

“The Final Word”

We now come to the final word in the Book of The Revelation. This appears to be a continuation of the previous chapter and vision, with several repeated themes, possibly to reinforce the message. It speaks of the events as ‘coming quickly’... but what is meant by this? Is it referring to ordinary earth time, or to ‘time’ as John saw it in the vision? ‘Quickly’ in God’s economy, of course, may not be ‘quickly’ in our human idea of time.

It is quite possible that ‘quickly’ was used of the vision’s ‘time’. That is, in the vision, Christ’s return was imminent, so He *would* be coming quickly. But, this is merely my own guesswork, for I do not really know if God meant the events (in this and the previous chapter) to happen after John was returned to his natural state after the visions, or in the far-future.

We will find small clues as we read through this last chapter, but we cannot come to final conclusions as to the actual timing of these events. Thus, our concern should not be the actual timing, but our own state before God, for though we may not know the time of His return, we do know He will return as a ‘thief in the night’ and so should live accordingly, anticipating.

Verses 1-3

1.

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

The angel continued by showing John the ‘river of water of life’. We came across this in the previous chapter. It encompasses many truths found in the New Testament. For example, that Christ is the source of true life, as He revealed in John 14:6, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*”

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And in John 4:14 Jesus told the woman of Samaria,
“whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

This is the same water of life spoken of here, the water given by the Messiah. God’s truth and salvation is clear as crystal to those who are chosen, but dark as mud to those who are not predestined. The water of life is pure, unsullied by sin. It contains no contaminants, for nothing sinful can come from God. Salvation, then, flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. The salvation given by God proceeds from the Son, Jesus Christ.

The river is then referred to as a ‘street’. I can only assume that this is because a street is used to travel, and a saved person travels from death into life. But, we find something interesting in this word ‘street’ when we trace it back to its root meaning, a meaning that takes us back, yet again, to predestination....

‘Street’ is plateia, which is ‘a broad way’ or street. A reader might query this, for we are told elsewhere that the way to God is narrow. (The explanation is that the way or gate to God is narrow. We are not told if the street of the saved, once he is in God, is broad or narrow).

This word, plateia, is the feminine form of platus, which also means ‘broad’. But, the root of this word is plasso, meaning ‘to form’ or to mould as does a potter. God calls Himself The Potter, Who creates a person either to salvation or to destruction... the very essence of predestination.

So, the ‘river’ or water of life is a ‘street’ or path along which a saved person will travel to God, enabled to do so by God’s predestination. At the side of this river of life was the ‘tree of life’, which can also refer to the cross of Christ, as well as to the fruit spoken of in Genesis, approved of by God and given for sustaining true life. The tree of life had 12 fruits or, rather, manner of fruits. This can mean 12 as in number, or it can refer to the 12 Apostles.

These fruit yielded their produce every month... 12 fruit over 12 months. Does this speak of the work of the Apostles as foundation stones of Christ’s Body (see previous chapter)? The leaves, too, were of great worth, healing the nations. Christ said that when the leaves of the fig tree had come, then summer was nigh (Matthew 24:32).

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The leaves would heal or cure, restore, the nations. This is not the healing of everyone (universalism). The meaning must be consistent with that of election, and so 'nations' has the meaning of a multitude of individuals of the same genus or nature – the saved of each nation. In the Old Testament 'nations' referred to heathens, but in the New Testament it was used of Paul to describe Gentile Christians. Thus, in this text, the 'tree of life' is that same tree Christ said was the chosen people, the Jews, into whom Gentiles are grafted (See Romans). The salvation of Gentiles came via the chosen people of God, the Jews.

Verses 3-5

1.

“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him:

2.

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

3.

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

This text speaks of the 'time' in heaven, after Judgement, when there shall be no more 'curse' of death. Instead, the throne (rule) of God and Christ shall be 'in it' (the river of life) and those saved will serve Him.

His servants, the saved (not angels, for they already see Him), will then see Christ face to face, for His name will be in their foreheads. That is, they are marked in their hearts and minds as belonging to Him. As we already know, there will be no night in heaven and no need for the sun or any created light-source, for God is there. He *is* Light. And the saved people of God, both Jew and Gentile, will reign with Him for ever.

