



# THE REVELATION OF JOHN

## Bible Study 52

Text: Rev. 22:8-21

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# Conclusio

### Greek NT

8 Κάγω Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀκούων καὶ βλέπων ταῦτα. καὶ ὅτε ἤκουσα καὶ ἔβλεψα, ἔπεσα προσκυνῆσαι ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν τοῦ ἀγγέλου τοῦ δεικνύοντός μοι ταῦτα. 9 καὶ λέγει μοι, Ὅρα μὴ· σύνδουλός σου εἰμι καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῶν τηρούντων τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· τῷ θεῷ προσκύνησον. 10 καὶ λέγει μοι, Μὴ σφραγίσῃς τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου, ὁ καιρὸς γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐστιν. 11 ὁ ἀδικῶν ἀδικησάτω ἔτι καὶ ὁ ῥυπαρὸς ῥυπανθήτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω ἔτι καὶ ὁ ἅγιος ἁγιασθήτω ἔτι.

12 Ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ταχύ, καὶ ὁ μισθός μου μετ' ἐμοῦ ἀποδοῦναι ἑκάστῳ ὡς τὸ ἔργον ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ. 13 ἐγὼ τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος.

14 Μακάριοι οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τοῖς πυλῶσιν εἰσέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν. 15 Ἐξω οἱ κύνες καὶ οἱ φάρμακοι καὶ οἱ πόρνοι καὶ οἱ φονεῖς καὶ οἱ εἰδωλολάτραι καὶ πᾶς φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν ψεῦδος.

16 Ἐγὼ Ἰησοῦς

### La Biblia de las Américas

8 Yo, Juan, soy el que oyó y vio estas cosas. Y cuando oí y vi, me postré para adorar a los pies del ángel que me mostró estas cosas. 9 Y me dijo: No hagas eso; yo soy consiervo tuyo y de tus hermanos los profetas y de los que guardan las palabras de este libro. Adora a Dios. 10 También me dijo: No selles las palabras de la profecía de este libro, porque el tiempo está cerca. 11 Que el injusto siga haciendo injusticias, que el impuro siga siendo impuro, que el justo siga practicando la justicia, y que el que es santo siga guardándose santo.

12 He aquí, yo vengo pronto, y mi recompensa está conmigo para recompensar a cada uno según sea su obra. 13 Yo soy el Alfa y la Omega, el primero y el último, el principio y el fin.

14 Bienaventurados los que lavan sus vestiduras para tener derecho al árbol de la vida y para entrar por las puertas a la ciudad. 15 Afuera están los perros, los hechiceros, los inmorales, los asesinos, los idólatras y todo el que ama y practica la mentira.

16 Yo, Jesús, he enviado

### NRSV

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 comrades the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!" 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 "See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work. 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 will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. 15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

16 "It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this tes-

### NLT

8 I, John, am the one who saw and heard all these things. And when I saw and heard these things, I fell down to worship the angel who showed them to me. 9 But again he said, "No, don't worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers the prophets, as well as all who obey what is written in this scroll. Worship God!" 10 Then he instructed me, "Do not seal up the prophetic words you have written, for the time is near. 11 Let the one who is doing wrong continue to do wrong; the one who is vile, continue to be vile; the one who is good, continue to do good; and the one who is holy, continue in holiness."

12 "See, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me, to repay all according to their deeds. 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 they can enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life. 15 Outside the city are the dogs -- the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshipers, and all who love to live a lie.

ἔπεμψα τὸν ἄγγελόν μου μαρτυρῆσαι ὑμῖν ταῦτα ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ῥίζα καὶ τὸ γένος Δαυὶδ, ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός. 17 Καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ νύμφη λέγουσιν, Ἔρχου. καὶ ὁ ἀκούων εἰπάτω, Ἔρχου. καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω, ὁ θέλων λαβέτω ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν.

18 Μαρτυρῶ ἐγὼ παντὶ τῷ ἀκούοντι τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· ἐάν τις ἐπιθῆ ἔπ' αὐτά, ἐπιθήσει ὁ θεὸς ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς πληγὰς τὰς γεγραμμένας ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ, 19 καὶ ἐάν τις ἀφέλῃ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης, ἀφελεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἁγίας τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ.

20 Λέγει ὁ μαρτυρῶν ταῦτα, Ναί, ἔρχομαι ταχύ. Ἀμήν, ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ.

21 Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων.

a mi ángel a fin de daros testimonio de estas cosas para las iglesias. Yo soy la raíz y la descendencia de David, el lucero resplandeciente de la mañana. 17 Y el Espíritu y la esposa dicen: Ven. Y el que oye, diga: Ven. Y el que tiene sed, venga; y el que desea, que tome gratuitamente del agua de la vida.

18 Yo testifico a todos los que oyen las palabras de la profecía de este libro: Si alguno añade a ellas, Dios traerá sobre él las plagas que están escritas en este libro; 19 y si alguno quita de las palabras del libro de esta profecía, Dios quitará su parte del árbol de la vida y de la ciudad santa descritos en este libro.

20 El que testimonia de estas cosas dice: Sí, vengo pronto. Amén. Ven, Señor Jesús.

21 La gracia del Señor Jesús sea con todos. Amén.

timony 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 everyone who hears say, "Come." And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book; 19 if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

20 The one who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

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

16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this message for the churches. I am both the source of David and the heir to his throne. I am the bright morning star." 17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let each one who hears them say, "Come." Let the thirsty ones come -- anyone who wants to. Let them come and drink the water of life without charge.

18 And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book. 19 And if anyone removes any of the words of this prophetic book, God will remove that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.

20 He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon!" Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all.

## INTRODUCTION

The end is near! Not necessary the end of time, but rather the end of our study of Revelation. Although some in the class may have wondered if Jesus would return before we completed the study of these twenty-two chapters, we have arrived at that point.

Even more curious is how John concludes this apocalypse. A quick reading of vv. 8-21 sounds a little like the ending of a Pauline letter than the ending of an apocalypse. But the introduction to the document in chapter one is a mixture of introductory sections of an apocalypse, a letter, and a prophetic oracle. With these established forms John then inserts a high degree of his own creativity into each of these units. Thus it shouldn't be surprising for John to conclude this writing in a highly creative manner also. Thus the Conclusion here somewhat matches the epistolary Praescriptio of 1:4-8. Given the personal and intimate nature of certain kinds of first century Greek letters, these elements stress the personal connection to his readers in Asia that John feels.

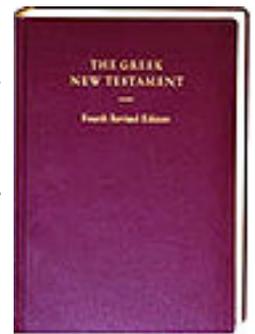
He has experienced one of the most unique experiences in all of Christian history, and his desire is to share this with the believers he knows and loves in ancient Asia. Through apocalyptic vision John has been taken into heaven to see and experience perspectives

about God and His ways even beyond the visionary experiences of the prophets of the Old Testament. God has allowed him to put these things he saw and heard into human words that his fellow believers at the end of the first century can comprehend. No wonder he moves to get all this into written expression in the most creative and helpful manner humanly possible.

There is much insight to be gained from careful study of vv. 8-21.

### 1. What did the text mean to the first readers? Historical Aspects:

**External History.** The Transmission History of the hand copying of the manuscripts of this passage reflect differences in wording at several places. The editors of *The Greek New Testament* (UBS 4th rev ed) note four places where these variations will likely impact the translation of the passage:



**22:14 πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν. washing their robes, {A}.<sup>1</sup>** The alternative reading ποιοῦντες τὰς

<sup>1</sup>πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν κ A 1006 1841 (2050 πλύνοντες) Page 1060

έντολὰς αὐτοῦ, doing His commandments, has much less evidence in its favor and thus stands as an attempted ‘correction’ of the reading of the text.<sup>2</sup>

**22:21 κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, of the Lord Jesus, {A}.**<sup>3</sup> Here later pious copyists added Χριστοῦ to the phrase so that it would be more typical to the rest of the NT.<sup>4</sup>

**22:21 μετὰ πάντων, with all, {B}.**<sup>5</sup> The ending of 2053 2062 it<sup>ar</sup> vg cop<sup>sa</sup> eth Ps-Athanasiusmss; Ambrose Fulgentius Apringius // πλατύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν Ps-Athanasius // ποιῶντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτοῦ 205 209 1611<sup>supp</sup> 1854 2030 2329 2377 Byz [046] it<sup>eis</sup> syr<sup>ph</sup> h cop<sup>bo</sup> (arm τηρῶντες τὰς) Andrew; Tertullian Cyprian (Caesarius) (Beatus)

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).

<sup>2</sup>“Instead of πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν, the Textus Receptus, in agreement with most minuscules and some versional witnesses, reads the somewhat similar-sounding words ποιῶντες τὰς έντολὰς αὐτοῦ (doing the commandments of him). The latter reading appears to be a scribal emendation (correction), for elsewhere the author uses the expression τηρεῖν τὰς έντολὰς (12:17; 14:12).

“‘To wash one’s robe’ is metaphorical language for moral and spiritual cleansing or reformation (Aune, Revelation 17–22, p. 1219). Interpreters usually understand this as referring to either (1) Christian baptism, (2) the decision to lead a morally upright life (Smalley, The Revelation to John, pp. 573–74), or (3) martyrdom (Aune, p. 1220).”

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 551.]

<sup>3</sup>{A} κυρίου Ἰησοῦ κ A 1611<sup>supp</sup> 2053 2062 // κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ 051<sup>supp</sup> 209 1006 1841 1854 2030 2050 2329<sup>vid</sup> 2377 Byz [046] syr<sup>h</sup> Andrew // κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ 205 it<sup>ar</sup> eis vg (vg<sup>ms</sup> cop<sup>sa</sup> omit Χριστοῦ) syr<sup>ph</sup> arm eth Beatus // omit verse 21, but add after verse 20 εἰς ἀγίους πάντας εἰς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων. ἀμήν. cop<sup>bo</sup>

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

<sup>4</sup>“The reading κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, which is well supported, was expanded by pious copyists by adding Χριστοῦ (Christ) after Ἰησοῦ and ἡμῶν (our) after κυρίου. The omission of ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ in a couple of manuscripts arose by accident when the eye of the copyist or translator passed from Ἰησοῦ (v. 20) to Ἰησοῦ (v. 21). Likewise, the reading κυρίου, which is found only in manuscript 1859, is a mistake in copying. In some languages it will be necessary to say ‘our Lord’ instead of ‘the Lord’ regardless of the text followed.” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 551–552.]

<sup>5</sup>{B} μετὰ πάντων. A (it<sup>ar</sup> cum omnibus hominibus) vg<sup>st</sup> (vg<sup>wm</sup> Beatus<sup>1/2</sup> add ἀμήν) Beatus<sup>1/2</sup> // μετὰ πάντων ἡμῶν. ἀμήν. 2050 (vg<sup>cl</sup> eth ὑμῶν for ἡμῶν) // μετὰ τῶν ἀγίων. ἀμήν. κ (it<sup>eis</sup> omit ἀμήν) // μετὰ τῶν ἀγίων σου. ἀμήν. 2329 // μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγίων. ἀμήν. 051<sup>supp</sup> 205 209 (1006 1841 omit ἀμήν) 1611 1854 2062 2377 Byz [046] syr<sup>h</sup> cop<sup>sa</sup> (concerning cop<sup>bo</sup> see footnote 2) arm (Andrew omit ἀμήν) // μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγίων αὐτοῦ. ἀμήν. 2030 syr<sup>ph</sup>

Revelation varies considerably not counting the inclusion or omission of ἀμήν.<sup>6</sup>

**22:21 omit ἀμήν, {B}.** Here the issue is the presence or absence of the concluding word ἀμήν. The manuscript evidence (see fn. 5 above for details) favors its omission.<sup>7</sup>

The Text Apparatus of the *Novum Testamentum Graece* (N-A 28th rev.) gives a fuller listing of all of the places where variations in wording surface in the centuries of hand copying the text. Some 29 places are listed.<sup>8</sup> But careful



[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

<sup>6</sup>“The concluding words of the book have been transmitted in curiously diverse forms. A couple of Church Fathers omit v. 21 entirely, and the Bohairic version unites vv. 20 and 21 to read, ‘Come, our Lord Jesus Christ, upon all the saints unto the age of the age (or ages). Amen.’ The Greek witnesses present seven different endings (not counting those that add ‘Amen’).

- (1) μετὰ πάντων (with all)—so REB, TEV, TOB, FC
- (2) μετὰ πάντων ἡμῶν (with all of you)—so NJB and AV
- (3) μετὰ πάντων ἡμῶν (with all of us)
- (4) μετὰ τῶν ἀγίων (with the saints)—so NIV (“with God’s people”)
- (5) μετὰ τῶν ἀγίων σου (with your saints)
- (6) μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγίων (with all the saints)—so RSV and NRSV
- (7) μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγίων αὐτοῦ (with all his saints)

“In favor of (4) is the fact that elsewhere in the book of Revelation ἅγιος is used twelve times (in 8:3 with πάντων) to designate the Christian believers. Reading (2), adopted by the Textus Receptus, is supported by only one Greek manuscript and shows the influence of 2 Cor 13:13 and 2 Thess 3:18. Reading (6), which has the most extensive manuscript support, appears to be a combination of (1) and (4). Readings (3), (5), and (7) are supported by quite insignificant evidence. On the basis of the weight of Codex Alexandrinus (4th century), which is joined by manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate and by Tyconius (A. D. 380) and Beatus (A. D. 786), the shortest reading seems most likely original.”

