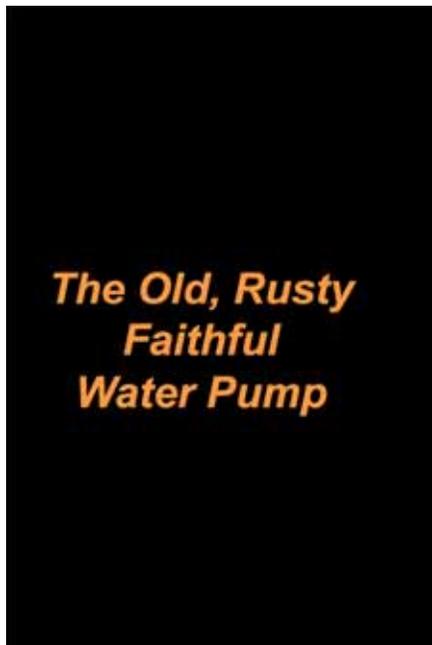


The Faithful and True Prophecy

There is a legend about a man who was lost in the desert and longing for a drink of water. He stumbled upon an old shack. A ramshackled, windowless, roofless, weather-beaten old shack. He looked around the place and found a little shade from the heat of the desert sun, and as he glanced around he saw a pump about 15 feet away. It was an old, rusty water pump. He stumbled over to it, grabbed the handle and began to push the handle of the pump up and down, up and down but nothing came out. Disappointed, he staggered back to the shack. He noticed off to the side, an old jug. He looked at it, wiped away the dirt and dust and read a message: "You have to prime the pump with all the water in this jug, my friend. PS: be sure you fill the jug again before you leave."

He popped the cork off the jug and sure enough it was almost full of water. Suddenly, he was faced with the decision. If he drank the water, he could live. Ah but, if he poured all the water into the old rusty pump maybe it would yield fresh cool water from deep down in



the well, all the water he wanted. He studied the possibility of both options. What should he do? Pour it into the old pump and take a chance on fresh, cool water or drink what was in the old jug and ignore its message? Should he waste all the water on the hopes of those flimsy instructions which were written no telling how long ago? Reluctantly, he poured all the water into the pump, and then he grabbed the handle. He began to pump, squeak, squeak, squeak, still nothing came out, squeak, squeak, squeak, a little bit began to drib-

ble out, and then a stream. Finally, it gushed, to his relief, with cool water pouring out of the rusty pump. Eagerly, he filled the jug and drank from it. He filled it another time and once again drank its refreshing contents. Then he filled the jug for the next traveler, and he filled it to the top, popped the cork on and added this little note: "Believe me, it really works! You have to give it all away before you can get anything back." There is some spiritual truth in this statement, but our application this morning is about the book of Revelation.

REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. Just as the note on the jug was trustworthy, the book of Revelation is trustworthy too. The book of Revelation is faithful and true. Therefore,

we need to trust it, believe it and act on it. The first clue that the book of Revelation was faithful and true occurred when we started our study two years ago in the book of Revelation. We saw in that first study that Revelation 1:1 read,

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-

servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 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. Revelation 1:1-3 (NASB)

These first two verses tell us that this book is the revelation of Christ. It's his revelation, and it was given to him by



the Father. Then God the Father communicated this revelation through an angel to the apostle John. The reason this prophecy was communicated to us is that the time is nearer for Christ's return. In verse 3 we are given a beatitude. It is the first beatitude of seven beatitudes in the book of Revelation. We will see the sixth beatitude in this study, and the seventh and the last beatitude in our next study. In the sixth beatitude we will be told that those who read it, those who hear it, and those who heed it will be blessed. That is, there is a blessing for those of us who read it, hear it and keep it.

REVELATION IS A PROPHECY FROM GOD. It is very important to understand Revelation 1:1-3. It tells us that this prophecy is from God. That is why this book is faithful and true. It comes from our God. Now in this study, which is Revelation 22:6-12, we are going to be given a final clue as to why the book is faithful and true. In Revelation 22:6 we are told why we can believe what is recorded in this book.

