

# CONCERNING THE WAY

September 29, 2009

## LESSON 76: THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST



### Chapter 22 - Final Reminders

In chapter 21 John was shown the eternal order of things, a new heaven and new earth. Then he was given a tour of the eternal city, the New Jerusalem. The chapter break between 21 and 22 is in a strange place, because the first five verses of chapter 22 continue the tour, then we're given a final message by John and Jesus Himself.



**Revelation 22:1-2** Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, (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.

“He” is the angel who took John “in the Spirit” to a great and high mountain to see the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven in 21:9-10. The river of the water of life is the fountain of the water of life which was promised to the thirsty by Jesus in 21:6. Its source is God Himself, because it flows from His throne, and He is the source of all life. The throne is of God and the Lamb. In the eternal state there will be no

more distinction between the throne of the Father in heaven and the throne of the Son on earth (Matthew 25:31, Revelation 3:21). Jesus will rule from the Davidic throne during the Millennial Kingdom, until the last enemy, death, is destroyed (Revelation 20:14). Then He delivers the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-26) and both the Father and the Son continue to rule forever.

If you remember, a similar river will flow from the Millennial Temple (Ezekiel 47:1-2, Zechariah 14:8), which flowed into the Dead Sea. This one in the eternal city runs from the throne of God down the middle of “main street” in New Jerusalem. We could speculate that it may run out of the city and onto the earth, also.

*“There is no sea from which waters are raised by the sun, as in the present hydrologic cycle (Rev. 21:1) and thus no rainfall to supply the river with its flow. Rather, it proceeds “out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,” high at the central pinnacle of the holy city. Evidently the mighty Creator is continually creating the waters, then sending them forth to give perpetual life and cleansing and beauty to the city and its inhabitants, and then on out into the uttermost parts of the new earth.” Henry Morris*

The clarity of the water could symbolize the cleansing from sin for those who drink the water. Although this is a literal river, it also typifies the Holy Spirit who cleanses and gives life to those who trust Christ (John 4:10, 7:37-38).

The “Tree of Life” – there are either more than one here, because it says on “either side of the river”, or it is one large tree that straddles the river. This is speaking of a special species of tree, not the same as the different kinds of trees that will bear fruit alongside the river in the Millennial Kingdom (Ezekiel 47:12). Those Millennial trees will provide food and their leaves will be used for medicine, but they are not the Tree of Life, because people will still die eventually in the Kingdom.

Jesus spoke of this tree back in chapter 2:

**Revelation 2:7 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'**

The first mention of the Tree of Life is in Genesis:

**Genesis 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.**

Then when Adam and Eve rebelled in the Garden of Eden, they were cut off from the Tree of Life:

**Genesis 3:22-24 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"-- (23) therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. (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.**

Apparently Adam & Eve would have lived indefinitely if they would have continued to have access to the Tree of Life. God did not want man in his sinful state to be able to live forever. One of the things that has always restrained evil is the fact that man does not live very long. We can't imagine how evil would run rampant if men would have been allowed to live indefinitely.

*“The harmonious unity of Scripture is herein exhibited. The Fathers compared it to a ring, an unbroken*

*circle, returning into itself. Between the events of Genesis and those at the close of the Apocalypse, at least six thousand or seven thousand years intervene; and between Moses the first writer and John the last about one thousand five hundred years. How striking it is that, as in the beginning we found Adam and Eve, his bride, in innocence in Paradise, then tempted by the serpent, and driven from the tree of life, and from the pleasant waters of Eden, yet not without a promise of a Redeemer who should crush the serpent; so at the close, the old serpent cast out for ever by the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who appears with His Bride, the Church, in a better Paradise, and amidst better waters (Rev. 22:1): the tree of life also is there with all its healing properties, not guarded with a flaming sword, but open to all who overcome (Rev. 2:7), and there is no more curse.” A. R. Fausset*

*“All worlds move in circles; and the grand march of God’s providence with man moves in one immense round. It starts with Paradise, and thence moves out through strange and untried paths, until it has fulfilled its grand revolution by coming back to the point from which it started; not indeed to repeat itself, but thenceforward to rest forever in the results of that wonderful experiment. Genesis is the Book of beginnings; the Revelation is the Book of the endings of what was then begun; and the last laps back upon the first, and welds the two ends of the history into a golden ring of eternity.” J. A. Seiss*

During this age where death is still a reality, those who follow after God are compared to fruitful trees planted by rivers of water:

**Psalms 1:1-3** **How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! (2) But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. (3) He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.**

The tree of life is used as a metaphor four times in the book of Proverbs (Proverbs 3:18, 11:30, 13:12, 15:4), picturing wisdom, fruitful works, hope, and the wise use of the tongue.

