

Prayer

It is amazing how much sense the Bible makes when you just take it for what it says. The golden rule of interpretation is this: ***“When plain sense makes good sense, then seek no other sense.”*** Now, of course, this allows for figures of speech and all the normal laws of language. We constantly use figures of speech in our communication.

- Time is money.
- The wind whispered through the trees.
- I have a million things to do.
- It’s raining cats and dogs.
- All hands on deck.

Our normal conversation is riddled with all sorts of figures, and so is the Bible. That is why we say we should read the Bible just like we read the newspaper, meaning we read it normally, allowing for figures of speech as we do in our normal communications. Proper interpretation interprets the Bible literally/normally, grammatically, historically, and in context.

God intended for us to take His word “normally.” When people begin to interpret the Bible mystically or allegorically, there are always major problems. There are some parts of the Bible that are clearly allegorical, as made clear from the text itself. Thus, to take it normally at that point is to understand it allegorically. But we should only do that when the text is clear it is to be taken that way, and even then the message is made clear.

Some people want to take some of the Bible normally, but then when it comes to prophecy they take it allegorically. That is totally unwarranted and leads to all kinds of subjective interpretations. Stick with what the Bible plainly says, in keeping with the normal laws of interpretation, and be consistent with the whole counsel of God. Take the literal parts literally and take the figurative parts figuratively.

For example, note John 6:53.

Slide # 1

John 6:53 (NKJV)

53 Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

Now the Roman Catholic Church takes this literally and believes that in communion they are literally eating the flesh of Jesus and drinking His blood in some kind of a mystical and yet literal way. Yet if you read just a little further, Jesus tells us the sense in which we should take this.

Slide # 2

John 6:63 (NKJV)

63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

Jesus was not speaking of eating His flesh and drinking His blood literally, but rather He was speaking “spiritually.” He was speaking of personally appropriating His work on the cross, and how do you do that? Well, by BELIEVING. Read on – the very next verse says:

Slide # 3

John 6:64 (NKJV)

64 But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.

The issue is BELIEF! The way you personally appropriate Christ is by believing in Him! The word BELIEVE is found 9 times in John 6 (cf. v. 29, 30, 35, 36, 40, 47, 64, 69).

When we come to the book of Revelation, thankfully we have been given an inspired outline in Revelation 1:19 that we must take literally.

Slide # 4

Revelation 1:19 – Inspired Outline

Revelation 1:19 (NKJV)

19 “Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

- “have seen” – Past (Vision of Christ) – **Ch. 1**
- “which are” – Present (Church Age) – Ch. 2-3

- “after this” – Future (Post-Church Age) –Ch. 4-22
- - Scene in heaven –Ch. 4-5
- - Tribulation – Ch. 6-18
- - Second Coming – Ch. 19
- - Kingdom – Ch. 20
- - **Eternal State – Ch. 21-22**

Slide # 5

- These three divisions are clear, and they do not overlap. Each division is complete in itself and distinct from the other two. This is God’s own division of the book. Hold fast to it, and you cannot go astray in your quest to understand its meaning. Do not at any time lift events from one division and attempt to place them in another.

- Lehman Strauss

The next great event on God’s prophetic calendar is the Rapture of the Church. This event will in turn trigger the end-time judgment events in the book of Revelation, culminating in the Second Coming, followed by the Millennial Kingdom, which is then followed by the Eternal State.

Revelation warns of impending awesome final events that will usher in eternity. There are no more GAP periods – the next thing is the “end” (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11). The consummation of the church age will usher in all these end-time things in successive fashion.

Revelation 21-22 speaks to the eternal state, and in the Eternal State we have a great contrast between the eternal destination of the lost, which is the lake of fire, and the eternal home of the saved, which is the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 22:6-21 forms an epilogue to the book in which various concluding emphases are made. Many of these emphases are very similar to those made in the introductory prologue of the book.

In Revelation 22:6-11, we noted 4 particular emphases in our introductory look at the epilogue.

