

Revelation 22:7-21  
Isaiah 55  
Psalm 36

“Come Quickly, Lord Jesus”

February 9, 2020

Unbelief is expensive.

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread?

I remember that when I was a little boy,  
I really, really wanted that stuffed raccoon.

Unbelief is expensive!

I thought that *maybe* my parents would get it for me for Christmas.  
But maybe not.

If I really wanted it, I could just get it for myself!  
And for once in my little life, I actually *had the money!*

So I bought that stuffed raccoon with my own money.

But I remember thinking later –  
why did I do that?

Why did I spend my money for a stuffed raccoon  
that my parents *probably* would have bought for me!

I didn't trust my parents.  
I didn't believe that they would give me good gifts.

Isaiah points this out in the opening verses of Isaiah 55.

Isaiah calls the one who has no money –  
“Come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread –  
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Why do you not trust God?  
Please don't presume upon God!  
You don't know how long you have left!

Let the wicked forsake his way – and the unrighteous man his thoughts –  
return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on you  
return to God – he will abundantly pardon!

God has managed to provide for all of his creatures for all of history.  
He knows what he's doing!  
No. – No. – he hasn't told *you* why he has done all this!

But he has told you that he loves you – and that he *will* make all things right.

That's why we sing Psalm 36 in response.

Psalm 36 opens with the plots of the wicked –  
“he flatters himself in his own eyes that his iniquity cannot be found out”  
“he has ceased to act wisely and do good” –

But the heart of Psalm 36 focuses on the steadfast love of the LORD.

“Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens...  
how precious is your steadfast love, O God...  
the children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.  
You give them drink from the river of your delights.  
For with you is the fountain of life;  
in your light do we see light.”

We only see this world clearly when we walk by faith...

Sing Psalm 36A  
Read Revelation 22

You can see a certain pattern here at the end of the book of Revelation:

three repetitions of “I am coming soon” –  
with an emphasis on the importance of *the words of the prophecy of this book*.

We need to believe what God says –  
and we need to *do* what God says!

Why?

Because Jesus is coming soon.

### **1. Behold, I Am Coming Soon (v7)**

What does Jesus mean by “soon”?

The apostle Peter tells us that for God a day is as a thousand years,  
and a thousand years is as a day!

#### **a. Blessed Is the One Who Keeps the Words (v7b)**

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

There are seven blessings in the book of Revelation.

The last two are found in verses 7 and 14 of our text.

The first was found in chapter 1, verse 7:

Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of this prophecy,  
and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Revelation starts with a blessing on the one who reads –  
and on those who hear *and keep* what is written in this book.

That same theme is repeated here at the end of the book of Revelation.

In other words, John seems to think he is writing something for you to *do*.

Do you think of Revelation as a book about *how to live*?

Let's just take a look at the other blessings:

The second was found in chapter 14, verse 13 –

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on...  
that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them.”

What does that mean?

It means *hold fast to Jesus*.

Keep pursuing him.

After all, in the previous verse, John said:

“Here is a call for the endurance of the saints,  
those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.”

The third blessing came in 16:15 –

Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on...  
in contrast to those who go to bed and fall asleep –  
only to be surprised when Jesus shows up!  
“Oh, you're here – I wasn't ready for you...”

The fourth is in 19:9 –

Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb  
(right after the statement that “fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints”)

The fifth is in 20:6 –

Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!  
speaking of those who remained faithful unto death –  
even under persecution!

And so now we come to the sixth blessing in 22:7

Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book

The seventh will come in 22:14 –  
Blessed are those who wash their robes,  
so that they may have the right to the tree of life...

In other words, all of these blessings are focused on discipleship.  
Jesus told the apostles to make disciples,  
baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit  
and teaching them to observe all that he commanded.

Now Jesus promises a blessing to his disciples –  
to those who put into practice all that he commanded!

### **b. So Worship God (v8-9)**

<sup>8</sup> *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,*

Here at the end of the book – just like at the beginning of the book –  
John inserts himself into the story.

In chapter 1, John saw Jesus – and he fell at Jesus’ feet.  
Jesus’ response was to say, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one.”

John was *right* to fall at Jesus’ feet to worship him!  
But now, when he hears the angel who showed him these things,  
he falls at the angel’s feet!

Think for a minute.  
Why does John tell us this?  
In one sense, this is embarrassing.  
John was about to worship an angel – he was going to worship a *creature*.