Between the Fall in the Garden of Eden and the creation of the new heaven and earth, the cross of Jesus Christ is the tree of life for all who trust in His redemption (Acts 5:30, Galatians 3:13, 1 Peter 2:24).

The tree of life will continually bear twelve different kinds of fruit, which right away shows us this is no ordinary tree. We can assume that the fruit will be continually harvested and eaten by the redeemed people in the city. This shouldn’t be a surprise, since Jesus ate food in His resurrected body (John 21:12, Acts 10:41). We won’t need the food to live, but it will be a privilege to eat it and enjoy it, possibly in a way we can’t yet understand.

*“And whether they need it for the support of their undecaying immortality or not, [partaking of the Tree of Life] is everywhere presented as one of the most precious privileges of God’s glorified saints. We cannot suppose that they ever hunger or thirst in that high realm, or that there is ever any waste in their immortal energies needing recuperation from physical digestion; but still the participation of these Lifefruits bespeaks a communion with Life, the joy of which exceeds all present comprehension.” Seiss*

The passage says that the leaves of the Tree of Life will be used for the “healing of the nations”. This seems kind of strange considering that there won’t be any sickness or death in the eternal state. Well, for one thing, the Greek word used here for healing, “therapeian”, which is where we get our word “therapeutic”, and can also mean “serving, service, care”. But even if it doesn’t mean healing of sickness or death, we still have to wonder why the Tree of Life is needed at all.

Some scholars believe that Revelation 22:2, along with the verses in chapter 21 that describe kings and nations coming into the city from outside, mean that in the eternal state there must be people living on the earth in their natural unresurrected bodies. These would be people who came into the eternal state from the Millennial Kingdom still in their natural bodies, and they would then populate the new earth. That might explain why there still needs to be healing.

It's an interesting idea, and attractive in some ways. But that view seems to raise more questions than it solves, and there is no scriptural support for it at all. In fact it goes against the understanding in the Bible that only redeemed resurrected people will be in the eternal Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:50). It seems best to understand that the Tree of Life will be there in the eternal state for redeemed people's enjoyment and nourishment, it will add to our sense of well-being.

*"The third and preferred explanation is that the healing leaves may represent spiritual service or care. The Greek word for healing is θεραπεία [therapeia], "serving, service, care," from the verb θεραπεύω [therapeuō], "to serve, be a servant." Liddell, Scott, and Jones list many examples where this term refers to serving and has no connection with illness or the need for healing. Only in the sense of care, treatment, or serving the sick did it come to be applied to "healing" or "curing," as in "therapy" and "therapeutic." True, the word is used in Revelation 13:3, 12 of a wound healed; but in Luke 12:42 it is used of "service" of a faithful and wise steward, and in Acts 17:25 for serving God. The leaves, then, are there to minister to or serve the redeemed as they serve God (Rev. 22:3)." Daniel K. Wong*

The tree in eternity is also a picture of what the Christian life is to be now. We as believers are to be continually producing spiritual fruit, which in some ways is for the healing of the nations (Matthew 21:19, Mark 11:13). And like the tree draws its life from the river of life which it is close to, so we must stay close to Christ in order to be productive:

**John 15:4-5 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. (5) "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.**

Now let's continue on through Revelation 22:

**Revelation 22:3-4 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; (4) they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.**

Now, every last curse is removed, including the curses from God at the fall of mankind into sin (Genesis 3:15-19), and death is no more (Revelation 21:4). Many of the curses in the OT were in response to sin and were used as correction (e.g., Deuteronomy 27:15-26; 28:15-68). In the eternal state, there is no more sin and so there is no more need for correction by God.

