SBC – Nov. 8, 2026
Revelation 22:18-21 (NKJV)
"Last Words – Important Words"

#60

Prayer

Throughout **history, the issue has been GOD versus IDOLATRY**. The one true God versus false gods. In every dispensation, the issue has been about faith in the true God as He revealed Himself progressively. Revelation was progressive, and people were expected to believe in God in accordance with what had been revealed.

God revealed Himself most fully and completely in the PERSON of Jesus Christ, and now the whole world is called to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Acts 17 is very clear that God NOW commands all men everywhere to repent (v. 30) and believe (v. 34).

IN the end, we find a great **DIVIDE** between BELIEVERS in the one true God – and those who refuse to believe. In the end, everyone will be in one of these two categories for all eternity – either that of belief or unbelief. But Revelation, like the rest of the Bible, makes it very clear that it must be the right kind of faith. It shows that a saving faith is a life-changing kind of faith.

There are those who are properly related to the Lord by faith, which is reflected **in characteristic OBEDIENCE,** and there are those who don't know the Lord and are **characterized by rebellion** to the moral standards of God. Note this threefold emphasis as seen in Revelation **21:6-8; 21:24-27; and 22:14-15.**

Those who know the Lord will **have access to the paradise city** of God called the New Jerusalem, in contrast to those who don't, who will be **outside in the lake of fire**.

At this very point in 22:16, Jesus Christ personally interjects, saying that He has sent His angel to relate the **things of this book to the CHURCHES**.

We have noted that the book has much at the beginning and again at the end that **directly relates** to the Churches, but the **bulk** of the book in Revelation 6-18 deals with JUDGMENT that doesn't pertain to the churches. So we asked – then why is it given to the churches? **ANSWER**: It is the church's responsibility **to WARN the world of coming judgment**.

With that in mind, 22:17 gives the **last invitation** in the Bible. The Spirit and the bride (that is, the church) are saying COME.

In fact, the Spirit works through the church and empowers the church to be a witness to that end (Acts 1:8). Those who hear – that is, respond to the gospel message are also to join in saying, "COME." And the thirsty and anyone who desires is invited to COME. It is a GRACE invitation. Anyone can come – if only they will.

In the book of Revelation, it warns of unparalleled coming judgment, but it also offers a final invitation of GRACE – COME! Now is the accepted time - **the door of grace is still open.**

That brings us to the final warnings in the book and the concluding benediction.

By way of review – one more time, note the inspired outline for the book of Revelation.

Slide # 1

> ***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***

Often, last words are important words. There are various "last words" recorded in the Bible. We have the last words of Moses in Deuteronomy 33; the last words of Christ before He went to the cross, as seen in the Upper Room Discourse (Jn. 13-17); Jesus' last words on the cross; Jesus' last words prior to His ascension (Acts 1); Paul's last words as seen in 2 Timothy; and Peter's last words as found in 2 Peter. But the climactic last Words in God's revelation are found in Revelation 21-22. And today we consider the last of these last words as seen in Rev. 22:18-21.

Revelation 22:18–21 (NKJV)

18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;
19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Verses 18 and 19 form a unit of thought. The warning is, “DO NOT TAMPER with this book! We must not add to it or take away from it! This is amongst the most solemn warnings in the Bible not to tamper with the message.

Verses 18 and 19 very possibly are a continuation of the direct message from the Lord Jesus Christ as seen in verse 16.

“***To everyone who hears the words of this prophecy***” echoes back to Revelation 1:3 and certainly would apply to those in the churches who would hear this message, but then also extends to all who are privileged to receive this message. This relates to those who have clearly been made aware of this message and would then dare to TAMPER with it.

Slide # 2

> **Revelation 1:3 (NKJV)**
> **3** **Blessed** is he who **reads** and those who **hear** the words of this prophecy, and **keep those things which are written** in it; for the time is near.

Revelation is the one book that promises a BLESSING to those who hear and apply the message, but on the other hand, a CURSE is applied to anyone who would dare tamper with its contents.

The warning specifically speaks in reference to “the prophecy of this book.” The book is essentially prophetic – it predicts what is coming. In general, it ties many themes together that relate to both phases of the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Slide # 3

> **Revelation 1:1 (NKJV)**
> **1** The **Revelation of Jesus Christ**, which God gave Him to show His servants—**things which must shortly take place**. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

> **Revelation 19:10 (NKJV)**
> **10** And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For **the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."**

When it comes to prophecy – people have consistently had the tendency to want to add to and try to embellish the Revelation themes. God says: DON'T YOU DARE DO THIS!