John could have just left this part out!  
But John tells the story – as embarrassing as it is – for a reason.

We can be tempted to worship the *messenger*.  
An angel is a messenger.  
And the message was *so amazing* –  
the message was *so wonderful* –  
that John – for just a moment – so identified the messenger with the message  
that he fell down to worship the messenger!

The *good news* of the gospel is *that good!*

That God will be *present* with his people – that there will be *no more curse* –  
no more night – no more pain – no more sorrow –

John sees the heavenly Jerusalem – he sees the glory and beauty of the new creation –  
and he is so awestruck,  
that he falls down to worship at the feet of the angel –  
the messenger!

And the angel says in reply,

<sup>9</sup> *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.”*

The angel – the messenger – sees himself simply as a “fellow servant.”

Angels, apostles, prophets – all these are simply ‘fellow servants’  
‘with those who keep the words of this book.’

Worship God!

Jesus had accepted John’s worship back in chapter 1.  
Because Jesus is God!

But then the angel tells John:

**c. The Time Is Near (v10)**

<sup>10</sup> *And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.*

At the end of the book of Daniel,

Daniel was told to seal up the book – because the prophecy was still far distant.

But John is told that the *time is near*.

In other words, the message of the book of Revelation  
was directly relevant to the first century –  
and every other century – for that matter!

Why does the angel say that the time is *near*?

As we’ve seen throughout our study –  
the sufferings and afflictions – the tribulation that John describes –  
characterizes the whole church age.

Every generation looks around and sees Revelation coming true!

But also, every generation sees the perseverance of the saints –  
the glory of the kingdom of Christ advancing –

every generation participates with John in the tribulation and the kingdom  
and the patient endurance that are in Jesus. (1:9)

And even when it comes to the coming of the New Creation –  
the time is *near*.

In Daniel's day there were lots of things that had to happen before the end.  
The temple had to be rebuilt.  
The Messiah had to come.

In John's day – what has to happen before Jesus returns?  
Given that all the stuff in Revelation –  
tribulation and kingdom and patient endurance –  
was already going on –  
what still has to happen?

Just one thing: Jesus needs to come back!

That's why the angel says what he does in verse 11:

**d. So Don't Worry About the Other Guy (v11)**

*<sup>11</sup> Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.*"

You don't have time to worry about the other guy.  
If they are set on doing evil – let them do evil.

The word here is the "unjust" – or the "unrighteous" –  
it is very much in parallel with the language of the "righteous."

The point is that the unrighteous are commanded to continue in their unrighteousness!  
(but notice the next verse –  
"I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me,  
to repay each one for what he has done.")  
Don't worry – they won't get away with it!

But let the filthy still be filthy.  
You can't clean them up!  
You can't fix them!

If they are set on destroying themselves – then let them destroy themselves!

But let the righteous still do right – and the holy still be holy.

The time is short.  
Life is short.  
By all means, call people to repentance –

but don't get caught up trying to fix people!  
That is *God's job*.  
Your job is to do what is right.  
Your job is to be *holy* –  
and remember that *holiness* is not just about being “separate” –  
God's holiness is not only that which makes him separate from us –  
it is also what impels him to draw near to us  
in order that *we* might share in his holiness!

After all, notice what Jesus says in verses 12-13.

## **2. Behold, I Am Coming Soon (v12-13)**

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

The holiness of Jesus results *both* in blessing for those who do what is right –  
and judgment for those who persist in unrighteousness.  
That's why Jesus identifies himself as the Alpha and the Omega –  
the first and the last – the beginning and the end.

God's plan from the beginning was to send his only begotten Son in our flesh –  
God's purpose before the foundation of the world  
was to bring a people to himself – through the sacrifice of his beloved Son!  
And so now the beloved Son declares that he is coming soon!

Because he is the Alpha and the Omega –  
alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet;  
omega is the last letter.

To be the Alpha and the Omega is to be the first and the last – the beginning and the end.  
He was with the Father in the beginning.  
He remains one with the Father in the end.

And when he comes he brings his reward with him.  
Jesus will repay each one for what he has done.

I know that some people try to wiggle out of this.  
They say that all that matters is faith.  
As long as you believe in Jesus, that's all that matters!

But Jesus says, if you love me, you will keep my commandments.  
Paul says that what matters is *faith working by love*.  
James says that faith without works is dead.

