

“JESUS IS COMING.”

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Scripture Texts: Revelation 22:6-17

Introduction.

The book of Revelation is a series of visions received by the apostle John while exiled on the Island of Patmos. The book of Revelation begins with a brief forward or preface and then the actual visions start at 1:9 and go through 22:5.

What remains here is like an epilogue or afterward, a seemingly disconnected collection of promises, exhortations and confirmations that point forward to the coming of Jesus soon.

Since this is the conclusion it should be the last chapter. Some of our chapter and verse placements are unfortunate. They are not inspired.

A professor at the University of Paris in 1227, Stephen Langton, divided the Bible into chapters. Robert Stephanus (Stephens), a French printer, divided the verses in 1551.

Revelation ends the way it began. Listen to the beginning again:

Revelation 1:1-2 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him *to show to his servants the things that must soon take place*. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

And:

Revelation 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

God’s Final Words, vss. 6-10.

We have come to the last words of the book of Revelation and of the Bible. God’s last holy and inspired and infallible words. Words are important, God’s words are especially important.

Genesis began with God speaking words that brought creation into existence. The NT began with the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us. These words are about how it will all end and then how God will bring the new creation into existence and Jesus comes again.

Revelation 21:5 And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am *making all things new*.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

The angel who has been John’s tour guide during this final vision speaks to John about the nature of the revelation he has received and written down. These words are “*trustworthy (faithful) and true*.” They are inerrant and infallible, without error. They have all the characteristics of the one who spoke them and inspired them. God stands behind them.

How did this book come to us? Revelation 1:1-2 traces the path:

Revelation was given by God to Christ, by Christ to the angel, by the angel to John, and by John to us.

Was anything lost in all those translations? Nothing. What John says is exactly what God says.

II Peter 2:20-21 No prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

God rules and overrules and controls and directs what the prophets and apostles write. God Himself wielded divine authority and supernatural power over the minds and hearts and pens of those who wrote.

The prophets and apostles could speak and write whatever and whenever they wanted, but it was only revelation from God when God made it so. We know that Paul wrote other letters but they were not inspired revelation and are not included in Scripture.

It doesn’t mean the Spirit wasn’t active in the preaching, teaching and writing then or now, just that it wasn’t infallible revelation.

These words had quite an effect on John and he falls down to worship at the feet of the angel. This is the second time John has tried to do this.

Revelation 19:10 Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The previous time the angel had also just announced a beatitude/blessing and had just declared the trustworthiness and truth of God’s words.

Was John confusing the angel as the giver of the revelation, rather than a creature who merely receives the revelation? Overwhelmed John thought special reverence was due to this creature.

Is John just overwhelmed by the brilliant glory and splendor and authority of the angel? Is he seeing a reflection of the glory of God and of heaven?

Whatever the reason, the angel immediately rebukes John, saying he is a fellow servant, he is a creature, like John. Even if the archangel Gabriel or Michael showed up in heavenly glory and splendor, we must not give him worship.

Angels are closer to being like us than they are to being like God. We are said to be just a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:4-6). The angel is a messenger (22:16), Jesus is the source. The angel is more like John in this matter.

We are reminded of an important spiritual truth about worship here. There are only two kinds of worship with no middle ground or third alternative. Everyone either worships God or they worship the dragon/beast/Babylon/Satan. That's it. Worship God or commit idolatry, false worship.

There may be an implicit warning here of how easy it is to fall into idolatry. If one such as John could fall into this temptation, how much more must we be alert? worshipping the wrong things has been a focus of Revelation. Obviously countless millions have fallen into this sin. It is folly on our part if we don't know that our hearts are easy targets of Satan's deception.

The point of all of this is that the goal of history is worship. And everyone will worship something. Don't fall into the ever-present temptation to worship or bow down to or make an idol of secular business or secular education or secular entertainment or secular media or secular arts or secular sports.

Finally the angel commands John not to seal the words of this book. Daniel was told:

Daniel 12:4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end.

The angel tells John, the end of time is near and has now begun. The seal is broken. The time of fulfillment is here. Do not keep the revealed things of God secret. This gives us a sense of the nearness, the soonness. None of us knows the day of the hour.

God's Final Works, vss. 11-15.

Verse 11 strikes us a bit strange and perhaps out of place. It is a summary of human destiny.

It seems to speak of a finality, there comes a point when the evil will only do evil and the righteous will only do what is right. In the end we will only do what we are. If reading Revelation doesn't soften your heart then your heart will get harder and fix more firmly your path and destination.

There is coming a time when all things will be set or fixed and there will be no more change, no more opportunity for repentance. After judgment there is no second chance or reincarnation or do over. But the good news is there will be no more opportunity to fall away (apostasy).

Jesus' promise spoken a second time.

He says again He is coming soon. The promise is given twice (7, 12-13) and it is given by Jesus Himself. This is an echo of the very first verse of Revelation.

