

Worship God!

Revelation 22

#44 in our series “The Gospel According to Jesus: The Revelation”

January 27, 2019

Peter Hiett

This document was prepared by Michael Hanna using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon (available [on our website](#)). Please let Michael know if you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document: themichaelhanna@thesanctuarydowntown.org. Thank you!

Prayer

So, Lord God, we thank you for who you are, and we pray now that you would help us to preach. God, I pray especially for those that are new, that you'd help them to preach. I mean...well, all of us, that you'd open the eyes of our heart...but we're getting, Lord, this is the last sermon from the Revelation in our series after a year and a half. And, Lord God, I am just overwhelmed by the picture and I despair sometimes thinking I cannot connect all the dots for people. And that's true. All the dots are not entirely connected for me. But you are the one who connects all the dots, Jesus. You are what everything means. So, when people think to themselves “what the heck?” I pray that you would remind them “it all means me,” Jesus. Would you remind our hearts, and would you help us to see? You are from the bosom of the Father, Jesus. You reveal the Father. So cause us to see through the power of your Spirit. It's in your name we pray, amen.

Message

Last week we preached about a mirror. And hopefully most of you have a mirror or someone near you has a mirror...

Hold your mirror so that you can see your face and both eyes. Look at your left eye. Now look at your right eye. Did you see your eyes move?

Now find a partner and look into your neighbor's face. Look at their right eye and then their left eye. Then watch as they look at your right eye and then your left eye. Did you see their eyes move?

Isn't that crazy? What's going on?

Well, you cannot see your own eyes move because of the way they're moving—the optics get all messed up. But instead of your vision getting blurry or fuzzy for a second, like when you move a camera—you see your eyes unmoved.

The problem isn't with the mirror. It doesn't lie. But your brain does lie. All the time. When it can't make sense of reality—it creates reality.

And that's not only true for that moment; it's true for all moments because your eyes cannot actually see now. They can't see now, for it takes time for your brain to process every image.

We say, “keep your eye on the ball,” but no mere mortal can actually do that. When a professional tennis player “keeps his eye on the ball,” he's actually keeping his eye on where that ball was a moment ago (1/10th of a second). If the ball is travelling at 150 miles per hour as

it does for professional tennis players, it means a tennis player sees the ball about 22 feet from where it actually is, but the brain predicts where it would be now, and tells you that's where it is now.

And that's why professional tennis players can hit tennis balls travelling at 150 miles an hour but can't swat a house fly moving at 5 miles an hour. It's unpredictable; it has a mind of its own—it's alive.

Your brain tries to calculate where it is, and tells you where it is, so you think you know where it is—you think you even see where it is—but you don't. You're believing a lie and constructing a story in your brain.

That actually works pretty well if your world is full of tennis balls and not flies,
...if your world is full of things and nothing with a mind of its own.
...if your world is full of matter and energy but absent of people.
...if your world is dead.

Well this is all from a wonderful Ted Talk titled, ["Time and the Brain: The Illusion of Now."](#) This is how the researcher ended his presentation:

Clip from "Time and the Brain: The Illusion of Now"
Hinze Hogendoorn at TEDxUtrechtUniversity, 2016

Hinze Hogendoorn: So where does that leave us with the question of when is now in the brain? I don't know. And the one thing I *do* know is that when you open your eyes, whether these beautiful eyes are your own, when you open your eyes and look out into the world there's one thing that you are *not* seeing, and that is now.

We can't see "now." So I cannot observe who I am. That's weird, but modern physics gets even weirder.

Quantum Mechanics clearly implies that, at some fundamental level, nothing is real unless it is observed by a conscious observer. But I can't observe me, because I am the observer.

The "me" that I observe is not who I am. I am the "me" that is doing the observing. And that "me" does not exist, unless it is being observed by a person...NOW. Only that person could tell me who I am.

You can't see now. And it's interesting that God's name is "I Am that I Am," as if He is always Now.ⁱ

I can't see Him, but He can see me, and He does see me, right now.

"No one has ever seen God" writes John in John 1:18, "The only begotten God who is in the Bosom of the Father, He has made him known." (RSV)
He is the heart of God, nailed to a tree in a garden.

I can't make sense out of all of that, but maybe it can make sense of me. Well, I hope you see this much: that we each create our own reality. You just did it just now using a mirror, but the illusion was exposed with a second mirror.

The first mirror was dead, and so your brain could more easily manipulate the information, the knowledge. The second mirror was alive—you looked into a living mirror—on the surface of the cornea of that mirror you could see your own reflection just as you did on the surface of the glass. However, this mirror wasn't so easy to manipulate, because this mirror could talk. And more than likely, you trusted what it said.

Which brings up a fascinating point. Your ability to arrive at truth wasn't dependent on your intelligence, but your capacity for trust—in Greek, *pistis*, also translated faith. Your ability to arrive at truth was dependent on faith. And so, a little child could arrive at truth faster than a physicist or theologian.

I mean someone with greater intelligence is more likely to trust their own perception; and a little child is more likely to trust their neighbor's perception. And hopefully that neighbor is their mom or dad.

I mean the physicist would argue: "No, I'm sure that my eyes didn't move, I have empirical evidence that my eyes did not move." The child would say: "OK Mom, if you say my eyes moved, I guess they did move."