This is the time when the "creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God." (Romans 8:19). At the cross, Christ had redeemed us from the curse of the law, but now this becomes the real physical experience of all creation (Galatians 3:13).

*"None will ever age, nothing will ever be lost, all work will be productive and enduring. The entropy law, the so-called second law of thermodynamics, will be repealed. Information will nevermore become confused, ordered systems will not deteriorate into disorder, and no longer will energy have to be expended merely to overcome friction and dissipation into nonrecoverable heat. Entropy will from*

*now on be conserved along with energy and mass and momentum. Though "time" will continue on forever, "time's arrow" will no longer be directed downward." Henry Morris*

It is hard for us to even imagine what that will be like. Our only experience is this earth, which includes the curse, entropy, friction, and so on. When we begin to think about what removal of the curse might mean, we run into the limitations of our finite minds— limited by our own experience—to even begin to understand that phrase: there will no longer be any curse!

*"Eternity is before us, and infinity surrounds us. We shall have an eternity of time to explore and discover the secrets of an infinitely varied and limitless cosmos." Morris*

**His servants shall serve Him.** The service will not be a burden, but it will be a form of worship. The service of God is a great reward! Before the Fall, in the Garden of Eden, Adam was given the job of tending and keeping the garden (Genesis 2:15). So, work is not a result of the curse, but part of God's perfect design. The curse made working conditions much more difficult.

*"It shows us most clearly that the heaven of the glorified saints is not one of idleness. They have something more to do than to sing, and worship, and enjoy. Indeed the perfection of worship is service, activity for God, the doing of the will of God. And this is to be one of the highest characteristics of the heaven of the saints. They are to do work, heavenly work, the highest kind of work." Seiss*

This service will not be tiresome because they shall see the Lord and be in His presence:

**Psalms 27:4** **One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.**

**Psalms 65:4** **How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You To dwell in Your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Your holy temple.**

"They will see His face" – because the curse is removed, sin is gone, and we will be perfected, we will be able to see God face to face in all His glory! Read Job 19:25-27, Psalm 17:15, Matthew 5:8, John 14:3, 17:24, 1 Corinthians 13:12, and 1 John 3:2-3.

"His name will be on their foreheads" – Jesus told the church at Philadelphia that the overcomer would have three names written on him: (1) the name of God; (2) the name of the New Jerusalem; and (3) Jesus' new name (Revelation 3:12).

**Revelation 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.**

There will be no more night, and as we discussed in our last lesson, we will have no need of the sun, even though there still may be a sun and moon in the new heaven. And we won't need even a lamp, because the light of God will illuminate the city continually. We also see here that reigning with God won't just be for the Millennial Kingdom, but will continue on forever in the eternal state.

**Revelation 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.**

Jesus the Messiah is called “Faithful and True” in 19:11, and He is the Word of God, but here it is speaking of the written Word. The Word of God is both an “alive” written revelation (Hebrews 4:12) and the living Son of God.

*“The angel’s words reinforce an important truth: Everything John has seen in Revelation will come to pass. What the inspired apostle has written is not mystical; the Apocalypse is not a record of his bizarre dreams or the result of an overactive imagination. It is not an allegory from which readers can extract hidden meanings of their own concoction. It is an accurate description of events and persons yet to come.” John MacArthur*

This verse also shows the expectation that these things would happen soon. Preterists like to jump on verses like this to prove their theories that all of these things have already happened with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. All it shows is that people of God have always had the expectation that the future events prophesied in the Bible could happen soon. “Soon” to God may not seem like “soon” to us. God’s perspective of time is different than ours.

The “he” is still the angel that is showing John the New Jerusalem. This verse marks the end of the tour of the New Jerusalem and the beginning of the closing comments of the book.

