

The Time Is Near

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Heaven; Eternity; Jesus Is Coming Back; Now; Maranatha / Revelation 22:1-21

Introduction

If you wanted to give a sense of hope, expectancy, urgency of the time, how would you say it? How would you communicate the need to both wait and be ready?

This morning we will be looking at the final words of Jesus as recorded for us in Scripture as we turn to the last book and then to the final chapter of that book - the book of Revelation. Here we find the final words of Jesus to His bride, us the Church.

We live in a world consumed by brokenness, anxiety, hopelessness, and constant shifting of the cultural landscape. We haven't been left in the dark. As the dark keeps getting darker, our hope gets brighter. We have been given a glorious glimpse of where this is all heading. Not a timeline to argue over, but a lifeline to hold on to. Definitely not so we can kick back relax and just wait for it all to end.

Jesus is pulling back the curtain of eternity today that we

would look through and that we would see the backdrop of heaven and the glory of it all. Imagine what it will be like, satisfied knowing what is promised is coming. He wants to share with us His heartbeat in the three words that echo in this chapter “I am coming soon.” These words are chosen carefully to let us know to be waiting and to be ready. It is an expectancy for tomorrow because His promises never fail. It is an urgency for today because our King is alive, He is coming back soon, and we already know how the story ends!

Church the time is not just simply ahead of us — the time is NEAR! Open your Bibles with me to Revelation 22 and let's see what it truly looks like to be ready!

Revelation 22:1–2 CSB

¹ Then he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the city's main street. The tree of life was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations,

Revelation 22:3–5 CSB

³ and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the

Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Revelation 22:6–7 CSB

⁶ Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.” ⁷

“Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

Revelation 22:8–9 CSB

⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. When I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had shown them to me. ⁹ But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you, your brothers the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!”

Revelation 22:10–11 CSB

¹⁰ Then he said to me, “Don’t seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. ¹¹ Let the unrighteous go on in unrighteousness; let the filthy still be filthy; let the righteous go on in righteousness; let the holy still be holy.”

Revelation 22:12–14 CSB

¹² “Look, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me to repay each person according to his work. 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 may enter the city by the gates.

Revelation 22:15–16 CSB

¹⁵ Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. ¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to attest these things to you for the churches. I am the root and descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

Revelation 22:17–18 CSB

¹⁷ Both the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” Let anyone who hears, say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life freely. ¹⁸ I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book.

Revelation 22:19–21 CSB

¹⁹ And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, which are written about in this book. ²⁰ He who testifies about these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! ²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone. Amen.

A Glimpse of Home

Sometimes the only way to live with patient endurance is to get a glimpse of the promise. I think this is a look at the glorious eternal state. By taking this glimpse i think we can just imagine and think man that is glorious and I cant wait - I am ready for that time!

Revelation 22:1-2 CSB

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Revelation 22:3-5 CSB

³ and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever.

John is then shown a river of the water of life clear as crystal flowing forth from the throne of God and the Lamb. The wording has the sense that the river's source is from the throne of both God and the Lamb. It may be literally water but dont miss the satisfaction and refreshment pictured

here. In eternity our refreshment flows directly from the presence of God Himself.

The river flowed down the middle of the city's main street - that there is a main street indicates that there will be other streets as well. That means the New Jerusalem isn't a vague, ethereal cloud where we float around playing harps. It is a real, vibrant, orderly city with streets, communities, and perfect fellowship.

God and the Lamb are pictured as being on the throne and this is significant. Verses like 1 Corinthians 15:24 become clearer.

1 Corinthians 15:24 CSB

²⁴ Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when he abolishes all rule and all authority and power.

Christ's reign on the throne will not end but rather change its character. Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords and this will be for now and for all of eternity.

The tree of life is pictured in the scene now and it is described as being on either side of the river of life. Which brings to mind that either the river of life is a small river or the tree of life is a massive tree and the river passes through it - or also that the tree of life is like a grove of trees growing on either side of the river. All are ok to be in view but I prefer

the idea that the river is not a small flowing river since its source is from the throne of God and the Lamb and the tree would be a massive tree i believe this tree to stand out from among the other trees.

This tree produces its fruit each month, and speaking of the fruit notice it makes 12 kinds. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations. The Greek word translated healing is the word from which we get therapy from. Physical healing is not needed in fact the next sentence or breath from John is that the curse is no more. No more sickness, illness, death or disease. The healing is other than from sickness - the therapeutic property is for the nations though.

Proverbs 13:12 CSB

¹² Hope delayed makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

The throne of God and the Lamb will be in the city and His servants will worship Him - we will worship Him. Not because we have to, but because we want to and because we recognize that He is worthy to be worshiped. Not only will we worship but we will worship truer and in person unlike ever before - for we shall see His face! We will finally gaze upon Him in all His glory. His name will be on our foreheads as His mark of ownership and claiming us as His own.

In heaven we will be forever identified by our God and with our God. Never again will we question whether we are His or not.

