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Chapter 21:9-27, 22

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- We've reached the final lesson of our study of Revelation, and as we do we finish with probably the most mysterious content in the book and the Bible
 - John has been asked to describe the New Heavens and New Earth (NH&E), and you can certainly sympathize with his challenge
 - He doesn't tell us much about this world, and what he does give us is focused on the capital city of the new world: New Jerusalem
 - Last week John was given an introduction to the new world as a place without crying, pain, tears and death
 - In other words, the complete fulfillment of all God has promised to us comes in that place
 - This world was never revealed to the Old Testament saints...the prophets prior to Christ were only told of the Kingdom period
 - But now the Lord begins to open the curtain of that coming period of history even as we still wait for the Kingdom to come
 - In a sense, we can say what will be true for Israel in the Kingdom will finally be made true for all humanity in the NH&E
 - John's vision of this world is fleeting, and yet there's enough detail to appreciate that it will differ in significant ways from our present world
 - As I said last week, we are going to note the differences between the present world and the NH&E to understand God's purposes
 - That understanding will build tonight until we see it come together in the end
- Our tour begins with John seeing the city from a distance and preparing to measure the dimensions of the city and describe its appointments

Rev. 21:9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

Rev. 21:10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

Rev. 21:11 having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.

Rev. 21:12 It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

Rev. 21:13 There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west.

Rev. 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

- The angel escorting John on this tour describes the city of New Jerusalem as the Bride of Christ
 - In the rest of the New Testament, the term "Bride of Christ" is a title reserved for

the Church saints

- But when we arrive in the NH&E, that title will transfer to the city itself
 - This makes sense when we remember that the term “Bride of Christ” refers to the dwelling place of Christ’s Spirit
- Just as a man and wife become one flesh in marriage, so did Jesus and the Church become one body by the indwelling of His Spirit
 - In the Church Age, the Bride of Christ is the body of Christ, His Temple
 - But in the eternal age, Christ dwells with the Father in the Temple of the City, so the city has become the Bride of Christ
 - And we dwell in the city as well, so we too are dwelling with Christ
- John’s first view of the city is remarkable, to say the least, beginning with its shape: it’s a perfect cube
 - The length and width of the city is equal to the height of its buildings
 - John doesn’t describe the nature of the New Earth itself which the city rests upon, but John watches from a high mountain
 - So apparently there is land outside the city, some of which John will describe later
- John says the city gleams with the glory of God like a diamond, meaning it will be brighter than our sun is today
 - Curiously, the city is surrounded by a high wall with three gates on each side for a total of twelve gates
 - Normally, walls are for defense, which makes us wonder why this city needs defenses?
 - But later in v.25 we will learn that the gates never close, so clearly no one is worried about an attack
 - These walls and gates are not defensive fortifications, they are memorials remembering God’s work in the prior Creation
 - John says in vs.12-13 that each gate had an angel stationed at it and each gate was named for one of the twelve tribes of Israel
 - We know that Israel eventually had thirteen tribes, so we’re left to wonder which twelve names are used for the gates
 - Manasseh and Ephraim are probably represented by Joseph
- Gates are an entry point, so naming the gates after the twelve tribes reminds us Israel is literally the gateway to redemption and to a knowledge of God
 - God worked through Israel to fulfill His promises of redemption as Paul explained

Rom. 9:4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,

Rom. 9:5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

- So it's appropriate that the gates into the city would memorialize the twelve tribes, because without Israel there is no entry
- Without Israel, there are no covenants, no prophets, no Law, no temple, no Christ...so truly everyone enters through Israel
- But notice the gates are arranged in threes for a total of 12 entry points, and these numbers are also significant
 - The number three is the number for the Godhead, which reminds us that the architect behind everything is God
 - All the work was God's alone and yet he accomplished it through the nation of Israel
 - And the number 12 represents God ruling through people, specifically through the sons of Jacob
 - So the gates will forever remind us that the Lord brought us into this city by working through a family called Israel
- Similarly, John says the foundation will memorialize the role of the Apostles
 - The foundation of the walls will contain twelve different layers of precious stones representing the twelve men who Jesus called
 - The Apostles were the men God used to establish the Church and the opportunity for Gentiles to enter into the city as well
 - And it's appropriate that the apostles would be foundation layers for the walls
 - The memorialization of the two groups together reinforces that Israel and the Church are distinct and yet work together in God's plan
 - Paul explain this relationship in Ephesians 2

