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A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE

Reading: Revelation 1:1-6

67. THE BOOK OF REVELATION

On one occasion that prince of preachers C.H. Spurgeon was accosted by a critic with a question from the Bible, “ *There now can you tell me what that means ?*” the man who wanted to trip the preacher up said. With a twinkle in his eye Spurgeon replied, “ *Why, of course I can you what it means. It just means what it says.*” That might well be an appropriate reply when people ask the question, ‘ *what does the Book of Revelation really mean ?*’ Perhaps these words may apply here also, ‘ *A question may be asked in a sentence the reply may take a century.*’ One thing is sure the book of Revelation is one of the most difficult to interpret. Perhaps one of the reasons for that is that Satan fights against us in our understanding of this book. David Pawson says ‘ *the devil hates the first few pages of the Bible which reveal how he gained control of our planet and the last few pages which reveal how he will lose control of it. If he can convince humans that Genesis is composed of myths and Revelation of mysteries he is content.*’ (Unlocking the Bible, David Pawson p, 1242)

Yet no book in the Bible has an introduction and a conclusion quite like this one. It commences with a promised blessing (1:3) and it closes with a promised blessing. (22:7) Sure much of this book is difficult to

understand but just to hear the prophecies of this book being read is a blessing in a troubled world like ours. Now in order for us to understand this book at least in a little way, let me introduce it with five words.

1. ATMOSPHERE:

What is the atmosphere or mood behind this book ? Well, John’s own personal circumstances give us a clue. Do you what he says in (1:9) ? John was exiled to Patmos towards the end of the 1st century probably put there by the Roman Emperor Domitian (81-96 A.D.) You see, it was Domitian who instigated emperor worship. Everyone who spoke to him had to address him “ *Lord and God.*” Do you see now why John was labouring in the mines and quarries of Patmos ? Busting rocks on a chain gang. This man would not surrender to any but His Lord, Jesus Christ. So throughout this book we see the sufferings of God’s people. John is in exile (1:9) Antipas is martyred (2:13) the church in Smyrna will face imprisonment (2:10) But God is on His throne and working out His sovereign purpose. 1.

2. APPROACH:

How do we approach a book like Revelation ? Well, basically there have been four different approaches ?

There is the Approach of *the Preterist:* The Latin word ‘ *preter,*’ meaning ‘ *past.*’ This interpretation states that everything in the book took place in the first century. So

John wrote to the saints to encourage them in their time of persecution. But John states seven times that he is writing ‘ *prophecy*.’ (propheteia 1:3 11:6 19:10 22:7,10,18,19) This is a book that deals with predictions. It deals with people and events which lie in the future.

There is the Approach of ***the Historicists***: This view holds that the book has been in the process of being fulfilled throughout the whole Christian era. Harold Willmington states ‘ *those who hold this view see in the symbols the rise of papacy, the corruption of the church and the various wars throughout church history. Most of the reformers interpreted the book in this manner.*’

There is the Approach of ***the Idealists***: they spiritualize the teaching of the Book and tell us that it does not set forth actual events at all but that its symbols depict spiritual realities. But again John tells us that he is writing prophecy dealing with events that one day will take place in the world.

There is the Approach of ***the Futurists***: and this approach emphasizes that Revelation is prophecy and that the major part of the book has to do with what is still future. 1:2;

3. **AUTHOR:**

For who is the author of the Book of Revelation ? Well look at (1:1) This book had its origin not in the mind of John, but in the mind of God. But how did the Lord convey the contents of this book to his servant John ? The Father gave the revelation to the Son (Matt 24:36) and

the Son shared it with the apostle using ‘ *His angel*,’ as intermediary. So here is John in Patmos, a penal colony of Rome receiving this wonderful Revelation concerning end time events. But what is the,

