

April 14, 2024 by Steve Brandon



# I Am Coming Soon!

## Revelation 22:6-21

- 1. Keep the Words (verses 6-13).**
- 2. Wash Your Robes (verses 14-16).**
- 3. Come to Jesus (verses 17-21).**

I invite you to open in your Bibles to the very end. That is, the very last chapter of the book of Revelation. We began looking at this book almost exactly a year ago. To be precise, I began preaching through Revelation on April 16, 2023. that's 364 days ago (because there was a leap year in 2024). This is my 37th (and last) message in the book of Revelation. We have looked at this marvelous book verse by verse and chapter by chapter, seeking to understand it's message to us.

Now, for the past few weeks, as we have been looking at the last two chapters, we have been looking at the new heaven and the new earth, and particularly, the new Jerusalem. It has been great to spend some time thinking about what life will be like in eternity. where God will dwells with us as our God (Revelation 21:3), where God will wipe away every tear, and death will be no more, neither will there be mourning nor crying nor pain (Revelation 21:4). The New Jerusalem is described as a giant, holy city, which has "the glory of God" (Revelation 21:11). Its streets are of gold (Revelation 21:21), with giant pearls as its gates (Revelation 21:21). There is no need for sun or moon in the new Jerusalem, "For the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb" (Revelation 21:23).

At the heart of the city is the "river of the water of life," and the tree of life, from whose life-giving fruit we can enjoy throughout eternity! (Revelation 22:1-3). We will see God "face to face"! (Revelation 22:4). We ended last week looking at Revelation 22:5, "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."

If you didn't know that the book continued, verse 5 might be a good place for the book of Revelation to end, in glory, looking at what's so great about the new Jerusalem, almost as if to say that God's people lived happily ever after! Verse 5 would have made a great place to end the book, with paradise restored! What a great ending to the book of Revelation that would be. But the book of Revelation doesn't end there. There are sixteen more verses to go.

The fact that Revelation doesn't end with the new Jerusalem is a reminder that the book of Revelation isn't so much about heaven in the future as it is about us living on earth today. Yes, the glories of heaven in the future is our hope. You should look for that hope. But Revelation was written to people on the earth, that they might persevere in the faith.

If you remember, the book of Revelation was written by the apostle John, who was on the island in political exile. It wasn't his idea to write the book. Rather, it was Jesus who appeared to him saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea" (Revelation 1:11). What John saw, he wrote to the churches in Asia minor, modern day Turkey.

If you remember, these churches were facing persecution. The message of Revelation was designed to give comfort to those believers in Christ, who weren't seeing the kingdom of Christ with power upon the earth. Rather they were facing the ire of the Roman Empire. The message of Revelation comes with a word of blessing. "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near" (Revelation 1:3).

Are you going through hard times? You are blessed if you hear and heed the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation was written to comfort persecuted believers in Christ. The comfort is in the coming kingdom of Jesus. "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him. and when Jesus comes, he will establish his kingdom! (Revelation 1:7). That's what the book of Revelation is all about! Jesus establishing the reign of his kingdom!

Thus, the book of Revelation is a call for us to live righteously and walk in holiness until the day that Jesus comes. Revelation calls us to follow Jesus and trust him with all of our lives.

This is what I call, "The Ethics of Eschatology." Eschatology is the study of last things. Ethics is the way that we ought to live. So, "The Ethics of Eschatology" is how we should live in light of the last things. For the next few weeks, I plan on preaching a series of sermons called, "The Ethics of Eschatology." During this series, I will survey the Biblical writers, who speak of the end times. We will find that they always (?) include an exhortation to holiness and righteousness and loving and following Jesus. I think this exhortation is always present in the text.

I heard a podcast this week which talked about some of the recent events of the world which are parallel to the lead up to World War 2. The man on the podcast knew his history very well and drew parallels with the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the conflict of Israel and Gaza since the attacks on October 7, 2023, and the timing of our American elections. This led to some assertions of the possible implications of the end times. It was very interesting. It was compelling. I see the parallels. Perhaps it is an indication of the nearness of Jesus. This was all before, even the Iranian attack on Israel, which came yesterday.