Eph. 2:12 remember that you [Gentiles] were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Eph. 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Eph. 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

Eph. 2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,

Eph. 2:16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

Eph. 2:17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;

Eph. 2:18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

Eph. 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

Eph. 2:20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,

Eph. 2:21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,

- Paul describes Gentiles in the Church as fellow heirs with Israel in the household of God
 - The two groups were once separated by a law that God gave to Israel but not to Gentiles
 - But now that Christ has done away with the Law of Moses, He has broken down the dividing wall allowing both groups to join
- This new combined family is built on a foundation of the apostles and prophets, Paul says, meaning their roles in bringing God's revelation
 - So in the NH&E we will live in a city constructed to remind us of Israel's role in allowing all people to enter God's grace
 - And of the apostles' role in bringing the Good News to all Gentiles
 - And the two work together to give God glory, for He used both to His purposes reflected in the number 12
- Now we tour the city beginning with John taking measurements of the city and noting the materials used in its construction

Rev. 21:15 The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.

Rev. 21:16 The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.

Rev. 21:17 And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.

Rev. 21:18 The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

Rev. 21:19 The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald;

Rev. 21:20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

Rev. 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

- As we saw at the temple in Ezekiel's book, measurements are taken by prophets to give the reader perspective and to validate the reality of the prophecy
 - But more than anything, the measurements simply amaze us
 - John says in v.16 that the city is designed as a perfect square 1,500 miles in each direction
 - Obviously, the city is beyond anything we have ever seen on earth today

- A city that is 1,500 long and 1,500 miles wide would span most of the continental U.S.
 - And then even more amazing, the city is a cube, extending upward into the sky by an equal distance of 1,500 miles
 - On today's planet, the outer reaches of Earth's atmosphere only extend about 50 miles or so
 - Satellites orbit at between 100 miles and 26,000 miles
 - So this city will reach up into the range of orbiting satellites today
 - Obviously, this means the world supporting this city must be vastly different than today's world
 - Our atmosphere must be very different or else we don't need an atmosphere any longer
 - Having the penthouse apartment in this world means having a stunning view
- The measurements in vs.15-17 also serve to reinforce a certain meaning
 - My english bible translates the measurements as 1,500 miles in every direction with a wall 72 yards high
 - But the original Greek measurements are in cubits and stadion
 - So the text actually says the city is 12,000 stadion and the wall is 144 cubits
 - These original measurements are important because the city is built on 12s and multiples of 12
 - Again, the number twelve is the number of God's perfect rule through men
 - So this city is a memorial to God's perfect plan which He accomplished in Christ through Israel and the Church
 - Finally, the city is a testimony to the beauty of God's creation in all its extravagance
 - Twelve precious jewels everywhere, the gates are made of a solid carved pearl (i.e., the pearly gates) and pavement is gold
 - The thing we value so much today and work so hard to obtain will be the paving under our feet in that day
 - And once again, the materials come in twelves speaking of God's power to work through the history of mankind
- Moving on in our tour, John begins to describe the city's inhabitants, beginning with its more honored residents

Rev. 21:22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Rev. 21:23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

Rev. 21:24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

Rev. 21:25 In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;

Rev. 21:26 and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;
Rev. 21:27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

- John says there will be no temple in the city because the Godhead is the temple of the city
 - Before, the Lord dwelled among men in a building or inside a human body but in the NH&E there will no longer be need for a physical home
 - Temples existed in the past to separate man from God because sinful man could not be in the presence of a holy God
 - With all sin erased and all enemies gone, the Godhead in fullness will dwell with us in His Person and thus He IS the temple
 - Moreover, notice both the Father and the Son reside together in this age, since finally the Father is able to fellowship with man again
 - Not since Adam walked in the Garden has this been possible
 - And Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 that the Spirit will dwell there as well