Slide # 6

Revelation 22:6-11 Summarized

- 1) This message is as certain as it can be – these words are faithful and true (cf. 21:5, 22:6).
- 2) The imminent coming of Christ is ever a reality that will trigger all these end-time events (22:7, 10).
- 3) The appropriate response to the revelation of these awesome realities is to WORSHIP God (22:8-9).
- 4) Now is the time to respond to the message because in eternity both character and destiny will be permanently fixed either for good or bad (22:10-11).

And that brings us to our text this morning. We pick it up at Revelation 22:12...

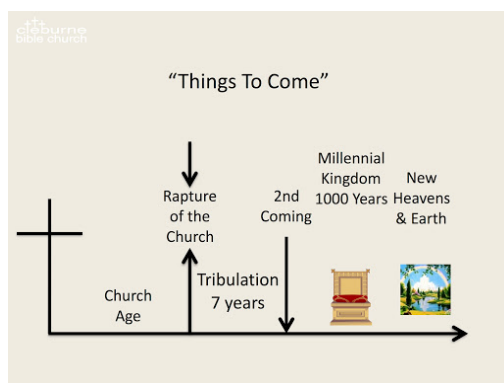
Revelation 22:12 (NKJV)

12 “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

Here is another strong interjection by the Lord Himself concerning the imminence of His coming. We saw the same thing in verse 7 and will see it again in verse 20.

Quickly can mean **soon or sudden**, but in the overall context the emphasis here would seem to be **SOON**. The idea is a “**prophetic**” soon. The next event on the prophetic calendar is the coming of the Lord for His church. So, it is soon from that standpoint. It is close in that it is NEXT!

Slide # 7



In the program of God, there is nothing else intervening. Note the emphasis in verse 10 (as noted last week): “***Do not seal the words of this prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.***” The things “***which ARE***” relate to the Church age as seen in chapters 2 and 3.

Those things “**which are**” will immediately give way to “**the things which will take place after this**.” There is no more “sealing” – no more delay; no more interlude; the program of God will now flow as outlined without interruption.

Once the church is complete, all these things revealed in Revelation will immediately begin to unfold and transpire. So, “quickly” should be understood in the sense of IMMINENT! It is soon in the sense of imminence or no more prophetic delay. The coming of Christ is “imminent” as it is the next thing on God’s prophetic calendar. There will be no more interval. The time is at hand – it is imminent! This emphasis on imminence is seen throughout the whole NT.

Slide # 8

Matthew 24:36, 42-44, 50

Matthew 25:13

Mark 13:32-37

Luke 12:37, 40

1 Corinthians 1:7

Philippians 3:20

Philippians 4:5

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

Titus 2:13

Hebrews 9:28

James 5:8-9

Revelation 1:3

Revelation 22:7, 12, 20

Note the URGENCY in what Christ says! We are warned to LIVE READY! The message is always to LIVE READY because He is “coming quickly.”

Slide # 9

Matthew 24:44 (NKJV)

44 Therefore you also **be ready**, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

And when Christ comes, He is coming with His reward. The word “reward” (*misthos*) is the idea of compensation or payment. Depending on the context, it can refer to either compensation in a positive sense, or in a negative sense, with the idea being retribution or punishment. However, we should note that in this immediate context the church is principally in view, as specifically stated in verse 16.

When Christ comes at the Rapture for the church, the Church will then stand before the judgment seat of Christ! The issue will not be judgment for sin because Christ forever paid the penalty at the cross. For all believers, all is forgiven and forgotten.

Slide # 10

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Hebrews 10:14 (NKJV)

14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Hebrews 10:17 (NKJV)

17 then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

As far as forgiveness – As far as eternal life is concerned, it is a GIFT. We do **nothing to earn** it or work for it. It is all by the GRACE of God. Jesus paid it all – all to Him we owe. We simply RECEIVE Him by faith. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone!

However, as believers, we will be judged in terms of REWARDS. The believer's judgment is all about the quality of service and being rewarded accordingly.