A little child trusts... and Jesus said, "You must become like a little child to enter..." But now, he said that to adults. And you can't become like a child if you already are a child. ⁱⁱ

There's a problem with little children. They're idiots (as we said last week). They naturally trust, but they really don't know who to trust. A little child might trust a talking snake, for a little child doesn't know who is good and who is not good—who is evil.

So we protect them... and yet we want them to learn who, and who not, to trust. We want them to live a story that includes encountering evil, so they will learn to trust the good. We want them to grow up, leave home, and come back, saying, "Mom, Dad, I've seen a lot and I trust you... you're good.... Kill the fatted calf. Let's party!" We want them to live a story, and then, love us in freedom forever.

And that's what stories do—they give you knowledge of good and evil, but not just dead knowledge—like a list or a law—they give living knowledge. Stories reveal people: they reveal who's evil and who's good. That's how we come to know the talking snake is evil, and the Word of God is Good.

Stories are rather remarkable things and reveal remarkable things about us.

As you're reading a story, you naturally create a reality. You try to connect the dots. You give it meaning. You read "they nailed him to a tree" and you think, it means all is lost. Then you read, "He rose from the dead" and it changes all the meaning—"all is lost," suddenly means "all is found." But that's not the meaning you gave, that's the meaning that was given by the author and his plot—his Logos, his Word.

If Scripture is right, we're all in a story and we're each trying to anticipate the plot... that is we're each trying to give everything meaning. We're each telling ourselves a story... and yet, we're a story being told.

If Scripture is right, the story you tell yourself is an illusion. But the story that's told is who you truly are. And the plot to that story will transform every event in the story that you have told yourself—the story of your own creation and all things with you.

That's just how stories work and how they work you. While you're reading a story, you try to anticipate the plot...even create the plot. But by the end of the story, the plot has created you...and transformed every moment in the story. And you're not just reading a story; you are the story that you're trying to read.

If Scripture is right, you are a character in a story being written, who is constantly tempted to re-write the story. When you do, you write yourself into nowhere and nothing. And when the Author writes you back in, nowhere and nothing become somewhere and something—it's a story of Grace.

Somewhere and something is inside the city.
Nowhere and nothing is the outer darkness.

Well, this is the point:

The “me” that I observe in a mirror is not who I am. To know who I am someone must observe me, and tell me who I am. And to trust Their Word, I need their story.

So as we as we have discovered:

When you look in the mirror and judge yourself—observe yourself—you create a false self, trapped in a reality of your own making.ⁱⁱⁱ

But when you are observed by someone you trust—you become real in a reality that is not of your own making. You wake up from the dream of your own sovereignty, your insanity.

We're talking about two mirrors:

One is dead, like the pocket mirror, and one is living, like the person sitting next to you.

They remind me of the two mirrors we talked about last week.

[image: Evil Queen looking into the Magic Mirror]

The Evil queen—the evil sovereign—had a mirror.

Because it was a cartoon, it spoke back to her, but we understand that it spoke her own thoughts...and her thoughts were death. The mirror was good but the way she took knowledge from the mirror was bad.

She looked in the mirror asking, “Who’s the fairest in the land?” so she could make herself the fairest in the land. She wanted to be first by making other’s last. She wanted to be a winner by making others lose. She wanted to be most beautiful by killing anything more beautiful than her. She wanted to capture the heart of snow white and put it in a box. She wanted to create her own reality... but everything in her reality was ugly and dead, and she was trapped forever alone as long as she took knowledge from her mirror.

She had a mirror... and Snow White also had a mirror

Clip from <i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i> Walt Disney Productions, 1937

Snow White sings into a wishing well, which magically echoes back only those phrases less than four syllables in length.

Snow White: I'm wishing [I'm wishing]
For the one I love
To find me [To find me]
Today

We expect to hear Snow's high, warbly soprano echoing a descending major 3rd. But no! the face of the handsome prince pops into the picture next to Snow's, and his heroic tenor voice provides the echo. But it is not a true echo; he inverts the motif with an ascending 3rd, landing on the fifth scale degree (as handsome princes are wont to do):

Prince: Today!

Snow White: (startled) Oh!

The Queen wanted to take knowledge of the Good to make herself Good.
Snow White wanted the Good...to find her and make everything Good—that is beautiful.

The Queen tried to conquer the Good so she took knowledge of the Good.
And Snow white wanted to be conquered by the Good and so was known by the Good and became Good... in nine months she may have even given birth to the good. The life of her Prince.

They each had a mirror and we have a mirror.

