

REVELATION 21-22

Act Eight: The Bride, The New Jerusalem

In Revelation 19.11-20.15 we witnessed Jesus' final victory over the dragon, the beast, the false prophets, and their followers (whose names are not found written in the Book of Life). Now, in Revelation 21-22 we find symbol piled upon symbol. (1) The saints (whose names are written in the Book of Life) are pictured as the Bride of Christ. (2) The Bride is then shown to be the New Jerusalem, the eternal city of God and of the Lamb, and the abiding place of the saints forevermore. (3) The New Jerusalem is also shown to be the new heaven and the new earth, beneath and upon which the saints will live throughout eternity.

- (21.1) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,
for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,
and the sea was no more.
- (2) And I saw the holy city,
new Jerusalem,
coming down
out of heaven
from God,
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

John begins by telling us, "I saw," language which in Scripture frequently indicates a visionary experience

John sees

a new heaven and a new earth

Isaiah 65.17, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind."

note that the word for "new" is

"kainos," which indicates something new in the sense that it is the completion or perfection of what came before it (for ex: the "new" covenant)

not "neos" which would indicate something new without precedent

that the first heaven and the first earth have passed away (2 Peter 3.10)

Rev 20.11, "From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them."

John does not see a "sea"

this not to be taken literally

the "sea" that is no more symbolically represents throughout the OT the enemies of God and His people

now, following the events of Rev 20.7-15, the enemies of God and His people are no more, and thus there is no "sea"

John sees next

the holy city - "holy," the city set part in it entirety to the Lord

the holy city is the new Jerusalem

clearly not the literal city

for the new Jerusalem

comes down out of heaven from God

and represents the Bride adorned for her husband

Isaiah 54.5, "For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called."

John 3.28-29, "I [John the Baptist] am not the Christ. . . . [I am] the friend of the bridegroom. . . . The one who has the bride is the bridegroom."

*Note the recapitulation of the theme already introduced in Rev 19.7-8 which speaks of the marriage of the Lamb and of the bride adorning herself
in Rev 21.9ff the City-Bride will be described more fully
the City-Bride is both
the Bride, you and me, the true Israel of God, the Church of Jesus Christ
and our eternal dwelling
for it is also the new heaven and the new earth
which is encompassed in the symbol of a city*

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- (3) And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,
"Behold,
the dwelling place of God is with man.
He will dwell with them,
and they will be his people,
and God himself will be with them as their God.
(4) He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,
and death shall be no more,
neither shall there be mourning,
nor crying,
nor pain anymore,
for the former things have passed away."

*From the throne a loud voice announces the eternal fulfillment of God's covenant promise repeatedly throughout Scripture God speaks of a day when
He will be His people's God
and they will be His people
now that day has come, and forevermore He will dwell in the midst of His people
they will be forevermore His people
and He will be for evermore with them
for He will be forevermore their God
the covenant promise of the OT has come to fruition
and therefore, we will enjoy anew the intimacy of Eden - where Adam and Eve walked and talked with God (the intimacy that was lost by the fall of mankind into sinful rebellion)
note: Eden's garden-like glory was symbolically restored in the construction of the Tabernacle and the building of the Temple
both were decorated with artistic depiction of an Edenic garden
in both the Ark of the Covenant was guarded by Cherubim - just as Cherubim guard the way into Eden
the exit from Eden faced east; one entered the Tabernacle and Temple from the east
and now, in Rev 21-22, the lost glory of Eden is perfectly restored - for looking ahead . . .
a river flows through the city (22.1)
along the banks of the river the Tree of Life flourishes (22.2)
this is what is depicted at 12:00 o'clock on our narthex window*

Because the covenant promise of unhindered fellowship with God has been fulfilled "old things" will pass away

*He will wipe away all tears
there will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain
can you imagine?*

(5) And he who was seated on the throne said,
"Behold, I am making all things new."

Also he said,
"Write this down,
for these words are
trustworthy and
true."

(6) And he said to me,
"It is done!
I am
the Alpha and the Omega,
the beginning and the end.
To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life
without payment.

(7) The one who conquers will have this heritage,
and I will be his God
and he will be my son.

(8) But
as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable,
as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars,
their portion will be in the lake
that burns with fire and sulfur,
which is the SECOND DEATH."

