

The Last Words of Jesus • Revelation 22:7-21 • By Dr. David O. Dykes. Part 29
Revelation: Unveiling the Truth

INTRODUCTION

Let's review. The first part of the Book of Revelation is about the vision that John saw of Christ in his glorified form. And then he writes letters to seven churches. Beginning in chapter four, verse one, is the rapture of the church. And then we as Christians, born again believers, in the future will be in heaven during the time of seven years of tribulation on the earth. Jesus said it will be tribulation like the world has never seen before at the end of that seven-year tribulation in which the Antichrist has gained control of the world political system and the world economic system and the world religious system. Then Jesus Christ comes back at the Battle of Armageddon. And we'll be coming back with him, followed by the millennium, the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. Some people are pre-millennialists; some are millennialists; and others are post-millennialists. I'm what they call pro-millennialist. I'm just for it, whenever it's going to happen. Sometimes I say I'm a pan-millennialist. I believe it's just all going to pan out in the end!

Whatever you are, the Bible says there will be one thousand years of Christ's reign on the earth. At the end of that thousand-year reign, there will be the Great White Throne judgment when unbelievers will be judged. And then beginning from that point on will be what we call the rest of eternity.

At the end of Revelation are the last words of Christ. Beginning in Revelation 22:7, he says,

“Behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book. I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, ‘Do not do it. I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers, the prophets, and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God.’ Then he said to me, ‘Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near, let him who does wrong, continue to do wrong. Let him who is vile, continue to be vile. Let him who does right, continue to do right and let him who is holy, continue to be holy. Behold, I am coming soon.’”

I. THE LAST COMMANDS IN THE BIBLE (22:8-10)

When John fell down at the feet of the angel to worship him, the angel gives us the last recorded command. And it is this: worship God. I think you could probably summarize all the commands in the Bible in that one final command: worship God. What does that word “worship” mean? It means to give worth-ship, to give worth to. We are not to worship a preacher. We're not to worship a church. We are not to worship a religion. We are to worship God alone because you may be disappointed and misled by anything except God himself. Jesus said to love the Lord God with all your heart, your soul, your mind and to love your neighbor as yourself. If you truly worship God, then you will love your neighbor.

II. THE LAST PRINCIPLE IN THE BIBLE (22:11)

The Old Testament is basically a book of commands, but the New Testament is basically a book of principles by which we can live. A principle is a statement of spiritual truth, but you have to dig a little bit below the surface and study it. In 22:11 we see we are to let them who are wrong, continue to do wrong. Let him who is vile, continue to be vile. And him who does right—let him continue to do right. And he who is holy continue to be holy.

What is the Bible saying here? I think it's trying to address a misconception that some people have. They say, “I can live like the devil, if I want to. I can live a sinful, wretched life if I want to. But when I go to heaven, then I'm going to be totally different. And I'll be changed.” It's true that we, as Christians, will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And we'll be like Jesus. But your basic character will not be changed, because if you live a life of sin, if you live an unholy life, as it says here, that's the kind of character that you will maintain. But on the other hand, notice that if you have lived a holy life, a life of righteousness, then when you die for all eternity, that's the kind of life that you will enjoy for eternity.

I'm amazed that some people think that they can live any way they want to. And one day they'll change after they die. I urge you, before death, to repent of your sins and turn to Christ. You will have no opportunity after you die.

III. THE LAST IDENTIFICATION (22:13-16)

Jesus says in Revelation 22, “Behold, I am coming soon. My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” That's the identification. And if you will skip down to verse 16, notice the last part of this identification, “I have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David and the bright and morning star.”

A very interesting study for any of you who are believers would be to take a concordance and go through the New Testament to identify every time Jesus says, "I am." What a blessing it would be for you to learn all of those. He says, "I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life. I am the bread of life. I am the living water. I am the door." Over and over again, he uses that self-identification: this is who I am. And here we find the last three of those statements in Revelation 22.

Let's notice who Jesus is.

1. ALPHA AND OMEGA (22:13)

First of all, he says, I am alpha and omega. Now this is a repeat from what he has said several times in the Book of Revelation. What does that mean? Alpha is the first Greek letter in the alphabet, and omega is the last Greek letter. He says, "I am the A to Z, and I am everything in between. There are perhaps a million letters in a set of encyclopedias, and you know what? Every one of those words are formed using all the letters from A to Z. You don't have to go outside of that. And that's what Jesus is saying. "I'm the beginning. I'm the end. I'm the first and the last. I'm alpha and omega. And I'm everything in between."