Slide # 11

Revelation 3:10–11 (NKJV)

10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you [**RAPTURE**] from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown [**REWARD**].

Some people downplay the issue of REWARDS, but Christ did not. It is one of the very last things He says to the church by way of **incentive**.

Salvation is not a REWARD but rather is a GIFT! In contrast, rewards are according to our works – what we did for Jesus!

We will be rewarded, or not, according to the quality of our service. There are degrees of rewards – some are more faithful than others and will receive a greater reward.

Everyone will be rewarded according to how they served – according to their works.

Slide # 12

1 Corinthians 3:11–15 (NKJV)

11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will **declare it**, because it will be **revealed by fire**; and the fire will **test each one's work**, of what sort it is.

14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will **receive a reward**.

15 If anyone's work is burned, he will **suffer loss**; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Slide # 13

2 Corinthians 5:9–10 (NKJV)

9 Therefore we make it our **aim**, whether present or absent, **to be well pleasing to Him**.

10 For we must **all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**, that each one may receive the things **done in the body**, according to what he has done, whether **good or bad**.

It is an AWESOME thing – even for believers to think about standing before God and giving an account of how we lived our lives. The whole of life is a **STEWARDSHIP**. We are not our own – to live any way we want – we now belong to Christ. He bought us with His blood. So the question then is: how did we use the one life He gave us?

Note this judgment that determines rewards is very PERSONAL. Christ says He is coming with reward, *“to give everyone according to his work.”*

“It is noteworthy...that all final judgments relate to works whether they are in connection with Christians who are being rewarded or unsaved who are being punished.” – **John Walvoord**

However, I take the “**coming quickly**” here principally has the rapture in view and the reward of the church, which will take place at that time.

Note again how **personal this is. EVERY ONE** – individually will be rewarded according to his work. The issue is not only HOW MUCH we did but the **QUALITY of it**. “According to his work” is a **QUALITY issue**.

And note that the WHOLE of your life as a believer will be examined – not just a little snippet here or there. It says, “according to his work,” with “**work**” being singular. This views the entire life as one continuous work for the Lord. The great issue is what is the tenor of the life – the whole of life – the lifestyle pattern.

If you served faithfully for a little bit but were generally unfaithful, expect a commensurate lack of reward. If you had slips but for the most part served faithfully, expect a commensurate reward. God is going to evaluate the whole of our life as the work we did for Him!

What will the fire reveal? Will it be wood, hay, and stubble quality that goes up in the smoke under the fire of God’s examination, or will our lives come through like gold, silver, precious metals? The QUALITY of our service will determine the degree of reward we receive!

Slide # 14

2 John 8 (NKJV)

8 Look to yourselves, that we **do not lose** those things we worked for, but that we **may receive a full reward**.

Faithfully serving Jesus counts for all eternity.

Slide # 15



13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”

In this verse, we have 3 interrelated statements all saying essentially the same thing in reference to Jesus Christ. These are crowning statements regarding His divine nature and prerogatives. They clearly show that Jesus is Almighty eternal God (cf. Rev. 1:8).

Alpha and the Omega are the first and last letters in the Greek Alphabet. This is like saying “I am the A to Z” in English. One of Jesus’ titles is “the Word.” Everything you can say about essential reality is found in Him (cf. Rev. 1:8). It means He is the total source and completion of all things. This same title is used in reference to God the Father in 21:6.

The **Beginning and the End** emphasizes His eternality and that He is sovereign over all things. Everything begins and ends with Him. He is sovereign over all from start to finish. Every created thing has its beginning in Him as well as its consummation.

First and the Last emphasizes that He is self-existent, eternal, and absolutely sovereign over all. None are before Him – none are after Him! He is the cause of all, and the final aim of all history centers in Him. The First and the Last is a direct statement on the Deity of Christ. In the OT, this phrase was used of YHWH, and in the NT it is also used of Christ, showing that He indeed is God Almighty (cf. Isa. 44:6; 48:12).

