

King Jesus Is Coming Soon

Revelation 22

One of the most memorable things said over the last three weeks was by Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy. It will be taught in history classes from now on. When the US President offered to fly him out of the country, Zelenskyy replied “The fight is here. I don’t need a ride; I need ammunition.” As we close out human history here and look into the eternal dwelling of man, I would alter that line and say, “The fight is won. I need a ride; Jesus is coming to take me home.” Jesus is coming back to take me home, just as he promised in **John 14:2–3** — “In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.” **Acts 1:6–11** describes his ascension to heaven after the resurrection. The confidence for ministry that his disciples were given, whatever they faced, was that Jesus is coming again right on the Father’s schedule. The Holy Spirit vivifies and gives resurrection power for spiritual work that causes the dead to live, and Jesus’ second coming gives clarity in a murky, distracted world; it provides a bullseye, as it were, and motivation for godly living and mission. The exact day of his return is known only to the Father, so ignore silly false teachers who fix made-up dates. But we **are** told three times in Revelation 22 it will be **soon**. V. 10 adds, “the time is near.” Our [1689 confessional statement](#) tells us why: “Christ desires that we be firmly convinced that a day of judgment will come, both to deter everyone from sin, and to comfort the godly more fully in their adversity. For this reason, he has determined to keep the day secret, to encourage people to shake off any fleshly security and always to be watchful, because they do not know the hour when the Lord will come and so that they may always be prepared to say, “Come Lord Jesus; come quickly.”

There are a dozen sermons in this final chapter. There’s mission; there’s warning; there’s worship. All of these are things are presented in the context of **Christ’s soon return**, so the structure of the sermon will be this: Jesus is coming and our life is in him. Jesus is coming, and he will heal the nations. Jesus is coming, and righteousness will reign. Jesus is coming, and we will worship as we were created to do. Jesus is coming, so live pure lives. Jesus is coming, and he will repay. Jesus is coming, so invite everyone you know. Jesus is coming, so faithfully declare his truth. Jesus is coming, keep your eyes on the prize.

PRAY — Open our eyes to see, our hearts to respond, they we may receive the blessing of those who keep the words of this prophesy. Open ears to hear your invitation; stir up thirst for you and satisfy it.

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Revelation 22 — Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

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.”

⁷ “And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

⁸ 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, ⁹ but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. ¹¹ Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

¹² “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

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. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

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.”

¹⁷ The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

¹⁸ 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, ¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

The first 5 verses of this final chapter complete the description of the new Jerusalem that spills over from chapter 21. The New Jerusalem, you recall, is a symbol of the people of God, the church. There’s no physical temple there because God’s people are the temple as [1 Corinthians 3:16–17](#) tells

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us. They are the temple of God, and God is in their midst — he is present. They see his face, and it is transformative. Remember that God's face turned toward you is the fullness of blessing, acceptance, and peace. Our benediction today is the Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6, which captures this eternal blessing. Listen for it at the close of the service. All of God's people are finally at home, and God himself is their home. So, our first two points: Jesus is coming: our life is in him, and the nations will be healed by him.

Jesus is coming and our life is in him. The river of the water of life flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. (John interchangeably refers to the throne as being occupied by God the Father, and by Jesus, the Lamb. This is not a confusion on his part; in his Gospel he tells us that [Jesus and the Father are one \(John 14:8–11\)](#). He is simply embracing the trinitarian nature of God, who is one.) The is [water of life he offers in John 4](#). It is the fulfillment of [Isaiah 55](#), which we have referenced for the past 2 weeks.

Important observations: There is no other source of life, no alternate well. Jesus is our life and will always be. This reality will always be central in God's Kingdom. The water flows from the throne, symbolizes the source of life in Christ, and runs down the middle of main street, if you will, symbolizing the central, essential nature of our life in him. That we live in Christ, that we are dependent on him for life itself, is never a secondary issue. It is always the center of our eternal state. We will never outgrow our need for God's sustaining power. If we will still need it then, in a glorified state, how much more should own our utter dependence on him now. Pride is our downfall, and a thief of power in our lives. God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. We were never intended to get saved on the front end, because we were in bad shape, and then finish out on our own. We are to abide in him and communion with him. This is life in Christ. And this is freeing, life-giving good news for all who are trying to live the Christian life in your own strength. You can't. Good News: You aren't supposed to. Remain in him, depend on him in prayer and humility, and live and thrive. It is when we remain in him that we bear fruit and thrive as the tree of life is doing in v. 2. Here again, the reminder that Eden is restored. The tree of life from which Adam and Eve were barred in Genesis 3 is now unfenced and open for harvest year-round.