From His Throne the Lord proclaims:

"I am making all things new!"

Isaiah 42.9; Isaiah 43.18-21 - "The former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare. . . . I am doing a new thing. . . . I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert . . . for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise."

*God would deliver His people out of Babylon, provides them with water,
and brings them back to the Promised Land*

*Now, here in Rev 21, He delivers His people from the earth and brings them
forevermore into His eternal Garden, as His bride, having freely
provided them with the water of life*

*John is instructed to write down the Lord's Words, for they . . .
are faithful (the Lord keeps His word)
are true (true Truth)*

Furthermore, the Lord proclaims: "It is done!"

*remember that in Rev 16.17 with the pouring out of the seventh bowl a loud voice an-
nounces: "It is done!"*

*God has accomplished His purposes
the wicked are judged and are no more (no more "sea")
His covenant promises are now brought to fruition*

*And this He can do because He is
 the Alpha and Omega
 the Beginning and the End
 in Rev 1.8 the Lord God claims this title
 now in Rev 22.13 it is Jesus Who claims this title
 the Triune God is the sovereign Lord Who rules "over all history and the eternity beyond
 history in both directions, past and future." (Johnson)*

The Lord promises

to give freely to those who know they are thirsty, living water

Rev 7.16-17, "the Lamb . . . will guide them to springs of living water"

*John 4.13-14, "whoever drinks of the water I will give him will never be thirsty
 again"*

to give His people, to those who conquer, an inheritance

for they have overcome the evil one and his enticements

for they have remained faithful to the Lord

*1 John 4.4, "Little children, you are from God and have overcome them [the
 antichrists who are already in the world], for he who is in you is
 greater than he who is in the world."*

their inheritance is entrance into the eternal city knowing . . .

He is their God

they are His people

note: Revelation is written to "stir up" the church under persecution

are you thirsty with a thirst the things of this world cannot quench? - then look to

Me for living water

are you striving in the Lord's might to conquer, to overcome the allurements of sin?

- then be encouraged to know the inheritance that is yours

and remember that those who are overcome with sin

*both those who profess to believe but prove to be cowardly, faithless, and
 detestable*

as well as those who are blatantly rebellious against the Lord

will be tossed in the lake of fire

*will experience the SECOND DEATH - the final, irrevocable condem-
 nation of the Lord*

Wilcock offers the following outline to show how 21.1-8 anticipates 21.9-22.5

21.2 anticipates 21.10-21, which describes God's city-bride

21.3 anticipates 21.22-27 which speaks of God's dwelling in the midst of the city

21.4-5a anticipates 22.1-5 which pictures God's curse free city

21.5b anticipates 22.6-10 which focuses on God's Word of prophecy

21.6a anticipates 22.11-15 which shows us God's completed work

21.6b-7 anticipates 22.16-17 which proclaims God's final blessings

21.8 anticipates 22.18-19, which reminds us of God's final judgment

Beale offers an outline of Rev 21.9-22.5

21.9-14, an initial view and appearance of the city

21.15-17, the measurements of the city

21.18-21, the material of the city

21.22-27, the internal features of the city

22.1-5, the symbols of the presence of God in the city

Note also that 21.12-22.5 is based on Ezekiel's vision in 40-48

(Beale) "[Ezekiel's] prophecies reveal

(1) the pattern of the final temple (40-44),

(2) the arrangement of the eschatological city, and

(3) the divisions of the land around the city compound (45-48).

Rev 21.12-22.5 interprets the future fulfillment of Ezekiel by collapsing temple, city, and land into one end-time picture of the one reality of God's communion with his people."

note, for example, Ezek 43.7, "Son of man [referring to Ezekiel], this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever. And the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name."

(9) Then came one of the seven angels
who had the seven bowls
full of the seven last plagues

and spoke to me, saying,

"Come, I will show you the Bride,
the wife of the Lamb."

(10) And he carried me away in the Spirit
to a great, high mountain,
and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming
down out of heaven
from God,

(11) having the glory of God,
its radiance like a most rare jewel,
like a jasper, clear as crystal.