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 552.

<sup>7</sup>“The Textus Receptus, in agreement with a few uncials and almost all minuscules and many ancient versions, concludes the book with ἀμήν. If, however, this word were present originally, it is difficult to account for its omission in those manuscripts that do not have it. Some modern translations include the word ‘Amen’ (RSV, NRSV, NIV, NJB), while others do not (REB, TEV, TOB, FC, Seg).” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 552.]

<sup>8</sup>

\* κ 1006. 1841. 2329 M<sup>A</sup> vg<sup>ms</sup> sy<sup>ph</sup> sy; Prim (ἀκούων και βλέπων are reversed in sequence of listing)

\* εβλεπον A 2053. 2062. 2329 (alternative spelling of εβλεπω)  
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| ειδον 1611s. 1854 *M<sup>K</sup>*

**9**  
\* ποιησης 1006. 1841 latt; Cyp (ποιήσης is added after ὄρα μῆ)  
◦ *M<sup>A</sup>*; Prim (καὶ before τῶν τηρούντων is omitted)

**10**  
\* οτι ο καιρος 2377 *M<sup>A</sup>*; Cyp Tyc Prim (ὁ καιρὸς γὰρ is replaced)

**11**  
\* A 2030. 2050. 2062<sup>txt</sup> (καὶ ὁ ῥυπαρὸς ῥυπανθήτω ἔτι is omitted)  
\* ρυπαρευθητω 046. 1006. 1611s. 1841. 2053. 2062<sup>com</sup>. 2329. 2377 *M* (ῥυπανθήτω ἔτι is replaced)  
| txt & 1854

**12**  
\* και 2030 *M<sup>A</sup>* vg<sup>mss</sup> (καὶ is added before Ἰδοῦ ἔρχομαι)  
\* αποδοθηναι &\* (ἀποδοῦναι is replaced)  
\* εσται 046. 1006. 1841. 1854. 2050. 2053. 2062. 2344. 2377. (1611s. 2329 *M<sup>A</sup>*) *M*; Bea (ἐστιν is replaced)  
| ο εστιν 2030  
| txt & A

**13**  
\* 7 8 10 1–5 2377 *M<sup>A</sup>* (the sequence varies for ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος)  
| 6–10 1–5 2030  
| 2 3 5–10 A  
| 2 3 5 7 8 10 2053. 2062

**14**  
\* ποιουντες τας εντολας αυτου 046. 1611s. 1854. 2030. 2329. 2344. 2377 *M* gig sy sy; (Tert) (πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν is replaced)  
| txt & A 1006. 1841. 2050. 2053. 2062 vg<sup>st</sup> sa; Fulg Apr

**15**  
\* ποιων και φιλων & 046 gig sa (φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν is replaced)  
| ο φιλων και ποιων 051s. 2030. 2050 *M<sup>A</sup>*

**16**  
\* εν A 1006. 1841. 2329 (ἐπι is either replaced or omitted)  
| – 051s *M<sup>A</sup>*; Prim  
\* και 051<sup>s</sup>. 2030. 2050 *M<sup>A</sup>* ar sy<sup>ph</sup> (before ὁ ἄσπῆρ is καὶ inserted)

**17**  
◦ & (τὸ before πνεῦμα is omitted)  
◦<sup>1</sup> & (ἡ before νύμφη is omitted)

**18**  
◦ 051s. 2377 *M<sup>A</sup>* (τῶ before ἀκούοντι is omitted)  
\* επ αυτον (αυτω 2050) ο θεος & 051s. 2030. 2050. 2377 *M<sup>A</sup>*; Ambr Apr (ὁ θεὸς ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὰς is replaced)  
| ο θεος A\*  
| ο θεος επ αυτω Ac  
\* επτα 046. 051<sup>s</sup>. 2377 *M<sup>A</sup>* (before πληγὰς is inserted ἐπτά)

**19**  
\* τουτων & (ar) (after τῶν λόγων is inserted τούτων)  
◦ A bo (ἐκ is omitted)

**20**  
◦ & 2030. 2050. 2329 gig syph co; Prim Bea (Ἀμὴν is omitted)  
\* ναι 046. 051s. 1854. 2030. 2050. 2377 *M<sup>K</sup>*; Prim (before ἔρχου is ναὶ added)  
\* Χριστε &<sup>2</sup> 1611s. 2030. 2050 *M<sup>A</sup>* sy; Prim Bea (after κύριε Ἰησοῦ is Χριστέ added)  
| Χριστε μετα των αγιων σου 2329 (cf vs 21 *M*)

analysis of these reveal that they are mostly efforts at stylistic updating or careless copying in a few instances. Thus the adopted reading can be treated with confidence that it represents the most likely original wording of the text.

**Internal History.** The miscellaneous collection of genre forms used by John in vv. 8-21 flow out of his being on Patmos and finishing up both the writing and the editing of this document. His sliding in and out of the vision mode in this passage presents one of the fascinating aspects of the passage. The voices of John, an angel, the Spirit, and Christ speaking randomly adds to the interest of this text. Thus John ends Revelation with something of the same kinds of miscellaneous collection of genre forms that we encountered in chapter one.

### Literary Aspects:

**Genre:** This unit of text in vv. 8-21 stands as the ending of the book of Revelation. Its literary form has defied certain analysis for centuries.<sup>9</sup> First, determination of specific boundaries has been problematic. Does it begin with v. 6, v. 8, or v. 10? The literary role of the two subunits vv. 6-7 and vv. 8-9 stand at the hear of the problem. But in my opinion this is a problem created by a modern post-enlightenment mindset wanting to see clean breaks between units of material. It ignores completely not only the Greco-Roman literary mindset of John’s world, but even more so the ancient Jewish approach to literary units of material. Shifts from one

\* 2329 (Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων is omitted)  
\* Ἰησου Χριστου 046. 051s. 1006. 1841. 1854. 2030. 2050. 2344. 2377 *M* sy<sup>h</sup> (Ἰησοῦ is replaced)  
| txt & A 1611<sup>s</sup>. 2053. 2062  
\* των αγιων & 2062. 2377 gig (πάντων is replaced)  
| παντων των αγιων (+ αυτου 2030 syph) 046. 051s. 1006. 1611s. 1841. 1854. 2030. 2053. 2344 *M* sy co  
| παντων ημων 2050  
| txt A vg; Bea  
\* αμην & 046. 051s. 1611s. 1854. 2030. 2050. 2053. 2062. 2344. 2377 *M* vgcl sy co (Ἀμὴν is added)  
| txt A 1006. 1841 ar gig vg<sup>st</sup>

[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 788–789.]

<sup>9</sup>Conventional analyses of the structure of the last part of Revelation frequently regard 22:6–21 as a distinct textual unit (Prigent, 276; Kraft, 276; T. Collins, *Apocalypse*, 10–12), which is frequently called an ‘epilogue’ (Swete, 302; Beckwith, 290–91; 771; Caird, 281–82; Prigent, 348–49; Hellholm, “Genre,” 52), while others use the rhetorically neutral term ‘conclusion’ (Bousset [1906] 455; Kraft, 276; Roloff [ET] 248–49). Vanni earlier referred to 22:6–21 as an ‘epilogue’ but later dropped the term in preference for ‘concluding liturgical dialogue’ (La struttura letteraria, 298–302).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1201.]

topic to the next in John's world were signaled by what can be labeled 'transitional units' of thought expression. Outside of pure paraenetic expression, the Jewish writers especially saw such units as means to connectivity between larger topics rather than as distinguishing marks separating topics as is the dominate case in modern literary strategies.

The rather mixed nature of the subunits in vv. 8-21 defies clear classification as a whole.<sup>10</sup> Probably the

<sup>10</sup>“In classical rhetoric, the conclusion of a speech was called the ‘epilogue’ (ἐπίλογος) or ‘peroration’ (*peroratio* or *conclusio*) and formed the final part of the four-part, five-part, or six-part classical oration (Ps.-Cicero Ad Herennium 1.3.4). This concluding section was used to review previous arguments, often in an impassioned way (Aristotle Rhet. 1414b; Ps.-Cicero Ad Herennium 2.30.47). Therefore, the conclusion of Revelation is an ‘epilogue’ only in the sense that it exhibits a striking thematic correspondence to the prologue in 1:1–8 (Giblin, 214), though the peroration of classical speeches normally had a particularly close connection with the *exordium* or *prooimion*, which functioned to catch the attention of the audience while introducing the subject of the speech.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1201.]

639 <sup>22.8</sup> **And I John**

who hears and sees these things.

And  
when I heard and saw,

640 **I fell down**

to worship  
before the feet of the angel

who showed me these things.

<sup>22.9</sup> And

641 **he says to me:**

**A** *See to it;*

**B** *your fellow servant I am*

both of your brothers the prophets

and of those obeying the words of this book;

**C** *worship God.*

<sup>22.10</sup> And

642 **he says to me:**

**D** *Don't seal up the words of this prophecy*  
of this book,

for

**E** *the time is near.*

**F** <sup>22.11</sup> *Let the evil doer do his evil still,*

and

**G** *Let the defiled defile himself still,*

and

**H** *Let the righteous do righteousness still*

and

**I** *Let the holy be holy still.*

<sup>22.12</sup> Behold

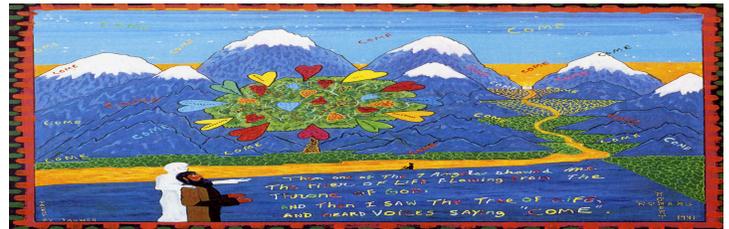
643 **I am coming quickly,**

best literary approach is simply to acknowledge that John 'does his own thing' in pulling the various subunits together in order to bring the document to completion.

The noting of the literary genre of the various subunits will be given in the Exegesis of the Text section as they impact the understanding of the content of each unit.

**Literary Setting:** Here the obvious is clear. Vv. 8-21 form the ending of the book of Revelation. A variety of emphases, largely from previous pericopes scattered across the content of Revelation, resurface in order to generate lasting mental images of important issues in the book.

**Literary Structure:** The block diagram below highlights the internal structure of each of the subunits.





655 God will take away his share  
 from the tree |of life  
 and |  
 out of the holly city  
 of the things written  
 in this book.

656 <sup>22.20</sup> The one testifying says these things:  
 L Yes, I am coming quickly.

Amen,  
 657 Come Lord Jesus!

658 <sup>22.21</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus (be) <sup>`</sup>  
 with all.

### Summary of Rhetorical Structure

The mixture of various sub-genre units are arranged basically around the voices of the angel (#s 639-642), Christ (#s 643-649), and John (#s 650-658).

The first unit (#s 639-642) begin with John's move to worship the angel (#s 639-640) followed by the angel's response (#s 641-642).

The second unit (#s 643-649) contains a collection of sayings by Jesus. The third unit (#s 650-658) contains also a collection of declarations from the third person perspective of John speaking with the exception of #656.

### Exegesis of the Text:

The above three fold arrangement of ideas will serve as the outline structure for the exegeting of the meaning of the text.

#### A. Words from the angel, vv. 8-11

8 Κάγω Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀκούων καὶ βλέπων ταῦτα. καὶ ὅτε ἤκουσα καὶ ἔβλεψα, ἔπεσα προσκυνῆσαι ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν τοῦ ἀγγέλου τοῦ δεικνύοντός μοι ταῦτα. 9 καὶ λέγει μοι· ὄρα μή· σύνδουλός σου εἰμι καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῶν τηρούντων τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· τῷ θεῷ προσκύνησον.

10 Καὶ λέγει μοι· μὴ σφραγίσῃς τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου, ὁ καιρὸς γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐστιν. 11 ὁ ἀδικῶν ἀδικησάτω ἔτι καὶ ὁ ῥυπαρὸς ῥυπανθήτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω ἔτι καὶ ὁ ἅγιος ἁγιασθήτω ἔτι.

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 comrades the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"

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."

The introductory statement is without a verb and stands as a formula expression: Κάγω Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀκούων καὶ βλέπων ταῦτα. And I John hearing and seeing these things. It becomes something of an identification signature by the apostle in his closing statements. It is somewhat like the Superscriptio expression, also without a verb, in 1:4a: Ἰωάννης, John. Additionally it comes close to the vision introduction in 1:9, Ἐγὼ Ἰωάννης, ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὑμῶν καὶ συγκοινωνὸς ἐν τῇ θλίψει καὶ βασιλείᾳ καὶ ὑπομονῇ ἐν Ἰησοῦ, ἐγενόμην ἐν τῇ νήσῳ τῇ καλουμένῃ Πάτμῳ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ. I John, your brother and partner in the affliction and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the Word of God and the witness to Jesus.