But what interested me most of all about this podcast is that I heard nothing regarding how we should live. I fear that so much of eschatology

today in America comes from fear or from a mere curiosity of mind, without any attention paid to how we ought to live. Our focus as a nation is upon "when," and not thinking about how we should live as a result. Since this is the danger of eschatology in our day and age, I want to spend a few weeks preaching about how our eschatology has an impact upon our ethics. But that's next week. This week, we are finishing up the book of Revelation.

The book of Revelation is written to those of us on the earth, to exhort us to follow Jesus, who will establish his kingdom. But Jesus can't establish his kingdom without first abolishing his enemies. That's why Revelation comes with so many judgments: the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls. They all come upon those who have refused to trust in Jesus and to bow their knee to him. But once his enemies are destroyed, then his people will be gathered to live in the new Jerusalem for eternity.

After describing the new heaven and the new earth in Revelation 21 and 22, this last section of Revelation tells us how to live today in light of his future coming. So, let's read our text

Revelation 22:6-21

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."

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

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, 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."

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

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

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

"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."

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.

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, 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.

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

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

The dominant theme of these verses is the phrase of Jesus, "I am coming soon." Jesus says this three times: in verse 7, "And behold, I am coming soon," in verse 12, "Behold, I am coming soon," and in verse 20, "He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.'" From these repetitions, I get the title of my message, "I Am Coming Soon!"

Now, when Jesus says, "I am coming soon," it means that he has not yet come. And while we are waiting, Jesus tells us how to live. The first thing that he says is this:

## **1. Keep the Words (verses 6-13).**

I trust that you can see it there in verse 7,

Revelation 22:7

"And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." That is, obey what is written in the book!

The reason why we keep the words is because these words are "trustworthy and true."

Revelation 22:6

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."

The book of Revelation may well be filled with many difficult things, but the words are to be embraced as "trustworthy and true."

Now, the call here to "keep the words" comes as no surprise to us! This is how the book of Revelation begins! I already read for you Revelation 1:3, but I read it again. "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who

keep what is written in it, for the time is near." Jesus is returning soon! We need to keep what he says! This is the message of the book of Revelation from beginning to end! It's how the book begins. It's how the book ends.

There's only one problem with this. If you look for commands for us to keep in the book of Revelation, you will find them to be few and far between. Apart from Revelation 2 and 3, where Jesus is instructing the churches, and gives them clear commands of how to live, there are very few commands in the book of Revelation until this last section.<sup>[1]</sup>

If you look closely at verse 7, you will see that the command to "keep the words," is not even a command at all. "And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." (verse 7). We are simply told that blessings come to the one who "keeps the words." The command that I'm bringing this morning is simply an implication! If blessing comes to the one who "keeps the words," then let's "keep the words!"

So, the question naturally comes, "What are the words to keep?" The answer comes, not with specifics, but with the flavor of the entire book of Revelation.

The book of Revelation talks about the coming reign of Jesus, which will only come about if the judgments come first! If we are to be with Jesus, in his reign, we should be following his ways! We should be trusting him! We should be like those in Revelation 14:4, who are described as those who "follow the Lamb wherever he goes." We should heed the "call for the endurance and faith of the saints" (Revelation 13:10). We should turn from the trappings of the worldliness of Babylon (Revelation 17-18), which will be destroyed. We should now follow in the ways of the beast! We should worship God! That's what we see in verses 8 and 9.

#### Revelation 22:8-9

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, 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."

John is so overwhelmed at seeing this vision, that he falls down to worship the angel who showed him all of these things. and the angel rebukes him! "You must not do that!" Then he calls himself a fellow servant of John's, along with the prophets, along with "those who keep the words of this book." There's my point again! "Keep the words" (verse 10). A specific word here is to "Worship God" (verse 10).

