

Jesus Is Coming

Scripture: Revelation 22:6-12

Code: 1215

1972

I want you to look with me at Revelation 22 verses 6 to 12 and I'll read them and then we'll study them. "And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophet sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly, blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book. And I, John, saw these things and heard them. And when I had heard and seen I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not for I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren, the prophets, and of them who keep the words of this book, worship God. And he saith unto me, Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still. He that is filthy, let him be filthy still. He that is righteous, let him be righteous still. He that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly and my reward is with Me to give every man according as his work shall be."

Now in this particular portion we have some tremendous stress laid on the suddenness of the coming of Jesus. Now the Bible has much to say about the fact that Jesus will come quickly, that He will come suddenly, that He will come in a moment, in an hour that you think not, that it will happen in the twinkling of an eye, that it will be sudden, that it will be swift and that it will be final.

Now as we come to this portion of the book of Revelation, needless to say it's the end. By the time we arrive at chapter 22 the great themes of Revelation have already unfolded and the doors have been opened. The rebellion, for example, of angels and man is over. The rebellion has been finally smashed by this point in Revelation. The Kingdom has already been ushered in. The rebels are in the lake of fire. Not only that, but the King of kings is on the eternal throne, assuming His sovereign right as King of the earth, King of the universe. Absolute and unchangeable holiness characterizes everything within the universal Kingdom of God, sin has been deleted from existence. And the redeemed bought by the blood of the Lamb slain at Calvary are now in resurrection eternal glory. Everything is over that ever dealt with man, except for the permanency of eternity, it alone abides in chapter 22. And as we enter into chapter 22, life is everywhere because here we find infinite and eternal life and there's no way that death can intrude on eternal life. And the chapter begins by talking about the river of water of life. And we see ourselves in heaven in the eternal place.

The earth and the heavens have been recreated by chapter 22. The blazing prism of diamond transparent light, the glory city Jerusalem, has settled down in to the eternal state. Light, beauty, holiness, joy and the presence of God and the Lamb, worship and praise to God and the Lamb, service and likeness to Christ are all eternal realities.

Earlier in the book of Revelation we saw in chapter 2 and 3 the church with all of its trouble, with all of its problems. We saw its history. We saw its character. And then we saw what happened in the Rapture. We saw the church exalted to heaven in chapter 4 and then we saw the Tribulation begin to unfold in chapter 6. And we saw the seals broken and the trumpets blown and the bowls of wrath poured out and the terrible horrible judgment that fell upon men so that over half the earth died in three and a half years. Monotonous scenes of wonder and horror.

Then we saw Satan's man, the Antichrist, coming up out of the pit and capturing the world with his demons and carrying it off into the worship of Satan and running the course of unparalleled blasphemy. And then we saw them all cast into hell to sink there forever. We saw the final deeds of Satan. We saw his release during the Kingdom already in Revelation. And then his final binding in the pit. We saw the breaking down of all rebellion and the shaking down of the old heaven and the old earth and the creating of a new heaven and a new earth. And we've seen sin and death and hell all set aside. We've seen redemption complete, paradise regained in mortal peace.

You say, "Well that wraps it up." Yeah it does. You say, "What's left?" Chapter 22 verses 6 and following is left. You say, "Well what is it?" Well, it's a few closing remarks and the basic emphasis is everything that you've read here is going to happen. Now because it's going to happen, you better do something, you better respond, you better react to it. Jesus is coming. The Tribulation will come when men will die and men will...men who are alive will scream to die to relieve them from the torment of judgment. And Jesus will return in great glory and set up His Kingdom. It all will happen. And the answer comes, "So what!" And so, John answers..."Here's so what..." starting in verse 6.

And the characteristics of these verses basically are simple. They are short, rapid fire, almost breathless, fast shots with very pointed significance. They are single statements independent, yet each dealing with the needed response of men to the coming of Christ. They almost give the feeling as you read through it of a furious rush, a kind of a wild fury in a last desperate moment and you see it because he says in verse 7, "Behold, I come quickly," and that's a breathless statement. Then you see it in verse 12, "Behold, I come quickly." You get over in verse 20 and you read, "Surely I come quickly." There's a kind of urgency here. The genius of the Holy Spirit has made these statements quick and pointed and fast that we might catch the emotion along with the truth in the context. And finally when you get to verse 20 there's almost like a sigh and John says, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

So the very passage is pregnant with urgency. It's pressing the Christian to respond and take care of some very important things. And it's also pressed with the urgency of warning to the believer, to the unbeliever I should say.