The beginning sentence of 8b links up conceptually to 1:1, καὶ ἐσήμανεν ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ, and He made it known through His angel to His servant John. John's vision centered around seeing and hearing: καὶ ὅτε ἤκουσα καὶ ἔβλεψα, and when I heard and saw (22:8b).<sup>11</sup> Thus, throughout the

<sup>11</sup>"The conjunction of terms for hearing and seeing in this guarantee of the veracity of the visions contained in Revelation reflects the widespread ancient view that the only reliable access to knowledge of past and present events is through the two senses of hearing and sight (cf. 1 John 1:1–3; Aune, *New Testament*, 81–82). Terms for 'seeing' and 'hearing' are frequently joined together in the OT and early Judaism as a way of summarizing sense perception (Prov 20:12; Cant 2:14; 2 Kgs 7:18; Isa 18:3; 21:3; 32:3; Jer 4:21; Jos. J.W. 6.213), and in prayer contexts God is often asked to 'see' and 'hear' the plight and request of the petitioner (2 Kgs 19:16; Isa 37:17; Neh 9:9; Dan 9:18; Job 35:13). This conjunction of terms for seeing and hearing is not common in Greek and Latin literature. Based on this usage, verbs for seeing and hearing are juxtaposed in contexts of prophetic or revelatory experiences as in Jer 23:18 (to which Rev 22:8 might be alluding), 'Who has stood in the council of the Lord that he should see [אָרָא] *wəyēre*; εἶδεν] and hear [ἄκουσεν] *wəyis̄ma*; ἤκουσεν] his word?' (cf. Num 24:15–16; Deut 18:16; Acts 22:14; Jos. Ant. 4.43). The senses of sight and hearing also figure prominently in the introduction to Gk. 1 Enoch 1:2 (tr. Knibb, Enoch)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1185.]

vision from chapter four especially to the end, the combination of εἶδον, I saw (37x), and ἤκουσα, I heard (24x), serve as primary signifiers of apocalyptic visionary experience. Thus in closing John reminds his readers of what they are reading: apocalyptic vision.<sup>12</sup>

The main clause in v. 8b, ἔπεσα προσκυνῆσαι ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν τοῦ ἀγγέλου τοῦ δεικνύοντός μοι ταῦτα.<sup>13</sup> I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things, repeats the same mistake John made as recorded in 19:10a, καὶ ἔπεσα ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ. and I fell down at his feet to worship him. Whether this depicts a second time that John made this mistake, or, more likely, that it gives a second depiction of the one time mistake first described in 19:10, is not entirely clear. Probably the latter understanding is the correct one. The circumstances surrounding the depiction are virtually identical in both texts.

Rev. 19:10	Rev. 22:8b-9
καὶ ἔπεσα ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ. καὶ λέγει μοι· ὄρα μὴ· σύνδουλός σου εἶμι καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν ἐχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ· τῷ θεῷ προσκύνησον. ἢ γὰρ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ ἐστὶν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας. Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”	καὶ ὅτε ἤκουσα καὶ ἔβλεψα, ἔπεσα προσκυνῆσαι ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν τοῦ ἀγγέλου τοῦ δεικνύοντός μοι ταῦτα. καὶ λέγει μοι· ὄρα μὴ· σύνδουλός σου εἶμι καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῶν τηρούντων τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· τῷ θεῷ προσκύνησον. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me; but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!”

The response of the angel to John’s move to worship him in 22:9 is almost identical to that described in 19:10b. Note the three segments of it:

<sup>12</sup>Thus Revelation is not comparable to the so-called predictions of [Nostradamus](#) (1503-1566) in his *Les Propheties*. To attempt such a comparison is to signal abysmal ignorance of the biblical prophetic nature of Revelation. Biblical prophecy centers on God and His posture and actions especially toward His people, and also toward evil in this world. The full sweep of time from creation to eternity is in view, rather than merely the future from inside history.

<sup>13</sup>“The verb δεικνύειν, ‘to show, reveal’ with ὁ ἄγγελος, ‘the angel,’ as subject is also used to introduce this concluding section in v 6. Elsewhere in Revelation it is used to describe the revelatory task of the *angelus interpretes* in 1:1, 4:1, 21:9, 10, 22:1 (see Comment on 21:9). The plural pronoun ταῦτα, ‘them,’ undoubtedly refers to the entire visionary portion of Revelation (1:9–22:9).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1186.]

**a) The basic thrust of both is identical:** ὄρα μὴ in both texts.<sup>14</sup> This highly idiomatic Greek expression has no literal equivalent in English.<sup>15</sup> The etymological translation is ‘stop looking!’ But this has nothing to do with the meaning of the Greek idiom. The NRSV rendering is as close as any to the sense of the idiom: “You must not do that!”

What both text strictly prohibit is the worshiping of angels and any other representations of deity.<sup>16</sup> Idolatry stands as a repeated theme in Revelation: 2:14-15, 20-21; 9:20. The setting up of an image to the first beast posed one of the great evils that brought down the wrath of God (cf. 14:9-11). God and God alone is to be the object of worship.

**b) Reason not to worship angels:** σύνδουλός σου εἶμι καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῶν τηρούντων τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου, I am your fellow servant and of your brothers the prophets and those obeying the words of this book. Note the closeness of this to the angel’s response in 19:10b, σύνδουλός σου εἶμι

<sup>14</sup>“The phrase ὄρα μὴ, ‘Watch what you’re doing!’ is an ellipsis that involves one of two different grammatical constructions, though the missing verb makes it impossible to decide which construction is involved. The same idiom occurs in 19:10. ὄρα is a second-person singular present imperative from ὁρᾶν, ‘to see,’ while the verb with μὴ, ‘not,’ is not expressed. If the elided verb is understood as an aorist subjunctive, i.e., a subjunctive of prohibition (e.g., μὴ ποιήσης, ‘do not do’), then μὴ introduces an object clause, i.e., ‘Watch, lest you do [such-and-such].’ If the elided verb is understood as an imperative (e.g., μὴ ποιήσον, ‘do not do’), this might be an example of asyndeton, i.e., the juxtaposition of two imperatives without a connective particle (A. T. Robertson, *Grammar*, 949; BDR § 461; Burton, *Syntax*, § 209), i.e., ‘Watch! Don’t do it!’ (cf. Matt 24:6, ὁρᾶτε μὴ θροεῖσθε, ‘Watch! Don’t be disturbed!’).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1186.]

<sup>15</sup>“ποιησις (‘you do’) has been added after ὄρα μὴ (‘see not’) in some textual witnesses to clarify the shorter, awkward expression, as also in 19:10 (so 1006 1841 pc latt; for the idiomatic rendering of the shorter phrase as ‘Don’t!’ see on 19:10).” [G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 1129.]

<sup>16</sup>“Whatever the motive, the angel’s prohibition is intended as a warning to Christians, not merely against worship of angels in particular, but against any form of idolatry, which was a problem in the churches of Asia Minor (e.g., see on 2:14–15, 20–21; 9:20).<sup>12</sup> Since this is the second time that John repeats the sin of substituting a false object of worship for the true, v 10 underscores the subtle problem for even faithful Christians. Perhaps we should not criticize John too much for this, since when a messenger of God powerfully preaches the word of Christ, ‘we are prone to give him reverence beyond his due’ (cf. 1 Cor. 3:5; Acts 14:7–18).<sup>13</sup>” [G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 1128.]

καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν ἐχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ, *I am your fellow servant and of your brothers who have the witness to Jesus.* The second response of the angel is virtually the same in both texts. In 22:9, τῶν προφητῶν, *prophets*, identifies τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου, *your brothers*. Thus John is closely linked to the OT prophets who received visions from God. In 19:10c an explanatory statement is made linking the Christian testimony to the prophets: ἡ γὰρ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ ἐστὶν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας, *for the testimony to Jesus is the Spirit who gives prophecy.*

Then his fellow believers is designated clearly in 22:9 by καὶ τῶν τηρούντων τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου, *and of those obeying the words of this book.*<sup>17</sup> This link is the primary emphasis in 19:10. By identifying himself as σύνδουλός σου, *your fellow servant*, in both texts, the angel thus identifies himself with all those seeking only to serve God. This disqualifies him from being worshiped. His task is to do God's bidding and he possesses no independent authority to take actions on his own.

**c) The positive command:** τῷ θεῷ προσκύνησον, *worship God!* Repeatedly this command is exemplified by various heavenly beings who fall to their knees in worship of God: 4:10; 7:11-12; 11:16-17; 14:7; 19:4, 10; 22:9. This positive command is the other side of the one command stated in the negative at the beginning: ὄρα μή.

**Part two of this beginning unit** (vv. 10-11) comes as a second instruction from the angel.<sup>18</sup> Note the repetition of καὶ λέγει μοι in v. 9a here in v. 10a: *and he says to me*. Additionally they stand in the present tense form rather than the aorist form καὶ εἶπέν μοι, *and he said to me*, as in 22:6a. The angel is the subject of all three verbs. But the tense shift signals a wider gnomic function of λέγει in vv. 9-10 as a part of the formal conclusion of the entire document.

<sup>17</sup> "In the phrase 'of your brothers the prophets and of those keeping the words of this book' a number of later mss. (M<sup>A</sup> Prim) omit the intervening 'and' (καὶ) and read 'of your brothers the prophets who keep the words of this book.' The variant is secondary, since all other mss., including earlier and better witnesses (e.g., Ⲙ A C 2053 2062 2344), preserve the 'and.' Could the altered reading possibly indicate an interpretation that the prophets are not necessarily a special class but all Christians, especially since 22:7 addresses all Christians with similar words, 'blessed is the one keeping the words of the prophecy of this book' (see further on 11:3, 6-7, 10; 19:10)?" [G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 1129.]

<sup>18</sup>"While the speaker is not explicitly identified, it is likely that the speaker is the *angelus interpretis*, 'the interpreting angel,' whom John attempted to worship (vv 8-9). Some interpreters, however, attribute this statement to the exalted Christ (Bousset [1906] 457; Allo, 328; Lohmeyer, 178-79)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1216.]

His command to John (v. 10a) is μὴ σφραγίσῃς τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου, *Don't seal up the words of this prophecy that are in this book.* The instruction here is the opposite to that given to Daniel in 8:26; 12:4, 9.<sup>19</sup> The action of sealing up a scroll helped guarantee the integrity of the contents until the scroll was delivered to the designated recipients. In the Jewish apocalyptic tradition generally the sealing of the scroll containing visions was keep its contents secret until the end of time.<sup>20</sup> But in 4 Ezra 12:37 (note also 14:5-6, 45-46), Ezra is told to seal up his scroll with visions and then to reveal them only to the wise.

John's command to not seal up the scroll points toward the contents of Revelation being sent out to the seven churches as soon as the final draft of the document was completed. This command also reflects the seven fold unsealing of the scroll in chapters five and six.

The basis (γὰρ) of the command to not seal up the scroll is given in v. 10c as ὁ καιρὸς γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐστιν, *for the time is near.* The adjective ἐγγύς with the meaning of near here affirms the closeness of ὁ καιρὸς, *the time.* One should be extremely cautious here since John **did not say**, ὁ χρόνος ἐγγύς ἐστιν, *the time is near.* This would have clearly signaled the expectancy for the coming of Christ at the end of the first century. The use of ὁ

<sup>19</sup>**Dan. 9:26.** τὸ ὄραμα τὸ ἐσπέρας καὶ πρωὶ ἠυρέθη ἐπ' ἀληθείας· καὶ νῦν πεφραγμένον τὸ ὄραμα, ἐτι γὰρ εἰς ἡμέρας πολλάς.† *The vision of the evenings and the mornings that has been told is true. As for you, seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now."*

**Dan. 12:4.** 4 καὶ σύ, Δανιηλ, κάλυπον τὰ προστάγματα καὶ σφράγισαι τὸ βιβλίον ἕως καιροῦ συντελείας, ἕως ἂν ἀπομανῶσιν οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ πλησθῆ ἡ γῆ ἀδικίας.† 4 *But you, Daniel, keep the words secret and the book sealed until the time of the end. Many shall be running back and forth, and evil shall increase."*

**Dan. 12:9.** καὶ εἶπέν μοι Ἀπότρεχε, Δανιηλ, ὅτι κατακεκαλυμμένα καὶ ἐσφραγισμένα τὰ προστάγματα, ἕως ἂν† *He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are to remain secret and sealed until the time of the end.*

<sup>20</sup>"While the notion of 'sealing' an apocalyptic revelation is found only in Dan 8:26; 12:4, 9, the idea of hiding a revelatory book until the end of days is found in other apocalypses. In Gos. Eg. 68.1-9, it is claimed that the *GospThen I washed my garments [el of the Egyptians]* was written by Seth and placed in an inaccessible high mountain called Charaxio that the truth might be revealed at the end of time. The motif of concealed revelation also occurs in T. Mos. 1:17-18, where Moses commands Joshua to 'embalm' his revelation and place it in clay jars and put the jars in a place prepared by God where they will remain concealed until the day of repentance, i.e., the eschatological Day of the Lord (Tromp, Assumption, 147-48). At the conclusion of the Coptic-Gnostic treatise Disc. 8-9 (60.10-63.32), the mystagogue instructs the initiate to write the revelation down on turquoise steles to be deposited in the temple at Diospolis and to include an oath warning readers not to misuse the book." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1216-1217.]

