

Revelation 22:6–21

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[0 : 00] Please stand for the reading of God's Word. Revelation 22, verse 6.

And he said to me, These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.

And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things.

And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me. But he said to me, You must not do that. I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers, the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book.

Worship God. And he said to me, Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.

[1 : 06] Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me to repay everyone for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

Blessed are those who wash their robes so that they might have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.

The spirit and the bride say, Come, and let the one who hears say, Come, and let the one who is thirsty, Come, and let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

[2 : 17] He who testifies to these things says, Surely I am coming soon. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. You may be seated. I have an acute sense today of the relationship between the people of God before the first advent or the coming of Jesus and the people of God before his second advent or coming.

O come, O come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here.

an apt verse for the church today. In this wilderness world, what word from heaven needs to rest upon the soul of the church in these days?

A beleaguered church. An embattled bride.

[4 : 07] A discouraged lot. A church that is familiar with tribulation and the need for patient endurance.

Indeed, the words that I share with you today will not be so much an exposition as they will be a summing up of revelation. Revelation. For in that early chapter, John wrote that he had been on the island of Patmos, but he was their partner.

He was sharing with them in the tribulations and in the kingdom and in the need for patient endurance, which he says are found in Christ.

So what word does the church need? What word do the citizens of heaven need when if the church feels itself to be in lonely exile, the individuals and their struggles and their sense of isolation and their longing and their wondering, was it not a message of the risen Christ that I gave myself to at conversion?

Was it not a word that spoke of his death? Yes. Substitution? Thankfully. But exaltation?

[5 : 58] Triumph? His rise to the skies? And I think of John's early readers, some decades now beyond their embracing of the Christian faith, and yet wondering deeply, intimately, personally, whether the presence of Christ remained with them still.

what kind of word does the church in that era need?

Evidently, an apocalyptic vision. Evidently, a pulling back of the veil. Evidently, a loosening of the curtain of seeing beyond their existence to the transcendent realities that are on the other side of the fabric.

The exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ and his present reign, the only remedy for a mourning bride. Even in this final chapter, we see a return to this refrain of the exalted Christ, for indeed he has been the melody of the letter throughout.

[7 : 43] In verse 13, he says, I am the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star. These great concluding titles bestowed upon Jesus of Nazareth, all filled with the sense that he is divine and God, that he dwelt with him from the beginning and he shall dwell to the very end.

That in history he is the root and descendant of David, surely a title that links him to the promises that God gave to David in 2 Samuel 7, that from your line will come a ruler who will be given a kingdom and a people to share in it with him which will never end.

This Jesus, this exalted one, this bright morning star echoing all the way back through the centuries to the unfaithful lips of Balaam who was constrained to say that he saw in the future the rise of a star who would be given a scepter to rule for God and to unite his people to himself in everlasting blessedness.

this melody of an ascendant lord the remedy for the beleaguered soul.

[9 : 59] There really have been three massive visions of him in the letter. The first came in the opening chapter in verses 9 through 20 where John says he saw one like a son of man and he described his raiment as one who had a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest the hairs of his head were like wool as white as snow his eyes were like a flame of fire his feet were like burnished bronze refined in a furnace and his voice was like the roar of many waters all these descriptions of the son of man which in

Daniel's vision were really the descriptions of the ancient of days and so he says to the beleaguered body the embattled bride your Lord lives is the first and the last the alpha and the omega the beginning and the end he wears!

He wears the crown of David and he is there in heaven at the right hand of God almighty and his word in that initial vision after John fell at his feet as as though dead came to him fear not oh bride that is so beset by the temptations of life oh Christian that is so overrun with the defeats in life fear not he will have a word with you in this book he wants to speak with you through this book write therefore the things that you have seen this first vision carried structurally through the letter in the midst of the churches rolled right through chapter three the ascendant son of man his ongoing word to the church and it gave way to the second vision in chapters four and five where he was drawn up into heavens and he saw

