

Why Revelation Matters

Revelation 22:6-11

By Phil Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2018-10-21

Why Revelation Matters

Revelation 22:6-11

By Phil Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2018-10-21

In our reading this morning we will be looking at the beginning part of the Epilogue to the book. In terms of the chiasmic structure of the book, this is parallel in subject matter to the Prologue in the first part of chapter 1. So verse 6 is starting a brand new section, and thus the change in timing. This morning we will only look at the first five verses of the Epilogue. Beginning to read at verse 6.

Text

6 Then he says to me, “These words are faithful and true. The Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent His angel to show to His slaves the things that must shortly take place. 7 Take note, I am coming swiftly! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.” 8 Now I, John, who heard and saw these things, when I had heard and seen I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things, 9 but he says to me, “Don’t! I am your fellow slave and among your brothers the prophets, those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.” 10 Then he says to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11 He who acts unjustly let him act unjustly still, and let the filthy one be filthy still, and let the righteous one still practice righteousness, and let the holy one still be sanctified.”

Introduction

Over the past three messages we have been looking at the glories of the New Jerusalem. We saw that the New Jerusalem is not simply a destiny for us when we die. It contains God’s throne room and all the spiritual resources that we need in this life. Galatians says that the New Jerusalem gives birth to us and is the mother of us all. It provides for us. It tugs at our hearts as the Holy Spirit imparts an upward call.

In other words, it is relevant to all that we do every day. And it invades earth. Or to use a non-military symbol, the river of life spills out of the Garden of Eden and begins to transform the whole planet into a garden as the Great Commission prospers. But that all began in the first century and will be culminated in eternity. So we have finished the seven major visions of the book of Revelation, and they span the first century to the end of time and beyond it into eternity.

And I’ve made a very small correction to the book outlines that you have. And I’ve made it because starting in verse 6 we have a lot of parallels to the first “how to read this book” section. In effect, a lot of the rules for interpreting the book are repeated even in this paragraph. But I don’t want to

repeat what I said back then, so I am going to make new applications to these principles and show how this book is very relevant to us; it really matters that we understand it.

I. The words of this book are absolutely trustworthy (v. 6)

A. They are faithful and true (v. 6a)

It matters first because the words of this book are faithful and true. We can bank on them. Verse 6: “Then he says to me, ‘These words are faithful and true.’” I’ve seen too many books slide over words and/or explain away words that don’t seem to fit. But we can trust absolutely every detail of this book. Even the judgments of sin are faithful and true. Someone once said, “Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them.” It is precisely because it is so faithful and true that it sometimes makes us uncomfortable. It is calling our lives to change and to line up with Christ’s life.

B. Because they are God’s revelation (v. 6b)

Second, we can trust the words of Revelation because it is God’s revelation. Duh! That should be obvious, right? But we don’t always revere God’s Word as if it is His revelation. This book records God’s inerrant thoughts being communicated to our minds. God does not lie. God never makes mistakes. God knows all things. So when He reveals Himself to us, we can trust that revelation. That’s the logic.

Verse 6 says, “The Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent His angel to show to His slaves the things that must shortly take place.” God Himself was showing or revealing His word through the angel and through His prophets. We need to get used to approaching the Bible with the faith that it is God Himself speaking to us.

C. Because they are prophetic (v. 6c, 7c,9,10)

Third, the words of this book are faithful and true because they are prophetic words. True prophecy is not an “I think so” statement as today’s charismatics typically see it. I think the whole book of Revelation is a rebuke to the modern charismatic movement that diminishes the character of prophecy, and in doing so undermines the prophetic Scriptures. One charismatic in Omaha justified his mistaken prophecies by saying, “Well, even Jonah made mistakes.” He claimed that Paul made a mistake when the vision of the

Macedonian call was a man calling Paul, and when Paul got there he realized it was a woman. So this charismatic concluded that Paul's chauvinism somehow got mixed up with the prophecy. No, that's not the way prophecy works. You can see how faulty views of prophecy undermine the authority of Scripture. When you examine the authority of the last two prophets in Revelation 11, they are quite different from modern so-called prophets. We have seen earlier in this book that all prophecy in Scripture is inerrant, infallible, and authoritative because it communicates God's very words. Verse 6 is explaining why the words of this book are totally faithful and true - no error in them. It is because they constitute the final deposit that God had been giving to the prophets. This book is a prophecy. He calls it the prophecy of this book and the book of this prophecy. And we dealt with that subject in depth in chapters 10-11. But it is a major area where the church desperately needs reform.

