

***Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas***  
***Fredericksburg Bible Church***  
*107 East Austin*  
*Fredericksburg, Texas 78624*  
*830-997-8834    [jthomas@fbgbible.org](mailto:jthomas@fbgbible.org)*

**A0650 – December 10, 2006 – Rev 22:8-12 – The Time Is Near**

We're studying the final chapter of the Book of Revelation. The three-fold division of the book is divinely given to us in Revelation 1:19

**Rev 1:19** Therefore, write the things which you have seen, the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things.

The “things which John had seen” are recorded in Rev 1:10-18 and constitute a vision of the Glorified Son of Man who sits at the right hand of the Father on high. The “things which are” are recorded in Rev 2-3 and constitute a vision of the Glorified Son of Man who evaluated the seven churches of Asia Minor. The “things which shall take place after these things” are recorded in Rev 4-22 and constitute the Glorified Son of Man’s judgment of the world during the future Tribulation, His millennial kingdom reign, the final anti-Semitic campaign of Satan, the Great White Throne Judgment of the unbelieving dead and finally the new heaven and new earth. Central to the new heaven and new earth is the new Jerusalem. This awesome city is the final parallel to the Garden of Eden which serves as the dwelling place of God with man. It appears that three basic groups are present in the new heaven and new earth; 1) the nations (Gentiles), 2) Israel, and 3) the Church. These are the precise divisions of humanity outlined by Paul in 1 Cor 10:32

**1 Cor 10:32** Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God;

Each of these people groups must be kept distinct in order to understand the plan of God accurately. God deals with each saved people group distinctively and though there is overlap in certain areas (e.g. justification, regeneration, faith alone) there are also differences which must be at the forefront of our

theology in order to understand history and to see the harmony of the word of God.

Within the city we have the overcomers of Israel and the Church. Outside the city we have the nations. Details of this arrangement are sketchy but we have a marvelous portrait revealed here in Rev 21:9-22:5. Finally, John finishes out his letter with an epilogue in Rev 22:6-21 and this epilogue is very similar thematically to the prologue of Rev 1. Let's pick up our reading in Rev 22:6 as John finishes the Revelation.

**Revelation 22:6-7** And he said to me [that is, the angel of Rev 21:9 who showed John the vision of the new Jerusalem], "These words are faithful and true" [just as Christ is Faithful and True so are these words for the Word Incarnate and the word inspired are inseparable]; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets [for God is the one who is the ultimate source of these words, for no prophecy originated with an act of the human will but with God who], sent His angel to show to His bond-servants [this is the channel of communications which are more thoroughly explained in Rev 1:1-2 God→Christ→an Angel→John→Bond-servants] the things which must [that is, of necessity, for their course has been charted out] soon take place [that is, quickly, with great speed, once the events begin to take place they will unfold in rapid succession. There is a sense of urgency here on the part of the Revelation of John. We must be ready at-any-moment for He may appear at-any-moment and that is the concern of verse 7]. <sup>7</sup> "And behold, I am coming quickly [again, with great rapidity and at-any-moment. We know not when, therefore He goes on to say...]. Blessed is he who heeds [that is "keeps, obeys] the words [that is, the commandments] of the prophecy of this book [that is, the Book of Revelation which is noted as prophecy both here and in Rev 1:3]."

If blessing is pronounced for those who obey the words of this book certainly the book can be understood. It is not a mystery but a revelation, an unveiling of things formerly concealed from man. They have been and will remain understandable as long as one reads them literally, normally in their plain sense and while being taught by the Spirit of God. They were meant to be obeyed and therefore understood. We should obey because He is coming quickly and when He comes His reward is coming with Him to give to every

man according to his deeds. How our lives would change if we woke up and said each morning “Christ is coming today” and not “Toil is coming today”. Being watchful of Christ’s coming leads to an abiding life which increases our confidence before Him at the judgment seat of Christ (1 John 2:28). As we said last week not all will be confident, some will shrink away in shame (1 John 2:28). So, let’s continue with these thoughts today as we continue to concentrate on the theme of Christ’s imminent coming. Verse 8,