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

Jesus reminds us that He could come back at any time, it has always been imminent. That fact is a great motivator for us to live godly lives. The Greek word “tachy”, translated “quickly”, has the idea of coming suddenly. So when He comes, it will happen very fast. The blessing is basically a restatement:

**Revelation 1:3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.**

Both of these verses make it clear that this is a book about prophecy. It’s not a devotional about the victory of good over evil or about general spiritual principles. On the other hand, it is not just for our entertainment:

*“God does not command believers to read Revelation merely to satisfy their curiosity about the future. He did not inspire it to provide material for detailed chronological charts of end-time events. There is a seemingly endless stream of books on prophecy being churned out, with speculative prophetic schemes proliferating ad infinitum, ad nauseam. But it was not God’s purpose to give Christians a detailed analysis of the prophetic significance (if any) of contemporary cultural, political, military, and social events or trends. God inspired Revelation for one purpose: to reveal the glory of His Son and call believers to live godly, obedient lives in light of His soon return. The purpose of Revelation is not to provide entertainment, but to provide motivation for godly living.” MacArthur*

In order to keep the words of the prophecy of this book, believers must:

1. Guard the text from tampering and corruption.
2. Guard the proper interpretation of the words. *“Believers are called to guard or protect the book of Revelation. It must be defended against detractors who deny its relevance, against critics who deny its veracity and authority, as well as against confused interpreters who obscure its meaning.” MacArthur*

3. Apply the lessons of the book to their own lives (Luke 6:46; John 14:15; 15:10).
4. Spread the message of the book to the church and to those who have not heard.

*“To fail to preach Revelation is not only foolish (cf. Rev. 1:3), but sinful. Any Christian who fails to learn its truths is forfeiting blessing; any preacher who fails to proclaim its truths is sinfully unfaithful to his mandate. . . . More than just a failure to teach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), it is outright disobedience to the command not to seal up the words of the Apocalypse.”—MacArthur*

We should pay attention to what Jesus thinks of the importance of this book:

*“In this final message, the Lord Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, pays great honor to the written Word of God. This fact we should mark very carefully, for we are living in a day when men are attempting to downgrade the written Word in favor of the living Word. Our Lord Jesus Christ in every phase of His ministry was careful to honor the written Word and to submit Himself to it. There can be no doubt of the fact that our Lord joined Himself with God the Father by magnifying the written Word. Thus the psalmist bears witness: “I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for the lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name ” (Ps. 138:2). We also remember how the Lord Jesus made it abundantly clear that by His coming He did not intend to destroy, nor even loosen up, the Word of God, but to fulfill it in every jot and tittle [Mtt. 5:18]” Donald Barnhouse*

So many Christians today profess a devotion and zeal for the Lord, but have a faulty view of the Bible. This is a recipe for disaster. The best example is religious but unbelieving Israel at Jesus' first coming. Paul called it zeal without knowledge. Jesus in John 4:23-24 seems to be saying that there are those who profess to worship God, but without the truth. There are many today who think they are worshipping God, but are in reality worshipping a god of their own creation, one who gives them an emotional experience and makes them feel good about themselves. The danger point is where your attitude and knowledge of the Bible is! Any time you get away from the Bible and rely on your experiences to get close to God or gain knowledge, you are deceiving yourself and worshipping a different god.

**Revelation 22:8-9** **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. (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."**

John makes the mistake (again) of falling down and worshipping the angel instead of God. Actually this is a good lesson to all of us. If a man as great in spiritual stature and maturity as John can be tempted to worship what is good itself in place of God, then it can happen easily to any of us.

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

If you remember from our Daniel study, Daniel was told to seal up the words of his prophecy until the time of the end (Daniel 12:4). Why was Daniel told to shut up the words and John told not to? Timing! When Daniel's prophecy was given, there were certain things that had to take place before the time of the end – most importantly, the first coming of Christ and His death and resurrection. Now there is nothing else that needs to take place before this prophecy can be fulfilled. In Daniel's day, Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming was not imminent – today it is. In a real sense, Revelation completes the revelation that was given to Daniel.

Since it is not a sealed book, isn't it obvious that it is meant to be understood instead of being ignored or subjected to various allegorical interpretations?