1Cor. 15:24 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

1Cor. 15:28 When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

- Paul tells us that after the Kingdom, the Son returns all authority to the Father so God may be all in all
- That phrase is a bit mysterious but it suggests the Godhead being fully present as we see here in the New Jerusalem
- And because the Godhead is fully present, the light of this world comes entirely from God
 - John says the Godhead is the source of the light and there is no sun or moon to cast light on the new earth
 - The glory of God is itself light to the world
- In v.24 John adds that the nations in this world walk by the light of the Lamb
 - Apparently, there will be nations on the earth outside the city of Jerusalem
 - And we hear that kings of the earth bring their glory into the light but we know Paul said that all authority is abolished
 - So the phrase “the kings bring their glory into the light” must mean the kings of the earth hand back their authority
 - So that all glory is now for and from God
- Finally, in v.25 John says that there is never a period of night in the new world, which

raises some interesting questions for us

- First, it causes us to wonder about the construction of the new world
 - If God is the only light and He is resident in the city, then it suggests that the world is flat
 - If the world was a sphere, then the light of God couldn't reach the back side of the planet, causing darkness there
 - Or perhaps the entire universe is equally lit or the laws of physics have been changed...the answer is unclear
- Secondly, we have more things being subtracted from our experience of the world
 - Earlier we heard there is no sea on this new world, and now we hear no sun, no moon and no dark
 - Once again, this raises the question of why the Lord is changing the design?
 - Why did He design a world with these features the first time if the “better” world doesn't need them?
- Let's review the Creation account...beginning with the fact that the world was made out of water, as Peter tell us

2Pet. 3:5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water,

2Pet. 3:6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

- Peter says that God's use of water as the beginning of physical creation was a reflection of His longterm plan for earth
 - He knew a day was coming when He would destroy the planet with water, so water was present from the beginning
- Furthermore, the Creation started with light and darkness in the beginning even before the planet existed and before the sun existed

Gen. 1:2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Gen. 1:3 Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

Gen. 1:4 God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

Gen. 1:5 God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

- So the Lord intended for alternating periods of light and dark and constructed a Creation to fit that plan
- This alternating of light and dark produced the ability to measure the passing of time, so time was created on Day 1

- And the addition of the sun and moon on Days 4 was for seasons and years

Gen. 1:14 Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years;

Gen. 1:15 and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so.

- In the design of the original earth, day and night made it mark the passage of time, and the presence of the sun and moon gave periodicity to that cycle
 - They were not created to provide light, strictly speaking, though they did that too
 - Light existed on Day 1 and so it can exist again without a sun to create it or a moon to reflect it
 - Their principle purpose was to be used as signs, to count time and control earth’s seasons
 - But in the NH&E there will not be a need to count time in the same way (nor will there be seasons or signs needed)
 - We think of time as something endless that we count upward to remember how far we’ve come
 - But from God’s point of view, time has a limit, and so our calendar is not a count up, but a count down
 - It’s a countdown to the end of this earth and to the end of time itself
 - And so when the need to count time ends, so will the objects that were created merely for that purpose
 - Without night there are no “days” to count and without a sun there are no “years” to count
 - So time is endless in the NH&E, although as we will see soon we still count months
- Now we move into the final chapter and John’s final few details about this new and strange world to come

Rev. 22:1 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

Rev. 22:2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Rev. 22:3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;

Rev. 22:4 they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.

Rev. 22:5 And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

- Now John moves to describing a few tantalizing details of the geography and other features of the city
 - From the throne of God come a crystal clear river of water called the water of life which flows through the city
 - The river runs down the middle of a broad street and on either side of the river is the tree of life
 - So the tree straddles the river it appears, and gains its life from the water
 - Then the tree in turn produces fruit in a unique pattern of monthly with a different fruit each month
 - And the leaves will have a healing power for the nations of people living in the NH&E
 - The tree is a special, singular tree called the Tree of Life, and the last time we saw this tree was in the Garden before the fall

Gen. 2:8 The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed.