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. Revelation 22:6 (NASB)

Notice the words faithful and true. It tells us that God communicated through an angel to us. If you look at verse 8 it says, "I, John am the one who heard and saw these things," and then John goes on to make the point that then he communicated it to us. It's the same message that we saw in Revelation 1:1-2. This message is repeated here in the closing chapter of the book. It is repeated because the book is faithful and true. Revelation has 22 chapters. Chapter 1 was an

introduction and chapter 22 closes the book. We have seen many exciting truths in this book. Some of the truths have been about our eternal home.

Stephen Wilmschurst wrote in his book, "The Final Word", what we have seen in the book of Revelation so far.

With this chapter we reach the end of Revelation. We have studied and come to grips with and sometimes been puzzled over this astonishing book which takes us behind the scenes of history, beyond this present world into the unseen realms of heaven, into the throne room where God reigns and works out his sovereign will, but now as we come to Revelation 22:6, the visions are over. And all the way from the start of

chapter four, they have flowed thick and fast. John has seen everything now, the new Jerusalem was the magnificent climax of those visions, but now, the sight of her fades away, and John is left no doubt dazzled by what he has just seen. The words of this book are faithful and true. And all that we have seen and all



that we've been taught are faithful and true. I don't know about you, but it's a great comfort. To know that the things we've been studying are faithful and true. We can bank on it. We can count on it. It is faithful and true and it's going to happen. And for those of us who have put our faith in Christ, we've discovered some really great things about what's going to be in our future.

THE AUTHOR OF REVELATION IS GOD. Our last study in Revelation was very special since it included a description of heaven. What the inspired apostle wrote is not mystical. The apocalypse is not a record of his bizarre dreams or

the result of an overactive imagination. Revelation is not an allegory from which readers can exact hidden meanings of their own concoction. What the apostle John wrote is divine truth. It is an exact description of events and persons yet to come. The truths are absolutely true. They are faithful. They are true. They are not wild imaginations. The reason that the words of Revelation are accurate and true is that the author is faithful and true. The author is God. That is the reason the book is faithful and true.

Therefore, we know that these words are faithful and true because Jesus is the “God of the spirits of the prophets.” That is all we need know. He's the God of the spirits of the prophets and His Spirit guided them as they wrote. I was thinking about this truth for a while. Why does God tell us that Jesus Christ is the God of the spirits of the prophets? He could have said the bodies of the prophets, right?

Also, He could have said “spirits.” While I was thinking about our physical bodies versus our spirits, it became clear what God was trying to communicate a great truth. Yes, God is the God of the bodies, but He is also the God of the spirits and which one lasts for eternity?

The answer is the spirit. Therefore, when He says He is the God of the spirits of the prophets, He is telling us that He is the God of the real us, not this body that is wrapped around us, not this thing that we prize so greatly, which is called our bodies. Therefore, we are told He is the God of the spirits of the prophets. This is an incredibly important truth because the prophets wrote scripture. The prophets are the ones who wrote most of the Old Testament. Prophets also wrote parts of the New Testament along with the apostles. God was writing through key men in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. There are some New Testament books

