

“The Grand Finale”

(Rev. 22:13-21)

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I. Introduction

A. Crazy Charles Manson is back in the news

1. More bodies....after nearly 40 years
2. His cult of crazy followers
 - *Haight Asbury guru
3. Wonder what they saw in him and his cult
4. Nothing worse than cults in the name of religion
5. Starting a cult in California
 - a. Land of “flakes and quakes”
 - b. Put on a white robe and start chanting

B. Four possible ways to start a cult

1. Reject the Bible

- a. Eastern religions

2. Devalue the Bible

- a. Deny it is God’s word
 1. Infallible
 2. Without error
- b. Loses all authority
 1. Rely on man’s authority

- c. “Can’t know truth for certain”

3. *Subtract from the Bible*

- a. The Jefferson Bible
 - 1. Deny the supernatural
 - 2. Only accepted moral principles
- b. Mainstream protestants today
 - 1. Allegorical stories vs. true miracles
 - 2. “ suggested moral code”

4. *Add to the Bible*

- a. Supercede what it says
 - 1. Later writings “trump” it
- b. Islam
 - 1. Nearly a billion followers
 - 2. The Koran
 - a. Written 600 years later after Revelation
 - 3. Elevates Mohammed the Prophet over Jesus
- c. The Book of Mormon (written in the 19th Century)

Mormonism is built around its *Book of Mormon*, which was written by Rev. Solomon Spaulding during a period of delicate health. To pass the time, he composed a silly religious fiction, intending to publish it as a romance.

He died without sending his manuscript to the press. Joseph Smith, by some means not known to the public, gained possession of it, and conceived the scheme of publishing it as a revelation from heaven. He executed his plan, published the book, founded a sect, and became the apostle of a most successful and dangerous imposture of modern times.

He added to the Bible

C. God's final words...

1. "Hands Off My Book!"
2. Don't add to or subtract from the Bible!
3. The Bible is the anchor designed to prevent such drift

II. Text....Rev. 22

A. The Incentive (v. 12-16)

(12) Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. (13) I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

1. The final words from Jesus
 - a. "I am coming soon!"
2. And you can trust his words , because...
 - a. He is the "Alpha and Omega"
 1. First and last letters of Greek alphabet
 - b. He is the "Beginning and the End"
 - c. He is the Eternal God!
 1. He cannot lie!
3. Special blessings for those who "*wash their robes*"

(14) Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life and may go through the gates into the city.

- a. Those who have been forgiven of their sins
 1. Have been "washed clean" by the blood of Jesus
- b. They will be "Blessed" or "Happy"
 1. Have the right to the Tree of Life

2. Have the right to enter the great city

4. Not so for those who reject Jesus?

(15) Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

- a. What's wrong with "dogs"
 - 1. Dog lovers in the congregation
- b. The Jews had a totally different view of dogs
 - 1. Filthy scavengers
 - 2. Referred to all non-Jews as "dogs"
- c. Here "dogs" refers to those who have rejected Jesus
- d. No sinner will ever enter the glorious city
 - 1. They are somewhere "outside" the holy city
 - 2. But probably not on the earth

*in the Lake of Fire

5 But some people will live outside the city?

- a. Called the "nations"
- b. Rev. 21:25-6

(25) On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. (26) The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.

- c. Rev. 22:2

(2)On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

6. Why Jesus is sharing this with John

(16) I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star.

- a. So John will pass it on to the churches
 - b. Just like I'm doing this morning
7. Jesus reminds them of his credentials
- a. ***"I am the root and the offspring of David"***
 - b. How could He be both?
 - 1. Root—God
 - 2. Offspring—man
 - b. ***"the Bright and Morning Star"***
 - 1. Another name for Christ

B. The Invitation (v. 17)

(17) The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

- 1. The Spirit and the Bride
 - a. Spirit = God, the Holy Spirit
 - b. Bride = Church
- 2. Come and receive the gift of eternal life
 - a. The free gift of salvation
 - b. Called ***"the water of life"***
- 3. A final invitation to accept Jesus as Savior

C. The Injunction (v. 18-21)

- 1. ***"Injunction"*** defined
 - a. A judicial order to refrain from doing something"

- b. The supreme judge testifies to all who hear these words

(18) I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. (19) And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the Tree of Life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

- 2. Don't add or subtract anything from this book
 - a. Specifically the Book of Revelation
 - 1. Yet, it concludes God's complete written revelation
 - b. Nothing more need be said until He returns
- 3. Consequences of altering God's word
 - a. For those who add to it..
 - 1. ***"God will add the plagues listed in Revelation"***
 - b. For those who subtract from it..
 - 1. ***God will take away his part from the Tree of Life***
 - 2. ***God will take away his part in the Holy City***
- 4. Talking about false teachers
 - a. The destructive power of false teachers
 - b. Drag others down with them
- 5. Christians also must also be careful with God's Word

D. Things we must not elevate above the Bible

1. Personal Opinions

- a. Closing words of Dr. Joseph A. Seiss

"With an honest and ever-prayerful heart, and with these solemn and awful warnings ever before my eyes, I have endeavored to ascertain and indicate in these lectures what our gracious Lord and Master has been so particular to make known and defend. If I have read into this Book anything which he has not put there, or read out of it anything which he

has put there, with the profoundest sorrow would I recant, and willingly burn up the books in which such mischievous wickedness is contained. If I have in anything gone beyond the limits of due subjection to what is written, or curtailed in any way the depth and measure of what Jesus by his angel has signified for the learning of the Churches, I need not the condemnation of men to heap upon me the burden of censure which I deserve. If febleness, or rashness, or overweening confidence in my own understanding has distorted anything, I can only deplore the fault, and pray God to send a man more competent to unfold to us the mighty truths which here stand written...If I err, God forgive me! If I am right, God bless my feeble testimony! In either case, God speed His everlasting truth!"

b. As I preached this book...