Gen. 2:9 Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

- Interestingly, Adam and Woman ate of this tree before their corruption and they were barred from it after they sinned
- God said they couldn't eat of it any longer because they would live forever

Gen. 3:22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" —

Gen. 3:23 therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.

Gen. 3:24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

- So while Adam and Woman had no sin, they ate of a tree that provided for eternal life, and after they ate they were barred from the tree
 - In effect, barring Adam and Woman from the tree of life produced physical death in keeping with God's curse
 - They came from dust, and now without access to the tree of life they would return to dust
- We remember something similar from the description of the temple to be found in the Kingdom as told by Ezekiel and Zechariah
 - They described a river that comes from the temple and exits the building to split and flow east and west

- In Ezekiel's description, that river causes life everywhere it goes including fruit trees that have the power to heal in their leaves
 - So in some sense, access to the tree of life is the means of eternal life both in the Kingdom and in the NH&E
 - This explains why the tree is also a part of the landscape in the Kingdom
 - Physical immortality is made possible by the tree, it appears, both in the Kingdom and the NH&E
 - But why did God institute this mechanism in the first place?
 - Notice, the tree itself is sustained by the water coming from the throne, which clearly communicates that all life comes from God
 - So each time we eat of the tree or use the leaves, we are reminded that life is flowing from God to us through the tree
 - In that way the tree is merely a mechanism to remind us where our life comes from
 - When death is ever present and health is fragile, we are constantly reminded of our mortality and our dependance on God
 - But when those worries are gone, what will cause us to remember God's goodness and His life sustaining power?
 - Without a mechanism like the tree, we could easily take immortality for granted and forget the source of all life is God
 - Finally, notice that the tree produces fruit on a monthly schedule, and this will be the time mechanism for the NH&E
 - Time continues to pass and be measured, but it's only measured in months, not years
 - So we always know what month it is but no one is keeping track of the years because it doesn't matter
 - We aren't counting down to anything and time itself is endless for us
 - But we are keeping track of months in a cycle of 12, probably to observe certain celebrations and memorials of Christ
 - The point will be to honor God through the pattern of observance
- Moving forward in the passage, in v.3 John confirms that the curse God pronounced on the earth after the sin of Adam is gone
 - In Genesis 3 God cursed the ground because of Adam, leading to physical death and the eventual destruction of the Earth
 - That curse has now been carried out, and so the curse itself has been removed
 - Without a curse on the earth, the world is idyllic and without flaw
 - More importantly, we are not under any condemnation nor are we dealing with the effects of sin in the earth itself
 - No weeds, no hard work, and especially no sin or death
 - The work we will do will be in service to Christ, and we can't say what that will look like, but we know it will be something worthwhile and enjoyable

- Our perfect nature means we will work in His very presence and see His face
 - And He will mark us as His with His name on us, a seal that assures us that we will never face death or sin again
- Lastly in v.5 John repeats that there is no night, and no need of lamps or the sun because God's light will be everywhere
 - You won't find darkness anywhere, not even shadows
 - There will be no such thing as a dark room or dark closet...light will simply exist in all places
 - We might also assume that we will not sleep either
- Before we finish the chapter, let's conduct that review of all the differences between the first creation and this new creation
 - When we put the differences between the two creations side by side, we notice a pattern
 - The first Creation would soon be corrupted by sin in the Garden leading to the curse on the world and judgment
 - Therefore, in the original Creation the Lord incorporated certain features in the design of the earth in anticipation of sin's arrival
 - These features would become useful to God in illustrating to man important spiritual truths concerning sin and redemption
 - For example, the Lord created a world with light and dark so that He could use the terms to illustrate righteousness and sin

John 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

- And the Lord created the sea knowing He would use it to destroy the world when sin became rampant in Noah's day
- More than that, the Lord uses the covering of deep water as a picture in the Bible of Sheol, the place of the dead

Gen. 49:25 From the God of your father who helps you,
 And by the Almighty who blesses you
 With blessings of heaven above,
 Blessings of the deep that lies beneath,
 Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.

