

Revelation 22:12-21

"The Last Call"

It's the last study, in the last book, on the last page of God's Word. & Even at the end of it all God will issue one *last call* to repentance. If there's one thing we've learned all throughout our journey (traversing through the book of Rev) it's been God's heart toward man to turn from sin & trust in Him. **Time after time the call has gone out, the plea has been made, the opportunity has been granted to man to repent of his wickedness, to turn from his sinfulness & find forgiveness through J.C. But more than not man chooses to resolve himself *in* his sin rather than absolve himself *of* his sin through faith in J.C.** Yet let it be made known that's *his* choice, not *God's* desire. The bible is very clear, "***As I live,' says the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live'.***"¹

But there comes a time whereby God will honor the desire found in the heart of man and if he will not turn to Christ & so find *forgiveness* then he will collide w/God's righteousness & so find *judgment*. The book of Revelation details both ends of the spectrum.

We've noted the things in this book that qualify as history (Ch 1, & the message to the churches literally & historically in Ch 2-3), we've studied the message of Jesus to the churches presently (again found in Ch's 2-3) & we've seen everything that will take place prophetically from Ch 4 forward in this book. **The rapture of the church, the worship of the Lamb of God Who has taken away the sins of the world, Him taking the scroll out of the hand of Him who sits upon the throne & loosing it's seals.**

The A.C. emerging & taking his place as the world dictator, not through war initially but by peace talks/diplomacy. Then comes war, pestilence, famine, death & destruction, God's judgment is being poured out. He seals 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel who urge men to repent & trust in Jesus... **We've seen the 2 witnesses who prophecy for 3 ½ yrs throughout the great tribulation, whom God grants the authority to bring plagues upon the earth & call fire down from heaven in order to destroy any who seek to stand in their way...** Yet at the end of the 3 ½ yrs the A.C. makes war w/them, kills them & 3 ½ days later they rise again while CNN is rolling on location & the whole world sees it, freaks out & they ascend into heaven.

¹ The New King James Version, 1982 (Eze 33:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

We've seen the trumpet judgments, the bowl judgments, the return of Christ to the earth, the A.C. & the false prophet thrown alive into the lake of fire. **The Millennial reign of Christ, the final rebellion of man, the Great White Throne Judgment & finally... a new heaven & a new earth; no more sadness or sorrow, no more pain & no more death, the former things having passed away.** We've seen the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem how it looks on the outside & what kind of things are happening on the inside.

There's no need for the sun or the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminates it. **The Lamb is it's light; there will be no more curse but we will serve our God & see His face, & we shall reign forever & ever... if it weren't the word of God who could believe it? Yet we're told in Vs 6 of Ch 22, "These words are faithful & true..."**

Vs 12-13

Ok, there are a # of things that I want to briefly touch on here. #1 Let's not miss our Lord's promise & the promise found again & again throughout the word of God that He is coming again. **"Behold, I am coming," Jesus declares it personally, the Holy Spirit reaffirms it constantly throughout your NT, Jesus is coming again. The world wasn't prepared for His 1st coming & neither will the world be ready for His 2nd coming.** Jesus said, **"And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all."** ²In other words, they weren't ready for what was coming. They mocked at the idea of God judging the earth, they carried on w/life business as usual. But the day came when judgment fell & then it was too late... Jesus underscored His point, **"Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."** ³Notice it's not "if" the Son of Man is revealed, it's "when" the Son of Man is revealed. **"Behold, I am coming", don't be deceived, don't be lulled to sleep. Don't fall into the "yeah right" flow of this world.**

Peter said it's going to be just like that when the time comes again. Leave the book of Rev & turn back to **2nd Peter Ch 3** (Vs 1-8). You see there's the heart of God, giving man every opportunity to come to Him. But the day will come when we will "enter the ark", in which we will be pulled "out of Sodom" & judgment will fall.