> "When books were copied by hand, scribes would occasionally add comments of their own or leave out words they thought were unsuitable. John therefore includes at the end of his book a solemn warning declaring that nothing should be added or deleted, for the very good reason that it is a revelation from God (22:18-19)."
>
> – ***Bruce Metzger***

When it speaks of "the prophecy of this book," it certainly has in view the book of Revelation, but this book is really an extension and conclusion of the whole counsel of God. It really is the capstone of all the Scriptures – taking all the grand prophetic strands of Scripture and tying them all together into one final grand consummation. So you really can't talk about the book of Revelation in isolation.

Of the 404 verses in the book of Revelation, 278 of them either quote or allude to the OT Scriptures. No other writer in the NT uses the OT more than this. It then incorporates NT Church truth as it addresses the "things which are" as it addresses the seven local churches in chapters 2 and 3 (1:19). So, in effect, Revelation ties in with all the other prophetic Scriptures of the Bible and, in that sense, does not stand alone.

> "Since the subjects in this book are woven throughout the Bible, the verse, in effect, condemns any tampering with God's word."
>
> – ***William MacDonald***

As an example of this, note the biblical theme of the LAMB. In Genesis 22:8 Abraham prophetically said, "*God will provide for Himself the lamb."* In Exodus 12, we have the Passover Lamb followed by the sacrificial system under the Mosaic law.
Then in the NT, John the Baptist comes onto the scene and introduces Jesus as "*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" (Jn. 1:29).

This is then followed in the epistles by Paul saying in 1 Corinthians 5:7 that "*Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us"* and Peter saying that we have been redeemed "*with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"* (1 Pet. 1:18-19). And then the capstone of Revelation mentions Jesus as the LAMB 28 times, emphasizing that only those written in the Lamb's book of Life will enter into God's paradise.

I submit to you that the Lamb theme in Genesis is interconnected throughout the whole Bible and comes to consummation in Revelation. You cannot tamper with this theme at any point without violating the whole.

Slide # 4

> "While in the strict letter the threats of this terrible warning apply to the Revelation, yet inasmuch as this portion of the Book of God is rooted in, interwoven with, and is the completion of all the Word of God, it becomes impossible to tamper with this final book without maltreating what had been given before." - ***G.H. Lang***

Not only that, but Revelation 22:18-19 effectively puts the KIBOSH on any further prophecy.

> "The observation is true that this warning applies specifically to the book of Revelation only, but by extension it entails the termination of the gift of prophecy and the NT canon also. … So the final book of the Bible is also the concluding product of NT prophecy. It also marks the close of the NT canon since the prophetic gift was the divinely chosen means for communicating the inspired books of the canon."
>
> – ***Robert Thomas***

In other words, when John the last living apostle penned this book – there was no more prophecy about the future. This was it! There are no more books of the Bible to follow - this is it!!!

Jesus told the disciples…

Slide # 5

> **John 16:13 (NKJV)**
> **13** However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide **you** [the apostles] into **all truth** [literally "all the truth]; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Now, John, the last living apostle, is receiving the final portion of inspired prophetic truth, and in effect Revelation 22:18-19 is saying that it is now complete – DON'T TAMPER with it! Don't add to the completed revelation of God – don't take away from it! It is complete!

> "Since Revelation is the culmination of all Bible prophecy, we have no need for additional prophecy." - ***Tim Lahaye***

What does this say to the multitude of so-called modern-day prophets? It, in effect, says they are in BIG trouble!

The warning here echoes Deuteronomy 4:2.

Slide # 6

> **Deuteronomy 4:2 (NKJV)**
> **2** You shall **not add to** the word which I command you, **nor take from it**, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.
>
> This [Rev. 22:18-19] is a canonizing of the book of Revelation parallel to the way the Deuteronomy passage came to apply to the whole OT canon. – ***Robert Thomas***

In other words, what applies to the part applies to the whole. The Jews applied the truth of Deuteronomy 4:2 to the whole of the OT, and likewise we should apply the truth of Revelation to the whole of the Scriptures. The principle applies in part and in whole to the entire Bible.