**Revelation 22:8 And I, John, am the one hearing (PAPart) and seeing (PAPart) these things. And when I heard (1SAAI) and saw (1SAAI) I fell (1SAAI) to worship (AAInf) before the feet of the angel showing (PAPart) me these things.**

**And I, John, am the one hearing and seeing these things.** That is, the prophecy of the Book of Revelation. **John**, of course, is the apostle John. He was the youngest of the apostles. He outlived all the other apostles. He was the only apostle who was not martyred. He was the human author of five NT books; the Gospel of John, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Revelation. He was the apostle who was closest to Jesus. He was infatuated with Jesus as reflected in his writing style and vocabulary which mimic Jesus’ teachings more than any other NT author.

John describes the means of divine revelation as **hearing and seeing**. That is, by way of direct communication from the angel to John as well as by **seeing** visions. What John saw may be compared to watching a movie and having someone give commentary along the way.

**And when I heard and saw I fell.** Apparently here near the end of the revelation he **fell to worship before the feet of the angel**. This is another idolatrous slip by **John**. He fell to worship an angel in Rev 19:10 as well. In both places the angel tells him in most emphatic terms **Do not do that!** and a similar reason is given. Of course, John should have known better. John was well-schooled in the OT which taught that no created thing was to be worshipped (Exod 20:3-6). He even warned the recipients of his 1<sup>st</sup> letter to “guard against idolatry” (1 John 5:21). John knew angels were creations of God and so, this just goes to show that even a prophet of God can commit the sin of idolatry. The Bible is a realistic and unbiased book. It portrays both the victories and failures of our heroes in the faith. Here we have a failure of

John recorded. If the Bible portrayed only the victories of its heroes then we could not identify with them. As it is the Bible fits our experience of both victories and failures and this should encourage us. We all fall but the key is getting back up! This portrayal of victories and failures is another evidence that the Bible is ultimately sourced in God and not man.

**Revelation 22:9 And he said (3SPAI) to me, “Do not do that (2SPAImp) (cf 20:10), I am your fellow-slave and your brothers the prophets and those keeping (PAPart) the words of this scroll: worship (2SAAImp) the God.”**

**And he said to me, “Do not do that”** and his reason was that **I am your fellow-slave**, a *sundoulos*, a fellow-servant of Christ along with **your brothers the prophets and those keeping the words of this scroll**. Again we see the importance of **keeping** or obeying **the words of this scroll**. When we obey the commandments in the Book of Revelation we are serving Christ. We are training in service now to prepare for reigning later in the Kingdom and the new heaven and earth. Rather than worshipping the angel, he says **worship the God**. Since God is one in essence and three in person all three of the persons of the Divine Trinity may be worshipped. When people fell down to worship Christ or called Him God He never rebuked them. For example, when doubting Thomas saw Jesus' nail pierced hands and felt his side he said, “My Lord and my God!” and Jesus permitted it. Jesus also claimed to be before Abraham and the great I Am (John 8:58). This was a claim to be God as evidenced by the Jews picking up stones to stone Him. Now, in the Bible you don't see believers or angels accepting worship or the title “God” (e.g. Acts 10:26; Rev 22:9). Therefore, while all men and angels worship someone or something the only One worthy of worship is God the Creator; Father, Son and Spirit.

**Revelation 22:10 And he said (3SPAI) to me, “Do not seal (2SAASubj) the words of the prophecy of this scroll, for the time is (3SPAI) near (eggus).** These words are very interesting since their opposite is found in the Book of Daniel.

**Daniel 12:4** But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time;

**Daniel 12:9** He said, “Go *your way*, Daniel, for *these* words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. (also see Daniel 8:26)

As for Daniel the words were concealed and sealed up because the time was not near. But John is told not to **seal the words of the prophecy** of Revelation because **the time is near**. The word **near** is *eggus* and means “of times imminent” “ready”. Since the death and resurrection of Christ the time has been near. The division of time from God’s perspective is the cross of Christ. After the cross we enter the end times. The reason for this is the fact that the death and resurrection of Christ is the basis for all of God’s accomplishments from that day forth. Are we living in the last days? You better believe it. Even John was in the last days. For that reason it was vital that John **not seal these words**.

