

## Rev 22:6-21, Epilog

### Overview

John has now completed the four visions “in the Spirit” that make up the body of the book (Figure 1, chart). The final paragraphs recall two themes from the start of the letter: the promise that the eternal Lord will come soon (1:7-8; 22:6-20), and a closing that reminds us that this book is first of all a letter directed to the seven churches of Asia Minor in the first century (1:4-6; 22:21).

Recall 1:7-8,

Rev 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. 8 I am Alpha and Omega, ~~the beginning and the ending~~, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

In 1:7, someone announces the coming of the Messiah, according to OT promise. 1:8 identifies the speaker as the Lord God, characterized by his eternity. This final section emphasizes both themes, the Lord’s return and his eternal character.

### Who is Speaking?

In this section, the means of revelation shifts from seeing to hearing (see note). The last time someone spoke to John was at the start of the fourth vision:

Rev. 21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. **And he said unto me**, Write: for these words are true and faithful. ... 9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and **talked with me**, saying, Come hither, **I will shew thee** the bride, the Lamb’s wife.

Since then, his guide has been showing him things, but without explanation:

Now we return to speech. Who is speaking? 22:6, 10 both begin, “he saith<sup>1</sup> unto me.” The last two utterances that John heard, in 21:5 and 9, were by the Lord and the guiding angel, respectively. The angel is still present, because John falls down to worship him in vv. 12-13, and is rebuked by him. But in 22:6, the speaker describes the angel in the third person, and in 22:7, 12, the one who promises to come, and who calls himself Alpha and Omega, is clearly the Lord.

At this point, with the visions done, the angel is probably present but silent, except for his rebuke to John in 22:13, and we hear the voice of the Lord throughout. This view is reinforced by the similarity between this conclusion and that to the book of Daniel 7 (Figure 2, chart).

1. Both Revelation 22 and Daniel 12 close a major prophetic book with an instruction to “seal” (Dan 12:4) or “seal not” (22:10).

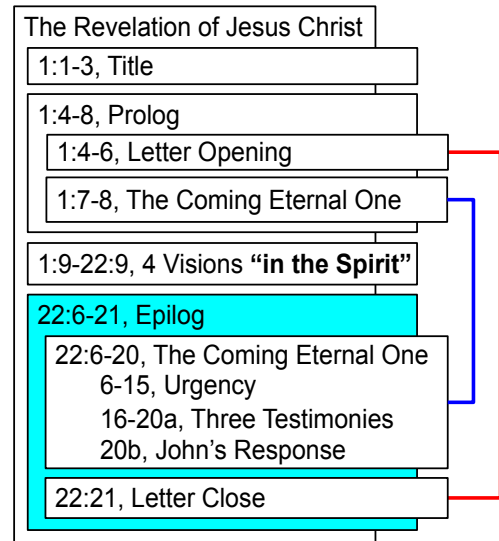
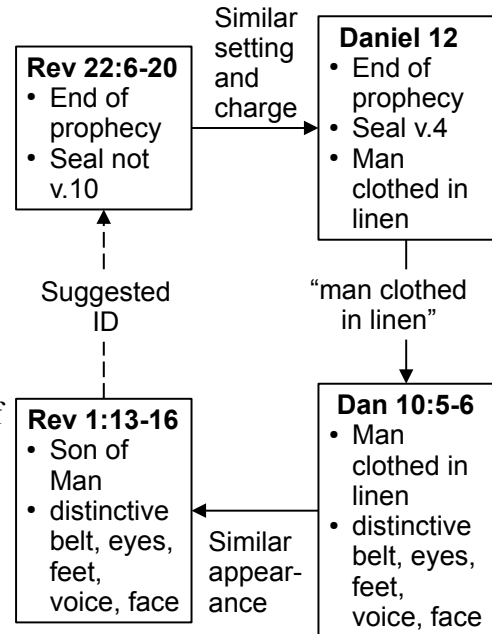


Figure 1: Structure of the Revelation

<sup>1</sup> The verb tense is present in the Greek in both places.

2. The one who speaks in Daniel 12 is a “man clothed in linen” (12:6,7), who is introduced in Daniel 10.
3. The description of the man clothed in linen in Dan 10:5-6 is almost identical with that of the Lord Jesus in Revelation 1 (Table 1), suggesting that the man clothed in linen is a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus.
4. So it is natural to recognize in the one who speaks to John to close the book, the same person who opened it, the Lord Jesus.

The Lord’s words include a reminder of the Urgency of the situation that faces the readers (6-15), assuring them of his soon return, and a final Invitation to unbelievers (16-20a). Both sections are marked with the Lord’s promise, “Behold, I come quickly” (7, 12, 20).



Daniel 10:5-6	Revelation 1:13-16
5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain <b>man clothed</b> in linen,	3 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of <b>man, clothed</b> with a garment down to the foot,
whose loins were <b>girded with fine gold</b> of Uphaz:	and <b>girt</b> about the paps with a <b>golden</b> girdle.
6a His body also was like the beryl,	
	14 (white head and hair)
6c and his <b>eyes as lamps of fire</b> ,	and his <b>eyes were as a flame of fire</b> ;
and his arms and his <b>feet like</b> in colour to polished <b>brass</b> ,	15 And his <b>feet like unto fine brass</b> , as if they burned in a furnace;
and the <b>voice of his words like the voice of a multitude</b> .	and his <b>voice as the sound of many waters</b> .
	16 (seven stars in hand, sword out of mouth)
6b and his face as the appearance of lightning,	and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

Table 1: Identifying the man in Daniel 12 with the Lord Jesus

## 6-20, The Coming Eternal One

### 6-15, The Urgency of the Situation

An alternation with a central digression (ABCD-E-ABCD) marks the unity of this exhortation (Table 2, chart). The first panel<sup>2</sup> (vv. 6-7) is a summary, amplified in the second (vv. 10-15).

<sup>2</sup> A symmetrical structure, whether alternation or chiasm, is made up of corresponding individual *elements* (e.g., A, or B, or C). The set of elements on one side of the structure (e.g., ABC) is called a *panel*.

22:6 And he <del>said</del> saith unto me,	22:10 And he saith unto me,
These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which <b>must shortly be done</b> .	Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for <b>the time is at hand</b> . 11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.
7 <b>Behold, I come quickly:</b>	12 And, <b>behold, I come quickly</b> ; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. 13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.
<b>blessed is he that keepeth the sayings</b> of the prophecy of this book.	14 <b>Blessed are they that do his commandments</b> , that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. 15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.
8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. 9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.	
Table 2: Summary and Expansion of the Urgency	

Between these panels, John interacts with his guiding angel. We will consider each pair of matching elements, and then John’s interruption.

### 6a, 10a, He saith unto me

**6a And he ~~said~~ saith unto me, ... 10b And he saith unto me,**—In the Majority Text, the verb in both cases is present tense, rendering John’s report more vivid, as though he is reporting it at the moment he hears it.<sup>3</sup> This touch enhances the sense of urgency in the entire alternation.

### 6b, 10b-11, The Time is at Hand.

These two elements emphasize that what has been revealed lies, not in the far-distant future, but in the expectation of the first-century readers.

**6b These sayings are faithful and true:**—This is the fourth time that the adjectives “faithful” πιστός *pistos* G4103 and “true” ἀληθινός *alēthinos* G228 appear together (chart). The first three all describe the person and words of the Lord Jesus.

Rev. 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, **the faithful and true witness**, the beginning of the creation of God;

Rev. 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and **he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True**, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Rev. 21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for **these words are true and faithful**.

Now once more he urges John, and his readers, to trust in what he reveals.

**and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel**—Compare

<sup>3</sup> Of the twelve instances of καὶ λέγω in the Revelation, four are aorist, and eight present tense.

Rev 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and **he sent and signified it by his angel** unto his servant John:

Rev 22:16 I Jesus have **sent mine angel** to testify unto you these things in the churches.

Previously, the angel is said to be sent by the Lord Jesus, but now he emphasizes that the ultimate authority is that of the Father (as in 1:1). Up until now, most of John's instruction has been managed by his guiding angel, who is still present (22:8). The Lord here adds his stamp of approval to what the angel has shown to John throughout the four visions.

**to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.**—Here is the point of the first element. The readers must not dismiss John's visions as far off in the future, but pay attention to them as relevant to their lives now.

The second panel begins with this same emphasis on urgency:

**22:10b And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book:**—This command contrasts with what the Lord told Daniel at the end of his prophecy:

Dan 12:4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and **seal the book**, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Revelation 5-8 give us a good idea of the meaning of unsealing a book. Unsealing a prophetic book allows the events it foretells to occur. The sealing of Daniel's book means that some of its events cannot take place until something happens to unseal the book. The statement that the Revelation is left unsealed means that what it describes can begin to occur, or as the verse ends:

**for the time is at hand** ἐγγύς *engus* **G1451**—These events are near, immanent. This statement forms one of many inclusions with the start of the book:

Rev 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: **for the time is at hand** ἐγγύς.