One of the angels that had had one of the seven bowls (the seven last plagues) speaks to John
He tells John he will now show him the Bride, the wife of the Lamb

note: John had previously been carried into the wilderness to view the great harlot,
Babylon; now John is taken by the Spirit to great, high mountain (as was Ezekiel in Ezekiel
40.2 when set upon a "very high mountain" upon which was built the city and Temple)

And what does He see?

He's told he will see the Bride

but what he sees, is the holy city Jerusalem

clearly the holy city and the Bride are one and the same

try to picture literally a Bride that is also a city

clearly, Revelation is a book of symbolic revelations

John sees the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God

this is not the literal city of Jerusalem

this is the "Jerusalem" that is the Bride of Christ - God's covenant people

this city represents both you and me, as well as our final destination

this city represents, as did OT Jerusalem, the city where God dwells (more on that later)

this city also represents the new heaven and the new earth (21.1-2)

the city is not limited to a specific geographical location

the city is in fact, the whole of the new creation - the new heaven and new earth

this city blazes with the glory of God

compared to a precious jewel

like jasper, and yet clear as crystal (despite jasper being an opaque jewel)

- (12) It had a great, high wall,
 with twelve gates,
 and at the gates twelve angels,
 and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were
 inscribed--
 (13) on the east three gates,
 on the north three gates,
 on the south three gates, and
 on the west three gates.
- (14) And the wall of the city had twelve foundations,
 and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

*The city is surrounded by a great, high wall (more on that later)
 There are twelve gates into the city (three on the east, north, south, and west sides of the city)
 inscribed on these gates are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel
 this "arrangement" is similar to how Israel camped while in the wilderness
 their camp surrounded the Tabernacle
 they camped with three tribes on the east, north, south, and west
 The wall of the city is built upon twelve foundations
 inscribed on these twelve foundations are the names of the twelve apostles
 Eph 2.19-20 - the household of God is built upon the foundation of the apostles and
 prophets [two NT offices] with Christ Jesus serving as the cornerstone
 The city represents God's covenant people, both OT and NT*

- (15) And the one who spoke with me
 had a measuring rod of gold to measure
 the city and
 its gates and
 walls.
- (16) The city lies foursquare,
 its length the same as its width.
 And he measured the city with his rod,
 12,000 stadia.
 Its length and
 width and
 height are equal.

*As in Ezekiel 40-48, an angel uses a measuring rod to measure the city
 remember, measuring the city, as we learned in Rev 11, speaks of God's protection of His
 people "from unwelcomed and defiling intruders."
 in Rev 11 the outer court is not measured, for it represents the church still under attack
 from the enemies of God
 but now it's the entire city that is measured - the entire city is under God's protection
 The city lies foursquare
 its length, width and height are equal
 12,000 stadia in length - 1500 miles! - 1500 miles high, wide, and long*

clearly, what John sees is a city that is the shape of cube
 as was the Holy of Holies (Exodus 26.15-25; 1 Kings 6.20; Ezek 41.4)
 in the Holy of Holies God symbolically sat enthroned
 only one time a year could the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies
 and even then, the Holy of Holies was filled with smoke, symbolically shield-
 ing the high priest's eyes from the glory of God
 but one day we will live eternally in the Holy of Holies, in the Lord's immediate presence
 remember - we are all priests of God (Ex 19.6; 1 Peter 2.9)
 by God's grace we
 have been justified and sanctified
 are pictured as dressed in pure (1 Peter 1.7, "tested by fire"), white linen
 Eph 5.25-27, 32, describes the Bride's dress as "[splendid], without spot or
 wrinkle . . . holy and without blemish

- (17) He also measured its wall,
 144 cubits by human measurement,
 which is also an angel's measurement.
 (18) The wall was built of jasper,
 while the city was pure gold,
 like clear glass.

The wall is measured next
 its width - remember the city is 1500 miles high - is 144 cubits (more than 200 feet)
 note how all the measurements are all based upon 12 (12,000, 144) - just as the people of
 God were also numbered as being 144,000

The wall is made of jasper

The city is pure, translucent gold

pure gold, having been refined in the fire of persecution (James 1.12)

*Q: is gold translucent? (Johnson) "The vision stretches and even breaks the paradigm of
 our experience in order to convey the precious value and purity that distinguishes
 the bride-church's beauty in the eyes of her Husband."*

*(Gundry) "The city-wall is so thick and high that no invading army could penetrate or scale it if
 they were able to find a foothold on the mountain (21.12a). . . . John is not [simply] describing an
 eternally secure place. He is describing eternally secure people."*

- (19) The foundations of the wall of the city
 were adorned with every kind of jewel.
 the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, (20)
 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the
 ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.