These three statements overlap and essentially say the same thing (cf. Rev. 1:4, 8, 11, 17; 2:8; 21:6). It is like making a triple emphasis on the sovereign eternal deity of Christ. These three interlocking statements are an emphatic declaration that Jesus is eternal God!

God is the source of everything! Without God, there is nothing! Everything came from God – everything concludes in God. Reality, ultimate reality is all sourced in God. Thus, Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. As Colossians 1:16-17 says of Him...

Colossians 1:16–17 (NKJV)

16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Jehovah's Witnesses reject the idea of Jesus being eternal God. Ron Carlson evangelistically deals with cultists. In conversation with JW's he asks them to help him understand three verses. First, he turns to Revelation 1:8.

Slide # 16

Revelation 1:8 (NKJV)

8 "I am the **Alpha and the Omega**, the **Beginning and the End**," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

He then asks them who this is, and they reply, "Jehovah God." He then turns to Revelation 21:6.

Slide # 17

Revelation 21:6 (NKJV)

6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the **Alpha and the Omega**, the **Beginning and the End**. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

Again he asks who this is, and again they reply, "Jehovah God."

He then turns to Revelation 1:17.

Slide # 18

Revelation 1:17 (NKJV)

17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am **the First and the Last**.

Once again Ron asks them who this is and again they say, "Jehovah God." He then has them read the next verse.

Slide # 19

Revelation 1:18 (NKJV)

18 I am He who lives, and **was dead, and behold, I am alive** forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

Then Carlson asks them: "*When did Jehovah die? When did God die?*" They have no answer because they don't believe Jesus is Jehovah.

This combination of Jesus being the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last is an emphatic statement that Jesus is no less than God Himself! It is undeniable, as this very language is used of God the Father as well as God the Son.

Also note that the context of this statement, following right on the heels of His coming to reward, is significant. Everything has its source in and finds its final end in Jesus Christ, and we ought to take that to heart as we SERVE Him. All are accountable to Him!

14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

This is the 7th and final beatitude in Revelation (cf. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14).

When it says, “Blessed are those who do His commandments,” there is some textual discrepancy regarding this phrase. Some manuscripts read “Blessed are those who do His commandments”, but the older manuscripts read “Blessed are those who wash their robes”.

Theologically, a case can be made for either view since John underscores both of these emphases in his NT writings and in Revelation.

If you take it as “***Blessed are those who do His commandments***,” that fits well with John’s consistent emphasis that overcomers’ lives are characteristically different from those who go to the lake of fire, as seen, for example in Revelation 21:7-8. And this very same contrast is again seen here in this immediate context of Revelation 22:14-15.

It is also consistent with the gospel of John and the book of 1 John.

Slide # 20

John 5:29 (NKJV)

29 and come forth— those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

1 John 2:3-4 (NKJV)

3 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

4 He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

The emphasis that true believers are characterized by obedience is consistent with the whole of NT truth. Born Again means a changed life – a new nature that demonstrates itself in the life. Obeying His commandments is not the ground of our salvation, but it is the fruit. We are saved by the obedience of faith alone, but the faith that saves does not remain alone.

“Although no one is saved by keeping commandments, it is surely true that any person who is genuinely saved will love His commandments and seek to keep them.” – **Henry Morris**

“Obedience to God’s Word is a mark of true salvation.”

– **Warren Wiersbe**

However, if one takes it as “**wash their robes**,” that fits well with John’s emphasis on Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God (as found 28 times in Revelation) who cleanses from sin.

Robes symbolize being dressed in the righteousness of Christ – the imputed righteousness of Christ which applied to the believer (Isa. 61:10; 64:6; Zech. 3:3-5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rev. 7:14). Isaiah 61:10 says... “**He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness...**”

Slide # 21

Revelation 1:5 (NKJV)

5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and **washed us from our sins in His own blood,**

Revelation 7:14 (NKJV)

14 And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “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.**

Revelation 12:11 (NKJV)

11 And they **overcame him by the blood of the Lamb** and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

A thorough study of John’s writings and the book of Revelation in particular shows both of these emphases coming through. We are cleansed by the blood of Christ on the basis of faith alone, but if that is really true, it will demonstrate itself in our practice – not in terms of perfection but in terms of the direction of our life.

