

Revelation

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Chapter 22

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The tree of life had originally been in the garden of Eden. It was the fruit of that tree that allowed people to live forever.

Genesis 2:9 The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

Genesis 3:22

And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”

Ezekiel 47:12

Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.

³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

The 'job' of those in heaven will be to serve God and Christ. That was man's original job – to take care of what God had made.

Genesis 2:15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Having the Lord's name on their forehead is symbolic of belonging to Him. Those in heaven have the Lord's name and not that of the 'beast', like those in Rev 13:16-17.



Revelation 13:16-17

It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads,¹⁷ so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

6 The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”

7 “Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll.”

The things described in the vision are things that must ‘soon come to pass’. (Will begin soon)

⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. ⁹ But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!”

The angel tells John not to worship him – that he is just a fellow servant – but rather to worship God !

Angel worship was a part of the false teaching that was circulating in the first century. People claimed to be given messages by angels that was different from the gospel the apostles taught, and they promoted the worship of those angels.

Colossians 2:18

Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind.

¹⁰ Then he told me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near.”

The symbolic importance of this verse is that the things John has been told about are about to happen (or to begin happening).

Daniel was told to seal up his vision because it involved future events, but John is told NOT to seal his.



Daniel 8:26

“The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future.””

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

11 Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy.”

12 “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.

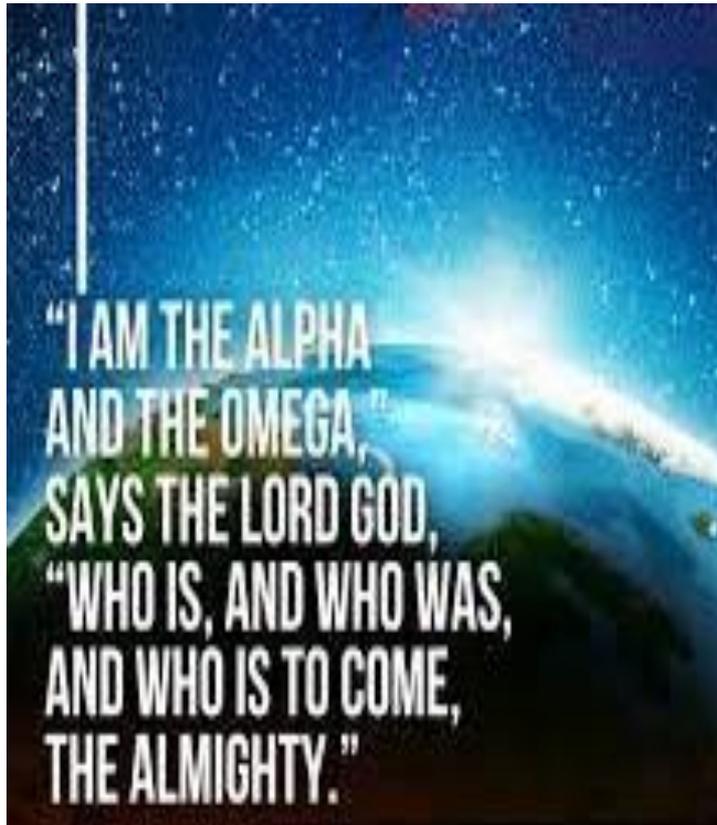
There are some people who will not repent and change their ways no matter what is happening around them, while others will remain faithful regardless of the circumstances. We simply tell the truth of God and the decision is up to the individual.

Ezekiel 3:27 But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you shall say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says.’ Whoever will listen let them listen, and whoever will refuse let them refuse; for they are a rebellious people.

Joshua 24:15 But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

God is in control of all things – he was there from the start (Alpha) and will be there at the end (Omega).



14 “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. 15 Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

Those in heaven have the right to the tree of life – to live forever – and they may enter the city.

The unrighteous are kept outside the city. They are symbolically called ‘dogs’ and are defined as those who practice magic arts (deal with demons), are sexually immoral (do not follow God’s appointed sexual roles for marriage and family) , murderers (those who take innocent life) , and idolaters (those who put anything ahead of God in importance), and everyone who loves and practices falsehood (all liars – they are the children of Satan who was a liar and deceiver from the beginning).