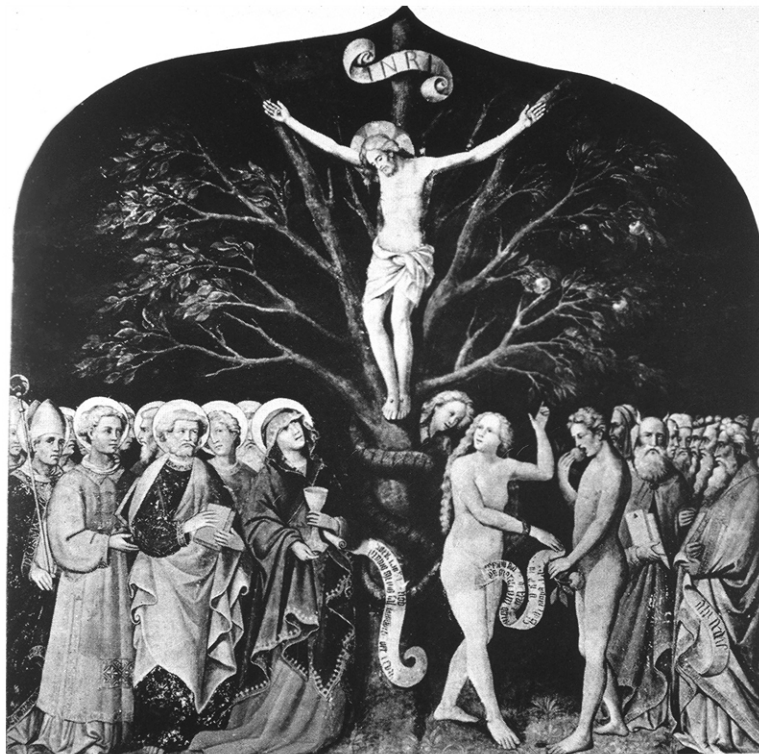


Figure 1 "The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

It's a tree in the middle of the Garden and upon it is "The Good in flesh" who is "the Life."

Is it the Queen's mirror, like the mirror you hold in your hand?
Or is it Snow White's mirror, a living mirror like the one sitting next to you?

See, maybe it depends on how you take it...or receive it.

According to Scripture there are two ways of knowing.
And according to philosophers there are two ways of knowing.

The first is like the Queen's mirror. It's how we know things that we can understand, that we can comprehend, that we can control, that we can judge, that we can test—*empeiria* in Greek—it means "to test."

...*Empeiria* and that's where it gets its name: "The empirical method."

It's an absolutely marvelous way to know about things—sometimes it's called "science." And how we use those things is called technology. It's a wonderful way of coming to know about things...but it's a terrible way to get to know people.

If a scientist wants to know about a tree, he cuts it down and counts its rings—he knows about it, but he can no longer know it—it's dead.

If a man wants to know about a woman, he can cut her down and dissect her spleen, heart and brain, but he can no longer know her, for she can no longer know him.

If a Theologian wants to know about God...

Maybe he could chop him down and dissect all the pieces—hell he could nail him to a tree and then put him in a box...if that was possible. He might know something about God, but He could no longer know God. He just crucified God, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Good, and all things with him. So actually, he couldn't know anything for everything would be dead or just an illusion. He would've created his own reality in which he was trapped utterly alone—emperor of his own empire and utterly alone in Hell.

The empirical method: Great for knowing things that you have judged as less than you. And yet terrible for knowing things greater than you and your ability to judge, comprehend, or understand—like a wife.

There are two ways of knowing. The first I'll call "Empiricism." (Most modern folks think it's the only way you can know anything, and so of course they have no idea who they are, what anything means, or why it is that they feel so utterly alone... and dead.)

Two ways of knowing: #1 Empiricism and #2 Revelation.

To receive a revelation is to worship. And to worship is to receive a revelation from God.

When we worship God, we observe the one who always observes us: the Author of our story. We see, because we are seen by "I Am." (We cannot see NOW, but he is NOW and He sees us.)

When we worship, we wake up from the illusion of our own sovereignty.

When we worship, we lose our selves and find ourselves. If you reflect on this, it's only then that we are happy. Fake worship sucks but true worship is happy.

When we worship,
We comprehend, because we have been comprehended.
We know, because we are known.
We conquer, because we have been conquered by Love.

Genuine worship is absolute ecstasy.

We're at the end of the Revelation and we should ask, "what's the point?"
This is the point: "Worship God!"
"Who is He?" we ask. Well remember the titles of the book is the Revelation of Jesus.

What's the point of the Revelation, what's the point of history, what's the point of all creation?
Worship God in Christ Jesus. PERIOD.

Last Chapter of the Revelation:

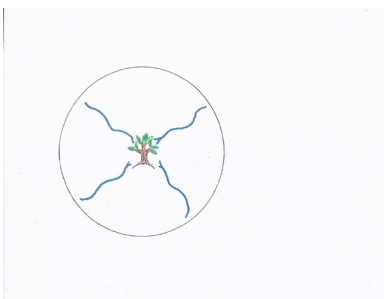
22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing [out of the throne of God and of the Lamb: ²in the midst of its broad place, and of the river on this side and on that, *is* a tree of life (YLT)] with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign [into the ages of the ages. (YLT)]

John looks and he sees himself (we saw this in the last chapter). His name is on one of the foundation stones. In fact, he would have been one of the 24 elders he saw around the throne in chapter five. He looks and sees himself. This is like a mirror.

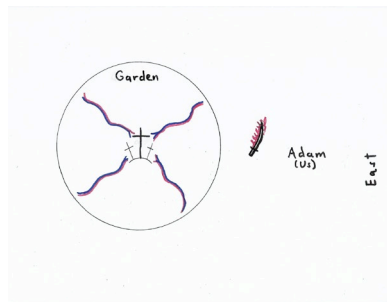
But it's a living mirror. It's a face. "The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it and...they will see his face," and worship Him. When John looks at the New Jerusalem, he's seeing himself in the eyes of God.