4. **AIM:**

Of this book ? Well, look at its title. It’s not the Revelation of St. John the Divine it’s the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Its all to do with ***Unveiling***: Revelation is from the Greek word (apocalypse) which means ‘ *an uncovering, an unveiling or a disclosure.*’ The central person of the Book of Revelation is not John but Jesus Christ. And if we study the book of Revelation and don't learn anything about Christ, then we've misread the book of Revelation. Revelation is meant to be an unveiling of Christ to us, but it also tell’s of the time when Christ's glory will be unveiled, or revealed to all people. When Christ came to us the first time, His Glory was veiled but when He comes again, His glory will be completely unveiled. Now when studying the book of Revelation, its every easy to become focused on trying to decipher and understand the prophecy. However, our main focus is to be on the One whose coming is prophesied. After all, it’s not the Coming we want to be familiar with but the Person who is coming.

Imagine a train station. In that station there is a station master whose main objective is to know as much as possible about all the trains. And so he has all kinds of intricate charts to help him predict exactly where a train is and when it will reach the station. Imagine also that there is a young lady at the station. Now she’s not nearly as well

informed as the station master, but she knows that her fiancée is on the train that is about to arrive, and she can hardly wait for it to get there. Our hearts also need to beat in anticipation of the arrival of the King. You may find a justification for your point of view, or you may find reasons to support some fine point of prophecy, but if you don't see the Lord Jesus in the Book of Revelation you've missed the real point. For this book is pre-eminently the revelation of Jesus Christ. It's all to do with **Unfolding:** for this book is essentially a book of prophecy. It shows us how all the events of human history have been pointing toward a single event, the return of Jesus Christ to establish His kingdom. **Unveiling: Unfolding; but also Upholding:** for we must not forget the practical import of this book. For remember it was written during a time of intense persecution, during the reign of a vicious Roman Emperor Domitian who declared himself to be lord and god of his people. Where were these believers going to find encouragement ?

Was there any hope for the future ? Is there any hope for the future ? The Book of Revelation answers with a resounding yes. God is still on the throne, all of history including their time of trouble and your time of trouble is under His control. The control of One who is coming again to defeat evil and establish His reign. 1:2:3:4:

5. **ANALYSIS:**

I mean how can we analyse this book ? You see, the scenes alternate between heaven and earth. For example in Ch's 2 & 3 we are on earth as we consider the seven

churches. But in Ch's 4-5 we are in heaven to see the Lord Jesus step into the spotlight and receive the scroll, the title deed to earth, then in Ch 6 we come back down to earth to see what happens when the seals are broken. As far as I know Revelation is the only book in the Bible that has an inspired outline. Do you see it in (1:19) ? Here is the golden key to the Book of Revelation. *It tells us that there is a Past, a Present and a Future in this book.* Here is the plan of the book. ' *Things seen,*' Ch 1 His **Glory:** ' *Things which are,*' Ch 2-3 His **Grace:** ' *Things hereafter,*' Ch's 4-22 His **Government:** Now these three divisions are clear and they do not overlap. Each division is complete in itself and distinct from the other two. This is God's own division of the book.

(1) ' **The Things Which Thou Hast Seen,**' Ch 1: **The Past**

The Book of Revelation is a book of symbols and signs. Do you see (1:1) The word ' *signified,*' is interesting. If you want to get the true sense of the word pronounce it aloud SIGN-I-FIED. In other words Christ made His revelation known to John by signs and symbols and once you grasp the symbolic ' *sign-ificance,*' of this book you can understand it better. Now here in (Ch 1) we discover truth conveyed in the form of symbols. The Lord Jesus is described in a way that is not intended to convey His actual appearance but various aspects of His character, His attributes and His role. For example, what are the seven candlesticks ? (1:12, 20) Well, the candlesticks are the churches and the stars are the angels. Do you see here,

(a) THE AWESOME SIGHT: 1:1-15

What a revelation of glory for an aged apostle. How thrilling it must have been for John who had witnessed the suffering of Christ now to see the glory of Christ. What compensation for an aged saint who denied the usual privileges of the Lord's Day to get a vision of the Lord Himself. Will you run your eye down this chapter and notice John's description of Christ ? Do you see here,

The Humanity of the King: ' One like unto the Son of Man,' (1:13) It was a full sixty years since John had last seen Jesus but he immediately recognizes Him as ' the Son of Man.' (Dan 7:13-14)

The Authority of the King: He was clothed with ' a garment down to the foot,' (1:13) In ancient times this was the recognised apparel of authority, dignity and rulership.