Psalm 101:7 No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.

16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

The angel was sent to John with this testimony **for the churches**. This was not a prophecy about everything that would happen in the world through the end of time, but rather **a prophecy of what would happen that would affect those churches** ! They were under the power of the Roman empire and were affected by what happened to it. While it does contain glimpses of the judgment and heaven , it is directed to them **(Rev 1:4, 10-11)** and is a symbolic representation of what will be affecting them (what is coming soon).

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Jesus is the called the ‘bright morning star’ and the ‘offspring of David’ in accordance with the prophecies:

Isaiah 11:1

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch (Nazareth) will bear fruit.

Numbers 24:17

“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob;

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Jesus is the called the ‘bright morning star’ as He is the light of the world – He is God and God is light (1 John 1:5)

John 8:12

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

The gospel is open to anyone who is ‘thirsty’ for the truth – to all who are seeking the way to eternal life.

Isaiah 55:1-3

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. ² Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. ³ Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. 19 And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.

Don't add to or take away from what is said in the words of this scroll of prophecy. Doing so will place you in the camp of those who have rejected the authority of God and with them you will be excluded from heaven and will be condemned to the lake of burning sulfur with the devil and those who follow him.

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.

Grace => the favor of God

Final Thoughts and Summary of Revelation:

Several times, the point was made that what John is seeing in his revelation will soon begin to happen.

Rev 1:1,3 Rev 22:6,10, 20

This book was written to encourage the Christians who were being imprisoned, killed, or exiled for refusing to acknowledge the Roman Emperor as a god or worship him.

While Revelation includes a vision of the final judgment and of heaven, **it is primarily a vision of the things that would affect the lives of those Christians in the Roman empire. It was given to encourage them to remain faithful and wait for God's judgment on those who were persecuting them.**

It is NOT a book of prophecy about everything that will happen until the end of time as some have tried to make it – that would be of little help or encouragement to those to whom it was addressed at that time.

Also note that John **IS NOT TOLD TO SEAL UP THE VISION** because it applies to some distant future time, as Daniel was (Daniel 8:26)

The Christians were being persecuted.

-They were persecuted by the Jews who rejected Jesus as Messiah. These Jews claimed that they alone were “God’s chosen people” and that the Christians were heretics.

-They were persecuted by Roman officials who did not recognize Christianity as one of the ‘official sanctioned religions’ of the empire. They considered the Christians to be promoting another ‘king’ besides the Roman emperor. This could lead to Christians being called ‘traitors to Rome’ and sentenced to prison or death.

-They were persecuted because they refused to engage in emperor worship. The Roman emperors were proclaimed to be gods and each city had its pagan temples and altars to the current Roman emperor. Each citizen was 'required' to give allegiance to the Roman emperor each year by burning a pinch of incense on the altar and saying that the emperor was 'god'. Once a person did this , they were given a certificate of allegiance signed by the local 'priest' of the emperor. This allowed you to buy and sell in the marketplace and take part in city affairs. Without this you were excluded from the everyday affairs.

Christians refused to do these things and so were shut out of trading or working in the area, as well as living under the threat of arrest as an 'enemy of the state'.

- They were constantly being told by false teachers that they could 'do whatever they wanted', that they could give in and act like all those around them and that God's grace would cover them.



VESPASIAN



69-79 AD

“Is now” (Rev 17:10-11)

DOMITIAN



81-96 AD

“eighth king”

The book of Revelation indicates by the description given in Rev 17:10 that it was written sometime between 69 and 79 AD during the reign of Vespasian – most likely shortly after the fall of Jerusalem.

John, the writer of Revelation is said to died in 99 AD after returning to Ephesus from exile when Emperor Domitian died in 96 AD.

Why does the book of Revelation only tell about the Roman emperors up to Domitian?

When Domitian died in 96 AD , a new set of Roman emperors came to power who are called in history the 'good emperors'. They focused their attention on reuniting the fractured empire, building projects, providing free grain and help for the poor (to win favor), **and ceased the persecution of Christians. The Christians were allowed to worship God as they wished and only came into conflict with Rome when they broke the law as any other citizen.**