

# Revelation Step by Step, 17

## The Closing Testimonies

We arrive at the summation of the book, introduced by a picture from the rest of the Bible, brought together and renewed; Ezekiel's millennial river (Ezekiel 47:1-9), Joel's fountain from the House of the Lord (Joel 3:18) and Zechariah's Ocean refreshing waters (Zechariah 14:8), all prelude the living waters of Christ (John 4:14) now (prophetically) emanating from the **Throne of God and the Lamb**, for it is now synonymous, delivering the unity of the Holy Spirit to the nations, that they might be healed of the curses of lawlessness.

Verse 1. 'Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal. It was flowing from the throne of God and the lamb'. ISV.

Verse 2: 'In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations'. Thus the symbolic Tree of Life, not now one, but many, grow on *both* sides of the river, and yield fruit continuously, spiritual blessings for all races as they are prepared for the furtherance of God's yet to be announced Plan for Spiritual mankind.

Verses 3-4: '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. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads'. Those privileged to live in the New Jerusalem are the Bride of Christ, who bear the name of God's Family on their foreheads and shall see his face, for they are His immediate servant family (Rev. 14:1). They are 'of God and the lamb' and now will reign eternally, v5, not just for the 1000 years, often dwelling in the light of His presence. 'There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.'

Verses 6-21. The Epilogue.

The visions of the Apostle John are at an end, and what follows are a series of solemn confirmations, assurances and instructions.

Verse 6. **An angel**, probably the one who has been signifying the things which must shortly come to pass, authenticates that the contents of the Book of Revelation are faithful and true. 'Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.'

Verse 7. The angel reports Christ's words that He is soon coming and that he who values and obeys the words of this book is blessed, a repetition of the introduction at

the beginning, 1:3, 'Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.'

Verses 8-9. Once again John is so overcome by the visions he has seen, that he falls in worship before the angel who brought them and gains a mild rebuke in the angel's emphatic prohibition, for he is told that the Prophets and the Saints are fellow servants of God, with the angels. 'Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

Verses 10-11. Unlike the instruction given to Daniel at the end of *his* book, the time has now come when these visions *can* be understood, so the book is unsealed for the immediate understanding of those who take the time to become both familiar and obedient to God's word. This present era is "a day of salvation" so nearly at an end, that there is no second chance for those who reject a full understanding of God's way at this time, by spurning precious knowledge they had once been given. 'And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."

Verse 12. His final return with rewards.

Christ here repeats the nearness of his return (with His Bride, Zechariah 14:5) when His Bride will receive her rewards, as in the parables of the Talents and Pounds. They have been in Heaven with Christ for 3½ years learning from their husband their coming roles, but now they will implement their various *spiritual* rewards. "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for **what he has done.**"

We can't even begin to appreciate the value of the positions we will hold. They are way beyond our comprehension, and this puts into perspective the **diligent devotion** to our calling which Jesus Christ expects of his future Bride. No wonder so many of the Church fail to enter into the Kingdom. Some few will have served in Jerusalem, and *still* be left behind at the Resurrection in the Judean wilderness, to join others who did not *quite* make it, in the region of Petra, in Jordan, where they will be trained for *their* physical roles in the Millennial Kingdom. (Read our article under, 'More' and 'End Time', the "Division of the Saints.")

The vast majority in the Church however, completely unaware of a *seven* year Tribulation because they did not study God's word carefully and instead relied upon a man's teaching, were quite unaware of God's command "Thus saith the Lord..." in Jeremiah 31:6-8, or else relied on the false teaching of their ministers or even

dismissed it themselves, having rejected the knowledge that they are of Israel. So, they remained in their lands, until the second Seal, war and invasion, takes them (as prophecy reveals) into captivity, where they experience the Great Tribulation, when many will give their lives in deep repentance for their delusion and deception. We read about them in Revelation chapter 7. Note that this is **after the introduction of “the great day of his wrath”**, when, **“who is able to survive?”** Revelation 6:17, New Living Translation.

Verse 13. Here, Jesus Christ claims the title which stresses His shared Divinity with His Father. The words Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, equivalent to ‘A-Z’. **“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”**

Verses 14-15. **‘Blessed are those who wash their robes,** [as it says in the Greek] **so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by its gates. But outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood....’** See how important it is to repent of our sins from day to day, and be forgiven through the blood of Christ. Those listed in verse 15 would not have qualified. “Dogs” are impure lascivious persons, sorcerers those who deal in magic through demons. Even they, reading this, can still repent, and be washed clean, and enter the Kingdom, if only they are prepared to turn from their sins, for I know just how patient our merciful God can be.

Verses 16-19. The figure which has been behind the angel from the beginning of the visions, in whose name the angel has spoken, now steps forward to authenticate the angel’s testimony, the whole content of the book. We are the “you” in the churches who receive it. Verses 16-17, **““I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star.”** The Spirit and the bride say, **“Come!”** Let the one who hears say, **“Come!”** And let the one who is thirsty come, and the one who desires the water of life drink freely....” These verses describe Christ in relation to His Bride to be, as He returns for her before the Great Tribulation, when they receive eternal life at the First Resurrection. We are admonished to be praying for that moment.

Verse 18-19. Christ then warns against adding to or taking away from the Book of Revelation, **‘I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book: and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.’**

A similar warning is found in Deuteronomy 4:2 and Proverbs 30:6, protecting His words from any who would undermine the Truth.

The Bible contains all we need to know about God’s will. Would He forget to include any vital instructions we need, in order to know His will? And so we must beware of

those who would have us keep the oral *traditions* of the Jews they falsely claim are just as authoritative as God's written word. This Rabbinic Judaism, Jesus Christ condemned throughout Matthew 23, time and time again, and also often stressed the truth is the *written* word of God, but surprisingly, most of the Church of God still use oral tradition in the determination of their Holy Days.

Verse 20. Once again, Christ repeats that He is coming soon; it will be only a handful of years for each one of us, individually. John, representing the church, replies, ["Amen: come, Lord Jesus"](#).

Verse 21. The benediction follows, familiar from the Epistles, and suggesting that the book was intended to be read aloud to the people of God.

And so we reach the end of the book, which promised at the beginning to reveal the things which must shortly come to pass, and closes with the assurance that He, for whose coming these things are a prelude, is near at hand, even at the door. We are to watch, and note that as these things fall into place before our eyes, both in the Church, and in the world, we let the evidence encourage us, despite the increasing difficulties, not just to be called, not just to be chosen, but also to be faithful to His word until our life's end. Revelation 17:14, ["...and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."](#) Amen.

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