“The time is at hand” links this element to 22:6, “shortly.”

Throughout the alternation, each element is amplified in the second panel.

**11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.**—

This verse continues the parallel with Dan 12:9-10 (Aune), confirming that we are intended to read these verses against the background of that prophecy.

Dan 12:10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

Daniel's statement is declarative: those who do not repent are hardened in their wickedness, while those who have withstood persecution continue in their righteousness. In Rev 22:11, the Lord uses a volunative. The time is at hand. Make up your mind. Do not commit the error of Felix (Acts 24:25), waiting for “a convenient season.” They may not have another choice.

The imperative here should be understood in the same sense as in Ezekiel,

Ezk 3:27 But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house.

The Lord shuts people up to the darkness they have chosen, as in the judicial blindness of Isaiah 6 and the parables in Matthew 13. But there will be one last open invitation in 22:17, testifying to the incredible longsuffering of our Lord.

### **Excursus: Shortly, At Hand**

Daniel is sealed, but the Revelation is not, because “the time is at hand,” the “things ... must shortly be done.” This suggests that when Daniel wrote, “the time of the end” was *not* yet at hand. That time is the final victory of Christ over Antichrist, when the “stone ... cut out without hands” of 2:34, the “Son of Man” of 7:13, destroys the kingdoms of this world and sets up his eternal kingdom. Now, the Lord tells John that the wait is over, and the time is at hand.

Candid readers may be excused for some skepticism. John recorded the Revelation about AD 90. The church has waited over 1900 years for the final Antichrist and the return of Christ. Such a delay hardly seems to satisfy expressions like “shortly” and “at hand.”<sup>4</sup>

These expressions are a main rationale for preterite interpretations of the Revelation, which see it as written under Nero around AD 60. If so, the persecutions of believers under Antichrist are fulfilled in Nero’s persecution of Christians around AD 65, and the coming of Christ in judgment is the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70.

This approach has many problems. We have followed a futuristic interpretation. But how can we consider a delay of nearly two millennia “at hand”? One way to understand these statements of the Revelation that the time *is* at hand, is by examining some earlier scriptures that say that it is *not yet* at hand,<sup>5</sup> and see the reasons they give. The claim that these events are “at hand” then indicates that all of these reasons have been satisfied, and we must be ready for them at any time.

Imagine a long road trip on the interstate, say from Ann Arbor to Chicago. When you head west from Ann Arbor, you may see a sign indicating that Chicago is 245 miles away, but the sign will probably tell you that first you come to Jackson, MI. Until you pass Jackson, don’t look for Chicago. When Jackson is past, the signs will announce Battle Creek. After that, you’ll see signs for Kalamazoo, then for Benton Harbor, then for Gary. Only when you pass the last big city between Ann Arbor and Chicago, will Chicago be “at hand” listed at the top of the sign.

On the interstate, the signs tell you not only which city is next, but also how far away it is. In Michigan, the distance between major cities is typically 10 or 20 miles. In West Texas or Nevada, it might be a hundred miles, but that’s still the next city. The road signs in the Bible give the order of events, but in most cases they don’t give the distance. The next event, the one that is “at hand,” might be one year away, or a hundred. But it’s still the next one.

Let’s consider three of these biblical road signs, all warning that the time is not “at hand” because something else has to happen first (chart).

### ***Daniel 12: The Death of the Messiah and Destruction of Jerusalem***

Daniel is told (12:4) to seal the book until the time of the end, which is not yet at hand. First Messiah must die as a substitute for his people, and Jerusalem must be destroyed.

Dan 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to

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4 “Quickly,” 22:7, 12, 20 has a different meaning, as we shall see.

5 These passages use various terms to express the idea that the Lord’s return is not at hand. See note for details.

bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And **after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself**: and the people of the prince that shall come shall **destroy the city and the sanctuary**; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

This remarkable prophecy dates the Lord's death to 70 weeks (sabbatical year cycles), starting with Artaxerxes' charter to Nehemiah to rebuild the city in Nehemiah 2.<sup>6</sup> The later events prophesied in Daniel (the coming of Antichrist and his defeat by the glorified Lord) cannot take place until this dated event has occurred.

### ***Gospels: The Worldwide Preaching of the Gospel***

In the fulness of time, the Messiah did come, and was cut off, as Daniel prophesied. But in the gospels, the Lord cautions against expecting the kingdom immediately:

Luk 19:11 ... he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

The parable that follows is the parable of the pounds, predicting a period while the nobleman has gone away to receive a kingdom, and his servants must "occupy til I come" (19:13). Similarly, in the Olivet Discourse, he outlines a series of events (Matt 24:4-14) that he calls "the beginning of sorrows" (24:8). He warns his disciples that "the end" will not arrive until these have occurred:

Mat 24:6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but **the end is not yet**. ... 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and **then shall the end come**.

The "gospel" must "be preached in all the world," before the end can come.

### ***Paul: Widespread Apostasy***

The Lord raised up Paul to lead this worldwide preaching of the gospel. But during his ministry, he realizes that something else has to happen before the return of Christ:

2Th 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day shall not come**, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Paul clearly expects three things to happen, in order:

1. First is "a falling away," literally "apostasy." Not only must the gospel be preached to all nations (as the Lord stated), but some of those who claim to be Christ's must turn from him.

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6 Newman, JETS 16:4 [Fall 1973] 229-234

2. This falling away leads to the appearance of the “man of sin,” the Antichrist, the beast from the sea. These first two events set up Revelation 17, in which the great whore (the apostate church) supports the beast (the man of sin) in his totalitarian rule. Paul was aware of the “mystery of iniquity” already at work (2 Thes 2:7).
3. Finally, the Lord comes to destroy the man of sin and set up his kingdom.

At the time Paul writes, the next event to expect is not the return of the Lord, or even the Antichrist, but the great apostasy, the turning aside not only of individuals but also of churches.<sup>7</sup>

### ***The Revelation: Next Stop, the Antichrist***

Thirty years later, the letters to the seven churches show that the apostasy is well underway. In every church but Smyrna and Philadelphia, the Lord has something against the church, some local shortcoming that threatens its health (chart):

*Ephesus:* Rev 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will **remove thy candlestick** out of his place, except thou repent.

*Pergamos:* Rev 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the **doctrine of Balaam**, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Rev 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the **Nicolaitans**, which thing I hate.

*Thyatira:* Rev 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because **thou sufferest that woman Jezebel**, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

*Sardis:* Rev 3:1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that **thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.**

*Laodicea:* Rev 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, **I will spue thee out** of my mouth.

After widespread apostasy, the next stop is the antichrist. The signs of the beast as described in Revelation 11 and 13 are totalitarian government, worship of human leaders, and persecution of true believers. These signs were evident already under Rome in the first century. John in his first epistle, probably written late in the first century, recognizes the approach of antichrist:

1Jn 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, **even now are there many antichrists**; whereby we know that it is the last time.'

1Jn 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof **ye have heard** that it should come; and **even now already** is it in the world.

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<sup>7</sup> He repeats this prophecy in his last letters, 1 Tim 4:1-3 and 2 Tim 3:1-5. The warnings to turn away from false teaching (1 Tim 6:5 MT; 2 Tim 3:5) suggest that it is beginning to appear. Titus, roughly contemporary with 1 Timothy, also knows of apostasy (1:10-11), but the remedy here is to rebuke and put out, not come out (1:13; 3:10), perhaps reflecting a healthier oversight in Crete than in Ephesus (cf. 1 Tim 5:19-25).

Note the temporal contrast in 4:3: in the past they were warned that this spirit would come, and now, in the present, it has. John experienced Rome in this role, and every generation since then has seen some worldly power seeking to rise to this control. We have passed all the intermediate cities on the interstate. The next is the emergence of the final Antichrist. We do not know when, but no intermediate predictions remain to be fulfilled. This is the meaning of John's statements that the things he describes "must shortly be done" (22:6) and are "at hand" (22:10).

The Antichrist is not a separate exit on the interstate, before the return of Christ. His reign is intense but limited, at most three and a half years (Rev 13:5).<sup>8</sup> Compare the book of Daniel, which predicts other events (the rise of Alexander the Great, the division of his kingdom, the career of Antiochus Epiphanes) before the next exit, 70 sabbatical cycles after Daniel, the first advent of Christ (Dan 9:25-27).

## 7a, 12-13, The Advent Promise

The events described as "things which must shortly be done" (22:6) and "at hand" (22:10), according to the timeline in 2 Thessalonians 2, include both the rise of Antichrist and his defeat by the Lord Jesus. Now the Lord focuses in on the second of these.

