

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #111
2/04/09

“The Lord's Final Words: Part 8”
Revelation 22:16-17

Revelation 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

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

As the Lord comes to the last part of His Final Words to Mankind, He emphasizes four things: **1)** The seriousness of His message is set forth by what He tells us in verse 16; **2)** His invitation for lost men and women to come to Him for salvation is extended to each person without any exception; **3)** Men should take each word of His Word seriously and not reject, alter, or add to it in any way or the consequences will be awful; **4)** Once again, for the fifth time in His final words, Jesus emphasizes that the remaining time is brief and that, when He returns to bring all of this creation to its conclusion, He will come quickly and suddenly.

Since this is our Lord's final words to mankind, special consideration should be given to each and every word He chooses to say. There are so many things He could have emphasized, which He did not choose to mention, not because they are unimportant, but because He must consider the matters He does choose to address to be of greater importance. Therefore, we read what He says to us in these few verses carefully, trying to comprehend as much as possible.

He once again draws attention to the gravity of this brief message by what He tells us in verse sixteen: **“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”** The solemnness of what He says is expressed by His use of **“I Jesus.”** Such a double identification is used because He wants to make sure that the reader recognizes the seriousness authenticity of what he reads. There is to be no room for confusion or mistaken identity. This is Jesus' message to each of us. Pay attention to each word! Each phrase and each word from our Lord is to be received and responded to with a realization of the importance that is embedded in it, that it is the Lord, the Master, the King who is speaking.

“These things” include every word in this revelation of Himself, from the very first — **“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw”** (Revelation 1:1-2) — unto the very last one (Revelation 22:21). The two verses before us constitute the closing of this revelation. The following four verses refer to all that is included in the totality of the Bible, God's holy book, God's holy Word.

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“Mine angel” is not identified. It is not necessary. He is a heavenly messenger sent by our Lord and trusted to communicate the Lord's message verbatim, word for word. He is likely the same messenger, the angel, which John says came to him at the very beginning of this revelation of Jesus Christ.

“Churches,” are suddenly mentioned again by our Lord. It is the first time since Revelation 3:22 that the Lord has used this word which literally means **“the called out ones”** and as such, ties together the entirety of the message into one unit, emphasizing the Lord's focus on His spiritual body, the **“church.”**

“The churches” were the recipient and focus of the first part of this awesome revelation, Chapters one through three. Then, Chapters four through eighteen followed in which the Lord described His terrible, but deserved, judgment upon all unbelievers in this God-hating and God-rejecting world. Those who constituted the **“called out ones,”** the true church, constituting the spiritual body of the Lord Jesus Christ, are with Him, having been removed from this earth by way of the rapture. In regards to **“the churches,”** our Lord further identifies Himself as both **“the root”** and **“the offspring of David,” the One from Whom David came as well as identifying Himself springing from the lineage of David.** That is, He has a double nature, both divine and human, originating life, and having human life.

Previously (5:5), He had identified Himself as being **“the Root of David,”**: the One from Whom David, the great king of the Jews, came. That stressed His deity. Now He adds to that characterization by saying that He is **“the offspring of David.” By this He sets before us the great truth that He, our Lord, is the God/man — fully God and fully man.** This great truth proclaimed by our Lord Himself (Matthew 22:41-46) was also a central part of Peter's magnificent sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:25-36) in which he identified Jesus, the One Who was slain by the God-hating Jews, as the eternal God/man. With His statement here in verse sixteen our Lord ties together the integral relationship of the New Testament church to those who are the true descendants of king David and his forefather Abraham (Galatians 3:26-29). It is a fitting summary of an issue long debated by theologians and scholars of various viewpoints. Both those of Abraham's physical descendants; and those of other physical lineages; are one with One Lord, Jesus Christ, the God/man. Thus, **“the churches”** include those of both physical lineages now joined into one body.