καιρὸς without chronological implications has the richer sense of ‘the opportune moment’ for God to take action. Thus John’s point is that God plans to take action and will take it regarding the evil and the persecution of His people. The precise moment when that takes place cannot be projected on a calendar but instead will happen when God decides that the moment is ripe for His action. It is closely connected to the temporal adverb ταχύ, *quickly*, in vv. 12, 20. Also related is the plea ἔρχου, *come!*, directed to Christ in vv. 17, 20. Christ’s promise is to definitively take action in making His presence known and felt. The believers’ pleas are to do so quickly.

The second half of this part two comes in v. 11:<sup>21</sup>

ὁ ἀδικῶν ἀδικησάτω ἔτι	a -
καὶ ὁ ῥυπαρὸς ῥυπανθήτω ἔτι,	b -
καὶ ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω ἔτι	a’ +
καὶ ὁ ἅγιος ἁγιασθήτω ἔτι.	b’ +

Let the evildoer do evil still,  
and let the filthy be filthy still,  
and let the righteous do righteousness still,  
and let the holy be holy still.

Probably Dan. 12:10b in the LXX stands behind this pair of couplets here.<sup>22</sup> This poetic declaration reflects a relatively common Jewish stance of humanity continuing to ‘do its thing’ either bad or good without much awareness to the larger dynamic of God’s plan and projection for action toward both evil and good. Nothing that any person can do will alter or change the divine plan.

## B. Words from Jesus, vv. 12-16.

12 Ἴδου ἔρχομαι ταχύ, καὶ ὁ μισθός μου μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἀποδοῦναι ἐκάστω ὡς τὸ ἔργον ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ. 13 ἐγὼ τὸ

<sup>21</sup>The literary sequence in this antithetical parallelism is *action / condition* in both pairs, first of evil (a/b) and then of goodness (a’/b’).

<sup>22</sup>“These lines may constitute an allusion to LXX Dan 12:10b, καὶ ἀμαρτωσιν οἱ ἀμαρτωλοί· καὶ οὐ μὴ διανοηθῶσι πάντες οἱ ἀμαρτωλοί, ‘and the sinners will sin, and all the sinners will be devoid of understanding,’ while Theod Dan 12:10 reads καὶ ἀνομήσωσιν ἄνομοι· καὶ οὐ συνήσουσιν πάντες ἄνομοι, ‘and the lawless will act lawlessly, and all the lawless will lack understanding’; this passage in Daniel is also alluded to in 4Q174 = 4QFlor 1–3 ii 3–4. The allusion to Dan 12:10 is likely because the continuation of past behaviors for both the righteous and the wicked is in view in both passages. The conclusion of Daniel is important for our author since he also alludes in v 10 to the angelic command to Daniel to seal the book he has written (Dan 12:4, 9). An analogous antithetical exhortation is found in Ezek 2:2–7, ‘He that will hear, let him hear; and he that will refuse to hear, let him refuse.’ Rev 22:11 is cited in a rather free form in Ep. Lugd. 58 (Eusebius Eccl. hist. 5.1.58), ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῇ ὁ ἄνομος ἀνομησάτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω ἔτι, ‘that the Scripture be fulfilled, ‘Let the lawless one continue to be lawless, and let the one who is righteous continue to act righteously.’” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1217.]

ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος.

14 Μακάριοι οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τοῖς πυλῶσιν εἰσέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν. 15 ἔξω οἱ κύνες καὶ οἱ φάρμακοι καὶ οἱ πόρνοι καὶ οἱ φονεῖς καὶ οἱ εἰδωλολάτραι καὶ πᾶς φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν ψεῦδος.

16 Ἐγὼ Ἰησοῦς ἔπεμψα τὸν ἄγγελόν μου μαρτυρῆσαι ὑμῖν ταῦτα ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ῥίζα καὶ τὸ γένος Δαυίδ, ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός.

12 “See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone’s work. 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 will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. 15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

16 “It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

With v. 12 John turns to a series of five declarations coming from Jesus rather than the angel. No introductory signal is given that this shift is happening just as none was given in 16:15 in the context of τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς μεγάλης τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτορος, *of the great day of God Almighty* (v. 14b):

Ἴδου ἔρχομαι ὡς κλέπτης. μακάριος ὁ γρηγορῶν καὶ τηρῶν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μὴ γυμνὸς περιπατῇ καὶ βλέπωσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην αὐτοῦ.

“See, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and is clothed, not going about naked and exposed to shame.”

**First word, v. 12.** The promise is to come quickly and also to bring ὁ μισθός μου μετ’ ἐμοῦ, *My reward with Me*. What that μισθός will be -- either good or bad -- will be determined ὡς τὸ ἔργον ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ, *as his work is*.

Clearly in the background here, with the verbal ἀποδοῦναι, *to pay back*, is the earlier image of the day of judgment in 20:11-15, esp. v. 12b (also v. 13),<sup>23</sup> καὶ ἐκρίθησαν οἱ νεκροὶ ἐκ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν, *and the dead were judged out of what was written in the books according to their works*.<sup>24</sup> Divine

<sup>23</sup>See also 2:23, 26; 14:13; 18:6

<sup>24</sup>“The second phrase (‘to repay to each in proportion to his or her behavior’) is an allusion to a widespread proverbial expression found in Prov 24:12 (ὃς ἀποδίδωσιν ἐκάστω κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ, ‘who will repay to each according to his or her behavior’), as well as in numerous other places in OT and early Jewish literature (Pss 27:4 [MT 28:4]; 62:12 [LXX 61:13]; Prov 24:12; Jer 17:10; Jos. As. 28:3; Pss. Sol. 2:16, 34; 17:8). The same saying is cited in Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6 (quoting Prov 24:12); 2 Cor 11:15; 2 Tim 4:14; Rev 2:23; 18:6; 20:12, 13. In all these passages, however, the plural form τὰ ἔργα, ‘the works (i.e., ‘behavior’),’ is used. Both phras-

judgment of our life is κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν, according to their works, simply because our obedience or disobedience signals whether or not we are committed to God through Christ, just as Jesus declared while on earth (Mt. 7:21):

Οὐ πᾶς ὁ λέγων μοι, Κύριε κύριε, εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἀλλ' ὁ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

Not everyone saying to me, "Lord Lord," will enter into the kingdom of Heaven; instead, the one doing the will of my Father who is in Heaven"

**Second word, v. 13.** The second saying of Jesus is a repeat of several earlier declarations of parts of it:

ἐγὼ τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ, cf. 1:8; 21:6

ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, cf. 1:17; 2:8

ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος, cf. 21:6

I the Alpha and the Omega,

the First and the Last,

the Beginning and the End.

The composite expression here picking up the earlier references underscores the all encompassing power and authority of Christ. Note that 1:8 and 21:6 attribute these labels to God, but here they are applied to Christ. Only the middle label was earlier attributed to Christ in 1:17 and 2:8.

**Third word, v. 14.** Μακάριοι οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τοῖς πυλῶσιν εἰσεέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν. Blessed are those washing their robes so that their authorization will be for the tree of life and that they by the gates may enter into the city. This is the last of the seven [beatitudes](#) in Revelation: 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14.

A formal blessing of God is invoked upon οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν, those washing their robes.<sup>25</sup>

es are combined only here in Rev 22:12 and in 1 Clem 34:3: Ἰδοὺ ὁ κύριος, καὶ ὁ μισθὸς αὐτοῦ πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ, ἀποδοῦναι ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ, 'Behold, the Lord, and his reward is before him to repay to each according to his or her work' (also quoted in Clement Alex. Strom. 4.22)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1218.]

<sup>25</sup>"The phrase οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς, 'those who wash their robes,' is functionally equivalent to ὁ νικῶν, 'the one who conquers,' in 2:7, for in both passages the reward is access to the tree of life (Charles, 2:177). For Lohmeyer (180) this meant that the beatitude was restricted to martyrs, while Charles (1:187–88) wants to level all references to garments, eschatological or otherwise, into metaphors for the spiritual body. Here the action of washing one's robes is clearly a metaphor for moral and spiritual cleansing or reformation. It is closely parallel to the phrase καὶ ἔπλυναν τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν, 'and they washed their robes,' used of the heavenly martyrs in 7:14, though there it is paradoxically stated that they made them white by (or in) the blood of the Lamb, i.e., the saving and purifying effect of the sacrificial death of Christ, appropriated through martyrdom (see Comment on 7:14). Another parallel is found in 3:4, where some Christians in Sardis are referred to as οἱ οὐκ ἐμόλυναν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν, 'who have not soiled their clothes,' i.e., a metaphor for continuing faithfulness to their original Chris-

The common objective here and in 2:7 of access to the tree of life links up washing one's robe to ὁ νικῶν, the overcoming one. The idea here is closely related to ὡς τὸ ἔργον ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ, as his work is, in v. 12b. The 'overcomer' is the one who validates his/her faith commitment through obeying Christ. The cleansing of the blood of Christ 'washes' our robes and this is validated by Christian obedience.

The twofold objective that defines the content of the blessing is ἵνα ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τοῖς πυλῶσιν εἰσεέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν, so that their authorization will be for the tree of life and by the gates they may enter into the city. The authentically lived Christian life brings divine authorization to eat the eternally nourishing food provided by God in Heaven (cf. 22:2). Also permission to enter the heavenly city of eternity comes

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tian commitment.

"The metaphor of washing one's garments has several possible meanings: (1) Christian baptism, (2) the decision to lead a morally upright life, or (3) martyrdom. Both Rev 7:13 and 22:14 are assumed by a number of scholars to refer to baptism, usually without supportive arguments (Kamlah, Paränese, 23; Prigent, 355; id., "Liturgie," 169). There are several difficulties with this view: (1) While baptism is certainly associated with the language of purification and cleansing in early Christianity (Titus 3:5; Heb 10:22; 1 Pet 3:21), such language is not exclusively restricted to baptismal contexts and baptismal imagery (e.g., Eph 5:26). In early Christianity the washing of the (naked) body was associated with baptism, while the washing of garments was not. (2) The substantival participle οἱ πλύνοντες, 'those who wash,' is in the present tense, indicating continuous activity rather than a once-for-all event such as baptism. (3) It is the person owning the garments who washes them, whereas people are baptized by others, i.e., the active versus the passive sense. Wilckens (TDNT, 691) tries to explain away the active sense of 7:13–14, 22:14, and 3:4 by collapsing them all into the passive sense of 3:5, where the victor is promised that he will be clothed with white robes. These factors suggest that the origin of the metaphor of washing one's garments is rooted in the practice frequently attested in the OT and early Jewish literature of the washing of garments (and sometimes the body as well) as a purification ritual (πλύνειν is used of washing things that are not the body or a part of the body; e.g., LXX Lev 14:9, καὶ πλυνεῖ τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ λούσεται τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ὕδατι, 'and he will wash his garments and bathe his body in water'; cf. Louw-Nida, § 47.8). It must therefore be understood in the active sense of what a person must do, i.e., either reform his or her way of living or (less likely) die as a witness for Christ.

"The metaphor of washing one's garments is appropriate in the context of the larger metaphor of entering into the holy city, as some of the following texts suggest. The people of Israel were required to wash their clothes in preparation for their appearance before God (Exod 19:10, 14), and Levites were required to wash their clothes as a ritual of consecration (Num 8:7, 21; priests, on the other hand were given entirely new garments, Lev 8:13). This tradition, with an ethical interpretation, is found in one MS of T. Levi in a long interpolation following 2:3 (text in de Jonge, Testaments, 25)."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1219–1220.

as well (cf. 21:9-22:5).

**Fourth word, v. 15,** ἔξω οἱ κύνες καὶ οἱ φάρμακοι καὶ οἱ πόρνοι καὶ οἱ φονεῖς καὶ οἱ εἰδωλολάτραι καὶ πᾶς φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν ψεῦδος. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

In a summarizing manner, Jesus affirms those excluded from the city, and thus banished to Hell.

**Note 22:3a,** καὶ πᾶν κατάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι. And everything accursed will not be there still.