This wasn't the first time that John bowed in awe at the feet of an angel. In Revelation 9-10, we read of the following discussion.

#### Revelation 19:9-10

And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God."

In both instances when John bows to worship the angel, he says the same thing, "Worship God" (Revelation 19:10; 22:9). The point is clear: Do you want to "keep the words of the prophesy of this book"? Then worship God!

We have seen the worship of God modeled throughout the book of Revelation. Last week, I talked about the heavenly worship in Revelation 4 and 5, where we read of the four living creatures and the elders and all of creation worshipping the Lamb upon his throne. And if you survey the book of Revelation, you find other places where God is worshiped. Like chapter 7, when the great multitude comes out of the great tribulation. They cry out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:10).

We see the worship of God in chapter 11, when the seventh angel blew his trumpet:

#### Revelation 11:15-18

There were loud voices in heaven saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying,

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,  
who is and who was,  
for you have taken your great power  
and begun to reign.  
The nations raged,  
but your wrath came,  
and the time for the dead to be judged,  
and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints,  
and those who fear your name,  
both small and great,  
and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."

We see the worship of God in Revelation 15, when those who conquer the beast sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

#### Revelation 15:3-4

"Great and amazing are your deeds,  
O Lord God the Almighty!  
Just and true are your ways,  
O King of the nations!  
Who will not fear, O Lord,  
and glorify your name?  
For you alone are holy.  
All nations will come  
and worship you,  
for your righteous acts have been revealed."

We see worship in Revelation 19, with the four-fold Hallelujah when Babylon is destroyed!

Revelation 19:1-8

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out,

"Hallelujah!  
Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,  
for his judgments are true and just;  
for he has judged the great prostitute  
who corrupted the earth with her immorality,  
and has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

Once more they cried out,

"Hallelujah!  
The smoke from her goes up forever and ever."

And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" And from the throne came a voice saying,

"Praise our God,  
all you his servants,  
you who fear him,  
small and great."

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

"Hallelujah!  
For the Lord our God  
the Almighty reigns.  
Let us rejoice and exult  
and give him the glory,  
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,  
and his Bride has made herself ready;  
it was granted her to clothe herself  
with fine linen, bright and pure"—

One of the ways that you "keep the words" is to "worship God." Perhaps this is even the primary way to "keep the words."

Now, I'm not talking singing! I'm not talking about coming to church. I'm talking about giving honor to the Lord with all of your life. Perhaps this is why the angel comes in Revelation 14 with the eternal gospel. Hear it fresh!

Revelation 14:6-7

Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. Revelation And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

Do you want to "keep the words of the prophesy of this book"? Then be a worshiper of God! Follow the Lamb, not the beast, not the ways of Babylon!

Those who follow in the ways of Babylon will be doomed. Look at verse 10.

Revelation 22:10-11

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

What a strange command! We understand the second part, "let the righteous still do right." But what about the first part, "let the evildoer still be evil"? I believe that the idea here is that the judgment of God is secure! if you want to continue in your evil ways, fine, the judgment is

coming. That's the message of verse 12.

Revelation 22:12

"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done."

The judgement of God is coming! That's been the message of the entire book of Revelation. The seals and the trumpets and the bowls all point to this! Revelation 20 told us about the Great White Throne judgment. The judgment is coming! Jesus is coming to judge! That's why you want to be on his side! worshipping him! not facing his wrath! And as if to remind us all that he has the authority needed to judge, We read in verse 13,

Revelation 22:13

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

Jesus holds all of creation in his hand! So, let us "keep the words." Here's my second point:

## 2. Wash Your Robes (verses 14-16).

You can see this right there in verse 14.

Revelation 22:14

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.

Verse 14 brings up some imagery from the book of Revelation. Washing your robes signifies the cleansing that comes through faith in Christ. We first see these cleansed robes in Revelation 7, with the great multitude "that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages." They were "standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands" (Revelation 7:9). This multitude was crying out, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:10).

