

Jesus is Coming

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[0 : 00] Hi everyone, great to see you this morning. Well, we've come to the end of Revelation and we've been discovering a lot. It's been quite a journey, if you've been with us, through the book of Revelation.

The point of Revelation, like I said at the beginning, its major point is to give us a behind-the-scenes look at what is happening in our age, in our world. And to help us to see why the world is like it is, why societies do the things they do and how we are to react in that.

And as we've been seeing over the last few weeks, to realize where this world is going, where these societies we live in are going, what's going to happen, and what the future holds.

And so there's a lot of important stuff. I hope you've seen, even though it's given to us in symbolic pictures, these truths are no less true and important to consider as we go about life.

So I hope at least those things have become a little bit clearer for you over the last few weeks. Maybe not crystal clear yet, maybe you still need to read it and hear teaching on Revelation for a while still, but I think we all do.

[1 : 12] But I hope that you're a little clearer on certain things than you were before we started this series. But if that's all that Revelation has done for you, if all it's done is for you to walk away going, you know, I'm a bit clearer on the millennium now, or I understand the mark of the beast a bit better, that's great.

And you walk home with that clarity in your mind. If that's all it's done, then it's failed in its purpose. Because what we discover, especially here at the end, is that the purpose of this whole book of Revelation is not just to teach you, but it's to change you.

And we see that at the beginning and at the end of the book. So, if you just keep your finger there and you turn right back to Revelation 1. Look at how John starts his Revelation and how he ends it.

Something he says, both at the beginning and the end. 1 verse 3. He says, Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, And blessed are those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it.

Not just hear, but keep. And we see that again. Look at Revelation 22, our passage this morning. Verse 7. Look, I'm coming soon.

[2 : 39] Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book. So, keeping it, living it out, being changed by it is its purpose. And that's why this final passage is here in Revelation and in the Bible.

It's here to challenge you to consider what you're going to do with this information that you've learned. Because you need to do something with it. No matter what amount of information you've accumulated from Revelation and from the Bible as a whole, whatever you have now, whatever knowledge you have about what the Bible says, and what this world's about, and who Jesus is, and what the future holds, the question I want to ask you this morning is, what are you going to do with that when you go out?

What is that going to do in your life? Because you need to do something with it. And the reason you need to do something with it, the main reason you need to do something with this information, is because Jesus is coming soon.

And that is the repeated reminder. Did you notice, as Rowan read that for us earlier, that phrase, how often it's repeated. Look at verse 7. Look, I am coming soon.

Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. Verse 12. Look, I am coming soon. And my reward is with me. Verse 20. He who testifies about these things.

[4 : 10] This is the last words of Jesus in the Bible. Yes, I am coming soon. Okay, so that's, he wants to make a point, right? You repeat something three times, it's because you want to make a point.

Jesus is coming soon. Now, I want us to consider that phrase for a few minutes. Jesus is coming soon. It's interesting when you take a phrase and then you stress a different word, it has a different emphasis.

And so I want us to stress each of the parts of that and see what is telling us. Jesus is coming soon. Jesus is coming soon. Jesus is coming soon.

Okay, so Jesus is coming soon. Who is Jesus? Jesus is. It's a silly question to ask a church. We should know who Jesus is. But who would you say Jesus is in the elevator conversation? By that I mean the time it takes for you to get to the ground, from the ground floor to wherever you work.

If you work in a multi-story building and you're in the elevator and somebody just randomly says to you, who's Jesus? What would you say in those 30 seconds? How would you define, what would be the main elements of his identity that you communicate to someone who wants to know who Jesus is?

[5 : 26] How would you describe who Jesus is? Well, here at the end of the Bible, we get possibly the most developed description of who Jesus is that brings together all the strands of the things we've been learning about him so far in Revelation into this one amazing description.

From his own lips, this is who Jesus is. From verse 13 and then verse 16, we see it. This is who Jesus describes himself to be.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end, and then verse 16 at the end, I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.

He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet that is the language that the New Testament is written in. Now, what's interesting about that phrase is that in the New Testament, so far, that phrase, the Alpha and the Omega, has only ever been used of God, the Creator.

And now, for the first time, that phrase is used of Jesus himself, confirming what we were saying in the Nicene Creed earlier, that he is true God of true God.

