
Into Thy Word Bible Study in Revelation

Revelation 22:7-20: “Jesus is Coming!”

General idea: Jesus is coming back! There is no doubt. He is God, and as the Word, He keeps His word and He shall return. John testifies, under the greatest oath that can be, that all he has said is true, and he reminds his people (and us) to make sure we do not any wrong, rather we must do what Christ has told us to do. John even reminds us of his frailties, and how he started to worship the angel who gave him these visions, as a reminder that we are to be faithful and loyal to Christ. Then, Jesus Himself testifies to the validity of this Book, its precepts and impact for us, and that He is the Source. Christ is coming and He calls us to holiness—not to vain speculations. He will reward the faithful, chastise all those who have done wrong, and condemn those who are evil! He wants us to be among the faithful. Christ wants us to love Him—not what is wicked that will only destroy us. He wants us to be content in Him—not miserable and disillusioned by the ways of the world.

A last warning is given never to manipulate God’s Word for skewed, personal agendas, never to read in what is not there, or take away from His Word what is there. God’s Word is truth and if we seek to violate that, even by good intentions (this is how cults and heretical theologies start), we become the liars and manipulators about whom He is warning!

Vs. 22: 7-20, Contexts: This passage brings to a close the Book of Revelation and the Bible with a dynamic exhortation to all people to repent. We are left with a promise of hope and a call to develop our faith so we are ready for His return. There are so many misguided and even heretical positions being taken about this Book, this passage, and about the word “prophecy.” What most people just do not get is this very important fact: this is not about end time speculations. Rather, Revelation, as clearly testified by John and Jesus Christ Himself in this passage, is all about our development as Christians who are of faith and who are loyal and obedient to Him. John’s visions are about getting the Church lined up to God, His Way, and His precepts (Revelation, chapters 1-3).

Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Soon/swift/shortly* (Greek *Tachos*) means “quickness and speed.” These events will come about as Jesus said—suddenly and unexpectedly (Matt 24:32; 2 Pet. 3:8-18). This refers to God’s divine providence and the final phase—not a timeline. The time of waiting is over, for Christ is here. Many Christians took this to mean that it would happen soon. We need to understand God’s perspective, not our desires. This word is critical to which approach and view of Revelation one takes. If we take this word as it is in English and do not pay attention to the Greek, the *genres*, or the context, we will jump to the conclusion of immediate fulfillment, reading into it our theories of what will happen—when Jesus clearly tells us not to do that (Matt. 26:45; Acts 2:16-17; 1 John 2:18; Rev. 2:16; 3:11; 22:6-12, 20).

- *Blessed is he who keeps the words.* This is the sixth beatitude; there are seven beatitudes in Revelation, among about 50 in the Bible (Rev. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14). See Rev. 1:1-8 study for more.
- *The prophecy* refers to the testimony of God proclaimed through heavenly means—through angels as told to John, and through men such as Jeremiah and John (who was also a prophet of God as well as an Apostle.) The prophecy is about the Word of God, His testimony, precepts, and truthful prediction, and how He uses us for His means (Jer. 42:5; Rev. 3:14; 22:18).
- *Worship.* In Rev. 19:10, John *fell at his* (the angel) *feet to worship him.* John is perhaps overwhelmed by the glory and all that is seen and said, stimulating him to instinctively worship the angel; thus, the angel rebukes his error. This was a common problem that Paul addresses; angels were given higher positions and relevance by some Christians (stated in Ephesians and Colossians) than what God has assigned them to be; some people even worshiped them. John is embarrassed, yet uses his mistake as a warning for us not to miss the point of his words and this Book, that we are to know and serve Christ by faith. Worship is for Christ and Christ alone, and this is the essential component of our communion and community in Christ (Col. 2:18-19, Rev. 1:17; see study 19:1-10).
- *Do not seal up.* This is a contrast to Daniel where the scroll was sealed because it was about the future that was not yet fulfilled or fully understood before Christ had come. But, Christ broke the seals and opened the scroll, thus it is fulfilled and understood. His plan that has been made known is that salvation is by grace through faith in Him. This also means to spread the word about the Word, for it is now for all succeeding generations (Isa. 29:11; Jer. 23:20; 30:24; Dan. 12:4-9; Rev. 1:3, 11; 5:1-9).
- *The time is near.* The time is near for God, who lives outside of space and time, but not necessarily near for us. This is similar to the *last days* meaning “last period,” referring in context to the sudden nature of the *Christian era*. Again, a lot of Christians get this wrong; it is not necessarily a time reference (2 Pet. 3:3).
- *Who does wrong continue to do wrong.* This is about the refusal to repent and the consequences that result. If we do not repent, there are dire costs for which we have only ourselves to blame. If we do not submit to God and redirect our ways to His Way, we end up becoming more and more hardened, thus our own arrogance becomes the motivation to continue to hate God and His Way. Christ has done His all—and beyond—to save us (Ezek. 3:27; Jer. 44:25; Dan. 12:10; Amos 4:4; 2 Cor. 2:15-16).
- *Let him who does right continue to do right.* This means the righteous will stand with God, while those who are wicked will refuse to stand with Him. God calls us to continue our faith formation and He will empower and provide for us. (Dan. 12:10).

