

**09/25/22 “Our Response to Revelation”
Revelation 22:6-12**

Welcome...

“What shall we do?” That’s the question.

There are many times in the Bible in which individuals were cut to the heart when they heard the Word of God and asked that question, “What shall we do?” or “What must we do?”

In Luke chapter 3, many came to John the Baptist asking that question. He would answer appropriately for their office or station in life – whether the crowds, the tax collectors, or the soldiers.

People asked Peter the same question when he preached the Gospel to those who were in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. At that point, Christ had died and risen and ascended to Heaven, and the Holy Spirit had been poured out. Peter preached the Gospel boldly and clearly, and the ones listening were cut to the heart. Acts 2:37 tells us, “When they heard Peter’s message, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?”

The Philippian jailer in Acts chapter 16 asked the same question. As he brought Paul and Silas out of the Philippian jail, he fell down before them and asked, “What must I do to be saved?”

I want you to think about that question as we come to our text today. What shall I do? What must I do?

In a few weeks, we will finish the book of Revelation and then on October 16th I will try to answer your questions – there is a handout in your bulletin with room for you to write your questions and submit them in the black boxes on the wall by October 9th . Or you can email your question to info@cornerstoneca.org.

The big question for us today is: What shall we do? How shall we put into practice the things that we have learned?

Let’s read Revelation 22:6-12...

Normally in our study of Revelation I save the application points to the end of my message, but today the points of application are built into each point of our text.

What shall we do? How shall we put into practice the things that we have learned?

Main Point: This text provides the response every believer should have to the promised return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The reality of our Lord’s imminent return calls for four responses on the part of every believer:

- I. Obedience 22:6-7**
- II. Worship 22:8-9**
- III. Proclamation 22:10-11**
- IV. Service 22:12**

My prayer is that this text will provide you with an unquestionably clear answer to the question: What shall I do? What must I do?

With this final section, we have come full circle in Revelation. There are clear parallels between the verbiage in today's passage and the beginning of the book. That is completely intentional. If you keep your hand in Revelation 22 and turn back to Revelation 1 we can make some comparisons. For example, Revelation 1:1 says "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel" and Revelation 22:6: "God sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place." They are almost exactly the same.

Or look at Revelation 1:3 says, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near." Revelation 22:7, 10 says, "Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book. ...for the time is near."

Revelation 1:8, 17 says, "'I am the Alpha, and the Omega,' says the Lord God. ...the First and the Last." Revelation 22:13 says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." In Revelation 1:9, 17, John writes, "I John... When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead." Revelation 22:8 says, "I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and saw, I fell down."

We have come full circle, back to where we started. God wants to press in on our hearts now the application of the things that we have learned. The question is: how, then, shall we live? Now that we have taken in all of this truth, how should it affect our lives? This closing section sums up how we should respond. We are not merely to be astounded, amazed, overwhelmed, perplexed, and then return to life as it was before. Still less are we supposed to shrug and act as though the words of Revelation are not significant. John did not make all of this up in his mind or have some weird dreams or hallucinations.

We must take this book as a revelation of Jesus Christ, an unveiling from Almighty God of something He wants us to see and know. When it comes to application, think of these questions: What should we understand? What should we believe? Who should we be? What should we do? Understand, believe, be and do.

Revelation 22:6-12 answers those questions. It begins with:

I. Obedience

In verse 6, the angel told John that the words of this book are faithful and true, they are trustworthy. Trustworthy means if you base your life on these words, you will not be disappointed. They will not fail you, they are faithful. True means that in the end when we get to Heaven we will look back and see that all of the prophecies came true. God will let none of them fall to the ground but will do everything that He has predicted that He would do. His word is faithful and true, it is trustworthy – you can depend on it.

Last week I saw someone fall thru the church roof...It gave way when they walked on it. Don't worry, it was only Minor (Bruce Minor). Thankfully they caught themselves before they dropped all the way thru, and the church roof has been repaired.

But the Word of God will not give way when we step out on it. These words are trustworthy. In Matthew chapter 7 Jesus likened it to building a house on a rock. When the storms of life attack, it will be solid and secure. Everything built on this book of Revelation is stable and trustworthy. It is worthy of your trust and obedience.