2. ROOT AND OFFSPRING OF DAVID (22:16)

Not only that, but he also says, "I am the root and the offspring of David." Now, what does that mean? That's amazing that he could say that because what he means is, "I am the ancestor of David and out of me came King David." But then he stepped to the other side and says, "Not only am I the root of David, I am the offspring of David." That would be like me saying I am both the ancestor of my father, and I am the descendant of my father. What does he mean there? What he's saying here is he's identifying himself in his deity. He's saying, "I have always been."

Do you remember when Jesus was talking to a bunch of Pharisees one day and they were talking about "Abraham, our father"? Jesus made an amazing statement. Jesus said, "Listen guys, before Abraham was, I am." You know what he was saying? "Abraham lived almost 2000 years ago, but before Abraham even existed, I am. I existed."

Some cults do not believe Jesus is equal to God, the Father. When they come to your door, you can share that verse with them. And if they pull out their so-called new world translation of the scriptures, they have mistranslated that verse. They don't translate it correctly. And any knowledgeable, honest, Greek scholar will tell you they mistranslated it to try to make it fit the heresy that says Jesus is not equal to God, the Father. But Jesus himself said, "Before Abraham was, I am. I was before Abraham. I was before David." He also says, "I am also in the line of

David.” What was he saying? Read the beginning of the gospels, Matthew and Luke. And you will see that the genealogy of Christ traces back through David. And so Jesus is saying, “I was before David and I'm after David.”

3. BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR (22:16)

And then notice the third part of his identification. He says, “I am the bright and morning star.” Have

you ever awakened some early morning when it's cool and crisp, just before dawn? The sky is not quite light, but it's not quite dark. If you look carefully, you will see one star shining. It's usually the planet Venus. The bright morning star still shines after the darkest part of the night. When all the other stars have stopped shining, that's the star that keeps shining. That's who Jesus is to you. Do you know that Jesus is there when you've gone through the toughest time of your life and you're disappointed because you put your faith in money, you put your faith in people, you put your faith in everything? Jesus is still shining after the darkest time of the night.

IV. THE LAST BLESSINGS (22:14)

Jesus gives us the Beatitudes based on blessings in the Sermon on the Mount. “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” and so on. There are blessings listed in Revelation 22 also. Jesus said, “Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.” That's the first blessing—you're blessed when you obey the words that you find in the Bible. In chapter one at the beginning of the Book of Revelation, the writer says, “...blessed is he who reads the words of this prophecy and keeps them.”

This is the only book in the Bible that specifically offers you a blessing if you will read it, if you will study it. I get blessed reading Psalms; I get blessed reading Ephesians. I get blessed reading Mark. But those books don't promise a blessing, but the Book of Revelation does. And furthermore, this book promises at the end that you are blessed by God. That word “blessed” literally means fortunate.

The second blessing is in 22:14 about washing your robes in the blood of Christ. “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.” Now, your Bible may say blessed are those who “keep his commandments.” That's the King James Bible translation. There's a great big difference between “blessed are those whose who keep his commandments” and “blessed are those who literally have their robes washed wide.” You have to study the Greek texts of the New Testament. When the King James Bible was translated, it was basically done using the Greek text of Erasmus based on what's called a *textus receptus* (Latin for “received text”). That may not

mean much to you, but that was based on just three manuscripts of the New Testament. Why in the world do we even use these different translations? Some say, "I mean, the King James was good enough for Paul. It's good enough for me, right?" Well, I'll tell you why. Since 1611 and the translation of the King James Bible, thousands of texts of the New Testament have been uncovered by archeologists. How many were available to Erasmus? Three. You know how many texts and portions of texts of the New Testament we have today in 1994? Over 30,000.

The very best Greek texts are those that all agree verse 14 says "blessed are they whose robes are washed." Nobody goes to heaven by keeping the commandments. The only way you can go to heaven is having your robes washed white in the blood of Jesus Christ. And that's the second blessing in Revelation 22. Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he has saved us." Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? You are blessed if you have your life washed in the blood of Christ.