*In Exodus 28.17-20 eight of these twelve stones describe the jewels adorning the high priest's
 breastplate - and even the other four may reflect John's translation from Hebrew into Greek
 the twelve stones on the breastplate of the high priest were inscribed with the names of
 the twelve tribes of Israel
 but in Revelation the names inscribed on the twelve foundations of the city are the names
 of the twelve apostles
 this apparent recalling of the high priest's breastplate is perhaps meant to further signify
 the "oneness" of God's people, both OT and NT*

It has been further suggested that since these jewels reflect the colors of the rainbow, it is a subtle reminder of God's covenant promise to Noah

Note also that Eden is described by the beauty of the precious jewels and metals found within it (Gen 2.12), which may point further to the idea that our final resting place is Eden restored

Note also Isaiah 54.10-12, "My steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed. . . . I will set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundation with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of agate, and your gates of crystal, and your wall of precious stone."

(21) And the twelve gates were twelve pearls,
each of the gates made of a single pearl,
and the street of the city was pure gold,
like transparent glass.

The twelve gates are all constructed from single pearls

And even the very street we will walk upon is made of pure, transparent gold

Q: one street?

this common street we walked upon is paved with gold

interestingly, Zech 14.20-21 speaks of how the common (cooking pots) will be judged as holy as the vessels used in the OT in the worship of the Lord

remember: while we love to sing about streets paved with gold, John tells us (v 18) that the entire city is made of pure, transparent gold (v 18)

(22) And I saw no temple in the city,
for its temple is
the Lord God
the Almighty and
the Lamb.

(23) And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it,
for the glory of God gives it light,
and its lamp is the Lamb.

There is no temple in the city

this is because the Lord God

the Almighty

THE LAMB

are (is) its temple

In the OT God "dwells" in the Holy of Holies

but now the entire city, the whole of creation, is the Holy of Holies

and there God will dwell in the midst of His people

in the OT curtains and walls separated the people from the Temple

but now His people are "so purified, washed so clean objectively (justification) and subjectively (sanctification) through the blood of the Lamb that they need not fear direct contact with their Lord and Redeemer." (Johnson)

Furthermore there will be no need for the sun or moon to provide lights

remember, in the city there is no sea (representing His and our enemies)

likewise, there will symbolically be no need for the sun or moon - which does not necessarily mean there will in actuality be no sun or moon

it is the Glory of God and the Lamp of the Lamb that will provide all the light needed

*and therefore we will never again walk in darkness
for now we will live continually in the light of His immediate presence*

Isa 60.19-20, "The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever."

*note that Isaiah first says there will no sun or moon
but then speaks of the sun never setting nor the moon never failing to give its light*

- (24) By its light will the nations walk,
and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,
(25) and its gates will never be shut by day -
and there will be no night there.
(26) They will bring into it
the glory and
the honor of the nations.
(27) But nothing unclean will ever enter it,
nor anyone who does what is
detestable or
false,
but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

*In the light of the Lord the nations will walk
Into the city the kings of the earth will bring their glory (Isaiah 60.3-5)
The city gates will never need to be closed (for there is no fear of invasion by an enemy)
And there will be no night*

*in the same sense that there will no longer be a sea, or sun, or moon
"night" represents the time for doing evil - men love darkness because their deeds are evil
assuming that the new heaven and earth will function (free of the curse) in a way similar
to our life now on earth, I assume there will be night and a time for rest from our
unhindered labors*

*(Johnson) "The nations influx into the city, bearing their glory and honor, vividly portrays the
reality that this bride of the Lamb does and will include and embrace the elect from all the
world's people." (Revelation 7.9)*

*None who are "unclean" will enter the city
Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will populate the city*

- (22:1) Then the angel showed me
the river of the water of life,
bright as crystal,
flowing from the throne
of God and
of the Lamb
(2) through the middle of the street of the city;
also, on either side of the river,
the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit,
yielding its fruit each month.
The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Now John sees a river

flowing with the water of life
bright as crystal
flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb
flowing through the middle of the city

OT background

Gen 2.10: "A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden"

Joel 3.18 (writing prior to the Babylonian exile): "In that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills flow with milk, and all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water: and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord and water the Valley of Shittim." (Shittim was a dry and barren valley)

Ezekiel 47.1-9 (written during the Babylonian exile)

a river flows from the throne
everywhere it flows it gives life
it flows even into the Dead Sea, making it come alive

Zechariah 14.8 (written following the Babylonian exile): "On that day living water [flowing water like water from a spring] shall flow out from Jerusalem."