And a dead faith – a faith that refuses to obey God – *isn't really faith!*

Think about how John says it in verse 14:

**a. Blessed Are Those Who Wash Their Robes (v14)**

*<sup>14</sup> Blessed are those who wash their robes,<sup>[c]</sup> so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.*

How do you get in?

It's not by being good enough –  
it's not by trying harder!

It's by washing your robes – in the blood of the Lamb!

This is the point made in chapter 7, verse 14,

when John saw the great multitude clothed in white robes –  
“these are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!”

Now John declares a blessing – the seventh and final blessing in the book!

“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.”

How do you get into the city?

Only one way.

Wash your robes in the blood of the Lamb!

You have to come to Jesus!

There is a sense in which this is a once for all thing.

There is only *one washing* –

we confess one faith, one Lord, one baptism!

Washing your robes in the blood of the Lamb

is all about being united to Christ in his death and resurrection!

But that once for all washing is a washing that has permanent effects!

The one who is washed in the blood of the Lamb

will continue in righteousness and holiness –

until the day when Christ returns.

We're not talking perfection here.

We're talking about holding on to Jesus –

persevering in faith, hope, and love

until Jesus comes back!

Those who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb have a right to the tree of life –  
and will enter the city.



It all goes together.

When you come to faith in Christ you get the whole Christ.

You don't just get a part of Jesus here and a part of Jesus there.

And in contrast:

**b. Outside Are the Dogs (v15)**

*<sup>15</sup> Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.*

We saw last time that the holy city *is* the new creation.

The new heavens and the new earth is the same thing as the heavenly Jerusalem.

Outside are the dogs.

Outside are the sorcerers – the drug-dealers.

and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters.

They are particularly described as “everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”

Remember that John opened his book with the seven letters to the seven churches –

In those seven letters, Jesus spoke sharply against those who encouraged sexual immorality and eating food sacrificed to idols.

So when John says that these people are “outside” –

he is particularly speaking of those who claim to be Christians –  
and yet their actions betray their confession.

They love and practice duplicity –

they confess Christ – and yet their words and their lives betray him.

If you would enter the city by the gates,

there is only one way: you must wash your robes in the blood of the Lamb.

You must follow Jesus.

You cannot be duplicitous.

In other words, you cannot have any form of “Jesus plus.”

You cannot say, “I believe in Jesus – but only if Jesus gives me what I want...”

Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega – the beginning and the end.

And Jesus adds, in verse 16:

**c. This Is the Word of Jesus (v16)**

*<sup>16</sup> “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.”*

And because of who Jesus is:

**d. The Spirit and the Bride Say, Come (v17)**

*<sup>17</sup> 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.*

The river of life flows from the heart of Jesus.

Living water is flowing from the heart of Jesus to his people!

That river began to flow at the cross –

and it flows deeper and wider every day!

If you are thirsty – if you long for living water – then *come*, drink of the water of life!

Jesus calls you.

The Spirit calls you!

The Bride – the heavenly Jerusalem – calls you!

Come!

Come to Jesus!

Come to the only one who can give you rest!

You’ve been trying to figure it out – to make it work –

you’ve been trying to find the answers by yourself –

and it will never work!

Not until you *come to Jesus*.

Where is your hope?

What do you run to?

Where are you going?

Come to Jesus.

Trust *him*.

That’s not to be confused with “trust the church!”

No, trust Jesus.

Run to him.

Come to him.

The Spirit and the Bride say “Come.”

John then provides a serious warning:

**e. So Don’t Detract from the Message of This Book (v18-19)**

*<sup>18</sup> 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, <sup>19</sup> 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.*

If you try to add to what Jesus says in this book –

if you try to add things, beyond what Jesus says! –  
then God will add to you the plagues in this book!

Any time you try to add stuff to Jesus you always end up losing Jesus!  
“I want to follow Jesus – but only if Jesus gives me what I want”

well, then, you don’t really want Jesus.

And if anyone takes away from the words of this book –  
if anyone tries to soften the message and “tone it down” –  
then God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city...

In other words, he’ll wind up with the dogs and drug-dealers outside the city.

Because he loves and practices falsehood.

### **3. Surely I Am Coming Soon (v20-21)**

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

<sup>21</sup> *The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.*<sup>[d]</sup> *Amen.*

Jesus is coming.

And he is coming soon.