2. *Personal Preferences*

a. Personal Preferences are natural and can be good

1. 31 flavors of ice cream
2. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder

b. Yet personal preferences are vastly different from revealed truth

c. Music Preferences

1. Some too loud

- Too fast
- Too much beat

2. You may not like drums or electric guitar—

- C.H. Spurgeon wouldn't allow an organ
- Doesn't mean Bible prohibits them

3. Music is generational

a. Each seems to have a different preference

4. Yet...different doesn't mean bad

5. Reaching the next generation

a. churches lost in the past

d. Grooming Preferences

1. My hair in college

a. My orange hair

b. My “long hair”

2. Clothing

a. Not a test of faith

b. Yes—decency

e. Worship Preferences

1. We are all made different

2. Some like it solemn

a. I like it *ALIVE!*

3. Different styles for different tastes

4. The key is to “worship in spirit and in truth”

5. I’m careful to not criticize others

6. But we must never elevate preferences above the word of God

3. *Personal Standards*

a. There is nothing wrong with standards and traditions

1. Unless they are elevated above God’s

2. God raised the bar high enough

b. It’s not more spiritual to have standards “above” God’s

1. That’s what the Pharisees attempted to do

2. God’s rules are sufficient

- c. Must be careful to ensure that standards and traditions don't lead to *legalism*
 - 1. Making Christianity a bunch of manmade rules
 - 2. Evaluating a person's walk with Christ by how they are doing with manmade rules
- d. The negative impact of legalism
 - 1. Missions in Brazil and Burma
 - 2. The demise of churches in Grand Rapids
- e. People meant well
 - 1. Trying to keep kids away from the edges
 - a. Movies
 - b. "The Sound of Music"
 - 2. Everybody meant well but people got hurt
- f. Many of you are healing from such experiences
 - 1. Get over it
- g. Let Chapel Pointe be a safe haven
 - 1. A people with the same adherence to the Bible
 - 2. But bound only by God's standards...not man's
 - 3. To be free from criticism over your preferences
- h. The three choices
 - 1. *Legalism*
 - 2. *License*
 - a. Kids from college who "kicked off the traces"
 - b. Threw out all the standards

3. *Liberty*

- a. Under Grace and not the Law
- i. Even well-meaning things may have unintended consequences
 - 1. Church constitutions
 - 2. Church covenants
 - a. The Bible is our covenant
 - 3. The opinion of a board of deacons or elders
 - a. May be right—may be wrong
 - b. What does the Bible say?
 - 4. Elevating the vote of the congregation
 - a. May be right—may be wrong
 - b. What is “God’s vote?”
 - c. Jonathon Edwards and communion
- j. The Bible always trumps all of man’s documents

4. *Personal Leaders*

- a. The power of a charismatic leader
- b. It’s difficult to reject a passionate leader
 - 1. The world desperately wants it!
 - 2. “Give us a cause” (right or wrong—a cause!)
- c. Church leaders today
 - 1. Some are way off
 - 2. Others are correct
- d. False teachers are usually right on 90% of the Bible

1. It's the 10% that does damage
 2. Their "groupies" can't discern the difference
- e. My passion should never be allowed to trump God's word

5. *Personal Truth*

- a. Modern relativism
 1. There is no "absolute truth"
 - a. "You believe what you want....
 1. ...and I'll believe what I want
 - b. "Doctrine divides—love unites"
 - c. "Unity above purity"
 2. Believe it's arrogant to believe you know the truth
 - a. God does!
 - b. And He cared enough to share it with us!
- b. We place great stock in our emotions and feelings
 1. But they can be tricked
 2. Lost in France
 - a. I can always "feel" true North
 - b. Lost in a town in France
 - Totally turned around
 - Couldn't re-orient myself
 - c. Our feelings can get turned around
 1. The Bible is our compass

III. Summary

A. The Final Words....v.20-21

*(20) He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.
(21) The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.*

1. The last recorded promise from Jesus
 - a. *"Yes, I am coming soon."*
2. The response of John
 - a. *"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with God's people. Amen!"*

B. The Invitation to "come" to Jesus.....v.17

(17) The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

1. Come and receive the gift of eternal life
 - a. A free gift
2. The word "**Come**" was the constant word of invitation on the lips of our blessed Lord.
 - a. Passing by the sea, He saw the first disciples fishing and He said, "Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men."
 - b. The Lord said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
 - c. The Lord said to the rich young ruler with the world in his heart, loving the wrong world, "Get rid of it, give it away, and come, follow me."
 - d. And our Lord says to those who are weary and heavy laden, "Come unto me and I will give you rest."
 - e. And the Lord said in the great parable of His gospel message, "Go out into the highways and the hedges and compel them, constrain them to come in."
3. This is the great climactic purpose of every worship service, every gospel sermon and every true message of the Lord. "Come, you who have never been saved, come to Jesus. And you who have already come, come closer, draw near, come still closer." (Crisswell....p. 157)

4. Larry B. and “forgiveness”

a. God forgave him

b. But others wouldn't

1. ...and he couldn't forgive himself

c. Then one day he understood that God's standard is the standard