Now tonight we're going to look primarily at verses 6 to 12 and we're going to see that Christians immediate responses to Christ's imminent return. If Jesus is really coming, what does that demand out of me? If His return is really near, what do I do? You say, "Well, do you believe His return is near?" Indeed I do. The Bible says that the Tribulation will be ushered in by a great time of world peace, and the world is screaming for peace. Lawlessness, false religions, devil worship and apostasy are in the heyday and these are to be signs of the end.

We've looked at a lot of signs and we believe Jesus is coming. And if He's coming and if He's coming soon, then it requires something of us. Let me give you four things that it requires: immediate obedience, immediate worship, immediate proclamation and immediate service. Those are the four...obedience, worship, proclamation and service. First of all, look at verse 6 and 7 and look at immediate obedience. "And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophet sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done." These are true things. "Behold, I come quickly, blessed is he that keepeth or obeys, takes to heart and to life, the words of the prophecy of this book."

He says this is going to happen just like it says it is and you better be ready to obey. You better put these things into your life and make them part of your living. The coming of Jesus Christ demands that your life counts today. This is the day, this is the hour, work while of this day and while you may for the night comes when no man can work. We need to have a real awareness of His return and it can change our lives.

You know that when we really live in the light of the coming of Christ it has a profound effect on us? I'll give you an illustration. When I was a little kid I was always making up stories...really wild ones. My Dad was a preacher for Moody and we were back in Philadelphia and I was going to a little school in Rockledge(?) outside of Philadelphia. And I went one day to school and I announced to the whole class that my father had taken an axe and chopped off both his feet, that he missed the log that he was swinging at. And, of course, the whole school went into just frenzy. And, of course, the teacher was calling and they were sympathizing with my mother and all this kind of thing.

And so, as it turned out there was a meeting of the PTA that week and my father showed up...which was not too good for me. And so the teacher really let me have it. And so I was angry with the teacher. And so, as a result of my anger with the teacher I decided that I would rebel a little bit. So I'll never forget one time during that week she left the room, so I thought, "Now I'm just going to really go," I was in the second grade. And so I got up and I went from desk to desk, just jumping, just running from desk to desk, see. And of course I was a hit. Right? They loved it. They ate it up. I

mean, the kids were...I mean, they weren't even involved, you know, she could come in and it wouldn't effect them at all and they were having a great time. And I'll never forget, she walked in and caught me right in the middle of two desks.

Well, you know, I received quite an education as a result of that...at that point. And you know, it altered my behavior a great deal. I...from then on I...cause when that happened I was...I was absolutely shocked because I couldn't hear her coming down the hall. You know, usually you can hear the patter of those orthopedic type shoes. That's...I mean, she was kind of an older teacher, you know, but apparently she had the silent type, right? And I didn't...and I was shocked and I lived for a long time in mortal fear that if ever I did anything when a teacher was gone she'd catch me doing it. So I began to live in the imminent return of the teacher.

And, you know, it had a profound effect on my behavior. Well this is something I think like the Spirit of God wants to lay on us a little bit and it's not only...it's not the fear idea at all, but it's the consciousness of the presence of somebody who represents authority. Jesus is coming and there needs to be a sense in which we catch obedience as a result of that. The anticipation of an authority or someone we really love usually changes the way we behave.

I remember when my father would go away for meetings when I was kid and my mom would come in and announce that he was coming back the next day. We would shape up. I mean, I'd take the trash out, my sisters would make the beds. You know, dad's coming home, let's get it all together and do right for one day. And you know, mom would say, "Ah, they've been great kids," you know, six days...whew! One day. But the very sense that we knew he was coming changed the way we behaved.

Now in verse 6 this is what he begins to say, these words, all the words of Revelation, all these prophecies are faithful and true, you can count on. They're going to happen. "And the Lord God of the holy prophet sent His angel to show unto His servant the things which must shortly be done." This comes from God, God is sending you this information and God does what He says. This book is worthy of your obedience because its truth is established. This isn't something spun out of John's brain, these are from God. This is no forgery, the book of Revelation, this is no fairy tale full of sound and fury signifying nothing. This is divine and authoritative.