V. THE LAST INVITATION (22:15)

In Revelation 22:15 John says that outside of heaven are the dogs. And he's not talking about canines. He's talking about evil men—those who practice magic arts, sorcery, drug abuse, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, etc. Jesus says, "The spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' Let him who hears, come. Whoever is thirsty, let him come. And whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."

The last invitation is the word, "Come..." I believe that one of the favorite words in the vocabulary of God is the word "come." Search the Scripture. As far as I can tell, there was only one time God ever said, "Get out." Do you remember in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve sinned? God said, "I'm sorry, but you've got to get out." And ever since then, God has been inviting men to come back into fellowship with him. "If any man thirsts," Jesus said, "let him come unto me and drink." Jesus also said, "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden. I will give you rest." In the Old Testament, God told Noah to build an Ark. Then the rain began to fall and pitter patter on the top of that Ark. And if you study what it says, literally in the Hebrew, God said, "Noah, come into the Ark." He didn't say, go get in the Ark. He said, "Come into the Ark." Because where was God? God was in the Ark.

It was not the Ark that protected Noah and all those animals. It was God. And that's the same invitation he says to you. He says, "Come to me. I invite you to come be a part of my family. Come be a part of my kingdom. Come be a part of what I'm doing."

And the very last invitation of the Bible is, "Let him who is thirsty, come and drink." Notice what it says in Revelation 22:17, "Let him take the free gift of the water of life." If you are not a Christian, God wants to give you a free gift. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now let me tell you something about a gift. You cannot earn a gift. If you can earn a gift, it's not a gift. It's wages. A gift is something that is just given to you out of love. There are a lot of people today in America who just can't accept that. They come from an ethic where anything in life that you attain, you gotta work hard and you gotta get it. There are a lot of people who say, "I made my money the old-fashioned way." They mean they didn't inherit it. They earned it. Some people have the attitude that they will earn their way into heaven too. They say, "I'm going to keep the commandments. I'm going to give to the church. I'm going to read my Bible. I'm going to love people. I'm going to do all this stuff if it kills me. I'm going to earn salvation." Oh, friend, give it up. You will never ever earn acceptance with God. It is a free gift. And you know what Jesus says? "If you thirst for it, come on and I'll give it to you freely."

Every time I talk on this verse, I think about what happened to me several years ago when I was doing a meeting at a First Baptist Church in Florida. They invited me down to spend a whole week teaching the book of Revelation three times a day. When I came to this last passage, I said, "God says if you want to be saved, come." And one old boy did! I still had one or two points left in my sermon, but he came walking down the aisle, coming to Jesus! He didn't even wait until the invitation. And the pastor there said, "Why are you coming?" He said, "Well, the Bible says to come, so I'm coming right now." They took him out and led him to Christ.

If you've never trusted Christ, you need to come. How do you come? You come just as you are. Some people think, "When I get better, when I clean my life up, then I'll come." Oh no, dear friend, you come just as you are. But you won't stay just as you are when you come. Amen. Because God will change you.

VI. THE LAST WARNING (22:18)

The last warning of the Bible is found in chapter 22, verse 18. It's for "Everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book." (Everybody hearing me, this is for you. That's what he says. "I'm warning all of you who hear it." And we're hearing it right now.) "If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to them the

plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and the holy city, which are described in this book.”

And here's the last warning that we find the Bible: Don't add or subtract from the word. Specifically, he's talking about the Book of Revelation, but I believe that this is a warning that you can apply to all the word of God. You may not believe it, but I believe with all my heart that all of this book is inspired. The Bible says all scripture is inspired of God. And that word “inspired” means God breathed into the man who wrote the words that we have in the Bible. And I believe all of it is inspired. I believe that Ecclesiastes chapter three is just as inspired as John chapter three. I also believe that when God spoke the last period in Revelation, that's when he stopped the written revelation of his word. God is still speaking to us as the Holy Spirit speaks, but the Bible is all the written revelation of God. And this is the warning that he gives: don't add anything to it.

Mormons are some of the most family-oriented people I've ever known. I admire them. But the Book of Mormon adds to the word of God, and the Bible says not to do that. Sometimes people add to the Bible in the sense that they attribute statements that are popular but not necessarily in the Bible. For example, “The Bible says... cleanliness is next to godliness.” That's not in there. Don't add it to the word of God. Or “The Bible says... God helps those that help themselves.” That's not in the Bible. Be careful about what you say the Bible says.