**Also 21:8,** τοῖς δὲ δειλοῖς καὶ ἀπίστοις καὶ ἐβδελυγμένοις καὶ φονεῦσιν καὶ πόρνοις καὶ φαρμάκοις καὶ εἰδωλολάτραις καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ψευδέσιν τὸ μέρος αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ καιομένη πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ, ὃ ἔστιν ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερος. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

**And 20:14b-15,** οὗτος ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερός ἐστιν, ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρός. 15 καὶ εἴ τις οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός. This is the second death, the lake of fire; 15 and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

**And 20:10,** καὶ ὁ διάβολος ὁ πλανῶν αὐτοὺς ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός καὶ θείου ὄπου καὶ τὸ θηρίον καὶ ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης, καὶ βασανισθήσονται ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

**And 19:20b-21.** ζῶντες ἐβλήθησαν οἱ δύο εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός τῆς καιομένης ἐν θείῳ. 21 καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ ἵππου τῇ ἐξελθούσῃ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ, καὶ πάντα τὰ ὄρνεα ἐχορτάσθησαν ἐκ τῶν σαρκῶν αὐτῶν. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 And the rest were killed by the sword of the rider on the horse, the sword that came from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

**And 18:21-24.** 21 Καὶ ἦρεν εἷς ἄγγελος ἰσχυρὸς λίθον ὡς μύλινον μέγαν καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν λέγων· οὕτως ὀρήματι βληθήσεται Βαβυλῶν ἡ μεγάλη πόλις καὶ οὐ μὴ εὐρεθῆ ἔτι. 22 καὶ φωνὴ κιθαρῳδῶν καὶ μουσικῶν καὶ αὐλητῶν καὶ σαλπιστῶν οὐ μὴ ἀκουσθῆ ἐν σοὶ ἔτι, καὶ πᾶς τεχνίτης πάσης τέχνης οὐ μὴ εὐρεθῆ ἐν σοὶ ἔτι, καὶ φωνὴ μύλου οὐ μὴ ἀκουσθῆ ἐν σοὶ ἔτι, 23 καὶ φῶς λύχνου οὐ μὴ φάνη ἐν σοὶ ἔτι, καὶ φωνὴ νυμφίου καὶ νύμφης οὐ μὴ ἀκουσθῆ ἐν σοὶ ἔτι· ὅτι οἱ ἔμποροί σου ἦσαν οἱ μεγιστᾶνες τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἐν τῇ φαρμακείᾳ σου ἐπλανήθησαν πάντα τὰ

ἔθνη, 24 καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ αἷμα προφητῶν καὶ ἁγίων εὐρέθη καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐσφαγμένων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. 21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “With such violence Babylon the great city will be thrown down, and will be found no more; 22 and the sound of harpists and minstrels and of flutists and trumpeters will be heard in you no more; and an artisan of any trade will be found in you no more; and the sound of the millstone will be heard in you no more; 23 and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more; and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more; for your merchants were the magnates of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. 24 And in you was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slaughtered on earth.”

His distinctive way of describing those excluded from the city here in v. 15 grows out of an ancient Jewish way of depicting the exclusion of all non-Jews from Jerusalem.<sup>26</sup> Note the listing of evil people under various labels: οἱ κύνες καὶ οἱ φάρμακοι καὶ οἱ πόρνοι καὶ οἱ φονεῖς καὶ οἱ εἰδωλολάτραι καὶ πᾶς φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν ψεῦδος. the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. The image of κύνες, dogs, for evil people is common and usually targets certain kinds of evil.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup>“This polysyndetic list of various types of sinners who are excluded from the holy city is based in part on the Jewish tradition of the necessity of eliminating all foreigners from the Land (Pss. Sol. 17:21).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1222.]

<sup>27</sup>“‘Dog’ is used here as metaphor for the wicked (if understood literally, it would be the only reference in this vice list to nonhumans) and is the only instance in which this term occurs on an early Christian vice list. It may be that κύων, ‘dog’ (and perhaps οἱ πόρνοι, ‘the fornicators,’ as well; see below), is used more specifically here for male homosexuals, pederasts, or sodomites since the term on the parallel vice list in 21:8 (see Comment there) is ἐβδελυγμένοι, ‘those who are polluted.’ Female and male cult prostitution is forbidden in Deut 23:17–18:

There shall be no cult prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a cult prostitute of the sons of Israel. You shall not bring the fee of a prostitute or the wages of a dog into the house of the Lord your God.

“Here the MT has the term כֶּלֶב *keleb*, ‘dog,’ which is used as a parallel for שִׁטְמָה *qādēš*, ‘male prostitute, sodomite’ (see K. van der Toorn, ADB 5:512; Botterweck, TWAT 4:164; Charles, 2:178; Ford, 345, 347), though this view is not without its critics (RAC 16:783–84; nb. that in m. Tem. 6:3 the ‘dog’ of Deut 23:18 is understood literally). On male prostitution, see RAC 16:324–26.

“According to 4Q394 = 4QMMTa 8 iv (Qimron-Strugnell, Qumran Cave 4, DJD 10, 52–53, lines 58–59), ‘And one must not let dogs enter the holy camp, since they may eat some of the bones of the sanctuary while the flesh is still on them’ (see also García Martínez, Dead Sea Scrolls, 78 [lines 61–62]). This ban on bringing dogs into Jerusalem is not because they are unclean animals (they are considered unclean because of their habits, but they are not eaten) but because of their tendency to dig up bones and eat the

Coming at the head of this list of vices, οἱ κύνες most likely stands as the umbrella label that covers the subsequent listing of specific evils in the rest of the list.

The term οἱ πρόβου used in the masculine gender covers male prostitutes in a variety of immoral activities including both homosexual and heterosexual actions.<sup>28</sup> remaining meat of sacrificial victims. It seems probable that the opponents of the Qumran sect who lived in Jerusalem kept dogs, a practice the sectarians regarded as a severe transgression (Qimron-Strugnell, Qumran Cave 4, 162). In the OT and early Judaism, dogs were viewed ambivalently (RAC 16:782–83). They were economically beneficial as watch dogs and herding dogs. On the other hand, they were held with contempt for having what were judged disgusting habits (Prov 26:11; Luke 16:21), but they were not technically classified in Jewish halachic traditions as unclean (see JE 4:630–32). When applied to people, the term ‘dog’ is therefore an insult (1 Sam 17:43; 24:14; 2 Kgs 8:13; Isa 56:10–11) and a term used by Jews of Gentiles (Mark 7:27–28; Matt 15:26–27; Ps.-Clement Hom. 2.19.1–3; see Str-B, 1:724–26; this equation is rejected by Tagawa, Miracles, 118–19). The proverb in Matt 7:6 and Did 9:5, ‘Do not give that which is holy to the dogs,’ is applied in the latter passage to exclude the unbaptized from the Eucharist (the same proverb is quoted in Gos. Thom. 93, the Liber Graduum 30.11, and at least two Gnostic sources in Hippolytus Ref. 5.8.33 and Epiphanius Pan. 24.5.2).

“In early Christian literature the term ‘dog’ is applied to those who are unbaptized and therefore unclean (Did 9:5), as well as to heretics (Phil 3:2; 2 Pet 2:22; Ign. Eph. 7:1). See O. Michel, “κύων,” TDNT 3:1101–4; S. Pedersen, “κύων,” EWNT 2:821–23. There is some evidence to suggest that Christians in late antiquity believed that demons could take the form of dogs (Acts of Andrew, Gregory’s Epitome, 7; ed. MacDonald, 210–11).”

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1222–1223.]

<sup>28</sup>“The term οἱ πρόβου, ‘the fornicators,’ may (in view of the masculine gender) refer more specifically to male prostitutes; on the Jewish abhorrence of τὸ παιδερασεῖν, ‘pederasty,’ see Lev 18:22; 20:13; Philo Spec. Leg. 3.37–42; Wis 14:26 (Str-B, 3:70–74). Plato, though writing in a cultural environment where homophile relationships were more routinely accepted, also regarded homosexual relationships as contrary to nature (Phaedrus 251a; Leges 1.636b–d; 8.841d–e). Some later Greek writers, and more commonly Roman writers, regarded homosexuality as similar to such sexual sins as adultery (Aeschines Timarchos 185 [F. Blass, ed., Aeschines: Orationes (Leipzig: Teubner, 1980) 92–93]; Plutarch Bruta anim. 990d–991a; Amatorius 751c–d [where Plutarch speaks of ἡ παρὰ φύσιν ὁμιλία πρὸς ἄρρενας, ‘intercourse with males which is against nature’]; Galen De prop. an. 6.9; Sextus Empiricus Pyrrh. 3.199; Juvenal Satires 2.36; Martial Epigrams 1.90; Ovid Metam. 9.715–48). The *Lex Scantinia*, a law passed in Rome in 149 B.C., legislated against *stuprum cum masculino*, i.e., pederasty (Juvenal 2.44; Ausonius Epigr. 92; Prudentius Perist. 10.204; Suetonius Dom. 8.3; Tertullian De monog. 12; see Berger, RESup 7:411; Weiss, RE 12:2413; G. Rotondi, *Leges publicae populi romani* [Hildesheim: Olms, 1966] 293; F. X. Ryan, “The Lex Scantinia and the Prosecution of Censors and Aediles,” CP 89 [1994] 159–62). In Lucian Hermetimus 22, Virtue (ἀρετή) is compared to a city from which all vices had been forcibly driven out (LCL tr.):

All those things that you find here—robbery, violence, cheating—they say you would find none of them ventured into that city; no, they live together in peace and harmony naturally enough; for

The final phrase πᾶς φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν ψεῦδος, everyone loving and practicing lies, reflects a Semitism.<sup>29</sup> At least included if not the point of this phrase is the false prophet mentioned in 16:13; 19:20; 20:10, and the false apostles (2:2).

Also one should remember that this vice list here is representative, not inclusive, of evil people. The other vice lists in Revelation follow a similar representative listing: 21:27; 21:8. Note the all inclusive reference in 22:3a, καὶ πᾶν κατάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι. *And everything accursed will not be there still.*

**Fifth word, v. 16.** 16Ἐγὼ Ἰησοῦς ἔπεμψα τὸν ἄγγελόν μου μαρτυρῆσαι ὑμῖν ταῦτα ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ῥίζα καὶ τὸ γένος Δαυὶδ, ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός. “It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

Here the focus shifts to words of affirmation to John by Jesus. They match the opening statement in 1:1, Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, καὶ ἐσημάνει ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ, *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John.*

what, I suppose, in other cities produces strife and discord, plot and counter-plot, is entirely absent. They do not any longer look on gold, pleasures, or glory as things to quarrel about—they drove them from the city long ago, thinking them unnecessary to their common life. So they live a calm and perfectly happy life with good government, equality, freedom, and the other blessings.

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1223–1224.]

<sup>29</sup>“The phrase καὶ πᾶς φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν ψεῦδος, literally ‘and everyone who loves and does falsehood,’ is a Semitism with a close parallel in Gk. 1 Enoch 99:9, τὰ ψεύδη ἃ ἐποιήσατε, ‘the lies which you did.’ The phrase is analogous to the Johannine Semitism ποιεῖν τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ‘to do the truth’ (John 3:21; 1 John 1:6; see M. Zerwick, “Veritatem facere [Joh. 3,21; 1 Joh. 1,6],” VD 18 [1938] 338–42, 373–77), an idiom based on the Hebrew phrase נמא פשע אֲשֶׁר אֱמֶת, meaning ‘to keep faith,’ which occurs twice in the OT (Neh 9:33; 2 Chr 31:20) and several additional times in more complex expressions (Gen 47:29; Josh 2:14; 2 Sam 2:6). In the Qumran Manual of Discipline, נמא פשע אֲשֶׁר אֱמֶת means ‘to act sincerely’ or ‘to practice the true law’ (1QS 1:5 [תמא תישגלר wēla ašōt emet]; 5:3; 8:2; see Leaney, Rule, 119; DCH 1:329). ποιεῖν ἀλήθειαν occurs frequently in Jewish and early Christian literature (LXX Isa 26:10; Tob 4:6; 13:6; Pss. Sol. 17:15; T. Reub. 6:9; T. Benj. 10:3; T. Iss. 7:5; 1 Clem 31:2). It has already been expressly mentioned in Revelation that the 144,000 do not lie (14:5), and ψεῦδος occurs in the brief vice list in 21:27. There is also the close parallel in the sinner list in the Two Ways source in Did 5:2 and in Barn. 20:2, where ἀγαπῶντες ψεῦδος, ‘those who love falsehood,’ are mentioned. With Revelation, however, ‘everyone who loves and does falsehood’ could refer to the false apostles (2:2) as well as the ψευδοπροφήτης, ‘false prophet’ (16:13; 19:20; 20:10).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1224.]

The follow up statements in 1:2, 4a are affirmed by ἐπι ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις, for the churches. Note ὃς ἐμαρτύρησεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅσα εἶδεν. *who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw* (1:2), and Ἰωάννης ταῖς ἐπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ. *John to the seven churches that are in Asia*: (1:4a).

