





cheerful voice.

But it's describing an emergency. It's certainly giving us the correct instructions. 22:10 says, do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll because the time is near.

And there's a sense in which instructions are being given with clarity. But I think different to the instructions on the Isle of Wight car ferry, the instructions on the Isle of Wight car ferry are designed not to give you a sense of urgency and not to make you panic and not to put fear into you.

[12:02] But these words do have urgency. They do have emotional power. They are meant, in a sense, to warn us.

That word came up, didn't it, somewhere in there, warning, verse 18. And if we read it and we don't tremble at the thought of missing out, if we've thought, oh, it doesn't really, you know, just an interesting way of spending half an hour on a Sunday evening, we've missed the point.

It isn't. Daniel, in his prophecy, was told, seal it up. It's clear, but it doesn't apply to you.

Seal it up, it'll become clear in many centuries' time. This book says, no, don't seal it up. This is for now. This you need to have to hand.

You need to be ready because the time is near. So there is openness and there is also urgency in these last verses. So let's try and see if we can bring some order to them.

[13:13] So the first thing I'm going to do is finish last time's sermon or presentation or whatever it is we're doing, meditation, because I didn't get as far as this bit about worship.

So I'd like to pick that bit up first, and then when we've done that, I'm going to ask for your help in looking at the remaining verses.

So if we may, let me pick up the point that I didn't pick up on the previous occasion, which is this about worship. And I'm referring to verse 8, where it says, I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things.

And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, don't do that.

I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God. Okay, so we didn't look at those words last time.

[14:18] They're surprising, aren't they? Do you not find them surprising? When I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship.

When I, I've got, this is the other way around, isn't it? When I saw and heard, I fell down to worship. And I was thinking about this. I've got some other thoughts, which I'll say in a minute. But I wonder why he did this.

And it made me think of the way human beings react to something, I don't know.

So let's suppose you are down to run the marathon. I'm not expecting most of you are, but let's. And when you, when you got to the end of it, you go, wow, oh, I've done that.

And you're so pleased that not only do you fall on the ground, but you embrace any single, anybody that you can find. I've done it, I've done it, I've done it. Such is the sort of overwhelming emotion of having completed this task.

[15:23] I wonder whether John was so overwhelmed with what he heard and saw, that rather than wishing to embrace the angel and say, oh, don't.

He was so overwhelmed by what he heard and saw, that he sort of fell down in awe and wonder and worship. And he mistakenly sort of addressed the angel in awe and wonder and worship.

Do you think that makes sense, sort of humanly speaking? That, you know, so impressive, what I've seen and what I've heard. Oh, it's just amazing.

And I fall down in awe and wonder. And the angel says, hang on, no, I'm only showing you this.

Don't worship me. Worship God. And I wonder whether that is why he does it.

It would make a bit of sense, wouldn't it? A response to what he has seen and heard via the angel.

Is this meant to show us that this revelation is so massive and overwhelming that one is left in awe and wonder, and he wrongly transfers this to the messenger rather than thinking of the original person to whom it came.

[16:39] Anyway, that's just a little thought. I've got another thought as well. And that is, he's made this mistake before. If you look at 19 verse 20.

It isn't 19 verse 20. I think I've got this wrong. It is 19 verse 10. Please could somebody with a microphone, for example, ask them to read us.

19 verse 10. Thank you. At this, I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, don't do that. I'm a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, for it is the spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus.

Thank you. Thank you. There's another translation which would say... Which would say...

[17:43] Have I got it written down anywhere? David, could you read us your verse 10, please? Because I think it's closer to the... It says 19 verse 10 and the mic's just coming.

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, see thou do it not. I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus.

Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Thank you. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Let's see. Let's come to that in a moment. He's made this mistake before. Okay, first point. I suppose it reminds us that we are capable of making the mistakes that we've made before.

Isn't that right? It's a sad fact, isn't it? That we can make a mistake, fall into a sin, know that it's wrong and do it all over again.

[18:53] It's just so frustrating, isn't it? Bears a little bit on what Shama was saying about Romans 7, that there was this sort of inbuilt incapacity in our current flesh.

Putting it the other way around, we ought to be realistic about this and know that we constantly need to be on our guard for traps and slips we've been prone to before. Yeah?

It's a reminder that we need to be on our guard for traps and slips we've been prone to before. Or just to enlarge on that, never to assume that we can do without the spiritual armour of Ephesians 6. Maybe worth just flipping over to Ephesians 6. Without the armour, we are desperately, desperately weak.