- The Hebrew word for deep is *tehom*, the same word translated "deep oceans" other times
- So the Lord created a world with night and seas to allow Him to illustrate sin and death and eternal punishment
 - And the Lord included objects like the sun and moon to institute the counting down of time and the giving of signs of the end

- Counting time was needed to allow men to mark the fulfillment of prophecy concerning the end of the age
- And the sun and moon are used by God as signs of the approaching end of the age and the coming judgment against sin
- Most of all, notice that the Lord made these design choices for the first earth long before man existed or the fall of Adam took place
 - In other words, God's plan for the first Creation fully anticipated the arrival of sin and His design made accommodations for it
 - The Lord planned to speak about the meaning of these things and explain a plan to correct for them in His Son Jesus
- But now that there is nothing unclean in the Universe and no one is sinning and there is no death, these elements have been removed
 - The NH&E itself has been designed without these illustrations because the things themselves no longer exists
 - Now that sin has gone and will never return, God designs a different world, one suited for a new purpose
 - While the first world was to be a home for a fallen man, the new world is a home designed for glorified sinless man
 - God's very plan for creation necessitated an arrival of sin so that eventually Christ could enter that Creation and die for it

Eph. 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

Eph. 1:5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

Eph. 1:6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

- Without being the author of sin, God expected and accommodated the arrival of sin
 - Because the Creation must know sin and the judgment that sin requires to fully appreciate the love of God
 - We must understand that God is a God of wrath and judgment if we are to praise Him for grace and mercy
 - And now in the NH&E we will forever remember and praise God for His plan of redemption for our sake
- With that we move into the closing comments of Christ to John and to us

Rev. 22:6 And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place.

Rev. 22:7 "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

Rev. 22:8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I

heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

Rev. 22:9 But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.”

Rev. 22:10 And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

Rev. 22:11 “Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.”

Rev. 22:12 “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

Rev. 22:13 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

Rev. 22:15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

- Christ finishes the vision of this book in a personal way for John, first saying these words are faithful and true
 - We can trust the record of this book and receive it in complete confidence that this is the future, and that future is not long away
 - The same Spirit who gave the prophets their words is the One Who gave John these words
 - Read Isaiah and notice all the things written long ago about Jesus that came true
 - Read Daniel and notice all the world events that transpired exactly as Daniel said
 - Did those men get lucky? Impossible! They knew the future because God revealed it to them
 - And John is exactly the same...he saw things that represent your future, and these things are no less certain than the word of the prophets
 - Jesus says He is showing us, His bondservants, the things that soon must take place
 - Yet we know these words were written 2,000 years ago...how is that soon?
 - Because once they begin to unfold, they will move quickly, and in the light of eternity it will be very brief
- So what are we to do with all this in the meantime? Jesus answers that in v. 7 saying, note that He is coming quickly, which is a reference to the Rapture
 - In light of what will transpire, Jesus says we must be thinking about the end at all times
 - We must live with eyes for eternity, prepared for the Lord’s return

- And heeding the words of the book means allowing the reality of these coming events to bear on the decisions you make in life
 - It's one thing to acknowledge intellectually that these things will one day take place
 - But it's another thing to allow that knowledge to influence your life
 - Almost to emphasize the importance of our response, John then relates a moment in v.8 when he fell to worship the angel escorting him
 - But John is rebuked by the angel and reminded that we do not worship fellow servants of God
 - Let that be a reminder not to elevate any servant of God, whether man or spirit, to a point beyond what's appropriate
 - Next in v.10 John is told that unlike John's predecessor, Daniel, John isn't to seal up the prophecy...he's told to leave it unsealed
 - Remember, Daniel was told to seal his vision because it wouldn't be revealed until John's day, which we studied in Chapter 11
 - The prophecy Daniel was given was so far in advance that it couldn't be useful in that earlier day
 - But now the time is short, so the world needs to hear and know the meaning of Revelation
 - This is not a book to be feared or avoided...on the contrary, the book itself pronounces a blessing on those who study it
 - And now the angel tells John that the time is near and we need to understand the meaning of this book
 - In fact, the meaning of this book will be increasingly clear to us as we approach the end
 - That's one reason why I believe we are so close, because the meaning of the book has become so clear to us
- On the other hand, in v.11 John is reminded that the fact this book may be understood in our time doesn't mean that unbelievers *will* profit from it
 - On the contrary, the angel says unbelievers will continue to go about their sinful ways
 - Only when and if the Spirit interrupts that course by bringing them saving faith will it change
 - Meanwhile, those who have the truth will remain in Christ's hand until the end
 - Then in vs.12-15 Jesus Himself gives a final call to the believer and to the unbeliever
 - Consider this the ultimate altar call of the Bible, a final chance for the reader to reflect on all the Bible testifies
 - For the believer, Jesus says He is coming quickly, meaning without warning and He brings a reward with Him
 - He will repay us for our deeds done in service to Him
- And in v.14 Jesus speaks to unbelievers calling them to desire for the good things