[6 : 39] He, Jesus Christ, the man who walked this planet, went to places that we can visit today, he is God. He is the creator of all of us.

And that's, you know, we've been learning aspects of Jesus that just highlight the fact that he obviously has divine power, as we've been reading the Bible, and here right at the end, it confirms, yes, your suspicions were right, he is God.

No one else that has walked this planet but Jesus. He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Like we also said in the Nicene Creed earlier, that through him all things were made.

He was there at creation, Jesus was. He was right at the beginning and he is the first and the last.

He is the beginning and the end, which means everything in between, he is there and he is in control of. Jesus is in control of where history is going and he's revealed to us where history is going and he's making that happen and bringing that about and nothing's going to stop that.

[7 : 50] And then he calls himself the root and the offspring of David. Not only is he this creator God who has made everything and come into his creation, but he is also the Messiah that the Old Testament spoke about, who would come from the line of David, a man who will bring God's rule to all nations and rule over all governments one day and all countries.

And then he is the bright morning star because he is the one who is going to bring a new dawn for this world. You know when you wake up before the sun has risen and you look to the west and you see, sometimes, you see this bright star.

You know, all the other stars are gone, but the morning star is there. Sometimes it's actually not a star, sometimes the planet Venus or something, but it's setting just as the sun is rising in the east or just before the sun rises.

And it's that bright morning star. You know what I'm talking about. It's still twilight kind of darkness, but you see that bright shining star just before dawn marking that the night is ending and assuring you that the new day is coming.

That's what Jesus coming into history has done. He's come into the nighttime of this world in its darkest point. just before dawn.

[9 : 17] And all those who look at him know the new day is coming. It hasn't come yet, but it's coming. Nothing is going to stop it. That's what happens when we look at Jesus because we know, as the bright morning star, he's the one that marks the end of the nighttime of this earth.

And he is the one who's coming. Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming though. He is coming. Not might be coming.

He is coming. And just as sure as his first coming in history was, so is his second coming to be.

Look at verse 6 again. Look at what the angel said to John. John, these words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.

John is just, well the angel is emphasizing to John that these things that have been revealed, most importantly, the return of Jesus Christ are trustworthy. It's more trustworthy.

[10 : 22] That fact is more sure than anything else in this world. It's more certain than the dawn. The fact that Jesus is coming back to this earth is more certain than the fact that the sun will rise tomorrow.

Because, you know, God has never actually guaranteed that the sun is definitely going to rise each day. It just happens because he's consistent. And it happens every day.

So we assume God is going to cause the sun to rise tomorrow. But he hasn't guaranteed that. What he has guaranteed is that his son is coming back.

And so, just as we plan for things that are far less certain in life, so we've got to plan for the return of Jesus Christ. You plan your day and your life based on things that are uncertain.

You know, you plan what to dress the next day based on what the weather report's going to be. And, you know, weather report sometimes is right, sometimes it's wrong. It's not 100% certain. But you use the information you have and you plan for it.

[11 : 32] You plan your savings or your investments based on where you think the stock market is going. You plan your career and your job based on where you think jobs are going to be available and what you study based on what you think the economy is in need of, what kind of jobs.

And so, you plan for things that are far less certain. What are you doing to plan for the return of Christ which is far more certain than anything else you plan for? Because Jesus is coming.

That's the most sure thing we have. It's the most definite thing you can know because of what God has done to show that. not only in the first coming of Jesus but the revelation through the apostles and through the angels.

He's made it absolutely sure that Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming soon. Jesus is coming soon and Jesus is coming soon.

He's coming soon. Now, that word in the original actually means He's coming imminently. He's coming without delay. In other words, even though it's been 2,000 years, it's still without unnecessary delay because it's the next thing in God's timeline that's got to happen.

[12 : 55] Nothing else has got to happen. Everything else that's needed to happen in God's plan has happened. There's only one thing that's left and that is the return of Jesus Christ. It's the next thing that's happened.

That's what it means that He's coming soon and the only reason for the delay in the last 2,000 years is to give as many people a chance to get ready for that as possible. especially considering what will happen when He comes which this passage also tells us.

Have a look at verse 12. Look, I am coming soon and my reward is with me to repay each person according to his work.

