Have you ever noticed that some people have funny ideas about the definition of prophecy? Some think that intuition about future events is prophecy. Recently we had an economic market crash and we are told that some people actually predicted it. They looked at trends in the market and drew some accurate conclusions. Other people think that prophecy is having a feeling that something is going to happen. If it happens to come true, then they are a prophet. Some think it is okay for a prophet to make mistakes as long as he or she gets some of the predictions correct. Nostradamus is one such example of a person who apparently, if in fact, he actually predicted anything would come true. It has been admitted that many things he predicted really have not come true. Therefore, is he really a prophet? Some people have weird ideas about what a prophet is.

**Supposed Prophets of Our Time.** Some have heard about the prophetic opinions of George Fielding Elliott. In 1938, he said a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was a strategic impossibility. Obviously, he was wrong. Or, how about Darryl Zanuck. He was the head of Twentieth Century Fox. In 1946, he said that television won’t be able to hold on to any market it captures after the first six months. He added that people would soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night. Or how about the Science Digest of August 1948 which said that a landing on the moon had so many serious problems that it might take science another 200 years to do so. Obviously, they weren’t right either. Or how about the person who placed a personal ad in a newspaper which predicted that the world would come to an end. It didn’t happen however. Later they said that they regretted any inconvenience they may have caused. I thought it was terrific they apologized. Whoever made that prophecy was obviously not a prophet. Or how about the person who last year predicted that Jesus would return on May 21st, 2011 and then he re-predicted Jesus’ return in October and both times the individual was wrong. He also added that the world would come to an end after Christ’s return. But the fact that we are still here proves he wasn’t right either of the two times.

We have weird ideas about who qualifies as prophets and what qualifies as prophecy. There is a Chinese proverb that summarizes the situation really well. It says,

> It is difficult to prophesy, particularly with regard to the future.1

That is a terrific statement, “It is difficult to prophesy particularly with regard to the future.” That is the truth. Now you may guess. You may think. You may have intuition. You may look at trends and have various ideas about what may be coming, but if you are truly a prophet, you will have to be accurate more than once or twice in your life. You must be accurate every time.

**Standard For God’s Prophet.** God has a higher standard for a prophet than what our world is willing to accept. Listen to Deuteronomy 18:21-22.

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You may say in your heart, “How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?” When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. Deuteronomy 18:21-22 (NASB)

God’s standard is really high. The point is, a prophet, if in fact he is a prophet, when he speaks it will come true. It will come true every time he prophesies. That is the standard for God’s prophet. Every time he speaks it is true. All we have to do to prove that someone is not God’s prophet is find one mistake. And if you make one mistake, you are not God’s prophet. Oswald Chambers makes the following comment with regards to God’s prophet.

A prophet is not a sanctified Gypsy telling fortunes, but one who speaks as he is moved by the Holy Spirit within.2

See, if he truly is God’s prophet, the Holy Spirit is speaking through him to the listeners or as he is writing the Holy Spirit is directing. What he says will come true, and it will come true 100% of the time.

The Bible’s 1,817 Prophecies. Consequently, the Bible’s 1,817 prophecies, that is 1,239 in the Old Testament and 587 in the New Testament are all true and accurate. Why? Because God the Holy Spirit was working through His prophets, the writers, as they spoke or wrote. What they wrote or spoke will come true. The accuracy of the Bible is illustrated by Dr. Charles Ryrie. He makes the following comment. He says,

The accuracy of the Bible can be tested and is proven by the fact that if you were to look at a bunch of the prophecies, 300 of them, it would require 200 billion earths, populated with four billion people, each to come up with one person who could achieve 100 accurate prophecies without any errors in sequence.3

Think 200 billion earths populated with four billion people would be required in order to find one person who would be accurate in 100 prophecies without any errors in sequence. Yet, when you come to the Bible, it records not 100 but over 300 prophecies related to Christ’s first coming and they were accurate sequence. That is incredible.