So however you take it (do His commandments or wash their robes), both of these descriptions are essentially true concerning those who have access to the New Jerusalem.

However, I do want you to notice that either way you take it – whether “who do his commandments” or “who wash their robes” human response is involved here. To do His commandments is the fruit of true conversion. To wash your robes is to appropriate Christ by faith. Both require that one must respond to the truth of Christ.

Salvation involves human response. Even as the last invitation in the Bible in verse 17 says three times, “Come, Come, Come.” One must COME! One must appropriate the truth of Christ for themselves in order to be saved.

That is not to take away from the sovereign work of God, which is absolutely necessary, but it is to be consistent with what the text actually says. I love a theology that is consistent with the text – and consistent with the whole counsel and not just based on certain proof texts.

He says, “***Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.***”

Only those cleansed by the blood of Jesus, only those who have appropriated the blood of Christ by faith, only those in the Lamb’s book of life, will enter in (cf. Rev. 21:27).

These have the right to the tree of life. They will partake of this tree that was in paradise lost in Genesis 3 and is now seen again in the New Jerusalem in the eternal state. Believers will partake of this tree, signifying that they have the ultimate quality of ETERNAL LIFE. They will share in the full richness of God’s life to the full (cf. Jn. 10:10). They will live in God’s PARADISE.

Note in Revelation 2:7 that overcomers are promised this very same thing, namely, that Christ will give them “to eat from the tree of life” in Paradise.

Believers characterized by cleansed and changed lives will have the privilege to enter into the city of the New Jerusalem. Entrance in will be a FANTASTIC experience (cf. Ps. 100:4; 2 Pet. 1:11).

In the allegory of Pilgrim’s Progress by John Bunyan, after the arduous journey towards glory, Christian and his companion Hopeful finally arrive at this destination:

“Here also they had the city itself in view, and they thought they heard all the bells therein to ring, to welcome them thereto. But above all, the warm and joyful thoughts that they had about their own dwelling there, with such company, and that for ever and ever. Oh! By what tongue or pen can their glorious joy be expressed! – Thus they came up to the gate. Now when they were come up to the gate, there was written over it in letters of gold, ‘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.’” – The Pilgrim’s Progress

15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

But is a contrast word. In verse 14 we have the BLESSED who have the right to the tree of life and are granted entrance into the holy city of New Jerusalem.

In contrast are those who are OUTSIDE and will never see the light of that wonderful city. Their destiny is the LAKE OF FIRE.

In the end, everyone is headed to one of two destinies. Either they are going to have part in the city of God – the New Jerusalem, or they are destined for the Lake of Fire. Everyone will end up in one of these two places. As I often ask: ***Where will you be when you get where you are going?***

Slide # 22



Those OUTSIDE the New Jerusalem are morally characterized in six ways.

They are called “***dogs***,” which in this text is a descriptive term for the lost.

Dogs in Bible times were scavenger critters that roamed in packs and often lived off the garbage of the land (cf. Ex. 22:31; 1 Kgs. 14:11; 16:4; 21:19; 23-24; 22:38).

In the Bible the term “dogs” is used symbolically to describe people of low moral character (cf. 1 Sam. 17:43; 24:14; 2 Sam. 3:8; 9:8; 16:9; 2 Kgs. 8:13). The term is used of a male prostitute in Deuteronomy 28:13; of Gentiles in Matthew 15:26, and of false teachers we call Judaizers in Philippians 3:2-3 (cf. Isa. 56:10).

“**Dogs**” replaces the word “**abominable**” in Revelation 21:8, but the same idea is carried over. These people are characterized by disgusting vices that God hates. In one sense, this morally degrading term applies to the rest of the list in terms of the defiling character of these people.