The one challenge exegetically in v. 16 is the use of the plural μαρτυρῆσαι ὑμῖν ταῦτα, *to give testimony to you (pl) of these things*.<sup>30</sup> Seemingly the ὑμῖν looks be-

<sup>30</sup>“The primary exegetical problem in this passage is that of determining to whom the plural pronoun ὑμῖν, ‘you,’ and the plural noun ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις, ‘the churches,’ refer; i.e., do they refer to the same or different groups? Many commentators understand ὑμῖν (dative of indirect object) to refer to the Christian members of the seven churches addressed by John, i.e., as a direct address to the audience; cf. 1:4 (e.g., Swete, 309; Charles, 2:219; Satake, Gemeindeordnung, 25; Lohse, 113; Mounce, 394; Sweet, 315, 317; Beasley-Murray, 342; Roloff, 212; Prigent, 357; Yarbrow Collins, Crisis and Catharsis, 39). Yet the significance of the plural ὑμῖν cannot be disposed of that easily, for that would give the passage a peculiar redundancy: ‘I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you [ordinary Christians individually] for the churches [ordinary Christians collectively].’ Others (and this is the position argued here) hold that the ὑμῖν refers to a circle of Christian prophets whose task it was to transmit John’s revelatory message to the churches (Bousset [1906] 459; Beckwith, 777; Charles, 2:219 [entertained as a secondary possibility]; Kiddle-Ross, 454; Lohmeyer, 180; Schüssler Fiorenza, NTS 23 [1976–77] 425; Vanni, La struttura letteraria, 80; Aune, BR 26 [1981] 19; id., JSNT 37 [1989] 103–16; Hill, NTS 18 [1971–72] 414–15). In Greek it is only a remote linguistic possibility that ὑμῖν and ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις refer to the same entity. The presence of the preposition ἐπί, ‘for,’ before ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις indicates that ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις is more remote from the action described by the infinitive μαρτυρῆσαι, ‘to attest,’ than is the pronoun ὑμῖν. Therefore, the view that ὑμῖν and ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις both refer to Christians in general is improbable (Aune, JSNT 37 [1989] 104–5).

“Since ὑμεῖς, ‘you,’ and αἱ ἐκκλησίαι, ‘the churches,’ in Rev 22:16 refer to two different (though perhaps overlapping) groups, we must consider to whom the ὑμεῖς might refer. Swete (309) thinks that the ὑμεῖς refers to Christians in the seven churches, while αἱ ἐκκλησίαι refers to Christians everywhere, though this view founders on the fact that αἱ ἐκκλησίαι occurs thirteen times in Revelation and refers only to the seven churches of the province of Asia. The pronoun ὑμεῖς must therefore refer to a different group. There are four possibilities: (1) potential martyrs (Caird, 286), (2) lecturers whose task it was to read Revelation to the congregations (Zahn, 2:626 nn. 89, 628), (3) envoys whose task it was to transmit copies of Revelation to the seven churches (suggested as a possibility in Aune, JSNT 37 [1989] 107–8), or (4) a group of John’s prophetic colleagues (Aune, JSNT 37 [1989] 103–16). Though there is no inherent reason that possibilities (2), (3), and (4) cannot be combined in some way, there are strong arguments in favor of (4).

“In 22:9 the angelic revealer claims that ‘I am [εἰμί] a fellow servant with you and your brothers and sisters the prophets and those who obey the commands in this book.’ In writing this statement, John clearly implies that he is a prophet, a self-conception also implied in his designation of the work he is writing as a ‘prophecy’ (1:3) and a ‘prophetic book’ (22:7, 10, 18, 19). Here a plurality of prophets is in view. While the true prophets of all ages

yond just John and targets associates of his charged with the responsibilities of composing and delivering this document to its designated readers in the seven churches of Asia. As such it becomes a solemn challenge to these individuals to faithfully carry out their responsibilities connected to this important document.

The solemnity of this affirmation in v. 16a is re-enforced by the I am saying in v. 16b, ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ῥίζα καὶ τὸ γένος Δαυὶδ, ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωῖνός. *I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star*. This is the final one of the five *I am* sayings in Revelation: 1:8, 17; 2:23; 21:6; 22:16.<sup>31</sup> The morning star, from Num. 24:17, is also mentioned in 2:28.<sup>32</sup> Thus the could conceivably be referred to, the present tense of the verb εἰμί, ‘I am,’ suggests that prophets of the present are in view, as are ordinary Christians ‘who obey’ (τῶν τηρούντων, a present substantive participle). Since ‘those who obey’ are contemporaneous with John, it is also likely that ‘your brothers and sisters the prophets’ are also John’s contemporaries. Rev 22:9 has a close parallel in 19:10: ‘Then I fell down before his feet to worship him, but he said to me, ‘Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant [σύνδουλος] with you and your brothers and sisters who maintain [τῶν ἐχόντων] the testimony concerning Jesus. Worship God. For the testimony concerning Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.’ Here John’s ‘brothers and sisters who maintain the testimony of Jesus’ obviously constitute a group contemporaneous with John. Their prophetic function is indicated by the gloss with which the verse concludes, which identifies ἡ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ, “the testimony of Jesus” (a subjective genitive), with τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας, ‘the Spirit of prophecy.’ The glossator is trying to make it clear that John’s brothers and sisters who hold the testimony of Jesus are indeed Christian prophets.”

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1225–1226.

<sup>31</sup>Rev. 1:8. Ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ. *“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.*

Rev. 1:17c. ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος. *I am the first and the last.*

Rev. 2:23c. ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἐραυνῶν νεφροὺς καὶ καρδίας, *I am the one who searches minds and hearts*

Rev. 21:6. ἐγὼ [εἰμι] τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος. *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.*

Rev. 22:16b. ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ῥίζα καὶ τὸ γένος Δαυὶδ, ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωῖνός. *I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star*

<sup>32</sup>In CD 7:18–19 (cf. 4QDa 3 iv 8), alluding to Num 24:17, the star is said to be the interpreter of the Law (הוא דורש התורה *wēhakkōkāb hū’ dōrēš hattōrā*). Num 24:17 (‘a star shall come forth from Jacob’) was interpreted messianically in Judaism (Mal 4:2 [LXX: 3:20]; Zech 6:12; 1QM 11:6–7; 4QTest 9–13; CD 7:18–20; T. Levi 18:3; T. Jud 24:1; cf. y. Ta’an. 68d, where the would-be Messiah Shimon bar Kosiba’s nickname ‘Bar Kochba,’ meaning ‘son of a star,’ is also an allusion to Num 24:17; cf. Eusebius Hist. eccl. 4.6.2; see Vermes, “The Story of Balaam,” in Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies, 2nd ed. [Leiden: Brill, 1973] 165–66). Coins minted during the Bar Kochba revolt depict a star over the temple (cf. Schürer, History 1:544 n. 133). The messianic interpretation of Num 24:17 was taken over into early Christianity (Matt 2:2–20 [see Str-B, 1:76–77]; Justin 1 Apol. Page 1072

witness given to John by Christ for the churches comes from the sovereign God of the universe and must be taken seriously. The assignment of assembling and delivering this witness to the churches is the solemn duty of these whom Jesus addresses here.

### C. Words from John, vv. 17-21.

17 Καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ νύμφη λέγουσιν· ἔρχου. καὶ ὁ ἀκούων εἰπάτω· ἔρχου. καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω, ὁ θέλων λαβέτω ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν.

18 Μαρτυρῶ ἐγὼ παντὶ τῷ ἀκούοντι τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· ἐάν τις ἐπιθῆ ἔπ' αὐτά, ἐπιθήσει ὁ θεὸς ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς πληγὰς τὰς γεγραμμένας ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ, 19 καὶ ἐάν τις ἀφέλῃ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης, ἀφελεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἁγίας τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ.

20 Λέγει ὁ μαρτυρῶν ταῦτα· ναί, ἔρχομαι ταχύ. Ἀμήν, ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ.

21 Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων.

17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let everyone who hears say, "Come." And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book; 19 if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

20 The one who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

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

Here the perspective shifts a third time to John voicing declarations reflecting his and the community of believers viewpoint.

**The appeals to Christ, v. 17.** Καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ νύμφη λέγουσιν· ἔρχου. καὶ ὁ ἀκούων εἰπάτω· ἔρχου. καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω, ὁ θέλων λαβέτω ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν. The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let everyone who hears say, "Come." And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift. The emphasis shifts to an appeal to Christ to take action in addressing the issues of evil on earth, especially as they harm God's people. The present tense λέγουσιν underscores the ongoing nature of this appeal.

The twin source of the appeal is τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ νύμφη, the Spirit and the bride. The Holy Spirit appealing for action by Christ is somewhat unusual since τὸ πνεῦμα, the Spirit, is closely identified with Christ throughout Revelation: 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13; 22. But as the repeated formula in the seven messages (ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις, let the one having ears hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches) illustrates the Holy Spirit can be made distinct from either Christ or God in speaking. What this means here is an affirmation of heaven for Christ to make His move.

The image of ἡ νύμφη, the bride, already has been applied to the Christian community in 21:2, 9 as also symbolized as the new Jerusalem. Thus the people of God in heaven are anxious for Christ to take action on earth as well.

But John reaches out to those hearing this document read in the churches of Asia with καὶ ὁ ἀκούων εἰπάτω· ἔρχου. And the one hearing let him say, Come! Thus believers on earth are encouraged to make the same appeal to Christ as those in heaven. The early 'hearer' is clearly identified in 1:3 as οἱ ἀκούοντες τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα, the ones hearing the words of this prophecy and obeying the things written in it. Although in the plural in both 1:3 but in the singular in 22:17, 18, the reference is the same.

32.12; Dial. 106.4; Hippolytus Comm. in Dan. 1.9; Origen Contra Cels. 1.59–60). The term λαμπρός, 'bright,' reflects the belief that, apart from the sun and the moon, Venus/Aphrodite is the brightest of all the planets (Pliny Hist. nat. 2.37; Martianus Capella 8.883). In Greek the morning star is called φωσφόρος, and in Latin lucifer (Cicero De natura deorum 2.20.53). Only in Rev 22:16, however, is the star metaphor used directly of Christ, and it is very probably an allusion either to Num 24:17 construed in a traditionally Jewish messianic sense or to a Christian exegetical tradition originally inspired by Num 24:17. Albl argues convincingly that Gen 49:10–11, Num 24:17, and Isa 11:1, 10 form a constellation of messianic proof-texts used in strands of pre-Christian Judaism that were taken over by Christianity (Heb 7:14; Justin 1 Apol. 32; Cyprian Quir. 1.21; Eusebius Demonstratio 7.3.55) and even as early as Rev 5:5 and 22:16 could be used without discussion as titles of Jesus ("Testimonia Collections," 247–56). In the star hymn of Ignatius, Jesus is referred to under the metaphor of a star that exceeds all other stars in brightness (Eph. 19:2–3; cf. Matt 2:1–12; Prot. Jas. 21:2; Clement of Alex. Exc. ex Theod. 74; Schoedel, Ignatius, 91–93; J. B. Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers 2/2:80–81; H. F. Stander, "The Starhymn in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians [19:2–3]," VC 43 [1989] 209–14). The metaphor of the star was used in astrology with political interests for the expected ruler sent by God or the gods. In the phrase 'the lightbearer [φωσφόρος] arises in your hearts' in 2 Pet 1:19, the term φωσφόρος is an adjective meaning 'bringing morning light,' which F. J. Dölger (AC 5 [1936] 1–43) suggests refers to the dawn. However, used substantively, it usually means 'morning star,' i.e., Venus (H. Conzelmann, TDNT 9:312; Spicq, Lexicographie, 954). This is in part confirmed by the fact that this phrase probably alludes, directly or indirectly, to Num 24:17. In Tg. Esth. 10.3, Mordecai is compared with the morning star (Str-B, 3:857). Twice in the Hellenistic epic Argonautica by Apollonius, the hero Jason is compared to a star, once to Sirius, the brightest of the stars (3.956–59), and once earlier when he approached the palace of Hypsipyle (1.774–81); see G. O. Hutchinson, Hellenistic Poetry (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988) 112."

[David E. Aune, Revelation 17–22, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1226–1227.]

Very interesting is the shift in meaning for the idea of coming in the third appeal of v. 17: καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω, ὁ θέλων λαβέτω ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν, and let the one who is thirsty come; let the one desiring the water of life take of it freely.<sup>33</sup> Spiritual thirst represents a yearning for a deeply fulfilling spiritual life that only God can fulfill.<sup>34</sup> The one διψῶν, also described as θέλων, is the individual on earth yearning for God's nourishment and strength. Contextually with the image of ὕδωρ ζωῆς, life giving water, the thrust may well play off the heavenly river in 22:1 and focus on the believer's yearning to be in heaven with God.

**The warning about the book, vv. 18-19.** 18 Μαρτυρῶ

<sup>33</sup>“17c καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω, ὁ θέλων λαβέτω ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν, ‘Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires receive the gift of the water of life.’ Here it is clear that the verb ἐρχεσθαι, ‘to come,’ has a very different meaning from the two previous uses of ἐρχεσθαι in this verse where the coming of Jesus is in view. To whom is this invitation to come addressed? It is likely that the hearer mentioned in v 17b is also the one who thirsts for the spiritual fulfillment offered by God and is therefore encouraged to come. Here ‘let him come’ may also function as an invitation to participate in the Eucharist. This statement, which is closely parallel to 21:6, is a probable allusion to Isa 55:1a, ‘Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters [οἱ διψῶντες, πορεύεσθε ἐπὶ ὕδωρ]’ (combining the three motifs of an address to the thirsty, an invitation to come, and the mention of water), while Isa 55:1b offers satisfaction ‘without money and without price,’ corresponding to the term δωρεάν, ‘as a gift’ (cf. Fekkes, Isaiah, 260–61).