We are not even talking about all of the 1,517 other prophecies in the Bible. Therefore, if you are wondering if God has written the Bible, the answer is yes! He wrote the book, and yes, the Bible is accurate.

The first book in the Bible is the book of Genesis. Did you know that the book of Genesis has some prophecies in it? And then there are prophecies littered throughout the Bible all the way to the last book of the Bible which is Revelation. That is what we’re looking at in this study - the last book of the Bible. In fact, we are looking at Revelation 22:13-21. But before we go there, I want to return to the starting point of the book of Revelation which is Revelation 1:1.

Meaning of Apocalypse or Revelation of


Christ. In this very first verse, we were told that this is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Now stop and look at that phrase, “the Revelation of Jesus Christ.” When most of us think about the revelation of Jesus Christ, we just think that it is telling us about Christ. It is revealing something about Christ and that’s true. But the Greek word for Revelation is our English word apocalypse. In fact, some of your Bibles might even say the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. Apocalypse is the transliteration of the Greek into English. So, we could call it the Apocalypse of Christ. Some Bibles say the Revelation to John or we could call it the Apocalypse of Christ or just the Apocalypse, if you want to shorten it. But the word Apocalypse in the Greek literally means the uncovering or taking out of hiding.

So, the Book of Revelation is “an uncovering.” God has uncovered truth for us. If you look at verse 9 in the last chapter of Daniel, we are told that Daniel was told to conceal or to seal the revelation. He was told not to share it. You can think of it like he was told to cover it. He was not to write it or to not to reveal it. But Revelation is the uncovering. It is the revealing of what John was told.

The Alpha and Omega. Our study is the last study in the Book of Revelation. This is our sixty-third study and our text for the morning is Revelation 22:13-21. Most of the book has been one series of visions or dreams after another and it’s been primarily communicated to the apostle John by a number of angels. But when we come to our text, verse 13, we find that an angel is no longer talking. In fact, it is Jesus Christ who is speaking. Therefore, let’s read verse 13.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Revelation 22:13 (NASB)

The word Alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet. Omega is the last letter in the Greek alphabet. Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega. We are told that He is the first and the last and then we are told He is the beginning and the end. Now, if you are like me I used to think that the first and the last was the beginning and the end. In fact, they are synonyms. That is the same thing. It turns out that they are not. The first and the last is different from the beginning and the end. The word first in the Greek is protos and the word for last is eschatos. Now that just sounds like fun maybe, but eschatos has the idea of the first in a series. Our English word last comes from eschatos which is the last in a series. So, think about this for second. The first is the first in a series and the last is the last in a series. Now think about a series of what? Well, the series of anything and everything that exists. Do you know what this tells us? God is the first before everything.

In John 1:1, we are told in the beginning was the Word. The Greek word for Word is in the imperfect. What God is saying is that before there was anything, the Word was already existing. If you wanted to move back in time further this Greek word tells us the Word was already existing. And if we go back farther and you think God might not have been there the Greek word says He was already existing. It doesn’t matter how far back a person goes, God has always been there. It doesn’t matter how far back we want to go, He was there. He is the first in the series and He is the last in the series. The idea of the last in the series is that everything else may disappear but not Him. That is the idea of the first and
the last in the series. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the beginning of the alphabet. He is the end of the alphabet. He is the first in the series and He is the last in the series. He will always be. He was before us, He was before this world, He was before this universe, He was before Adam and He was before whatever the evolutionists want to say was here.

I find evolutionists interesting. I was watching a very interesting video this week about the Sphinx and the Pyramids in Egypt. I found the video really fascinating. They believe aliens came from another planet and built the pyramids and we appeared. I thought that was really wild. It is interesting that in order to get life here, they postulate that aliens came from another place and built them. Well, I think God is an unbelievable alien. He is called God. That’s who He is. And if they are willing to accept an alien creating everything, why not just make it really simple and have an all-powerful being called God create everything. Make it simple. Oh, but I forgot, we can’t have God, but we can have aliens on another planet. Right? Well, my question is, “Where did they come from? Who created them? Who started their planet?” And if it was the big bang, where did all the little molecules and whatever it was that came together and exploded and created all the stuff, come from? At some point one has to figure out where did something come from? The Bible tells us that He, Jesus Christ, was the first and the last. It is a mystery and we will never understand it. Really amazing.