*"What a rebuke to the negligence, the neglect, the sneering, ignorant arrogance, shown by most of Christendom toward The Revelation! Our Lord Jesus may declare it an open, unsealed, understandable book; men say it is filled with "unintelligible language" and "mystic symbols." Christ says: "Blessed is he that readeth"; men say: "Let it alone, you cannot understand it." William R. Newell*

*"Dare we suppose that the merciful Jesus would hang his benedictions so high as to be beyond the reach of those to whom they are so graciously proposed? Would he mock us by suspending his offered blessings on terms beyond our power? Yet this is the charge men bring against their Redeemer when they think to plead the incomprehensibility of this Book for their neglect and practical rejection of it. The very propounding of these blessings and rewards is God's own seal to the possibility of understanding this Book equally with any other part of Scripture. Would he, the God of truth, lie to us? Would he, the God of mercy, mock us? Would he who gave his life for us, and ever lives and ministers in heaven and earth for our enlightenment and salvation, give us a Book to tell us of the outcome of all his gracious operations, command us to note its words, to believe and treasure its contents, and promise us a special blessedness in so doing, if what he has thus put into our hands is not at all within the limits of our comprehension and successful mastery? . . . Therefore these very benedictions pronounce against the common notion that this Book is too difficult for ordinary Christians, and rebuke all who despise and avoid it." Seiss*

**Revelation 22:11** **"The evildoer must continue to do evil, and the one who is morally filthy must continue to be filthy. The one who is righteous must continue to act righteously, and the one who is holy must continue to be holy." (NET)**

After one of Daniel's visions, he was told that the words were closed up until the time of the end and that both good and evil would continue: the wicked would not understand the things of God, but the wise would (Daniel 12:9-10). It is the same way today in this age. We have much more revelation than Daniel was given, including the entire New Testament and this book of last things. But, the wicked continue to ignore the sure prediction of the judgment of God that is coming. The generation at the time of the Tribulation will be unparalleled in their blasphemy and rejection of God. Even though they will know God exists and that He is the source of their judgment (Revelation 6:15-17), they will continue to rebel and refuse every opportunity to repent (Revelation 9:21; 16:8, 11).

*Preaching Revelation draws the line. Its truths will melt the hearts of the repentant and harden the hearts of the unrepentant. Those same truths thus become either an instrument of salvation, or an instrument of damnation (cf. 1Cor. 1:18; 2Cor. 2:15-16). MacArthur*

Those who are righteous and holy are made that way through their trust in Christ's righteousness. The evidence of that redemption is in their righteous acts. They are holy because they are set apart to God and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. They will continue to be holy.

**Revelation 22:12-13** **(Look! I am coming soon, and my reward is with me to pay each one according to what he has done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end!)**

The angel had been talking, but now Jesus inserts a personal reminder to readers of this book. He is coming soon to pay each of us for what we have done. Believers will be judged on their works only for eternal rewards, not salvation (Isaiah 40:10-11; 62:11; Luke 14:12-14; 1 Corinthians 3:13-15; 2

Corinthians 5:10; Colossians 3:22-25; 1 John 2:28). The redemption given by Christ covers their sins. Unbelievers have only what they have done in their lives, and it is not enough for heaven. Payment for them will be the lake of fire (Romans 2:5-10, 1 Peter 4:18; Revelation 2:23; 20:11-15).

**Revelation 22:14-15** 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. (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.

Here we see that all the redeemed, the ones who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14), will have access to the Tree of Life, and can enter the New Jerusalem. "Dogs" refers to those who are impure, like an unclean animal.

*The verse does not intend to teach that in the eternal state all manner of wicked men will be living just outside the heavenly city. It simply describes the future with the imagery of the present. The contrast is between the blessedness of the faithful and the fate of the wicked.* Robert H. Mounce

So "outside" would refer to those who were left out of the eternal Kingdom of God, and are then in the Lake of Fire.

**Revelation 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."

This is Jesus' seal of approval on the book of Revelation. Jesus is both the root of David and the offspring of David!

If you remember from the beginning of the book, the Revelation of Jesus Christ was given by God to the Son Who then gave it to His angel, who then gave it to John (Revelation 1:1). The message is given not only to the seven churches of Asia, but to those "who have an ear to hear" (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29. 3:6, 13, 22, 13:9).

This is the first mention of the church since the letters to the churches in chapters 2 and 3, which is a clue that the church will not go through the Tribulation but be raptured before.