The Purity of the King: ' His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow,' (1:14) Is this not a symbol of Christ's absolute sinless holiness ?

The Sagacity of the King: ' And his eyes were as a flame of fire,' (1:14) Today we might say He has X ray vision. My Christ cannot be deceived. He sees every minister, notes every member, observes every ministry and views every motive with X ray vision.

The Severity of the King. ' and his feet like unto fine brass,' (1:15) Brass in the Bible symbolises judgment. And the Head of the church will judge sin in His churches. (Jn 3:14)

The Integrity of the King: ' And his voice waters,'
The Sovereignty of the King: ' And he had in his right hand seven stars,' Christ is holding messengers in his right hand. It suggests His control of all things.

The Ferocity of the King: ' And out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword,' (1:16) The sword is the Word of God (Eph 6:17 Heb 4:12) and nothing can stand before God's Word.

The Glory of the King: ' And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength,' (1:16) Once that face was marred and spat upon, here it shines in resplendent glory. (Matt 17:2) And it is that divine glory that John now beholds. My do you think you have problems ? The early Christians and John faced tremendous problems. But rather than focus on the problems John ' turned his eyes on Jesus and looked full in His wonderful face and the things of earth grew strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.' My sometimes when faced with great problems, our tendency is to focus on the **hands of God**, what He has not done for us and what we want Him to do for us, instead of focusing on the **face of God**, simply who He is. Often, in the midst of great problems, we stop short of the real blessing God has for us, which is a fresh vision of who He is. (a)

(b) THE ABJECT SERVANT; 1:17

' And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead,' (1:17) Undone. Unmasked. Unravelling. John caught one glimpse of the Holy One and his self-esteem was shattered. Was it not the same for Isaiah ? When he saw the sovereignty,

purity, authority of the Lord Jesus he cried, ‘ *Woe is me for I am undone.*’ (Is 6:5 Jn 12:41) Was it not the same for Peter ? When Peter realized he was standing in the presence of a Holy God instantly he fell at Christ’s feet, ‘ *Depart from for I am sinful man O Lord.*’ (Lk 5:8) Is there not a dangerous absence of awe and worship in our churches ? We are boasting about standing on our feet, instead of breaking and falling at His feet. For years Evan Roberts the leader of the Welsh Revival at the beginning of the 20th century prayed “ *Bend me, bend me,*” and when God answered the great Welsh Revival resulted. But is it not where we are today ? No fear. No awe. No reverence. What we need is a true vision of Christ, that will instil us with holy fear. (a) (b)

(c) *THE ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGN: 1:17-20*

As He Conveys His Sympathy: ‘ *Fear not,*’ as He Reveals His Identity: ‘ *I am,*’ why did John not record seven of those sayings in his gospel ? ‘ *I am the first and the last,*’ In the Old Testament God said, ‘ *I am the first and I am the last and beside me there is no God.*’ (Is 44:6 48:12) By saying, ‘ *I am the first,*’ Christ lays claim to eternal pre-existence. By saying ‘ *I am the last,*’ He is eternally immutable. He says ‘ *I am he that liveth,*” that was another name that was applied to God. (Jos 3:10) “ *Amen and have the keys of hell and death.*” He Affirms His Authority: Listen, ***He is the All Sufficient One:*** ‘ *I am the first and the last,*’ ***He is the All Victorious One:*** ‘ *I am he that liveth,*’ ***He is the All Powerful One:*** ‘ *And have the keys,*’ Is this not encouraging ? You see, despite cancer, growths, heart attacks you’ll never go through the door of

death until He puts the key into the door. (1)