It's a living mirror. It's a face. And it's a story.

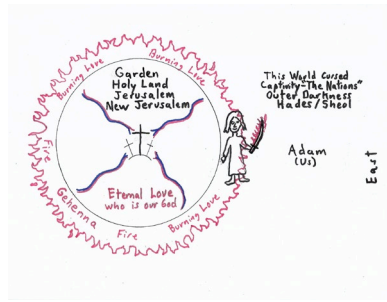
That's why I've showed you all of these beautiful high-tech graphics throughout this series, not so that you'd get all the details, but so that you'd understand it's all one incredible story.



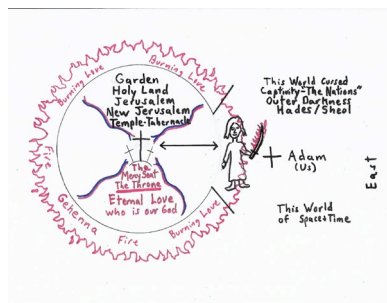
John sees the tree of Life in the Garden of Eden and from it flows four rivers.



He doesn't see two trees in the middle, but one.



And it looks like Jerusalem in the Promised Land.

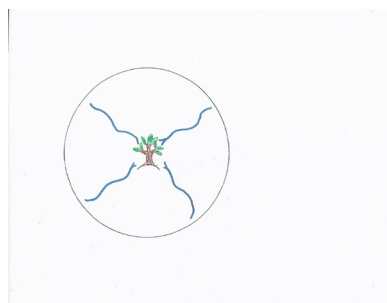


It's a tabernacle and a temple and in the inner sanctuary there is a coffin that contains the law on tablets of Stone. It's like humanity wanted to know the Good and so took the life of the Good. And God said, "You want knowledge of the Good? Here's the Law. Keep it in this Ark, this coffin, keep it in this box." You see we've all lusted after the heart of God in a box.



Figure 2 "Adoration of the Mystic Lamb" by Jan van Eyck, part of the Ghent Altarpiece (1432)

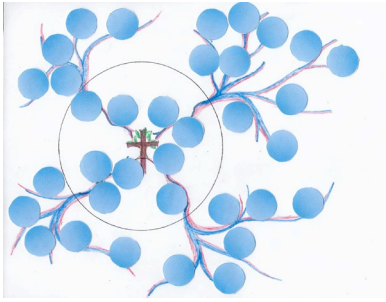
But now on top of this box, which is the throne of God, stands a slaughtered lamb: He is the Good in flesh and He is the Life—he is the living law of Love. The fulfillment of the Law. The content, the substance of the Law. He is risen from the dead and He is the judgment of God. He stands on the mercy seat, that is a throne, and He is Mercy. God consigned all to disobedience, that He may have Mercy on all.



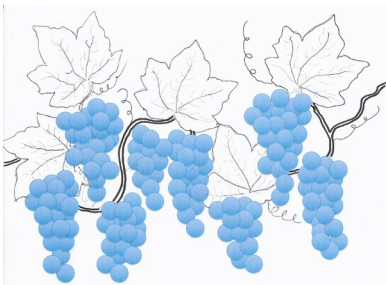
From the throne, that is a tree, flows the river of life. "The Spirit is life" and that life is in the blood of the lamb. It is the *nephesh*, the soul of the Lamb, the Eschatos Adam, and we are his bride.



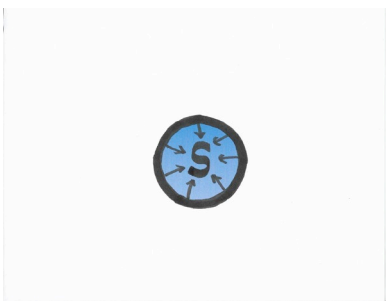
It flows from the throne and out of the garden, until the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Is. 11:9, Hab. 2:14). And wherever the river goes it brings healing and it brings life (Ez.) John sees the tree of life everywhere.



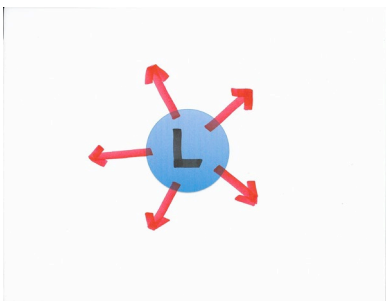
The tree is the decision of God from the heart of God. And his decision is to create souls—to create humanity in his own image.



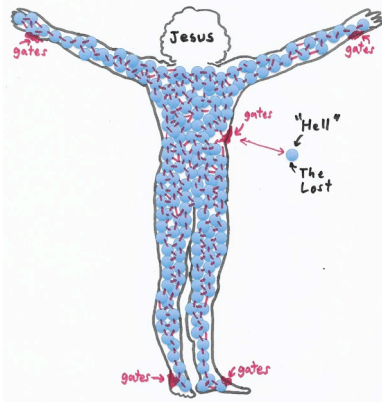
Each of us is a vessel of wrath (like a grape of wrath), that gets transformed into a vessel of mercy—a vessel of blood that's wine and wine that's blood.