In John 4.10, 13-14, Jesus speaks of the living water which forever quenches our thirst

And as in Ezek 47.12, John sees the Tree of Life

interestingly, it grows on either side of the river (try picturing that botanical novelty)
monthly it bears fruit
and its leaves will be for the healing of the nations

We will continually eat the fruit of the Tree of Life first located in Eden (Gen 2.9)

perhaps this speaks of a heavenly sacrament
looking ahead: Rev 22.14, "Blessed are those who wash their robes so that they might have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates."
to eat of the tree of life symbolizing being blessed with eternal life
but not only does it fruit give life - its leaves are for healing
all within the city are healed of sin's curse and power, for . . .

(3) No longer will there be anything accursed,
but the throne

of God and
of the Lamb

will be in it,

and his servants will worship him.

(4) They will see his face,

and his name will be on their foreheads.

(5) And night will be no more.

They will need no light of lamp or sun,
for the Lord God will be their light,
and they will reign forever and ever.

Within the city will be nothing accursed (21.4)

Within the city will be

the throne of God and of the Lamb

His servants who worship Him

servants who see His face - for "there will be no more need for protection of God's people from his consuming holiness" (Johnson)

servants on whose foreheads are written His Name (3.12; 6.17-7.3; 14.1)

*And now John's vision ends and it began with a vision of glorious light
no common light of a lamp or of the sun
but the light emanating from the Lord God
Who will reign over us for ever and ever!
and therefore there no longer will there be the "darkness" symbolized by night*

Beale suggests that Rev 22.6-20 is structured around five (I will suggest six) final words to the readers of this book: EXHORTATIONS to obedience, BLESSINGS promised in response to holy living, and WARNINGS of judgment for unholy living

- (1) 22.6-7, A BLESSING for those who keep the words of the prophecy of this book*
 - (2) 22.8-9, An EXHORTATION to worship God only*
 - (3) 22.10-12, A WARNING to evildoers and an EXHORTATION to the righteous*
 - (4) 22.13-16, A BLESSING for those who wash their robes
so they might have the right to the tree of life
so they might enter the city*
 - (5) 22.17, An EXHORTATION: "Come!"*
 - (6) 22.18-20, A final WARNING and BLESSING*
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- (6) And he said to me,
"These words are
trustworthy and
true.
And the Lord,
the God of the spirits of the prophets,
has sent his angel
to show his servants what must soon take place."
(7) "And behold,
I am coming soon.
Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."*

Now either the angel or Christ Himself speaks to John

v 6 could be the angel speaking

v 7 is clearly either Christ speaking (or the angel speaking as Christ's representative)

In v 7 either the angel of Christ assures John

these words are trustworthy and true

Daniel 2.45, "[Nebuchadnezzar's dream from God] is certain, and its interpretation is true."

likewise, John's God-given visions of what must soon take place are trustworthy and true

"What must soon take place"

John's visions not only look into the future

they also speak of present realities for those to whom he initially wrote and for all believers throughout the time between Christ's first and second coming

Now in v 7 either Christ declares: "I am coming soon"

the return of Christ is imminent at all times

remember, Revelation also speaks of other comings of Christ prior to His final return in judgment of wayward churches (2.5, 2.16, 3.3)

*BUT verse 8 most probably speaks of His final return being imminent
 the Lord's return is also imminent (we live in the last hour - 1 John 2.18)
 but remember, 2 Peter 3.8: "With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a
 thousand years as one day."*

*God is described as "the God of the spirits of the prophets"
 this speaks either of God directing the spirits (the thinking) of the prophets so that what
 they speak or write is His trustworthy and true word
 OR this refers to the Holy Spirit guiding those who hold the biblical office of prophet
 OR this may speak of God enabling His people to think His thoughts after Him
 for note that in v 6 both John and those who faithfully hold to the words of this
 book are all called prophets - which, by God's grace, would include you
 and me*

*This section ends with Revelation's sixth benediction
 BLESSED is the one who keeps (who is faithful to the Lord's trustworthy and true) words
 found in this book of Revelation
 such a one is faithful to the Lord and lives with the assurance that the victory will be His*

(8) I, John, am the one who
 heard and
 saw these things.