You say, "How do you know it's not a forgery?" Because forgerers don't write books that exalt Christ and condemn humanity. They're not in the business of doing that. This book is accurate. So says the angel from God to John. At the very beginning we learned, didn't we? Chapter 1 verse 1, "The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass. And He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John." This is from God at the beginning and at the very end full circle he says, "This is from God...everything in here is from God." If God says there's going to be tremendous hailstones, the size of a hundred pound cake

of ice, they're going to be. If God says that there's going to be blood over a span of two hundred miles to the depth of the horses' bridles, there's going to be carnage and blood shed like you can't believe. If God said there's going to be fire to scorch the earth, it's going to be. If God says the third of the rivers are going to turn rotten and sour and polluted, it's going to be. And if God says the sea is going to have the same thing, it's going to be. And if God says one third of the men are going to be killed and later on a fourth of the remaining ones are going to be killed, then that's what's going to happen. And if God says demons are going to come out of hell in the blackness of the pit in chapter 9, is going to be released and demons are going to run all over the earth to infest the earth, then that's exactly what's going to happen. You see, God has a perfect record. He bats one thousand in terms of Revelation.

He said Adam and Eve would die, and they did. He said the world would perish by water and it did. He said Babylon would fall and it did. He said Tyre would fall and it did. He said Jerusalem would fall and it did. He said Messiah would come and He did. He said Messiah would be born of a virgin and He was. He said Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and He was. He said Messiah would be slaughtered and He was. The future record will be just as perfect as God's past record, He's never missed anything yet and, you know He won't miss anything in the future. He said judgment will come on the land and the water and the sea and men and it will. He says war will come killing half the world and it will. He says nations will gather to Armageddon to fight and they will. He says the Antichrist will come and he will. He says believers will be martyred and they will. He says Messiah is coming back to reign and He is.

Get it in your brain, if God said it it will happen. The book of Revelation isn't some kind of fairy tale, it's true. And the very fact, mark this, the very fact that God says it means it will happen because He said, "My Word shall never return unto Me...what?...void. It will always accomplish the purpose to which I send it."

Now look at verse 6 and let's look at some specifics. He says, "These words are faithful and true and the Lord God of the holy prophet sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must...here's the word...shortly, *en tachei*(?) ." We get a word tachometer from this. You know what a tachometer is on your car? It measures the RPMs of your engine, I think. Speed is the word, *en tachei* , shortly means rapidly, quickly. It measures speed, not soon. It's not saying He shall come soon, it's saying He shall come fast. It will come like a shot out of the blue. God is patient and God is long-suffering. But when time comes for Him to arrive, He'll come fast.

You know, there are people who argue that Jesus isn't coming. That's a typical heresy of liberalism, that Jesus isn't coming. And the argument Peter brings up in 2 Peter chapter 3, he's writing and he's telling them about these false prophets whom he calls "wells without water," which is an interesting thing...clouds that don't have any rain in them, and so forth. And then he says to them, they're going to say in verse 4 of 2 Peter 3, "Where is the promise of His coming?" See? All you people go around saying Jesus is coming, where is He? We haven't seen Him around. "For since the fathers fell asleep,

all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Oh, they say, "Well, He won't come because everything is just going on like it always goes, you know." Which is a ridiculous argument, it's like saying I'll never die because I never have. And then he goes on to say, "But they are willingly ignorant of the fact that by the Word of God were of old and the earth standing out of the water and in the water by which the world that then was was overflowed with water and it perished." They must have forgot that all things didn't continue as they were. Back in Genesis 6 God wiped out the whole world with water. Guess again, fellows. It hasn't always been like you say it has. And he says, "In the heavens and the earth which are now by the same Word are kept in store reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." God destroyed it once with water, He'll destroy it again only not with water, with what? With fire.

"Yeah, but He's waited so long." And then he says this, "Beloved, be not ignorant of this thing, one day is with the Lord as...what?...a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day." God doesn't have a clock.

You say, "Well why doesn't He come back if He's going to come?" And he gives the answer. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise." It's not that He's not going to do what He says, "But He's long-suffering, not willing that any should...what?...should perish." And so the stupidity of the argument in 2 Peter that nothing is going to happen because nothing ever has doesn't even begin to cover the ground. If God says it will happen, it will happen.