**Revelation 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.

The bride, that is, the Church, and the Holy Spirit, who indwells the Church, invites all who are reading this book to accept eternal life through Christ, the bridegroom. This is our primary task in this age, to invite people to come to Christ. And the one with ears to hear what the Spirit says in the book of Revelation is invited to come to faith. And to the one who has not yet come to salvation, who is thirsty for it, this is an invitation to come to the one who has the water of life (John 7:37-39).

**Revelation 22:18-19** 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; (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.

This is a very serious warning, and it confirms that the message of this book is not just to the seven churches, but to “everyone who hears the words”. This principle applies to all of God’s inspired Word, not just Revelation, because it was given before in Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32, Proverbs 30:6, and Jeremiah 26:2. If anyone claims to have received additional revelation from God after the close of this book, they are cursed. The words of the inspired text are considered:

1. God’s.
2. Understandable to those who read the text in its plain sense.
3. The main source by which we can understand the requirements of God.
4. A reliable means of understanding the way of eternal life.

These things lead to a literal interpretation of the text. If the text was mainly figurative or allegory, then how could God hold man accountable to a message that is so obscure?

*“That the specific words of Revelation are not to be sealed up stresses again that there is no hidden, secret meaning apart from the normal sense of the text. If the truth is not clear in those words then this command is nonsense. If the plain, normal understanding of the words of Revelation does not convey the meaning God intended its readers to grasp, then those words are sealed.” MacArthur*

*“God is surely capable of speaking plain words, through His angel and through John, to us, and we had better let Him say what He says. This is a book of revelation, not mystification, of apocalypse, not apocrypha.” Morris*

Because of what is said in these verses, it is believed that the canon of Scripture is closed with the end of the book of Revelation.

*“Chafer well concludes: “The formal closing of the New Testament canon is at least intimated in Revelation 22:18. The dissimilarity in the manner in which the two Testaments end is significant. All the unfulfilled expectation of the Old Testament is articulate as that testament closes and the last verse gives assurance of the coming of another prophet. But no continued revelation is impending as the New Testament is terminated: rather the announcement is made that the Lord Himself will soon return and the natural conclusion is that there would be no further voice speaking from heaven before the trumpet heralds the second advent of Christ. Of no small moment is the fact that since the canon of the Bible was divinely closed no attempts have been made to add to it.” Mal Couch*

*“This is a warning not just to the would-be prophets themselves, who might try to continue prophetic ministries beyond the time of Revelation’s writing, but also to “everyone who hears,” i.e., those in the churches who needed to refuse any authority that challenged the divine authority, accuracy, and finality of this prophecy. The observation is true that this warning applies specifically to the book of Revelation only, but by extension it entails the termination of the gift of prophecy and the NT canon also. “ Robert Thomas*

Many cults try to add to inspired scripture by elevating their own writings to that level, such as the Mormons with “The Book of Mormon”, and Christian Science with their “Key to the Scriptures.” Mohammed took it even further in writing the Koran by taking portions of the Bible and changing it to suit his ideas, then repudiating the original inspired text. In doing so he has led whole nations away from the truth.

I would not want to be any of these people on the day of judgment, because the plagues listed in the book of Revelation will be added to them. This definitely includes those who teach that only some of the words in

the Bible are inspired and true, and other words are in error (I am not speaking of translations but about the original texts). This is ultimately taking away from the words of the book, as verse 19 warns against.

*"The cults add to the words of the book of this prophecy, the liberals take away from them, and both are regarded by the Lord as blasphemies deserving of the most serious punishment".*

*"This constitutes a most serious indictment and sober warning to any who would tamper with the Holy Scriptures. Lest anyone still object that it applies only to the Book of Revelation, it may be noted, historically, that the various atheists and humanists, as well as the motley array of modernists, liberals, higher critics, and other pseudointellectuals in Christendom who have rejected or questioned, ridiculed or allegorized away the books of Daniel, Isaiah, Jonah, Acts, Peter, or any other books of the Bible have also, invariably, done the same to the Book of Revelation, to the Book of Genesis, and the other books of the Pentateuch. The first and last books of the Bible have constituted a touchstone, as it were, so that the attitude of men and women toward those books always seems to determine their real attitude toward all the Scriptures. Therefore, the Lord had Moses stress the divine integrity of his writings (Deuteronomy 4:2) and John stress the inviolability of Revelation." Morris*

Anyone who adds to or takes away from the inspired Word of God, or tampers with it in any way in order to change the meaning of the words to fit their personal desires, will not have a part in the eternal state. I would not want to be anyone who claims to have the gift of prophecy and tries to add or take away from the Word of God that has already been given. There is no need for further Revelation! Instead of listening to so-called prophets, people should be studying the revelation we have already been given!