And when I
 heard and
 saw them,

I fell down to worship
 at the feet of the angel who showed them to me,

(9) but he said to me,
 "You must not do that!
 I am a fellow servant with
 you and
 your brothers the prophets, and with
 those who keep the words of this book.
 Worship God."

*Once more (19.10; 22.8-9) John is so overwhelmed by what he has heard and seen, by the
 message delivered to him by the angel, that he falls at the angel's feet and worships him
 (19.10)*

But, once more John is rebuked by an angel

*"You must not do that"
 the angel identifies himself as a fellow servant
 as is John
 as are all who keep the words of this book
 you and me, by God's grace, are "fellow prophets"
 we are blessed by God with the ability
 to think His thoughts after Him
 to speak His truth*

*The angel then calls upon John to "Worship God"
 believe Him
 obey Him
 serve Him by being His witnesses ("martyrs")*

- (10) And he said to me,
 "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book,
 for the time is near.
 (11) Let the evildoer still do evil,
 and the filthy still be filthy,
 and the righteous still do right,
 and the holy still be holy."
 (12) "Behold, I am coming soon,
 bringing my recompense with me,
 to repay each one for what he has done."

John is instructed by the Lord or by His angelic representative

*"Do not seal up the words of this prophecy of this book
 for the time is near"*

*what John has heard and seen will soon begin to take place
 compare this with Daniel 12.4, 9: "Shut up the words and seal the book, until the
 time of the end."*

*(Johnson) "The sealing of Daniel's prophecy signaled that the time of its fulfillment
 was remote. . . . What John has seen, however, concerns the redemption-
 historical epoch in which he is living - the span between the resurrection of
 Christ and His return."*

*Everyone to whom John writes or reads the words of his book must decide what kind of person he
 is going to be*

*an evildoer and filthy
 rebellious against the Lord
 aligned with the harlot*

*or righteous and holy
 declared righteous by faith and therefore striving to live righteously according to
 God's holy law*

*living a holy life - a life set apart from the world, a life lived in imitation of the
 Holy One, our Savior, Lord and King*

*Daniel 12.10: "Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined,
 but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but
 those who are wise shall understand."*

*the evildoers and filthy are not being called upon to continue to be evildoers and filthy
 BUT the reality is that those who are evildoers and filthy will chose to continue to be so
 AND those who are righteous and holy by God's grace, will continue to strive after
 righteousness and holiness*

Now it appears with certainty that it is the Lord Who issues His warning and promise

He is coming soon

and when He comes He will repay each (and every) one for what he has done

*be it evil and filthy
 be it righteous and holy*

*Isa 40.10-11, "Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold
 his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like
 a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom,
 and gently lead those that are with young."*

- (13) I am
 the Alpha and the Omega,
 the first and the last,
 the beginning and the end."
- (14) Blessed are those who wash their robes,
 so that they may have the right to the tree of life and
 that they may enter the city by the gates.
- (15) Outside are
 the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and
 everyone who loves and practices falsehood.
- (16) "I, Jesus, have sent my angel
 to testify to you about these things
 for the churches.

I am

- the root and
 the descendant of David,
 the bright morning star."
- (17) The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come."
 And let the one who hears say, "Come."
 And let the one who is thirsty come;
 let the one who desires take the water of life
 without price.

*Now Jesus once more (see 1.17, 2.8) declares Himself to be
 the Alpha and Omega (first and last letters of the Greek alphabet)
 the first and last
 the beginning and the end*

*(Johnson) "The one and only, incomparable and eternal God, who stands sovereign
 at history's dawn and its sunset."*

Isa 41.4, "I, the Lord, the first, and with the last. I am He."

Isa 44.6, "I am the first and I am the last; beside me there is no god."