Sorcerers refer to those involved in **the occult**. They have rejected the true God in favor of the dark side of spiritual realities. The Greek word is **pharmakos**, from which we get the English word “**pharmacy**”. It denotes the combination of occult practices and drug use, which often go together (cf. 9:21, 21:8; Gal. 5:20). These people are defined by occult practices involving demonic activity and power.

Under this heading would be mediums, spiritists, astrologers, those who call up the dead, New Age practices, Eastern mysticism, and so forth. They are in tune with the dark side of the spirit world.

The **Sexually Immoral** refers to those involved in any type of sexual behavior outside the bounds of marriage as ordained by God. *Sexually immoral* is the translation of the Greek word **pornos**, from which we get the English word **pornography**. It denotes those who practice illicit sexual activities. They are not saved – no matter what they say.

Slide # 23

1 Corinthians 6:9–11 (NKJV)

9 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**,

10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 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.

Murder is the premeditated taking of a life that is rooted in hatred or depravity. Abortion is murder. Euthanasia is murder. Jesus further defined murder as hatred in the heart (cf. Mt. 5:21-22; 15:18-19; Mk. 7:20-23; 1 Jn. 3:15). We are not talking about self-defense or matters of war but rather premeditated murder.

Slide # 24

Genesis 9:6 (NKJV)

6 “Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed;
For in the image of God He made man.

Genesis 9:6 is the **PILLAR of human government** established after the flood and is still in force today (See Romans 13, where the institution of government is said to not bear the sword in vain). Of course we have corrupted government in a fallen world that doesn’t always apply this principle properly – but what is ordained of God still stands.

By the way, MURDER can be forgiven – like any other sin if people come to repentance and faith in Jesus!

Corrie Ten Boom once spoke in a prison: She told the prisoners, “I want to encourage you fellas – Moses, David, and Paul were all murderers, but look what God did with those fellas”. It’s what grace is all about.

“If someone brutally murders your son and you take things into your own hands, that’s revenge. If you’re content to allow the law and the courts to arrest and punish the offender, that’s justice. But if you pardon the murderer, adopt him, and take him home to live with you as your son, that’s grace.” That is what God has done for us!

By the GRACE of God, even MURDERERS can go free – can go to heaven. However, if people won’t repent and receive the grace of God, they will die in their sins. That is what is in view here in Revelation 22:15.

Idolaters are those who worship false gods or a false concept of what they consider to be the true God. Your god is what you live for – what you are devoted to. It can be anything or anyone. Your God is where your true allegiance lies! It’s what you live for!

There are multitudes of professing “Christians” who in fact live for self. In reality, self is their god, and they have never come to really know Jesus as Lord. He is not really their God -they are self-deceived. Idolatry may relate to money, to power, to the flesh, to self-glory, or whatever.

In the end, idolatry is commitment and devotion to anything that is placed above or served in the place of the ONE true God.

Let me ask you? “Is God truly **NUMBER ONE in your life?**” If not, and this is the pattern of your life, then you should examine yourself and make sure you are in the faith. It may be that in reality you are an idolater in danger of going to the lake of fire - of being shut out of the city of God forever and ever.

Paul closes out the list by saying, “**and whoever loves and practices a lie.**”

These people have a deep and ongoing commitment to deceit. They PRACTICE deception as a habitual lifestyle. They love it! Love here is the Greek word “***phileo***” meaning friendship love. They enjoy it as a way of life. They embrace deception over God’s truth. They welcome it and have an affection for it. They are comfortable with deception and refuse to repent.

In John 3:19, Jesus said, “***This is the condemnation...men loved darkness rather than light.***” In 2 Thessalonians 2:10 Paul speaks of those who “*did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*”

This week I read the testimony of a man who said:

The knowledge of who Christ was – the historical events, the Biblical narrative – had been given to me many years before. But whereas my mind held the facts of those events, my heart remained unconverted. – **John Lovell**

For many it is not merely a matter of intellect – of intellectually knowing the truth, but rather a matter of the heart that prefers a lie over the truth. The Bible says, “***with the heart one believes unto righteousness***” (Rom. 10:10). It is a heart commitment!