**7 Behold, I come quickly:**—"Quickly" should not be confused with "shortly" or "at hand," which we studied in connection with 22:12. Compare a similar expression in Mal 3:1 (chart),

Mal 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall **suddenly** come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi, writing about 400 BC, describes the coming of the Lord to his temple, probably referring to the return of Christ in Revelation 19 to overthrow the Antichrist, who has occupied the temple of God (2 Thes 2:4).<sup>9</sup> He describes it as "sudden." This does not mean "next on the prophetic agenda" (and thus to be expected). The coming of Alexander the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes, the rise of Rome, and the sacrificial death of the Messiah (all predicted by Daniel 150 years before) had to come first. Rather, it means "unexpected," "without warning." The Lord uses the Greek word that translates "suddenly" in Mal 3:1 to describe his unexpected return:

Mrk 13:35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: 36 Lest coming **suddenly** he find you sleeping.<sup>10</sup>

"Shortly" and "at hand" in 22:6, 10 address the relation of the Lord's coming to the present time. "Quickly" says that when it happens, it will be so fast that we will have no warning.

1Co 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 **In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye**, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Note the parallels to this promise earlier in the Revelation:

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8 And possibly shortened further, Matt 24:22.

9 Matt 11:10 quotes Mal 3:1 in reference to John the Baptist, suggesting that the passage is a foreshortened view that includes both the first coming of the Lord (e.g., John 2:15) and the second (resulting in true reform of the Levites, Mal 3:3-4) and judgment on the wicked (3:5).

10 See note for discussion of the vocabulary for "suddenly."



Rev 2:16 Repent; or else **I will come unto thee quickly**, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Rev 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, **I will come on thee as a thief**, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Rev 3:11 **Behold, I come quickly**: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Rev 16:15 **Behold, I come as a thief**. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

This promise of the Lord’s return marks the end of the delay imposed in Psalm 110,

Psa. 110:1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The Son has obediently waited, and now the time has come for him to return:

Psa 110:2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. ... 5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

This phrase recurs in 22:12, marking the alternation:

**12 And, behold, I come quickly;**

As with the first element, the second panel amplifies the first, in this case by describing what happens when he comes.

**and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**—The consistent teaching of the NT is that while we are justified by faith (Rom 3:28; 5:1; Gal 2:16; 3:24), we will be judged according to our works. The Lord taught (chart):

Mat 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; **and then he shall reward every man according to his works.**

Paul lays this down as a general rule, in a beautifully structured chiasm in Rom 2:5-11 (Table 3, chart):

Rom 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; **6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:**

...

Each panel contrasts the two possible outcomes: one positive (eternal life; glory, honor, and peace), and one negative (indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish). Each outcome depends on the conduct of those who experience it. In the first half of the chiasm, the positive outcome is first, followed by the negative, and both are preceded by the behavior that leads to them, while in the second half, the

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:		11 For there is no respect of persons with God.
7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality,		to every man that worketh good, <b>to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:</b>
eternal life:		10 But glory, honour, and peace,
8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness,		upon every soul of man that doeth evil, <b>of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;</b>
indignation and wrath,		9 Tribulation and anguish,

Table 3: The Reward Chiasm in Romans 2

negative outcome comes first, and the outcomes precede the conditions. The second half amplifies the first, to include Gentiles along with Jews. Rom 2:6 and 11 summarize: Positively, God renders to each according to his deeds. Negatively, he doesn't give anyone a special pass.

We saw, at the Great White Throne (chart),

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, **according to their works**. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man **according to their works**.

On our reading, only the wicked are at the great white throne, but believers are not immune to God's review of their works:

2Co 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, **according to that he hath done**, whether it be good or bad.

True salvation changes one's life. In fact, this is part of the work of the Holy Spirit, under the new covenant:

Ezk 36:25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And **I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them**.

In Romans 7, Paul laments the weakness of the flesh to keep the law of God:

Rom 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

But in Romans 8, he presents the answer, the New Covenant gift of the Holy Spirit:

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Thus when 1 John gives three tests of a genuine faith,<sup>11</sup> the first is:

1Jn 2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, **if we keep his commandments**.

The amplification of the second element reminds them of his authority to act as judge (thus Osborne, Thomas, etc.):

**13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.**—This triple title, here claimed by the Lord Jesus, is another mark of the identification of the Father and the

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11 R. Law, *The Tests of Life*. Edinburgh: T. Clark, 1909. The other two are an orthodox Christology and love for other believers.

Son in the New Heavens and New Earth, fulfilling 1 Cor 15:28, “that God may be all in all.” Consider how each of these is used in the Revelation.<sup>12</sup> To avoid confusion, note that the occurrence of two of these titles in 1:11 is not in the Majority Text:

Rev. 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 Saying, ~~I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last~~: what thou seest, write in a book

**Alpha and Omega**—This phrase appears only twice before (MT 1:10 lacks it). The first instance is of the Father, in 1:8 (the title “the Almighty” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew צבאות *tsebaōt* H6635, translated “hosts” in the common OT name, “Lord of Hosts”).

Rev. 1:8 I am **Alpha and Omega**, ~~the beginning and the ending~~, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, **the Almighty**.

The next appears in the transition between the third and fourth visions:

Rev. 21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And he said unto me, ~~It is done. I am~~ I have become **Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end**. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Note the majority reading, not “it is done,” but “I have become.” The one sitting on the throne earlier in the book is the Father, but now, in the New Heavens and New Earth, the Son and Father are enthroned together (22:3, “the throne of God and of the Lamb”).

So “Alpha and Omega,” originally a title of the Father, now becomes the title of the Son as well.

**the beginning and the end**—MT lacks this expression in 1:10. There is an early hint of it in the letter to Laodicea,

Rev 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the **beginning** of the creation of God;

Next, it appears in 21:6, along with “Alpha and Omega.”

**the first and the last**—The two earlier instances of this title both refer to the Son:

Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; **I am the first and the last**:

Rev 2:8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith **the first and the last**, which was dead, and is alive;

Notably, this is a title claimed by Jehovah in Isaiah:<sup>13</sup>

Isa 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; **I am the first, and I am the last**; and beside me there is no God.

Isa 48:12 Harken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; **I am the first, I also am the last**.

12 There are numerous textual variants. We follow the Majority Reading as edited by Robinson and Pierpont. See note with summary table on divine titles in the Revelation.

13 Isa 41:4, “I the Lord, the first and with the last [plural, sc. generations],” introduces this theme, but does not present the stark contrast of 44:6 and 48:12.

So “Alpha and Omega” is initially a title of the Father, and “Beginning and End” with “First and Last” of the Son, but (as in so many other ways) by the time we get to the end of the book, the vision of 1 Corinthians 15 has been realized:

1Co 15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

## 7b, 14-15, Blessing on the Obedient

The third element in each panel picks up the theme of obedience in the amplified second element, promising blessings on those who obey the Revelation in particular, and God’s commandments in general. These blessings conclude a series of seven beatitudes that punctuate the book (see note; Figure 3, chart). All but one appear after the entry of the Antichrist, providing increasing encouragement to the saints who are under persecution.

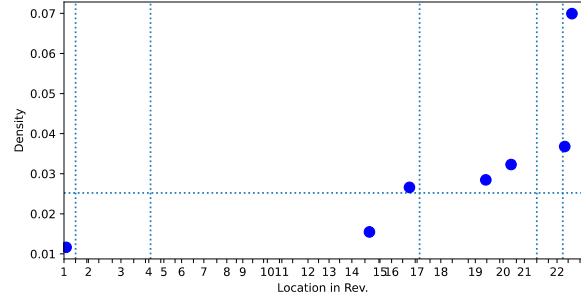


Figure 3: μακάριος in the Revelation

The first is very close to the last two, and in particular to 7b, proclaiming a blessing on those who hear and obey what John is recording:

Rev. 1:3 **Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein:** for the time is at hand.

That obedience may have unpleasant consequences, so next, he blesses the martyrs:

Rev. 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Next is a reference to the Lord’s return. The watchman must not lay aside his clothes, but keep them on to repel any intruder.

Rev. 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

The NT describes both our position in Christ, and our godly practice, as clothing:

Col 3:8 But now ye also **put off** all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that **ye have put off the old man** with his deeds; 10 And **have put on the new man**, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. 12 **Put on therefore**, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; ...

Attention to practical holiness will help us be ready for the Lord’s return.

Those who are thus prepared will enjoy the next two blessings, in the millennial kingdom:

Rev. 19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Rev. 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Finally these last two bring us back to the first beatitude’s exhortation to obedience.

Rev. 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

**7b blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.**—This blessing reminds us of the first blessing in the book:

Rev. 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and **keep those things which are written therein**: for the time is at hand.

**14 Blessed are they that do his commandments,**—Two questions arise here:

1. Textual readings differ. Most read οἱ ποιοῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ, as in the AV. Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus read οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν “the ones who wash their garments.” We follow the majority reading.