The word *soon* at the end of Revelation 22:6 means "quickly come to pass." The church has expected Christ to return since the days of the Apostles, and He has not yet come; but when John's prophecies begin to be fulfilled in the future, they will happen very quickly. There will be no delay.

The early church had a sense of urgency about the imminent return of Christ. We see this repeatedly in the Epistles. In Philippians 3:20-21, Paul says, “Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body.” We eagerly await the Second Coming of Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:7 says, “Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.” Paul told the believers in Thessalonica that they are a model to believers everywhere. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 says, “For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.”

We serve while we wait for Christ to return.

Verse 7...

Jesus says in verse 7 He is coming quickly. The word “quickly” gives us a sense of urgency and expectancy. The Lord does not look at time the way we do. 2 Peter 3:8 says “With the Lord, one day is like a thousand years, a thousand years is like one day.”

How do we live out this sense of urgency, knowing that Jesus is coming soon? In the book of Revelation, God has given details of events that will occur before the Second Coming. None of those things has happened yet - the seven trumpet judgments, the seven bowl judgments, the Antichrist rising up to rule over the whole earth, the man of sin setting up the abomination of desolation. These are future events. Jesus is saying, “I am coming soon. You do not know the day or the hour. You need to be vigilant, watchful, and energetically, and actively serving mM.”

How then shall we live? How do we apply this in practical terms? Even if the Lord does not return for a long period of time, still there is a sense of immediacy. If today you hear His voice, do not harden your heart. Instead, put into practice what God wants you to do. And what does He want you to do?

Verse 7 tells us He wants us to obey His commandments. Verse 7...

The word “heed” in a simple way means to guard, protect, keep sacred. Believers are called to guard or protect the book of Revelation from those who would rather avoid it or try to denigrate it.

But believers are called not only to guard Scripture, but also to obey it. “Heed” is commonly translated “obey”. Jesus said, John 14:15, “If you love Me, you will obey what I command.” Jesus, our Lord, measures love by obedience. Whoever has His commands and obeys them is the one who loves Him.

However, Revelation is not filled with many commands. There are far more commands in an average epistle — Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians. But we must take the Bible as a whole. This is the last chapter of the last book. It sums up all of God’s commands that are binding on the hearts of Christians.

The purpose of Revelation is not to provide entertainment or speculation, but to provide motivation for godly living. God inspired Revelation to reveal the glory of His Son and call believers to live godly, obedient lives in light of His soon return.

Peter also taught that believers’ knowledge of end-time events should cause them to live holy lives. In a passage describing the future Day of the Lord, the destruction of the present universe, and the coming of the new heaven and the new earth, Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:11-12, “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of

God” and in verse 14, “Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless”

The glorious future realities described in Revelation compel a commitment on the part of believers to lead holy lives. Christ’s imminent return demands immediate obedience.

We are actually traveling two journeys at the same time. The internal, infinite journey of sanctification - live a holy and godly life, put sin to death by the power of the Spirit, be pure as you wait for the day when the Lord will return.

And the external journey of evangelism - we look forward to the day of God and speed its coming by preaching the Gospel, because the kingdom will not come until every tribe and language and people and nation has had this Gospel preached to it. The overarching commands are to be holy and be a witness.

What shall we do? First, our response must be obedience to the Word of God. Second:

II. Worship

Look at verses 8-9...

Isn’t it amazing how honest the Bible is about its heroes? It is a proof that this is the book of truth. We are all sinners. For the second time, John falls down to worship an angel. Look at 19:10...

And now John does the same thing in 22:8-9.

This brings us to the fundamental issue of worship - false worship versus true worship. The central problem of the human race, of us in our sin, is idolatry. Paul gives a clear definition of idolatry in Romans 1:25: “They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator.”

The essence of idolatry is to fall down and give homage and total dedication to a creature, a created thing. Satan’s basic temptation is to call us away from worship of the true God into worship an idol. He tempted Jesus with that. He showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and all the beauty of creation. Matthew 4:8-10 says, “...the devil (a creature) took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ‘All this I will give you,’ he said, ‘if You will bow down and worship me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Away from me, Satan! For it is written: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.”’