Verses 6-9

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1.

“And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

2.

Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

3.

And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

4.

Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.”

The angel then said that whatever had been told to John was true and to be trusted. They were things that would come to pass very soon, so those who kept to the word and spirit of the prophecy (The Revelation) were blessed by God.

The Apostles always told their hearers that they only preached what they themselves had seen and heard. They were true witnesses. In this text John says that he saw and heard the vision, so others could rely on what he says. When the angel finished talking to him, John fell down to worship him, but the angel told him not to do it. “I am only your fellow-servant. I am the same as your brethren, the prophets, and your brethren, the saved. I, too, keep the sayings of this prophecy - so worship God, not me.”

Today, many who say they are Christians worship human leaders, some of whom even say they are ‘gods’. The true attitude should be that of the servant, who is least, not that of a ruler! We must worship God alone, not any human being or system.

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The things shown to John would shortly be done – speedily and swiftly. Does this mean shortly after John heard it, or, that the events, once started, would come to a quick end?

Verses 10-12

1.

“And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

2.

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

3.

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

The angel tells John not to seal up the prophecy, for the time is at hand. That is, he should not keep the prophecy secret, because the events spoken of were imminent. As we have seen, certain events and sayings were for the churches at the time, and some were of a more distant future. So, certainly, some of the words were for the consumption of his peers. And even those things of future date were, in God’s eyes, to come speedily.

Those who are unsaved at the end will *remain* unsaved when the end comes, filthy and condemned by God to the last. Conversely, those who are saved will remain so and must remain righteous, holy in life and belief.

Look! (said Christ) I come quickly! Those who listen to what I have said and keep my words will be blessed by rewards appropriate to the works done by my people. We see here that God will give different rewards, directly linked to the works done by Christians. Works are not those devised by men, but those honourably and faithfully complied with by the saved, given by God as His will in the lives of His people. So many Christians do ‘works’ they *think* are holy. But,

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they are just human works, done because of a sense of duty and because the Christian thinks he ought to do good works. True works are those things done because God has given them personally to the individual Christian to do. God does not recognise any other 'good works'. Only works prompted by God will receive a reward... so search your hearts.

Verses 13-16

1.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

2.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

3.

For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

4.

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

Christ now speaks to John: 'I am the Alpha and Omega'. This is a statement of Almightyness, and should make all creatures tremble. He is the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Yet, so many reject Him and scorn His name! Those who obey and worship Him have a right to the tree of life and they will enter the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem (see previous chapter). Note that this is a repeat of Christ's own words: the proof that we love Him is that we do what He says; we obey His commandments.

Those who do not, and are outside the city (not a part of heaven) are dogs. That is, impure in mind and heart, impudent and condemned by God. They include the categories of people previously referred to.

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Jesus told John that He had sent His angel to show John 'these things in the churches'. This underlines the fact that many things spoken of in The Revelation were (primarily) for the churches at the time of John, as well as for future reference (secondarily).

Christ said He is the root and the offspring of David. By 'root' He means David had his being in Him. Yet, He was also born of David's line, in human form. He is the 'bright and morning star'... the first sign of a new day. (In some modern versions, this morning star is wickedly referred to as Satan!)

Verses 17-21

1.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

2.

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

3.

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

4.

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

5.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

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The Holy Spirit is brought into this part of the prophecy. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come". He who hears will also say, "Come". That is, this is not a message for everyone, but only for those who 'hear', or are saved. So, 'him that is athirst' only refers to the saved, it is not an universal 'offer'. It speaks only of those who are already on the 'street' or river of life. It is the saved who may take freely of the water of life.

Then, Christ warns readers of the prophecy, through John, to beware: anyone who adds to the words of The Revelation will receive judgement and be obliterated by the same plagues that will strike the wicked of this world. Those who remove any parts of this prophecy will have his name taken from the book of life*. That is, both will be sent to hell. This is not, as many suppose, a text that shows that we may lose our salvation. Rather, it shows that those who add or remove from the text are not saved anyway.