What does it mean that God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book? Does it mean that it only applies to those living in the 7-year Tribulation period when the bulk of these plagues will be historically operative? I don't think so because when you read verse 19, it has eternity in view. Verse 19 speaks of not having part in the book of life or in the holy city, and the parallel thought to that in verse 18 would be that they will have part in the lake of fire – the ultimate eternal "plague" as defined in this book.

So I would understand "plagues" here in a very broad sense to speak of the nature of God's terrible JUDGMENT as illustrated in the book, including and climaxing in the lake of fire judgment. In reality, that JUDGMENT encompasses and surpasses all the other plagues in the book. Whatever it means specifically, it is really BAD. My mentor Dr. John Whitcomb used to say: "Whatever it is - I don't want to try that."

The plagues in Revelation all have to do with pain and suffering – with misery, and I take it in that vein. Terrible consequences of painful misery await those who would dare tamper with God's book.

And it applies both ways – it must not be added to or taken away from. Those that would dare take away from the words of this book, God "shall take away his part from the Book of Life… [or some manuscripts read 'from the tree of life'], from the holy city, and from the things which are written [blessing] in this book."

Again, some manuscripts read book of life and some read tree of life, but the end result is the same – these people do not have eternal life.

Repeatedly in the Bible, from the 1st five books of the Bible written by Moses right straight through to the last book of Revelation, people are severely warned not to tamper with God's Word, with Revelation 22:18-19 being the crowning CAPSTONE warning (cf. Deut. 12:32; Prov. 30:5-6; Gal. 1:8-9).

In John's day, there were many false prophets on the scene, and John spoke repeatedly to that situation. The church at Thyatira was rebuked because of the false prophetess called Jezebel in their midst as seen in Revelation 2:20.

Slide # 7

> **1 John 4:1 (NKJV)**
> **1** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because **many false prophets** have gone out into the world.
>
> **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**;

John, three times in Rev. 21:8, 21:17, and 22:15 speaks of LIARS as not having access to the holy city but rather having their part in the lake of fire.

Those who tamper with God's Word are LIARS in the magnified sense of the word, as they dare to misrepresent "***Thus saith the Lord***."

In Deuteronomy, the penalty for being a false prophet was the DEATH PENALTY (cf. Deut.13:5; 18:20).

The Charismatic Movement has brought into the professing church a whole slew of people claiming that they have the gift of prophecy, and most recently there is a whole slew of people now claiming to be modern-day apostles. There is a whole movement called “The New Apostolic Reformation.” These people are all LIARS and are in BIG trouble with God.

Now, of course, I would see, in keeping with the whole counsel of God, including the invitation of Revelation 22:17 that if people come to repentance, they can be forgiven. But the sense of the warning passages in Revelation 21 and 22 is that they address people hardened in their pattern of sin who won’t repent. Such people are headed for the lake of fire. For example, note the balance of invitation and threatened judgment in Revelation 21:6-8.

Slide # 8

Revelation 21:6–8 (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.**

7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have **their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone**, which is the second death.”

The people in view here who dare to tamper with the Scriptures will not come to Christ on His terms.

> “No true believer would ever deliberately tamper with Scripture. … That does not, of course, mean that believers will never make errors in judgment or mistakenly interpret Scripture incorrectly or inadequately. The Lord’s warning here is addressed to those who engage in deliberate falsification or misinterpretation of the Scripture, those whom Paul denounces as peddlers of the Word of God (2 Cor. 2:17).” – ***John MacArthur***

Slide # 9

2 Peter 3:16 (NKJV)

> **16** as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people **twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.**

It is characteristic of false teachers and false prophets to TAMPER with the Scriptures, but they do so to their own destruction. Those who would dare tamper with the HOLY BIBLE thereby prove they are not truly children of God.

> "This passage assumes that a child of God will not tamper with these scriptures." – ***John Walvoord***

There is a point of no return where God abandons people in their sin (cf. Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). When people deliberately dare to add to or take away from the Word of God, they may very well have crossed that line – God knows.

Jesus plainly said the Spirit would guide the apostles into all the truth (Jn. 16:13). Jesus plainly said that those who followed after them would believe in Him "through their word" (Jn. 17:20). The Bible plainly says the revelatory FOUNDATION of the Church was the apostles and their close contemporary associates, the prophets (Eph. 2:20, 3:5-6).