2. To whom does “his” refer?

“Commandment” ἐντολή *entolē* G1785 is the consistent LXX translation of מצוה *mitswah* H4687, which in the first five books of the Bible is used overwhelmingly of God’s commandments (such as the ten commandments) (see note). Only in later books is it applied to the commandments of men. Recall the

	Rv 21:8	Rv 22:15	1Cr 5:11	1Cr 6:9-10	Ga 5:19-21	Ep 5:3-5	Cl 3:5-8	1Tm 1:9-10	2Tm 3:2-5
1 No Other gods	X								
2 No Idols	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
3 Name in Vain							X		X
4 Sabbath Day									
5 Father & Mother								X	X
6 Murderer	X	X			X		X	X	
7 Adultery	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
8 Steal			X	X				X	
9 False Witness	X	X						X	
10 Covetous			X	X		X	X		
Other			X	X	X	X	X		X

Table 4: References to the Ten Commandments in the NT Epistles (cf. also Matt 15:19 and Mark 7:21-22). The only one not repeated is the Sabbath day.

alignment of the spiritually fatal actions with the Ten Commandments (Table 4, chart, see notes to Rev 19b-20). The one commandment that is not repeated is the sabbath day, which Paul specifically excepts:

Col 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

But John’s example shows that the early church set apart the first day of the week for spiritual exercise:

Rev 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day

This final blessing reinforces the notice in 22:12 that when the Lord returns, he will give every one according to his works.

**that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.**—Note the parallel with the promise in 21:27 (chart),

Rev 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

There, the condition for entering the city was being among God's elect. Here, it is keeping his commandments. But as we have seen, the two describe the same people, the faithful ones whom God, through the new covenant blessing of his Spirit, enables to obey him.

**15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.**—This curse balances the blessing of v. 14. Those who obey God's commandments enter in; those who disobey are left without. This verse recalls the grounds for condemnation we saw at the Great White Throne:

Rev 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

## 8-9, John's Interruption

At the end of the first panel, John interrupts to report his diligent attention to what he has seen.

**8 And I John saw βλέπω *blepō* G991 these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen βλέπω,**—Note the tidy chiasm of saw ... heard ... heard ... saw. He has received both visions and verbal reports.

The verb “see, saw” βλέπω *blepō* G991 deserves special attention. The usual verb for seeing is ὁράω *horaō* G3708. The two words appear a total of 73 times in the Revelation, but not all of these have John as the subject. John is said to see ὁράω 51 times, but only four times does he see βλέπω (Figure 4, chart). Two of these four instances are here in 22:8, and the other two are at the start of the first vision, where the Lord says to him,

Rev. 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou **seest βλέπω**, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; ... 12 And I turned to **see βλέπω** the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I **saw ὁράω** seven golden candlesticks;

βλέπω, at the start and end of the book, means not only to perceive, but to look, to direct one's attention toward something. 1:12 shows the difference in meaning. At the outset, the Lord Jesus charges him to pay careful attention, and to record what he learns. Now he is almost done, and he reports that he has been faithful in his task.

The distribution of this verb in the Revelation exhorts us in our service to the Lord. His service demands our careful attention. Since we believe that his word is our authority, we must be

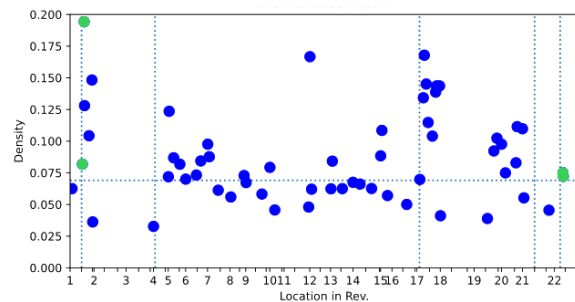


Figure 4: How John sees in the Revelation: *blepw, oraw*

diligent in seeking it out and meditating on it. When we report to him at the end of a task, may it be our joy to report, like John, that we have not only seen, but paid diligent attention.

Most of what John has seen and heard has been through the guidance of an angel, promised at the start of the book (chart):

Rev 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it **by his angel** unto his servant John:

In 22:6, the Lord endorsed what he had heard:

Rev 22:6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

Now John feels some recognition is appropriate:

**I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. 9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not:**—His response is inappropriate, and the last thing the angel reveals to him is that he must not bow down before a creature.

John should have known this. At the announcement of the marriage supper of the Lamb, he fell down before his angelic guide, and received a similar rebuke (Table 5, chart). This second rebuke follows closely the reason given in the earlier one.

**for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book:**—The angel again declares himself to be a fellowservant, with John and other faithful believers. Together, they serve the Lord. They hold equal rank in the affairs of heaven, and neither should offer worship to another.

Rev 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him.	Rev 22:8 ... I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.
And he said unto me, See thou do it not:	9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not:
I am thy fellowservant,	for I am thy fellowservant,
and of thy brethren	and of thy brethren the prophets,
that have the testimony of Jesus:	and of them which keep the sayings of this book:
worship God:	worship God.

**worship God.**—Worship should be devoted to God alone.

Table 5: Parallel between 19:10 and 22:8-9

We can perhaps understand why John would feel tempted to honor the angel through whom he has received such wonderful insights; compare the behavior of Cornelius toward Peter:

Act 10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. 26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

But our Lord has forbidden such exaltation of the messenger:

Mat 23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

The angel’s refusal of worship extends by implication to who are also God’s servants, and here he adds to those in 19:10, “the prophets.” Perhaps John reports his second failure, and the

angel’s second rebuke, to remind his readers how easy it is to fall into this inappropriate honoring of the messenger, and how important it is to avoid it.

## 16-20a, Three Closing Testimonies

The structure of the alternation in Table 2 shows that it ends in 22:15. Structure also marks the next section, with three instances of the verb “to testify” *μαρτυρέω* *martureō* G3140 (from which we get our word “martyr”) (Table 6, chart). A similar cluster of words from this root (sometimes translated “witness, bear record, testimony”) opens the book (Figure 5, chart), where the density also peaks above the average line, the horizontal dotted line where all instances would be if they were evenly spaced.<sup>14</sup>

Rev 1:1 The Revelation of **Jesus Christ**, which **God** gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it **by his angel** unto his servant **John**: 2 Who **bare record** of the word of God, and of the **testimony** of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Ref	Who?	What?
22:16-17	Angel	Invitation
22:18-19	John?	Warning
22:20	Lord	I come

Table 6: Three Final Testimonies

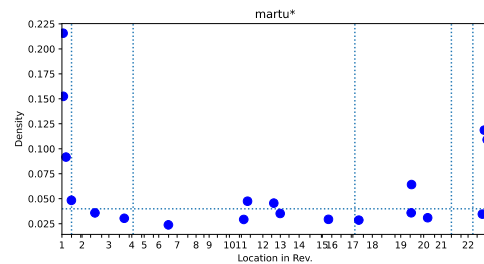


Figure 5: Instances of *μαρτυρέω* and Cognates

Words like “witness” and “testify” recall criminal cases, where a crucial issue is the “chain of custody” through which evidence is supported, to ensure that it has not been falsified. The Revelation begins by describing the chain of custody of the teaching in this book, and now at the end, we are reminded of the role of three critical witnesses (Table 6):

- In 22:16-17, based on the testimony given by the angel, the Lord issues three final invitations.
- In 22:18-19, we will suggest that John is testifying to the need to preserve the message intact.
- In 22:20, the Lord Jesus testifies a final time of his sudden return.

## 16-17, First Testimony: Final Invitations

The book closes with three invitations to “come.” The Lord authenticates these invitations in two ways: by endorsing John’s angelic guide, and then by reminding John of his own credentials.

**16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.**—First, the Lord once more endorses the angelic messenger. Angels have firsthand knowledge of the divine plan of judgment, in which they play an active role (blowing the trumpets and pouring out the bowls). One of them is even involved in preaching the gospel in the last days of the Antichrist, when the believers have been decimated (chart):

Rev 14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

John’s tour has been conducted by witnesses with first-hand knowledge of what will happen. We can have confidence in what they report.

<sup>14</sup> In addition to 1:1-2, see also 1:5, “Jesus Christ, who is the faithful **witness**,” and 1:9, “for the **testimony** of Jesus Christ.”



Note the recipient. The angels have taught John throughout the book, but “you” is plural, and so does not refer to John alone. See note. Most likely, we have here an echo of 1:4,

Rev 1:4 John to the seven **churches** which are in Asia: Grace be unto **you**, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

It is the Lord himself who has sent the angel to bear witness not just to John, but to the believers collectively, the churches to whom the book is sent. So John and his readers should pay attention.

The second reason we should believe the invitations is the identity of the one who gives them. The Lord Jesus now gives several titles describing himself.