So when Jesus comes back that second time to bring the kingdom of God to earth in its fullness the first thing He will do is to judge every person according to what they have done in their life.

Now, that seems that's a bit scary isn't it? Right? Think of what you've done in your life or the things that maybe the other people around you don't know but everything will come out on that day and that's scary and it seems to contradict this comfort we have in the doctrine of salvation through faith alone, doesn't it?

[14 : 20] As Christians because that's what the Bible teaches for those who are in Christ they're saved not through their works but through faith alone in Christ. Look, if you want to turn to Ephesians chapter 2 this is a great passage that confirms that comfortable doctrine for those who are in Christ.

Ephesians chapter 2 from verse 8 For you are saved by grace through faith and this is not from yourselves it is God's gift not from works so that no one can boast not from works.

So what's about what's this judgment of works that the Bible assures us of? If the Bible says we're saved not through works well the thing is when people read that doctrine and they take comfort in that and they breathe a sigh of relief if they're in Christ if you're not in Christ and you're not one of his people then you can get no relief from that verse but if you are you can breathe a sigh of relief we're saved not through works but through faith but then we stop and we don't read the next verse in Ephesians verse 10 for the reason we're saved through grace for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared ahead of time for us to do so this is quite clear the Bible's teaching on this is that you are not saved by works but you are certainly saved for works and those works how you live day by day will show up whether your faith is actually real or not and will show up on that day whether your faith is real how you have lived out that faith how you have used all of this information God has given us and whether you have put it into practice and whether it's really changed you because you might be able to fool people into thinking you're a Christian on Sunday when you stand up and say the words and sing the songs but you can't fool

Jesus when you stand before him one day and it will be seen on that day whether your life from Monday to Saturday has reflected the truth that you claim to believe in on Sunday and so before that day make sure it does so that's why you need to do something with this that's why you need to do something with the words that we read and we hear and we preach and you listen to Sunday after Sunday you can't just walk out of there and say well that was nice I know something more now I'm a little cleverer I know the Bible a bit better no that's not the point the point is that it changes you and it prepares you for the coming of Jesus Christ to this earth that's why you need to do something with what you hear what do you need to do well this passage the last passage of the Bible tells us quite clearly also what we need to do and there are three things that I want to show you that you need to do with everything we've learned in

Revelation firstly you need to wash your clothes look at verse 14 blessed are those who wash their robes so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates so we've learned last week that the city that is given in this great vision this amazing beautiful city is a representation of the new creation that Jesus is going to bring about but if you want to live in that new creation you need clean clothes you need appropriate living because the way of life you live in that new creation needs to be appropriate for this new age without sin and death and wickedness you need appropriate living you need clean clothes so I recently developed a new appreciation for our washing machine at home so it's amazing how you you don't really appreciate home appliances until they don't work anymore our washing machine broke down we tried to get it fixed and we still couldn't so we eventually had to settle for the fact that we had to buy a new washing machine and it had a good run it was like 14 years and that's a good run for a washing machine but we this last week bought a new washing machine and we had it delivered and they installed it and there was a time though between our old washing machine breaking and our new washing machine being delivered that our clothes our dirty clothes just accumulated and accumulated and accumulated and like we ran out of space in our laundry baskets it's amazing how quickly dirty clothes accumulate when you don't have a way of washing them a practical way of washing them well so do our sins accumulate if there's no way to atone for them they accumulate for this day of judgment and they just keep accumulating and accumulating and accumulating you can throw them in the laundry and put on new clothes and kind of pretend that they're not there but they will keep building those dirty clothes those sins against God and if there's nothing if there's nothing else you get from the gospel now you should get a lot of stuff in the gospel one of the most important things to realize is that before Jesus comes to judge he came the first time to make a way for sinners to get clean when he brought atonement by dying on the cross that's why from the moment he started his ministry he knew he was going to the cross and there was no way for him to avoid that because he knew that only on the cross when he the son of God dies for sins and has his blood spilled only there can atonement be made to wash your clothes and sending of the