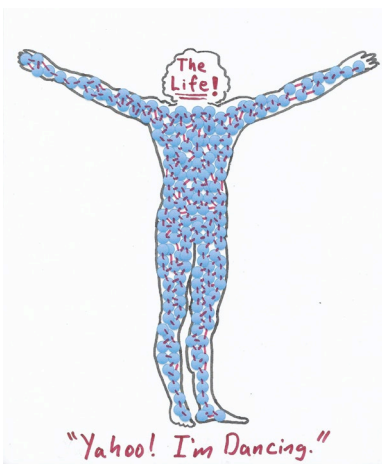
At the tree God crushes the soul that has damned itself, for it only takes and never gives.



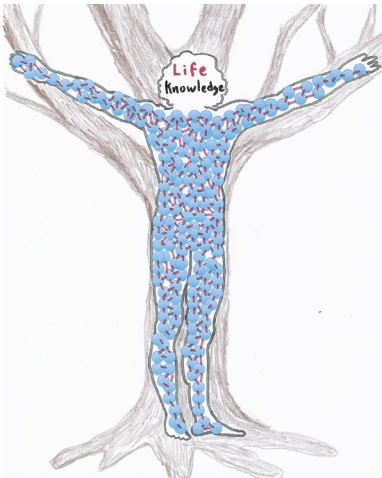
And He turns it into a soul that freely chooses to love—freely chooses to lose its life and find it.^{iv}



The New Jerusalem is the Body of Christ, who is the Bride of Christ. And she is made at His bleeding side.



The New Jerusalem is billions of souls in a communion of life. She is entirely free and eternally happy. For the will of all, is the free will of each.^v



That's the judgment of God and it's eternal. It is eternal life and it is the Good. And it is who you truly are. Everything else is nowhere and nothing but a vain illusion.



This is the Judgment of God: When you judge the judgement of God, you trap yourself in Hell. And when the judgment of God judges you, you enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

You see the judgment of God is a story, revealed in a person, who is the Beginning and End; He is the Plot.

The Judgment of God is Good, and the Judgment of God is Life.

The Judgment of God looks like two trees at the start of the Story, but in the end you see only one.

And you know that the Good is the Life, and all evil works to reveal the Good, who is the Life, so you would come to freely love the Good, who is the Life.

The Judgment of God is Good, and the judgment of God is eternal life.

When you stop taking knowledge from Christ to judge and justify yourself and start worshipping Christ (for he has judged and justified you with His Life), then His presence transforms the meaning of all things.

“All is lost” turns into “all is found,” as you worship and find yourself unable to stop worshipping because you can’t imagine why you would ever want to stop worshipping—it is your hearts deepest desire.

You’ve been found and you agree with what you are—the eternal decision of God—and you rule in love over every moment of space and time into the ages of the ages.

v. 5 ...and they will reign [into the ages of the ages. (YLT)]

⁶And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”

⁷“And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

⁸I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, ⁹but 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.”

This vision is so amazing that John just starts worshiping the angel—the revealing angel. Angel means messenger and there are lots of revealing messengers. The book of the Revelation is a “revealing messenger” and lots of folks seem to worship it, rather than worship with it.

People think it’s the revelation of the future—that is a map. So they try to use the Revelation to save themselves, and they end up crucifying the savior. They use it to make themselves first and so crucify the last, when Jesus said, “whatever you do to the last, you do to me!” and “whoever seeks to save His life, will lose it.” Stop trying to save your life and worship the Savior.

It’s the Revelation of Jesus. That’s the name of the book. Use the Revelation to worship God in Christ Jesus.

In Luke 17 the Pharisees ask Jesus when the kingdom will come and he answers, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation...” (*parataresis*; I spent some time studying this. It means empirical observation.) “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹ nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

“Will there never be an end of all our ceaseless talk about the *delay* of the Parousia?” asks Karl Barth. “How can the coming of that which doth not *enter in* ever be *delayed*? The End of which the New Testament speaks is no temporal event... What *delays* its coming is not the Parousia, but our awakening.”^{vi}

I don’t think that means, that time as we know it will never come to an end. I think it means that it comes to an end at a torn curtain in the sanctuary of your soul. The sky really does roll up and all things become new, because everything you thought was real, was not real. And everything you thought was not very real like faith or hope, is far more real than anything you can see or touch. And Love... far from being unreal, Love is God.

Worship God! Not the revelation, not the revealing angel.

You know the Bible is a revealing angel. Creation is a revealing angel. Spirits are revealing angels. To worship the revealing angel is called idolatry. Idolatry destroys you and the one you idolize, for idols aren’t persons, but things.^{vii} Never turn a person into a thing.

And now this is wild, but this revealing angel—one of the seven bowl angels—looks like Jesus and talks like Jesus.^{viii} We’ve wondered if this is the Spirit of Jesus. The work of the Spirit of Jesus is to cause us to worship God in Christ Jesus.

Well This Bowl angel says, “Worship God!”

It was one of these angels that showed John the destruction of the Harlot and said, “Don’t worship me, worship God.” And now this bowl angel shows John the Bride and says, “Don’t worship me, worship God.”

We’ve seen that we each have been the Harlot and we each become the Bride. John can’t help but worship when he sees his old self destroyed. And he can’t help but worship when he sees his new eternal self revealed.

