

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 11-3-13 PM NOTES
"THE FINAL INSPIRED WORDS FROM GOD"
REVELATION 22:6-21
#33 in Series, "Verse-by-Verse Through Revelation"

2 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV) "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

The Greek Word translated "inspired" in 2 Timothy 3:16 means "God-breathed."

I. The Faithful Word of God (vv. 6-10)

A. The Accuracy of the Word of God (v. 6)

B. The Authority of the Word of God (vv. 7-9)

The word translated "quickly" does not mean immediately. A better translation would be "suddenly."

Matthew 24:27 (NKJV) "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."

C. The Accessibility of the Word of God (v. 10)

Daniel 12:4 (NKJV) "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

II. The Finished Work of Christ (vv. 11-16)

A. The Finished Work of Christ Settles What We Are (v. 11)

1 Corinthians 15:22 (NKJV) "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."

Hosea 4:17 (NKJV) "Ephraim *is* joined to idols, Let him alone."

Romans 1:25-27 (ESV) "²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. ²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷ and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error."

Theologians call what is taught in Romans 1:25-27, "God's wrath of abandonment."

B. The Finished Work of Christ Settles Where We Are (vv. 12-15)

1. There Are Those Who Will Be With Him (vv. 12-14)

Revelation 22:14 (NASB) “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.”

Revelation 7:14b (NKJV) “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

2. There Are Those Who Will Be Without Him (v. 15)

C. The Finished Work of Christ Settles Whose We Are (v. 16)

Revelation 1:1a (NKJV) “The Revelation of Jesus Christ...”

III. The Final Witness of the Spirit (vv. 17-21)

A. The Last Welcome (v. 17)

B. The Last Warning (vv. 18-19)

1 John 2:5 (NKJV) “But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”

C. The Last Word (vv. 20-21)

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The Bible tells us in **2 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV)** “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”. The Greek Word translated “inspired” in this verse means “God breathed”. A perfect God breathes out a perfect word. Is God still speaking today? Well, it depends on what people mean by “speaking”. I have two books in my library entitled *Hearing God’s Voice* and *How to Listen to God*. Both of these books are authored by good Bible teachers, and in the book they would say that God’s inspired (breathed out) word is complete and when they talk about God “speaking” they are referring to God the Holy Spirit bringing Scripture to our mind, or prompting us to do or say something by putting thoughts into our mind that agree with the inspired completed Word of God. What they are speaking of is how the Holy Spirit applies the inspired Word of God to our lives. There are other authors and Bible teachers who say that God still speaks by giving new revelation to people today. The Mormons believe that God spoke to Joseph Smith and gave him the book of Mormon that is inspired. There is also the “inspired” book, *Science and Health* by Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of the cult called Christian Science. I was looking at another book that someone gave me. The subtitle of the book is *How God Speaks Today through Prophecies, Dreams, and Visions*. I would advise people to be very leery of that book! That sounds like new revelation. The fact is, God has finished breathing out His Word to us. While the Spirit of God still guides God’s children according to His inspired Word and while He still makes application of the inspired Word to specific situations, the inspired Scriptures are complete and God says some rather stern things to those who would add or take away from His revelation, His breathed out Word, as we will see in our text.

Revelation 22:6-21 is an epilogue or conclusion that closes out this 10 month study. While the books of the Bible are not arranged in chronological order, Revelation is the last book of the Bible written. In a sense then, these are the last words of God Himself. Our triune God is alive and well and as we just saw, He still guides His people, but when it comes to His breathed out perfect inerrant Word, these are His last words to us until we see Him. In this epilogue, two themes dominate. First is the reliability and authenticity of the book of Revelation, and secondly the imminency of the end.