**I am the root and the offspring of David**,—Note the paradox in these two titles. “Root of David” implies one from whom David comes, while “offspring” implies one descended from David. We see the same contrast in the introduction of the Lord in 5:5,<sup>15</sup>

Rev 5:5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the **Root of David**, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Again we have “the root of David,” but now “Lion of the tribe of Judah” corresponds to “offspring of David.” It recalls Jacob’s blessing on his sons:

Gen 49:10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.<sup>16</sup>

The Messianic king descends from Judah, and ultimately from David. And indeed, Isaiah promised that a branch would spring out of the root of Jesse.

Isa 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

The Jewish Targums agree with Christian interpreters that the reference is to the Messiah. This image of the Messiah as a branch is a continuing theme through the prophets:<sup>17</sup>

Jer 23:5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous **Branch**, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

But Isaiah also drew the attention of the people to something distinct from the branch: the root from which it springs (chart):

Isa 11:10 And in that day there shall be a **root of Jesse**, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

If the branch is the Messiah, the root must be one from whom he comes. 22:16 claims that he fulfills both of these promises. Compare the paradox with which the Lord confounded the Pharisees,

Mat 22:41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. 43 He saith unto

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15 See notes on that verse in [https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/rev2/notes/Rev\\_4-5.pdf](https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/rev2/notes/Rev_4-5.pdf)

16 “Lion of Judah” appears only in Gen 49:10, Rev 5:5, and Hos 5:14, where the Lord describes himself as a lion in bringing judgment on Israel and Judah. Does this title perhaps emphasize the judgments of the book?

17 See also Jer 33:15, Zec 3:8, Zec 6:12.

them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, 44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? 45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

**and the bright and morning πρωϊνός star.**—The morning star, the planet Venus, appears just before sunrise, encouraging those who long for the dawn. The dawn is the coming kingdom of God, when the Lord Jesus returns in his majesty like the rising sun:

Mal 4:2 But unto you that fear my name shall the **Sun of righteousness** arise with healing in his wings ...

But if the Lord Jesus is the rising sun, how is he also the morning star? He is probably referring here to his first advent, Recall the words of Zacharias, at the birth of John the Baptist.

Luk 1:78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring ἀνατολή *anatolē* G395 from on high hath visited us,

The word “dayspring” here is used in the OT to describe the Messiah at his first coming. His message was that the kingdom of God (the full day) was at hand, and his first advent was like the morning star, announcing the coming of the dawn.

The cognate verb appears in Balaam’s prophecy:

Num 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come ἀνατέλλω *anatellō* G393 a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

The LXX translates the title “branch” or “sprout” for the Messiah in Jer. 23:5, Zech. 3:8 and 6:12 with the word “dayspring,” rising. So the Lord presents himself at three points in history:

1. He is the root of David, the one who created David and his family.
2. He is the morning star, who appeared two thousand years ago to announce that the kingdom of God is at hand.
3. He is the final offspring of David, the conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah, who will appear to set up the earthly kingdom of God.

Now we come to the message that 22:16 has authenticated:

**17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**—Here are three invitations to come.

Who is speaking, and to whom are these invitations addressed? We will suggest that the Lord is speaking, and the successive invitations are addressed differently.<sup>18</sup> We will suggest that the first invitation urges the Lord to fulfill his promise to come, the last is addressed to unbelievers, and the one in the center combines these two (Figure 6, chart).



The first “Come” is addressed to the Lord. So far in the chapter, he has twice promised to “come quickly.” Now the

Figure 6: The three invitations of 22:17

18 The repeated invitation “come ... come ... come” recalls Isa 55:1, but those invitations were all addressed to the people, while the context here suggests that the first is addressed to the Lord who has just promised twice to “come quickly.”

church, the bride of Christ, claims that promise, and asks him to come, supported by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8 supports the idea that the Spirit supports us in our call for the Lord's return (chart). The subject, as in the Revelation, is our present suffering, and the coming glory:

Rom 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

In this condition, we continually cry out to God for this promised deliverance:

Rom 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Our groanings cry out to the Lord to return. And the Spirit supports these supplications:

Rom 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but **the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us** with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The Lord has promised twice to come quickly (22:7, 12), and will repeat this promise in 22:20. Now he reports, "The Spirit and the bride whom the Spirit indwells are calling me to come."

Set the second invitation aside for a moment, and consider the third, "Come." This is clearly the Lord's invitation to sinners to come, recalling his invitation during his earthly ministry(chart),

Mat 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

In his gospel, John records multiple invitations of the Lord that use the figure of living water:

Jhn 4:13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Jhn 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Here he repeats that invitation.

So the first invitation is to the Lord himself to return, while the third is to unbelievers to receive the Lord while the door is still open. The central invitation to come, spoken by those who hear the Revelation read in the churches, is deliberately imprecise. The hearer should both call for the Lord to come (as John will in 22:20), but also call on the thirsty, for whose salvation the Lord is delaying his coming. The message to the churches is, "Do you want me to come quickly? Then invite others to come to me, for I will not return until my church is complete." Peter tells us that the Lord's coming is delayed to wait for all of his church to be saved:

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to **us**-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all [of **us**] should come to repentance.

He goes on to tell us to hasten the coming of the Lord:

2Pe 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and ~~hasting unto~~ **hastening** the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

How can our “holy conversation and godliness” hasten the coming of the Lord? By gathering in those whom the Lord has chosen, who have not yet received him. The best way we can invite the Lord to return soon, is to invite others to come to him.

## 18-19, Second Testimony: The Inviolability of the Message

**18 For I testify** unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book,—“For” is not the majority text. This testimony is not subordinate to the previous one, but parallel to it.

**If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the ~~book~~ tree of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**—With “change not,” compare “seal not” in v. 10. God wants the contents of this book to be presented intact to his people. Those who read it in the congregation are not to skip over parts, or add additional prophecies.

This warning recalls Moses’ warnings to Israel in Deuteronomy (Table 7, chart). The warning

Rev 22	Deut 4	Deut 12	Deut 29
18 If any man shall add unto these things,	2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you,	thou shalt not add thereto,	
God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:			20 The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him,
19 And if any man shall take away from the words of <b>the book of this prophecy,</b>	neither shall ye diminish ought from it,	nor diminish from it.	
God shall take away his part <b>out of the <del>book</del> tree of life,</b> and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.			and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven. 21 And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in <b>this book of the law:</b>

Table 7: *Parallels to Rev 22:18-19 in Deuteronomy*

against adding or removing appears twice, in Deut 4:2 and 12:32, and the consequences, of adding judgments or removing one’s portion, are in Deut 29:20-21. Moses delivers all three warnings in Deuteronomy. So here, John, who delivers the Revelation to the churches, may be the subject of “I testify” (see note on subjects of μαρτυρέω).

In 22:19, the AV “book of life” raises questions. Elsewhere, the book of life is the book of election. How can God remove people from this book?

The expression “book of life” does not appear in any Greek manuscript of Rev 22:19. The text from which the AV was translated was originally prepared by Erasmus of Rotterdam and published in 1516. He had only one manuscript of the Revelation, and it was lacking the last page, so he translated the last six verses from the Latin Vulgate into Greek, and his version of the Vulgate read “book of life.” All Greek mss agree that the threat here is exclusion from the tree of life, the inverse of the blessing in 22:14,

Rev 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

The Revelation is “the book of this prophecy” (Rev 22:19), while Deuteronomy is “this book of the law” (Deut 29:21). But Deuteronomy is also concerned with prophecy. In fact, in the LXX, Deut 12:32 is actually 13:1, and introduces a warning against false prophets in chapter 13 (chart):

Deu 12:32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it. 13:1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: ...

Moses was warning about a struggle between rival prophets, some supporting the law of God that forbade idolatry, while others allowing the worship of images alongside the Lord. Recall Micah’s house of gods in Judges 17-18, or the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18. The letters to the churches in Revelation 2-3 also reflect a prophetic struggle (Aune):

Rev 2:2 (Ephesus) I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried **them which say they are apostles, and are not**, and hast found them liars:

Rev 2:14 (Pergamos) But I have a few things against thee, because **thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam**, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Rev 2:20 (Thyatira) Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, **which calleth herself a prophetess**, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

The New Testament pattern encourages participation of multiple teachers when the Lord’s people gather, with instructions to those who hear to discern:

1Co 14:29 **Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.** 30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. 31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

1Th 5:20 Despise not prophesyings. 21 **Prove all things**; hold fast that which is good.

John is concerned that when the messengers from the churches read the Revelation in the churches, some people (like Jezebel) may invoke Paul’s principle to support their right to contest

what John has written. In his final testimony, John claims a special privilege for his prophecy, as Paul had claimed for his, even while urging openness:

1Co 14:37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

John, like Paul, knows that his words are qualitatively different from the prophecies given in the meetings, subject to challenge by other prophets. They rank, with Deuteronomy, as inspired Scripture, and in the course of time the churches recognized it as such.