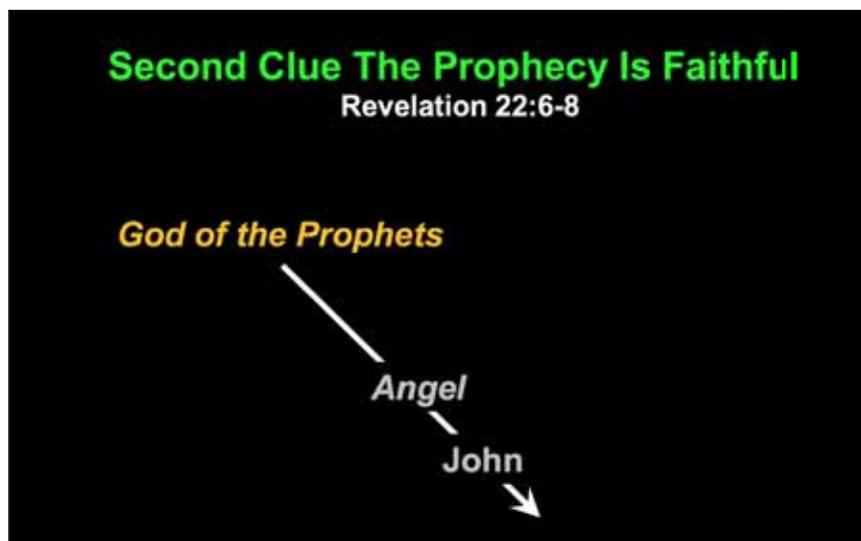
that were written by colleagues of the apostles. The apostles directed them to write. Therefore, we understand that the entire New Testament was written directly or influenced by the apostles themselves.

REVELATION IS FAITHFUL AND TRUE. Since God is faithful and truth and He wrote through the prophets, the book of Revelation is faithful and true. The God of the spirits of the prophets, wrote the book of Revelation. Now you go to the Old Testament, and think about some of the tremendous prophecies the prophets wrote. Think about Leviticus 26:33-39. The passage prophesied that Israel would go into captivity. In Isaiah 13:1-14:27 and in Daniel 2:36-39 we are told that Babylon would end up being destroyed and it happened. Babylon will also be destroyed once again in the future. The first destruction was a temporary one and not the final one. And we've seen in our study of Revelation that

the final destruction of Babylon will be total, absolute, complete and then that will be the end of it.

In Daniel 22:39-43, Daniel 5:25-31 and Daniel 8:15-22, we find prophecies that the Medo-Persia empire would be defeated by the empire of Greece. Then Greece would

be defeated by another empire, and that empire was the empire of Rome. All of those prophecies were literally fulfilled. Daniel is one of the most amazing prophecies in the Old Testament. Just a fabulous, fabulous prophecy. Micah 5:2 predicted that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Isaiah 7:14 predicted that the Messiah would be born of a virgin, and Isaiah 53:7-10 predicted that he would be crucified and then Psalm 16:8-11 predicted that he would come back to life, that Christ's body would not decay and then He would be resurrected. Furthermore, when we come to the New Testament we find that Jesus prophesied the destruc-



tion of Chorazin and Bethsaida.

In the early part of the book of Revelation the apostle John prophesies that Laodicea and Sardis would be erased off the map and today all that remains of Laodicea are a couple of marble columns. That is all that is left of the city. The city was absolutely destroyed. It's ancient buildings do not exist. It is gone! The city of Sardis doesn't exist either. It was the city that was declared to be dead. The statement in scripture is: "You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."

When God speaks, things happen. When God gives a prophecy, it comes true. It is something we can depend on. We have seen in our studies that the nation of Israel has return to the land of Palestine. The return of Jews to Palestine was predicted in multiple places of The Old Testament. One of the classic passages that I like is Isaiah 11:11-12. In that passage we are told two times that Israel would return to the land.

Israel was invaded, defeated and deported by the Babylonian empire. Then God brought the Jews back to the land after the Babylonian army was defeated by the Medo-Persian empire. Then in A.D. 70 the Jews scattered by the Roman empire and the second return to the land of Palestine occurred in 1948. At that time the nation of Israel was revived. Isaiah 46:9-11 summarizes what would happen with these words,

