

Revelation 22.12–17

Bright Morning Star

Amington

Sunday 28 June 2020

Revelation: Names of Jesus [8]

Have you ever got up early to watch the sunrise? The best sunrise I ever saw was this one. This is the view out of my tent flap when I camped by Flathead Lake, in Glacier National Park, Montana. In case you don't believe me, here's the tent!

(I couldn't resist... there's the car I hired for the road trip looking out over one of the stupendous views!)

Today in our series looking at the names of Jesus in Revelation, we come to a rather curious one: Bright Morning Star. What does Jesus have to do with Venus (which is a planet, not a star)?

And it's curious because, if you know your Isaiah, you'll know that it's a title given to the king of Babylon – who styled himself as the 'king of kings' and who was the enemy of God's people, and so is often used as a metaphor for the devil...

The devil has all the seductive attraction of desire, wealth, and power – and he tells us what we want to hear; all too often we listen to his whispers, rather than to the truth. His subtle temptations are disguised as light – we may even say, a *false dawn*.

Although we rarely see them in this country thanks to the light pollution, there is such a thing as a false dawn. It's very faint, but it happens with the glow of the stars in the zodiac comes from the East, giving the appearance of a new dawn.

Friends, we need to be wary that we don't substitute Jesus for something false. We need to be wary that we don't substitute the truth for a lie, focusing on what we *want* to hear, rather than what we *need* to hear.

Ten years ago I bought myself a dining table. I wanted a solid oak one, something that would last me a lifetime. The description read, 'Oak dining table, made of solid wood,' which I read as 'Dining table, made of solid oak,' no doubt the impression the people selling the table wanted to give.

It turned out the table is made up of solid wood offcuts, covered with an oak veneer – which I only realised when it got bashed and some of the veneer came away, revealing the truth. I was gutted.

I read what I wanted to hear, not what the words actually said.

Friends, so often we treat Jesus like that. So often we put words in his mouth, so he says what we want him to say. Tim Keller said:

If your god never disagrees with you, you might just be worshiping an idealized version of yourself.

<https://twitter.com/timkellernyc/status/510458013606739968>

That's exactly what the devil wants. He wants to turn us inwards, to worship ourselves, rather than Jesus. So often we do – and we make do with his weak, false light.

But Jesus – *he* is the true light. In Isaiah the king of Babylon / the devil is described as the 'morning star' (Isaiah 14.12) – here Jesus is described as the *"Bright" Morning Star* (Revelation 22.16).

Which light would you rather live by? The false dawn, or the true dawn? The morning star, or the *"bright"* morning star? Sometimes the planet Venus – the astronomical morning star, which heralds the true dawn – is so bright it casts a shadow!

That's the sort of light I want to light my path, and it's found only in Jesus – nowhere else. How can you let the light of the Bright Morning Star shine into your life, bringing warmth and truth?