The apostles had more of a universal ministry involving the church at large, as seen, for example, in the extensive ministry of Paul or of Peter throughout Asia Minor, as seen in 1 Peter 1:1. Prior to the NT being completed, God gave prophets to local churches. This ministry filled in the gap prior to the completion of the NT, which, in one way or another, was all channeled through the apostles.

The Bible plainly says that the apostles were marked with unique sign miracles (2 Cor. 12:12). Jude 3 plainly says the faith was "once for all delivered to the saints." Hebrews 2:3-4 plainly says that the message of the apostles was confirmed with "signs and wonders."

But here is the thing: NEW REVELATION as given through the apostles was consistently accompanied by and confirmed by supernatural SIGN MIRACLES. That was the consistent pattern – new revelation confirmed by apostolic sign-miracles.
There is no more new revelation being given; therefore there are no more apostles, and consequently no more validating miraculous sign-miracles.

The book is complete! The apostles are off the scene. And there are no more validating sign-miracles.

As we evaluate so-called modern-day prophets and apostles (which I say are all bogus), we need to note that they have no NEW message. They claim “signs and wonders,” but they are not of the same nature as what the apostles did in the Bible. They have people flip-flopping around and going into what appears to be occult-like trances. But nobody really gets healed of catastrophic health conditions or permanent disabilities.

And what message do they bring? There is no new message as we have with NT apostolic truth! They speak in general terms like, “If you walk in obedience, God will bless,” or some such thing. And if they do speak in specifics, they are always wrong. Benny Hinn claimed Fidel Castro would die in the 1990’s. He didn’t. He actually died in 2016. Benny claimed the American homosexual community would be destroyed by fire before 1995. Why has he not been stoned? Because we live in the NT age of grace, and false teachers take full advantage of it.

And so the battle for the Bible continues – but so does the extremely strong warning from the Lord Himself – don’t add to – don’t take away – and those who do so will incur the judgments found in the book of Revelation.

> ***THE BIBLE:***
>
> This Book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you and comfort and cheer you. It is the traveler’s map, the pilgrim’s staff, the pilot’s compass, the soldier’s sword and the Christian’s character. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object, our good is its design and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is given you in life and will be opened in the judgment and will be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents. **--Robert Cleaver Chapman**

J. A. Seiss wrote about Revelation 22:18-19…

> O, my friends, it is a fearful thing to suppress or stultify the word of God, and above all "the words of the prophecy of this Book." To put forth for truth what is not the truth…cannot go unpunished. … If I err, God forgive me! If I am right, God bless my feeble testimony! In either case, God speed His everlasting truth!" – ***J.A. Seiss***

20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Quickly can mean sudden or soon, but I think soon is the idea. In verse 7 Christ says He is coming "quickly" and then says the blessed are those who keep "the words of the prophecy of this book." Thus His coming is attached to how people are living. It is not so much about the suddenness of His coming but about whether people were living ready.

In verse 12 He again says He is coming quickly, but it is attached to rewarding people according to how they have lived. Again, the emphasis is not so much on "suddenness" but whether or not people were living ready.

In verse 20, Jesus yet again says He is coming quickly, but it comes on the heels of warning people not to tamper with the Word. Yet, again, the issue is living ready in light of His SOON return and not so much the SUDDENNESS of the event.

Of course both are true, as His coming at the Rapture will be sudden as well as soon. But I think the overall emphasis in context is living ready in view of His imminent, soon return.

This is now, for the third time in this chapter, that Jesus has affirmed His SOON return (cf. v. 7, 12, 20). Here we have three personal interjections from the Lord Himself, with a superlative emphasis being made.

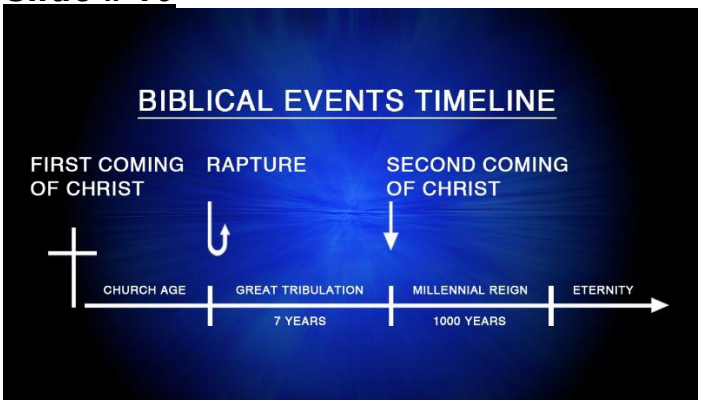
This is the LAST DIRECT word from the Lord Jesus. And He says it three times! Last words are important words!