Jesus is coming, and he will heal the nations. The nations were scattered and divided at Babel in Genesis 11. There have wars and unrest between nations ever since. Finally, in the sufficiency of the life of Christ, the nations are healed. We've already had wonderful views of worship around the throne by those of every tribe, language, people, and nation. There we see their singular focus: the

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Lamb who was slain. Here we see their eternal source: the nourishment of Christ's life that heals all the destruction of sinful rebellion, all the murderous wars, and atrocities of evil leaders, and the injustice of oppression. It is in Christ and his righteous reign that the nations are healed. We are called to do justly and pursue justice as a reflection of God's righteous and just character. But this is always with an awareness that the perfect has not yet come. Efforts to heal injustice and brokenness apart from Christ are not only doomed to failed, they are rebellious in nature. Christ heals the nations. This is why we go proclaiming him. In our own culture we presently hear much about the need of racial reconciliation. We support this in principle because reconciled ethnicities look like heaven. But any version of reconciliation and justice that is not found in, and centered on Christ is fundamentally flawed. Our assignment is not to embrace horizontal retaliation, but live and proclaim heavenward repentance. *Panta ta ethne*, all the nations, we find healing in Christ alone, and he is coming soon with healing in his hands.

Jesus is coming, and righteousness will reign. v. 3 says “**No longer will there be anything accursed.**” Jesus is the Righteous Judge of Acts 17, 2 Timothy 4, and Revelation 19. Heaven is a place of righteousness. **2 Peter 3:13** — **But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.** Therefore, as the Righteous King comes and establishes his righteous reign, all unrighteousness is put out and destroyed. We see another list in **v. 15** of our text of those who love their sin more than the Savior: **Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.** Jesus is coming to establish forever righteousness. Let those who continue to embrace their unrighteous deeds be convinced of their lostness and their need to saved from their sin. If you continue to love and pursue ungodly things your flesh craves, you will cast into outer darkness, you will not eat of the tree of life, and you will not participate in the life of Christ. Those who experience the eternal blessing of life in Christ, in **v. 14**, are those who have overcome the world and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb who was slain. That is, their sin has been paid for and cleansed by the blood of Jesus shed on the cross, and he has clothed them in his spotless robe of righteousness. This is the invitation fulfilled at the cross of Christ, but given all the way back in **Isaiah 1:18** — Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. You have no righteousness on your own.

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Jesus is coming, and we will worship as we were created to do. In **v. 3**, **No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.** Not just a worship service, as we may think about here, but our entire existence lived in the light of God's presence serving, loving, communing, praising and cherishing him as we were created to do, and as he is worthy of. We have already seen the beauty and delight and joy of worship in chapters 4 and 5. It is centered on, and empowered by the triune God, and it is the focus of all creation. There are no pretenders, no idols, no mutinous cravings robbing God of his glory. The relationship of appreciating and adoring the beauty of God is finally reality. This will be satisfying.

But note a shocking intrusion of idolatry in **vvs. 8–9**, and let's be warned. John falls down to worship a created angel. And this is the second time he does it — the first in chapter 19. He is overwhelmed by beauty, and we gain insight into how depraved our hearts are and how easily we are disoriented from God and his Kingdom — even on our best day, which I think John is having. Sin has tainted every part of our being. We feel this to a degree. The things of God are so radically *other* from what we are as fallen creatures that we are utterly awed by their untainted splendor. Here is our sin at the core: we are prone to turn God-given appreciation and desire for beauty into idolatry. In the words of Romans 1, we have a bent to worship and serve created things rather than the Creator who is forever blessed. The things of God — things not defiled by sin — are stunningly beautiful, and we are to appreciate the beauty of God reflected in them. This gives me hope that in my resurrection body, purified from sin, I might move closer to a "10." But on this side of the resurrection it isn't sinful that we long for beauty; the sin is that we grasp too short of God, who alone is altogether lovely, altogether worthy, and supremely beautiful. We crave less than God. This is evil. To quote C S Lewis from his excellent little work, *The Weight of Glory*, "Our desires are not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

And let us be reminded John isn't some nominal Christian. This is the apostle who has already beheld God on his throne. If John would almost fall idolatry, what concern must we take for our soul? What is revealed about our hearts when we fall down before a game or a screen, or comfort or convenience, or entertainment — and another person — and sacrifice the resource of life to that idol? Things here don't even last 100 years, much less an eternity. See them as lying substitutes and heed the angel's strong command: worship God. He will not share his glory with another.