The sins listed here in Revelation 22:15, as well as other similar lists in Revelation, are thought to be merely representative and not exhaustive of the types of sinfulness that keep people out of heaven. These are prominent categories of sinfulness, and LYING is very prominent. In fact, it is mentioned in all 3 of the lists in Revelation 21 and 22 (**cf. 21:8, 21:27, 22:15**).

Slide # 25

Rev. 21:8 “**all liars** shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire...”

Rev. 21:27 “...there shall by no means enter it anything...causes...**a lie...**”

Rev. 22:15 “But outside are...whoever **loves and practices a lie.**”

All committed liars are going into the lake of fire and not into the holy city of New Jerusalem. This is not merely talking about someone who messes up and tells a fib; this is a committed lifestyle of loving and practicing a lie.

In keeping with how John consistently uses the word “liar,” I think what is essentially in view relates to SPIRITUAL MATTERS – to matters of faith and practice. If we are committed to the God of truth and the Word of Truth – this will be reflected in our lives. If we are not, then in fact we are committed to a lie – we are committed to living a DOUBLE LIFE.

The devil, as the father of lies, majors on deception, and so do his children (cf. Jn. 8:44). Conversely, God majors on truth, and so do his children.

Slide # 26

John 8:44 (NKJV)

44 You are **of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.** He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he **speaks a lie,** he speaks from his own resources, for **he is a liar and the father of it.**

John 18:37 (NKJV)

37 Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?” Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. **Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.**”

The apostle John in his writings repeatedly uses some form of the word **LIAR** to refer to those who claim to be Christian, but yet in fact they are not. They profess Christ, but their practice shows they are living a lie.

Slide # 27

1 John 2:4 (NKJV)

4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

1 John 2:22 (NKJV)

22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

Slide # 28**1 John 4:20 (NKJV)**

20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

Revelation 2:2 (NKJV)

2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

All phony Christians fit into this category as well as all cults, isms, and all others who reject the truth in favor of the lie. This sin finds its apex in those who follow an antichrist – who is Satan’s ultimate lie – a counterfeit of the true Christ who alone is the way – the truth and the life (cf. 2 Thess. 2:11).

In the end – everyone is either of the TRUTH (that is Jesus) or a lie (all other forms of false religion).

The word “But” in verse 15 draws a major contrast between those who truly know the Lord and those who do not. The contrast is drawn in terms of practice.

The clear implication is that the blessed who will enter in live radically differently from those who don’t. Outside are the morally unclean, the spiritually perverse, the sexually immoral, murderous haters, those devoted to anything above the One true God, and all pretend Christians.

True Christians don’t practice any of these perversions! True Christians are defined by changed lives whose ultimate allegiance is the One true God revealed in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Someone once said, if you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

Jesus said:

Matthew 7:21 (NKJV)

21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

I want you in that day when you stand with me before the Judge of the world to have Him say, “Come you blessed,” “Come you blessed”. I don’t want to look at you standing there saying “Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord! I named you in earth, I named you before the elders, I named you before the church! I named you in prayer meeting, I named you in witness. And Lord, now Lord, Lord did I not this and did I not that. I don’t want to hear Him say: “Depart from Me I never knew you, you worker of iniquity. You never were made a doer of the will of God.” You learned enough, and you learned what to say properly enough to be accepted for what you professed yourself to be on earth, but now the Day of Judgment has come, and the TRUTH is now to be known.

- TRUTH by Al Martin

The truth is to be made known!

When you get where you are going, where will you be?

Come to Jesus and be washed in the blood of Jesus!

Come to Jesus and be forever changed!

Come to Jesus and share in the tree of life.

Come to Jesus that you may enter through the gates of the city!

Come to Jesus!