But how do we know if we are committing idolatry? Your affections are a good indicator of your idols. Follow the path of how you spend your time, money, your words, thoughts and effort and it will lead to the objects and persons that consume your life. If you are willing to sin to get what you want, or you sin when you don’t get what you want – then you are pursuing and worshipping something or someone in the place of God. Anger, anxiety or discontentment are often negative reactions when a person’s idol is threatened.

Revelation chapter 13 and following details the worst organized idolatry of the human race, which is yet to come. The Antichrist will do signs and wonders, seeming to be assassinated and then come back to life. He is backed by the hidden power of the dragon — the devil. He will demand worship from all people on planet Earth. The false prophet will set up an idol and give it life supernaturally. He will compel people under pain of death to worship the idol and to receive a mark of the beast. Those who do not receive it cannot buy or sell, and probably will be executed. Those who do receive it will spend eternity in hell. Misplaced worship leads to the wrong eternal destination. No wonder John ended his letter of 1 John with “Keep yourselves from idols.” Don’t worship someone or something in the place of God.

Conversely, there is also no book of the Bible that depicts true holy righteous worship more clearly than the book of Revelation. Revelation chapter 1 details the image of the resurrected glorified Christ, moving through seven golden lamp stands. In Revelation 4, we see the image of the throne of Almighty God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. All in Heaven are worshiping God, the Creator of all things. In Revelation 5, the Lamb appears on the throne, all in Heaven continue to celebrate God the Creator and Christ the Redeemer. They are organized in concentric circles around the throne of God, giving Him glory. There is no book of the Bible that gives you a better picture of healthy worship of the true, triune God.

The practical application for us is to worship God. Attack any idols in your heart. Is there any created thing that has a hold on you, that you are living for, that has become too important, that you are pursuing blindly, that is dominating your life? It could be the approval of others, it could be the success of your children, it could be money, power, sex, sensual pleasures, entertainment. Repent from worshipping that idol and worship God your Creator, and Christ your Redeemer.”

Our response to Revelation is obedience, worship, and third:

III. Proclamation

Verses 10-11...

God said, “Do not seal up the words” in direct contrast to the end of Daniel chapter 12, where Daniel is told twice to seal up the scroll because it concerned a distant time. Here John is told, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near.”

Sealing the words gave the sense that they could not be entrusted to the common people, who would not be able to understand them. They would read them and be confused by them. But Jesus tells John, “Do not seal them up.” That implies that these words are clear enough to be understood by all. Therefore, we would do well to proclaim the truths of that are recorded here in God’s Word.

In a sermon that Charles Spurgeon preached on January 2, 1888. He said, “The Word of God can take care of itself, and will do so if we proclaim it, and cease defending it. The Word of God is a lion. Why have you tried to cage him for his preservation; shut him up behind iron bars to secure him from his foes! See how a band of armed men have gathered together to protect the lion. What a clatter they make with their swords and spears! These mighty men are intent upon defending a lion. O fools, and slow of heart! Open that door! Let the lord of the forest come forth free. Who will dare to encounter him? What does he want with your guardian care? Proclaim the gospel in all its lion-like majesty, and it will soon clear its own way and ease itself of its adversaries.”

I was raised in the Roman Catholic Church. I was actually born the same time that Vatican II convened and the Roman Catholic church decided to convert the Catholic Mass from Latin to the vernacular, the local language that can be understood. The majority of the Roman Catholic world did not understand a word that was spoken in the Mass when it was in Latin. I learned that over the centuries, it was a consistent pattern that people who translated the Bible into the vernacular would be hunted down like criminals and executed, like William Tyndale and others who translated the Bible into English. His translations were collected and burned by the Roman Catholic authorities.