The Beginning and End. Then notice, He was the beginning and the end. The Greek word for “beginning” is archē in the Greek. It has the idea that he is the originating one. Think about that for a second. He is the originating one. He is the -- if I can put it this way, He is the beginner. He is the one who begins everything. Then we are told He is the “end.” The Greek word is telos and it has the idea that He is the fulfillment. He brings completion. So, watch this, He is not only the first in the series and the last in the series but He is the one who begins things and that He is the one who ends things. He brings it to completion.

Verse 13 introduces a tremendous shift in the book of Revelation. No longer is an angel speaking. God is speaking to us. Now do you want to know who this God is? If so, look at verse 16. It says, “I, Jesus.” That is who is speaking at this point. Verses 13-21, and do not forget verse 16, tell us God is speaking.

Verses 13-21, and do not forget verse 16, tell us God is speaking.

In John 5:26, Jesus is talking. He is talking to a crowd and there are some Pharisees in the crowd. Jesus makes a startling statement to His listeners. They received His message but they didn’t like it. Therefore, verse 26 says,

For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself... John 5:26 (NASB)

What’s the message? The message is that God the Father had life in Himself. The idea is that He is self-sustaining. If you were self-sustaining that would mean you do not depend on anyone else. You do not depend on anything else. That is the first in the series and the last in the series. You are the first and the last. No matter how far back you want to go, God was always the first. And He is the last in the series. The idea is that He is self-sustaining. He has life in Himself. I do not have life in myself and you don't either. You couldn't continue your life if you wanted to. You can’t
sustain your life if you wanted to. There's going to come a
day, unless Jesus comes first, that we are going to die and
disappear from this earth. No matter how hard you try, no
matter how much effort you give to it, you cannot continue
to live by your own free will. That is not possible. But God
does. God continues to exist. He is self-sustaining. Jesus
says, “I am self-sustaining too!” Just like the Father, Jesus is
self-sustaining. Jesus says, “I am the first and I am the last.
I am the Creator and I will bring it to completion.” That is
the message. Verse 13 is a powerful statement about who the
author of Revelation is. The book started by saying it was the
Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. Then at the very end of the book
who is in focus again? Jesus Christ! And we are told that He
is God. Therefore, God has been speaking to us. God the
Father to Jesus, to John and then to us.

Seventh Beatitude in Revelation. In verse 14 we
are introduced to the closing comments of the chapter.

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the
right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.
Revelation 22:14 (NASB)

Now the fact that this verse starts off with the word blessed
is a clue that this is another beatitude. The book of Revela-
tion has many different numbers. There are seven churches,
seven spirits, seven and seven and seven is repeated through-
out the book. Well, this is the seventh beatitude of seven
beatitudes. This is the last beatitude and it’s the seventh one
and we are told, “Blessed are those who wash their robes.”
Now the word for wash here has the idea in the Greek lan-
guage of washing and washing.” The verb is a present parti-
ciple and that implies ongoing washing. Now, if you recall,
when we were in Revelation 19:8 and 14, a white robe was
a symbol of those of us who are believers. Those of us who
are saints. Those of us who are going to spend eternity with
God. That is those who are true Christians. True Christians
are symbolized as having white robes on. White robes! What
does it mean to be washing your robes? Well, you want to
keep them white, that’s the idea. The idea of washing them
is that you want to keep them white. And what does white
stand for? It stands for holiness. It stands for purity. The song
that we heard earlier titled, “Holy and Humble and Obedi-
ent,” that is the correct idea.