[20 : 49] Holy Spirit to give you power for living a new life when he rose from the dead and ascended and sent his spirit that is the only way to get those sins cleaned those sins that keep accumulating that we all can't avoid accumulating like dirty clothes in a laundry basket without a washing machine they just keep building up without the atonement that Jesus came to bring your sins will just keep accumulating until judgment day and no other religion can offer you atonement you can go to any other religion that you like no matter how attractive it looks none of them will have a way that they can convince you and that they can show you and prove to you that atonement has been made it's all about just wearing clean clothes they don't there's no religion that can tell you other than Christianity how those dirty clothes are going to get clean all they do is just you know just cover up the dirty clothes put a lid on them and wear nice clean clothes that's what other religions teach you to do how to live a good life to cover over your sins but they don't atone for your sins only Jesus can do that because only he died on the cross and you know what when he did that he offered you a free gift a free gift for all who want it look at verse 17 both the spirit and the bride say come let anyone who hears say come let the one who is thirsty come let the one who desires take the water of life freely freely it's a free gift for all who are thirsty for all who realize they need atonement for all who realize they can't clean themselves they can't wash away their sins it's like he said in his sermon on the mount when he said blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness because they will be filled blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth it's for those who realize that we need that we're thirsty for righteousness that we cannot clean ourselves we cannot cover over our sins it's for those people that Jesus says come drink freely

I've done everything for you for those who come to Christ so that's the first thing you need to do in response to what we've learned here and in light of the coming of Christ you need to make sure your clothes are washed that you have taken the atonement that Jesus came to bring through trusting in him and following him the second thing you need to do is you need to keep the truths of revelation close to you verse 7 look I'm coming soon blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book so remember back in chapter 1 right at the beginning he said blessed are those who hear these words and keep them in other words hearing is one thing keeping them is another keeping is actually living in light of these truths not just hearing them but living in line with what we hear day to day look at verse 10 the angel says a very interesting thing to John verse 10 of revelation 22 then he said to me don't seal up the words of this prophecy of this book because the time is near that's a weird thing to say and yet it makes sense if we know a bit of the old testament and we remember what the angel told

Daniel at the end of his prophecy now Daniel was a prophet much like John who got this apocalyptic vision of what was going to happen in the future of Israel but the prophecy he got only came true a few centuries later and so at the end of Daniel chapter 12 he's told these words 12 verse 9 this is the angel talking to Daniel he said go on your way Daniel for the words are secret and sealed until the time of the end okay so the angel told Daniel that the words are sealed up because they're not yet in effect but that's not what the angel tells John in Revelation the angel in Revelation tells John don't seal up the words of this prophecy in other words it's not talking about some time in the future that's only coming in centuries it's talking about now all the stuff that we've been reading in Revelation is applying applicable to this age now and so keep it open keep it in your mind as you look at the world around us as you read the news look at it through the perspective that

Revelation gives you and the rest of the Bible but this book Revelation is here to give us a new filter by which to evaluate the world you can actually use it to be able to hear the howls of the beasts the beasts remember Revelation the beasts are the ones who come and spread ungodly belief systems and ungodly structures into society and we know because of Revelation that they're at work doing that and so Revelation helps you to see and determine I woke up to the howls of the beasts this morning the calls to prayer from the mosques I woke up to hear that the cold air you can hear it from Weinberg and Lansdowne and all over belief structure that denies Jesus Christ that denies the return of Christ and tries to keep people away from that the howls of the beasts are all around us and

Revelation helps us to determine to see that to see what's going on and then to live according to it to stand firm for the truth even when society is trying to shut us down because we know that's what they're going to try to do keep Revelation open keep it in your mind learn to see the world in these ways if you spend nearly as much time in Revelation as you do on Facebook you'll know much more about the world than Google or Facebook can ever tell you and as you develop that biblical framework and every time you read the Bible and sit under accurate teaching of the Bible it's going to help you develop a framework by which you can see the world better and more accurately through God's perspective and as you do that it'll change how you live slowly but surely look at verse 11 again you know what does this mean this is the next thing the angel says after telling

[28 : 19] John not to seal up the scroll he says let the filthy still be filthy let the righteous go on in righteousness let the holy still be holy now what does that mean well I think it means you will either live by these truths or you don't you will go on in sin and your response to these truths will determine which one of those you are and that actually comes from the next verse in Daniel right after the angel in Daniel tells Daniel that the the scroll must be sealed up he says these words Daniel 12 verse 10 many will be purified cleansed and refined but the wickedly will act wickedly none of the wicked understand but those who have insight will understand and just as that angel told Daniel he's telling John we must have insight we must live in light of