So we need the armour if we're not to slip up again and again. And in Ephesians 6 verse 10, he says, Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

[20:09] Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms.

Therefore, put on the full armour of God so that when the day of evil comes, you can stand your ground and after you've done everything to stand. Stand firm then with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, the breastplate of righteousness in place, with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and pray in the Spirit on all occasions, etc.

That's the armour. It's not describing anything weird. It's not saying you need to draw pentagrams on the floor or have magic smoke or have special crystals.

It's just saying, trust the Lord, pray, be obedient, follow the truth, just the normal things of the Christian life.

[21:30] And he says, you leave those off at your peril. We need to wear this armour because it is strong to preserve us against the evil one.

And just sort of elaborating on that thought, he was worshipping angels and the message that he's given is worship God.

I think Jerome mentioned this the other day, that the theologian John Calvin talked about worshipping things that are not God.

Angels worship all sorts of things that are not God. The human heart is a factory of idols and even good things can become idols.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Worship God. So there's an emphasis there on us worshipping God.

[22:33] I just want to take this a little bit further and go back to that 19 verse 10, particularly the translation that David gave us. Worship God.

I've lost it. Worship God. 19 verse 10. For it is the spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus or the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

I haven't got to the bottom of this verse, but let me just point out to you where it's going. It says worship God and it gives a four.

This is something closely linked up with the worship of God. The testimony of Jesus, by which I take it that he means holding fast so that we're not ashamed of Jesus.

So that when push comes to shove, oh, you're a Christian, are you? What do you believe? That we are prepared to say, I'm a believer in Jesus Christ, even when we sound stupid and out of touch and cranks, but we're still prepared to own up to Jesus.

[23:55] Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. And that third connection, what's he saying?

That when people are prepared to testify to Jesus, even under duress, as some of these first readers would have been, that is the essence of the prophetic ministry of the spirit.

And you notice we've got the Trinity there. Worship God, a testimony of Jesus. This is the spirit of prophecy. And one commentator says, actually this idea sums up the whole book.

It is all about maintaining worship to God, testifying to Jesus in the power of the spirit. Testimony to Jesus.

Is he saying that this is really the heart of the ministry of the spirit? That all these things are wonderfully connected. And I don't think I've got to the bottom of that, but it's a very tantalizing thought to go away and think about.

[25:07] And I say, let us be worshippers. That's what it says, worship God. Let us be worshippers of God. Let us be people who bow down before God, who see God looming large.

And in all our lives, let us be worshippers of him. And let us be testifiers of Jesus because it looks as though you can't be a worshipper unless you're a testifier.

Let us be people who are not ashamed of the Lord Jesus Christ because it's no good us coming here and reckoning we're worshipping when we're singing songs if outside we're not prepared to testify to Jesus.

Worship God for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Let us be evangelists testifying of Jesus and let us be filled with the spirit because it seems from this verse that being filled with the spirit this is what it's all about being a worshipper and being a testifier to Jesus.

That, it would seem that this verse is saying that is the you know the bottom line of the work of the spirit. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

[26:24] So I leave us with those exhortations. Let us be worshippers. Amen. Let us be evangelists testifying of Jesus. Amen to that.

And let us be filled with the spirit in doing so. Amen to that. Right. Let's sing something and then we'll get back to the next bit of verses.

What would you like to sing? There's some choices or whatever you would like. 9-0-9. 9-0-9. And so I was thinking these words that we're reading are they just random?

Are they just going all over the place? Or is there some connecting theme? Well yeah there must be.

It's not impossible to produce a collage of things but is there any theme? Are they fairly random? Is there a common theme? Is there a reason for choosing these particular words?

[27:38] I did have quite a think about it and here's a suggestion which we can try out. It's a little bit like the upper room discourse John 13 14 15 round there which is all to do with how the Christian life can be lived in the absence of Jesus personally.

So that's what that upper room discourse is really all about and I wonder whether this is how to live in this world given that Christ is coming soon.

I wonder if that would be a way to sort of summarise everything. How to live in this world given that Christ is coming soon. So I thought let's just try on that thought and so breaking it down there's part A that Christ is coming soon part B when he comes there will be a final judgment and part C that

being the case how then should we live?

and I thought I was going to ask you if we could test that out and I'm going to ask you to liaise with two or three other people and go through the verses and say so if you're looking at A do the verses speak about Christ coming soon?