Let me remind you of what has happened by the time we get to this last chapter of Revelation. A horrible 7 years of tribulation has been poured out on the earth. A significant part of humanity has been destroyed. As this tribulation period comes to an end, the wicked Satan possessed antichrist has come to rule much of the world. The antichrist gathers the armies that he controls at a place called Armageddon. His goal is to destroy the Jews. When all looks hopeless, Christ returns to the earth with His saints and the antichrist’s armies are destroyed and the antichrist is cast into the lake of fire. Next, Satan and all of the demons (it is implied) are bound for 1,000 years. Christ then sets up His earthly kingdom and rules and reigns for 1,000 years. After the 1,000 years, Satan and the demons are released for a time to reveal that some of those born during the millennium were never born again. After these unregenerate rebels are revealed, they are judged and the Devil and his angels are cast into the lake of fire forever and ever. After the unsaved dead are judged at the great white throne judgment and cast into the lake of fire, the earth and the atmosphere around the earth (called the first heaven in other places) are burned up and then remade taking away all the taint of sin. Then, The New Jerusalem, the capital city of Heaven comes down to the remade earth, and we who have been saved by the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf will live with the Old Testament saints eternally. In the last message (Revelation 21:9-22:5), we saw a description of the New Jerusalem and some of what we will do there. That brings us to these final inspired words from God.

I. The Faithful Word of God (V6-10)

In verse 6 the emphasis shifts from eternity in the New Jerusalem to an epilogue (a short section at the end of a literary work) that provides the conclusion to the book. The first part of the epilogue focuses on the word God has given.

A. The Accuracy of the Word of God (V6)

The immediate reference here is to the book of Revelation, but it also extends to cover all the words breathed out by God. The “he” in verse 6 is the angel who had shown John the New Jerusalem. The words of God are described as being “faithful and true”. That phrase, “faithful and true” is used as a title for the Lord Jesus Christ in Revelation 3:14 and Revelation 19:11. The written Words of God are as faithful and true as the living Word of God. Both are faithful and true.

Verse 6 tells us that the God who moved His prophets of old – literally “the spirits of the prophets” (ESV, NASB, NIV) – to write His very breathed out words is the same God that sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. In other words, the prophesies of Revelation are just as much God’s breathed out words as are the Old Testament prophesies. Just as what those Old Testament prophets prophesied came to pass, even so what the angel has said will come to pass, and when it does come to pass it will be “shortly”. That is translated “quickly” in the HCSB.

B. The Authority of the Word of God (V7-9)

It seems as though there is a change of speakers in verse 7; Jesus Himself now addresses John. In this passage is a **promise**, a **blessing**, and a **warning**. First, there is a promise. The **promise** is that He is coming “quickly”. Now some may think the promises aren’t authoritative because John wrote this somewhere between 90-95 AD and He still has not bodily literally returned. The word translated “quickly” does not mean immediately. A better translation would be “suddenly”. **Matthew 24:27 (NKJV)** “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” Light travels at 186,000 miles per second. That is what “quickly” means. This has no reference as to when He is coming. The promise is that He is coming quickly. The **blessing** is to the one who keeps the words of this prophesy (the book of Revelation). This book of Revelation has the special promise that those who read it will be blessed. It is a shame that Christians don’t read this book and pay the price to understand it. It is a shame that many preachers don’t want to preach from this book. They (and their people) are literally losing a blessing. God does not tell believers to read Revelation to satisfy their curiosity about the future. This book is the revelation or unveiling of Jesus Christ. When He is unveiled, we see His glory and respond in glorifying Him through worship. Not only is there a promise and a blessing, there is also a **warning** in verses 8-9a. John gets so carried away that he falls down in worship, but he mistakenly directs his worship to the angel who is only the messenger of God who has shown John these amazing things. The angel warns John that only God is worthy of worship. The saints or Mary is not worthy of worship. A proper understanding of Revelation always results in the worship of God. Worship is one of the main themes in Revelation.