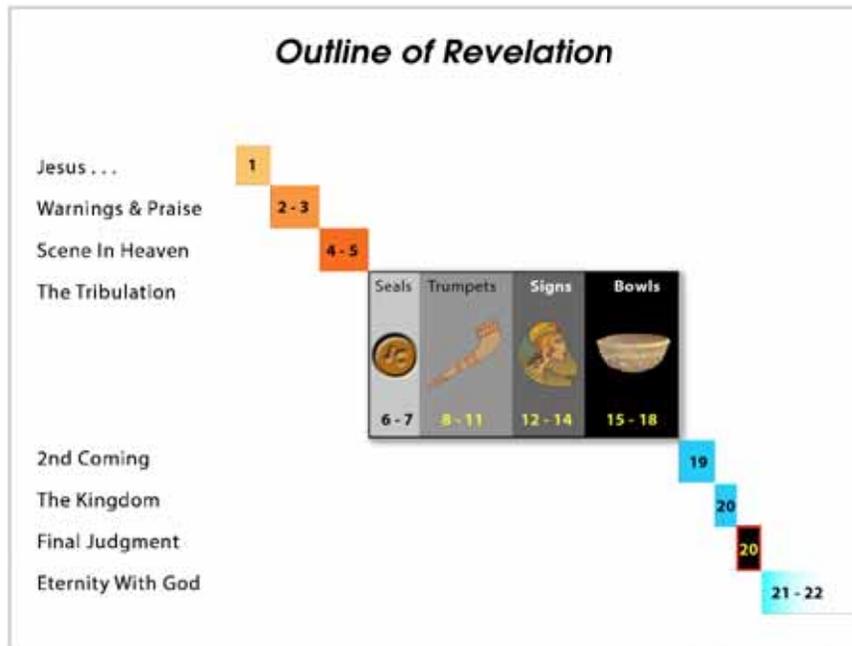
Remember the former things long past,
 For I am God, and there is no other;
 I am God, and there is no one like Me,
 Declaring the end from the beginning,

And from ancient times things which have not been done,
 Saying, 'My purpose will be established,
 And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';
 Calling a bird of prey from the east,
 The man of My purpose from a far country.
 Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass.
 I have planned it, surely I will do it.

Isaiah 46:9-11 (NASB)

Here we are reminded that God can be trusted. God is faithful. God is true.

PROPHECIES WILL BE FULFILLED SOON. And so what God wrote in the book of Revelation can be trusted.



. . . sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place. Revelation 22:6 (NASB)

Did you notice what the verse says these things must occur soon? You may say, how soon is soon? We are still waiting! The answer is that soon is sooner than when the

prophecies about the future were given back in the Old Testament times. It is important to realize that God has a very different idea about time. And the apostles of the New Testament tell us that the fulfillment is still coming. That was the same message in the Old Testament, the apostles are still saying it and we are still waiting today. We trust the prophecies because God has proven Himself to be faithful and true when He predicts something is going to happen. Therefore, we are still waiting for the fulfillment of his prophecies.

MEANING OF THE WORD "QUICKLY." Verse 6 says that the author of Revelation is God and He communicated it

through an angel. Therefore, we can trust that these things will happen. Verse 7 says that the prophesy is so certain that Jesus says,

And behold, I am coming quickly . . . Revelation 22:7a (NASB)

Now it is important to discover the meaning of the word “quickly” in order to understand what is being said. The phrase “I am coming quickly” occurs in Revelation 3:11 and will occur again in Revelation 22:12. Then we will see the phrase again in our next study in verse 20. Therefore, this is an important concept to understand since it is repeated four times.

What does the word “quickly” mean? The root Greek word is *tachus* and it has the idea of suddenness or suddenly.

Therefore, we are being told that when Jesus Christ comes, He comes suddenly, okay? It does not have the idea that He is going to come in two minutes or three minutes. *Tachus* has the idea that when He comes, He comes fast. He is like a thief that breaks into your house unexpectedly and does it very quickly. You will not

know when He is coming, but when He comes, He comes fast. Christ will not announce the time of His coming.

I've had my house broken into in the past. Not my current house. Actually, I've had two houses broken into by a thief. I did not know He was coming but between the time that I had left my house and returned, he had broken in. He was fast. He was quick. Boom, he was in and out. That is the idea of this word *tachus*. Jesus is saying, “I am coming and when I come, I come fast.” In Revelation 22:6 we are told that these events are coming soon, and then in Revelation

22:7 Jesus says that when He comes, He's going to come fast! Really quick. Really fast.