Now he says this, at the end of verse 6, he says, "I wanted to show unto His servants." Who are they? Who are these *doulos*? Who are these servants? They're believers. Do you know that in Romans chapter 6 it tells us that we're the servants of the Lord? It says simply, and there's a lot more in that sixth chapter, but let's just pull that one thought out, chapter 6 and verse 17, "But God be thanked that whereas you were the servants of sin you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you." Then verse 22, "And now being made free from sin you became servants to God." When you were saved you became a servant of God. You are His *doulos*. You are His bondservants. And He wants you to know what's going to happen. Why? Because He wants you to obey these things. The book of Revelation isn't for unbelievers...they can't tell one end of it from the other. The truths of this book are for you and for me that we might get a grip on what's going to happen and immediately obey. Look at verse 7, "Behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." Keep these in your heart and mind, obey the spiritual principles that are here. Give heed, *tereo* is keep and it means to give heed or observe in your living the principles that are here. Jesus simply said this, "If you love Me, you will do...what?...keep My commandments." He said it three times in John, chapter 14, He said it in verse 15, verse 21 and verse 23. And then when you get over to 1 John he repeats it and repeats it and repeats it..."If you love Me you'll keep My commandments. You can tell you're saved if you keep My commandments...keep My commandments...keep My commandments." I've said it so many times, I'll say it again, the most important word in the Christian life is obedience. That's what it's all

about...that's what it's all about and we'll say more about that in a minute.

But we need to be obedient. We need to be keeping the words of the prophecy of this book. We need to give adherence to them, observe them, heed them because He's coming. There are some direct commands to the church in chapter 2 and 3 that we need to obey. There are some principles that we see through the book of Revelation that we need to obey, giving God glory, praising Jesus Christ, occupying ourselves with strategic things that matter. We need to be obedient to the principles of this book.

Now let me talk a little bit about obedience. There are many kinds of obedience. There's a kind of obedience that is a threat, but that doesn't really get to the core. You know, some guy was saying this week, I was listening to some tape and he said, "There was a little kid and he was standing in his highchair, just standing right up there. And his dad said to him, 'Sit down.' And he just stood there. He said, 'I said sit down.' He just stood there. His dad said, 'Sit down or I'll knock you down.' And the kid sat down. And he said to his dad, 'I may be sitting down but I'm standing up in my heart.'" Well, you see, that's obedience but that is not the spirit of obedience. You got it? That's legalism. The same person I was listening to said that he had a person that was involved in his church and he said that they made \$120 a week and they gave to the Lord \$10.20. And he said that's obedience to an Old Testament law but that's not the spirit of obedience. That it almost...that almost sounds like a legalism, which is an interesting thing.

You say, "Well what are you trying to say?" Well I'm trying to say that there's a difference between obedience and the spirit of obedience. I don't have anything in my kitchen posted that says, "Don't smash your kids with a rolling pin." Just so I remind myself. I don't have anything that says, "Don't hit your wife with the shovel."

You say, "That's horrible." I don't have to remind myself of things like that. "Don't drown your children in the bathtub." We don't have rules like that hanging in the bathroom. There's a certain sense, you see, in which love pervades everything and we don't need those rules. I mean, I love my children and I love my wife and because of that I don't need to do that. You see? There's a different spirit. And, you see, I want to obey in terms of my right relationships. If I make a promise to my children, I want to keep them not out of legalism to them but because I love them. And I think my children feel the same to me. They want to obey me not so much out of fear but out of a desire to obey me because they love me. That's the difference and that's exactly what Paul meant and I want to take a minute to show it to you, the difference between obedience and the spirit of obedience is in Romans 13 in verse 8, "Owe no man anything but to love one another for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Do you see? And he goes on to say the law says don't commit adultery, don't kill, don't steal, don't bear false witness, don't covet, etc., etc., etc. But he says this, it's all comprehended in one saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Love, verse 10, is the fulfilling of the law.

You see, if I love somebody, I willingly submit myself. And if I really love God, do I need to have the Ten Commandments nailed up in my house? And do I have to say, "Oh, I don't want to do that, God will step on me?" No. You know, whenever...I don't know how you are affected, but whenever I sin I don't react to sin by saying, "Oh no, now I'm going to get it." That's a foreign reaction. You don't react either do you? You say, the first reaction is, "God, I'm sorry that I grieved You," right? Sure. Because that's the spirit of obedience. The spirit of obedience is that which...now watch this and here's a definition...it is that which permits me to obey in an area where there's no enforcement. You get that? So the spirit of obedience is committing myself to obey in areas where there's no enforcement, you see? It's because I just want to obey. It's because the love of my heart demands that I obey...not out of fear but out of adoration and love. And so, God doesn't ask us to get a bunch of rules and tack them up and make sure we obey them. God just asks us to love Him. And if we love Him we'll fulfill the whole law.

And that's why...that's so different than legalism. Legalism is doing it, doing it...oh I want to be holy, I want to be pious, and if I don't do that somebody won't think I'm pious and God will take three Brownie points away from my score. You know, see. That is totally foreign to God. That is nauseating to God. That's a system of legalism. What God wants to see is a heart that is so overflowing with love that it obeys out of the natural flow of life, not out of fear. And so, the Christian should have a spirit of obedience because of his love for the Lord. We ought to read His Word and we ought to learn the principles and we ought to obey them.