- *My reward is with me* means that what we go through in life, suffering in our daily grind, is well worth it when we are faithful and loyal in Him. The more we have faith and are obedient, the greater the reward; Christ will reward us truly and abundantly. This also means it is not enough to just know His precepts, but we are to know Him (Gen. 15:1; Psalm 18:20; 19:11; 62:12; Isa. 49:4; Matt. 19:17; 28:20; Luke 6:46; John 8:31; 10:7-9, 14:6; 1 John 2:3-4; Rev. 20:12 [4 Ezra])!
- *According to what he has done.* This refers to the judgment that is based on what we have done or not done; it is our responsibility. God will not just judge your actions; He will also judge your motivations! Yet, God gives us ample provision and time to turn from our evil and wayward ways to His True Word, His best Way. This does not refer to salvation, as salvation is a gift—NOT a reward (Jer. 23:22-23; Matt. 16:27; Rom 2:6; 5:15-17; 6:23; James 2:20-26; Rev. 2:23; 14:13; 18:6; 20:12-13; 22:12).
- *Alpha and the Omega* means God is the Lord of History. He is eternal, all powerful, and rules over all places and time. He is LORD of all that is past, present, and that which is to come. His will and purpose will be achieved in His timing and nothing we can do will either bring it faster or thwart it; we must surrender to Him (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; John 19:20; Rom. 8:18-25; Gal. 2:20-21; Col. 1:17; Rev. 1:8; 22:12-16). See Rev. 21:1-8 study for more.
- *Blessed are those who wash their robes* means that those who are faithful in Christ will receive the approval and good will of God as blessings from Christ, but those who reject Him will be judged. Being blessed also refers to the emotional states of satisfaction, well-being, and contentment that result from being approved by God and by the fulfilling of our duty. It is enjoying God's special favor and His Grace working in us. It is like being told by our parents that they are proud of us. Being blessed is not about wealth or material things; it is all about faith and being content because of who we are in Christ. Our *robes* imply that we must seek to be our best for His glory; if not, we are insulting the real God/Christ! We represent Christ, and our faith and obedience are our clothing. How is yours? (Matt. 5:1-12; Rev. 3:4, 18; 6:11; 7:9, 13; 4:4; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9, 14; 20:6; 22:7-14; The seven *beatitudes* in Revelation, 1:3; 3:4-5; 7:14; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14).
- *Outside.* This is not good; once this happens, it is too late to repent! If we seek evil, love what is wrong, and worship what is false, we will be held to account; and if one refuses to accept Christ as Lord, he or she will be judged and condemned. God is exclusive and supreme; nothing comes before Him (Deut. 6:4-9; Matt. 7:6; 1 John 2:23; Rev. 20:15; 21:8, 27).
- *Dogs.* This is not Lassie the beloved family pet; this refers to sexual immorality in pagan cults characterized as stray dogs running amok, dirty and disease ridden. In the Old Testament, it means those who were ceremonially impure; in Paul's time, it meant male prostitutes. (Gen. 3:24; Deut. 23:17-18; Phil. 2:3; Rev. 21:8).

- *Everyone who loves and practices falsehood.* This refers to sin and the desire to continue in sin, refusing God's grace. This also means being an apostate—one who says he or she is a Christian but his or her bad character shows that to be a lie, and that he or she is not of God. This also denotes disloyalty, even idolatry, as it is saying a god or an idea is true when it is not, and/or adultery with God as with a spouse—besides the obvious omission of truth (Isa. 44:20; Jer. 10:3; 1 John 2:22). The result is His divine judgment and punishment of no entrance into Heaven (Deut. 32:22; Isa. 65:17; 66:15-22; Mal. 4:1; 1 Cor. 3:13; 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; 2 Thess. 1:7-8; 2 Pet. 2:6; 3:7-13).
- *I, Jesus...give you this testimony.* Jesus is the Witness to the Church universal, and the angel speaking to John is bearing the very words of Christ to him. Then, John becomes the witness of Christ, not only to his churches, but also to us today through the written Word. (Matt. 22:1-14; 25:1-13; 1 John 4:1-6; Rev. 1: 2; 2:20; 6:9; 22:9).
- *Root and the Offspring of David.* This refers to the lineage of David as followers after God's heart, and a promise from the Old Testament that a Savior would come from David's line—as Jesus did (Isa. 11:1-10; Matt. 22:42; Rom. 1:3; Rev. 5:5).
- *Morning Star.* Here, this means the One who will crush the enemies of God. This name of Christ was for Jesus' first coming and Messiahship. The name first referred to the planet Venus, and was a depiction in Judaism meaning the advent of dawn or of a new day or age. Jesus is now that advent. This is also about His radiance and glory. It alludes to the kingship of Israel and points us to His Second Coming. Jesus is the true *Morning Star*, the counterfeit is Lucifer (Isa. 14:12, 13). The pagans believed that people's lives were ruled by the stars. This testifies that Jesus is the Ruler, not the stars. Jesus is giving Himself to us. Thus, this may also apply to our glorification and radiance for being in Christ (Num. 24:17; Psalm 84:11; Mal. 4:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Peter 1:12-21; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 2:28; 22:16; 22:16)!
- *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"* refers to Christ calling those who long to be with God, seek His ways, and apply His truth into their lives. It is a work of the Spirit that is also synergized by our faith and obedience in Christ and our activity in His Church, His bride (John 7:37-39).
- *I warn everyone.* This is God's most passionate warning to not add or subtract from what He says. God wants His Word protected, revered, and applied. He wants us not to be corrupt, seeking to distort His Word. This means we do not add in our thoughts to replace His or make up our own. We can add commentary, insights, applications, and encouragement as long as we stay true to His Text, because this is the Word of God and it is Holy. Thus, when we do add our thoughts, we must make sure they are lined up to His and make a distinction, to ourselves and others, between His Word and our words. In context, this is referring to Revelation, but it also applies to the entirety of the Bible (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Gal. 1:8-9; Heb. 4:12; 2 Peter 3-4)!