It’s just like the end of Isaiah: All people walk to the edge of the new Jerusalem for they see the corpses of all people burning in the valley of Gehenna, where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. And they worship ceaselessly and ecstatically... why?

They Worship God for he has saved them from themselves and saved them for Himself—they are the New eternal Jerusalem, His Beloved Bride.^{ix}

¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. (*eggus*/ eng-goos: literally—“at hand”)

That means like “now.” In Daniel, it’s sealed up until the time of the end. Now it’s unsealed for the end is now.

John 12:31 “Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world cast out.” No wonder satan doesn’t want us to live in the now, in the light of God: “Now will the ruler of this world be cast out...”

v. 50 [The Father’s] commandment is eternal life...

Eternity touches time now. Eternal life is now, when you worship. That’s when you make decisions, or decisions make you.

“Now is the Judgment,” says Jesus

“Now is the day of salvation.” Says Paul in 2 Cor. 6:2

“... On [us] the end of the ages has come.” 1 Cor. 10:11

“He appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself...” Hebrews 9:26 and now listen to Hebrew 12:18:

“...You have not come to what may be touched...” (That is maps and charts and earthly governments like the nation state of Israel.) “...You have not come to what may be touched...”²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.²⁵ See that you do not refuse him who is speaking...”

...who is speaking.

Why do we occupy ourselves with laws and procedures and earthly governments, maps and charts, numbers and cycles, and the secret meaning of dates, seasons and years supposedly extracted from the Word of God?

Why? Maybe it’s because we’re running from the Living Word of God?

We’re running from Him who *is* speaking now...

We’re running from the Word, to escape His Judgment.



Something in us knows that we took His Life on the Tree. But if we would stop, and hear the Judgment spoken from the tree, by the very Word that we all have nailed to that tree, we might hear, “Father forgive them. They know not what they do.”

Don’t judge the judgment. Look at the judgment and listen to the judgment, and you will worship God for His Judgment, His Word in broken flesh—your Prince.

v. 9 “Worship God!”

¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. ¹¹ Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

Let. Jesus is sending this to seven little churches in Asian minor. In some of those churches people are being seduced and trapped by evil spirits. In some folks are about to be slaughtered in the arena. In some there is heresy, betrayal and apathy... and Jesus says, “Let it be...”

“Worship God!”

We worship the one who speaks all things into existence with His Word. Changing all of space and time, is not a problem for him... But to change your heart into that of a worshiper, He suffered and died and descended into hell—every hell—in order to know your sin and sorrow, fill it with His Grace and Joy, rise from the dead to show you his face and let you put your finger in his wounds.

Worship God in Christ Jesus!

12 “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. 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 may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.^x 15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

16 “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root (that’s the source) and the descendant of David (that’s the fruit of David... as if Jesus has made David a tree of life—His Life.), the bright morning star.”

17 The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.”

They could be calling to Jesus, or the people in the outer darkness, or both. Jesus descends into the outer darkness, shows us his wounds, and makes us thirsty for him. He has “numbered himself with the transgressors.” (Is. 53:12)

17 The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

Let. There’s a whole lot of “Let.” You know the word in Greek for “forgive” can also be translated “let”?

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues [wounds] described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

In other words, they’ll still be under the curse—just as all who don’t believe the revelation of Jesus remain under a curse^{xi}, until they learn to trust the Revelation of Jesus, who is the Judgment of God and Blessing of God.

20 He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.”

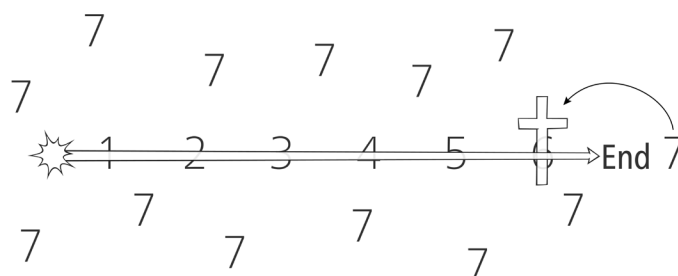
He’s not a thief in the night; He’s your husband. He wants you to know him, when He comes. And maybe He’s coming all the time...

“Surely I am coming soon.”

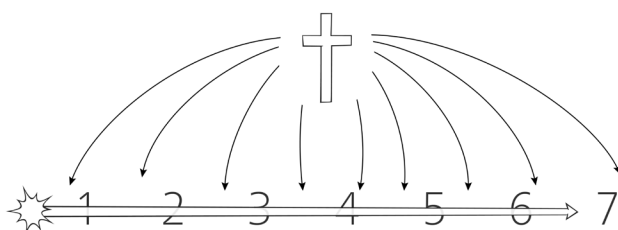
That’s the third time he’s said that in this chapter and that was 2000 years ago... Research this if you need to, but “soon” means “soon.”

Maybe He’s coming all the time: Maybe he came on Easter morning. Maybe He came on Pentecost.^{xii} Maybe he comes in the last and least of these. ^{xiii}

Maybe he is the Way, the Truth, the Life, and the Love you encounter every day in the people all around you.



He is the End and the Beginning that was revealed to us on the tree in the garden. He is the Plot. He is the Revelation of God, who is Love.



And maybe He is coming all the time.