What Christ says follows right on the heels of the warning about NOT TAMPERING with the book! This book is really important to Jesus. It's all about Him and His grand finale concerning history. One better not mess with it!

"***Surely I am coming quickly***" speaks of the Lord's IMMINENT return, meaning it could happen at any time.

In view is the first phase of Christ's second coming, when He comes for His Church in what is commonly referred to as the RAPTURE.

Slide # 10



Christ coming "quickly" is what we call a "PROPHETIC soon," in that it is the next event on God's prophetic calendar.

Slide # 11

> **2 Peter 3:8 (NKJV)**
> **8** But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that **with the Lord one day is as a thousand years**, and a thousand years as one day.

On God's calendar – so to speak - it's only been two days since Jesus left, and we are expecting Him back SOON!

How soon we can't say, but the whole NT teaches the IMMINENT return of Christ (cf. 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).

God's exact timeline, strictly speaking, addresses His plan with Israel, as noted in Daniel 9:24 and so forth. However, the timeline of Israel affects the church in this sense. Immediately on the heels of the rapture will come the Day of the Lord. The Rapture is ever imminent, and immediately on its heels will follow the Day of the Lord.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Paul addressed the Rapture of the Church, but then in 1 Thessalonians 5:1 he turns the page, so to speak.
In my NKJV it says, "But concerning," which in the Greek is "peri de."

Consistently, Paul uses this phrase in transitioning to a different but yet related subject. He moves from the Rapture in chapter 4 to the Day of the Lord in chapter 5. These are distinct realities and yet related in the sense that they both come as a “thief.”

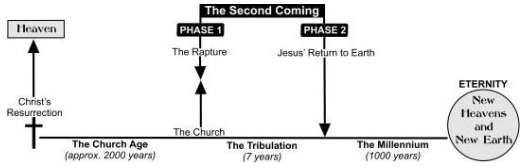
Slide # 12

> **1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 (NKJV)**
> **16** For the **Lord Himself will descend** from heaven with a shout… And the dead in Christ will rise first.
> **17** Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. …
>
> **1 Thessalonians 5:1–2 (NKJV)**
> **1** But concerning the times …. you yourselves know perfectly that the **day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.**

When the Antichrist signs a 7-year covenant with Israel, all will be able to know the very timing of the Lord's return with very close precision because we know Christ returns immediately after that 7-year period of time to destroy the Antichrist (cf. Dan. 9:27; 7:25; Matt. 24:15, 21; 2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5).

So all this is VERY TIGHT - The Rapture, the Day of the Lord that ensues, the conclusion of the Day of the Lord at Christ's Second Coming. These are dominoes in that the Rapture will trigger this successive development, which relates to the calendar of God.

Slide # 13



Now note that never in the OT is Christ's Second Coming described in terms of coming as a thief in the night. It is Jesus who first introduces the idea that His coming will be like a thief coming in the night (cf. Mt. 24:43; Lk. 12:39; 1 Thess. 5:2, 4; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15).

The Old Testament prophets NEVER spoke of Christ's coming in this way because they only dealt with the second phase of His second coming – namely His coming to the earth. The rest of the New Testament then builds on this "coming as a thief" analogy. Paul, John, and Peter all borrow from Jesus in this regard (cf. Mt. 24:43; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15), which is one reason I say Matthew 24 is the prophetic seed plot for the rest of the New Testament.

Slide # 14

> **Matthew 24:43–44 (NKJV)**
> **43** 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.
> **44** Therefore **you also be ready**, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Thieves come without warning, without signs, without any heads-up. This fits perfectly with illustrating how Christ will come before the Tribulation Period at the Rapture of the Church. It will come unexpectedly because there are no clear signposts to indicate its arrival. Yes, we see the day coming generally in that we see the last days' trend of apostasy, but there are no definitive signposts (cf. Heb. 10:25; 1 Jn. 2:18).

Some think that the rapture is completely disassociated from the beginning of the Day of the Lord, and they argue that therefore there may be a gap – perhaps a fairly large one between the rapture and the start of the Day of the Lord, which begins with Antichrist signing a 7-year covenant with Israel.