The Lord used Paul to present this great, awesome truth, first in Ephesians. In Ephesians 3:3, when he writes about the **“...revelation he made known unto me the mystery,”** he refers the reader back to what he had just written in Ephesians 2:11-22. He wrote of a **“mystery ... Which in**

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other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (Ephesians 3:3-6). In the previous verses (Ephesians 2:11-22) Paul had described this **“one body”** and what made it possible. It was supernaturally established by the Lord Jesus Christ through the power of His **“blood,”** which **“abolished the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile,”** in which there are **“no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens ... of the household of God.”** In this final portion of His last words to mankind, Jesus ties them all together, including those of various physical lineages, and speaks His message to all who are His. Regardless of their earthly genes, they are now a part of His family.

Then, in verse seventeen, Jesus clarifies another critical matter which has been the subject of heated debate by various theologians over the years.

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

Both **“the Spirit,”** the Holy Spirit, and **“the bride,”** the church, proclaim His invitation to all, **“Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”**

First, it is His invitation — spoken as an imperative, a command to all who compose His church, “Let him come!” As such, it is clearly set forth as the purpose of the church — the offering of this invitation is the purpose of the church. Every expenditure of energy and every activity of the localized body of believers, is to be governed by this command. Everything the church does should be measured by whether or not it conforms to and is obedient to this command, and effectuates what it has been commanded to do. To do otherwise is to be disobedient to our Lord.

Second, it is an inclusive, not exclusive command. Some, who call themselves Christians, spend far too much time debating about who has been chosen and elected by the Lord to become a part of His family. Such is most always done, either through ignorance of God's Word or a sense of self-righteousness, as men pretend to comprehend the mind of God, squeezing what are eternal truths down into earthly concepts which can be fully comprehended by the minds of mere mortals. **“Whosoever”** was a favorite word of the Lord as He walked among men and it is clearly a word that is inclusive. In addition to His use of this word, He frequently presented illustrations and gave commands like the one found in Luke 14:23: **“... Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.”**

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Not only do we find this emphasis in our Lord's teachings, but it is evident in His actions over the years. He reached into the pagan city of Jericho and brought out Rahab, not only a Gentile pagan, but also a prostitute. Though she was such, He included her as a startling example of His inclusive grace (Joshua 2:1-11); and even made her a part of the lineage of king David along with the Moabitess, Ruth (Ruth 4:17-22) and a part of His own human line of ancestors (Matthew 1:1-16). It is clear that God is sovereign and has predetermined who becomes a part of His family. He also must always enable a person to respond to His call (because all men are hopeless sinners for salvation) is totally a work of His grace. Yet, it is also clear that He invites ALL who **“is athirst”** to come. Though it is abundantly clear that our Lord both predestines those who will be saved, it is also abundantly clear that **“He will have all men to be saved”** (1 Timothy 2:4) and even seems to have delayed His time of judgment while He continues to extend His invitation to all: **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”** (2 Peter 3:9). Even if, in the mind of man, **God's work of predestination** and inclusive invitation to all, which is sometimes called the doctrine of the **“free will of man,”** seem to be in conflict, these two great truths are not in conflict in the mind of God. Our place is not to understand the mind of God, but to obey His commands.

Third, “the water of life” is free to all who will take of it. It has been purchased by the Lord Himself, Who now gives it as a gift to ALL who will accept His gift.

Fourth, “the water of life” which He gives is able to satisfy the total needs of those who drink of it so that they **“will never thirst again”** (John 4:10-14).

Fittingly, with this command to those of us who have already tasted of **“the water of life”** and found that it did indeed result in total satisfaction, our Lord concludes the final words of His revelation of Himself to mankind.

Of all of the things He could have addressed to those who have been born of the work of the Holy Spirit into His family, He chose to close with this command. That should certainly be sufficient to set forth its importance. It is an urgent message, absolutely critical in its content. Our obedience to it should take preeminence over any other concern and action in our lives. The time is short and the need is great. Let us be obedient to our Lord in this most important matter: **“And let him that is athirst come,”** do our best to enable those who have a need and a desire to **“drink of the water of life,”** to have that opportunity.