THE SIXTH BEATITUDE. Then, we are given a beatitude in verse 7. It is the sixth beatitude in Revelation.

Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.

Revelation 22:7b (NASB)

We saw in chapter one, “Blessed is he who hears, who reads, and who heeds.” And here we are told, “And blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.” Now, most translations do not translate the verse and say “heeds,” but the NASB does. The New American Standard Bible translates this as “He who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.” The word “heeds” is better translated as “keeps”

because the Greek word is *tereo*. *Tereo* is a Greek word that just means “to keep.” That is, to keep something.

WE NEED TO REMEMBER OUR FIRST LOVE. What are we supposed to keep? What am I supposed to do? Therefore, I went back and looked through the different passages of Rev-

elation in order to discover what we are to keep. I discovered in Revelation 2:4-5 that the church in Ephesus was told that they had left their first love and needed to remember their first love. That is also true of some believers today, right? Do you remember when you first became a Christian how were excited you were about the Lord, wanted to know the Lord and wanted to serve the Lord? You were consumed with the Lord and nothing else? As time went by some of us have gotten a little callous in our hearts toward Jesus, and the Lord is not that important anymore. Some have found that



TV is more important than going to church to listen and study the word of God. Some prefer the family over God. Some are more preoccupied with the things of this world. Jesus said that we're not supposed to be wrapped up with the things of this world, but yet we find that we do. We became preoccupied with serving the Lord.

Did you know that serving the Lord can be bad, if it takes away your relationship with Christ? Some of us struggle in our relationship with Christ to begin with. The challenge to the Ephesian church was that they were involved in doing and doing for Jesus but they no longer loved Him as they once did. He says, "You have you left your first love!" Can I ask, "Have you left your first love?" Now, you might say that you have devotions in the morning and then you think that you have done you thing for God for the day. Well, wait a minute. Do you have a longing for a relationship with the Lord? Do you have a love for your Lord? What drives you? What motivates you to do what you do? You know we're going to heaven, you think you have eternal life and so you lay back and that's the way you live your Christian life. Well, the Christians in Ephesus were told that they had lost their first love, and they were urged to return. They were to rekindle that first love again.

WE NEED TO BE WILLING TO SUFFER. The church of Smyrna was told to prepare for suffering, to be faithful in their trials until death. That's not something that we as Christians struggle with to. However, we struggle with lesser persecutions such as insults. We usually do not evangelize because we are afraid someone will criticize us when share Christ with others.

WE NEED TO BE ON FIRE FOR CHRIST. The church of Pergamum was told to repent, to flee sexual sins and to flee living for pleasure. The church of Thyatira was told to repent, to not tolerate false teachers and to flee false doctrine. In chapter 3 of Revelation, the church of Sardis was told that they needed to wake up because they were a dead church. And the church of Laodicea was warned to repent because they were lukewarm. Every time I think about a lukewarm church, I think about a social club. We take care of our friends, have money and go through the routine but that's basically it. When we leave the church we are on my

own, have no commitment, no obligation to God to anything else. We have done our thing for the day.

We do our thing for the week and then do it all over again. Well, there's something wrong with that picture and that is the message to five of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. Some of those Christians were good but most of them weren't, and so the Holy Spirit challenged them to be on fire, to have a desire and to have a passion for the Lord. God needs to be number one in our lives -- the priority of our lives.

WE NEED TO REPENT OVER OUR SIN. In Revelation chapters 4 through 21, we were challenged to be repentant, to believe and to be holy. We are warned to not take the mark of beast. It is just fabulous to see what God has challenged us to do throughout this book while at the same time, revealing the future.

God has ministered to us in a personal way. We have been challenged to keep the words of the prophecy of this book. We have been told that there is a blessing when we do these things! Now someone might say, "Well, I don't want to do all the things." Then the message of Revelation you will not be blessed.