I keep thinking about a scene in a movie—you've probably seen it. It's from the movie *A Beautiful Mind*, the true story of John Nash, the brilliant mathematician from Princeton.

He was able to recognize patterns where no one else could. And so, he began to ascribe meaning where no one else would.

The whole cosmos became his mirror—his own mirror. At one point, he thinks he can comprehend everything, which means that he can be comprehended by no one—he trusts no one, but himself—and goes insane.

He is entirely sovereign over his own reality, and so, utterly alone...utterly alone, until a woman enters his insanity and shows him what's real. She enters his world and writes a story of Love with her own broken heart.

And he begins to look into a new mirror...or maybe, he looks into an old mirror in a new way.

Clip from *A Beautiful Mind*
Universal Pictures, 2001

A key moment in the film. Alicia Nash (portrayed by the beautiful Jennifer Connelly) approaches her husband (John Nash, played by Russell Crowe).

Alicia: You want to know what's real?

John nods silently.

Alicia: *(touching the side of his face with her hand)* This.

She takes John's hand and presses it to the side of her face.

Alicia: This.

She moves his hand from her face and holds it against her chest, over her heart.

Alicia: This. This is real. Maybe the part...that knows the waking from the dream, maybe it isn't here.

She gently caresses his head, then places her hand over his heart.

Alicia: Maybe it's here.

He went on to win the Nobel Prize in 1994. He ended his acceptance speech with this statement:

"I have made the most important discovery of my career, the most important discovery of my life: It is only in the mysterious equations of love that any logic or reason can be found."

He surrendered to Love, and Love made his shattered world new. The Logic of Love is the Word of God, who makes all things new.

And maybe, He's coming to you all the time, so you wouldn't run and hide at the End of time, but would joyfully surrender to Love for all eternity.

V. 20 "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

If you said that in Aramaic, it would be pronounced "Maranatha." In the early church it was that practice to say, "Maranatha" at the Lord's table. So some have postulated that the Revelation was used as a call to worship at the Lord's Table.

Remember, they didn't have TV in that day, and most didn't read, so they were happy to listen to the whole thing. We chop it up and use it to sell books and scare pagans, but they'd just sit and listen to the Revelation of Jesus.

It begins like this: ³ Blessed [happy] is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is at hand."

Then they'd read it to the end and say "Maranatha, come Lord Jesus."

Communion

Then someone would take a piece of bread, break it, and say, "This is my body given to you. Take and eat." And that person would take a cup and say what Jesus says, "This is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it all of you."

Say this after me: "Maranatha... come Lord Jesus."

We invite you to tear off a piece of the bread and dip it in the cup.
It is the heart of God, given to you, put it in you...
Then worship and may you never ever stop.

Benediction

We still haven't read the last verse of the Revelation.

²¹ **The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all** (not "some" but "all"). **Amen.**

Some ancient manuscripts add the word "saints" after "all." But these are later manuscripts...

It even appears that the most ancient manuscripts didn't, and don't, even include the "Amen," which means, "For sure!"

And so the Bible ends with the word "all."

Father Gillick was visiting an elementary school when he struck up a conversation with a child. A few moments into their discussion, she blurted out, "You're blind."

That was true. Due to an illness, he had lost his sight as a small child.

With tenderness, he replied, "My dear that's not news to me."

But before he could say more, she quickly moved from shock to sorrow, sadly replying, "But you don't know what you look like."

That statement caught Father Gillick off guard, and before he could respond, she ever so softly said..."You're beautiful."^{xiv}

That was the news from heaven... Good News.

The world can see, or is coming to see, that they are blind.

But you have news from heaven... and you can share that news with the world now.

The Revelation is the Revelation of Jesus

And when we look at Him, it also becomes the Revelation of who we are.

The New Jerusalem has the Glory of God—She's Beautiful... and she is you.

If you don't believe you're beautiful, you've been looking in the wrong mirror.

Believe the Gospel. Amen

All Bible verses from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted. All images by Peter Hiett unless otherwise credited.

Endnotes

ⁱ God is Light wrote John. No one seems to be able to comprehend Light... to us it is a contradiction—a wave and a particle—We can't judge light. But According to physicists Light is always Now—it doesn't age, it doesn't change... and yet, even time, changes relative to Light, somehow. We judge Light and think it's two (like two trees in a garden), but maybe Light judges us and we're two, like Good and evil.

"This is the judgment," said Jesus in John 3:19, "The Light has come into the world."

ii Paul wrote: "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. So now faith hope and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor. 13:11-13)

iii A wonderful but painful sign that you're not simply creating your own reality is that you suffer. And when someone makes you suffer, you can know that they're real and not simply a figment of your own imagination—they are a person capable of loving and being loved. Insanity can be a defense mechanism against suffering, which is also a defense mechanism against Love. Sin is insanity... but not all insanity is sin.

iv "Call the world, if you please, *"the Vale of Soul Making"*. Then you will find out the use of the world.... There may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions—but they are not Souls till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself. Intelligences are atoms of perception— they know and they see and they are pure, in short they are God. How then are Souls to be made? How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given them— so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each one's individual existence. How, but in the medium of a world like this? This point I sincerely wish to consider, because I think it a grander system of salvation than the Christian religion..." —John Keats

How sad that John Keats did not know, and was not told that Scripture teaches, and indeed, the Christian Religion should teach: that this world is "The Vale of Soul Making," and that a soul is a vessel containing the Breath of God—an earthen vessel that becomes a blood vessel in the Body of Christ, a vessel of wrath that becomes a vessel of Mercy, a vessel that bleeds the Life of God in the image of God.

v God is free. God is Good. Jesus is God's Will. Jesus is God's Good free will.
Jesus is God's Decision to be Himself. Jesus is the Judgment of God in flesh.
God is Love. Jesus is Love in flesh. Jesus is free-will in flesh.
Jesus is freewill in our flesh.
Jesus is the image of God and God is free.