Following this, there is a discussion about exactly who these people are.

Revelation 7:13-14

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?"

I said to him, "Sir, you know."

And he said to me, "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."

There it is. The saints who have been rescued out of the great tribulation, are "clothed in white robes." These robes have been "washed and made . . . white in the blood of the Lamb."

Of course, this is all imagery, because you don't wash things with blood. You try that, and you have a filthy garment, deep red stains, that are very difficult to get out. Like much of Revelation, this is a picture. It's a picture of the blood of Jesus cleansing our souls from sin. Our cleansing comes from our confession of sin and trust in Jesus. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

So, my second point here, to "wash your robes," is really a call for you to believe in Jesus! Because those who have faith in Jesus, stand pure and holy before the Lord, "not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). So, wash your robes!

But that's not the only imagery used in verse 14. There is also the imagery of the tree of life.

Revelation 22:14

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.

We saw the tree of life last week. Remember, it's the tree "on either side of the river." It's the tree that brings forth "twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month." It's the tree whose leaves are for the "healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2). It's the tree that gives life. It's the tree that sustains life.

Believe me, you will want to have access to this tree! The way that you gain access is through "washing your robes." That's what verse 14 says. Note the "so that" of verse 14.

Revelation 22:14

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.

For the past few days I was ministering in the jail. I was ministering alongside a man who goes to the Red Brick Church in Stillman Valley. I told him how I was preaching on Revelation 22 last week, which speaks of the tree of life. I said, "Do you know about that tree?" He said, "Oh, yeah!" I said, "Do you know where Red Brick church is meeting?" He said, "Of course, fifth tree on the right hand side of the river as you

face the throne.” He said this almost like I was foolish to ask the question, because everybody at Red Brick Church knows that they are meeting at the fifth tree on the right hand side of the river as you face the throne.”

I said last week that this would be a good place for us to meet as well. We have ministered alongside of Red Brick on the earth. Let us fellowship alongside Red Brick in eternity. So, you facing the throne, count back five trees. We will meet there. But you will only meet you there if your robe is washed in the blood of Christ through faith in him! So, believe in him! Trust in him! If your robes are cleaned, you will not only have access to the tree of life, but you will also have access to the new Jerusalem.

#### Revelation 22:14

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.**

The city is where you want to be. The city is where God dwells! In the heart of the city is where the throne of God and of the Lamb will be (Revelation 22:3). Those in the city will be fellow worshipers of God (Revelation 22:3). But not so outside.

#### Revelation 22:15

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

Again, like so much of Revelation, this is difficult if you press the metaphor. It appears as if in eternity, we will be able to come and go as we like, in and out of the city. It appears as if on the outside of the city there will be wicked people, who may be close to the gates of Jerusalem, who may want to enter, who may try to enter, but will be denied by the angelic guards who stand watch at the gates (Revelation 21:12). But in Revelation 20, we read of how the wicked, those who have not trusted in Christ, are thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). They aren't hanging around the gate. We won't be mixing and mingling with them.

The solution to this dilemma is to embrace the apocalyptic. The new Jerusalem is like a city with gates, with people coming and going. But the only ones who will be able to enter are those who have washed their robes, who have trusted in Christ. Those who have held onto their sin, will be outside the city. In fact, they will be in the lake of fire, which is outside the city.

Note carefully what this means, however, it means that the sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters and liars, will not experience the joys of the new Jerusalem.

In my ministry in the jail this week, I mixed with all these sorts of people. During the weekend, we had a time of confession, where short prayers were offered up. They all began with this phrase, “Father, forgive me for ” And with this verse on my mind, I took special note of what I heard.

“Father, forgive me for my involvement in witchcraft.”

“Father, forgive me for my lust.”

“Father, forgive me for the blood I shed.”

“Father, forgive me for pursuit of riches.”