Night will be no more and people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun. Instead God will be all the light that we will need and in His light we will never walk in darkness ever again. They will reign forever and ever. I am even more ready for that time, I am starting to get homesick for heaven, aren't you?!

Trust and Keep These Words

Revelation 22:6–7 CSB

⁶ Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.” ⁷

“Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

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⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. When I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had shown them to me. ⁹ But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you, your brothers the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!”

Revelation 22:10–11 CSB

¹⁰ Then he said to me, “Don’t seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. ¹¹ Let the unrighteous go on in unrighteousness; let the filthy still be filthy; let the righteous go on in righteousness; let the holy still be holy.”

Right here the angel looks at John and guarantees the text saying - *these words are faithful and true*. They are faithful and true because they don’t originate from man, they come from the Lord God.

The book of Revelation and all the prophecy within it is surrounded by absolute CERTAINTY and EXPEDIENCY.

This statement right here contradicts any point of view concerning Revelation that many pastors, teachers, and Bible scholars take that this book is an imponderable mystery for which no key is available today and no one can know or understand it. The book of Revelation is the word of God as revealed - not vague imaginations of what could happen but certain things that will happen that God has chosen to reveal the details of for His servants. The purpose is to SHOW what MUST soon take place - meaning it can be understood and taught with certainty.

Jesus says - Look I am coming soon — it is imminent it will be sudden. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the

prophecy of this book. A blessing for those who keep the words of this book - meaning it is not obscure but it is easily understood and necessary to be understood.

A special blessing is promised to the one who keeps the words of this book. The way we keep the word of the prophecy of this book is to trust the book and know that Jesus IS coming SOON! We keep it by living in the hope of His coming

John caught up in the moment fell down to worship and is rebuked and the angel says I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets and those who keep the words of this book. Worship God! Prophecy is a word to be kept not merely discussed, pondered, and debated. Trust obey and apply God's truth to our life and worship Him.

Again this book is neglected too often by the church and those in it - confusing the meaning and ignoring the warnings and promises. The angel tells John do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book - why because the time is near! By not sealing up this book or silencing it and instead reading it and going through it we make ourselves ready because the time is near!

Daniel is told to seal up the words of prophecy because the time is not yet, but here John is told to not seal up the words because the time is now near - nearer each day!

The time is coming when there will be no opportunity for change - the unrighteous will go on in unrighteousness and the filthy will remain filthy and the righteous will go on in righteousness and holiness. While the time is near but not yet there is opportunity to heed the words and understand the judgment and to make a change. When the time is not NEAR but instead HERE, then that time will be too late to change and where you are is where you will be.

Matthew 25:10 CSB

¹⁰ “When they had gone to buy some, the groom arrived, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was shut.

Luke 13:25 CSB

²⁵ once the homeowner gets up and shuts the door. Then you will stand outside and knock on the door, saying, ‘Lord, open up for us!’ He will answer you, ‘I don’t know you or where you’re from.’

We make ourselves ready by trusting and keeping the words - knowing the judgment is real, Christ is coming and that salvation is available and when He comes it will be too late. To not heed this prophecy is to continue in wickedness and unpreparedness.

He Rewards Accordingly

Revelation 22:12–14 CSB

¹² “Look, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me to repay each person according to his work. 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 may enter the city by the gates.

Revelation 22:15–16 CSB

¹⁵ Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. ¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to attest these things to you for the churches. I am the root and descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

Another way to ensure we are living in a state of ready expectancy, knowing the time is near, is by hearing what Jesus is saying. He repeats it again “*Look I am coming soon!*”

Matthew 24:44 CSB

⁴⁴ This is why you are also to be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Not only am I coming soon, but notice He says when I come

My reward is with Me, and each will be repaid accordingly. In fact each one is repaid according to their work.

Revelation 2:23 CSB

²³ I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am the one who examines minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you according to your works.

2 Corinthians 5:10 CSB

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

It should give us pause in the things we choose to do, think, and say when we remember that Jesus is coming soon and He will reward us accordingly. According to our works and He is looking at the motives behind our works.

Nothing will be missed in this judgment and evaluation by Jesus either. He reassures that His judgment is final and perfect. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. He is the author and finisher of faith. He is the one qualified to judge perfectly as creator and redeemer.

Jesus says blessed are those who know that He is coming and have washed their robes and thus have the right (the privilege and reward) of the tree of life and also to enter the city by the gates.

Both those are rewards for those who have come and had their sins forgiven by Jesus at the foot of the cross. They receive a reward for their work - not that the works save them but that the works testify to their being saved.

Works testify of salvation and works testify of unrighteousness - what do our works testify of us?

James 2:17-18 CSB

¹⁷ In the same way faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself. ¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith by my works.

James 2:26 CSB

²⁶ For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Now regarding the phrase wash their robes, some translations may say those who do His commandments. Here is the reason for the difference - it is not translator preference but it is one of manuscript discrepancy. I point this out because I want to assure you that you can trust and be assured that God's word is preserved and inerrant and trustworthy.