described in this book

- To be washed clean of sin by the blood of Jesus, to eat of the tree of life rather than to perish in the lake of fire, to enter into the gates of the city
 - Jesus reminds those who refuse His call in v.15 are those who practice and love the unrighteous acts of sin
 - Remember, Jesus isn't saying that those who do these things are automatically unsaved
 - He's saying that these behaviors typify the lifestyle and attitude of unbelievers
 - And if those who practice such things do not repent and believe, they will be left "outside" the city
- We know that unbelievers exist eternally in the Lake of Fire and now we get a hint of where that place may be
 - Since the original Heavens and Earth have gone, the lake of fire must have been allotted a place in the new Heavens and Earth
 - And that new place is somewhere outside the city
 - This leaves open the possibility that the location could be visible from the city or least somewhere on earth
- Finally, our book ends with a benediction...

Rev. 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

Rev. 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

Rev. 22:18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book;

Rev. 22:19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

Rev. 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Rev. 22:21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

- Jesus testifies one last time that we should trust and believe what He has given to us and trust in Him as Messiah, the descendant of David
 - You get a sense from the ending that Jesus knew this book would be doubted, misinterpreted and even dismissed
 - But there is no other book of Scripture in which Jesus speaks to the reader in the first person as the incarnate Christ
 - And there is no other book of Scripture where Jesus emphasizes so strongly

that the word should be trusted and heeded

- And then Jesus offers one final altar call, the final call to believe in the entire Bible
 - In v. 17 the Spirit and the Church say to the world “Come” meaning come to faith in Jesus
 - Since the first century, the Spirit of God and the Church of believers has been calling the world to know Jesus
 - And anyone who comes thirsty for righteousness and for peace will take of the water of life without cost
- But in stark contrast to that invitation, the book ends with a warning that should make anyone think twice about adulterating Scripture
 - Jesus says that anyone who makes changes to this book, they will not enter the city of God
 - They will experience all the plagues of this book, culminating with the Lake of Fire
 - They may not live through the Tribulation, but the point is they will experience one or more of the torments of this book
 - At the very least, they will know the Lake of Fire
 - Jesus is saying that the desire to undermine the word of God is a trait characteristic of unbelief
 - Altering God’s word is a sure sign that the person has no relationship with the Spirit Who authored the work
 - That’s why He says they will not be found in the book of life
 - The language of v.19 may sound as if Jesus is saying someone could lose salvation
 - But that is merely a consequence of Jesus using parallel language...He’s saying “You remove my words, I remove you”
 - And since the Spirit is the author of the entire Bible as a single work, then by logical extension this warning is true for all books of the Bible
 - The entire work of Scripture was inspired, including the specific number of books included in the canon of scripture
 - So God knew these words would be the final words of the Bible
 - Which makes it clear He was warning against changing anything in the word of God, not just in the book of Revelation
- Lastly, Jesus assures us He is coming quickly, to which John adds, Amen, come Lord Jesus
 - To which I add, amen as well
 - The Grace of the Lord Jesus be with all of us...until He comes
 - Please learn these things, and share them with others