## 20, Third Testimony: Promise of the Lord's Return

**20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.**—For the third time in the epilog, the Lord emphasizes the need for his audience to be prepared. The first two times (22:7, 12) he says “behold, I come quickly.” This time he confirms those announcements: “Surely [ὡαί ναι G3483],” that is, “yes, indeed.” He is not calling their attention to the announcement, but reinforcing the previous ones.

### 20b, John's Response

The book closes with two statements, bracketed by “Amen.”

**Amen.**—John fervently desires that the Lord's promise might be realized.

**Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**—The first statement responds to the Lord's testimony in 20a. John shows the same eagerness for the Lord's kingdom that the disciples indicated in Acts 1 (chart).

Act 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

In fact, the Lord taught his disciples to pray for this:

Mat 6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Many other NT parallels urge this attitude. But at many periods in history, professing believers have been indifferent to the Lord's return. This is particularly the case in churches that treat the millennium as an allegory for heaven, or for God's rule on earth through historical governments. John was not satisfied with either of these. He eagerly awaited the Lord's return.

Are we so comfortable in this present evil world that we do not long for the Lord's return? As often, we see a parallel in the experience of King David. As David was attacked by his son Absalom, so our Lord's authority will be opposed by the Antichrist, supported by the apostate church. As David defeated Absalom, so the Lord will defeat the Antichrist. But after David's victory, the people needed encouragement to urge David to return to his throne in Jerusalem:

2Sa 19:9 And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom. 10 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back? 11 And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house. 12 Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?

Many who claim the name of Christ need this encouragement, to recognize the fallen nature of this present world, and look beyond it to desire, and pray for, the return of Christ.

## 21, Letter Close

**21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all the saints.**—The second statement, to the readers, closes the letter begun in 1:4,

Rev 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

In both verses, John is praying that God would continue to bestow his grace, his unmerited favor, on the churches.

These are the only two instances of “grace” *χάρις charis* G5485 in the book, reflecting how Paul opens and closes his letters. None of John’s letters closes this way, and only one (2 John 3) opens with a prayer for peace. But John has been ministering in Asia minor, traditionally in Ephesus, where Paul taught for more than two years (Acts 19:8, 10), and may have studied Paul’s teachings and letters, even as Peter did:

2Pe 3:15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other **scriptures**, unto their own destruction.

Peter recognizes Paul’s letters as scripture. If even these inspired teachers valued what the Spirit gave their colleagues, how much more should we treasure the books they have left us.<sup>19</sup>

In most mss, the benediction is addressed to “all the saints.” This title (plural of the adjective “holy,” *ἅγιος hagios* G40) is a favorite of John, and appears more often in the Revelation than in any other NT book. It shows three concentrations (Figure 7, chart). Rev 8:3,4 refers to the prayers of the saints offered upon the golden altar:

Rev 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all **saints** upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the **saints**, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

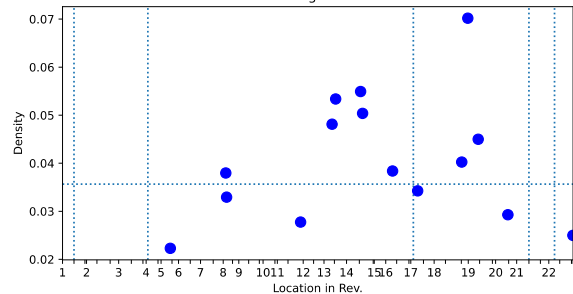


Figure 7: Plural adjective "saints" in the Revelation

These prayers recall the cry of the martyrs, suggesting that these saints are also suffering.

Rev 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not **judge and avenge our blood** on them that dwell on the earth?

<sup>19</sup> Compare the extensive passages in the OT prophets that apparently cite their colleagues.

## Rev 22:6-21, Epilog

The next peak describes the saints under the Antichrist, who makes war with them (13:7) while they exhibit patience and faith (13:10, 14:12).

Rev 13:7 And it was given unto him to make war with the **saints**, and to overcome them:

Rev 13:10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the **saints**.

Rev 14:12 Here is the patience of the **saints**: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

The third peak describes the victory of the saints over Babylon. She has shed their blood:

Rev 18:24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of **saints**, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Now they rejoice over her:

Rev 18:20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye ~~holy~~ **saints** and apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

And they muster in white linen as the Lord's army when he returns to subdue the nations:

Rev 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of **saints**.

“Saints” literally means “holy ones,” that is, “separated ones.” Each of these peaks emphasizes the nature of their separation: they are standing against a hostile world system that persecutes them. Now, at the close of the book, John prays for God's grace and peace to be with them.

**Amen.**—This Hebrew word often expresses the agreement of one person with what another says. In 22:20, John agrees with the Lord's promise of his sudden return. But it also appears frequently at the end of a prayer or benediction, reinforcing the request that has been expressed: “May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Indeed, may it be so.”



## Notes

### βλέπω G991 vs. ὁράω G3708 vs. εἶδον G1492

In Accordance, searches on ὁράω also yield εἶδον.

Consider the subjects of the verb βλέπω:

#### John

Rev. 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou **seest**, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

	ראה	פקה	פנה	רקש	Total
βλέπω	45	2	14	1	123
ὁράω	1013	0	0	0	1394
*κυπτω	0	0	0	16	53
*ανοιγω	0	16	0	0	201
Total	1310	36	134	22	

Table 8: Verbs for Seeing

Rev. 1:12 And I turned to **see** the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

Rev. 22:8 And I John **saw** these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and **seen**, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

#### Laodiceans

Rev. 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest **see**.

#### No one

Rev. 5:3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to **look** thereon.

Rev. 5:4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to **look** thereon.

Rev. 9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can **see**, nor hear, nor walk:

#### Unbelievers

Rev. 11:9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall **see** their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

Rev. 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they **see** his shame.

Rev. 17:8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they **behold** the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

Rev. 18:9 ¶ And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

Rev. 18:18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

## 22:18, Who is the subject of μαρτυρέω *martureō* G3140?

This list includes cognates: μαρτυ\*

### John

Rev. 1:2 Who **bare record** of the word of God, and of the **testimony of Jesus Christ**, and of all things that he saw.

Rev. 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the **testimony of Jesus Christ**.

### Christ

*Note also the phrase, “testimony of Jesus Christ,” which describes the substance of John’s testimony, (1:2, 9), and something held by the martyrs (6:9), those with whom the dragon is angry (12:17), John’s brethren (19:10), and those who rule in the Millennium (20:4)*

Rev. 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful **witness**, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.

Rev. 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true **witness**, the beginning of the creation of God;

Rev. 22:20 He which **testifieth** these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

### Angel

Rev. 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to **testify** unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. *Could this refer to John? But 1:1 mentions the mediating angel: Father → Jesus Christ → Angel → John*

### Martyrs

Rev. 2:13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful **martyr**, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

Rev. 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the **testimony of the Lamb** which they held:

Rev. 11:3 And I will give power unto my two **witnesses**, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

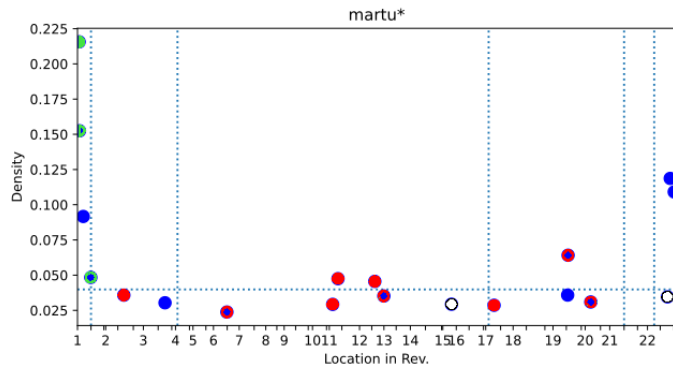


Figure 8: Green: John. Blue: Lord Jesus. Red: Martyrs. Black: special

Rev. 11:7 And when they shall have finished their **testimony**, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

Rev. 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their **testimony**; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Rev. 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the **testimony of Jesus Christ**.

Rev. 17:6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the **martyrs** of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

Rev. 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the **testimony of Jesus**: worship God: for the **testimony of Jesus** is the spirit of prophecy.

Rev. 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the **witness of Jesus**, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

### Unclear

Rev. 15:5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the **testimony** in heaven was opened: *The expression refers to the copy of the covenant that was kept in the ark, a covenant that included blessings and curses on the people. The substance of the testimony of the Revelation is similarly blessings and curses.*

Rev. 22:18 For I **testify** unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: *Compare the warning in Deuteronomy:*

*Deu 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*

*Deu 12:32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.*

*There, it is Moses, the Lord's prophet who imposes the restriction, so John may be speaking here.*

## 22:18 μαρτυρέω ἐπί

This preposition with this verb can indicate:

- the subject of the testimony, Heb 11:4 “God testifying **of** his gifts,” Num 35:30 “one witness shall not testify **against**  $\alpha$  any person to cause him to die.” (but Dt 19:15 translates  $\alpha$  with κατά)
- the recipient of the testimony, 1 Tim 6:13 “Christ Jesus, who **before** Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession”

Beale has an extensive survey of possible understandings, focused on whether “you” and “the churches” refer to the same group. “You” is plural, and so cannot refer to John. He settles on identifying them, based on the parallel with 1:4.