**Revelation 22:20-21** He who testifies to these things says, **"Yes, I am coming quickly."** Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. (21) The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

It has been over 1900 years since Jesus spoke these words to John. Many scoff that "quickly" could refer to a yet future, literal, physical second coming of Jesus to overthrow the rebellious kingdoms of the earth:

**2 Peter 3:1-9** Dear friends, this is already the second letter I have written you, in which I am trying to stir up your pure mind by way of reminder: (2) I want you to recall both the predictions foretold by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles. (3) Above all, understand this: In the last days blatant scoffers will come, being propelled by their own evil urges (4) and saying, "Where is his promised return? For ever since our ancestors died, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation." (5) For they deliberately suppress this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water. (6) Through these things the world existing at that time was destroyed when it was deluged with water. (7) But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, by being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. (8) Now, dear friends, do not let this one thing escape your notice, that a single day is like a thousand years with the Lord and a thousand years are like a single day. (9) The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some regard slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not wish for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

Peter's words are a great encouragement to those who wait for the return of Christ. He gives the reasons why it has been 1900 years and counting:

- Perspective - From God's perspective, one thousand years are as a day. God is timeless. From His

perspective, the time between this promise and our own is short: “To Him, He’s only been away for two days!

- Grace and Mercy - The long delay from our perspective is a great testimony to the grace and mercy of God. Once the events described in this book begin, things will move quickly. Each year that Christ’s return is delayed is another year of undeserved grace poured out on a rebellious earth where people still have the opportunity to receive salvation by faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ.
- Judgment Building - Those who reject Christ continue to push the world further and further from God. One day, the iniquity of the earth-dwellers will be complete (cf. Gen. 15:16). When that day arrives, Christ will come as a thief upon an unsuspecting world and The Day of the Lord will begin (Matthew 24:43; Luke 12:39; John 10:10; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 3:3).

The promise of His return is a powerful motivator for believers to deny the world and to live lives preparing for His return:

**Titus 2:11-14** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people. (12) It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, (13) as we wait for the happy fulfillment of our hope in the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. (14) He gave himself for us to set us free from every kind of lawlessness and to purify for himself a people who are truly his, who are eager to do good.

But for those who have not placed their faith in Jesus, the book pushes them further in their rejection of God:

*“I doubt not, that this Apocalypse has been and will be the rock on which many a one’s salvation is wrecked by reason of the offense taken at its presentations. To the savants and scientists of this world, there is no part of all the Scriptures which seem so absurd and impossible. They can get on with everything else a thousandfold better than with the outlines of the future which this Book gives. To their philosophy it is the very consummation of nonsense. And if this is the scheme and outcome of the Gospel system, they will have none of it. They know better. They have got beyond all such puerilities. They would not swallow such things for their lives, and scorn to take for divine what embraces them as the consummation of this world. Their sneers, contempt, and blasphemy nowhere rise to such a pitch as when they are asked to accept and believe that this Book is of God, and means what it says.”* Seiss

The question is, which are you? Will you take the promises which Christ gives the overcomer throughout this book and become one who believes in Him? Will you respond in faith to the open invitation to drink the living waters? Will you be one of those who are kept from the hour of trial which is to come upon the whole world (Revelation 3:10)? Will you love the appearing of the Lord Jesus and say, with the rest of the saints: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

Or will you stay with the skeptics, the sophisticated, the independent and self-sufficient, who say they don’t need God and would just as soon He did not exist? Have you already hardened your heart beyond the point of return so that you will be one of those who will stand before the Great White Throne, whose name is missing from the Book of Life (Revelation 20:15)?

**Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts . . . Now is the day of salvation!**  
(Hebrews 3:15; 2 Corinthians 6:2)

**Come, Lord Jesus!**