If so which verses and what way do they say it? part B does it say when he comes there will be a final judgment where is that mentioned?

[29:19] Is it mentioned a lot or a little? Is it a common theme? And then thirdly C do the verses talk about how then shall we live?

Do they give sort of directions and principles for this present age? Do you get the idea? So we're investigating that thought under those three headings and my suggestion is that you get together with two or three other people and see if that fits and if we go through the verses have we covered them all or have we missed a lot out or what?

That's why I put those verses that we can tick them off if you found references. So does that make sense? So what I'd suggest is if the people on this side start with A and then go if you've got time A, B and C and the people on this side start with C and then go C, B and A.

So if we take about five, six minutes, could you do that? So we're going to recoup, we're going to recap trying on the thought that how to live in this, that these verses about how to live in this world given that Christ is coming soon and we're going to tick off the numbers of verses that we've got referred to.

So can we, was there a little group around here at the front here? Did you have any, did you find any verses that mention Christ coming soon? Yes.

[30:50] Which ones did you find? Six. Six. Seven. Seven. So God's coming soon. Seven.

Coming soon, yep. Twelve. Twelve. Twelve. Which says, what's it? Look, behold, I'm coming soon, look, I'm coming soon.

Yes. Any more verses? Twenty. Twenty. He who testifies to these things says, yes, I'm coming soon. So we've covered, so twenty we've mentioned.

Any other? Ten. Ten. time is near. Is that what you had in mind? Yeah, the time is near.

Yeah. Okay, so these are all, they're sort of adding urgency, aren't they? Soon, quickly, the time is near. Did any other group have anything else to add to that, that we're confirming that one of the themes of this is that Christ is coming soon?

[31:58] Any other verses to add? Have we missed anything out? Nope. Thirteen. Yes, that thirteen is an interesting verse, isn't it?

Because it, I just wondered whether we had missed something there. It does say, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

So yes, it sort of implies Jesus at the beginning of history and right at the end of the world. Yep, thank you. Okay, let's, do any of these verses cover item B, that when he comes there will be a final judgment?

Do any of these verses cover the idea of judgment? So the group, I don't know if there's one or two groups at the back there, but did you come up with anything on that? Does it mention judgment or imply judgment anywhere?

Verse eleven. Say that again? No opportunity to change. Thank you. No opportunity to change. Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong.

[33:04] Let the vile person continue to be vile. Let the one who does right continue to do right. Let the holy person continue to be holy. I've got a slide for that. I'll come back to that in a minute. But don't let me get away without doing it.

So which verse was that again? Eleven. Yeah, there is no opportunity to change. Yes? Yeah, I think you could put that under now which one was it?

Eleven. You can put it under B and you could also put it under C. Let's come back to that in a moment. Yep. Any? Yes, 15.

There's the holy city but it doesn't include everybody. It isn't a universal gospel. Everybody is going to be there. It's saying inside are the people who wash their robes and have the right to the tree of life and go through the gates into the city.

But outside are the dogs. Those who practice magic arts is actually pharmakia from which we get pharmacy.

[34:25] But you mustn't translate it too literally. It doesn't say all pharmacists will be outside. Murderers, idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

that's taking us into the realm of false belief. People who have lived their lives believing that there is no last judgment or believing if I do my best I'll get into heaven or believing I'm not such a bad person.

All those sort of falsehoods. 13, 18, and 19. I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll, if anyone adds anything to them, God will add to the person the place described in this scroll.

If anyone takes away the words from this scroll, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the holy city which are described in this scroll. 18 and 19 say that there is a negative outcome from life.

In our book we taught 18 and 19 and someone says that it's not the final judgment. Seems pretty final to me.

[35:47] God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the holy city. I think that sounds final to me. It's saying if you refuse to accept the truths in the book of Revelation and the rest of scripture for that matter there is a danger that you put yourself in real danger if you don't live by the words that we've been given.

I think that's what it's saying. We'll come back to that as well probably. Any more on final judgment? Anything?

Anybody want to add anything? coming? Okay, let's go to see.

Let's go to see. Are there any verses that give present contemporary application given that Christ is coming and there will be a final judgment? moment? Yeah, thank you.

Yeah, worship God. I missed the last bit that you said, Julia.

[37:12] It does, yeah. There's a positive command to worship God. Yes, that's right. That's a now thing, isn't it? 14, yes.

Let's do 14. Verse 14 says. It's interesting. You'd almost think John would say, blessed are those who have their robe washed by Christ.