6:17 For the great day of his wrath is **come**; and who shall be able to stand?

9:12 One woe is past; and, behold, there **come** two woes more hereafter.

11:14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe **cometh** quickly.

11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is **come**, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

14:7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is **come**: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

18:10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment **come**.

## John—Green

6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, **Come** and see.

6:3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, **Come** and see.

6:5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, **Come** and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6:7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, **Come** and see.

17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, **Come** hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

## People—Hollow Green

All singular except 7:13, 14.

7:13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence **came** they?

7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which **came** out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

17:10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet **come**; and when he **cometh**, he must continue a short space.

22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, **Come**. And let him that heareth say, **Come**. And let him that is athirst **come**. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

## Angel—Hollow Blue

8:3 And another angel **came** and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

## Marriage of the Lamb—black

19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is **come**, and his wife hath made herself ready.

## The Seven Beatitudes of the Revelation

These beatitudes, like the nine in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:3-11), are marked with the predicate μακάριος *makarios* G3107, more literally “happy.” Another word, also translated “blessed” in the AV, is εὐλογητός *eulogētos* G2128, meaning to be well spoken of, and is properly applied to God (e.g., Eph 1:3; 1 Pet 1:3).

Figure 3 shows their distribution in the book. Who is speaking in each case?

**1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.** —This is part of the preface of the book, and most likely from John himself.

**14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.** —A heavenly voice, just before the unfolding of the bowl judgments

**16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.** —After the sixth bowl; spoken by Christ

**19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.** —Most likely, the angel who introduces the judgment of Satan's allies in 17:1.

**20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.** —Part of John's report of the millennium; probably spoken by John.

**22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.** —As in 16:15, coupled with the announcement of his swift coming, spoken by Christ.

**22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.** —Following MT, “his commandments” suggests that this is the voice of John. In these closing verses, a beatitude from him would balance the one he gave at the opening (1:3). On the other hand, perhaps “his commandments” refers to the Father's commandments: we have read twice of “the commandments of God, and the testimony/faith of Jesus”

12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep **the commandments of God**, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep **the commandments of God**, and the faith of Jesus.

These three vv are the only instances of ἐντολή *entolē* G1785 in the Revelation. The word is quite rare in the Revelation (only 0.3/thousand words; 1 John has 6.5/thousand).

Opt for the Savior endorsing the Father’s commandments.

## Where John Sees and Hears

The epilog differs from the rest of the book in focusing on speech rather than vision as the medium of revelation. This shift is subtle, but we can detect it with careful observation.

Figure 10 plots instances of the verbs ὁράω *oraō* G3708 (blue), βλέπω *blepō* G991 (green), and ἀκούω *akouō* G191 (red) applied to John. While both appear throughout the book, there are clear concentrations, particularly when compared with the random baseline for each set of words (the dashed lines). In particular, from 19:11 (the return of Christ) through the end of the third vision (the judgment of Satan and his allies), John repeatedly sees things, but only in 21:3, transitioning to the NHNE, does he again hear a voice,

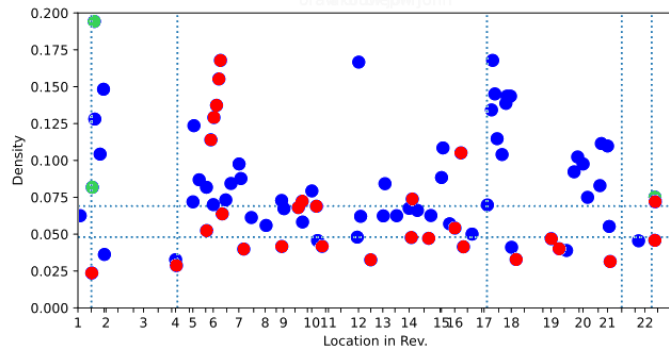


Figure 10: Where John Sees (ὁράω, βλέπω) and hears (ἀκούω)

Rev. 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, 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.

In the fourth “vision” John neither sees nor hears (the instance in 21:22 says that he did *not* see a temple). Then, in 22:8, we read of both modalities:

Rev. 22:8 And I John **saw** these things, and **heard** them. And when I had **heard** and **seen**, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

Note that the density of seeing is at or below its (blue) baseline, while hearing pushes above its (red) baseline.

Another way to see this shift is in the verbs describing the actions of God or the angel in revealing things to John, the phrase καὶ λέγει μοι *kai legei moi* “and he said to me” or √λαλέω μετ’ ἐμοῦ followed by √λέγω] for speech, and various forms of δείκνυμι *deiknumi* G1166 “to show” for vision, plotted in Figure 11. Visual revelation starts in 1:1:

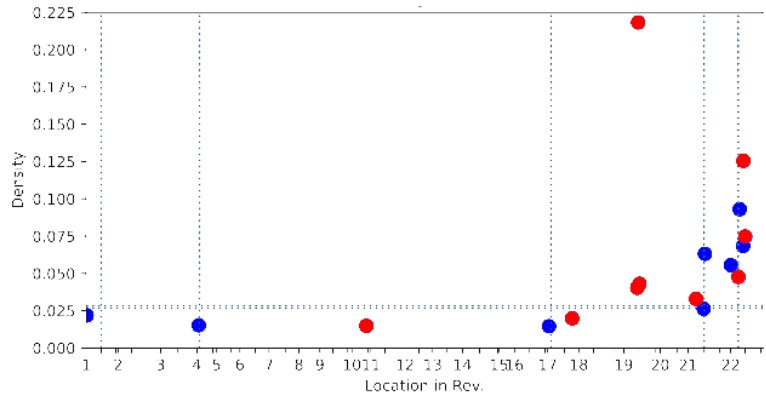
Rev. 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to **shew** unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

But the spoken formula does not appear until 10:9, when John receives the little book, and is much more concentrated. Its two instances in ch. 19 anticipate the revelation of the bride of Christ in chh. 21-22.:

Rev. 19:9 **And he saith unto me**, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

And he saith unto me, These are *Figure 11: δείκνυμι and και λέγει μοι or √λαλέω μετ' ἐμοῦ* the true sayings of God. 10 And + √λέγω I fell at his feet to worship him.

**And he said unto me**, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.



## 22:7 Quickly ταχυ tachy G5035 (Table 9) and Synonyms

	אָפֿן	מהר, מהרה	Total	Notes
ταχ*	0	57	135	NT: ταχ* 40x, all writers
ἄφνω	5	0	10	NT: only 3x in Acts
ἐξάπιν* (α, ης)	10	0	18	NT 1x, Mk 9:8
ἐξαίφνης	4	0	30	Mk 13:36 of 2 <sup>nd</sup> coming; 4x Luke-Acts
παραρῆμα	4	0	17	2x Mt 21:19f; 16x Lk-Acts
σπεύδω	0	26	84	Lk-Acts, 1x 2 Peter
σπουδ*	0	1	41	
Total	25	112		

Table 9: Vocabulary expressing quickness

How does this align with אָפֿן *pithom* H6597, as in Mal 3:1 (where it is translated ἐξαίφνης)? אָפֿן draws almost exclusively on ἄφνω and derivatives, and is never rendered with √ταχ. But the Greek words that do translate אָפֿן are restricted mostly to Luke-Acts, never in Paul or John.

Malachi’s word, in the LXX, is the one chosen by the Lord in Mark 13:36 to describe his unexpected return.

## 22:10 The Time is at Hand ὁ καιρὸς γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐστιν

The Lord gives this as a reason for leaving the Revelation “unsealed,” in contrast with Daniel, which is to remain “sealed” “until the time of the end ἕως καιροῦ συντελείας.” This suggests that ὁ καιρὸς ... ἐγγύς ἐστιν means that the καιρὸς συντελείας has arrived.



It may be useful to review the various descriptions of the end times in the NT. We omit uses of spatial proximity, or temporal proximity to non-eschatological events.

## Synthesis

Daniel's "time of the end" is most closely represented by  $\sqrt{\sigma\upsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda}$ , which uniformly refers to "the end of the world." That end point in Daniel is the victory of the Son of Man over the fourth kingdom, depicted by the little stone in Daniel 2 and more literally in Daniel 7. It is indeed "the end of the world," the end of the kingdoms that have dominated the earth since the time of Daniel, and the inauguration of the kingdom of God

At the outset, we should recognize the import of the commands "seal" (Dan 12:4  $\sigma\phi\rho\alpha\gamma\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ ) and "seal not" ( $\sigma\phi\rho\alpha\gamma\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$  in both Dan 12:4 and 22:10). The root's earliest uses in the Revelation are to describe the sealed scroll ( $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\sigma\phi\rho\alpha\gamma\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ , an intensified form of  $\sigma\phi\rho\alpha\gamma\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$  appearing only here in the NT), whose seals ( $\sigma\phi\rho\alpha\gamma\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ ) the Lamb alone is able to open. As he does so, successive stages of the plan for the current age revealed in Matthew 24 are executed, leading to the full trumpet and bowl judgments. Remember that the first five seal judgments were already in operation at the time John wrote.