HOIPLUNONTESTASSOLAS - washed their robes

HOIPOIOUNTESTASENTOLAS - do His commandments

A copyist error caused a change in a very minor way and it did not effect the essential meaning. Bottom line we can trust our Bibles - Amen!

Those who havent done the commandments or washed their robes are kept outside. Dogs - not literal fluffy friendly pets, all those who practice evil and love lies and evil. Being kept outside does not indicate that they will be outside beating on the wall to get in - but just to distinguish that they will not enter in.

Jesus then says He Himself has sent His angel to attest these things to you (John) for the churches. These things were shown and given to John explicitly for the churches. The book of Revelation is written to the churches - it is not a secret private affair impossible to know — it is for believers and the Church throughout the ages. Jesus gives two titles root and descendant of David - the title of Messiah showing that He is both Creator of David and a descendant of David.

Isaiah 11:1 CSB

¹ Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

The second title is the morning star - perhaps the planet Venus. The morning star is the star brightest that brings

about the new day the dawn. Jesus is the one who bring about the new day and the dawn of the end of the age and the beginning of the eternal state.

We must be ready for the bright and morning star is coming soon with His reward.

The Invitation Is Open

Revelation 22:17–18 CSB

¹⁷ Both the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” Let anyone who hears, say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life freely. ¹⁸ I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book.

Revelation 22:19–21 CSB

¹⁹ And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, which are written about in this book. ²⁰ He who testifies about these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! ²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone. Amen.

Both the Spirit and the bride say Come! Let anyone who hears say Come! The Spirit and the church say come as an invitation and open invitation. Anyone who hears says

come an even further open invitation. Let the one who is thirsty come and the one who desires to take the water of life freely. The invitation is open for all and all who hear and desire and are thirsty may come and drink freely.

This is an open invitation to receive Jesus and salvation. He will not exclude anyone from coming to Him and those who come He will not turn away.

Matthew 11:28 CSB

²⁸ “Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

John 6:37 CSB

³⁷ Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never cast out.

John 12:32 CSB

³² As for me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself.”

Romans 10:13 CSB

¹³ For **everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

We remain ready by understanding that the invitation is open - both for ourselves and for any and all who would hear and listen. An invitation is not only opportunity but with it comes responsibility. Those who hear the

invitation must receive the invitation for without receiving the invitation nothing has changed. It is a must that the church also remember that anyone who desires salvation in Jesus Christ can come to Him and take and drink of the water of life freely. One of my favorite Casting Crowns songs is “If We Are the Body” a line says “Jesus paid much too high a price for us to pick and choose who should come” David Guzik gives some insight on exactly what all who desire looks like

- One might say, “I don’t understand all the Christian doctrine and theology”—come anyway, because it doesn’t say *whoever understands, let him take the water of life freely.*
- One might say, “I can’t repent the way I should. My heart is hard and I can’t even weep over my sins or feel bad over them as I should”—come anyway, because it doesn’t say *whoever feels, let him take the water of life freely.*
- One might say, “I don’t know if I can live the Christian life the way that I should”—come anyway, because it doesn’t say *whoever can, let him take the water of life freely.*
- One might say, “I don’t know if I am worthy to live the Christian life”—come anyway, because it doesn’t say *whoever is worthy, let him take the water of life*

freely.

“But mark thee, sinner, it says ‘whosoever.’ What a big word that is! Whosoever! There is no standard height here. It is of any height and any size. Little sinners, big sinners, black sinners, fair sinners, sinners double dyed, old sinners, aggravated sinners, sinners who have committed every crime in the whole catalogue, — whosoever.”

The invitation is so open and clearly marked that Jesus warns about those who would add to the words and those who would take away from the words. The words are carefully chosen and must not be messed with. The consequence is having the plagues of this book added to you or having you share of the tree of life taken away.

Jesus says and testifies He is coming soon — the church says Amen Come Lord Jesus - Maranatha

Until He comes the grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone.

Conclusion

To the very end, the Book of Revelation emphasizes readiness and watchfulness. Jesus is coming soon!

The early church wasn't wrong or misled by Jesus - God's desire to keep each generation expecting, watching and ready for His return.

Ready because the coming of Jesus will be sudden and imminent and there will not be time for men to change when He comes so they must be ready before He comes by coming to Him and drinking from the water of life now.

To miss the message of being ready for the time is near is to miss the message of the book of Revelation. We must keep expecting Jesus return. Three times it is recorded Jesus saying - I Am coming soon - He has delayed in coming but Peter tells us why

2 Peter 3:9 CSB

⁹ The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.

We ought to be ready by being busy bringing the open invitation to lost sinners to trust Christ. When the church lives in expectancy the church is alive with fervency provoked to ministry and evangelism.

True understanding of prophecy and especially Revelation should motivate obedience to God's word and sharing God's invitation.

Maranatha - Even So Come Lord Jesus!

The Time is Near - Are you ready?!