

Lesson 10: Revelation 22:8-21

Opening Question: †

Opening Prayer: God of light and life, we praise you for your tireless work on behalf of the whole world, that someday everything sad will be made untrue. Hasten that day, O Lord, and keep us faithful while we wait. Amen!

Read aloud Revelation 22:8-21

Read Wright aloud:

I stood in the cloister and listened to the bells. To begin with, I could hear each of the ten, clear in the morning air. But gradually, as the order changed and the echoes multiplied in the ancient stone colonnades, they seemed to merge into one: a glorious, wild, ancient sound, awakening not only echoes but memories of years long past and imaginings of years yet to come. Even so, out of the rich confusion of their noise, the lowest two or three notes kept intruding, wherever they were in the constantly changing pattern: dong dong dong . . . dong . . . dong. They were part of the whole music and yet seemed to be saying: Pay attention. This is O † M awake.

Something of that sense comes over us as we reach the end of this most remarkable of books, whose surface we have skimmed in the interests of time and space and yet whose depths we have glimpsed as we have sped by. To begin with, we may have been able to hear most of the notes. But as the pace quickened and the echoes multiplied, the sequence of events—the letters, the seals, the trumpets and the bowls, and all that went with and around them—may have merged into one in our memory, a glorious, wild, ancient sound, pointing us back to the very dawn of time and the most ancient of scriptures, and yet pointing us on through symbolic signposts to thin 8

But, out of this rich confusion of vision and image, two or three notes now stand out, emerging variously from all that has gone before, part of the music and yet with something else to say. Pay attention. Keep these words. I am coming soon. I am coming soon.

Coming soon! That had been the hope of Israel for many a long year, before ever John saw Patmos, indeed before Jesus opened his eyes to the frosty light of a Bethlehem morning. Malachi, four hundred years earlier, had warned the bored and careless priests