You see, Revelation is not entertainment. So many people think the book of Revelation is entertainment. Oh, Revelation, whoppee, you know, we can all see all those strange things, you know. Revelation is not entertainment. You know what it is for me? It's motivation. I study this book and I get motivated. I get super charged to get a job done and get a job done right now. We know these things are going to happen. What did Peter say in 2 Peter 3:11? He says, "Seeing that these things shall be dissolved, man, the end of the world is coming, what manner of persons ought you to be?" You don't just sit around speculating about it, you do something. "You ought to be holy and godly, you ought to look for and hasten to the coming of the day of God." He goes on to say you ought to be, at the end of verse 14, in peace without spot and blameless. This is motivation...not entertainment.

And so, what does the Word of God say? Jesus is coming. So what? Immediate obedience. Whatever the principles are in the Word of God it's time to obey them, right now because Jesus is coming.

Second thing, immediate worship. I love this, verse 8, this is so human. "And I John," I've told you before why John does this. He's so overwhelmed with the stuff that he gets in on, he says, "And I John, I saw it all, me." See. It's a shocking thing. It's the same reason that he talks about himself like

in John 21, you know, where Peter was following Jesus and Peter looked around and Jesus had just told Peter the wonderful news that He was going to get crucified. And so Peter looks around and says, "What about him?" And it says that Peter turned...the text says in John 21, "And Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved." The one who reclined on His breast at supper. That's John. He could have said, "John," but not John, he says, "You know the one that Jesus loves, who was next to Him at the supper." See. He adores the fact of his relationship to Christ. He's overwhelmed about everything that he's involved in...his whole thing with God is absolutely overwhelming to him. So everything is this fantastic thing. "You know me, I'm the one that Jesus loves." See. He just adores that thought.

So he uses the same thing here, he says, "And I John saw these things and heard them." And then he says, "And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things." Well that's interesting. What is he doing there? Well he's been there before. You go back to chapter 19, he gets so carried away, this angel, another angel came and showed him the marriage supper of the Lamb in 19 and verse 10, he says, "I fell at his feet to worship him." He's doing the same thing again. "And he said unto me, See thou doest not, I'm thy fellow servant and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." Now they must have thought it was getting to be like a broken record because if you go back to 22 and verse 9, the same thing. "He says unto him, See thou do it not." Cut it out, John. "I'm thy fellow servant of thy brethren the prophets and of them who worship...who keep the words of the book, worship God." Get up, John, I'm only an angel.

Now there are several beautiful things about that. I don't think John meant to be idolatrous. He was just so overwhelmed and so thrilled with what he was learning that he had a hard time distinguishing between the messenger and the one who sent him. And in a very real sense that's a kind of a beautiful thought, isn't it? Have you ever been mistaken for Jesus Christ? I've been in the ministry for a few years now and nobody yet has fallen down at my feet and worshiped me. I've never had to say, "Oh, get up...you're mistaken." That will be the day. But, you see, there would be something beautiful about that. They thought...they thought Paul was a God, you remember. I'm sure there are some Christians who are so Christlike that some people haven't been too sure but that Christ wasn't around. And so John starts to worship the angel and in verse 9 the angel gets him up. He classifies himself, you see, with other created beings who are also in God's service. And he says, "Worship God...worship God." Listen, that's an immediate priority in the Christian life is worship.

You say, "Yeah, I know, what is worship? Is worship organ music and stained glass windows? What is worship?" Well, a few weeks ago we did a little study on worship in Psalm 26, let me just brief you on it. Turn to Psalm 26 and let's see what worship is, just simple...and here we have a beautiful picture of worship. David is worshiping. And he gives us the ingredients of worship. First we see the worshiper and then we see his worship. There are four characteristics of a true worshiper...four characteristics of a true worshiper. First of all, trust. In order to really worship God trust is the key to

everything. If you're not really trusting God, your worship is a sham. If you're saying, "O God, I praise You for who You are and I thank You for all Your power and I praise You for being the God You are," and then you go out of there and chew your fingernails off because you can't figure out where the next \$10 is going to come from...your worship was a mockery. Or if you're praising God and praising God for all of His power, all of His sustenance and then going around like a nervous wreck and popping barbiturates, something isn't right. There's something being lost between the statement of your trust and the actuality of it. Worship in its purest sense begins with actual real trust in God. That is what pleases God above everything else is that you really trust Him.