“Father, forgive me for my lies.”

No kidding every single one of these prayers were offered up! They all match exactly what verse 15 says. The only prayer that I didn't hear was this one, “Father, forgive me for I am a dog.”<sup>[2]</sup>

In the jail, the sins of verse 15 are alive and well in the lives of the men who are imprisoned. Some have been imprisoned for their lust. Some have been imprisoned for the blood they shed. Some have been imprisoned for their lies in the pursuit of riches. Such people will be outside the new Jerusalem.

But there is hope, there is forgiveness in the blood of Jesus. There is hope of transformation, that when faith in Christ is exercised, a change in behavior follows. so that those who have “washed their robes” are the same ones who “keep the words.” This was Paul's message to those in Corinth.

#### 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Surely, that is the case here with eternity. There will be plenty of former sorcerers and former adulterers and former murderers and former idolaters and former liars in the new Jerusalem.

Verse 16 contains a word of affirmation regarding the truthfulness of the words in Revelation 22.

#### Revelation 22:16

“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.”

Verse 16 is like verse 6, “These words are trustworthy and true.” They are “trustworthy and true” because they come from Jesus, who came from the line of David, from where the promised king would come. He was the “bright morning star” that was prophesied to come out of the tribe of Judah (Numbers 24:17), who will be given to believers (Revelation 2:28), who will arise in our hearts (2 Peter 1:19). Verse 16 gives

the credentials of Jesus.

Verse 16 is like verse 13, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." The words of Jesus are true. You can take them to the bank! So, "keep the words" and "wash your robes." Finally,

### 3. Come to Jesus (verses 17-21).

#### Revelation 22:17

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.

This is the final invitation to the book of Revelation. It's an invitation to "come to Jesus." He's the only one who can cleanse you from your sin. He's the only one who has the power to forgive you. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). He's the only one worthy of your worship!

Now, I love who issues forth this invitation. "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.'" First of all we see the Spirit offering this invitation. The Spirit is the Holy Spirit, the one who is sent to convict the world of sin and righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). The Spirit is the one who comes into hearts and exposes sin and changes people. The very one who can transform is the very one who is inviting. This is the same Spirit who came on the day of Pentecost to convict 3,000 of their sin and bring them to salvation. It only makes sense for the Holy Spirit to offer this invitation. But the Holy Spirit isn't the only one making this invitation.

It's also the "Bride" who says come. Revelation 19 tells us that the Bride of Christ is the church of Christ. The "Bride" is us! It's all who believe in Jesus! And so, the invitation here isn't simply the Spirit who says, "Come," but it's all of those who have come and who want others to come and join! "Come and enjoy what I have found in Jesus!" they say. This is how you should share your faith! It's not pointing people where to go, it's inviting them to join you in your joy.

But there is a third party of people offering the invitation, it's those who hear! It's all of you, who have heard the book of Revelation, and have found blessing in the book. "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near" (Revelation 1:3). If you really hear the book of Revelation, you will be blessed! And you will keep the words of what's written in it. And you will invite others to come and join in your joy.

Come to what? Come to the water!

#### Revelation 22:17

And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

Again, we saw this last week with the river of the water of life (Revelation 22:1). It's the living water that is life-giving (John 4). It's far better than the most refreshing drink you have ever had on a hot summer day! It truly is life-giving!

And note here, that it is completely free! You don't have to pay for this water! Salvation doesn't come through your efforts! It's a gift to all who come! Like so much of Revelation, this echoes the Old Testament. In this case, Isaiah 55.

#### Isaiah 55:1-7

"Come, everyone who thirsts,  
come to the waters;  
and he 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?  
Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good,  
and delight yourselves in rich food.  
Incline your ear, and come to me;  
hear, that your soul may live;  
and I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
my steadfast, sure love for David.  
Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples,  
a leader and commander for the peoples.  
Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know,  
and a nation that did not know you shall run to you,  
because of the Lord your God, and of the Holy One of Israel,  
for he has glorified you.