(2) ‘ *The Things Which Are,*’ Ch 2-3: The Present

For chapters 2 & 3 deals with the churches in this age of grace. Now we can view these churches in a three-fold way. We can view them,

(a) *HISTORICALLY:*

First and foremost these are seven letters written to seven actual, historical churches found in the Roman province of Asia, which was located on the western seaboard of what we now know as Turkey. Geographically, these seven cities form a rough circle and they are listed here in the order which a messenger might visit them. Sailing from the isle of Patmos he would arrive at Ephesus, he would then travel north to Smyrna and Pergamum, then south east to Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Now the churches in this region were hard pressed.

• ***Circumstantially there was Persecution:***

The Emperor Domitian. (AD 81-96) regarded himself as a “ *God,*” so Christians who worshipped the Lord Christ were now being invited to worship the Lord Caesar. Once a year everyone in the Empire had to appear before the authorities and cry “ *Caesar is Lord.*” I mean what were the believers to do ? They were faced with a choice Caesar or Christ ? To confess Caesar as Lord meant liberty, to confess Christ as Lord meant hostility, possible death.

- **Doctrinally there was Infiltration:**

False prophets were abroad trying to deceive the churches into their heretical teachings. (2:2, 15, 20)

- **Morally there was Contamination:**

Immoral men and women were contaminating the church by their influence, standards of behaviour were being lowered. (2:14, 20) So the devil was attacking from several fronts. Sometimes the onslaught was Physical, the Emperor. Other times it was Doctrinal, false cults. Still other times it was Moral, lowering standards. My have the tactics of the devil changed ? Are the same pressures not troubling our churches today ? Oh you say, “ *We are not being persecuted.*” Well, what about false cults ?? What about the continual desire to dilute the truth ? What about the pressure of the world to conform the church to its own ways ? My do these seven letters not issue a call to endure persecution, to hold fast the truth, to obey the Lord. (a)

(b) PROPHETICALLY:

The plan of the book seems to indicate this. (1:19)

" *The things which thou hast seen.*" - Chapter 1.

" *The things which are.*" - Chapter's 2-3 " *The things which shall be hereafter.*" Chapter 4-22. So, chapters 2 and 3 reveal to us conditions in the church from Pentecost to the Rapture. In other words each church may be seen as representing a different phase in church history. (1:3)

1. Ephesus: (A.D. 30-300) The name means “ *desirable.*” It represents the Apostolic Church. Even then a gradual cooling toward the Lord was evident.
2. Smyrna: (A.D. 100-313) The name means “ *myrrh,*” representing the Martyr Church.
3. Pergamos: (314-590) It means “ *marriage,*” speaks to us of the Compromising Church.
4. Thyatira: (590-1517) Means “ *Continuing sacrifice,*” and it speaks of the Papal Church.
5. Sardis: (1517-1700) Which means “ *remnant,*” speaking of the Reformation Church.
6. Philadelphia: (1700-1900) The name means “ *brotherly love,*” the Revival Church.
7. Laodicea: (1900- Rapture) And the name means “ *People's rights,*” The Worldly Church. So we may see in these seven churches a panorama of prophecy from the day of Pentecost to the Rapture of the church. So we may view these churches (a) (b)

(c) TYPICALLY:

One might ask the question. *Why were there seven churches singled out by the Risen Lord ?* Certainly there were more than seven churches in this area. (Acts 20:5 Col 1:2 4:13) Indeed at the time the Book of Revelation was written (A.D. 95-100) there may have existed over one hundred separate and independent local churches in the world. But out of the many Christ chose seven typical churches and addressed Himself to these. Why ? Well, it seems that the spiritual conditions found in these seven churches are typical and representative of what every local church has been throughout her history and what she

is like today. *You see, any condition of any church in any place at any time may be found here.* It may be that each of us will see our church depicted here in these letters, for the conditions existing in these seven are conditions which have existed in the past and which certainly exist in the present. Do you know something ? Every thoughtful believer will find himself mirrored here. You see, as we read the letters and see the state of each church, we will be confronted with a series of questions.