I was thinking about the book of James. James 4:8 says that if we draw near to God, then God will draw near to us. Did you know that God will draw near to you if you draw near to him? I know some people will say, "Well, I just don't feel very close to God. I wish God would come and let me know that he exists." James has told us how to solve our problem. We need to be the ones who draw near to Him.

HOW GOD COMMUNICATED THIS PROPHECY. Now Revelation 22:8.

I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down . . . Revelation 22:8 (NASB)

The first thing we are told in this verse is that John is the one who is speaking. He is the apostle. We have been told God communicated to an angel, who communicated to John and he has communicated to us. I couldn't help but think about John's role in all of this. How did God communicate this to John? We have been told the communication

was by direct conversation and through a vision, and he had to write it for us. How do we know that John didn't muck it up when he wrote, when he recorded what he saw? How do we know that he didn't mess that up?

ILLUSTRATION OF 2 PETER 1:21. 2 Peter 1 gives us a very important foundational principle. It explains how God wrote the Old and New Testaments through the prophets, other writers and the apostles, this includes the apostle John. In 2 Peter 1:21 we read,

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21 (NASB)

This tells us that God moved men to write by the Holy Spirit. The word moved in Greek is *phero* and it means to bear, to carry, or to lead. It's the idea that He bore the prophets along. He carried them along or led them as they wrote. This is called inspiration.

Do you know what it tells us? The book of Revelation was written by two authors. It was written by the apostle John, and was written by the Holy Spirit. Revelation is a very unique book in the way it was communicated.

EXAMPLES OF INSPIRATION. I would like you to see an example of how inspiration works. In Acts 3:21 we are told that God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. Then in verse 22 we are told,

Moses said, "The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells

you." Acts 3:22 (NASB)

In verse 22 we are told that Moses said that he was a prophet. If you want to verify that Moses was a prophet look at Deuteronomy 34:10. There we are told that Moses was a prophet. Now, notice that verse 21 says that God spoke through the prophets. That is, God spoke through Moses who communicated to the people.

Now look at Acts 4:25. This is even better. In Acts 4:25, we read,

. . . who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit . . . Acts 4:25 (NASB)



What does verse 25 tell us? It says that God wrote by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David. Right here we are told that the Holy Spirit was communicating through David.

In Acts 28:25 we are told,

And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after

Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet . . ." Acts 28:25 (NASB)

We are told in this verse that the Holy Spirit spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers. What's the message? God spoke by the Holy Spirit through the prophets. Every book of the Bible has two authors. The human author and the divine author called the Holy Spirit.

Next turn to 2 Timothy 3. 2 Timothy 3 tells us that everything that God writes is inspired. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

says,

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)

What does this tell us about scripture? All of scripture is God breathed. He breathed it out, and He breathed it by the Holy Spirit through the men who wrote the Old Testament and the New Testament. When they wrote, they wrote in their own style and with their own words. Therefore, each book has a unique flavor with their own words, grammar and structure because they wrote each book, but yet, God so superintended what they wrote so that the documents were what God wanted communicated.

Also, look at Titus 1:2 for a second. In Titus 1:2 we're told that,

... in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began ... Titus 1:2 (NASB)

What does it say about God's character? He "never lies." The message is God cannot lie. Therefore, if God wrote the Old Testament, and He did. If God wrote the New Testament, and He cannot lie, guess what the Old and New Testaments are? They are called truth.

Now look at John 17:17. Here Jesus is speaking to His disciples. He said,

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. John 17:17 (NASB)

Jesus said, "Your word is truth." Next, look at Colossians 1:5. Colossians 1:5, near the end, says,

Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel ... Colossians 1: (NASB)

Guess what the gospel is? It is truth! The Bible is truth. All of the Bible is truth and so is the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation is faithful and it is true.