Now look at verse 1, "Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity, I have trusted also in the Lord." He says you look at my heart, Lord, I trust You...I trust You. That's the basis of real worship, trusting God. And there are a lot of people who sing the songs and they get the kind of funny feeling that you get on Sunday when something hits your emotions and they come to church and they own a Bible and they maybe read it and they may be praying, they maybe praise God but they don't trust Him...they don't really trust Him. True worship begins with trust...total trust.

Then the second thing that makes up true worship is a preoccupation with God's loving kindness. Verse 3, "For Thy loving kindness is before my eyes." This is the second characteristic of a true worshiper. He not only trusts God but he's preoccupied with God's loving kindness. He is totally absorbed in the grace of God.

There's a third thing about him, the end of verse 3, "He walks in truth." You cannot truly be worshiping God and living in sin. You can't be worshiping God and living in error.

The fourth thing, we're just going fast, in verse 4, he doesn't get involved with evil doers, "I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with hypocrites."

Four characteristics of a true worshiper...number one, he trusts God, absolutely and completely. Number two, he's preoccupied with God's loving kindness. He's so overwhelmed with God's grace that he wouldn't worry about anything because he knows His grace is sufficient. Third, he walks in truth, he abides in the Word, constantly constantly constantly. That's true worship. Fourthly, he never fools around with evil doers. Now that's the characteristic of a true worshiper, and we could go a lot further than that but just suffice it to say at that point. Now because David is a true worshiper, in verse 6 he arrives to worship, "I'll wash my hands in innocence, I'll encompass Thine altar, O Lord." I'm coming to Your altar to worship.

Now there are four...well let's say five ingredients of true worship. Four characteristics of a true worshiper, here are the five ingredients of worship. Number one, thanksgiving. You want to really worship God? Be the right worshiper, first of all, and then give Him thanks, verse 7, "That I may make known with the voice of...what?...thanksgiving." You know what it is that is worship? It is thanksgiving.

"God, I just want to thank You. I just want to praise You for what You've done." Constant thanksgiving. Then he says in verse 7, the second thing is praise, "Tell of all Thy wondrous works." Have you ever recited to God His wondrous works? You say, "Do I need to do that?" That's worship. Remember how they used to pray in the Old Testament? "O God, who made the earth and the sky and the sea and the land and God who delivered Israel out of Egypt and God..." You know how they used to do? They used to recite the whole thing sometimes, it seemed like they'd go on forever. You can read some of the great...read the prayer of Habakkuk, for example, in the little book of Habakkuk. He goes on and on and on and on and on, he doesn't even bother to ask God for anything, he just keeps reciting everything God did. That's worship, that's praise for His wondrous works.

There's a third thing...thanksgiving, praise, the third commodity that makes up worship is the love of His presence. Verse 8, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house and the place where Thy honor dwelleth." He was in love with the presence of God. That's worship. Living every moment in the conscious presence that He's there.

There's another one, and this gets us right back to where we started, trust...verse 9, "Gather not my soul with sinners, I'm asking You, God, nor my life with bloody men in whose hands is mischief and their right hand is full of bribes, but as for me I will walk in mine integrity, redeem me and be merciful unto me." He's trusting God. God, this is my problem, You're going to take care of it.

And so, true worship is thanksgiving, praise, loving His presence, trusting Him and then it wraps up in verse 12 with the commitment. "My foot standeth in an even place." In other words, I won't go where I'm going to stumble. "In the congregations will I bless the Lord." I'll stay on level ground and bless the Lord. That's a simple, simple picture of true worship. It's to be the right person and carry to God your thanks, your praise, your trust, your commitment and to love His presence...that's worship. And so he says to him worship God.

Do you really worship God? Do you...it all boils down to trust. Nobody else to worship but God. And it says in Colossians 2:18, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in the voluntary humility and worshipping of angels." You could lose your reward if you're to worship angels. There are some cults, are there not, that revere and worship angels. That is not scriptural.

So, in all worship God is the object, verse 9, worship God. The book of Revelation demands an immediate response of worship and praise to God. You say, "Well, do we have a song or a praise that we could give Him?" Sure, it's all through the book of Revelation. Just read chapter 4, 5, 7, 11, 15 and 19 and you can read the whole worship song of the redeemed.