Holy and Humble and Obedient

Holy, humble, obedient
I want to be
Holy, humble, obedient
I want to be

Bow down at Your feet
There is no pride
My sin and my shame I cannot hide
No silver or gold can satisfy
Only Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus

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That is the picture of white robes. It is the idea that they are living a holy life. True Christians, true believers, true saints actively wash themselves in this life by confession of sins. They are seeking to be holy. There is a desire to be holy even as God says in 1 Peter 1:15-16,

You shall be holy, for I am holy. 1 Peter 1:16 (NASB)

He wants us to be holy even as He is holy.

We have a hard time understanding what this means. I was looking through some Scriptures that remind me of what holiness is. The Holy Spirit led me to look up some verses related to fleeing sin. Try this for a second. 1 Corinthians 6:18 talks about fleeing immorality. That is sexual sin. Then 1 Corinthians 10:14 talks about fleeing idolatry and Colossians 3:5 defines idolatry as greed, evil desire, passion, impurity and immorality. 1 Timothy 6:10-11 talks about fleeing the love of money. I think we can broaden the love of money to the love of things, the things of this world. In 2 Timothy 2:22, we’re supposed to flee youthful lusts and all the things that come with youthful lust. We often think of sexual sin but it’s much broader than that. It is our pride. It is our ego. It is all the things that we want. This is especially strong when we are in our youth. And it just multiplies and gets worse if we don’t stop and think about it and correct it. Therefore, what we are supposed to do is not do those things. That is the negative side but on the positive way it is to the pursuit of holiness. That’s the positive way of saying it. But what happens if we sin in this life? 1 John 1:9 tells us that,

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us


We are told in Revelation 22:14, “Blessed are those who are washing their robes.” They are pursuing holiness, they are the ones confessing their sins. Why?

. . . so that they may have the right to the Tree of Life and may enter by the gates of the city. Revelation 22:14 (NASB)

What city? That is the New Jerusalem. We are told that there are two benefits. First, blessings for the people who are washing their robes, that is, people who are Christians. This is one of the marks of a Christian. They are pursuing holiness. One of the marks of a Christian is that you are confessing your sin - that’s a mark of a Christian. Those things do not make you Christians, but those are true of you, if you are a Christian. What we are told is that blessed are you because you get to be able to eat of the tree of life. You have the right to the tree of life. In Genesis 3:21-24 we discover that God actually put some angels around the Tree of Life because if anyone ate of the Tree of Life they would live forever. The implication here in verse 14 is that if you are one of the ones who are washing your robes, you will live forever. You will live for eternity. And I like the last part of this verse. It tells us that we get to live in heaven and enter into the gates of the city. Do you remember how many gates there are to the city to the New Jerusalem? There are three on four sides. That is a total of 12. Do you remember what the gates are like? Each gate is one big pearl. That is the door of the gate.

I was thinking about these gates and then all of a sudden I remembered a joke about the pearly gates and Saint Peter.

So, What Do I Do to Get into Heaven?

There was a man who died and approached the pearly gates. Saint Peter told him heaven was getting crowded and so he had to test the people with a point system before they could get in. If he got one hundred points, he could enter heaven. So, the man told Peter that he gave to the poor and Peter marked him down for three points. The man thought again,
then said that he tithed and Peter added one point. The man desperately searched his memory, finally said that he never cursed. And Peter added a half a point. By now the man was getting frustrated. And he said at this rate, he could only get in by the grace of God and Peter replied, come on in.

That makes the point. The only way you are going to get into heaven is not by your works but by the grace of God, by His mercy. The ones who are washing their robes, who are pursuing holiness, who are confessing their sins are the ones who have already been forgiven by the grace of God because they put their faith in Jesus Christ. They are looking to him as their Lord and their Savior.