Yes. Yes. Holy living. It's a holy city, isn't it?

Holiness without which no one will see the Lord. Yeah. So, 14. Yep, thank you. Sorry, Brenda.

Seven. Yeah, thank you. That's again about words, and one of those was about words.

[38:14] That was about words, wasn't it? Yeah, I think that's right.

Yes. Jerome's saying that verse 15 has ethical implications for the way we live now, given that if you live a different way, you will be outside the city.

Number 12. Number 12? Carry on. Because he is saying that his reward is with him. Yeah. So, if you want that reward, you need to and whatever you need.

Yeah, I'm coming soon and my reward is with me and I will render to each one according to what they have done. So, that's, in the light of his coming, there's an implication for what we do now.

Yeah. Yeah. 17. 17? Yes, thank you. And 17, you would categorise as what sort of sentence?

[39:48] An invitation. Yeah. An invitation or an offer or a free offer if you were.

Oh, thank you. Yes. Thank you.

Yeah. Yeah. Yes.

Yes. Yes. That's right.

We're people of the book. And it's interesting that of all the sort of implications for now, that comes across strongly. It's not just sort of an ethical implication, but a word implication to keep the words, to hold on to the words.

[41:04] Number 10. Number 10. Let the holy person continue to be home.

Yes. Am I right? That's 11. Oh, isn't it?

Sorry. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. That's right. Well, it looks as though we've missed out verse 16. And it looks as though we've missed out 6 and 8.

I think we can take 8 to go along with the worship bit. So I think we're allowed to put those together. But we have missed out that one. And this one, perhaps.

And... Yes. Because I want... The more I thought about this, the more I wonder whether it all leads back to other parts of the letter.

And that's why he's picked these threads, because they go back and they connect with lots and lots of other things. And it's... And it's... And it's... And it's...

[42:09] And it's visible just before the dawn.

And here is Jesus saying, I am the one you see now. And the fact that you see me is it's just before the dawn.

The sands of time are sinking. The dawn of heaven breaks. You know, the light is just coming because you can see the bright morning star. Which I think is rather a lovely thought.

Right. Let's see what we can do in the next few minutes. Thank you very much for going through that. I think that's... It's helpful because it engages us with the text, doesn't it? I'm going to whiz ahead and just pick out one thing here, which is verse 12.

My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. There's quite a bit of theology to pick out here. It's put in connection with the coming, isn't it?

[43:25] My reward is with me. I will give to each person what they have done. This is a theme that crops up quite a lot in the Bible, and I haven't gone and given you lots of references yet.

But there's a positive in the sense that Jesus will give people according to what they deserve.

I'm going to tweak that in a moment. But if you think of this, every evil deed that people have got away with, or think they've got away with, they won't get away with it, because Jesus will come and give every evil deed exactly what it deserves.

And if you think of the way that crime dramas are framed, they're very popular crime dramas, aren't they? But it's all about making sure that the person who did the evil deed gets caught.

And there's something that actually appeals to our nature in that, because when there's an injustice done, we want to see it put right. And this verse at least says that, doesn't it?

[44:41] Judgment is mine, says the Lord. Vengeance is mine. He will bring every deed into judgment in that sense. And I've put taken into context.

So you're thinking, where does that leave me as a Christian? And I'll tell you, our lives will be judged in the context that we belong to Christ.

And my illustration for it, which I think is sound, is if you had a little child who drew a picture of you, auntie, mummy, daddy, if you took it out of context, you'd say, what a scrappy piece of nonsense.

But because it's a child, because the child has done it out of love, and you look at the motivation, and you look at the relationship, you say to the child, that's beautiful.

I shall keep that forever, and I shall treasure that. If you put it into context, and if you put Christian deeds into context, let's, oh, I've got this.

[45:49] Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Reward.

Let's look at some rewards, shall we? Matthew 5, verse 12. So who's got the microphone at the moment?

Right, could you read us Matthew 5, verse 11 and 12? Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Thank you. A reward for being insulted and demeaned and made to feel ashamed and made to feel you're a loser, and Jesus says, I notice that.

There is a great reward for you. Chapter 5, verse 46. Jerome, you've got the microphone.

[47:10] You might as well read these. Matthew 5, verse 46. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?

Do not even the tax collectors do the same? Okay, so here's no reward. No reward for living on a quid pro quo basis.

I'll scratch your back if you scratch my back. I'll do something for you if you do something for me. There's nothing particularly reward worthy about that.

