

Revelation 22:12-21

12 'See, I am coming soon;
my reward is with me,
to repay according to everyone's work.

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the first and the last,
the beginning and the end.'

14 Blessed are those who wash their robes,
so that they will have the right to the tree of life
and may enter the city by the gates.

15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers
and fornicators and murderers and idolaters,
and everyone who loves and practises falsehood.

16 'It is I, Jesus,
who sent my angel to you
with this testimony
for the churches.

I am the root and the descendant of David,
the bright morning star.'

17 The Spirit and the bride say,
'Come.'

And let everyone who hears say,
'Come.'

And let everyone who is thirsty
come.

Let anyone who wishes
take the water of life as a gift.

18 I warn everyone
who hears the words
of the prophecy
of this book:

if anyone adds to them,
God will add to that person
the plagues described
in this book;

19 if anyone takes away
from the words
of the book
of this prophecy,

God will take away
that person's share
in the tree of life
and in the holy city,
which are described
in this book.

20 The one
who testifies
to these things
says,
'Surely
I am coming soon.'

Amen.

Come,
Lord Jesus!

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus
be with all the saints.
Amen.

John 17:20-26

20 'I ask
not only
on behalf
of these,

but also
on behalf
of those
who will believe
in me
through their word,

21 that they
may all
be one.

As you,
Father,
are in me
and I am in you,
may they also
be in us,
so that the world
may believe
that you
have sent me.

22 The glory
that you have given me
I have given them,
so that they
may be one,
as we are one,

23 I in them
and you in me,
that they
may become
completely one,
so that
the world may know
that you have sent me
and have loved them
even as
you have loved me.

24 Father,
I desire that those also,
whom you have given me,
may be with me
where I am,
to see my glory,
which you have given me
because you loved me
before the foundation
of the world.

25 'Righteous Father,
the world does not know you,
but I know you;
and these know
that you have sent me.

26 I made your name known
to them,
and I will make it known,
so that the love
with which you have loved me
may be in them,
and I in them.'

Reading Revelation this Week

This is our last Sunday reading from Revelation!
Just as we opened from the prologue, overture, opening credits
Now we close with epilogue, encore, closing credits

If this was performed as a sound-and-light show
These are flashbacks, hints of sequels, reminders, echoes
The narrator John, is explicit, not implied

The source: God, Jesus, Spirit, 'bride', angels, scroll
The medium: John's vision, words, book
The promise and warning: sanctuary, boundaries

The repetition of 'come', *erchomai*
Suggests a liturgical response from audience, like 'amen'
Maranatha - Aramaic word often used for 'Come, Lord Jesus'

If we imagine Revelation as an onion we've cut through
We come out the other side, last papery layers
Almost like wrapping in 'PS' and 'PPS'

Since Revelation echoes and 'spins' prior scripture,
It closes with warnings not to try it yourself, adding more
Or else face plagues and loss of place in the end

The exclusions in v15 make safe space for those in the city
The punishments in v18-19 are for misleading others
Who's in, or out, of what promise or threat?

The urgent imminent 'soon' is often reduced to 'next Tuesday'
Does Jesus start or end a 1,000 year just rule before the end?
That's 'pre-millennial' or 'post-millennial' reduction
'A-millennialists' say 'always, or never', 'both, and'

Does it help you resist Christian accommodation or assimilation
Into our hegemonies of state, politics, capitalism, economics
As it helped John's peers resist Roman rule and Greek culture?

Reading the Fourth Gospel this Week

'The Lord's Prayer' in this gospel:
Ut unum omnes sint in Latin
That's the motto of the UCC

In 2012, we added a Mohawk 'all my relations':
"Akwe Nia'Tetewá:neren"
[aw gway-- nyah day day waw-- nay renh],

What's that invitation or call (not mission)
If it's not imperializing, converting, assimilating?
How are we in union w/ Christ, as Jesus was w/ Creator?

Beyond the original 11 (not to mention women, others)
to future 'church', 'followers of the way'
what unity and reciprocity do we yearn for or seek?

V 24 takes us back to the prologue –
A pre-existent Word, *logos*, incarnate in Jesus – and in us?
It's a way to talk of relations between creator and creature

V25 takes us back to our liberal crisis –
What 'world' does not know – could or should know?
What is 'making name known', 'sent'...

Loaded words of *gnosis*, knowing,
Of *agapē* loving, *apesteilas* sent
Hard to hear outside our missionary past!

Yet what gospel do we proclaim, in word and deed –
Evangelion – evangel or gospel for our evangelism?
Into what do we nurture newcomers or children?

If we affirm anything at all,
Is it necessarily excluding or denigrating alternatives?
"expressio unius est exclusio alterius"?
(That's a principle of statutory interpretation...)