Isa 48.12, "I am he; I am the first and I am the last."

Now comes Revelation's seventh BENEDICTION

*BLESSED are those who wash their robes (in the blood of the Lamb)
 their robes are pure linen*

given to them by the Bridegroom

*representative of the fact that they have exercised an obedient faith in the
 Lamb*

*Who by shedding His blood has delivered them from sin's curse and power
 to them is given the right to eat from the tree of life
 to them is given free access into the city*

But on the other hand,

*outside the city are all who love and practice falsehoods (lies that contradict God's truth)
 remember the parallel in Rev 21.8, 27
 dogs (who return to their vomit) - Matt 7.6; Philippians 3.2 - referring to individu-
 als professing to be part of the church
 sorcerers (worshipers of gods made in their own image)
 the sexually immoral (aligned with the harlot)
 murderers (both physically and spiritually)
 idolaters (worshipers of the dragon and the beasts)*

Now Jesus reminds John He has sent His angel to show John and the churches the visions of
Revelation

Jesus then once more (5.5) identifies Himself as being
the root of David
the descendent of David

He is the One who established David's kingdom and gave to David His covenant
promise of a Son who would rule forever an eternal kingdom (1 Sam 7)

He is the promised Son of David who now forever reigns over that eternal kingdom
Psalm 110.1; Matt 22.41-46

David's son

yet David's Lord

He also proclaims Himself to be the "bright morning star"
the morning star anticipates the dawning of a new day
(Wilcock) "He heralds the dawn of eternity."

And now, in v 17 all who hear are exhorted to "Come!"
the Holy Spirit and the Bride are the ones calling
some might view this as a call directed to the Lord to come quickly (as in v 20)
but it is in fact an EVANGELICAL CALL to all who have ears to hear to come to the Lord in
faith

the call comes from the Bride, that is, the church, God's people
for we are His witnesses

thank God, it's a call empowered by the Holy Spirit

it's a call to those who know they are "thirsty"

it's a call to them to come and freely partake of the water of life

(18) 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,

(19) 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.

(20) He who testifies to these things says,

"Surely I am coming soon."

Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus!

Verses 18-19 issue a WARNING

it's a warning to those who hear the words of the prophecy of this book

the warning is

don't add to what you've heard

don't add your own ideas about God and His purposes to what you've been
taught in this book

Deut 4.2, "You shall not add to the word that I command you . . ."

if you do, you will suffer the plagues described in this book

*and don't take away from the words of the book of this prophecy
 don't ignore God's call to purity and endurance or question His promises of
 blessing and His threats of judgment
 Deut 4.2, "You shall not . . . take from [the word that I command you]"
 if you do God will take away your share
 in the tree of life
 in the holy city described in this book
 bottom line: Deut 4.2, "You [shall] keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I
 command you."*

(Wilcock) "If we believe that what God has said in his book is not sufficient for salvation, but that we need to make certain additions of our own if we are to be saved; or if we believe that some of the demands of God's book are superfluous, and we can get by without observing them; then we are not only saying that we know better than him – we are (which is much worse) acting as if that were true. Rudeness he can forgive; but blind wilfulness is the sin against the Holy Spirit."

Verse 20 wonderfully informs us that it is the Lord Who testifies concerning the truthfulness of all that we have heard, read, and studied in Revelation

And He promises us, "Surely, I am coming soon."

"soon" is clearly according to God's timetable

2 Peter 3.8-9: "With the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promises as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

*clearly Peter's words are addressed to those to whom he writes
 there may well have been those who appeared to be part of the Lord's
 church that had yet to repent and come to faith*

*remember the Lord told the glorified saints in Rev 6.10-11 who were asking "How long?"
 that He would not bring His final judgment to bear until "the number of their
 fellow servants and their brothers should be complete."*

As we await His return we join John is crying

Amen!

Come, Lord Jesus

(21) The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

(Johnson) "[Revelation ends reminding us] that even before Jesus' triumphant bodily return from heaven, he has not left us orphans, defenseless before our mighty foe. [His grace accompanies] us each step of the way. Jesus' embattled people have every reason to anticipate with confidence our indescribable joy when 'we will be like Him, because we will see Him as He is'" (1 John 3.2).

Amen? AMEN!