God who was worthy from all creation and his plan for all human history laid before him in the scroll and the inability of anyone in heaven or under heaven or even under the earth or in the seas to execute the plans of God for human history and he began to weep and then these mixed metaphors the lion and he turns and it's the lamb and it's the Lord Jesus Christ who on the basis of his death and resurrection was given a kingdom and a people to share it with he will unfold the rolling executions not only of God's judgment which we saw during those months of trumpets and seals and visions and bowls but also the salvation that he brought to his own the second vision of the lion and lamb rising as the melody of the book and then the third and final great vision of him in chapter 19 the victorious warrior who came on the horse conquering all finally laying everything to rest the enemy gone to the day where there are no more tears there is no more pain there will be no more sorrow on into eternity this one the risen one

Jesus of Nazareth is God's lamb and lion and eternal one promised for the bride johann sebaston bach passed away some centuries ago now but his final fugue entitled the art of fugue has been a source of scholarly intrigue and intense debate for well over two centuries because in some sense it remained an unfinished work mystery surrounds it on many levels not only in regard to Bach's intended order for the composition but a shroud hangs over it in regard to the subtlety of his actual

intentions for it namely did he or did he not purposefully write the initials of his name through musical letters and put it into the piece did it roll out of [16:06] B A C and then the German equivalent of H from what I have been told a B flat did he want his name to be the melody of his final piece well I don't know but when it comes to the Bible's final composition there can be no doubt the author the divine author fully intends for the name of Jesus to be the melodic line of the revelation after all this is the revelation of Jesus Christ and I don't take that to mean merely about Jesus Christ I don't take it to mean merely that it is from Jesus Christ I take it to mean that this is the unfolding this is the pulling back this is the unveiling of all that the father has given to the son so that the church in its mourning lonely exile here would say come oh come Emmanuel he indeed is in every chapter I was listening this morning to the radio as I was praying through the message and the song came on I don't normally listen to contemporary Christian music I have my fill of it after about three minutes but at any rate there I was and the song came on with the refrain let the glory of the Lord rise upon you let the glory of the Lord rise upon you let the glory of the Lord rise upon you oh let it rise that's revelation hopefully you've seen something of his glory that you might be encouraged in your need to what end we've come to the end to what end what did the author of this letter hope to engender in the lives of his readers put differently what was his stated aim well in two words in our closing section I think we could summarize it in the end of verse nine worship God in this wilderness world nevertheless worship God when you've run and you're now run out worship God I believe that in some sense the great biblical word blessed almost encapsulates the author's aim he wants to bless you doesn't want to weary you with 40 expositions on the final letter his intention for those who read this difficult work was to bring blessing the word occurs twice even in our own reading today blessed are those who wash their robes the word blessed appears seven times does that surprise you in revelation seven times it's used most often five of those seven times it's used in conjunction very near in proximity linguistically to the word for keep so he writes that you might be blessed by God and know that he desires for you to keep his word and his ways even though you're never quite sure that his presence is remaining with you keep it anyway until that day five of the ten times it's there take a look back at the very beginning chapter one and verse three blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it for the time is near to what end that you might be blessed and that you might be encouraged and exhorted to keep to the way in this wilderness world where without a pulling back of the veil you would wonder whether or not his presence was still with you blessed is the one who hears and who keeps what is written here for the time is near take a look at chapter 14 and verse 13 and

[22:15] I heard a voice from heaven saying write this blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on blessed indeed says the spirit that they may rest from their labors for their deeds follow them and look at the verse before it verse 12 here is a call for the endurance of the saints those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus these are the ones who are blessed chapter 16 and verse 15 behold I am coming like a thief blessed is the one who stays awake keeping his garments on so that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed to what end well when you and I begin to live our life as if Jesus is not on the throne when you begin to live your life as if his presence is no longer there if you begin to live your life as if your obedience to the gospel of our

Jesus Christ both in its content and in the context of the fabric of your own ways if you live your life as if none of that matters guess what happens it's not long before your garments are not only sullied but before your Christian garments are disposed of altogether for indeed the hour of this first audience They labored under the weight of compromise and accommodation either in regard to what the word says about Jesus or the ways that they were to live in light of Jesus and the banging of the book continues to rise upon the ear of the hearer keep it keep it keep it I know you don't see him but love him I know you wonder whether he's with you but walk on in him in the garments of his righteousness that clothed you at your conversion keep them unstained