God's revelation if we're going to go on in righteousness and if we're going to wear the right clothes for the coming new creation so that's the second thing we need to do we've got to wash our clothes we've got to keep these truths and this framework with which to evaluate our world close to us we've got to keep it open and then there's a third thing we've got to do it's actually something we mustn't do don't mess with God's words don't mess with them and we see that right at the end verse 18 and 19 look what it says I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book if anyone adds to them God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book and if anyone takes away from the words of this book and this prophecy God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city which are written about in this book okay so

John ends his letter his revelation with a warning in the strongest terms he's actually using the language of Deuteronomy this idea of not adding and not taking away we first come across it when God is giving his law to the Israelites in Deuteronomy and there's this repeated refrain this repeated warning not to add to God's law not to take away from God's law and it was a warning against the false teachers because as soon as God's law and God's instructions came into the world there were false teachers that started to manipulate it you take something powerful like that you take something powerful like God's words there's always opportunity to then use that power and manipulate it for your own ends you see that all over and ever since God has been speaking there have been false teachers who have been leading people astray by either adding their own ideas into what

God has said and then using God's law and God's words to forward their own agendas adding to God's word or they've been selectively reading it and only telling the Israelites the laws that they were able to keep and that were comfortable not the uncomfortable laws they didn't like and then people liked those teachers and gave them money and nothing has changed it happens today there are false teachers all over who are standing in pulpits right now adding to God's word in other words they're imposing their own ideas and their own thoughts and then using God's word to support their own ideas proof texting where you take text out of context and then you just quote these texts from all over to make your ideas sound more biblical and legitimate adding to God's word or there are plenty of teachers right now who are teaching the

Bible but teaching it very selectively they're picking and choosing what to teach and avoiding the uncomfortable bits or the politically incorrect bits they're taking away from God's word this warning right at the end of the Bible applies today and it also applies not just to teachers who teach the Bible selectively but listeners who listen to it selectively you must be aware of that be aware of listening selectively to the Bible only listening to teachers that teach what you already agree with finding teachers that just teach what you've already decided to believe so that they can affirm what you've already decided to believe instead of teachers who actually teach things that make you uncomfortable and convict you to change selective listening is just as common as selective teaching of the

[33 : 32] Bible and John is warning against that in the strongest terms because when you mess with God's word like this it loses its power to save and it has eternal consequences and so be careful as you handle this precious revelation from God don't mess with it don't misuse it just to make yourself feel better and avoid the difficult parts don't use it to just forward your own ideas and proof text and just take text out of context to prove a point and win an argument don't misuse the word of God and be careful who you listen to I say this realizing what my position is be careful who which teachings and which teachers you listen to don't just listen to anyone you know if you had to have surgery performed on you and it was an important surgery would you would you just go to gumtree to find a surgeon no of course you wouldn't so don't get your bible teaching from whatsapp and facebook and just random people on the internet because this is life and death stuff here because the bible is powerful and this is how it ends it's reminding us that this what

John has revealed what God has revealed through the angel to John and the rest of it as God is revealed through his apostles and prophets this is vital to do surgery on you when it's taught properly when it's treated properly so make sure you're letting this do surgery on you make sure you're listening properly and keeping it open and determining your steps day by day by this because you need to if you're going to be ready for what's coming verse 20 have a look at it he who testifies about these things says yes I am coming soon are you amongst those who are ready to say amen come

Lord Jesus let's pray Lord we do thank you for your word and just how just a couple of years ago we started Genesis and all the amazing truths about our world and our lives that you revealed from there now we we've ended revelation and we thank you for everything in between that you've made known to us truths that we need for life and salvation so that we will be wearing the right clothes clean clothes ready lives ready for your new creation ready for the return of Christ we pray that you would help us not to keep this closed not to keep it gathering dust on our bookshelves at home but every day to form habits in our lives where we where we keep your word open and not only do we hear it but we put it into practice we keep it and help us Lord to be ready for the imminent return of

Christ that is definitely coming and help us to help others to be ready for that too in Jesus name Amen