D. And therefore they must of necessity be fulfilled or God's character is at stake (v. 6d)

And next, because the words of this book are God's very revelation to us, and because they come through prophets, the last part of verse 6 says that these prophetic words record "things that must shortly take place." The Greek word for "must" is δεῖ, and is defined in the dictionary as "to be under necessity of happening, it is necessary, one must, one has to."¹ These words cannot fail. They must be fulfilled. Why? Because it is of the very nature of prophecy to be infallible and inerrant.

And in the 100+ sermons that we have had so far on this book we have looked at absolutely remarkable fulfillments to the prophecies of this book. But too many people are skeptics, and they can't take God's word at face value. For example, the vast bulk of my commentaries say that blood up to the horses' bridles must be hyperbole. They say that is impossible. Well, that is their minds dictating what is possible and what is not. But we saw eyewitness accounts that described blood up to the horses' noses. As strange and hard to believe as such a prophecy might seem, it must be fulfilled or God's very character would be at stake. Others think that the prophecy that every island and mountain in the Mediterranean would soon move so fast under people's feet that it would seem like the ground was fleeing must be hyperbole. They think that there is no way that that could happen in history. But we have seen that science has caught up with this Scripture and new Mediterranean studies show that the entire Mediterranean was impacted by

¹ Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, eds. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d, Accordance electronic ed., version 2.5. (Chicago

such massive tectonic movement, that every mountain and island very literally moved - some moving upwards several meters. It would have been very scary to experience that. And we have looked at many other details and seen that when God says something will happen, it happens. Biblical prophecy is nothing like modern so-called prophecy, which claims to be 60% accurate. Biblical prophecy must be fulfilled. In fact, in Matthew 7, Jesus showed that this was how to test true prophets from false prophets. He said you could tell the prophetic trees by their fruit. Prophetic trees always bear good fruit. In other words, 100% fulfillment is the test for New Testament prophecy. There is no exaggeration in the word “must” when it says that they must take place. It is a necessary implication of the fact that prophecy is inspired. So that gives us confidence in the Bible’s promises, its assurances, its laws, and its every word.

II. The words of this book were relevant to their first century audience (v. 6c)

And that leads us to the second major point - the words of this book are relevant to their first century audience. And because we can see the specific ways that God fulfilled most of the prophecies in the first century, it is very relevant to us. But if (as some people claim) the book only relates to the generation living at the end history and that it involves battles of rockets and helicopters and tanks, first century saints would not have had a clue what it meant, how it related to them in any way, or why John bothered to give the book to them. But we have seen that since the original audience was composed of Jewish Christians under the apostle’s care, they would have understood this thoroughly Jewish book almost instantly. Here are some of the ways that this book was very relevant to them.

A. *These words must be fulfilled soon (v. 6e)*

Verse 6 says that this book’s purpose was “to show to His slaves the things that must shortly take place.” The Greek for “shortly” is ἐν τάχει, and refers to something that will happen very very soon. 2000 years later is not very very soon. This is a repetition of what was said in chapter 1 verse 1. Every one of the seven visions in this book had to substantially relate to something that was fulfilled shortly - even the making of the New Jerusalem (which was the last section). Though chapters 21-22 look at the New Jerusalem from the perspective of eternity (when the last person has entered into the New Jerusalem), Revelation 3:12 says that the New Jerusalem was already in existence, and other Scriptures indicate that the construction of the New

Jerusalem itself was completed within four years of the writing of this book - in other words, in AD 70. And chapters 21-22 remind us of things the New Jerusalem did during history - such as bringing healing to the nations. Nations don't need healing in eternity.

In any case, the bulk of this book was fulfilled by AD 70, and even the beginning of the last section was fulfilled at that time. So it is relevant first, because the things of this book had to take place shortly. It very much concerned what was going to happen to the first century audience.

B. Christ must come in judgment soon (v. 7a)

Second, Christ had promised to come in judgment upon first century Israel within one generation - within forty years. Well, the end of that forty-year period was closing in on the apostle John. He wrote this 36 years after Jesus made that prophecy. And earlier in the book we saw that Christ's historic judgments did indeed fall upon both Israel and Rome within forty years.