“The grammatical pattern of a substantival participle followed by a finite verb in the imperative or future occurs with some frequency in the Second Edition of Revelation (2:7, 17, 11, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 22:11, 17a); the only exception is 13:18, which the author may have added when the First Edition was revised. The imperative form of the verb ‘come’ (לָבוֹא *lēkū*) occurs three times in Isa 55:1 (just as ἐρχεσθαι occurs three times in Rev 22:17), though in LXX Isa 55:1 only the first לָבוֹא *lēkū* is translated, again suggesting the author's dependence on the Hebrew text.”

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1228–1229.

<sup>34</sup>“Hunger and thirst are frequent metaphors for unfulfilled moral and spiritual needs and are often used in the OT, early Judaism, and early Christianity for the need for spiritual satisfaction and fulfillment that can only be provided by God (Pss 42:2; 63:1; 143:6; Sir 24:21; Odes Sol. 30:1–2; cf. Jer 2:13), by the words of God (Amos 8:11; Philo Spec Leg. 2.63), by Christ (John 4:14–15; 7:37; 1 Cor 10:4), or by the pursuit of righteousness (Matt 5:6). In CD [text A] 6:3–4, ‘well’ is used as a metaphor for the Torah, while in CD [text B] 19:34, former members of the community are castigated for having departed from the well of living water (מֵי הַחַיִּים *wayyāsūrū mibbē’ēr mayim haḥayyim*), i.e., the Torah. In rabbinic literature water is a frequent metaphor for the Torah (b. Sukk. 52b; b. Qidd. 30b; Gen. Rab. 54.1; 66.1; 84.16; Exod. Rab. 2.5; 25.8; Num. Rab. 1.7; Cant. Rab. 1.2–3). The thirst of the people of God combined with God's provision of water is a frequent metaphor for salvation in Deutero-Isaiah, based on the story of the wilderness period experienced by Israel after the Exodus from Egypt (Isa 41:17–18; 43:19–20; 44:3–4; 48:21; 49:10; cf. 12:3).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1229.]

ἐγὼ παντὶ τῷ ἀκούοντι τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· ἐάν τις ἐπιθῆ ἐπ’ αὐτά, ἐπιθήσει ὁ θεὸς ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὰς πληγὰς τὰς γεγραμμένας ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ, 19 καὶ ἐάν τις ἀφέλῃ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης, ἀφελεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἁγίας τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ. 18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book; 19 if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Although debate over whether the speaker here is Jesus or John, the context favors the latter who gives the warning coming from Christ ultimately.<sup>35</sup>

First in this integrity formula<sup>36</sup> there comes the

<sup>35</sup>“The identification of the speaker is problematic, though the present text of Revelation suggests that ‘the one who testifies these things’ (v 20) is Jesus (see Comment on v 20). While most commentators regard the statements in vv 18–19 as those of Jesus (Swete, 311; Charles, 2:218; Mounce, 396; Allo, 333), some insist that the speaker is John (Zahn, 2:628–29; Bousset [1906] 459; Lohmeyer, 181; Caird, 287). Kraft thinks that the original subject of the verb μαρτυρῶ, ‘I testify,’ was probably John but that the final redaction of the book has attributed the interpolated curses to Jesus (Kraft, 281–82).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1229.]

<sup>36</sup>“Oath formulas that introduce apocalyptic speeches are found occasionally in Jewish apocalyptic literature (K. Berger, Amen-Worte, 20–27, has a comprehensive discussion of the oath formula in eschatological sayings in this literature; see also G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “The Apocalyptic Message of 1 Enoch 92–105,” CBQ 39 [1977] 309–28). Berger lists the following passages where the oath formula occurs: 1 Enoch 98:1, 4, 6; 99:6; 103:1; 104:1; 2 Enoch 49:1; Asc. Isa. 1:8; 3:18; Apoc. Mos. 18; 3 Apoc. Bar. 1:7; T. Sol. 1:13; Rev 10:6; 1 Clem 58:2. The function of the oath formula in apocalyptic literature is the verification of the truth of the vision report that follows. Apocalyptists, including John, conceived of their role as witnesses to divine truth, whether they wrote under pseudonyms or not. The oath formula could therefore be more appropriately designated the ‘witness formula’ in view of that function. Introductory oath formulas in prophetic speeches are found in Josephus (Ant. 18:197ff.) and in the Odyssey (17.154ff.; 19.302ff.; 20.229ff.). In the OT, the oath formula ‘Yahweh has sworn by’ functions much like the messenger formula ‘thus says the Lord’ in introducing pronouncements of judgment (see Amos 4:2; 8:7). The prophetic oath formula can be expressed in the third person (see Isa 14:24; 62:8; Jer 49:13; 51:14; Amos 6:8; Pss 110:4; 132:11) or as a first-person speech by Yahweh (Gen 22:16; Isa 45:23; 54:9; Jer 44:26). The ancient Israelite oath formula ‘as the Lord lives’ (Judg 8:19; Ruth 3:13; Amos 8:4) was also adopted for use as a prophetic oath formula: ‘as I live, says the Lord’ (Isa 49:18; Jer 22:24; 46:18; Ezek 5:11; 14:16, 18, 20; Zeph 2:9). In the OT, however, the prophetic oath is always spoken by Yahweh, never the prophet. In Jewish apocalyptic literature and in the Greco-Roman sources cited above, the oath formula is always used by the prophet or seer, never by the deity.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Page 1074

statement of warning (18a) and is followed by two third class conditional sentences where the protasis of each envisions either *ἐάν τις ἐπιθῆ ἔπ' αὐτά*, *if anyone adds to these things* (v. 18b), or *ἐάν τις ἀφέλῃ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης*, *if anyone takes away from the words of this book of prophecy* (v. 19a).<sup>37</sup> The third class conditional protasis (*ἐάν* + subjunctive mood verb) does not assume that either of this will happen but instead presents two possible scenarios which could possibly occur.

The central issue in the scenarios is either adding to or taking away from the message of Revelation. The assumption behind these is the repeated statement in 19:9; 21:5; 22:6, *οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοί*, *These words are faithful and true*. That is, what has been written down faithfully represents what John both saw and heard in his vision. The document has integrity in its coming from God ultimately, and thus should not be changed or modified in its content.

At the primary level of thrust for this integrity formula in light of the sub-genre of such formulas in his day, John warns against changing the wording of the text.<sup>38</sup> What is intended beyond this basic meaning of

Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1229–1230.]

<sup>37</sup>“The Greek verb most frequently used in the integrity formula is *προσθίεναι*, ‘to add to.’ The two conditional clauses in vv 18b–19 are parallel constructions. The protasis of both conditions consists of the conditional particle *ἐάν*, ‘if,’ with the aorist subjunctives *ἐπιθῆ*, ‘add,’ and *ἀφέλῃ*, ‘take away,’ while the apodosis has the future indicatives *ἐπιθήσει*, ‘will add,’ and *ἀφελεῖ*, ‘will take away.’ This type of conditional clause refers to a future event that is possible, ....

“The two verbs translated ‘add,’ *ἐπιθῆ* and *ἐπιθήσει* (v 18), and those translated ‘take away,’ *ἀφέλῃ* and *ἀφελεῖ* (v 19), are examples of paronomasia; the first of each pair of verbs is used literally, while the second occurrence of the same verb is used metaphorically (BDF §488.1; Turner, *Syntax*, 148); for other examples of paronomasia in Revelation, see 2:2 (2x), 22; 3:10; 11:18; 14:8; 18:6 (3x), 20, 21. The usual formulation of the integrity formula (see Form/Structure/Setting on Rev 22:10–20) favors the Greek antonyms *προσθίεναι*, ‘to add,’ and *ἀφελεῖν*, ‘to subtract, delete.’ John appears to have consciously replaced *προσθίεναι*, the verb most commonly used with the integrity formula (see above under Form/Structure/Setting) with *ἐπιθίεναι*, one of its synonyms, in order to capitalize on the fact that the latter verb can mean ‘to inflict’ (see Luke 10:30; Acts 16:23), as well as ‘to add,’ thereby enabling him to use paronomasia in both conditional clauses. This careful composition reveals a noteworthy rhetorical ability on the part of the author.”

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1230–1231.]

<sup>38</sup>“The main issue, however, is that of the function of the integrity formula. Did John really fear that someone would tamper with his book, or was he simply using this protective device to emphasize the sanctity and completeness of his revelatory book (the view of Lohmeyer, 182; L. Brun, Segen, 109). In all probability both possibilities were the concern of the author. There are several

adding and taking away becomes largely speculation. Clearly it is not intended as a claim to canonization for the document.

The severity of divine punishments in the two apodises underscores the seriousness of the integrity claim for Revelation.

For adding to, there comes the warning: *ἐπιθήσει ὁ θεὸς ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς πληγὰς τὰς γεγραμμένας ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ*, *God will add upon him the plagues written in this book*. But for taking away, there comes the warning: *ἀφελεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἁγίας τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ*. *God will take away his share from the tree of life and from the holy city of those things written in this book*. Both of these severe actions reflect that in mind here are the Jezebels etc. mentioned earlier who did not accept the apostolic Gospel and thus reflect a pseudo-Christianity that in reality stands with the evil people of the world who face doom for their evil. As 2:7 and 3:12 clearly imply they are not overcomers and thus not qualified for participation in the city of God. Thus both punishments lay out an eternal punishment rather than a temporary judgment.

**Another appeal to Christ, v. 20.** *Λέγει ὁ μαρτυρῶν ταῦτα· ναί, ἔρχομαι ταχύ. Ἀμήν, ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ. The one who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen, Come, Lord Jesus! Here John repeats an earlier declaration of Jesus (ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ταχύ, Behold*

possible reasons that John may have feared that someone would tamper with his book: (1) The textual history of other apocalypses, both Jewish and Christian, reveals that such texts were constantly being revised and modified by those who transmitted them. (2) John was a member of a prophetic group (Rev 22:9, 16) opposed by the prophetess ‘Jezebel’ and her prophetic circle (Rev 2:20–23) and by the Nicolaitans (Rev 2:6, 14–15); Revelation was therefore written in a setting of prophetic conflict. (3) In early Christianity there is evidence to suggest that prophetic revelations were subject to evaluation (1 Thess 5:19–22; 1 Cor 12:10; 14:29; cf. 2 Thess 2:1–2; 1 Cor 2:6–16; 12:1–3; 14:37–38; Rom 12:6), a procedure about which very little is known. Yet this process seems to have involved the interpretation of one prophet’s revelations by other prophets (G. Dautzenberg, *Prophetie*, 122–48; Aune, *Prophecy*, 217–29). All this suggests that John may have had reason to believe that his revelation was in danger of being interpreted away or augmented by Christians within the various local communities who regarded themselves as prophetically gifted. This is perhaps strengthened by the proximity of a prohibition against adding and deleting in LXX Deut 13:1 with a passage cautioning against following the advice of false prophets (LXX Deut 13:2–6; cf. Philo Spec. Leg. 1.315). In Phaedrus 275e, Plato comments on the vulnerabilities of written texts (LCL tr.): ‘And every word, when once it is written, is bandied about, alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself.’” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1231–1232.]

I come quickly, v. 12a) and follows it with his own affirmation and appeal to Christ. Jesus is previously referenced as the faithful witness in 1:5 and 3:14 which affirm the integrity of the vision being given to John.

The affirmation here ναί, ἔρχομαι ταχύ, *Surely, I come quickly*, modifies the previous one slightly Ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ταχύ, *Behold I come quickly*, (v. 12a). But the essential thrust remains the same: Christ promises to take quick action in addressing evil and the needs of God's people.<sup>39</sup> Not only does v. 20a repeat v. 12a but also 2:16; 3:11; 16:15 and 22:7. John's response is to affirm this promise of Christ: Ἀμήν, ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ. *Amen, come Lord Jesus!*<sup>40</sup> The use of the present tense imperative

<sup>39</sup>“I will come soon” is a solemn promise made by the exalted Jesus that he will soon return to inaugurate the eschatological age, a promise that occurs in very closely similar phrases in 2:16; 3:11; 16:15; 22:7, 12. ἔρχομαι, ‘I come,’ is a futuristic present, a not uncommon use of the present tense in verbs of coming and going (Burton, *Syntax*, 9–10; Kühner-Gurth, *Ausführliche Grammatik* 2/1:139–40; BDF §323), which can specifically be labeled the ‘oracular present’ (Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, § 1882) or the ‘prophetic present’ (Turner, *Syntax*, 63). The verb ἔρχεσθαι, ‘to come,’ is used in the prophetic present fourteen times in Revelation (1:4, 7, 8; 2:5, 16; 3:11; 4:8; 7:14; 9:12; 11:14; 16:16; 22:7, 12, 19). The verb ἔρχεσθαι, when used in the prophetic present, however, does not invariably refer to the Parousia. As G. R. Beasley-Murray has pointed out, the phrase ἔρχομαι σοι, ‘I will come to you,’ in the proclamation to the churches at Ephesus (2:5) and Pergamon (2:16) does not refer to the Parousia; rather it refers to a coming in judgment prior to the Parousia (“The Relation of the Fourth Gospel to the Apocalypse,” *EvQ* 18 [1946] 173–86; cf. Aune, *Cultic Setting*, 126–33). More often, however, ἔρχεσθαι refers to the Parousia (3:11; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1233.]

