

## Sermon – 31/08/2008 pm

### In or Out

Study Text: Revelation 22:13-15

Many buildings in the city have restricted access these days. People carry swipe cards around their neck in order to get into the building. How do they get those cards? The owner or the boss gives it to them. When they are given a job in the place they are given a card. Cards are given freely to those with a right to enter. Do you have the card that gives you the right to enter the city of God? Are you wearing it, ready to enter at any time? You may be called in at any time.

### Eternal Saviour

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

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet so this is like saying the A to Z. These are the words of Jesus who said in the preceding verse *Behold I am coming quickly*. Back in verse 7 he made the same announcement before giving a blessing. That was the sixth blessing in this book. In this verse we come to the seventh and final blessing or beatitude.

Not only does Jesus announce that he is coming quickly, he makes the claim to be the infinite and eternal God. The very same words of verse 13 are used in reference to the Lord Almighty in 1:8. Jesus existed before his birth in this world. He was with God in the beginning (John 1:2). After his death and burial he rose from the dead and returned to his Father. Jesus has no beginning and no end. He is the eternal Son of God.

Jesus exists in history but is also beyond history. He exists outside the time and space constraints of this world which he created. He is not part of the creation. It is a great comfort to know we have a Saviour who is above and beyond this world, for this world is passing away – despite the most determined effort of men to ‘save the planet’. Jesus, not man, not the world, not the sun or the stars is the beginning and the end.

Those who do not believe in God the Creator get completely confused when they start to consider the beginning and the end of this world. Ask how this world began and they say there was ‘big bang’ billions of years ago. It is amazing how evolutionists think they have a monopoly over time. Who else talks in terms of billions of years? It is way beyond recorded history, but that does not matter they say. They just project back on the basis of their theories and come up with wildly varying numbers which we are supposed to believe. To accept ‘in the beginning God’ is too simplistic they say. While some of us seek the truth, others seek complication.

The Bible, and particularly this verse, makes it abundantly clear that nothing exists beyond the time and space occupied by God. The Triune God, Father Son and Holy Spirit, is infinite and eternal. *By him (Jesus) all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible...all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things consist (Colossians 1:16, 17)*. These words allow nothing to be seen as outside of Christ.

The truth of creation is fundamental to the gospel and especially the coming judgment. If God did not create this world, including man, then he has no right to judge us; this is the thinking of the evolutionist. No wonder such people are so desperate to find some proof for their belief. If their theory is not true however, and if there is a creator God as the Bible says, then they have to consider what God says. God says he not only created this world but that he will judge this world (Romans 2:16, Acts 10:42, 17:31). God has set a day when he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ. Jesus is on his throne in heaven ready to return in judgment.

## Enter

The one who is the beginning and the end, the one who is coming on the clouds of heaven in power and great glory, announces a blessing on those who wash their robes. The reading ‘those who do his commandments’ is also possible – the words look very similar in the original. Already in 17:3 the ones who come out of the great tribulation are spoken of as having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The bride of Christ must be dressed correctly (19:8) and the wedding guests properly attired (Matthew 22).

To enter into the holy city, to come before the heavenly throne, we must be wearing such robes. We dare not enter in our own robes for they are filthy, they are stained by sin. All our good works are as filthy rags. We must put on clean clothes. What are these clothes? They are robes washed in the blood of Christ. How amazing that our filthy rags can be washed clean allowing us to enter into the presence of God. Such is the power of the blood of Christ.

*There is power, power, wonder working power,  
in the blood of the Lamb*

*There is power, power, wonder working power,  
in the precious blood of the Lamb.*

So go the words of well-known hymn.

These robes of grace must be taken and worn by faith – in this sense we must ‘do his commandments’. We must persevere until the end, and we can do that only in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is the message of this letter to the churches. Trials and tribulation will come but in Jesus we have the victory. Jesus took our sin away so Satan can no longer accuse us. We do not have to listen to his wicked schemes. We can so ‘no’ to the seduction of this world by standing in the victory of Jesus.

Clothed in washed robes we have the right to the tree of life (22:14). We may enter through the gates into the city of God. What a glorious picture this is. The gates that were closed because of sin have been opened by the precious blood of Jesus. Adam was cut off from the tree of life when he disobeyed God, but now the second Adam, the perfect son of God, has opened the way for us to enter in and partake of the tree of life.

*If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9). No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:3). Jesus is Lord is the password. When was the last time you said ‘Jesus is Lord’? Are you ready no matter what, no matter you be laughed at or spat upon, no matter you lose your job or your family, ready to say Jesus is Lord? At what point do you draw the line and say no more – I refuse to say Jesus is Lord?*

In the church at Pergamon Antipas had already been martyred. Others faced the same future. Jesus did not promise deliverance from such suffering but deliverance through suffering. Do

not give up. Let us not become weary and discouraged. Let us not *fear those who can kill the body, but fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell* (Matthew 10:28).

The heavenly city has walls and gates. What are the walls? The twelve apostles. What are the gates? The twelve tribes of Israel. The twelve tribes and the twelve apostles have some bearing over who enters. The twelve tribes were chosen by God. They were the people whom he saved from bondage in Egypt by his grace and power. The twelve apostles were chosen by Jesus. They laid the foundation of the church which is Jesus Christ. The gates of this heavenly city are only open to those who are chosen and saved by Jesus Christ.

## Outside

Street dogs are part of life in the cities and towns of India. Mangy dogs that belong to no one roam the streets eating whatever scraps they can find. We had some camped in the lane behind our house. We had to keep the gate shut or they would come into our yard. Sometimes we would hear growling and fighting when one dog found a scrap to eat. It was a real ‘dog eat dog’ existence for these beasts – not unlike life down at the stock exchange or in many work places in our profit driven economy.

*Outside are dogs* (22:15). What a terrible picture! Filthy, mangy dogs squabbling over the refuse of this world. It is another picture of hell. Every man for himself – the survival of the fittest. Hitler’s concentration camps are nothing compared to what is pictured here. Outside are dogs.

Paul called the Jews who insisted on circumcision for salvation ‘mutilators of the flesh and dogs’ (Philippians 3:2). He quickly and comprehensively condemned any who added works of the flesh to the pure and precious doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone. What such teachers were doing was tantamount to idolatry. Such false teachers were still active in the church at the end of the first century and are still active today. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers.

*Outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murders and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie* (22:15). Those excluded from the holy city are described in 21:8 and 21:27 as well as in this verse. Common to the three verses is the sin of lying. Lying is opposed to the truth, and Jesus is the truth. Sorcerers seek truth in things and places other than Jesus – they are liars. The sexually immoral deny the truth of God in creation. They lie to themselves and others when they seek sexual gratification outside the divine institution of marriage.

Murderers are also guilty of lying; how else do people get away with abortion and euthanasia? Idolatry is an outright lie. Worshipping the creation rather than the creator is the biggest lie of all. It is the greatest of all Satan’s deceptions seen in the life of everyone who rejects the truth of God and his word. Outside are dogs.

Consider where you stand today. Are you living a lie? Are you living in the truth? Have you entered in through the gates, clothed in the blood-washed robes of Christ. Is your soul at rest in Jesus Christ?

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