C. The Accessibility of the Word of God (V10)

The message of Revelation is not to be hidden. It is a book to be spread. Daniel was told to seal up one of his visions in **Daniel 12:4 (NKJV)** "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." Daniel was told to seal his revelation and John is told not to seal but to send this word revealed to him. In Revelation we have the last words that God inspired.

II. The Finished Work of Christ (V11-16)

The finished work of Christ will be in eternity the main object of our thanksgiving and one of the prevalent topics of our worship. The finished work of Christ settles what we are, where we are, and whose we are.

A. The Finished Work of Christ Settles What We Are (V11)

The finished work of Christ applied or rejected determines that we are either dead in Adam or alive in Christ. **1 Corinthians 15:22 (NKJV)** “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” Peoples’ response to the finished work of Christ will fix their eternity. To reject the finished work of Christ sets our character and seals our destiny. At some point, our character is set – there will be no

change. For some who hear this message, your future and your destiny hangs in the balance. Those who hear the truth and continue to be unjust, there will come a time when your destiny is set. Those who hear and continue to be filthy (“vile” in NIV) will at a point in time have their destiny sealed. In contrast, the one who has been made righteous in Christ’s righteousness will be righteous throughout eternity. The one who has been made holy (set apart in Christ) will be holy through eternity. Certainly at death or at Christ’s coming our destiny is set, but for the made righteous, made holy saints of God that destiny is determined the moment that they are made new creations in Christ by trusting in the finished work of Christ. Here is something that ought to make those who have never received Christ shake like a leaf in a whirlwind. When the finished work of Christ is rejected time after time, there may come a time when God judicially blinds them and they are set in their lostness forever even before they die. In the Old Testament, God said to the long rebellious inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom of Israel often called Ephraim (the largest tribe in the Northern Kingdom) in **Hosea 4:17 (NKJV)** “Ephraim is joined to idols, Let him alone.” Their judgment was already determined and set. In Romans 1 we see God “giving sinners up” to their sin. **Romans 1:25-27 (ESV)** “²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. ²⁶ For this reason **God gave them up** to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷ and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.” This is what the theologians call **God’s wrath of abandonment**. What have you done with the finished work of Christ? It settles what we are.

B. The Finished Work of Christ Settles Where We Are (V12-15)

Notice that there are some going to be in the New Jerusalem eating from the tree of life, but there are some who are denied access and find themselves on the outside.

1. There Are Those Who Will Be With Him (V12-14)

Jesus reminds us that His coming is imminent. It could be at any time. Our works here give evidence of our having received and trusted in the finished work of Christ on the cross. When he comes for us He has rewards for us that are based on our faithfulness to His will and our surrender to His ways. I believe that our rewards will have to do with our capacity to enjoy Heaven and to be used in service to Him. Everyone in Heaven will enjoy it to the fullest of their capacity and everyone will serve Him to the fullest of their capacity (Revelation 22:3), but some will have a greater capacity than others. We will be with the one who is the alpha and omega. Those are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The alpha and omega tells us that He is the fullness of all that God has to say. The beginning and the end focuses on His sovereignty. He is over and in control of everything from the beginning until the end. The first and the last emphasize His eternity – at the beginning He was already there and He has no end; He is eternal.

In verse 14, the older manuscripts say with **Revelation 22:14 (NASB)** “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.” Washing the robes refers to our participation in and identification with the death of Christ. **Revelation 7:14b (NKJV)** “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Those who will be with Him are those who are rewarded at His coming and those who have their sins washed away by the blood of the Lamb of God – Jesus Christ.

2. There Are Those Who Will Be Without Him (V15)

This verse describes those who will not be in Heaven. They are “outside”. These are the condemned for eternity. The dogs are not household pets; they are vicious scavengers who often attacked people. Morally, dogs often referred to people of impure and depraved behavior. The Hebrew equivalent word is used in Deuteronomy 23:17 to refer male homosexual religious prostitutes. In other places it is used to refer to enemies of the Gospel (Philippians 3:2). Sorcerers (the Greek word is the word that we get “pharmacy” from) refer to witchcraft mingled with drugs. The sexually immoral refers to all sexual conduct that is other than sexual conduct within the bounds of a covenant marriage. Murderers are premeditated life takers, and idolaters are those who substitute false gods for the one true God. In addition, those who have a pattern of lying are without – separated from the God forever and ever.