**Description of Non-Christians.** Verse 15 tells us who is not getting into heaven and it is rather clear once we understand verse 14. Verse fifteen says,

> Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. Revelation 22:15 (NASB)

I looked closely at the Greek words in order to get a better understanding of this verse. I was a little surprised because the Greek word that’s used for sorcerers is the word from which we get our modern word pharmacology or pharmaceutical drugs. The word for immoral can be translated as pornography. What we are told here is that these people who are those who are into drugs and pornography and they are murderers and idolaters. Then, I noticed that the last part of this verse refers to people who love and practice lying. Whoa! I wonder if anybody here practices lying. You are a deceiver. God says that if you practice lying, if you practice these things, you are not really a believer. That’s the message. You are kidding yourself if you think you are. One of the signs you are one of these persons is that you are not washing your robe, is that you are practicing these things. The idea that is that you are comfortable with these sins. You are not wanting to change. You are rationalizing why it is okay. This is a challenge to each and every one of us to think about our life.

**Jesus Christ – God, Man and the Messiah.** Verse 13 told us that God is speaking to us at this point. Then verses 14-15 tell us that we have a decision to make. This is a choice about your destiny. Now when we come to verse 16, we are told,

> I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star. Revelation 22:16 (NASB)

At first you might say, this sounds like a repeat. But it is not a repeat. Did you notice what Jesus says at the end of the verse? He says, “I am the root and the descendant of David.” What’s important about that? What He is talking about is that He was born through Mary. Mary was his mother and the Holy Spirit was -- I can't really say a father but in a sense like a father. It is talking about is His humanity. Verse 13 talks about his deity and verse 16 is talking about his humanity. Then we are told that He is the Bright Morning Star. The Jews in extra-biblical writings often referred to the Messiah as a star. Therefore, verse 16 is telling us that Christ is a man and the Messiah. Genesis 3:15 prophesied that there would be One who would come to save us from our sins. That was a reference to the Messiah. Do you know what the closing chapter of Revelation tells us? Christ is the Messiah. Genesis 3:15 predicts the Messiah is coming. The last chapter of Revelation says the Messiah is Jesus. He was born as a human. But yet He is God. He is the God-man. He is both God and man. He is both. This is really a fantastic conclusion to the book of Revelation because of all the things that we would want communicated in the closing verses is to be told who God is. God has reminded us that Jesus is both God and man and He is the Messiah.

**Call to Drink of the Water of Life.** Now look at verse 17. It says,

> 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 wishes take the water of life without cost. Revelation 22:17 (NASB)

What is verse 17 all about? The first part is about the return of Christ because He says He is coming. This is also an invi-
tation to those of us who are spiritually thirsty. We are called to come so that you may partake of the water of life and it is free. This is not like a bottle of water that you pay for. The water of life is free. God gives and it is free. That’s the grace of God. What is the gift of salvation? It is free. We are told,

For by grace you are saved by faith and that not of works it is a gift of God. Ephesians 2:8 (NASB)

So, you will be able to partake of the water of life. It gives you eternal life and it is without cost. This is a challenge to come and have your sins forgiven.

DO NOT ADD OR TAKE AWAY FROM REVELATION.
Then verses 18 and 19 wrap it up. There are actually two more verses but I think this is the primary wrap up of the chapter. And we are told,

I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. Revelation 22:18-19 (NASB)

Now there are two things I want to talk about regarding these two verses. The first is that this is an echo of divine warnings. For example, in Deuteronomy 4:1-2 and 6 and in Deuteronomy 12:32 Moses warns the Israelites. Moses gives instruction to the Israelites. He tells them not to change what he has said which is later recorded in this book called Deuteronomy.