Are you an Ephesian believer, have you grown cold in your love for the Lord ? Perhaps you're like the Christians in Smyrna, are you suffering for Christ's sake ? Are you like those in Pergamos ? Are you compromising the truth ? Or are the believers at Thyatira a picture of you ? Do you know what they believed in ? Peaceful coexistence. Maybe you're like those in Sardis. Have you a reputation but there is no reality ? Like those in Philadelphia, could the Risen Lord commend you for your faithfulness ? Or like the believers in Laodicea are you lukewarm and is Christ about to spew you out of His mouth ?

You see, in these two chapters the Risen Lord speaks His mind to His churches. It is in these chapters and not in (Matt Ch 28 or Acts Ch 1) that the final words of Christ to the church is recorded. ***That means that Christ's message to these churches has a timeless relevance.*** Indeed if you look closely at these letters you will see the character of a New Testament church. What ought to be found within a New Testament church ?

Love: The letter to Ephesus:

Suffering: The letter to Smyrna

Truth: The letter to Pergamos

Holiness: The letter to Thyatira

Reality: The letter to Sardis

Opportunity: The letter to Philadelphia

Wholeheartedness: The letter to Laodicea

(3) ' The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter,' Ch's 4-22 The Future

' *Things seen,*' Ch 1 ***His Glory.*** ' *Things which are,*' Ch's 2-3 ***His Grace.*** ' *Things hereafter,*' ***His Government.*** Now let's go back and look at the plan of the book. Do you see the phrase ' *the things which shall be hereafter,*' (meta tauta) The meaning is, ' *write the things which shall be after the churches when the churches are no more.*' Now look at (4:1) So (Ch 4) introduces the third section of the book. Now remember chapters 2 and 3 deal with seven successive periods of church history which closes with the Laodicean age, which is the church of today. But look at how (Ch 4:1) opens. " *After this,*" After what ? After the church age. So from chapters 4 through 22 we have the third section of the book, which focuses on prophecy after the church age.

So when we come to (Ch 4) we leave the church age. People always say ' *Where does the Rapture come in ?*' It's in the white spaces between (Ch's 3-4) Look at (4:1) again. Now what does that remind you of ? That reminds us of both (1 Cor 15:52 1 Thess 4:16) which tell us that there is going to be a trumpet blown when the Lord

comes. My one of these days the Lord is going to say to the saints, “*Come up hither.*” You see, what we have in (4:1) is a picture of all believers being “*caught up,*” to the throne at the Rapture. And the Rapture is the very first event in God's prophetic calendar. Now here is John summoned to heaven. Why ? Because God wants to show John,

(a) *THE RULE OF THE LORD: Ch's 4-5*

He wants to show Him worldly events from a heavenly perspective. *Now what exactly did John see ?* John sees a throne, God's throne, sat in heaven. John finds himself in the control centre for the entire universe. And the central object of this headquarters is the throne of God. Now Revelation is a throne book, the word being used some *forty five times*, and this a throne chapter for the throne is mentioned *thirteen times* here. You say, ‘*what's it all about ?*’ Just this. Though the storm is over for the child of God another is about to break loose on the earth. God's great government is about to work itself out on the earth. The stage is now set, the church has been taken to heaven, the Lord is on the throne, all of heaven praises Him and awaits the outpouring of His wrath. A challenge is thrown out to all humanity ? *Who of all God's creatures is fit to rule the world ? Who has the right to the title deed of the earth ?*