So what are we saying? His soon return demands what? Immediate obedience and immediate worship. Now we come to the heart of the thing...immediate proclamation. Now this is not a message to be hidden, it's a message to be spread. Look at verse 10, "And he saith unto me, Seal not the

words of the prophecy of this book for the time is at hand." If you saw somebody moving fast toward absolute destruction and you were able to stop them and you didn't, that's a serious serious indictment. And so we need to be busy not sealing the words of this book, but preaching it. Since there is tremendous warning, we cannot close the book of Revelation, we must speak its truth. The term "at hand" means imminent, it means the next event on God's clock is the return of Jesus. And because He's coming we need to spread the Word. Now we've been studying Acts and you remember He said, "After the Spirit is come upon you you shall be witnesses unto Me." And then the Bible says that Jesus ascended into heaven and two men stood by in white apparel and they said, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven, this same Jesus who is taken up from you shall...what?...so come in like manner as you've seen Him go." Why should you be a witness? Because Jesus is coming back and you better get busy, spread the Word.

The failure to proclaim the truths of this book and the warnings of judgment that are to come is to disobey God. This is not to be a closed book. This is not to be a sealed book. It is to be open to men. And I honestly believe in my heart that a Christian who fails to study the book of Revelation, who fails to understand the truths of judgment and to proclaim those truths is disobeying God. And I believe that a great church will always be a Second Coming church. I don't believe that you can have a great church that does not constantly proclaim the return of Jesus Christ. We must live in the light of the return of Christ. That ought to change our lives for two reasons. Number one, because when He returns we're going to have to face Him for the record of our deeds. And number two, the godless are going to face Him.

Now he goes on in verse 10, "Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book for the time is at hand." Then a shocking verse, verse 11, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." You say, "What is it saying?" It's a strange verse. It's simply saying this, if a man is unjust and he rejects this message, let him be unjust forever. If a man is filthy and he rejects the message, let him be filthy forever. My dad always used to say, "Death never changes anything, it only crystallizes into permanency what you were in life." If you lived your life unjust and filthy that's the way you'll live your eternity. If you lived your life righteous and holy, that's the way you'll live your eternity.

If the warnings of this book are not sufficient to change a man, then God has no more to say, let him be unjust forever. I have nothing else to say. It's a sobering thought that a decision made against Christ can become so much a part of a character that it damns a man's soul and some day he's unable to believe. And then every hearing of the gospel only produces more antagonism. There's a shocking kind of lingering sickness that comes into every one of us, or should come as we read that verse. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still. People say, "Is there a second chance?" No there's no second chance. He that is filthy, let him be filthy still. Eternal separation from God.

We must proclaim this message. Jesus is coming. The world needs to hear. And when they hear the gospel it either makes them right or it confirms them wrong. If it does not absolve of sin, it condemns of sin. If it doesn't soften the penitent heart, it hardens and hardens. If it is not, said Paul, a savor unto life, it is a savor unto death. And so the angel says proclaim this prophecy, preach it, preach it, preach it.

How long has it been since you sat down with somebody and talked to them about the coming of Jesus Christ? And I'm not just talking about the glib happy-go-lucky bumper sticker approach. I'm talking about how long has it been since you sat down and talked to somebody about hell? How long has it been since you warned somebody about the eternal damnation that comes as a result of rejecting Jesus Christ? How often do we soft pedal these things? I believe, beloved, that it's time that we commit ourselves to proclaim the truths of judgment because Jesus is coming. So we see in these prophecies the necessity of immediate obedience, immediate worship, immediate proclamation. I don't know how long we have. What we do we do now, or we don't do it.

Lastly, immediate service, verse 12, "Behold, I come quickly and My reward is with Me to give every man according as his work shall be." Behold, I come quickly...again suddenly, swiftly. And the Bible has so much to say about this. The fact that when He comes that nobody is going to be ready, the world is going to be shocked when this happens. In Mark there is indication of the urgency that is going to take place when Jesus comes...the shock that's going to come upon men. It says in verse 33 of chapter 13, "Take heed, watch and pray for you know not when the time is for the Son of Man is like a man taking a far journey who left his house and gave authority to his servants and to every man his work and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore for you know not when the master of the house cometh, at evening, or at midnight, or at cock crow or in the morning, lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping." Sad thing.

Over in Luke, just a thought out of chapter 12 verse 35, "Let your loins be girded about and your lamps burning and ye yourselves like men that wait for their lord when he will return from the wedding that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, he that...that He shall gird Himself and make them to sit down to eat and will come forth and serve them. If He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know that if the owner of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not have permitted his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when you think not."