C. The Finished Work of Christ Settles Whose We Are (V16)

Jesus Christ is the source of the book of Revelation. It is all about Him. The title of the book in verse 1 is actually **Revelation 1:1a (NKJV)** “The Revelation of Jesus Christ...” , At first verse 16 sounds contradictory. The root would be the ancestor and the offspring would be the descendent. How could Jesus Christ be both the root and the offspring of David? Understanding comes when we understand the deity and the humanity of Christ. Jesus Christ was eternally God and in the fullness of time He became man without ceasing to be God. In His deity, He is the root of David in that He existed before David. In fact, He had no beginning! In His humanity, He was the descendent of David. His human lineage can literally be traced back to David. When we are united to Christ, we are in the one who is deity and humanity in one person. The bright and morning star is the star that announces the dawn’s soon arrival. To call someone a star in the first century was to exalt that person. Jesus Christ is not just a star:, He is the brightest star that brings in the eternal dawn of Heaven where there is no more night.

III. The Final Witness of the Spirit (V17-21)

This is perhaps the greatest invitation in the Bible! It is fitting that the canon (accepted books of the Bible) should close with this reference to the Holy Spirit who actually moved in the lives of Holy men to give them the very breathed out words of God.

A. The Last Welcome (V17)

The Spirit is of course the Holy Spirit, third member of the Godhead. The bride is the church – those regenerated by the work of the Holy Spirit. The invitation is one word – “come”! There is a call to come to Christ. I don’t think that anyone fully understands the doctrine of election, but any view of election that makes man a robot and takes away the responsibility of man to respond to God’s invitation is a false view of election. To be balanced, any view of election that leaves out the sovereignty of God is a false view of election.

Notice the qualifications for coming to Christ. First, they must hear. Because of sin, we are spiritually deaf until God gives us ears to hear. If you hear the invitation, the drawing to come to Christ and trust in His finished work, it is because God has given you ears to hear. The second qualification is thirst. Thirst refers to desire in the Scripture. You can come to Christ if you desire. Whosoever will may come. Know however that it is the Spirit of God Himself that has put that thirst within you. There is invitation after invitation in the Scripture to come to Christ. Don’t treat this invitation lightly. Remember the warning of verse 11 that there comes a point when it is too late.

B. The Last Warning (V18-19)

This is an especially stern warning! It comes not from John but from Christ Himself. The immediate context points this warning to the book of Revelation. However, since the whole canon of Scripture is equally inspired by God. I think that it is appropriate to apply this warning to all 66 books of the Bible. There are other similar warnings in Deuteronomy (4:2; 12:32), Proverbs 30:5-6, and Galatians 1:6-7. Remember that when sin entered the world in Genesis 3, it was Satan that tried to add to God’s word and then denied its truth. To distort, deny, or damage the Word of God in any way is a dangerous thing to do.

Verse 19 is not saying that a person who takes away parts of the Word of God could lose their salvation. No one living under the Lordship of Christ would add to or subtract from the Word of God. One of the signs that a person is saved is that they treasure God’s Word and desire to obey it. **1 John 2:5 (NKJV)** “But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.” The word “keeps” means to treat as a precious thing. Verse 19 of our text could be understood as anyone who takes away from the words of this book has no part nor ever had a part in the Book of Life.

C. The Last Word (V20-21)

Remember that quickly does not mean immediately but suddenly. John’s response is “Amen” which means “I agree” or “so be it”. John is ready! “Even so, come, Lord Jesus”. Are you ready? Are you longing for His coming tonight? May you experience God’s grace to enable you to say “yes”. (3317)