Seek the Lord while he may be found;  
call upon him while he is near;  
let the wicked forsake his way,  
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

This is the invitation: if you come, God will have compassion on you! God will abundantly pardon you! It's "without price" (verse 17). Salvation is all of God's grace.

It's God's grace then, that works in our lives to bring about obedience. So don't think of the points of my sermon as sequential, as if you need to first, "Keep the Words," then "Wash Your Robes," and then, "Come to Jesus." Actually, in time it's the reverse. You need to "Come to Jesus" first. Then you need to bring your robes to the cleaners and ask him to "Wash Your Robes." Then, God will stir your heart and empower you to "Keep the Words."

In other words, my points are given chronologically in this order:

1. Come to Jesus (verses 17-21).
2. Wash Your Robes (verses 14-16).
3. Keep the Words (verses 6-13).

John finishes with another affirmation of the trustworthiness of the words of Revelation:

Revelation 22:18-19

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, 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.

These verses are similar to verse 6, "These words are trustworthy and true." They are also similar to verse 16, "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches." The words of Revelation are so trustworthy that God doesn't need you to add anything to them, nor does he want for you to take away from them.

If you do, the consequences are dire. If you add to the words, God will add to you the plagues in the book. If you take away, God will take away your share from the tree of life and the Jerusalem, both of which are described in verses 1-5 (which we looked at last week).

There are many who add to these words with speculations of meanings, and meanings for the future. Things which never come to pass. In my preparation this week, I heard a preacher (who had just finished his last sermon on Revelation), bemoan how many other pastors have neglected the book of Revelation. "There are many reasons for this. It's too difficult. It's too controversial. It deals with things unrelated to us." Many more could be added.

For whatever reason pastors don't preach from Revelation, many have still ignored this book of the Bible. Perhaps they didn't "take away" from the book in a formal sense, but, in some regards, by their actions, they neglected the book. Many perhaps take away from this book by neglecting it in their own reading. I'm sad for those who have felt this way. They have missed a great blessing in their lives (Revelation 1:3).

I'm glad the we at Rock Valley Bible Church have received the blessing. I have been blessed by leaning into the book. I'm going to miss it. I have enjoyed preaching through the apocalyptic literature, letting the pictures speak for themselves. I'm sure that I have erred in some matters in preaching through the book, but I have tried to steer us straight, right down the line of Revelation, not saying more than it says and not saying less.

My hope and prayer for us all, is that we would embrace the message of Revelation in our lives. not shrinking back from the words, nor obsessing over them to add more than is there in the book.

So, we come to the end of the book, with the affirmation of Jesus.

Revelation 22:20

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."

Now, there are difficulties with this as well. He said this two thousand years ago. Yet he still hasn't come. This has cause some to reject Christianity. They argue, "Jesus said that he was coming 'soon.'" But here it is, 2,000 years later and he still hasn't come. Obviously, Jesus and Paul was mistaken. Christianity cannot be true."

To all of this, I say, "'soon' means something to Jesus that it doesn't mean to us. I have seen enough to trust him. He will come in his time." Peter says that "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8). So, with the Lord, it has been two days since Jesus has been away. He's also patient. I've seen enough of Jesus to know that his words are true.

And now, the application of the book!

Revelation 20:20

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

May our exposition of Revelation burn in you a longing for the return of Christ.

"Come, Lord Jesus!"

Revelation 20:21

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



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[1] Here are a few of the commands in Revelation (after chapter 3):

- Revelation 13:9, "If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

    If anyone is to be taken captive,

        to captivity he goes;

    if anyone is to be slain with the sword,

        with the sword must he be slain.

    Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

- Revelation 14:7, "And he said with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.'"

[2] In the days of the New Testament, "dogs" were used to describe detestable sinners. Paul wrote this in Philippians 3:2, "Look out for the dogs, look out for the evil doers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh." That's the idea here, not literal dogs.