This book was written in early AD 66, so verse 7a is literally true when it reiterates what was said earlier in the book - "Take note, I am coming swiftly!" The Greek word for "swiftly" is actually more precise than swiftly. Swiftly can mean soon, but it is ambiguous in the English and can refer to an event far distant happening fast when it does happen. But this is the Greek word ταχύ, which never means fast. It is defined by Greek dictionaries as pertaining to a brief time subsequent to another point of time, and it is almost always rendered "in a short time" or "soon." It doesn't have anything to do with the speed of His descent. It has to do with the short period of time from prophecy to fulfillment. And we saw that Jesus did indeed come soon to bring judgment.

Is there a coming of Jesus to earth in our future? Yes. But that coming is predicted to be a long ways off. This one was predicted to be soon, near, at hand, and about to happen. Again, we cannot allow our doubts to dictate exegesis. If God said that Jesus would come soon, He did come soon. And earlier in the book I shared with you the testimonies of eyewitness who claimed to have seen Jesus in the sky leading the armies of heaven and fiery chariots and horses in spiritual battle, sweeping all through the cities of Israel. He very literally came in judgment. This was very relevant to the first century audience.

And because it was fulfilled to a "t" it provides guidance for us to show us how Christ engages in all of His other historical judgments. If Israel and Rome couldn't get away with their rebellion during New Covenant times,

then nations today can't get away with their rebellion. But on the Dispensational theory, nations get away with rebellion in history - that is, until the last seven years of this age. So on their interpretation, there is no bearing that the book has to history. On their view, God's judgment of some future empire with His law, His covenant, and His judgments has no bearing on what might happen in history.

But on our interpretation, this book is very relevant. It shows that Jesus judges even Gentile nations in history. So, by showing the fulfillment in history, it gives us a philosophy of history. By showing the relationship of covenant, law, and historical judgments in the first century, it shows us how covenant, law, and historical judgments relate to all nations today. Do you see how the relevance of the book to the first century audience is so important in seeing the relevance of this book now? Because it was relevant to them it is very relevant to us. It shows that America is living dangerously in its rebellion against Jesus.

C. These are prophetic words that the first century audience was expected to obey/keep (v. 7b)

The third thing that shows the relevance of this book to the first century audience is that the words are something that they were expected to obey or keep. This is not just a book about the future; its a book on ethics; its a book to live by. Verse 7 says, "Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." Jesus said in Matthew 4:4, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." And this verse shows that obedience is always rewarded by God.

Can we receive the same blessings they did? Yes. This book is filled with applications that we can pay heed to and obey. We will see in an upcoming overview sermon of Revelation, that this is a spiritual war manual that shows us how to overcome even in difficult times. It is a worship manual that shows us how to worship. It is a manual of ethics for God's foot soldiers. It is a manual that shows us how to pray against demons. And because the first century saints were incredibly successful in implementing this book, conquering nation after nation with the Gospel, and eventually seeing Rome itself becoming a Christian empire, it gives us a concrete paradigm for doing the same in our own times. John applied Old Testament law to Rome, so we are justified in applying Old Testament law to Gentile nations. John applied Old Testament promises, so we are justified in applying Old Testament promises in New Covenant times. It was intended for every nation. This book affects how we look at elections. This is a book of ethical imperatives,

not just future predictions.

III. The words of this book call for worship (vv. 8-9)

A. The words are so powerful that John worships (v. 8)

The next thing that we see is that the words of this book were so powerful that John was overwhelmed by them and fell on His knees to worship God. Reading Revelation is nothing like reading Reader's Digest or reading a novel or even a history book. As we saw in our discussion of the Greek terms βιβλίον and βιβλιδάριον in chapters 10-11, Revelation was being added to the canon the moment it was being written and thus was part of the canon of Scripture. As we will see later on in this chapter, once the last words of this book were written down, no more canon could come.

But that makes this book just as much God speaking to us as other books of the Bible are. Because these words were God's very words, John feels like he has come face to face with God. John recognizes God in these very words. Now, he mistakenly thinks that the messenger of the words is Jesus. He is confused about the messenger, but not the message. So verse 8 says, Now I, John, who heard and saw these things, when I had heard and seen I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things...