The fact that the words are not sealed just goes to show that they can be understood. It is unfortunate that so many have assumed the book was sealed because of its symbolic language when God says it is not! How many will miss the blessings this book proclaims simply because they refused to take it at face value?

**Revelation 22:11 Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.”**

These are very strange commands but connecting them to the previous emphasis on the any-moment coming of Christ they point to a time when things will be fixed due to His coming. The lesson is “change while there is still time. Do not wait until He has come when it will be impossible to change”. When Christ returns both one’s eternal destiny and one’s place in that destiny will be fixed, whether believer or unbeliever. The grammar of these commands is odd, two of the four are imperatives of permission.<sup>i</sup> In other words, God will permit the one who is filthy to remain filthy and God will permit the one who is righteous to continue in righteousness while there is still time. But, the overwhelming emphasis is that time for change can run out at any moment. Do something while you still can because when Christ comes it is too late for change. As A. T. Robertson says, “The states of both the evil and the good are now fixed forever. There is no word here about a

“second chance” hereafter.”<sup>ii</sup> Thus, these commands should stimulate us to do something about it now before Christ returns. This is probably the best sense of the verse since in the next verse judgment according to one’s works is the next great event.

**Revelation 22:12 “Behold, I come (1SPMI) quickly (*taxus*), and My reward is with Me, to render (AAInf) to every man according to what he has done. NASB95**

**Behold** is used because this message is of utmost importance. It means “See” “Pay attention”. **I am coming quickly** or **I come quickly**. Again, the word **quickly** is *taxus*, the same word we studied in verse 6 and 7. It means “speedily, quickly”, certainly from the divine perspective and this looks at the any-moment return of Christ. It is an imminent event. The thing which comes with Him is then noted as **reward** or **recompense**.

The event where recompense is made is judgment. This is signified by the phrase, **My reward is with me to render to each man according to what he has done**. The word **reward** is *misthos* and could be translated “recompense” or “payment” or “wages”. It is an economic term referring to the payment given after work was completed. For example, in the parable of the vineyard workers where people were hired at various times of the day and all received the same wage (Matt 20:1-16). We should remember from this parable that rewards are not based solely on justice but also on grace. This shows that we will all receive from Christ what is due but we may also receive more than what is due. He will never slight us but He may give above and beyond. In our context the *misthos* is recompense for work done, whether good or bad. Some have limited this to believers at the judgment seat of Christ since verse 16 says the Book is for the churches. However, it seems broader at this point since the prior verse seems to refer to all humanity, the filthy and the holy and how their eternal status is fixed when Christ returns (unless, of course, this is a contrast between the experiential righteousness or filthiness of believers). Immediately following His return all will be recompensed or rewarded for what they have done in the body.

It seems to me that the epilogue is summarizing all the events in Revelation and this includes the Church, the Tribulation and the Millennial Kingdom. No matter who a person is, believer or unbeliever when Christ returns He

will **render to each man according to what he has done**. The first judgment will be for Church saints from Revelation 2-3. This judgment is called the judgment seat of Christ and will be pre-tribulational. The second judgment will be for OT and Tribulation saints. This judgment is post-tribulational, occurring during the 75-day interval. The third judgment will be for the unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne judgment. This judgment is post-millennial. So, no matter who you are, believer or unbeliever, when Christ returns He is coming to judge where He will **render to each according to what he has done**.

