

Intro:

We come to the climactic sermon of our Christmas series. We are two weeks late on this, due to our abnormal weather patterns.

- When Debbi and I moved to Victoria in the spring of 1985, we were constantly being told, ‘This weather isn’t usual for Victoria.’
- We came to the conclusion that Victoria had no *usual* weather!

We have been occupied with a theme connected to an ornament called a Moravian star. I have shown you an example in this candleholder my wife found in the thrift shop.

Our theme isn’t dependent on this star, or on the Moravians as such, although we have taken the opportunity of using it to call to our minds the unusual revival and missionary work the Moravians did in the 18th century under the leadership of Count Zinzendorf. I trust this emphasis has been a blessing to you.

Now we come to our last passage in the series, Revelation 22.16.

These verses are the last words of God men have heard since the days of the apostles. Our theme began with the first words of God in Gen 1.3: ‘Let there be light’ and conclude with these, the last words of God to man until our Lord comes again with a shout.

Truly, I am looking forward to the next word from God!

As we look at our passage this morning, I hope that you will see how it ties in with all we have spoken of before today. I want you to see how Jesus is the answer to the darkness that prevails around our world today and every day.

Our message is called:

I Am the Bright and Morning Star

Let’s read our passage: Rev 22.14-21, our text being verse 16

Proposition: The Light of the world does not yet illumine all, but it promises a new day to come, better than any day you have lived thus far.

I. The consistent promise of light in the midst of darkness

A. The first light of creation overwhelmed by the darkness of sin (Gen 1.3)

1. God didn’t intend for the world to be plunged into darkness
 - a. He did plan for day and night
 - b. He did not intend for ‘soul-darkness’

2. Man's rebellion against spiritual light turned man's world to darkness
 - a. The light God gave to their souls: "you shall not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil"
 - b. God intended for man to know good and evil – had they refused the temptation, they would have know the difference by what they turned *from*.
 - c. Instead, man came to know good and evil by what they turned *to* — darkness.
3. God did not leave man without hope: "thy seed will bruise his head"

Have you noticed this, everything God says is light? In other words, when God speaks our minds are informed, we see reality clearly because God has shown it to us.

Men who turn from the Word of God are always turning from light to darkness.

- If you hear a word from this pulpit, a word that comes clearly and consistently from God's word, and you turn away ... where are you turning to? Darkness.

B. The first promise of the star (the light that should come) is seen by a pagan – a dog of a Gentile (Num 24.17)

1. What can we say of Balaam?
 - a. He was a necromancer, a wizard, a man given to the pursuit of gain by the pursuit of evil
 - b. He somehow yet had access to the true God, though not the access of a child of God
 - c. He was given a vision of the light that should come, God's promised one who would overcome the darkness of this world

Numbers 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

2. Tragically, Balaam son of Beor turned away from the light he saw
 - a. We find in Num 31 that he is instrumental in leading Israel into sin
 - b. We also find him dead, slain at the hand of Israel's warriors, close to the people of the light, but far from the light

Do you take warning from Balaam? He saw the light, but he did not have the light.

- C. The first sight of the star came also from pagans, magi, men whose lives were transformed by what they saw (Mt 2.1-12)
 1. Perhaps out of the same culture and traditions that shaped Balaam
 2. But of a different heart and spirit from Balaam
 - a. Instead of coming to curse, they came to worship
 - b. Instead of coming for gain, they came to give
 3. They rejoiced to see the light – our only insight into their spirit

We saw Adam and Eve turn away from light to darkness.
We saw Balaam ignore the light he saw and instead pursue darkness.
And last we saw the wise men seek out the light, embrace it, and worship the One whom the light represents, and who provides the light.
In all of this we are not seeing a bright, all-illuminating light — we see only the light of promise.

- Just a brief word of promise to Eve
- A still unseen hope of a promise embodied in the nation of Israel as Balaam blessed the nation
- A seemingly insignificant representative of promise in the babe of Bethlehem, born in humble circumstances and outside the corridors of power and prestige in our world.

But what is that light... what is it that the men who see it and embrace it desire above all other things?
Let's look at our text...

II. The Mighty One whose power and faithfulness guarantees the light to come

A. The authenticating voice of Jesus

1. The book of Revelation has been given to John by angels and the Spirit for the most part
2. The Lord Jesus speaks up in this chapter for himself
 - a. Three times he declares “I am coming quickly”
 - 1) 22.7
 - 2) 22.12-13
 - 3) 22.20
 - b. In this passage, he offers the ‘*bona fides*’ of this book of Revelation

“The combination ‘I Jesus’ occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Here Jesus used it to stress His role in producing this book and so to strengthen its authority (*cf.* vv. 7, 12).”¹

“Now at length Jesus speaks in His human personal name. ... He attests the *bona fides* of His messenger.”²

- The place of this book in the history of divine revelation to man seems to give the Lord’s divine and final imprimatur not only on the book of Revelation, but on all the New Testament and indeed the whole Word of God.