The frequent parallels between Revelation and Daniel encourage us to see the seals that the Lord breaks as those Daniel was commanded to put in place. To "seal the book" is to prevent its full execution, and while many of Daniel's details were fulfilled by the first advent, two were not: the little horn out of the fourth beast (Antichrist), and the sending of the Son of Man in judgment, both in Daniel 7.

So the sealing of Daniel's scroll indicates that (some of) its prophecies may not yet be fulfilled, for the "time of the end" has not yet come. Leaving John's scroll unsealed indicates that any of its predictions may now be fulfilled.

The Lord's first advent is marked repeatedly by the announcement that the kingdom of God (Dan 7:14, 19) has drawn nigh ( $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\gamma\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ , verb, perfect tense). One might think that this should be synonymous with the adjective  $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\gamma\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$ , but the latter refers to something still in the future. Four of its six instances are in the Olivet Discourse, describing the Lord's future return. In other words, the kingdom *has* drawn near already, at the first advent, but *will be near* when the Lord returns. And in Lk 19:11, the Lord corrects his disciples when they think that the kingdom is imminent ( $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\chi\rho\eta\mu\alpha$ ).

2 Thess 2:2 offers the same kind of corrective, warning that the day of Christ is not yet at hand ( $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\eta\mu\iota$ ). First two things must happen: the apostasy, and the revelation of the antichrist. Clearly, Paul does not think that either of these has happened at the time he writes 2 Thessalonians (about AD 50). In the light of this revelation, the Lord's return is *not* "at hand" ( $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\eta\mu\iota$ ). But by the time Revelation is written (ca. AD 90), it is at hand (22:10,  $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\gamma\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$ , the term used in the Olivet Discourse). This suggests that the apostasy and the Antichrist are clearly enough seen to suggest that the delay of 2 Thessalonians 2 is over.

The letters to the seven churches of Asia bear this out. Our exposition showed the growing thread of apostasy in these churches, and much of the language that they use presumes the spreading cult of the Roman emperor in his bid for world dominion (the mission of the manifestation of the Antichrist in every age). So the exhortation not to seal the book recognizes that the requirements of 2 Thessalonians 2 have been satisfied, and at any time the great final conflict depicted in the Revelation, especially ch. 13-20, may begin to unfold.

Another line of argument that we should consider is the use of “sudden” language in the OT. For example, Malachi writes (3:1), “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.” But according to Daniel 9, which Malachi already had, the Messiah would not appear for another four hundred years.

## ἐγγύς ἐστιν in Temporal Sense

Matt. 24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that **it is near**, even at the doors. *The coming of the Lord*

Matt. 26:18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, **My time is at hand**; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. *The Lord's passion*

Mark 13:28 ¶ Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: 29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know **that it is nigh**, even at the doors. *The coming of the Lord*

Luke 21:30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. 31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is **nigh at hand**.

Rev. 22:10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time **is at hand**.

## ἐγγίζω

Verbal form of the term used in Rev 22:10, perhaps with inchoative sense, “draws near,” but isn’t near yet. But use of the perfect tense mitigates against this.

Matt. 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven **is at hand**. *pf*

Matt. 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven **is at hand**. *pf*

Matt. 10:7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven **is at hand**. *pf*

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God **is at hand**: repent ye, and believe the gospel. *pf*

Luke 10:9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. *pf*

Luke 10:11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God **is come nigh** unto you. *pf*

Luke 21:8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time **draweth near**: go ye not therefore after them. *pf*

Luke 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof **is nigh**. *pf*

Luke 21:28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption **draweth nigh**. *pres*

James 5:8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord **draweth nigh**. *pf*

1Pet. 4:7 But the end of all things **is at hand**: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. *pf*

Rom. 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is **at hand**: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. *pf*

Heb. 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day **approaching**. *pres*

## παραχρήμα

Only Mt 21:19f and Luke-Acts; usually describes the prompt effect of a miracle. Once it describes the apostles' false expectation of the kingdom:

Luke 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should **immediately** appear.

## ένίστημι

Refers to the present time.

2Th. 2:2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ **is at hand**. *pf*

2Tim. 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times **shall come**. *fut*

## συντέλεια

These are all of the instances. All but Heb 9:26 imply that it has not yet come, but Heb 9:26 says that we are now ἐπι συντελεία τῶν αἰώνων—perhaps indicating imminency, not “in” (as AV).

Matt. 13:39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the **end of the world**; and the reapers are the angels.

Matt. 13:40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in **the end of this world**.

Matt. 13:49 So shall it be at **the end of the world**: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

Matt. 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of **the end of the world**?

Matt. 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto **the end of the world**. Amen.

Heb. 9:26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once **in the end of the world** hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

## συντελέω

Mark 13:4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things **shall be fulfilled**? *pres*; parallel to Matt 24:3 συντέλεια and Lk 21:7 μέλλη ταῦτα γίνεσθαι

## Divine Titles in 22:13 (Table 10)

“tr” marks those in the Textus Receptus, but not Majority Text.

	1:4 Father	1:8	1:11 Son	1:17 Son	2:8 Son	4:8 Father	21:6	22:13
Alpha and Omega		x	tr				I have become ... Son	x
Beginning and end		tr					x; cf. 3:14	x
First and last			tr	x	x			x
Which is, and was, and is to come	x	x				x	x	
Almighty אבאצ		x						

Table 10: Divine Titles in 22:13

## הַצְּחָה H4687 and ἐντολή G1785—LXX alignment (Table 11)

	הַצְּחָה	צוה	תורה	מִשְׁפָּט	
ἐντολή	153	14?	4	1	230
ἐντέλλομαι	8	352	0	0	412
νόμος	1	0	192	1	425
κρίσις	0	0	0	134	263
κρίμα	0	0	1	175	249
δικαίωμα	1	0	0	38	140
σύγκρισις	0	0	0	10	23
	184	498	223	425	

Table 11: Vocabulary for Law, Commandment, Judgment

## ἀνατολή in the LXX

The use of ἀνατολή for “branch” in Jer. 23:5, Zech. 3:8 and 6:12 results from the verbal link with the action of coming forth.

	אָרְבֵּי	מִצְחָה	צִמְחָה	Total
ἀνατολή	37	69	5	181
ἀνατέλλω	0	0	20	58
Total	159	74	45	

Table 12: ἀνατολή and cognates in LXX

## How do People Become ἅγιοι?

The concentrations of the plural adjective ἅγιοι in the Revelation (Figure 7) around instances of spiritual conflict suggest that the word may reflect their own action in setting themselves apart from the worldly system that is persecuting them.

The only person who is said to sanctify himself in the NT is our Lord (John 17:19), though Paul says that if Timothy “purges himself” from pollution, the result will be a “sanctified” vessel, where the verb is middle, like the second instance in John 17:19, not passive.

Both voices appear in the NT, as shown below. Asterisks mark instances with an external agent. In particular, the agent of this middle voice sanctification is named as the Father (Jude 1) and the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:16). 1 Cor 7:14 and Heb 2:11 use the middle of people whose state results from the actions of others. The middle is twice as common as the passive. The distinction appears to be generic-specific, rather than a direct semantic contrast.

### Middle

Eight out of 13 instances have an external agent. But middle and passive are distinct only in future and aorist tenses, and except where noted, these instances are all perfects, so they may well be native passive.

\* John 17:19 And for their sakes I sanctify [active] myself, that they also might **be sanctified through the truth**.

Acts 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which **are sanctified**.

• Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which **are sanctified by faith** that is in me.

\* Jude 1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are **sanctified by God** the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

\* Rom. 15:16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being **sanctified by the Holy Ghost**.

\* 1Cor. 1:2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

\* 1Cor. 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is **sanctified by the wife**, and the unbelieving wife is **sanctified by the husband**: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

\* Heb. 2:11 For both **he that sanctifieth** and they who are **sanctified** are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, [present]

Heb. 10:10 By the which will **we are sanctified through the offering** of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Heb. 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are **sanctified**. [present]

\* 1Tim. 4:5 For it is **sanctified [present] by the word of God and prayer**.

2Tim. 2:21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, **sanctified**, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

## Passive

Matt. 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, **Hallowed** be thy name.

Luke 11:2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, **Hallowed** be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

1Cor. 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are **sanctified**, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and **by the Spirit of our God**.

Heb. 10:29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted **the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified**, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Rev. 22:11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him **be holy** still.