I don't believe in this "gap theory". I believe that the rapture takes place and immediately history segues into the Day of the Lord judgment. A key reason for believing this is that here in Matthew 24:43-44 Jesus illustrates that His coming will be like a thief in the night. And then, as we turn to 1 Thessalonians 5:2, we find Paul saying that the Day of the Lord also comes as a thief in the night. What is true of the one is also true of the other because, in fact, they are closely connected – with BOTH coming UNEXPECTEDLY as a thief in the night.

I take it that the coming of Christ at the Rapture and the coming of the day of the Lord are like two sides of the same coin. The coin is the coming as a thief. On one side of the coin is the coming of Christ; on the other side of the coin is the coming of the Day of the Lord. They are distinct, but yet closely related in that the one immediately segues into the other. Thus, both happen without warning.

This coincides with Paul's closely relating and yet keeping distinct the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4 and the Day of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 5.

Also note that earlier in Matthew 24, in verse 38, we find the people are carrying on with life in a normal way UNTIL the day that Noah entered the ark. In verse 39, the people did not know UNTIL the flood came and took them all away. The single coin here is the word "UNTIL". On the one side of the coin is UNTIL Noah was safely tucked inside the ark – which corresponds to deliverance via the rapture. On the other side of the coin is UNTIL the flood of judgment came – corresponding to the day of the Lord's judgment.

The rapture comes as a thief in the night, as does the Day of the Lord. The one ushers in the other. They are like two sides of the same coin. When the one happens, the other follows. It is an immediate segue. Thus, the rapture in effect introduces the Day of the Lord, which immediately follows on its heels.

Christ plainly indicates that this aspect of His coming (the rapture) will happen when we do not expect it. This is the very opposite of Matthew 24:33, which says about His return to the earth, "when you see all these things, know that it is near – at the doors!"

The only reasonable explanation is that there are, in fact, TWO phases to Christ's Second Coming. The first phase is totally unpredictable and unexpected. That relates to the rapture. The second phase is predictable for those who will be alive in the Tribulation Period.

The next event on God's prophetic calendar is the rapture, but we have no idea EXACTLY when it will take place. Christ has plainly told us this. So to set any dates is wrong! We only know it is SOON on God's calendar!

Jesus may come today, but we don't know.

Many have set dates – they have all been wrong. No one knows when Christ will come for the Church.

That is why we are to “live ready”.

As noted in Revelation 22 (the last chapter of the Bible), three times Jesus says He is coming "quickly," which I take to be SOON in the sense of imminence (see v. 7, 12, 20). The book is NOT sealed (Rev. 22:10), meaning there will be no more delay. There are no more "gap" periods. Immediately, according to the inspired outline, the "things which are" (the church age) will be followed in successive order by "the things which will take place after this" (Rev. 1:19). Once the dominio of the RAPTURE falls, all else will immediately follow in place with no more delay.

Christ emphasizes His coming soon by saying, “Surely” – “Surely I am coming quickly.” And then John adds his own affirmation to this certain and welcome prospect by saying “Amen,” meaning “so be it.”

And then immediately he follows up with…

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Lord – means MASTER and denotes Deity – He is God/Master
Jesus - means God-Savior. Even so, come, God-Master/God Savior! His very name has DEITY written all over it!

To the true believer, He is our precious Lord and Savior – our Lord Jesus.

This phrase in Greek is the equivalent to the Aramaic “***maranatha”*** used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:22. Maranatha literally means “the Lord comes.” This became the watchword in the early church.

Maranatha – “Our Lord Comes!” became a common greeting and benediction in Christian circles.

John’s heart at this point longed for the coming of Christ. He had seen all that is going to transpire, culminating in the eternal state and life with God in the paradise city of the New Jerusalem.

He had seen the glory of heaven – the throne room. He had seen the glory of the eternal city. He had tasted the delights of the kingdom come, and his heart leaped with anticipation as he said,

Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

This is the expected sentiment of every true child of God. We long for the Lord's return and the glory He has in store for His children.