So here's an example. No reward for that. That's what it says, isn't it? What reward will you get if you just do things for other people, if you know they're going to do something nice for you? Chapter 6, verse 1, please.

Go on, you've got the mic. You might as well do it. Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

[48:15] Thank you. So that's a no reward. If you're just showing off in your good life, in your donations, you know, so that you can have your name written up and so on, there's no particular reward for that.

Chapter 6, verse 4, please. Or better say verse 3 and verse 4. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Isn't that lovely? So you've given something, and only you and the Lord know about it, and you didn't do it to show off. You just did it for the Lord, and the Lord says, I think that's great.

And please make no mistake, there will be reward for that. The reward will show how much I valued what you did. It was in context, wasn't it?

It wasn't commensurate with the amount of money you gave. It was the fact that you did it just between you and me, as it were. The Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

[49:44] Chapter 6, verse 6, please. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Yeah. A reward for private prayer, for secret prayer. You had something on your heart, you told somebody in church you were going to pray for them, and mercifully you remembered it by the time you got home, and you prayed, and you sought God, and you prayed, and the Father says, that's great.

I really value that. That will be rewarded. When Christ comes, he will bring his reward with him. Secret prayer, says the Lord.

I think that secret prayer is so valuable, and it will be rewarded. 10, verse 41. 10, verse 42 through to 42.

What about that? Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet, because he is a prophet, will receive a prophet's reward.

[51:08] And the one who receives a righteous person, because he is a righteous person, will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water, because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

Isn't that fantastic? A cup of cold water. On any rational estimation, that's not very much, is it, but Jesus says, ah, if you did that, because you were helping one of my people, and that was the reason, I count that as a very worthy thing to do.

And just giving a cup of cold water to one of these disciples, you will not lose your reward. I think that's a lovely thing, isn't it, that the Lord sees and values things that perhaps we don't value very much ourselves, but an act of kindness towards a Christian person, because they're a Christian, that's something that the Lord says, that will be rewarded.

And we'll be surprised, don't we? When did I ever see you hungry? When did I ever see you naked? When did I ever visit you? And he'll say, well, you did that to one of my people.

And I count that very special. I count that very special. So, I thought that was worth looking at, because that's an encouragement, isn't it, that he comes bringing his reward.

[52:45] And, I'll just flick ahead to, there was a lot about words, keeping the words, and that's a good thing for us to think of.

We've been trying to keep the words as we've gone through this, haven't we? Trying to value and appropriate and digest and meditate on the words.

And he says, that's a really important thing until he comes. And I think we've got one more meeting left, and let's think next time about his coming.

Time has gone. Oh, I think you can tell us the vile. Oh, yeah. What did I? A slide. Ah, right, okay. Quickly.

Let the vile be vile. Yeah, I think this is an urgent statement, isn't it? It's saying, you should live now realising that there is a time, there will come a time, when one's choices in life are fixed and there's no more opportunity to change and whatever the consequences are, you'll have to take them.

[54:00] I think that's what it's saying. It's saying, there will be a time when there isn't a further opportunity. And if you, you know, it might be this evening, and if you go out of the building saying, I'm not going to repent, I'm not going to take this seriously, there might be a time when that is how it is, that's fixed at that.

And, and Christian people might go out of this building saying, I'm determined to live a holy life, I know I make a mess of things so often, but I want to live a holy life that, you know, the Lord will, will say, yeah, that's it, that's it, that's you.

So I think there's a, sort of, it's almost like a last chance. Just be careful, because you might not get another chance.

And then you could match it with verse 17, where it says, come, let the one who is thirsty come, and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

And that's an invitation for now, isn't it? There's a warning, and there's an invitation. It's not too late. Actually, because you have now, and you could, come.

[55:17] And if you want to, there's nothing to stop you taking the free gift of the water of life. Why not do that? If you've never done it before, why not do that now?

This is the way Christians live. We want to constantly come to Christ, and drink of him, and eat of him, don't we? And we want to be doing that. We don't want that to be something we talked about. That's how we want to live. We don't want it to be something that we did 20 years ago, but it's something, that's the way we live. We are drinking the water. We are feasting on Christ.

Does that make sense? Yeah. I still think we need to stop. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for these words, and this meditation, and please grant that we may be among those who do drink of the water of life.

that we do wash our robes, that we do keep the words, that we do have our eyes on the coming of the Lord Jesus.

[56:38] So now may grace and mercy and peace be with each one of us, from God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.