² *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Lk 17:26-27). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Lk 17:28-30). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

“Behold, I am coming,” notice “quickly” or as we spoke last time, “suddenly”. When it happens there will be an immediacy about it & wherever you’re at in your relationship w/Christ is where you’ll be, be it for Him, or against Him. There’ll be no changing your mind at that time, it’ll be too late. That’s why the bible attaches the sense of urgency to the need for repentance & our ongoing relationship w/Christ. Yes, it’s great when one turns from sin & trusts in Jesus. But once we’re *in* Christ it’s imperative that we *abide*, or stay connected *to* Christ. Jesus was always exhorting us to a need to watch & be ready. Do you remember these words? *“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”*⁴ Jesus wasn’t talking to the unbelieving world when He said those words, those are words to those who belong *to* Him, who need to be safeguarding their relationship *with* Him. Watch... & be ready. He’s coming quickly (or suddenly, [at an hour we don’t expect]).

“...& My reward is w/Me” notice “to give to every one according to his works.” This may be a *comfort* to you, or it may be a *concern* to you depending upon where you’re at with Christ. When the Lord says that He will reward us according to our works it reminds us that God pays attention to the details of our lives. He’s mindful of our suffering, our sacrificing & our service unto Him (or lack thereof).

But the encouragement of this passage is this; your labor in the Lord is not in vain. God will never be a debtor to man, He will reward you, or recompense you according to your work. Now here Jesus claims to be the One who will reward those who are His. Yet the book of Hebrews says, *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”*⁵ So here we read that *God* is our rewarder, yet here in Rev Jesus says, “I’m your rewarder”. How do we reconcile these 2 things? Easy right? Jesus *is* God.

Now one may ask, “If we’re rewarded *according* to our works, does that mean we’re saved *by* our works?” The answer to that is “No”, it’s never about what we do, it’s about what Jesus has done. Yet we’re to realize that what we believe will determine how we behave. Saving faith will produce change in your life... Let me put it like this, if your faith toward God hasn’t changed your life, it hasn’t saved your soul...

⁴ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mt 24:42-44). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Heb 11:6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

True faith toward God will produce godly results in my life. If Christ be in me, then His character will be reflected & shine forth from me. Question: what kind of works are being produced in your life? Remember these words? *"But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?"*⁶ Just prior to that he said, "You show me your faith w/out your works, & I'll show you my faith *by* my works." Paul told Titus, *"This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works."*⁷ So though we're not saved by our works, saving faith will produce good works in our lives.

As for these titles in Vs 13, couple quick things. Again they speak to us of the deity of Christ. Back in Ch 21 (6), the term "Alpha & Omega, the Beginning & the End" was applied to God, here they're applied to Jesus. Jesus said, "I and My Father are One." Jesus is as eternal as is God the Father, there is only 1 God, represented in 3 Persons (God the Father, God the Son & God the Holy Spirit). It's the mystery of the Tri-unity of the Godhead. In the book of Isaiah we read, *"Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.'"*⁸ So, The Lord & His Redeemer say, "I am the 1st & the Last, Besides Me there is no God." A singularity of plurality... let me know when you got it figured out 😊.

Jesus is the Alpha & the Omega, the Beginning & the End, the 1st & the Last. Which is to say that He is the "A-Z" which by implication includes every letter in between.

Translation: it's all about Jesus. In the volume of the book it is written of Him, all things were created *by* Him, *through* Him, & *for* Him. He is before all things & after all things, He is the eternal ever present God.

Vs. 14-15

Vs 14, (Read), Again this doesn't infer that doing His commandments earns us eternal life, but rather obedience to the word of God is *evidence* that eternal life abides in us...

Now your bible may say, "Blessed are those who wash their robes" referencing the cleansing flow of the blood of Jesus. The variation comes in on the basis of 2 very similar Greek words. But here's where we see a minor variation w/no major disruption to the text. In other words the context remains the same. Either way the emphasis is upon those who follow *after*, trust *in*, & depend *on* J.C. ... they are those will have the right (by the grace of God) to the tree of life & the city of God.