Why would he worship this angel? Commentators believe that John mistakenly thought that it must be Jesus. Why would he mistakenly think that it must be Jesus? Because Christ's very words were coming from the angel to John and having an impact upon him, and he could not help but react to that word. I do not believe John's intention was to worship an angel; rather it was to worship Christ His Lord. But the unmistakable presence and power of God in the inspired words humbles him and powerfully moves him. Even the correction that the angel gives shows that this was the case.

Verse 9

but he says to me, "Don't! I am your fellow slave and among your brothers the prophets, those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

He is explaining why John was confronted with God Himself in these words. The angel was a prophet. You may have never realized that an angel can be a prophet, but he is clearly called one. He said, "I am your fellow slave and among your brothers the prophets." Well, what happens when you hear a true prophet? You are hearing the very words of God, not simply man's impressions about God's revelation. John would understand that. According to 2 Peter 1:21, "prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." If the angel is a prophet, then it is the Holy Spirit speaking through this angel. No wonder John

treated these words as God's Words. Paul had said that when he prophesied, it was not man's words, but God's words that were being given. He told the Thessalonians, "when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe" (1 Thes. 2:13). And in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul said that when a true prophet is in a church, the prophecy will make people say that God is in their midst and they will fall down and worship. They will do the same thing John did.

So if John thought this was Jesus bringing God's revelation, it is no surprise that John bows down to worship Him. The angel probably looked like a man and probably did not have wings like you see in the picture. So it was a very understandable mistaken impression.

Now, before I look at the angel's correction, let me comment a bit more on the fact that the angel does not use the word βιβλιδάριον (or little book) here. That would have been a reference to the as-yet-unfinished book of Revelation. Consistently Revelation refers to the little book of Revelation as a βιβλιδάριον and refers to the rest of the Bible as a βιβλίον, or big book. We saw earlier in this series that this followed the pattern of Ezekiel where Ezekiel received a little book (the book of Ezekiel) and that little book got added to the big book, or the canon. The βιβλίον for John was the canon, which was about to be completed. This angel is helping John to finish off the words of the canon of Scripture as a whole. That's why he lumps himself in with all the other prophets. With them, he has brought the inspired word of God. The canon could not be closed until verse 21 was written down.

And let me comment briefly on why God's Word should always lead us to worship. God's Word is God Himself speaking to us, so it shares the powerful attributes of God. We have seen before that the Word heals because God heals; the Word brings conviction because God brings conviction. The Word is powerful because God is powerful. Hebrews says that it discerns and exposes things in our hearts that we didn't even know were there. Why? Because it is God Himself looking into our heart. The Bible is likened to a hammer that breaks the stones in pieces; to medicine that brings healing, to a fire that consumes. When the Spirit of God takes the words of Scripture and applies them to your heart, it is like you are coming face to face with God Himself and it humbles you and makes you worship.

Now, that assumes that you are approaching this book with faith and expectation. 2 Corinthians 3:6 says that it is a dead letter to those who are outside of Christ. They don't see it as being the Word of God. The

evangelist, Gypsy Smith, had an agnostic tell him that he had gone through the Bible several times and could see no inspiration in it. Smith responded, "Let it go through you once, then you will tell a different story!" And that has been true of me. I have had times when the Word had no impact upon me because I was not approaching it in faith, and other times when I was on my knees reading God's word where God has manifested Himself to me so powerfully through the Scriptures that I am almost undone in His presence. It drove me to worship.

B. The angel does not disagree with worship. He just redirects the worship to God Himself. These words are designed to make you God-centered

So I want you to notice that the angel does not disagree with John's worship. He is just directing worship properly. The angel helps him to be God-centered by pointing out that he is not Jesus. He tells him, "Worship God." And by analogy, preachers should not point to themselves when they preach the Word. They should be constantly pointing all honor, authority, and all reverence to God.

IV. The timing for the words of this book are contrasted with those given to Daniel (v. 10 with Daniel 12:4,9)

Another thing that commentators point out is that verse 10 is a deliberate and direct contrast with the timing and actions of Daniel 12:9. Daniel had been told, "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end... Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." (vv. 4,9) And in context it is the end of the Old Covenant and the end of Israel as a nation. So in the context of describing the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Old Covenant in AD 70, Daniel had been told to not worry about the greatest tribulation ever since it was referring to a time that was far distant. Now John has written a book about the same events that Daniel did, but he is told, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near." Before it was distant, now it is near.