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Jesus is coming, so live pure lives. Vvs. 10–11 drum it into our hearts and minds again: The time is near — He is coming soon. “Let the righteous do right and the holy still be holy.” Rejoice in glorious hope, our Lord and judge shall come. Our Lord and Judge. **2 Peter 3:10–12** — But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. ¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! If you would work to prepare your classroom for an evaluation, work to make sure you are in compliance before OSHA shows up, [how much more should everyone who has the hope of seeing and dwelling with this righteous judge purifies himself as Christ is pure \(1 John 3:3\)](#). Much of the application and empowered Christian living sections of Paul’s epistles deal with living pure lives. We live pure lives to please him. We live pure lives to reflect him. We live pure live because he repays.

Jesus is coming, and he will repay. In v. 12 Jesus repays spiritual blessedness to the righteous, and final condemnation for those who love and continue in their sin. The judgment is based on works of righteousness according to God’s righteous standard, or works of unrighteousness according to the same standard. The emphasis here is that the actions of the life indicate the reality of the heart. It is not that works can save. But we are saved to do good works in the power of the Spirit. There will be no partiality in Jesus, the Righteous Judge. **Jeremiah 17:10** — “I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”

Jesus is coming, so invite everyone you know. Knowing the fear of God — that is, what awaits those outside of Christ and our accountability to God — we persuade others to come to Christ, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5. Here in v. 17 is the 3-fold refrain, “Come! Come! Come!” The Lord’s return is near! Don’t presume on a tomorrow that may not happen. Come now! The invitation to all is to come and be satisfied in Christ. We believe in the sovereignty of God in salvation because the bible teaches it. But the sovereignty of God does not remove the responsibility of man. He invites, he calls, he saves, and we are to respond to this. Note, too, that the ones who hear the invitation repeat the invitation: The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” Let the one who hears say, “Come.” Have you heard Christ’s invitation to come? Have you been satisfied in him? You are, then, an extender of his invitation to come. Whom do you need to invite? Don’t make it a short list. Simply publish the invitation.

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Jesus is coming, so faithfully declare his truth. The warnings in vvs. 18–19 apply immediately and specifically to the book of Revelation that John has recorded. It applies further in principle to the whole of God’s word. His word is forever fixed in the heavens as Psalm 119 says. His word is life. Those who edit God receive the same curses poured out on unbelievers earlier in the letter, thus demonstrating they are unbelievers. Be warned of this when you hear false teachers or preachers that are doing exactly what this passage says, soft peddling things they don’t like, or adding things that they wish were there. Any distortion of God’s word is an indication of spiritual blindness and pride. God takes the accurate communication of his word very seriously. A warning to those who teach: You are accountable to God for his word. You are held to a higher standard. Finally...

Jesus is coming, keep your eyes on the prize. Surely I am coming soon, he says for the 3rd time in v. 20. He is our only hope in life and death. Stay focused! The time is short! We don’t have the luxury of distraction. Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. His return is imminent. Our life is with him. The world seems loud and threatening. Don’t cave to it. The worst the world can do is send your body to grave. It’s going there anyway, faster than any of us want to imagine. Look to Jesus. Look for Jesus. Drink deeply of Jesus, and be satisfied in Jesus. He will hold you forever. Everything here is corrupt and temporary. Let both you heart and your voice cry out for the Lord’s return. He is forever.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

PRAY — You are the hoped-for Messiah. You came in humility, took the form of servant, died on a cross for our sin, and rose victorious to eternal life. You are returning as the Righteous Judge and Eternal King. Help our weak hearts and minds to embrace that will full assurance of hope in you. Thank you for letting your children hear your invitation. Lord, let more children hear it today.