⁶ The New King James Version. 1982 (Jas 2:20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ The New King James Version. 1982 (Tit 3:8). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁸ The New King James Version. 1982 (Is 44:6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Vs 15

You see, I've always told you guys that dogs don't go to heaven & now you see it for yourselves 😊. Is that really what this is saying? No, the term dogs is a reference to those morally impure, in ancient Israel (& in many places in the world today) dogs weren't domesticated house pets. They were mangy scavengers who were recognized as unclean & impure.

So, the morally impure (dogs), the drug abusers (sorcerers), the sexually immoral, (those who disregard the sanctity of marriage & practice sex outside of marriage), murderers, idolaters & whoever loves & practices a lie, won't be in heaven, won't have access to the tree of life, they're outside, they're in the lake of fire which burns w/fire & brimstone day & night forever & ever.

Now don't envision these people outside the city of the New Jerusalem trying to claw their way in. That's not what John is saying, he's simply making the obvious distinction of those who have faith in Christ (as made evident by their works) & those who do not. Those who do are in, those who don't are out. You are either in Christ or you are not, there is no neutral ground, you are for Him or against Him.

Now, don't think that if perhaps you're in one of these categories currently that there's no hope for you personally; you can still repent. You can still turn from your sin & trust in the Lord (we'll see that in a minute).

But Jesus made it clear that it's not the well who need the physician it's the sick, He didn't come to call the righteous, but the sinner to repentance. Paul told the Corinthians, *"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."* 1 Co 6:9-11

That's the good news friends, when you turn to Jesus, He washes you, forgives you, cleanses you & makes you new (gives you a clean slate & a fresh start).

Vs 16

Check it out, Jesus personally authenticates the entire book of Revelation. "I have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches." Some of these things are tough to wrap our minds around, but it's all true, Jesus verifies it all.

We might also note that it's written to the churches, this book isn't to be neglected by the church, it's to be embraced & studied. Jesus wants us to know what's coming down the pike, so that we might prepare our hearts personally & reach out to others evangelistically.

Then he gives Himself 2 more titles, "The Root & Offspring of David" meaning that as David's Root He existed before David, He created David, & as David's Offspring He came into the world through the line of David (Jesus talked about this in Matt 22:41-46).

As the Bright & Morning Star, it's the name designated to Venus which next to the moon is the brightest object in the night sky. The idea here is that no matter how dark it may seem presently, a new day will dawn shortly whereby righteousness will reign & sin & death will be abolished forever.

Vs 17

"The last call"; now the question comes up, is the invitation to the Lord to "come" in the "even so come Lord Jesus" kind of response to Vs 12? "I am coming quickly" "& the Spirit & the bride say 'Come!'". Or is this the invitation to those who are lost to come & live forever, to drink the living waters & never thirst again?

I think you're safe on either side of that fence, certainly the cry of the Spirit & the cry of the bride of Christ (the church) is for Him to come, & to take us home & give rest to our weary souls... Yet equally true is the fact that the Spirit is wooing the sinner to the Savior, the church is reaching out to this lost, dying & dark world & saying, "Come to Jesus & find life."

So here's the deal, you are either in or you are out, but God desires that you be "in". The invitation goes out, "Come", "Come" whoever thirsts, "Come", if you're tired of drinking from the cesspools of this world & want to drink from the life giving pure waters that flow forth from the throne of God then you come, & God will give you life. Come and drink, notice "Freely".

It's free, there's no strings attached, drink liberally be filled & overflowing w/the Spirit of the Living God. But here's what we need to understand, "Free" yes, "Cheap" no way. It cost God everything to offer you & me the free gift of everlasting life; the price was paid through the shed blood of J.C. upon the cross. It's through His death & resurrection that we freely partake of the waters of life.

But again you guys, notice the method through which God brings people to Himself.

It's through simple invitation; it's person to person, "Let him who hears say 'Come'. God wants to work through your life to invite others to consider Jesus. To invite others to come & hear His word & learn of Him. It's always about the invitation to "come".

Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool." *Isaiah 55:1-2*, "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. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance."

All throughout the gospels, "Come and see..." People inviting other people to come & see, come & hear, come & consider who this Man is... Jesus the Christ; the Son of the Living God. There's a thirst in the heart of every man & that thirst is only quenched in Christ. Might write 'em down & look them up later, Ps 42:1, Ps 63:1-3

Oh, some people may come to Christ through Christian Radio, or television, but the vast majority are the result of another believer inviting them to church, or encouraging them to consider Jesus... It's the personal invitation that God seems so often to use.

But the door is wide open, "Whoever desires" can come, it's an open invitation to receive salvation from J.C. to any/everyone. It's opportunity & it's responsibility, because if I decline the invitation, than I only have myself to blame...

"Well, I don't understand all this 'bible' stuff"- come anyway, it doesn't say "whoever understands let him take of the water of life freely. "Well, I don't know, I don't feel bad over my sin like I probably should" – come anyway, it doesn't say "whoever feels a certain way, take of the water ..." "I don't know if I can live the Christian life" – come anyway. It doesn't say, "Whoever can let him take..." "I'm not worthy to live the Christian life" – come anyway. It doesn't say, "Whoever is worthy, let him take the water of life freely."

All you need in order to drink from the water of life is to "desire" it. If you can say, "Lord I have the desire to be saved, to give up my sin, to have a new heart, I desire to obey You, but I don't have the strength, Lord I have the desire, would You supply the power?" If that desire describes you, you're invited to freely come, if you're willing, the door is open. If this is your desire, then you are freely invited to come, if you are only willing.

Btw note the difference here between Christianity Vs the religions of the world.

The religions of the world say you need to give something to the gods. Christianity says we can't give anything to God, God gives to us, He says, "Here, you take from *Me*, take the water of life freely.

Vs 18-19

This is one of the reasons we take a literal approach to the book of Rev. Because I don't want to be guilty of adding to it or taking away from it. **I would rather be wrong in letting it say what it means & mean what it says, than be wrong in trying to change it by adding to it or taking away from it. It's only when we seek to change the meaning that it becomes meaningless anyway.**

Now certainly God knows the heart, & I'm sure we don't understand everything w/pinpoint accuracy, but we're not to willfully tamper w/this book (or for that matter any of the word of God). **What arrogance to stand in authority over the scriptures and seek to tell people "Well, God said this, He didn't say that, this is true, that's folklore or myth" what arrogance to presume to judge the word of God. We're to be judged by God's word, not be the judge of God's word.**

It's best to simply say, "God's word declares it, therefore I believe it."

Vs 20-21

Prophecy is a great proof of the love of God. He warns men, tells them what's coming, gives them opportunity to repent, to turn to Jesus & be saved.

But notice even to the very end; the book of Rev emphasizes watchfulness & readiness, "I am coming quickly" watch & be ready.

We love the final word of God to man don't we? You know the last book of the OT ends w/an admonition regarding a curse. **Malachi 4:6, "Lest I come & strike the earth w/a curse."** But the final word of God to man under the new covenant is one of grace, "The grace of our Lord J.C. be with you all." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Prayer Points:

Lord that's the cry of our heart, we're so thankful for your patience & your desire for all men everywhere to be saved. Yet our hearts yearn to be w/You, we long for a new heaven & a new earth, no more curse, but dwelling in Your presence forever. Lord help us to catch Your vision & be emboldened to impart the invitation to those around us to "Come", to come hear Your word & drink freely of the water of life. Pour out Your Spirit & may we be busy about Your work until we hear Your voice & see Your face; even so, come, Lord Jesus...

Well, it wouldn't be right to end this time w/out offering you the invitation to come, to come & drink of the Living Waters so find life in J.C. You've heard, the question is, "Do you desire?" If you're willing to turn from your sin, & trust in J.C. He will forgive you, cleanse you & make you new right here & right now. Just open your heart & call upon His name...