Revelation 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the ***things that must soon take place.***

What are we to make of all these promises and assurances that He is coming very soon? (Revelation 22:6, 7, 12, 20).

Is it true? Has Jesus missed His opportunity to make good on that promise?

Of course those who interpret Revelation as having taken place in 70 AD and there about use these verses to back up their view. That Jesus actually did come very soon after these words.

Others say it just means that when Jesus does come it will all happen very quickly whenever it starts. Others say it simply means that these things are certain.

Others say John is writing from a divine perspective, to God these things are very soon while to us on earth they are slow in coming and still a long way off. Others say that it simply means that these events could happen at any time, no one knows, so live ready.

The best understanding is found in comparing the words from Daniel's vision.

What must soon take place is a contrast to Daniel's vision and revelation when he says, "what will take place in latter days."

What to Daniel was far distant has now become sooner. Now is the time for the beginning of the end of time. John understood Daniel's latter days to be referring to John's present days. The OT prophetic word is now begun to be fulfilled. Satan has been defeated and the Kingdom of God is being ushered in. The fulfillment may be a long process but it has begun, the time is near.

From the standpoint of Revelation we are now in the process of realizing the end. Events are unfolding that are pointing to the end. Jesus warns us again and again to be watchful and ready.

Revelation 22:7 "Behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

Verse 14 is the seventh and final beatitude.

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

All our robes are dirty. God's favor rests on those who keep His commands and they are given access to eternal life, to eat of the tree of life.

This right is not because of works, not because they washed their robes or did what was right. It is because of the grace of God through the blood of Jesus. Faith in the blood of Jesus is rewarded with eternal spiritual fruit, with eating and entering. The curse is reversed and paradise is opened to the new Adam.

This gift of grace will be missed by many on the outside, who will not see let alone eat of this tree. Those who love their sin will remain in their sin.

God's Final Blessings, vss. 16-17.

The descendants of David.

Some of you may be into genealogies, you may be able to trace your roots back several generations. What if you could trace your roots back to some great president, or back to a great king, to some royalty? What if you could trace your roots all the way back to King David? How cool would that be?

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ through repentance and faith and if you are among those who long for His appearing, then you are a descendent of King David.

Psalms 18:50 Great salvation he brings to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever.

Revelation 22:16 "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 promises made to David belong to the Son of David, the Messiah who sits on the throne.

Jesus says in **Hebrews 2:13**, "Behold, I and the children God has given me."

By faith in Jesus we are children of David and beneficiaries of all the promises made to him.

Remember the promise made back in Revelation 3:

Revelation 3:21 The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Come.

This is a call to repent and come to Jesus. Come. The only condition is to be thirsty. That's all we have to offer to God for His salvation, our parched throats, thirsty for salvation, thirsty for forgiveness, thirsty for righteousness, thirsty for the courts of the Lord and for eternal life.

Isaiah 55:1 “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Some of Paul's last words sound similar:

II Timothy 4:6-8 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to *all who have loved his appearing*.

All who have longed for and desire his appearing.

Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Our study of Revelation should not just leave us more informed of how to correctly interpret this book. It should move us, quicken our spirits, stir up longings and desires for holiness and for Jesus.

Implications and Application.

Have you ever been in a car and had a really close call, just inches from a terrible accident? Or have you been in a situation, on a roof or walking on ice or something where you almost have a serious injury, a really close call? Maybe a time you almost went over the edge or almost drown?

Have you had one of those adrenaline rushes, a close brush with death or injury and then that feeling of relief or joy knowing from what you just escaped? Maybe trembling or shaking with gratitude.

When you get to the end of Revelation and you have seen the visions you have seen and you have heard the terrible judgements that fall on the wicked, the weeping and gnashing of teeth, do you tremble to think how close a call we have had? That could have been us, there but for the grace of God go I.

Have you ever been seriously burned and then shuddered to think what the fires of hell must be like? Have you considered the everlasting pain and suffering you have been spared?

How truly glad are you that as Paul says, that Jesus has delivered us from the wrath to come” (I Thessalonians 1:10)?

Scripture warns again and again that for those who don't repent, who don't turn from sin, there will be wrath and fury (Romans 2:8; Ephesians 5:6). Those who don't drink “the water of life without price” (Revelation 22:17) will drink the wine of God's wrath (Revelation 14:10-11).

But for those who drink “the water of life without price” (Revelation 22:17) there will be no tears, no sorrow, no pain, no depression, no sickness, no sin, no death (Revelation 21:4).

Can you believe the kindness of God? Can you believe your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life? Can you believe the salvation that is yours and the inheritance that is kept in heaven for you? Do you tremble? Do you fall down in worship? Do you thank God for so great a mercy?

II Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to *all who have loved his appearing*.

Come, Lord Jesus, come. Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Maranatha and Amen.