Read all this prophecy again and you will see that only the unsaved would dare to tamper with the contents, for it speaks of great themes, of salvation, repentance, obedience and judgement! Only those without salvation can add or remove words of this nature*.

Christ then said, I Who testify to these things will come soon. So be it! John then says, Come even as you say, Lord Jesus! The favour and joy of our Lord Jesus Christ remain with all who are saved. May it be fulfilled.

We have now reached the end of this great Book, which is like no other in the New Testament. It spans the time of John to the far future, beyond the time of this article. It speaks of the truth of Christ and the faithfulness of His people. It warns the pastors of churches to be on their guard and Christians of all ages to be always ready for His return. Through it runs the all-pervasive doctrinal teaching of election and predestination, which is the framework for all Christian life and knowledge. Without it there can be no truth.

* See BTM Article A-097 'Blotted out of the Book of Life?', for a more detailed examination of this matter.

Notes:

Adding and subtracting. Many Christians, including preachers, think that the warning about

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adding or subtracting words applies to all of scripture. The way to look at it is this; The PRIMARY reference is ONLY to the words found in the Book of Revelation. This is the primary *biblical*

interpretation of the text itself. However, we may also legitimately apply a SECONDARY interpretation of this text, which is *theological*

: that we may not add to, or subtract from, ANY part of God's word. Even so, readers should beware of applying universal meanings when a text speaks of a local or immediate matter, for there may not necessarily be a wider theological meaning. (In this case there is).

V1. "out of... and of..." Does this wording mean that the throne belongs to the triune God and the Son, or that each has His own throne? As a preposition, "Out of", *ek*

' speaks of an emission from a point of origin. I would presume that as the Lamb, Jesus Christ the Son, is God, that the throne is occupied by 'God' as a Trinity. Thus, "and of the Lamb", where 'and' is the conjunction, 'and' must convey the meaning of 'indeed'. Thus, the emission from the throne of God is also an emission from the Lamb, as the Lamb is one of the Trinity, and the throne belongs to each and all Persons.

V2. "manner of fruit". 'Manner' can refer to types of fruit/fruit of the vine, of fields, and also the fruit of the loins, progeny (as in tribes?).

"on either side". The Greek shows that there was a tree of life on both sides of the river. That is, two trees (probably sharing the bearing of fruits).

"a month". Refers to the festival held every new moon (first day of each month).

"healing (of the nations)". As the word *therapeia* is used it probably refers to health

'of the household' (in this case, the household of God – the saved). The root speaks of restoring to good health.

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V3. “no more curse”. That is, no more *katathema* – cursed things or people, because God’s throne shall be in (Heaven).

V5. “Light”. The ‘light’ of the sun, neuter noun, *phōs*, here refers to light as an emission from a physical source (sun). It can also be used

metaphorically

of God being light itself. Whereas the ‘light’ given by God, the verb, *phōtizō*

, refers to a gift from God (light), which can also be used to describe understanding. Thus, the first ‘light’ in the text is a mechanical brightness given by a created source, and the second ‘light’ is from God (not the sun), having power within itself. By association this uncreated light (of God) will last for eternity.

V10. “seal not”. God wanted John to announce what he had seen in this latter vision, because time was short (“at hand”). Therefore, the primary meaning is of a time soon to pass, and not necessarily of the far future. This leads us to conclude that some of the Book is concerned with a time John lived in, or soon after he lived, even if parts refer secondarily to the far future (which they obviously do). Primarily, the coming spoken of means that those who are unsaved will remain unsaved, etc., because there will be no time to repent anyway.

V14. Only those who have access to the tree of life, those ordained by predestination, can enter the new Jerusalem. Those who will be refused are shown in a short list (V15); this list is by no means exhaustive, but is broadly representative of all the sins of non-predestined people.

V16. Jesus Himself sent prophets/teachers/pastors to teach these things in the local churches. That is, local churches containing genuine believers and having genuine pastors and teachers. Today, most churches are false or have false teachers and pastors. These are tares.

V17. Only those who are saved can take freely of the life-giving waters.

(‘Book of life’ – see article A-097).

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V20. Jesus speaks the first sentence. John speaks the second.

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