<sup>40</sup>“This is not strictly a prayer, but part of a dialog in which this statement is a response to the preceding statement; see Comment on 1:6 for an extensive discussion of this liturgical formula. The second-person singular present imperative ἔρχου, ‘Come!’ is unusual in that imperatives rarely occur in prayers in the NT or in early second-century Christian literature. In Koine Greek generally, the present imperative is very rare in the context of prayers, whereas the aorist imperative is relatively common. F. W. Mozley observed that in addressing God in the LXX and the NT, the aorist imperative is almost always used, though he does cite a few exceptions: 1 Kgdms 3:9, 10; Job 10:2; 13:21; 14:15; Isa 64:9; Sir 33:11; Luke 11:3 (“Notes on the Biblical Use of the Present and Aorist Imperative,” *JTS* 4 [1903] 280). In Koine Greek the present imperative is used only in situations of strong emotional stress (Bakker, *Imperative*, 82–83). In Rev 22:20, the imperative ἔρχου is used in response to Christ's promise to come soon, perhaps communicating an affective urgency to the audience. The author apparently uses the present imperative to exhort Christ to keep his promise, so the entire phrase might be understood as ‘Yes, amen, do that, Lord Jesus’ (Bakker, *Imperative*, 134). Bakker suggests that John uses the present imperative because this phrase is not so much a prayer as a conversational situation. However, it is important to recognize that the context of this concluding prayer, i.e., the entire situation presented in Revelation, is indeed a situation of extreme need and stress; therefore, the function of the present imperative

verb here most likely signals the Aramaic liturgical formula *maranatha* behind it.<sup>41</sup>

**The Benedictio, v. 21.** Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων. *The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.* Among the existing hand copies of this verse, several scribes saw the expression more liturgically and thus added Ἀμήν at the very end.<sup>42</sup> But the evidence favors omitting it. Additionally the reference μετὰ πάντων, with all,

in this situation of stress is clearly appropriate.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1234.]

<sup>41</sup>“This phrase is widely regarded as a translation of the Aramaic liturgical formula *maranatha*, which indicates that the Aramaic phrase contains a verb in the imperative (‘our Lord, come!’) rather than in the perfect (‘our Lord has come’). Since the transliterated but untranslated Aramaic formula *maranatha* is found in liturgical settings in Did 10:6 and 1 Cor 10:22, it is not unreasonable to assume, particularly in view of the liturgical echoes found in 22:14–21, that ‘Come, Lord Jesus!’ is a liturgical ejaculatory prayer that John has adopted for use at the conclusion of Revelation. S. Schulz has convincingly argued that the original meaning of *maranatha* must necessarily have been an urgent prayer for the imminent Parousia of Jesus (in which the title ‘Lord’ was virtually synonymous with ‘Son of man’) and not an acclamation of the divine presence in worship (ZNW 53 [1962] 125–44, esp. 138). He demonstrates that *marana* in the formula cannot have originally referred to God as some have claimed (e.g., Dunphy, *ITQ* 37 [1970] 294–307). It is unnecessary to argue, however, that the original meaning of the formula cannot without further ado be regarded as determinative for later meanings (the polysemy of *maranatha* is in fact suggested by M. Black, “The Maranatha Invocation,” 196; see NIDNTT 2:897). That the *maranatha* formula is translated ‘Come, Lord Jesus!’ probably indicates that John has not translated the formula himself but is using a traditional variant of the *maranatha* formulation, another example of which is found in Phil 4:5, ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς, ‘the Lord is at hand.’ The traditional character of ‘Come, Lord Jesus!’ is indicated by the fact that the phrase ‘Lord Jesus’ is found only twice in Revelation, here and in the epistolary benediction in v 21, which, as we shall see, has significant traditional features. Further, the only Pauline epistolary benediction in which the name ‘Lord Jesus’ occurs is found in 1 Cor 16:23, immediately following the *maranatha* formula in 1 Cor 16:22! The syntax of κύριε Ἰησοῦ is also unique to Revelation, since ‘Lord’ is in the vocative case, and ‘Jesus,’ in apposition to ‘Lord,’ is also in the vocative. The view that the nominative is always used in apposition to the vocative (Zerwick, *Greek*, 11) therefore needs qualification since titles combined with proper names appear to constitute an exception; see Acts 26:2 and the comments of G. Mussies, *Morphology*, 90.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1234–1235.]

<sup>42</sup>“Some mss. add ‘amen’ at the end of v 21. But if the ‘amen’ were original, it is hard to conceive how it could have been omitted from A 1006 1841 pc a gig vg<sup>st</sup> Tyc.<sup>114</sup> Copyists added ‘Amen’ because it appears at the end of some other NT epistles and is often found as a secondary scribal emendation at the close of all NT letters (see further on 22:20).” [G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 1157.]

seemed bothersome to several copyists and not sufficiently Christian. Thus a variety of substitute expressions show up in many of the manuscripts.<sup>43</sup> But John ends his vision from Christ with a benedictory prayer that would have provided an appropriate ending to the document as it was read in each of the house church groups in the churches of Asia.

## 2. What does the text mean to us today?

The relevancy of the ending of Revelation in 22:8-21 is multifaceted, just like the variety of sub-genres found in these verses.

The overall impact of all of the verses speaks to a reminder of several important themes throughout the document generally. The vision came to John from God through Christ and the angels in terms of John's seeing and hearing. John then faced the challenge of finding the right ways to put this into written form that was understandable to his late first century readership. Affirmations come in this final section that the challenge was completely successfully. He did accurately record what he had seen and heard, so that no tampering with the content should be done either in adding or subtracting words and ideas.

We are reminded vividly here that God alone is to be the object of our worship. Angels and other heavenly beings along with idols as objects of worship are strictly off limits for God's people. The heart of Revelation is focused on God's caring relationship with His people both on earth and in heaven. As such He alone deserves our worship.

The vice lists of vv. 11 and 15 remind us of the deep commitment to evil by those outside the people of God. They persist in their evil and find themselves completely excluded from God's family. And a few of these truly evil people will be found inside the Christian communities as the Jezebels like at Thyatira and the Nicolaitans at Pergamum.

We can share the expressed yearnings for Christ to come quickly that dot these final verses. With John,

<sup>43</sup>“Scribes were uncomfortable with the general ending of ‘all’ (πάντων), perhaps thinking it could be construed as including those outside the true church, thus suggesting universal salvation. Therefore, some tried to clarify what John probably had in mind with ‘all of the saints’ (x 2030 051s M sy co gig) or substituting ‘the saints’ (x gig), while others inserted ‘all of us’ (2050 pc) or ‘all of you’ (296, Latin versions, Ethiopic, and pseudo-Ambrose). Only A, vg, and Bea have πάντων, but it is to be preferred because it is the shorter and thus more difficult reading.<sup>112</sup> That “all” referred originally to churches gathered to “hear” the word read is apparent from 22:18: ‘I witness to all who hear (παντι τῷ ἀκούοντι) the words of the prophecy of this book’ (cf. also 1:3–4).<sup>113</sup>” [G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 1157.]

the saints on earth and in heaven, we also cry out, Μαρνα θα. Come Lord, come!

## Excursus: Understanding Revelation

I cannot close this lengthy study without providing some reflections on the study of the final book of the New Testament. First, I want to say thank you to those class members in Costa Rica who prodded me into agreeing to do this study. Initial hesitancy because of the modern controversial study of Revelation gradually turned into profound gratitude to both God and you for the encouragement to do this study. To be sure, it has been a long, very detailed study producing a background commentary of almost 1,100 pages. But for me personally, it has been one of the most rewarding Bible studies that I have experienced in over half a century of Gospel ministry. I'm quite confident that I have learned much more about this book of the Bible than more of you in the class have. But my prayerful hope is that this study has sparked new interest in going deeper not just in Revelation but also in the rest of the Bible as well.

**How can one summarize the essence of the document of the NT?** Let me share some reflections:

1) If one wants to grasp Revelation correctly, then he or she must learn *how to think apocalyptically*, rather than historically. All of the book is presented from the outset as Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, [an apocalypse about Jesus Christ](#) (1:1). Revelation is not charting out Christian history! Nor is it some kind of fortune telling of the future of the world! Instead, it is a vision of God and His ways with His creation from before the ‘foundation of the world’ to the beginning of eternity with two fundamental religious themes: His total intolerance of evil and His compassionate care of His people. This has consistently been the way of God since creating Adam and Eve in the beginning.

An apocalyptic vision comes out of the visionary experiences, beginning with the 8th century prophets of Isaiah / Micah and Amos / Hosea in the Old Testament. Early, initial forms of the apocalyptic side of visionary experience surfaces a few places in the final documents of the OT, especially Daniel and Ezekiel. Although numerous expansions of such specialized apocalyptic perspective surfaces in the intertestamental Jewish literary tradition, nothing compares with the creativity of John's work. Even the subsequent Christian efforts to produce apocalypses in post apostolic Christianity fall miserably short of measuring up to the literary creativity of John. Some of this, of course, goes back to the lack of divine inspiration for these writers. But most of this very inferior later Christian effort comes out of fringe groups producing fictionalized versions without the massive background understanding of either the OT or the Jewish apocalyptic traditions that

John had access to. More than anything else, most all of these later Christian writings take on the rigid tone of the Jewish apocalypses with an emphasis on the wrath of God upon those who dare disobey their projection of Christian obedience from their fringe religious viewpoint, generally Gnostic in orientation.

John, on the other hand, is not bound to any of the prophetic or apocalyptic constructions out of either the OT or the other Jewish sources. To the contrary, he displays a marvelous creativity in picking up words, short phrases, and pieces of images from his many sources and then he pulls them together in his own way in order to explain to the readers what God had showed him in the vision.

The literary genus of this is how John solved a fundamental problem with his heavenly vision. He was permitted to see and hear things not arising out of human experience on earth. But then he had to use earth bound human language to describe in writing what he had seen and heard. In drawing upon somewhat similar experiences of the OT prophets along with some of the terminology of the Jewish apocalyptic writers, he had a ready source of existing human terminology for communicating to his first century audience in an understandable manner. Many of the listeners were Diaspora Jewish Christians who had grown up hearing the words of the prophets and also being familiar with the Jewish apocalyptic traditions which themselves were mostly Hellenistic Jewish products. His occasional use of images common to the pagan religions of his world also contributed to the effectiveness of communicating his message to his audience.

Our modern dilemma is the huge challenge of shifting gears out of a historical way of thinking into an apocalyptic visionary way of thinking. Huge, huge damage has been done to the text of Revelation by those failing to make this shift. To be sure, it is not an easy shift and even the best scholars occasionally lapse into historical modes of thought with the inevitable impact of creating interpretive barriers that make it almost impossible for God to speak through the sacred text to the reader or hearer in today's world. My suspicion and hope is that the contemporary post-modern reader is gradually coming to a place where apocalyptic thinking is easier to do. There is a reason behind a renewed interest in Revelation in many Christian circles across the theological spectrum during the last decade.

2) The heart of what John saw and heard is a vision of a holy, utterly pure God with absolutely zero tolerance of anyone tainted by evil and wickedness. God's wrath comes down hard, and even on His own people as chapters two and three stress, upon wickedness. The bottom line message is that although evil managed to seriously damage and hurt God's creation,

His ultimate intention is to totally root it out and banish all of those connected to it into the eternal torments of Hell. This includes Satan, his cohorts and all his human supporters down to the last person whose name has not already been entered in the heavenly registry of the new Jerusalem. Quite marvelously this listing of official citizens of heaven was done by the Lamb before God even moved to create the world.

The comfort of this side of the message of Revelation to God's persecuted people is that evil does not pay. Wicked men don't ultimately win, as sometimes people think. God's power is so overwhelmingly massive that at the end all evil and evil people will be totally defeated and removed by the simple speaking of a couple of words by the Lamb.

The other side of the message of Revelation is the profound passionate care of God for His people. In no shape, form or fashion does His care exempt them from suffering physical harm from the evil in this world. They will suffer in the manner of Christ who is presented in Revelation not just as the Lamb of God, but as the brutally slaughtered, blood soaked Lamb of God (ἀρνίον ἐσθηκὸς ὡς ἐσφαγμένον, 5:6b) from chapter five on.

But over and over, John passionately asserts that in God's care no spiritual harm to us as His committed people is possible from evil all the way up to Satan himself. The devil always stands under God's ultimate control with limits imposed on him as to what he can do and how far he can go with the people of God.

Everything in Revelation ultimately moves toward that eternal care of God for His people in eternity. The martyred saints first experience it and all His people will make their entrance after the final judgment. In preparing an eternal home for us, God sweeps the slate totally clean and permits not one tinge of evil to exist in His eternal home for us. Our having been washed clean in the blood of the Lamb cleans us up for living in the holy presence of a pure God for all eternity. Thus our eternal life will be in perfect safety and total freedom from disease etc. that living in an evil world has produced in this life.

Even more spectacular is the intimate interaction of Almighty God that we will enjoy eternally in heaven. His throne is the center of our heavenly home; He abundantly provides for all our needs; He is fully accessible to His people. Marvelously what God craved the most initially with Adam and Eve in the Garden will now be fully realized with all their descendants who have yielded their lives to Him in this life (cf. Gen 3:8-10).

Now studying a document of the NT with such a powerful message as this makes all the effort worthwhile!