



# The Last Word

A Bible Study on Revelation by Stan Key

## SESSION 16. THE LAST WORD REVELATION 22:6-21

### I. Summary of the Book of Revelation

#### A. A quick overview of Revelation

Prologue 1	Seven churches 2-3	A vision of heaven 4-5	Seven seals 6:1-8:5	Seven trumpets 8:6-11:19	Cosmic war: good vs. evil 12-14	Seven last plagues 15-16	The fall of Babylon and last judgment 17-20	A new heaven and new earth 21:1-22:5	Epilogue 22:6-21
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1. Recurrence of **contrast**: good-evil, God-Satan, Christ-antichrist, Lamb-dragon, Jerusalem-Babylon, the Bride-the great prostitute, salvation-damnation.
2. The building double-crescendo that climaxes in a terrifying **judgment** for the citizens of Babylon and a glorious **salvation** for the citizens of Jerusalem.
3. Revelation is not a crystal ball to enable us to discern the future. It is rather a clarion final call to **make a decision**: Which city will define my existence? Which Lord will I serve?

#### B. For those who open the door and let Jesus come in as Lord and King (3:20), Revelation encourages us to:

1. **Look up.** Our King has not forgotten us. He knows our trials and persecutions. He is watching every tear that falls. He is coming back... soon. We are saved in hope.
2. **Look in.** Because no one knows the day of His return, we must live in constant readiness. Prepare to meet your God! What if it were today?
3. **Watch out.** There are many enemies that threaten to destroy us and rob us of our salvation. The world, the flesh and the devil are all around us. Therefore, be careful and walk in obedience. Be faithful even unto death.
4. **Look around.** There are many opportunities to serve our Lord and be his witnesses (martyrs). Others need to have the opportunity to flee from the coming wrath and find salvation in the City of God.

### II. Famous Last Words

When someone is about to leave, especially when one is nearing death, their final words usually reveal that about which they feel most deeply.

- Bing Crosby (1977): *That was a great game of golf, fellers.*
- Humphrey Bogart (1957): *I should have switched from Scotch to Martinis.*
- Oscar Wilde (1900): *Either this wallpaper goes, or I do.*
- Dominique Bouhours (French grammarian, 1702): *I am about to—or I am going to—die; either expression is used.*
- Nathan Hale (1776): *I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country.*



- Lord Nelson (1805): *Thank God, I have done my duty.*
- Thomas Jefferson (July 4, 1826): *Is it the fourth?*
- Socrates (399 BC): *Crito, I owe a rooster to Asclepius. Will you remember to pay the debt?*
- John Wesley (1791): *The best of all: God is with us.*
- Jesus (33): *Father, into your hands I commit my spirit* (Luke 23:46).

Revelation 22:6–21 gives us a record of God’s final words to us! It would be misleading to think that these words are more important than other words God has spoken but these are apparently the words He wants us to **constantly remember**.

### III. The next-to-the-last word

When this chapter is finished, there is nothing more to say. All has been said. More definitive than when a judge pounds his gavel, these words complete what God wants us to understand. This is God’s final word.

- A word of **affirmation**... to authenticate all that has been said. “These words are trustworthy and true.” (v. 6).
- A word of **promise**... to give us hope. “I am coming soon!” (vv. 7, 12, 20).
  - For the believer, the promise of Christ’s return tomorrow makes it possible to live in victory **today**! Regardless of how bad things are now, we can survive and even thrive because of the certainty of his return and his coming glorious kingdom.

On July 4, 1952, Florence Chadwick tried to swim from Catalina Island to the coast of California. She wanted to be the first woman to complete the 21-mile swim. But the fog was so thick she could barely even see the boats traveling with her. Finally, after almost 16 hours in the water, she gave up. Getting into one of the boats she discovered she was only half a mile from shore! In a news conference the next day she said, “All I could see was the fog... I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it.”

- But how can the return of Jesus Christ be “soon” when we have been waiting for almost 2,000 years for this blessed event? Even in the first century, followers of Christ were struggling with this perplexing difficulty.

