

The Final Word: A New Beginning

Have you ever finished a book so captivating that you sat in silence for a few moments after closing the back cover, caught between the world you just left and the reality around you? Perhaps there was a sense of longing, a bit of sadness that the story ended, but also a profound sense of satisfaction. As we come to the very end of the Revelation of Jesus Christ—and indeed, the end of the entire Bible—we aren't just finishing a story. We are standing on the threshold of eternity.

The Book of Revelation wasn't given to us to satisfy our curiosity about charts or timelines, nor was it meant to be a divine puzzle we solve with our own intellect. It was given to reveal Jesus Christ in His full, unveiled glory. As we look at these final verses, we see the heart of God beating for His creation, a bridge between the "now" and the "not yet."

The Invitation and the Warning (Verses 12-15, 17-19)

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie... And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

As we observe these verses, we see a finality that is both beautiful and sobering. Jesus identifies Himself using three titles that encompass all of time and existence: the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. He is the bookends of history.

When Jesus says, "I am coming quickly," the Greek word is *tachu*, which suggests "suddenly" or "without delay" once the events are set in motion. As Chuck Smith often noted in his *C2000 Series* on Revelation 22, this doesn't necessarily mean "soon" in a chronological sense to the original reader, but rather that when He moves, He will move swiftly.

The interpretation here is clear: Jesus is the Sovereign over all. By calling Himself the Alpha and Omega, He is claiming the very titles of Yahweh (God) from the Old Testament (Isaiah 44:6). He is the source of life (the Tree of Life) and the judge of those who reject the truth. The warning in verses 18-19 is a "fence" around the Word of God. To add or subtract is to claim authority over the King Himself.

How does this land on our hearts today? It reminds us that there is no "middle ground" with Jesus. You are either inside the city, washed by the blood of the Lamb, or you are outside, clinging to "the lie."

- Are you trying to "edit" God's Word to fit your lifestyle?
- Or are you submitting your life to the Word?

The invitation in verse 17 is the most beautiful "R.S.V.P." in history. The Spirit (the Holy Spirit) and the Bride (the Church) are in perfect harmony, inviting you to drink. If you are spiritually parched today, the water is "free." It doesn't cost your effort; it cost His life.

The Final Promise and the Final Prayer (Verses 20-21)

"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

In these closing lines, we see the final dialogue of the Bible. Jesus makes His final promise, and John—representing the entire body of believers—offers the final prayer.

The interpretation of "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (the Aramaic *Maranatha*) is the heartbeat of the early church. This not the prayer of a man who is fed up with life, but the prayer of a man who is in love with his Lord. It is a cry for the restoration of all things and the physical presence of the King.

Warren Wiersbe, in his book *Be Victorious*, summarizes this perfectly: "The Bible begins with 'In the beginning God' (Genesis. 1:1) and ends with the grace of the Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:21). Between these two extremes, we see the tragedy of man's sin and the glory of God's redemption." (This is a summary of his teaching on the book's conclusion).

The application is simple yet profound: Is "Maranatha" the cry of your heart?

1. Live Expectantly: We don't look for signs as much as we look for the Son.
2. Live by Grace: The very last word of the Bible is "Amen," but the very last *thought* is "Grace." Even in a book filled with judgment and fire, the final note is God's unmerited favor toward us.

The Challenge to the Believer

To those of you who have placed your faith in Jesus: The Book of Revelation was not written to scare you, but to prepare you. You are on the winning side of history. My challenge to you is this: Live in light of the "Amen." If you truly believe He is coming quickly, how does that change your priorities tomorrow morning? How does it change the way you view your neighbor who doesn't know Him? Let the reality of the New Jerusalem fuel your ministry in the old world.

The Invitation to the Non-Believer

Perhaps you are reading this and you feel "outside the gates." You feel the thirst, but you've been trying to quench it with the "lies" mentioned in verse 15—pleasure, money, or self-sufficiency. The Bible ends not with a "Keep Out" sign, but with an open door.

Jesus says, "Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." There is no merit to earn, only a gift to receive. The same Jesus who stood on the cross is the Jesus who stands at the end of history, and He is calling you. Won't you come to Him today? Admit your need, believe that He died and rose for you, and join the chorus that cries, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"