Dispensationalist commentaries completely miss this, and they end up holding to a strange contradiction. Let me explain. Daniel's prophecy in chapter 12 dealt with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. But he wrote the prophecy around 530 BC, so the events of that chapter were indeed a long ways off - exactly 600 years to be precise. On anyone's time scale, 600

years is a long time. You don't need to worry about events 600 years from now. But Dispensationalists want us to believe that 600 years is such a long time that Daniel does not need to worry about it and could seal up the book. Yet here, they claim that the prophecies of this book relate to events in our future (at least 2000 years after John wrote Revelation), yet in God's timetable they are so imminent to John and so perilous that John may not seal up the canon yet because they are soon. That makes no sense whatsoever. Both Daniel and John are writing about God's timetable, and if 600 years is far distant, then 2000 years cannot be near.

And their interpretation completely misses the context of when the canon is going to be closed. The canon may not be sealed until AD 70 because that is when the last of the prophets stop prophesying. He had already told John that in chapter 10:7 - that the mystery of prophecy would not be ended until the seventh trumpet, which blew in AD 70. It makes much more sense to say that prophecy would end in four years and Jerusalem would be destroyed in the same year. On anyone's time scale, four years is soon. Jay Adams rightly interprets both passages, saying,

Unlike John's, Daniel's prophecy did not constitute a 'contemporary' message, and was therefore sealed until the times of which he wrote. In direct contrast, Jesus told John not to seal the Apocalypse, for the matters it concerns were 'at hand.'²

V. Our attitudes towards the words of God can form irreversible character (v. 11)

But what makes an imminent fulfillment so pronounced is the fact that verse 11 indicates that it is too late for Israel to be rescued. It says, "He who acts unjustly let him act unjustly still, and let the filthy one be filthy still, and let the righteous one still practice righteousness, and let the holy one still be sanctified." It's not talking about eternity, because the righteous and wicked living side by side continue to practice righteousness and wickedness. That's not true in eternity. It is clearly referring to something in history. To understand this, we need to understand the very next verse after Daniel is commanded to seal up the book. Verses 10-11 of Revelation 22 parallel verses 9-10 of Daniel 12. Daniel 12:9-10 says this:

...Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. 10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand. (NIV)

That was prophesying that at the time of the tribulation the wicked would persevere in their wickedness and would not understand. Or as the Message

2 Jay E. Adams, *The Time is at Hand* (Greenville, SC: A Press, 1987), p. 52.

Bible paraphrases it, “But the wicked will just keep on being wicked, without a clue about what is happening.” We see that completely fulfilled in Josephus’ eyewitness history. He was astonished at how quickly the wicked in Israel degenerated into further wickedness and absolute hardness of heart. They were utterly blind in their rebellion. It was as if they were in a free fall of wickedness. As to timing, Dennis Johnson comments that “What Daniel saw in the future John sees in the present.” And I find it interesting that He admits that because he is not a Preterist. But it is hard to get around the clear words.

So what was happening in John’s present? Israel had committed the unpardonable sin and could not repent; they could not reverse their slide to disaster. It is a scary observation of human nature that when people resist God long enough (like Israel did in the first century), they cross an invisible line in wickedness beyond which they cannot reverse themselves. There is an older commentator by the name of Carpenter who said of this verse, “Sow an act - reap a habit; sow a habit - reap a character; sow a character - reap a destiny.”^[^3] He is saying that our attitudes towards the Word of God can eventually form irreversible character. If you are at a point where God says verse 11 of you, there is no reversing your destiny. The wicked people described in this verse had crossed the line and committed the unpardonable sin. God’s order was (and it is an order), “He who acts unjustly let him act unjustly still, and let the filthy one be filthy still.” If God says that of you, there is no reversing it. From Genesis 1 to the end of Scripture, when God says “Let there be...”, it comes to pass.

I’ve had people tell me when confronted about their sin that they will just ask God’s forgiveness. They have a cavalier attitude toward their sin and rebellion. But the more we quench the Holy Spirit, the closer to the line of unpardonable sin we come, until Hebrews says there is a point where it is impossible to renew us to repentance. You won’t even be able to repent. From that point on you will act unjustly still and be filthy still and quite comfortable in that damnable situation. Those are solemn words to end this paragraph with. And they are solemn words that we should pay heed to if we are stubborn in our rebellion.