Our problem may not be adding to it but subtracting from it. In the home of Thomas Jefferson, the great Founder of our country, is a copy of his Bible. There are places where he took scissors and cut out portions of Scripture that he didn't believe, mainly some of the miracles. He believed in Jesus as a great teacher, a great man, but didn't believe in the supernatural Christ. And so he subtracted and cut away from the Bible. I warn you, don't do that. Don't subtract from the word at all. Do you believe it all? You only believe as much as you practice.

VII. THE LAST PROMISE (22:7,12,20)

Somebody told me one time that in the Bible there are 365 promises, one for every day. I believe there are more promises than that, and Revelation contains the last promise in the Bible. This literally is the last word of Christ. And what is it? “I am coming soon.” Jesus says it three times. He says, “Behold, I am coming soon” (verse 7). The word “behold” means to “pay attention.” He says it again in verses 12 and 20. In verse 20, it says, “He who testifies to these things says yes [surely, certainly, without a doubt] I am coming soon.” The first promise in the Bible and the worst promise in the Bible is found in Genesis 2:17. God said to Adam and

Eve, “Eat of all the trees in the garden you want to, but don't eat of this tree. And the day that you eat thereof, I promise you shall surely die.” That's the first promise. And that's the promise that got us into trouble/sin. But the last promise of the Bible is in Revelation, and it is the best news from Jesus: “I am coming soon.”

I always think about the old country preacher who was preaching on this text in Revelation. He was getting all riled up and excited about it, so much so that he ran to the front of the platform and said, “I am coming soon...” He realized at that moment that he lost his place in the sermon, so he started again, backed up, and came forward to the edge of the stage and said, “I am coming soon...” And he lost his place again. So he ran back and came to the front of the stage and said, “I am coming soon...” And he tripped and fell right into the lap of a lady on the front row! He apologized, but she said, “That's okay. You warned me three times you were coming.” None of us should be surprised when Jesus comes back! Why? Because he said, “I am coming soon.” If it was soon 2000 years ago when these words were written, it's even sooner now.

VIII. THE LAST PRAYER OF THE BIBLE (22:20-21)

Look at verse 20. “He who testifies these things says, yes, I am coming soon. Amen.” Who said that? Did John say that? Or did Jesus say that? The word “amen” means “let it be.” I don't know who said it, but this is the last prayer John said, “Come quickly, Lord Jesus.” In verse 21, John ends the book by saying, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with God's people.”

These two prayers are interrelated. If you have God's grace with you and you're trusting his grace for salvation, not your works for salvation, you can say, “Come quickly, Lord Jesus.” Honestly, can you say that you want the Lord to come back soon? Some kids want Jesus to come back before finals! Some might want Jesus to come back before April 15 Tax Day. Are you ready? Not only that, do you desire for Jesus to come back?

In 2 Timothy, we have some of the last words of the Apostle Paul who says, “I'm now ready to be poured out. The time of my departure is at hand. I've kept the faith. I fought the good fight, but it's over for me. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give to me, not only to me, but to everyone who loves his appearing.”

CONCLUSION

Can you say that you love the appearing of Jesus? I remember when I was about five years old, I went with a friend of mine to the house behind ours and stole some items out of the garage! We nearly took everything in that garage. No one was home, so we hauled out every toy we could find and put it in a field beside their

house in some tall Johnson grass. We were hauling out the last load when the dad at that house drove up in the driveway.

He was honking his horn at us and yelling! And you talk about being caught red-handed. We just stood there in the drive, too dumb to drop everything and run. The dad got out of the car, grabbed us by our collars and took us home. He took us to my friend's house first and told his mother what we did. Then he took me to my home, and I told my mom what we did. My mother called my dad at work to come home and deal with me. It's bad when they have to call the father home from work. I just knew my dad was going to kill me. My dad came driving up to our home, and although I loved my dad, I sure didn't love his appearing.

You may love Jesus, but do you love his appearing? Are you ready for him to come back? Can you pray like John prayed, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly"? If you can't pray that prayer, ask the Lord to reveal to you why that is. What's keeping you from praying it? Is there sin in your life that you need to confess? Because if he appeared, you'd be ashamed? Or is it because you are so attached to some things down here on earth that you want to enjoy them for a while before Jesus comes back? Your heart is in the wrong place. If you've been laying up treasures in heaven, when Jesus comes back, not only will you love him, but you'll love his appearing.

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