B. The words delivered by the Lord’s messenger are *for* the churches

1. The ‘these things’ = the book of Revelation, all its content and all its promises [bright light for the church, all in all]
2. The ‘these things’ are given *for* the churches
 - a. The book begins with a vision of and messages for the seven churches of Asia Minor
 - b. The book ends with a statement of purpose *for the churches* generically

¹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible*, Re 22:16 (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003).

² Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, p. 305.

“‘Αι εκκλησῖαι are not the Seven Churches only, but the Christian societies throughout the world, which in the next generation were known in their aggregate as η καθολικη εκκλησῖα.”³

- c. The promises are for you, if you will believe them
- 1) Faith in the word of God is the door to the church
 - 2) The one who believes the promise in the darkness is one who is redeemed from sin and enters on the Kingdom of God, into the Lord’s church

The things we say, the truths we preach, are simply God’s promises.

- They are in writing
- They are not yet realized
- They involve faithful acceptance of the one who says He is faithful

Many people think such faith is foolishness. They think it is obscurantism and darkness.

Jesus says it is true. Who are you going to believe?

- C. The guarantor of the promises declares himself to be the ‘root and offspring of David’
1. What do you think this phrase means?
 - a. ‘Descendant’?
 - b. I think it means more than just ‘descendant’
 2. The reference is to Isaiah 11
 - a. Isa 11.1
 - b. Isa 11.10
 - c. Isa 11.10 quoted in Rm 15.12
 - d. Phrase ‘Root of David’ alone in Rev 5.5
 3. But note the distinction in Rev 22.16
 - a. Root *and* offspring
 - b. Word for ‘offspring’ is γενος, ‘generation’ ... we get our scientific term ‘genus’ from it

³ Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, p. 305.

- c. Means not ‘immediate family’ but descendant or offspring as our versions give it
- d. What is the root of a plant?

The root is the source of its life

- 4. The phrase means “Creator” and “Descendant” wrapped up in one person
 - a. Using the language of Isa 11.1, one commentator says Jesus “is at once the ράβδος [rod] and the ριζα [root], the Root and the Offshoot, the Beginning and the End of the whole economy associated with the Davidic family.”⁴
 - b. Why I am belaboring this?
 - 1) To show you that the person guaranteeing the Word of God here is a **MIGHTY ONE** ...
 - 2) He guarantees the Light of the Word – the many promises we believe and hold to, though we still ‘see through a glass darkly’
 - 3) He is the Creator and the Son of David — it is he who guarantees the promise and he is the promise!

And not only that, but consider ...

III. The bright light of the One whose reality and promise gives us hope for the life to come

A. Listen to these comments

1. William Newell:

“Our Lord is coming, indeed, as the Sun of Righteousness to rise upon the darkness of this world and reign in the millennial kingdom. But it is yet ‘this darkness’; although ‘the night is far spent, and the day is at hand.’ Yes, the day is not here — but lo, the harbinger of the day, the Morning Star! It shines in the night, but it prophesies the coming sunrise.”⁵

⁴ Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, p. 306.

⁵ Newell, *The Book of the Revelation*, p. 365.

2. John Nelson Darby:

“The assembly (*ecclesia* — the church) sees Him in the now far spent night as the Morning Star, recognizes Him, while watching for Him, according to His own Word, in His bright heavenly character — a character which does not wake a sleeping world, but is the delight and joy of those who watch. When the sun arises, He will not be thus known: the earth will never so know Him, bright as the (coming) day may be.”⁶

B. What is the morning star?

1. It is the bright light of Venus, actually, that shines in the dead of night and tells us that the day is about to dawn
2. It shines when most men are sleeping
3. It shines in darkness
4. It shines while not producing significant light, but rather the promise of light to come

C. The Lord made a promise to Israel:

Malachi 4:2 "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.
[NAU]

1. That promise is the brilliant light of the coming kingdom
2. The promise is for Israel
3. But the ‘root of Jesse’ is going to bring Gentiles with him!

^{NAU} **Romans 15:12** Again Isaiah says, “THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE, AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES, IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE.”

- a. Paul is quoting Isaiah
- b. And Matthew’s Gospel here — the part about the Gentile’s hope

⁶ Darby, quoted in Newell, *The Book of the Revelation*, p. 365.

Now I want you to consider the promises we have in Jesus Christ, the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star...

Is there anything you would not give up for him?

Is he your God and your Lord?

Conclusion:

Simply read again through Rev 22.17, emphasizing the invitation: “Come”

1. “Come” from the Spirit and the Bride and the one who hears to the Lord
2. “Come” from the Lord to the lost:
 - a. If you are thirsty, come
 - b. If you are willing, come

And last, Rev 22.20, I am coming quickly