I think of all the young people sitting here today children your peers many of whom are going to go through life undressing the righteous garb that the church gave them in their youth and it ought not to be so for you whether you're in first grade or fifth grade or senior in high school or university student do not allow the garb of Christ righteousness to be thrown aside as if he wasn't on the throne as if he didn't see as if he didn't love you and want to live with you and share his life with you

keep it keep it all the way through 22 7 and behold

I am coming soon blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book so what is the melody the Lord Jesus Christ the remedy for a beleaguered body what is the measure that we are to hear walking out of this book as a congregation that we are to keep his word and his ways what is the motivation well there are two in the final words of our text the first is he reminds us of the veracity or the truthfulness of the very words which we have been expounding verse six and he said to me these words are trustworthy and true and the

Lord the God of the spirits of the prophets has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place not only is there are these words put forward before you through all of these weeks to be held as true not only is there in a sense then an attestation of the message in the conclusion but there's actually an attestation given to us by the messenger John verse 8 I John am the one who heard and saw these things and when I heard and saw them I fell down to worship but he said to me you must not do that he heard them he saw them you believe them a motivation for keeping them is the truthfulness of the message and also and we conclude with this the nearness of his coming

[27 : 48] I want you to see this final word in the text this word come or coming 22 7 and behold I am coming soon 22 12 behold I am coming soon 22 20 surely I am coming soon and surrounding those three strong prophetic words is the spirit and the bride verse 17 saying come and the one who hears saying come before it's too late come to this ascendant Christ that we have seen indeed verse 20 amen come

Lord Jesus a motivation is the nearness of his coming now I know what you're thinking I mean after all quite a bit of time has passed how are we to take these words I want to take them two ways in closing first traditionally as Peter the apostle outlines for us in 2 Peter 3 that the coming of our Lord is not slow as some count slowness but he references a quote from Moses concerning the Lord with whom the Lord a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day that somehow his coming is soon it's just that his conception of time is so unlike our own I know it's hard to get your hands around 2,000 years but I think the word is clear on that that when we do see him we will know that it wasn't slow but I think not only can we look at this traditionally or exegetically through Peter but I think I want you to see this textually even in the letter itself turn back to chapter 2 in verse 5 well it might be better to first turn even to chapter 1 remember we saw in verses 13 and 14 a son of man and he was at that time verse 12 standing amidst the seven golden lamp stands and the interpretation came in chapter 120 as for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in the right hand and the seven golden lamp stands the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the seven lamp stands are the seven churches that even in his glorified state Jesus was already standing in the middle of his churches he was present so that when you get to chapter 2 and verse 5 you read this remember therefore from where you have fallen repent and do the works you did at first if not

I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place that the Lord Jesus Christ was said to have been capable of coming to that first century church how through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit or through the withdrawal of that spirit and word for where the spirit is the word is and where the word is the presence of the Lord is so he's able to speak of coming to that first church you see it further in verse 16 of chapter 2 therefore repent if not I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth John who has been given this revelation understands that Christ will come at the consummation but he also understands that Christ presently reigns in the midst of the church and comes to them through the power of his word and the ministry of the spirit we see the same idea in chapter 3 in verse 3 remember then what you have received and heard keep it and repent if you will not wake up

I will come like a thief and you know not at what hour I will come against you well this is to the! church of! Sardis in its early state the capacity of the Lord to come even prior to the consummation to judge and to save so let me close with this then his coming is sure but his communion with us in the present is equally sure he will one day visit us but he rules over us even now through his word in other words you beleaguered bride embattled church in lonely exile he is already present with you just as he shall come to consummate his reign over all things and share his kingdom with you the melody of revelation the

[34 : 05] Lord Jesus Christ for he is the remedy for our soul the measure that we are to walk out with may I worship God may I live a life that finds his approval his blessing and may I evidence that

by keeping his word and his ways and the motivation because these words are God's words they're true and he is coming and has the power to come even in our own midst here today for the Lord Jesus Christ rules his church and he does so through the power of his word our heavenly father

I pray for this congregation for my brothers and sisters in faith that you would encourage hearts that you would quicken minds that you would grant repentance to those who have grown slack that you would comfort those today who need a word of your abiding presence and even so we pray that you would come in Christ's name amen to