Each man must be paid back, so to speak, for the deeds done in the body. The payback comes in the form of degrees of punishment for unbelievers (Matt 10:15; 11:22) and degrees of reward for believers. The factor that determines whether a person will be punished or rewarded is whether he had faith alone in Christ alone while still in the body and thus moved from a state of spiritual death to a state of spiritual life. No works can merit this so great salvation. What the Scriptures teach is that faith is non-meritorious and therefore salvation can be imparted through faith (Eph 2:8-9). Faith is the instrument through which Christ saves. It is wrong to teach that faith is the basis upon which a person is saved. No one is saved on the basis of faith. If one were saved on the basis of faith and then stopped having faith then they would lose their salvation. No one's faith has ever saved them. Faith doesn't save, Christ saves. Faith is merely the means through which Christ saves. Faith is always instrumental. This is why we say eternal salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and that faith is alone, it is not connected with works. Thus, on one hand, if a person did not have faith alone in Christ alone then he will be punished. The basis for the degree of punishment is not sin but his works (i.e. what he has done). On the other hand, if a person did have faith alone in Christ alone then he *may* be rewarded. There is no guarantee of reward because reward is based on works and not faith alone. Therefore, it is possible that a person can be genuinely saved but receives no rewards because he has no good works. Paul describes some believers as suffering loss (1 Cor 3:15). So, while a genuine believer can never lose his salvation (2 Tim 2:13; John 10:27-29; Rom 8:35-39) he can lose reward (1 Cor 3:15; Rev 3:11). The key distinction to make is that eternal salvation is applied through faith but rewards are issued on the basis of works. Confusion in this arena has plagued the church which has tried in many ways to mix faith with works in such a way that eternal salvation is

not wrought by Christ alone. Doubtless it is a part of our depraved human nature to add our works as a condition of justification, either overtly (Church of Christ) or covertly (Lordship Salvation). But the addition of any of our works to Christ's works as a basis of justification completely nullifies the work of Christ. As Paul argued in Galatians 1, a gospel that requires any human work loses its ability to even be identified as the gospel. Therefore, one must keep justification by faith alone in Christ alone distinct from sanctification by works of obedience done in the Spirit.

Our passage has to do with Christ recompensing each person for his deeds done in the body. The issue is not justification but recompense. I take it that this passage refers to all men being recompensed, whether believer or unbeliever. If a person was an unbeliever then ultimately he will be resurrected at the Great White Throne and judged according to his deeds to determine the degree of everlasting punishment. If one is a church saint then he will be resurrected at the pre-tribulation Rapture and attend the judgment seat of Christ where his degree of reward will be decided on the basis of his works done in the body. If done in the flesh then they are bad and unrewardable (2 Cor 5:10). If done in the Spirit then they are good and rewardable (2 Cor 5:10). Always the basis for determining the degree of punishment or the degree of reward is one's works.

Let me briefly introduce the doctrine of the judgment today and next week I will investigate the rewards mentioned in Revelation; what the rewards are and how they are acquired. Before we get started, dispensationalist Erich Sauer offered a helpful way to understand the believer's judgments. He says there are three judgments of the believer. We are...

1. Judged as Sinners. This judgment was borne by our substitute Jesus Christ.
2. Judged as Children. These judgments are in time in the form of divine discipline and even pre-mature death.
3. Judged as Servants. This judgment is a judgment of deeds that takes place at the judgment seat of Christ.

As long as you keep these important distinctions in place I think you'll understand. Today we are focusing on the third judgment of the believer where we will be judged as servants. I want to ask and answer four questions about this judgment. First, who will be at the judgment seat of Christ?



Second, when will the judgment seat of Christ take place? Third, where will the rewards be enjoyed? and four, why does Christ reward us?

### **Who will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ?**

The answer to this question is all who are justified by faith alone in Christ alone. No unbeliever will be present and no believer will be absent. When the roll is called up yonder all justified by faith alone in Christ alone will be present and will attend this judgment.

**2 Corinthians 5:9-10** Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

**Romans 14:10** For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

All believers must make this appearance. No believer is going to automatically advance their token to boardwalk and collect \$200 if they pass go. All must appear. Now, according to Rom 14:12, when you appear at this judgment seat you're going to have to make a verbal statement about yourself, your going to have to give an account for your deeds. If this scares you then you need to do something about it now so that you will have confidence before Him then because this is going to happen (1 John 2:28). It's more certain than death and taxes!