*...knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”.... But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is **patient** (MAKROTHUMEO<sup>1</sup>) toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach **repentance** (II Peter 3:3–4, 8–9).*

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<sup>1</sup> THUMOS—passion, anger, wrath. MAKRO—long time, great distance. MAKROTHUMIA means longsuffering, great patience, forbearance.

- C. A two-fold word of  **blessing** ... to motivate us to obedience.

There are 7 blessings (beatitudes) in the book of Revelation<sup>2</sup>, two of which are given in this passage:

1. *Blessed is the one who **keeps the words** of the prophecy of this book. (22:7).* This book is not just given so that we will have more information about the last the days. It is given to us so that we will **do what it says**: believe the Gospel, hope in Christ's return, love our neighbor, bear witness to Jesus, obey our Lord and follow his commands, resist temptation, stand fast in tribulation, be faithful unto death, keep our doctrine pure, etc.
2. *Blessed are those who **wash their robes**, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city... (22:14).* The verb "wash" is in the present tense, referring to a **continual**, on-going washing. Once is not enough! However Revelation 7:14 indicates that our robes must be "washed" and "made white" in the blood of the Lamb. Here, both verbs are in the aorist tense, signifying an action that is **once and for all**. One is reminded of Jesus' word to Peter: "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean" (John 13:10).

- D. A word of  **command** ... to help us keep the main thing the main thing. "Worship God" (vv. 8–9).

This is the second time John has worshiped the **messenger** rather the One who sent the message (see 19:9–10). If the mail man delivers you a love letter, don't fall in love with the mail man! Worship God! This is not a suggestion but a command and summarizes the message of the entire book. If the study of Revelation does not culminate in worship, if **eschatology** does not result in **doxology**, then we have misunderstood the message and missed the whole point.

- E. A four-fold word of  **warning** ... to put the fear of God in us (vv. 10–11).

1. *"Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy" (v. 10–11).*

Warning: the day is coming soon when change will be impossible, when the day of grace will be ended, when destinies are fixed forever. There will be no chance for last minute repentance. Today is the day of salvation. Tomorrow will be **too late**.

2. *"I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done" (v. 12).*
3. *"Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood" (v. 15).*
4. *"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone **adds to** them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone **takes away** from the words of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book." (vv. 18–19).*

Warning: Don't tamper with or distort God's Book (see Gal. 1:6–7). Don't add to it (Mormons, Muslims, the gnostic gospels, etc.). Don't take from it (Thomas

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<sup>2</sup> Rev. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7 and 22:14.

Jefferson, higher criticism, etc.). God has given us all we need to know for life and godliness.

*What more can he say, than to you he has said,  
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled? (John Rippon).*

F. A two-fold word of **invitation**... to reassure us of God's infinite grace.

1. 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 desires **take** the water of life without price (v. 17).

The invitation is given by the Holy Spirit and the Church (Bride) to the unbelieving world around us. "Come to the waters... all who are thirsty... come." American evangelicals did not invent "the altar call." Every true Gospel service ends in an invitation.<sup>3</sup>

2. "Come, Lord Jesus!" (v. 20).

In verse 17, the invitation was that the world would come to Christ. But here in verse 20, the invitation is that Christ would come to the world. This is one of the earliest prayers of the church. We have its original expression in I Corinthians 16:22. **Maranatha!** (a transliteration of an Aramaic phrase: "Our Lord, come!").

It almost seems that God is giving the last word to us! Having finished what he had to say, God points to us and says, "OK, I'm done. The last word belongs to you! If you don't know what to say, I'll give you a hint: **"Come, Lord Jesus!"** But I can only prompt you. You are going to have to say it for yourself!"

#### IV. The Last Word (Revelation 22:21)

But wait. There is one final word.<sup>4</sup> All the previous words have been penultimate (next to last). This word is the ultimate and final word for all people, in all times, everywhere. When this word is said there is truly nothing else to say. Unless you want to repeat the word again and again: **Amen.**

Amen is transliterated from Hebrew into both Greek and English (as well as perhaps every other language). It comes from a root word that means firm, dependable, secure and certain. Jesus used the word often, beginning many statements with "Truly, truly (Amen, Amen), I say to you..." This was Jesus' way of guaranteeing that his words were reliable and true.