Slide # 15

> **1 Corinthians 1:7 (NKJV)**
> **7** so that you come short in no gift, **eagerly waiting** for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,
>
> **Philippians 3:20 (NKJV)**
> **20** For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also **eagerly wait** for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

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> **Titus 2:13 (NKJV)**
> **13** **looking for the blessed hope** and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,
>
> **Hebrews 9:28 (NKJV)**
> **28** so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those **who eagerly wait for Him** He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

We are not setting any dates, but we definitely feel the anguish of soul that Lot experienced as he was oppressed daily by the filthy conduct of the wicked (2 Pet. 2:7-8). We definitely see the reality of last days' perilous times that accompany last days' apostasy as seen in 2 Timothy 3. We definitely see the Day of Christ's coming approaching (Heb. 10:25). And as we do so, we long for His appearing and often sigh, "***Even so come, Lord Jesus!"***

And then the final benediction…

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

John closes the book on the note of GRACE! **The last word – on these last words is GRACE!** The last word in the OT is the word "curse" – the threat of a curse. But the last word in the New Testament is GRACE!

Grace is the unmerited favor of God! We are saved by grace, and we live by grace – the favor of God's empowerment.

How fitting, against the backdrop of the horrible judgments of this book, the GRACE of God shines brightly for those who are the recipients of it. And as Christ said to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Cor. 12:9). We can do all God asks us to do because Christ strengthens us – that’s grace (Phil. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:1-4).

Many believe that the best rendering of verse 21 is as it is rendered in the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

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> **Revelation 22:21 (HCSB)**
> **21** The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.

One of the things the book of Revelation should do for all believers of our age is to give them a great APPRECIATION for their salvation – for the GRACE of God. No matter what we might go through, God has not appointed us to WRATH but to obtain deliverance from the most awful time that will ever come upon the world (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9). And beyond that, the BEST is yet to be in the glory world in the hereafter!

In essentially all of his letters, Paul both begins and ends with GRACE, as does the book of Revelation (cf. Rev. 1:4; 22:21). It’s as if the writer says GRACE is about to flow to you through this letter, and so he says, “***Grace to you.”*** As we come to the end of the letter – now what? Grace be with you as you go from here. Grace be with you as you go out into the ravages of the world awaiting the coming of the Lord. Grace goes with you because Christ goes with you and His favor rests upon you!

GRACE, GRACE, GOD’S GRACE – what a fitting note to end on. This is the saints' song through endless ages, singing forever of the GRACE OF GOD! We will never get over it. We are simply trophies of His GRACE!

Revelation 22 contains the last invitation (22:16-17); the last warning (22:18-20); the last promise of His coming (22:20); and the last benediction – a grace benediction (22:21).

The whole of the book of Revelation can be summed up with, “GET READY” and “LIVE READY.” If you are not saved, you have been warned that in the final judgment whoever is found in the Lamb’s book of life will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15; 21:27).

If you are a believer, you have been told what is coming, and the next great event on God's calendar is the coming of Christ – LIVE READY. The message for you is to LIVE ready, as Christ repeatedly says He is coming quickly!

Get ready – Live ready – Be ready! As Jesus said, "Be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." (Mt. 24:44).

Ecclesiastes 3 tells us that God has put eternity in our hearts, and then it says…

Slide # 18

> **Ecclesiastes 3:14 (NKJV)**
> **14** I know that **whatever God does, It shall be forever**. Nothing can be added to it, And nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should **fear** before Him.

In eternity, what will be will be for all eternity!

> We just finished elections in the United States. Some years ago a political operative coined the phrase, "***It's the economy, stupid***." And that reflects worldly wisdom where the driving thing in people's thinking is their own personal welfare in the here and now.
>
> In Matthew 6, Jesus talked about the lost of the world and how their whole focus is all about now, self, and stuff. But Jesus said the Father knows our needs, and the focus of God's people should be seeking the kingdom of God first (cf. Mt. 6:25-34).
>
> Take this simply as a play on words and not as a pejorative statement. Worldly wisdom says, "***It's the economy, stupid***," but sanctified godly wisdom says, "***It's the kingdom, foolish ones***." Again, I speak as a play on words (cf. Lk. 24:25).

But the point is it's all about living for the kingdom. Living for God with an eternal perspective! That is our real purpose in life! In Revelation 22:7, Jesus says, "***Blessed is he who keeps the words...of this book***." Blessed are those who take it to heart and live accordingly. Blessed are those who live in light of the coming kingdom! For those who do so…the grace of God rests upon them! Go forth with His grace as your mantle in time and for all eternity! Grace upon grace upon grace for time and eternity. God's last word to us is GRACE!

Grace be with you all. Amen!