VI. Conclusion: five more applications

I’ll pick up at verse 12 next week and continue to look at these final principles by which we can interpret the book, but let me end with five final thoughts of application.

A. Application 1

First, let me make an application from the fact that God's words are faithful and true. When your flesh (or even a demon) tempts you to question God's Word in any area, rebuke this thought sharply. That's what David did in Psalms 42-43. Thoughts were flooding into his head that made him discouraged and want to give up, and he rebuked himself and told himself to quit thinking that way. He told himself,

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance."

He was preaching to Himself and telling himself to cut it out because he knew that God's words were faithful and true and his thoughts were not. So he was convincing himself to quit listening to his own thoughts which were not faithful and true - which were driving him to despair.

When you are tempted to think that you will get away with your sin, rebuke yourself and any demon that may be present by saying, "No, I will not call God a liar. Galatians 6 says that whatever we sow, that we will also reap. And I choose to believe that. I will not sow to the flesh by giving into this temptation."

When you are tempted to doubt that you can do what God is calling you to do, rebuke yourself by saying, "No, I will not call God a liar. God's Word says, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'"

Daily we are tempted to doubt that God's words are faithful and true. Reject such doubts with all your might. Argue with yourself if need be.

I remember one person who was constantly being tempted to think that he had committed the unpardonable sin and that he could not be forgiven. He had no faith to believe he was forgiven when he asked God to forgive him. It was a temptation to doubt God's promise that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness - and the word "all" includes that sin that he had sinned. Hebrews says that the person who has committed the unpardonable sin can't repent; doesn't want to repent; he has gone too far. So if you repent and turn from your sins, it is proof positive that you have not committed the unpardonable sin.

The point of all these illustrations is that we should not allow ourselves to doubt God's Word. We should preach to ourselves the phrase in verse 6 that says, "These words are faithful and true."

B. Application 2

Second, our hearts tend to worship men, things, and other idols. When God gives us a beautiful gift, we can easily transfer our trust from God to the gift, or the finances, or the house. It's a form of idolatry. And if John could accidentally worship the creature rather than God, we can too. We must be like the angel and break that tendency to elevate anything to the status of God. The angel's admonition must be our constant reminder to get rid of idols. He told John not to worship him, but to worship God.

C. Application 3

Third, see yourself as a slave when it comes to responsibilities and as a son or daughter when it comes to privileges. This angel called himself a slave and called John a slave. And earlier in the book John called himself a slave of Jesus Christ. Are you better than the apostle John? I think not. Then don't think it beneath your dignity to call yourself Christ's slave. When you think of yourself as a slave it tends to bring humility. And it is possible to think of yourself as a slave and a son or daughter at the same time. Just think of yourself as a slave who has been adopted into God's family. Abraham's slaves were a part of his household. Galatians 4 says that a slave is no different from a child - he has family status. Seeing yourself as a slave adopted into God's family will not only maintain a proper humility before God, but it will increase your love and appreciation for God. I would urge you to start thinking of yourselves as slaves of God.

D. Application 4

Fourth, remind yourself that God's Word is always relevant. Look for its relevance. Don't dismiss any of it. Even the boring parts are relevant and should be cherished as God's good gift to you. Thank God for every portion of Scripture and treat it as precious.

E. Application 5

And finally, I mentioned the negative portion of verse 11, but let's take hope from the positive statements in verse 11 - "let the righteous one still practice righteousness, and let the holy one still be sanctified." This is God's decree concerning the elect. Just as God commanded the non-elect to be hardened, in these phrases He commands the elect to practice righteousness. If you are a righteous one, God wills for you to continue practicing righteousness. And since He decrees it for all the elect, the elect will always persevere. If you are a holy one, God wills that you persevere in being sanctified. If He wills

it, it will be done. He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. So there is much in this passage to be encouraged by.

But in terms of answering the title to this book - Why does the Book of Revelation matter? - We can say that it matters because it is not only the instructions for the early church, it is God's loving instructions for us and that are relevant to us. May each one of us love God's word and cherish it. Amen.

[^3]: Boyd W. Carpenter, *The Revelation of St. John. Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, volume 8, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), p. 636.

University of Chicago Press, 2000).