

REVELATION 22:12-21
THE LAST DAY IS YOUR DAY!

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”

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

“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

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; 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.

He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.”

Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

On the last Sunday of the church year we consider the End of the world and the Last Things: Christ returns in glory to this earth, He raises all the dead, He publicly judges every person who ever lived, He receives the believer into the clouds and takes them to the kingdom of heaven, He casts the unbelievers from His presence forever into the physical and emotional pangs of hell, He destroys by fire the world as we know it, He creates a new heavens and a new earth of which we are not exactly sure regarding details. On this Last Sunday of the church year, we look at the last verses of the last book of the Bible—the book of Revelation.

The visions of Revelation were given to the Apostle John exiled on the island of Patmos for preaching Christ. In these visions, Jesus showed John the things that “must come to pass”—that is, the Christian church will be beset by the vehement and diabolical attacks of Satan; yet the Christian church in the hands of Jesus is safe; Satan, his forces, and all those rejecting Christ are thrown into the lake of fire; and the believers, with Jesus their Savior, live in the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. These visions given to John use symbolism and imagery to portray these struggles of the Church and the final victory in Christ. The visions are not physical descriptions, but symbolical descriptions of events to come. It is easy for Bible students to lose sight of that and try to force the symbols, pictures, and images of Revelation into factual descriptions and events.

These closing verses of Revelation summarize its glimpse into the turmoil of the future with the comforting assurance of victory for Jesus’ believers. Jesus says, *“Behold, I am coming quickly. I will return soon!”* Granted, “quickly” to God, Who is timeless, is not “quickly” to man who has little patience—fast travel, fast foods, fast medicine, fast internet connections. The End may not come for 500 years, or maybe today! That would strike you as “quickly,” wouldn’t it? At any rate, Jesus does not dawdle on His way or in His plans.

He says, *My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.* Jesus will pass final sentence on each person according to what they have done. Those producing “fruits” from the faith in Jesus in their hearts, who live with trust in Christ for their forgiveness, will be blessed with eternal life. Those, who reject and despise Christ for forgiveness, will be cast away forever—the real death—no blessings from God ever again. Why does Jesus have the right to do this? *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.* Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Jesus is the first and the last, the beginning and the end, the “A to Z” of the entire world. In his Gospel John identifies Jesus as *“the Word”* *“by whom all things were made”* (John 1:1-3,14). Likewise Peter in his second letter writes, *“By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth. . . are now preserved by the same word. . . reserved for fire until the day of judgment (2 Peter 3:5-7).* Jesus, the Word, began it, sustains it, and will end it. Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, has the right to “reward” all according to their faith for forgiveness in Him or according to their rejection of Him as the Savior. he is the Be-All and End-All of life.

The text says, *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.* “Do His commandments” is more than mechanically keeping the Ten Commandments. It is believing in Christ. *This is His [God’s] commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 3:23).* Through Jesus you will *have the right to the tree of life, and [to]enter through the gates into the city.* In Jesus you have special Rights! At the gate of heaven you will be

allowed to pass—like having the key card to the motel and to your room. A-no-ID-necessary access. You will enter the city being detained. You will have the right to go to and eat from the tree of life! That tree was present in the Garden of Eden. After sin, it was forbidden to Adam and Eve and all sinners thereafter. However, you, with righteousness from Christ, will eat from the tree of LIFE! What a day it will be!

BUT “No Access” for others. *Outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.* All the wicked troublemakers, seeking to harm you, on the outside! *Dogs.* Discounting your pet dog, dogs of the street are bold, and untrustworthy—an apt description of the camp of Satan opposing the Christians. They will be on the outside. Also, on the outside, *sorcerers*—those in “cahoots” with Satan to your harm. Also the *sexually immoral*—those living pornography’s life—without purity and commitment to God’s institution of marriage—one man by birth and one woman by birth committed to one another for life. The sexually immoral abuse the gift God gives them to be bound together in love and engender new life in children. They use it for personal satisfaction. *Murderers*—man slayers, those who take it upon themselves to end the lives which God has given—whether by euthanasia, abortion, mass murder of students or people at the mall, murderer for settling grudges, or simply by hate. Such will all be on the outside, unable to harm you! *Idolaters*—those who openly cling to false gods, Christless gods—Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Great Spirit-ism; and those who are devoted Christless idols of the heart—recreation, money, pride, prestige, popularity, and all ideologies, no matter how honorable in appearance, but all without Christ. Such enemies of Christ’s church will be on the outside. As well as those of the *lie*—whose goal is ever to deceive, who twists the truth for purposes of self, who twists the Holy Word of God. They also will be outside looking in—helplessly and hopelessly outcast. Does any of this surface in your life? Run to Jesus for forgiveness!

I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star. The Savior sends His angels, His messengers—even people—to share His Good News with His churches and others. Jesus is both the root and the offspring of King David and the kingdom of salvation. Jesus is David’s Lord and His Son—true God and true man, the sinless substitute for sinners. He is the Morning Star of the Light of the New Day of life forever in heaven. What a Dawning Day from the east, what an Easter for the people of God on the last day! Out of the grave forever!

And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. Through the Holy Spirit and through the church, which is the bride of Christ in whom the Spirit works, the invitation goes out and spreads! “Come for the water of life—it’s free!” Have you ever been thirsty, really thirsty, longing for water, to wet the tongue and the throat—just water! not pop, not tea, not beer, just water, for which you would give your dearest possessions, your “eye-teeth”? Jesus, the water of life, quenches forever your thirst for “acceptance before God.” It’s free!

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; 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. These are fitting words of warning as Revelation and the Bible close. This message of the Morning Star, the New Dawn, the Easter of Judgment Day, is not a message to be tweaked to suit personal agendas, or denominational resolutions, or desires for numerical growth, or compulsions to follow logic rather than faith. This pure message of Life is not to be added-to or subtracted-from. Such will bring God’s wrath—eternal suffering and removal from God’s Book of Life. The message of forgiveness in Christ is a gift from God. Don’t mess with it! Stand by what is written. With Jesus you will stand at the Last Day.

Jesus repeats His wonderful uplifting news: *Surely I am coming quickly.* “Take heart! You have not been abandoned.” Realize, this world will randomly self-destruct, but will destruct only when God gives the say-so. In Jesus, that day will come with no harm to you! *Amen!* So be it! *Even so, come, Lord Jesus!* We can hardly wait! Do you ever think, “I don’t want to leave yet. It’s too early; I would feel cheated”? Do you feel that way when you hear of the death of a 15 year old who had his whole life ahead of him, of a 30 year old mom who will never get to see her family grow up and her grandchildren, or the 66 year old retiree, who never got to enjoy retirement? Those are all earthly and near-sighted sentiments. Do any who have gone to heaven and the great city of God in Christ ever want to come back? In heaven *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away!* (*Revelation 21:4*). Going to heaven is not a loss! *Come, Lord Jesus!*

The very last sentence: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*—the free mercy of God that’s yours in Jesus now and forever—*be with you all!* In Jesus, “The Last Day is your Day!”

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---