It's time to do what you're going to do for the Lord and do it now. We're to watch, to be ready and to serve. You say, "Well, what's this big deal about service?" Well the Bible simply says that you need to be serving Him because when He comes back, look at it, verse 12, "My reward is with Me to give to every man." You say, "Well isn't that materialistic?" And I've talked about this and I've maybe have

shared with you this before but people will always disparage that is a motive when it is not a bad motive, to serve Christ for a reward, that's a natural thing. This illustrates to me so many times in athletics, if a guy runs a race, runs his very best and wins, you don't say, "Oh, materialistic, crass, selfish." You expect him to do that, right? If a general takes his army out to battle and he wins the battle, you don't call him materialistic. If a guy loves a girl and comes to her and says, "I love you so much I want to marry you," she doesn't say, "Oh, materialistic, it's not enough to love me, you have to marry me." That is strange because that's normal. There are some things that are the natural reward of other things and reward from our Lord is the natural result of faithful service.

My grandfather had in his Bible a poem written and it goes like this, "When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ and He shows me His plan for me, the plan of my life as it might have been, and I see how I blocked Him here and checked Him there and would not yield my will, will there be grief in my Savior's eyes? Grief though He loves me still? He would have me rich but I stand there poor, stripped of all but His grace, while memory runs like a haunted thing down a path I can't retrace. Then my desolate heart will well nigh break with tears I cannot shed, I will cover my face with my empty hands, I will bow my uncrowned head. O Lord, of the years that are left to me, I give them to Thy hand, take me, break me, mold me to the pattern that Thou hast planned."

We need to be busy serving the Lord. We need to orient our priorities. We need to strip out all the garbage in our lives and get down to the business of immediate obedience, immediate worship, immediate proclamation and immediate service. Some of you said, "Some day I'm going to start a Bible study...some day I'm going to get going and study the Bible...some day I'm going to witness to my neighbors...some day I'm going to do this...and some day I'm going to teach a class...and some day...some day...some day," and it just fades. It's time to do it. It's time to do it.

You say, "Well, I'm not even a Christian, what do I do?" Verse 17 says what you do, "Let him that heareth come, let him that is a thirst come and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." It's still time to come before Jesus gets here.

When Napoleon's army invaded Russia, they came to a village. And in this village everyone had fled except one man who was a farmer. He was a courageous man. And he stood in the face of Napoleon's army. And they saw his calmness and they saw his courage and they decided not to shoot him. But they decided they would mark him and brand him for life. And so they had a branding iron which they heated and they burned the letter "N" into the palm of his right hand.

"What does that mean?" he said.

"It stands for Napoleon," they said. "And you now belong to him."

The man promptly picked up an axe and put his hand on a block and chopped it off. He said, "The hand belongs to him, I don't." That's courage. He believed in something and he gave up his hand for it.

You say, "What are you trying to tell me?" I'm trying to tell you this, if you have anything in your life that belongs to anybody but God, cut it off. It's time to get it together and do those things that need to be done in these last times. I think we can spin our wheels and as I said this morning, we can fool around with diddly things that mean absolutely nothing to anybody and not be ready when Jesus comes to receive a full reward. Look to yourselves, said John, that you lose not the things you have wrought but that you receive a full reward. Immediate service, immediate proclamation, now is the time to tell them about Jesus. Immediate worship, now is the time to begin to trust God and show Him you love Him. Immediate obedience, now is the time to do the things you know He wants you to do.

Our Father, we're so thankful tonight that we've just been able to examine these thoughts. And, Lord, we feel so inadequate. Lord, we feel that we fail You so miserably. Father, I know in my own heart I just really don't do those things that I ought to do so many times. And, Lord, it's easy for me to say...Well, I'm so involved in preaching to so many...and this and that that I don't have time to witness to somebody who lives near me or that I meet somewhere...it's easy for me to just kind of slough off my responsibility. God, I'm sorry when I've done that. I don't know when Jesus is coming, Lord, but I know He's coming and He's coming soon and I'm ready in my heart but I'm not sure that I've done everything I should do. Father, I want to be sure that I've shared Christ with all those that need to hear that I can reach. I want to be sure I've lived the fullest kind of service to You that I can live, that I might receive a full reward, not for my glory but that I might cast it at the feet of Jesus Christ. And, Father, I know I haven't always been obedient but I want to be and I want to have the spirit of obedience that makes me obey because I love You not because I'm afraid of You.

And, God, I want to worship you with a pure heart and I want to say I trust You and I want to really be trusting You so that when You come I'll have nothing lacking. And, Father, I would pray that for everyone who is here. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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