DO NOT WORSHIP ANGELS. Now returning to Revelation 22:8, let's look at the middle of the verse.

And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." Revelation 22:8 (NASB)



After reading this verse, you might ask yourself, "Why did John fall down at the angel's feet? Why did he bow down and worship this angel?" I think it's very possible that he was confused. He was probably overwhelmed by his experiences. It's

possible that maybe he didn't really realize or have a good understanding of who this individual was until later. Therefore, when he wrote the book of Revelation later he knew better, and he could tell us the being was an angel. Maybe he didn't understand that the time he interacted with the angel. And the angel just said, "Hey, wait a minute. I serve God, you serve God too! Don't worship me. Worship God." That's the message.

I think John was confused. If nothing else at least we know that he was wrong. That is the second message. That is, we have no business being preoccupied with angels. I know an individual who was preoccupied with angels almost to

the point of worshipping angels. That is not what we are supposed to do. Angels are just created beings who are supposed to be obedient servants of God too!

GOD CONTROLS WHAT SCRIPTURE REVEALS. Revelation 22:10 introduces us to the prophecy's fulfillment. That is, the fulfillment of the prophecy is near. And that echoes what we have already discovered in Revelation 22:6. Verse 10 reads,

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

Now this is interesting because if we go to Daniel 12 and read verses 4 and 9, we discover that Daniel was told to conceal something he was told. He was told to seal up some part of the prophecy of Daniel. But here, the apostle John is told to give it out. It is the opposite of what Daniel was told. Daniel was told

to conceal, and John is told to give it out. It reminds us of several things.

First, God has not revealed everything to us. We have everything that we need for life and godliness. That is the message of 2 Timothy 3:16-17. But we have not been told everything. God has not wanted to do that, and the reason might be that we could not understand it or it might be too overwhelming for us.

Second, God has not revealed all the details of our life. I thought it was interesting to look at Acts 16:6-7 that when Paul wanted to go to Bithynia, God said, you're not going there! I do not want you to go there. I want you to go someplace else. And that happens in our lives. God hasn't told

us what is going to happen tomorrow. Do you know what's going to happen tomorrow in your life? I'd like to know what is going to happen, I have to admit. I'd like to know what life's going to be like a year from now. But I suspect that if we knew we would not want to live the next couple of days or weeks or months or years. Watch this! God has not revealed everything to us in the spiritual realm, in our own life or all the details of the world's future. God has not done that. He knows best. Daniel was told to conceal, and here John is told to reveal. Why? Because the time is closer.

GOD CONTROLS WHAT SCRIPTURE REVEALS. Verse 11 is called a problem passage because there are many different viewpoints about the meaning of the verse. It says,

Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy. Revelation 22:11 (NASB)

The verse seems to suggest, don't change. But that can't be true. That

cannot be the meaning because we know that scripture is constantly challenging us to change, to live a godly, holy life, or to believe in Christ, right? Therefore, what does it mean?

The answer is found in a clue that helps us unscramble this verse. The clue occurs in the first part of the verse where it says, "Let the one who does wrong." That is how the New American Standard reads. But if we look at the Greek word for the verb "do" it is a present participle. That means the evildoer is continuously doing wrong. That is, the normal life style of evildoer. Therefore, the verse says then let them live that way. If after hearing all the truth of Revelation, if after hearing the truth, they want to keep living in sin, then let them. If they decide to reject or ignore the truth, then let



them.

Also, if the godly or righteous person has come to an understanding of the truth of what God has communicated, then they are to keep living their holy lives? Keep doing it.

CONCLUSION. Verse 12 says,

Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. Revelation 22:12 (NASB)

So what's the bottom line? The bottom line is that the book of Revelation is faithful and true. It is a prophecy that is going to come true. So how should we respond? Are you thirsty? If so, do not pick up the jug of water next to the wall and prime the pump. What you need to do is pick up the word of truth, the Bible and believe it, obey it, and rejoice in it. Because we have a wonderful home in heaven, and it's certain.