Look: There's Jesus hanging on a tree.

- If I take freewill as a possession, if I crucify the Christ, if I break the bread and spill the blood, I kill freedom, life, logic, the Good and I choose non-being, I am utterly enslaved and unable to love—I'm dead.
- If I receive freewill as a gift—as grace, as a lover that has been romanced by her groom, if I perceive body broken and blood shed as a gift given when I am utterly unworthy of the gift, I become impregnated with freedom, life, logic and the Good; I bear the fruit of good free decisions—I begin to Love. I have the knowledge of Good and evil, and I choose the Good in Freedom; I live; I am the image of God (the one who loves in freedom)

Look: There's Jesus hanging on a tree.

- If I use him to make myself in the image, everything dies.
- If I worship him, for he is the image, everything lives and I become the image of God.

Look: There's Jesus hanging on a tree.

- If I try to justify myself, by taking knowledge of good to make myself good, everything dies.
- If I see that I am justified, for God has given the good, everything lives.

"I know that the Father's commandment is eternal life," said Jesus (John 12:50)

^{vi} Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, page 500

^{vii} "Concepts create idols... only wonder understands." —Gregory of Nyssa

^{viii} Maybe we can "idolize" Jesus, and by that, I mean turn him into a thing for our own consumption. I think that's, actually, what we did at the cross. Instead of worshipping Him as he truly is—our Creator, we reduced Him—or tried to reduce Him—to a thing that we can use to construct our own creation, our desecration. When Israel chose an idol, they chose a calf. Calves are very safe and useful, but they cannot create you or recreate you... but they can help you create the "abomination of desecration."

^{ix} "From new moon to new moon,
and from Sabbath to Sabbath,
all flesh shall come to worship before me,
declares the Lord.

And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled [pasha] against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." — Isaiah 66: 23-24

This is such a terrifying passage . . . until you believe it. Who are "the men who have rebelled [pasha] against me"? If you read all of Isaiah, noting that "pasha" is translated with various English words—that in Hebrew are this one word—you realize that "the men who have rebelled against me" are all men, **INCULDING** the Messiah, who has numbered himself with "the transgressors [pasha]." They worship for they see their corpses being consumed in the valley of Gehenna—they worship in new bodies. "All is lost" has become "all is found" in Christ Jesus.

"Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors [pasha];
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors [pasha]." —Isaiah 53:12

^x There are 7 blessings, 7 beatitudes, in the Revelation. I think they are all a form of worship. So they mean, "happy are those who worship." When you worship you forget yourself and find yourself in that which you are worshipping. If you reflect on it, you'll realize that you are always most happy when your worshipping—you probably just didn't call it worship, but cheering for the Broncos, praising one of your kids, or making love to your wife.

You can worship God in the Broncos, your kids and your wife, just by saying "thank you." You can and should use them as means of worshiping God.
Only one is truly worthy of our worship and that's God. Anything else is idolatry. If you idolize the Broncos, your kids or your wife—you will destroy them, destroy yourself and crucify the Christ—you will worship the creature rather than the Creator.

Blessed, happy are you, when you worship God in every moment.

These are the seven blessings:

1. Blessed is the one who *reads aloud* the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those *who hear*, and *who keep* what is written in it, for the time is near. (1:3)
2. And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are *the dead who die* in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!" (14:3)

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3. "Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is *the one who stays awake*, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!" (16:5)
 4. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are *those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb*." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God." (19:9)
 5. Blessed and holy is *the one who shares in the first resurrection*! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years. (20:6)
 6. "And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is *the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book*." (22:7)
 7. Blessed are those *who wash their robes*, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. (22:14)

^{xi} See: John 3:18, 36

^{xii} If we find in the coming of the Resurrected, His coming in the Holy spirit and His coming at the end of the age three forms of His one new coming for all their significant differences, there need be no artificiality in explaining that these passages refer to the first and immediate form in which His coming did really begin in that generation as the Easter event and in which the two remaining forms are plainly delineated and intimated. . . .

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is also the parousia. In this it has not only taken place but is still taking place to-day. And as it has taken place in the resurrection and is taking place to-day in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, it is also true that it will take place at the end of the days in the conclusion of the self-revelation of Jesus Christ.

Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics (a compendium), p. 242-243

^{xiii} The King says not that the sheep have compiled a splendid moral record, but that they had a relationship with himself: "Amen, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." Or to put it even more precisely, they are praised at his final parousia for what they did in his parousia throughout their lives.

Robert Capon, Kingdom Grace Judgment, pp. 509-510

^{xiv} Chris Heuertz, The Magnolia Journal, fall 2018, p. 49