Next, there is a very interesting statement in Proverbs 30:5-6 that is very similar to verses 18 and 19 in Revelation 22. Proverbs 30:5-6 says,

Every word of God is tested;  
He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.  
Do not add to His words  
Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.  
Proverbs 30:5-6

What does God say here? God says don’t add to My words. That is in the Old Testament. God says don’t add to My words. Just don’t do that. In Isaiah 30:9-13 there is an illustration of how people can add or take away from God’s word. Verse 9-13 says,

For this is a rebellious people, false sons,  
Sons who refuse to listen  
To the instruction of the Lord;  
Who say to the seers, “You must not see visions”;  
And to the prophets, “You must not prophesy to us what is right, Speak to us pleasant words,  
Prophesy illusions.  
Get out of the way, turn aside from the path,  
Let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel.”  
Therefore, thus says the Holy One of Israel,  
“Since you have rejected this word  
And have put your trust in oppression and guile, and have relied on them,  
Therefore, this iniquity will be to you  
Like a breach about to fall,  
A bulge in a high wall,  
Whose collapse comes suddenly in an instant . . . ”  
Isaiah 30:9-13 (NASB)

And the prophet goes on. What were the people wanting? Do not prophesy to us what God is saying but prophesy to us things we want to hear. Pleasant words! Verse 10 says, “Prophesy to us pleasant words.” Prophecy what we would like to hear. Well, that is rejecting God’s word. That is adding to God’s word. They did not want to hear what God had to say. That is removing it. They wanted someone to add to God’s Word, to tell them something that would make them happy. I was thinking about that. We tend to do that on occasion, don’t we?

We hear what God has to say and we pick and choose what we’re going to obey. What is even worse is when a pastor picks and chooses what he’s going to teach. A lot of teachers and preachers are doing that these days. They teach what the people want to hear. Does that sound like Isaiah 30? Therefore, they do not teach certain doctrines. Some are not very popular today. Therefore, they are guilty of not teach-
ing God’s word. I can be guilty by the way if I am teaching a passage of Scripture if I change the intent, the sense and the meaning of the passage of Scripture. If I am not careful I can add to God’s word. God doesn’t like that. In 2 Timo-

thy 2:15 we were told to rightly divide the word of truth. In James 3:1-2, we are told not to be mini-teachers because we will incur a stricter judgment. God does not like people changing what He wants us to hear. God does not like us changing His word. Why? He said it and He doesn’t want us distorting what He said. He doesn’t want us redesigning and remaking. The last thing He wants is a spokesman mess-

ing it up and saying thus sayeth the Lord, when in fact the Lord has not said it. Like a prophet of old, when they spoke they were supposed to speak what the Lord said. It must be accurate. It is an important lesson for us as well.

Now you say well, what else do these two verses mean? Do they teach that the cannon is closed? That this, is the close of the Bible? And the answer is yes and yes and yes and yes. There is nothing more to be added. It is important to note one of the early church fathers who commented on this passage said that when John wrote there were a lot of heretics and false teachers who were providing other prophe-

cies about the future. He adds that this was a direct con-

flict with many of the false teachers who lived during the time of the Apostle John. So, if you think about that for a second, clearly what is being said is do not listen to anybody else. Do not listen to the heretics. Do not listen to the false teachers. Do not add. Do not take away! This is God’s truth.

This is God’s prophecy about the future. Now if you think about the context in which this was written, how could we accept anybody today who would give us supposed proph-

esies and say they should be added to the Bible? It would just be inconsistent to think that anything else beyond the book of Revelation should be added to the Bible. And the answer is we shouldn’t do that.

I AM COMING QUICKLY! Verses 20 and 21 wrap up the book. He says,

He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.”


Well, Revelation has been a great, great journey as we have seen what the future looks like. I trust this morning that you understand what God has done in the closing part of this chapter. There are three basic points that God has made. First, we have given the identity of Jesus. He is God. He is man and He is our Messiah. The second message is that we are urged to make sure that we are Christian, that we are a believer and have a choice. You can either choose to go to heaven or you can choose to go to the lake of fire. We oftentimes refer to that as hell. And the third part of this message is that if we are not to add to what He has said. That is God’s message. So how do we respond this morning? It is rather very simple today! Thank God. Thank God for His Word because it is faithful and it is true and pray, “Come quickly, Lord Jesus!”