- *Hears the words of the prophecy.* This is an invitation to join Christ; He will welcome all those who thirst after Him (Isa. 55:1; John 4:13-14; Rev. 22:1).
- *I am coming soon.* The return of Christ, as magnificent and climatic an event as it will be, will be of no value personally if one does not get his or her act together! (John 3:36 Rev. 2:16; 3:11).
- *Come, Lord Jesus.* This was an Aramaic prayer used by the early church called the “Marana tha” (Maranatha) which is seeking the return of God or a messiah and/or a return of His Ways. It was popular under Roman occupation (1 Cor. 16:22).

Thoughts and Applications:

This Book ends with several pronouncements to *come to Him*, a beatitude that says *blessed to those who keep my Word*. The Bible is bathed in His love for us and ends with a final cry for us to come to Him, heed His voice, and practice His love to others. The question is, are we going to heed His voice? Are we going to come? Too many Christians get so captivated and fixated on His second coming that they miss the main point. His coming again is not about when or how, but what are we doing to prepare for it. That preparation has to do with our faith formation more than anything else. Christ wants us to be loyal and obedient to His Word in precepts and call. He is calling us, His people in His Church, to Him!

The Two Prevailing Views (Chapters twenty-one and twenty-two deal with the literal versus non-literal interpretation of Scripture).

There is nothing significant in the last passage for this debate (other than what has already been said) except that most commentators seem to ignore it. Yes; they ignore the most climatic, hopeful, and wondrous passage in the Bible. So much “ado” is spent on speculations and sensationalisms, that the things that are really important are ignored. In the worse way, I think it is the fear of conviction that causes many commentators to manipulate His Word—especially with Revelation. In this way, they can put the focus on elsewhere, as Satan likes us too, so what God clearly calls us to can be rationalized away or ignored, so they would not be convicted of it. Of course, if you read any of Revelation, you will see what God thinks of this practice. In the best way, it seems that many people like to come up with their own theories, which is OK to a point, but then to sensationalize them and belittle those who do not hold to their vain speculative and even sometimes aberrant views that are not even found in the passages is not OK. Thus, when they get to this passage, conviction hits home; God Himself tells us clearly, *do not do it!* Oops!

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?

3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. How do you respond to the fact that Jesus is coming back? What does it mean to you that Jesus keeps His word and He shall return?
2. Why would someone love to live a lie or love to lie? What possible benefit could he or she see in this? Why is end time speculation so popular, and yet growing in faith is not?
3. Christ wants us to love Him, not what is wicked and that will only destroy us. So, why does He put so much passion and effort in it? Are we worth it?
4. One of the fundamentals of being a Christian is that we will be rewarded as the faithful and God will chastise and condemn those who are evil! How does this motivate you for evangelism? How do you feel knowing that He wants us to be among the faithful?
5. Why does Christ call us to holiness and not to vain speculations? Why do so few Christians do this properly, as He has called?
6. John was honest about his frailties. How can this be a reminder to us to learn from our mistakes so we can be more faithful and loyal to Christ? Why would someone not want to admit their mistakes? How can you use your mistakes?
7. Jesus reminds His people to make sure we do not do what is wrong. So, what can you do to model and even say to others in love and respect to do as Christ has told us to do?
8. What does it mean to you to be content in Christ? Why are so many of us miserable, even though we are Christians? How does this compare to not being a Christian and being disillusioned by the ways of the world? What can you do better to be content in Him?
9. Why does God severely warn us to never manipulate God's Word for skewed personal agendas? Why do so many preachers and commentators seek to do just that? How does one rationalize that it is OK to manipulate God's Word?

10. What can your church leadership do to teach and model to its people never to read in to God's Word what is not there, or take away what is there?
11. How can you better use God's Word to develop your faith so you are more ready for His return?
12. What can your church do about getting its people lined up to God and His Way and precepts and to know and be prepared by faith, spiritual maturity, character, and Fruit?

Next study verse 21...

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