When God says "amen", it means "it shall be so." It is through Jesus that all the promises and purposes of God are established. This is why Jesus is the Great Amen of God (Rev. 3:14).

*... in him it is always **Yes**. For all the promises of God find their **Yes** in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory (II Cor. 1:19-20).*

When worshippers say "amen", it means: yes, let it be so, I agree, I identify with all that has been said. Once you have said Amen, there is nothing else to say. The best you can do

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<sup>3</sup> "It is the testimony of the church empowered by the Holy spirit that constitutes the great evangelizing force of this age." (Robert H. Mounce, p. 409).

<sup>4</sup> Yes, John does add the words, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all" which are rich in meaning. But we will save a discussion of these words for another time.

is repeat it. It means, **let the Lord have his way!** Imagine, if the whole world shouted Amen!

S. M. Lockridge preached an unforgettable sermon on the word “Amen!” The climax of the sermon came when he described King Jesus:

*My King is a sovereign King. No means of measure can define His limitless love. No far seeing telescope can bring into visibility the coastline of His shoreless supply. No barrier can hinder Him from pouring out His blessings. He's enduringly strong. He's entirely sincere. He's eternally steadfast. He's immortally graceful. He's imperially powerful. He's impartially merciful. Do you know Him?*

*He's the greatest phenomenon that has ever crossed the horizon of this world. He's God's Son. He's the sinner's Savior. He's the centerpiece of civilization. He stands in the solitude of Himself. He's august and He's unique. He's unparalleled. He's unprecedented. He is the loftiest idea in literature. He's the highest personality in philosophy. He is the supreme problem in higher criticism. He's the fundamental doctrine of true theology. He is the cardinal necessity for spiritual religion.*

*He's the miracle of the age. He is the superlative of everything good that you choose to call Him. He's the only one qualified to be an all sufficient Savior. I wonder if you know Him today?*

*He supplies strength for the weak. He's available for the tempted and the tried. He sympathizes and He saves. He strengthens and sustains. He guards and He guides.*

*He heals the sick. He cleansed the lepers. He forgives sinners. He discharges debtors. He delivers the captives. He defends the feeble. He blesses the young. He serves the unfortunate. He regards the aged. He rewards the diligent....and He beautifies the meek.*

*I wonder if you know Him?*

*He's the key to knowledge. He's the wellspring of wisdom. He's the doorway of deliverance. He's the pathway of peace. He's the roadway of righteousness. He's the highway of holiness. He's the gateway of glory. Do you know Him?*

*Well, His office is manifold. His promise is sure....and His light is matchless. His goodness is limitless. His mercy is everlasting. His love never changes. His word is enough. His grace is sufficient. His reign is righteous. And His yoke is easy, and his burden is light. I wish I could describe Him to you....*

*He's incomprehensible. He's invincible. He's irresistible. Well, you can't get Him out of your mind. You can't get Him off of your hand. You can't out live Him, and you can't live without Him. The Pharisees couldn't stand Him, but they found out they couldn't stop Him. Pilate couldn't find any fault in Him. The witnesses couldn't get their testimonies to agree. Herod couldn't kill Him. Death couldn't handle Him, and the grave couldn't hold Him. Yea!!!, that's my King, that's my King.*

*Yes, and Thine is the Kingdom....and the Power....and the Glory....Forever....and ever, and ever, and ever—How long is that? And ever, and ever. And when you get through with all of the forevers, then. AMEN!*

### **TABLE TALK**

1. What did you learn in this lesson?
2. This book is not just a revelation *from* Jesus. It is the revelation *of* Jesus. Explain and discuss this.
3. Describe an experience you have had when you realized someone was tampering with God's Word; either adding to it or taking from it.
4. Does the book of Revelation fill you with hope? Or dread? Does the prayer "Come, Lord Jesus" come naturally for you?
5. Has this study changed the way you think about worship? How?