Why? In 1199, Pope Innocent III wrote to a bishop of Metz, saying, “The mysteries of the sacraments of faith should not be explained everywhere to everyone, since they cannot be understood everywhere by everyone, but only to those who can conceive of them by their faithful intellect. Because of this the Apostle Paul said to the simpler people: ‘As unto little ones in Christ I gave you milk to drink, not meat.’ For ‘strong meat is for the

perfect', as he said to others: 'we speak wisdom among the perfect;' ... Such is the profundity of divine Scripture, that not only simple and illiterate men, but even prudent and learned men do not fully suffice to investigate its wisdom. ... For it is written: 'seek not the things that are too high for thee.'" Essentially the Pope said, "This book is too hard for you to understand, do not read it. As a matter of fact, it is best not to translate it into your language because you will never understand it."

But the angel in Revelation 22 told John, "Do not seal up the words of this prophecy, publish them broadly and widely, drink them in and read them." Why? God's Word does not return void. Isaiah 55:10-11 says, "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

Everywhere the Word of God goes out, it achieves what God sent it out to do.

If that is the case, why are there so many unbelievers? Why do so many people hear the Gospel and not repent and believe? We need to understand that God is not sending out the word to do the same thing in every case. He is hardening some by the Word and saving others by that same Word.

Revelation 22:11 says...

The parallelism is interesting, that he who does wrong will continue to do wrong, and he who does right will continue to do right. It is a division of the wicked and the righteous. They will be confirmed in this by the Word of God.

Ultimately in Heaven and Hell, these words in verse 11 will finally be true for the righteous and the wicked. Those who are confirmed in their righteousness by the ministry of the Word of God will spend eternity being righteous. There will be no future fall from Heaven, but forever they will continue to be righteous and do righteously. But for the wicked, at some point, this will be spoken as a decree of judgment over them. It is a final verdict.

In the meantime, we have the hope of the Gospel. One can cross over from death to life from darkness to light. A wicked Saul of Tarsus in the morning can become a transformed apostle Paul in the evening. That radical transformation can happen to the thief on the cross in an instant. He can suddenly see who Jesus is and believe in Him and hear the promise from Jesus, "Today, you will be with Me in paradise."

Our hearts are burdened and we long for and year for the unrighteous and unbelieving to repent of their sins and cross over. Revelation 22:14 gives us hope: "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city."

That means all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All have violated God's commandments and laws. None have kept His Ten Commandments or His Two Commandments to love God and to love our neighbor. Our robes are soiled. God sent His Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who lived a sinless life and died in the place of sinners. He shed His cleansing atoning blood for sinners like you and me. By faith in Him, you can wash your robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. I would urge you while there is time to do it.

Look at Revelation 22:17, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."

That is the message that I am proclaiming to you right now: If you came in here thirsty and guilty and condemned, Jesus can forgive you and cleanse you. He can pour the living water of life down your parched throat and you

will live forever. You must only turn from your sins, repent of your selfishness and sins and turn to Christ, and He will forgive you. We get to proclaim that message every day this week, to share that with somebody at our workplace or in the neighborhood or in school or at a store or at a park. That is what we are called on to do.

So, our response to Revelation includes obedience, worship, proclamation, and fourth:

IV. Service

Verse 12...

My reward is with Me” implies that God is mindful of our sufferings and our service, and nothing will ever be done in vain if it is done for Him. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, believers will be judged according to their works; and rewards will be given to those who have been faithful.

You don’t need to wait. Get busy immediately serving His kingdom. Be faithful to serve Him, whatever your calling, whatever your spiritual gifts, whatever good works he has prepared for you to do.

Friends, the end of Revelation is not an event but a Person. The central focus of eternal life will be God and the Lamb in the midst of their peoples. God is the one who planned our redemption and accomplished it through Jesus, and the chief blessedness of the new Jerusalem will be to enjoy face-to-face communion with God as we saw in verses 3-4a, “There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face.”

More blessed than the lavish surroundings or abundant provision in the new Jerusalem will be the presence of the Lord God among His people. We will serve Him gladly for all eternity, and that service begins now when we trust Him and put to use the gifts and abilities He has given us for His glory. The knowledge that Jesus could return at any moment should not lead us to a life of idle waiting for His coming, but it should produce in us diligent, obedient, worshipful service to God and urgent proclamation of the gospel to unbelievers.

Let’s pray...