You see, the scroll in (Ch 5) is the title deed to the earth. In this book are the final end time cataclysmic judgements of God that will be poured upon the earth during the tribulation. And the One who possesses this book and can

break its seals possesses the right to rule the world. Now the question was not ‘*Who is willing ?*’ but ‘*who is worthy ?*’ (5:2) No one in Washington has the answers. No one in Moscow. No one in London. No one can execute God's plans for human history. We are hopeless and helpless to usher in the Golden Age. No wonder John wept. Is there anyone who can open the book ? Is there anyone who can loose the seals ? Is there anyone who can rule the world ? *Bless God, there is One, Only One, the blessed Jesus He's the One.* Christ is about to open the sealed book and release judgment on the world. You see, this is,

(b) *THE RETRIBUTION OF THE LORD: 6:1-19:10*

The Bible uses different titles for this blood chilling period. It is called, The Day of the Lord: (Is 13:9) The Indignation: (Is 26:20) The Time of Jacob's Trouble: (Jer 30:7) The Seventieth Week: (Dan 9:27) The Tribulation: (Matt 24:21) Jeremiah, spoke of this time. He said, “*Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces turned to paleness ? Alas for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble.*” (Jer 30:6-7) Joel spoke of this time. He said, “*The day of the Lord cometh for it is nigh at hand, a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness.*” (Joel 2:1-2) The Lord Jesus had this to say about this time, “*For then shall be Great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of this world to this time, no nor ever shall be.*” (Matt 24:21)

That is a remarkable statement. Considering all the wars, famines, heartaches, atrocities that have taken place on earth, to hear Christ say there is a time coming, the like of which the earth has never seen, makes one tremble. According to Daniel (Ch 9) seven years are assigned to Israel in God's prophetic calendar. *It starts with the signing of a contract with the Antichrist and ends with Christ's return to earth to establish His kingdom.* Now it is this period that is described in Revelation Chapter 6 to 19. Some scholars feel that the inspired outline in (1:19) divides this period into three parts. So that in (Ch 6-9) we have the first three and a half years, in (Ch's 10-14) we have the middle of the period when Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel and becomes their persecutor instead of their protector. Then in (Ch 15-19) we have the last three and a half years.

Now this seven-year “ week,” is characterised by three series of events. (1) ***The Seven Seals:*** (6:1-8:5) (2) ***The Seven Trumpets:*** (8:6 19:21) (3) ***The Seven Vials:*** (16:1 19:21) Can you picture the scene ? The Lord Jesus is about to take back creation from the usurper Satan. But as the Lord Jesus begins to break the seals in that scroll, so the judgments begin here on earth. *The Seals are broken, the Trumpets are sounded, and the Vials are outpoured.* Each series of judgments, in an ascending scale of severity flows from the other and each has its ultimate cause in the taking of the scroll by the Lord Jesus into His capable and pierced hands. Everything that now happens in the Book of Revelation happens because He precipitates the action. From start to finish He is in complete control. Judgment is about to fall. Why ? To

punish the nations for their sin (Matt 25:31-36) and especially the way they have treated Israel. Also to purge Israel and prepare a believing remnant to receive Christ when He comes in glory. This is,

(c) ***THE RETURN OF THE LORD: 19:11-21***

That is mentioned in (Ch 19) Now please keep in mind that the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus will take in two stages. At the Rapture Christ comes to the air. (1 Thes 4:17) At the Second Advent Christ comes to the earth. (Zech 14:4) Scripturally speaking the ‘ *come up hither;*’ in (4:1) is the Rapture, but the appearance of the White Horse Rider and his armies in (19:11) is the Revelation of the Lord Jesus. You see, *marriage imagery and martial imagery don't fit into the same picture. In the Rapture the picture is that of a wedding, in the revelation the picture is that of a war.*

My the King is coming. He is coming ***Visibly:*** ‘ *every eye shall see Him.*’ (1:7) He is coming ***Victoriously:*** He is coming in ***Vengeance:*** look at (19:19-20) This is the long looked for conflict of Armageddon. What a scene the armies of this world marching across the Plains of Esdraelon. The shipping fleets of the world at anchor in the Persian Gulf and along the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean. The aircraft of the world, darkening the skies above. Then suddenly it will all be over.