Now, it's very popular to say that nothing "bad" is going to be brought up at the judgment seat of Christ, it's all going to be positive but that's not what 2 Cor 5:10 says. The problem is that people think that if the deeds are bad that means they are sin and certainly sin can't be brought up at the judgment seat of Christ. Well, certainly no sin will be brought up at the judgment seat of Christ because our judgment as sinners was borne by our substitute Jesus Christ. So, sin is not the issue at the judgment seat of Christ. Deeds are the issue. Our deeds were not judged by Jesus Christ on the cross and so, what you have to understand is that believers have good and bad deeds and bad deeds are distinct from sin and will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. Good deeds are those done by the Spirit and bad deeds are those done by the flesh. So, you can do what appears to be good before men but if the

motivation is not of the Spirit then of course it won't qualify as a good deed. So, both good and bad deeds done in the body will be brought up at the judgment seat of Christ and we will be recompensed.

### **When will the Judgment Seat of Christ take place?**

It will take place after He appears at the pre-Trib Rapture but before the Second Coming.

**2 Timothy 4:6-8** For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; <sup>8</sup> in the future 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.

It does not happen the moment you die. At that time the believer's spirit and soul go to be with the Lord and their body remains here on earth. We have to be resurrected before we go to the judgment seat of Christ and all church saints will be resurrected on the day of the pre-Trib Rapture and then, following that, but before the Second Coming we will all have our time at the judgment seat of Christ. Now, we don't know when He will appear. The rapture is often associated with this word "appear". It can happen at-any-moment and every generation since Paul and the apostles has thought it would be their generation. And God set it up this way so it would serve as a motivation to be ready at all times.

**1 John 2:28** Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

The point is get ready now so you will have confidence then. There will be some who are not ready and shrink away in shame when He comes because they know what's next, the judgment seat of Christ and they have to give a speech and they don't really have any viable excuses. You're there, you're naked, the things hidden in the dark crevices of your life are brought to light your motives are disclosed (1 Cor 4:5). So, get ready now, learn doctrine,

abide in Him, have a living vital relationship with God. Don't put this off till tomorrow.

### **Where will the Rewards be Enjoyed?**

Well, they will be enjoyed on earth during the Millennium and on the new earth afterward, particularly in the new Jerusalem. We should be storing up treasure in heaven and there's debate about exactly what this treasure is, whether it really is monetary value to be used in a future economy to glorify God or whether it is a metaphor for increased quality of life in the future.

Either way heaven is where you store up the treasure earth is where you will enjoy it. So, heaven is looked at as a bank where you get the greatest return on whatever you deposit there in the here and now (e.g. helping Phillip Neel's platoon by sending all those gifts, giving a cup of water, etc...). Once we die or get raptured there's no more opportunity to store up treasure in heaven and so whatever is there will be what you have to work with for all eternity. And, of course, if it is greater then you will have a greater capacity to glorify God in the Millennium and the new earth.

### **Why does Christ Reward Us?**

You know, He doesn't have to. When you become a child of God by faith alone in Christ alone He tells us what is expected of us as His children. And when we do what is expected of us He doesn't have to say, "Well done good and faithful servant." He doesn't have to give us any kind of reward. An example of this is given in Luke 17:9-10. If we do all that is commanded we have only done what we ought to have done. However, even though He doesn't have to reward us He wants to reward us. It brings Him joy in the same way that it brings an earthly father joy to reward his obedient sons. Heb 12:2 says Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before Him. He loves to lavish gifts upon His faithful servants because it brings Him great joy. These rewards can then be used by His servants to glorify Him in new and exciting ways that are not a part of our present capacity.

---

<sup>i</sup> There is a close parallel in Daniel 12:10.

<sup>ii</sup> Robertson, A.T.: *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, 1997, S. Re 22:11



---

[Back To The Top](#)

Copyright (c) Fredericksburg Bible Church 2006