The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), 1Cor. 15:50.

²⁰Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#), 507.

²¹"Those who argue that 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom' (1Cor. 15:50) forget that these natural generations are subjects

of the kingdom, not inheritors, for only the resurrected saints in glorified bodies are co-heirs with Christ in His eternal kingdom (Rom. 8:17).”—Smith, [The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge](#), 2Pe. 3:13.

²²Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#), Rev. 22:14.

²³“There is no indication whatever in Scripture that resurrected and translated beings have the quality of human sex, much less the capacity to produce offspring.”—John F. Walvoord, [The Revelation of Jesus Christ](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), Rev. 21:24.

²⁴Wong, [The Tree of Life in Revelation 2:7](#), 220-221.

²⁵Morris, [The Revelation Record](#), Rev. 22:2.

²⁶Jay P. Green, [The Literal Translation of the Holy Bible](#) (Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace Publishers, Inc., 2001), Rev. 22:3.

²⁷Morris, [The Revelation Record](#), Rev. 22:3.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Alva J. McClain, [The Greatness Of The Kingdom](#) (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), 513.

³⁰Friberg, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), 244.

³¹With the curse came *less productive* working conditions (Gen. 3:18-19).

³²Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#), 510.

³³John MacArthur, [Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 22:6.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Kenneth L. Gentry and Thomas Ice, [The Great Tribulation: Past or Future?](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 112.

³⁶Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#), 814.

³⁷MacArthur, [Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#), Rev. 22:7.

³⁸Perhaps the most significant threat to the text in our day is to be found in the plethora of devotional paraphrases of the text which generally serve to obscure its true meaning. Instead of being nourished and having their minds renewed by the meat of God’s word, believers are turning to the pabulum of these paraphrases which feed their emotion at the cost of true understanding.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰“To fail to preach Revelation is not only foolish (cf. Rev. 1:3+), but sinful. Any Christian who fails to learn its truths is forfeiting blessing; any preacher who fails to proclaim its truths is sinfully unfaithful to his mandate. . . . More than just a failure to teach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), it is outright disobedience to the command not to seal up the words of the Apocalypse.”—Ibid., Rev. 22:10.

⁴¹Donald Grey Barnhouse, [Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 410.

⁴²Often, *emotionalism* is mistaken for worship in the Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is the *Spirit of Truth*. It is *impossible* to worship “in the Spirit” while remaining ignorant of God’s word.

⁴³Alan F. Johnson, [Revelation: The Expositor’s Bible Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 205.

⁴⁴John F. Walvoord, [Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1971), Dan. 12:4.

⁴⁵Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 544.

⁴⁶William R. Newell, [Revelation: Chapter by Chapter](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994,c1935), 362.

⁴⁷Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#), 514.

⁴⁸MacArthur, [Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#), Rev. 22:6.

⁴⁹Friberg, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), 34.

⁵⁰Ibid., 343.

⁵¹Monty S. Mills, [Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John](#) (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987), Rev. 22:11.

⁵²MacArthur, [Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#), Rev. 22:10.

⁵³Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) 523.

⁵⁴Friberg, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), 66.

⁵⁵Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 545.

⁵⁶“The [TR] reading appears to be a scribal emendation, for elsewhere the author uses the expression [τηρεν τας εντολας](#) [têrein tas entolas] (Rev. 12:17⁺; 14:12⁺).”—Bruce M. Metzger, [A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament](#) (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), Rev. 22:14.

⁵⁷Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) 461.

⁵⁸Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#), Rev. 22:15.

⁵⁹Robert H. Mounce, [The Book of Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), Rev. 22:15.

⁶⁰Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 546.

⁶¹Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) 725.

⁶²Ibid., 62.

⁶³Arno C. Gaebelien, [The Revelation](#) (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1961), Rev. 22:16.

⁶⁴Newell, [Revelation: Chapter by Chapter](#), 365.

⁶⁵MacArthur, [Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#), Rev. 22:17.

⁶⁶Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#), Rev. 22:17.

⁶⁷“Philo of Alexandria, a contemporary of the apostles, attested thus: ‘The Jews would die ten thousand times rather than to permit one single word to be altered of their Scriptures.’ ”—Rene Pache, [The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture](#) (Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing Company, 1969), 164.

⁶⁸NT occurrences of the phrase, *it is written*: Mat. 2:5; 4:4, 6-7, 10; 11:10; 21:13; 26:24, 31; Mark 1:2; 7:6; 9:13; 14:21, 27; Luke 2:23; 3:4; 4:4, 8, 10; 7:27; 19:46; 24:46; John 6:31, 45; 12:14; Acts 1:20; 7:42; 15:15; 23:5; Rom. 1:17; 2:24; 3:4, 10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13, 33; 10:15; 11:8, 26; 12:19; 14:11; 15:3, 9, 21; 1Cor. 1:19, 31; 2:9; 3:19; 9:9; 10:7; 14:21; 15:45; 2Cor. 8:15; 9:9; Gal. 3:10, 13; 4:22, 27; Heb. 10:7; 1Pe. 1:16.

⁶⁹MacArthur, [Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#), Rev. 22:10.

⁷⁰Morris, [The Revelation Record](#), Rev. 22:10.

⁷¹Mal Couch, “Soteriology in the Book of Revelation,” in Mal Couch, ed., [A Bible Handbook to Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 170.

⁷²Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 547.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Morris, [The Revelation Record](#), Rev. 22:18.

⁷⁵Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 547.

⁷⁶Morris, [The Revelation Record](#), Rev. 22:19.

⁷⁷[Ibid.](#)

⁷⁸Gordon H. Clark, [Logical Criticisms of Textual Criticism](#) (Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1990), 38.

⁷⁹Metzger, [A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament](#), Rev. 22:19.

⁸⁰Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) 533.

⁸¹Newell, [Revelation: Chapter by Chapter](#), 359.

⁸²Barnhouse, [Revelation](#), 412.

⁸³Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#), 523.

⁸⁴Merrill F. Unger, [Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament](#) (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Sos. 8:14.

⁸⁵Gaebelein, [The Revelation](#), Rev. 22:20.

⁸⁶Metzger, [A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament](#), Rev. 22:21.

⁸⁷Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#), Rev. 22:21.

⁸⁸Walter Scott, [Exposition of The Revelation](#) (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), Rev. 22:20.

⁸⁹Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#), 518.

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