There will be just one word from Him who sits astride the Great White Horse. One word and the war is over. The

beast and the false prophet are bundled up and hurled headlong into the everlasting flames. The panic stricken armies fall down dead. The vultures descend and cover the scene. Christ is victorious. I heard the story of some theological students who were tired and confused by some lectures they were getting on the Book of Revelation. So they decided to go to down to the gym for a game of basketball. While they were playing they noticed their African American caretaker reading His Bible while waiting to lock up. They asked which part he was studying and they were surprised to find that he was going through Revelation. ‘*You don’t understand that do you ?*’ ‘*Sure do.*’ ‘*What’s it about then ?*’ With eyes lit up and a big broad smile came this reply. ‘*Simple, Jesus wins.*’ And the long awaited reign of Christ begins. For do you see here,

(d) THE REIGN OF THE LORD: 20:1-21

Look at that little phrase at the end of (20:4) ‘*And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*’ Bible scholars refer to this as the ‘*Millennium,*’ a Latin word that comes from the words ‘*melli,*’ which means thousand and ‘*annum*’ which means year. Think of it. Only a few hundred yards from where He wore a Crown of Thorns He will wear the Crown of Glory. For a thousand years our blessed Lord will literally reign on this earth. At last we will be able to sing truthfully,

**Joy to the world the Lord is come
Let earth receive her King
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing**

**No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found**

**He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love**

What a contrast this will be to that other judgment, known as the Great White Throne judgment (20:11-15) when sinners will come face to face with the Christ they rejected and ‘*whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*’ (20:15) My would that not stir you to reach the lost ? To care for the dying ? To tell them of ‘*Jesus the mighty to save ?*’ I mean would you not like others to dwell in,

(e) THE RESIDENCE OF THE LORD: CH 21-22

For speaking of the eternal state John says ‘*Behold the tabernacle of God is with men and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God.*’ (21:3) The word ‘*tabernacle,*’ (skene) literally means ‘*the place where God dwells.*’ Today, God does not live in man-made

temples (Acts 7:48-50) but in the bodies of His people and in the church (1 Cor 6:19 Eph 2:21) But in the eternal state God will move into this city and live with all believers in intimate, continuous fellowship. ‘ *I beseech thee,*’ says Moses ‘ *show me thy glory.*’ (Ex 33:18) ‘ *O God,*’ says the psalmist ‘ *early will I seek thee to see thy power and thy glory.*’ (Ps 63:1-2) I tell you heaven will be peopled with millions of bright presences but all eyes will be fastened on and fascinated by the King in His beauty.

**Father of Jesus love’s reward
What rapture will it be
Prostrate before Thy throne to lie
And gaze and gaze on Thee**

Now we see Him by faith, one day we shall see Him by sight. “ *And they shall see his face.*” (22:4) Do you see how this book of prophecy closes ? Three times Christ says “ *Behold I come quickly.*” (22:7, 12,20) The word ‘ *quickly,*’ (tachu) means immediately, rapidly, imminently, swiftly. In other words, His coming is very, very soon. He is already on His way. He is ready to burst upon the scene of human history right now. ‘ *John tell people not to change one word of this Revelation.*’ (22:18-19) *And John I am coming soon.*’ Can you see this aged servant clapping his hands and saying ‘ *even so come Lord Jesus.*’ Thus ends the last book of the Bible, the book of the last things. Thank you for joining me on ‘ **A Journey Through The Bible.**’ Surely we can end this ‘ *journey,*’ in no better way than to echo this prayer, ‘ *even so come Lord Jesus.*’

**I am waiting for the coming
Of the Lord who died for me
Oh, His words have thrilled my spirit
I will come again for thee
I can almost hear His footfall
On the threshold of the door
And my heart, my heart is longing
To be with Him evermore**

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