

Revelation #57

September 24, 2023

Series Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Behold I Am Coming Soon

Today's Message: Living In the Light of the Knowledge of Christ's Imminent Return, pt 2; Revelation 22:6-12

Last week we zeroed in on the phrase, "take heed," or "keep the words of the prophecy of this book." There is a compelling reason to take heed to the words of the prophecy of this book and that is that we would stand firm and faithful in our testimony concerning Christ. When the world, the flesh and the devil belittle, challenge, degrade and deny the authority of the Word of God, and in particular in the book of the Revelation, it takes faith and hope and courage to stand firm and not shrink back from the glories of God that are revealed in the book. Remember, to keep, or to take heed means to guard carefully and hold securely to the Truths revealed. Why? That we might have hope in order to stand courageously in the last days!

Having hope will give you courage! (Job 11:17)

Imagine being a first century Jewish believer. Just to follow Jesus required the apostles to give up everything to follow Him. Shortly after the rich young ruler walked away from Jesus, Peter said, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" And, it was not uncommon for a Jewish believer to be put out of the social and religious life of Israel just for following Jesus. We see this in John 9 when the man who was born blind was put out of the synagogue for defending Jesus. Yet, there were many who, *in hope*, trusted Jesus!

The book of Hebrews records that many OT saints— that is, those OT believers who, *in hope*, were looking forward to Messiah by way of prophetic promises— were flogged, tortured, mocked and jeered, imprisoned and even stoned to death. Many were destitute and homeless adorned in sheepskins and goatskins, persecuted and mistreated. They lived in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. Yet they took *heed* and trusted, they believed the promise of God, and were commended for their faith— faith in a promise yet to be fulfilled in Christ when He would come! (read about this in Hebrews 11:35b-39)

It was having hope in the promise of God that gave them courage!

Then, there was Polycarp, burned at the stake at the age of 85. There were the many martyrs of Iona in 806 A.D. who were killed by the Vikings; Joan of Arc in 1431 A.D.; Tyndale, More, Latimer, and Fisher in the 1500's; the Huguenots of France. Then, people groups who claimed Christ as their own throughout Africa, Croatia, Burma, India, China, North Korea, Afghanistan, and on and on. There is no end to the shed blood of the martyrs. But in each case they all died having a hope beyond this life: a hope rooted in the words of the prophets and apostles and of the Lord Jesus Christ and **His promises of things yet to come!**

In each example mentioned above, at the root of their hope was faith in Christ—the ground in which their faith was planted! And their hope was the kind of hope that displayed itself in great acts of faith, in death defying deeds and testimonies! From the oldest believer, like Polycarp, to believers as young as 4 and 5 years old their Living Hope has been their hope! And, without question, many of the martyrs were impoverished on earth but rich in heaven as they awaited, *in hope*, for their Savior from there!

It is our hope in the promises of the Scriptures, including the Revelation that give us courage to stand!

We are continuing on in Revelation 22:6-12 today. Remember we are studying the Epilogue of Revelation. The verses we are concerned with today are written to encourage believers to live responsive lives for Christ in four areas. First, (and we talked about this last week), by expressing hope in Christ by keeping the words of the prophecy revealed in the book of Revelation. Second, believers live by expressing hope through the true worship of God. Third, believers respond to the hope of Christ by a clear proclamation of the message of Revelation. And, fourth, this hope is expressed by personal purity and service before Christ.

I. (22:6-7) Hope is expressed by keeping the words of this book of the Revelation

- A. Truth: “God inspired Revelation for one purpose: to reveal the glory of His Son and call believers to live godly, obedient lives in light of His soon return.” (MacArthur)
 - 1. Have you taken **heed** to the words of this book? If so, how are you living differently now than before Revelation? If not, why not?
 - a) The OT prophets prophesied and warned Israel to listen and take heed to God’s word. They neither listened to it, guarded it, or obeyed it. **Consequently**, the majority missed the first coming of Christ because they didn’t pay attention! Take a lesson from them and learn to **heed** the words of the prophecy of this book!
 - b) **2 Peter 3:11-12a, 14**: “Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and hasten its coming. ... So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him.”
 - c) **1 John 3:2-3**: “Dear friends, now we are the children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”
 - 2. **PRN**: Hope in Christ’s imminent return is expressed in a Christ-like lifestyle that comes from keeping the words of the prophecy of this book!

II. (22:8-9) Hope is expressed by the true worship of God

- A. John identifies himself for the first time since Revelation 1:9
 - 1. He gives testimony to the fact that it was to him that these things were revealed and he verifies the truthfulness of the Revelation, as did the angel in 22:6.

- B. John expresses his awe of the Revelation given to him by the angel that he fell down to worship the angel.
1. When was the last time God's word caused a deep awe of what you learned?
 - a) Perhaps your attention was misdirected toward the preacher or teacher or author and you inadvertently heaped undue praise upon the communicator.
 2. In awe John fell down in worship before the angel, and the angel stopped him.
 - a) John had been in awe of the Revelation given by the angel in 19:10 and the angel stopped him.
 - b) Angels are great and awesome beings, but they are created beings.
 - (1) So great are the angels...but they are just servants (**see 22:9**)
 - (2) But, infinitely greater still is our God
 - (a) The Great God, served by angels, "the prophets and all who keep the words of this book."
 3. So, the angel utters the simple yet profound words, "Worship God!"
- C. Truth: a right reading and understanding of the book of Revelation will build hope in the life of a believer, expressing itself through the worship of God!
1. Worship is the major focus of Revelation.
 - a) So, while you may be in awe of the great events of Revelation, be in awe of God and worship Him alone!

III. (22:10-11) Hope is expressed by clear proclamation of the message of Revelation

- A. The angel commands John to communicate the words of the prophecy of the book.
1. "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book."
 - a) John is to reveal the words of the book and NOT conceal them.
 - (1) To make the words plain.
 - (a) The words of Revelation are to be understood in plain terms.
 - (i) Remember, symbols are often used, but you will always find a clear explanation of what the symbol means.
 - (2) To produce hope in Christ's imminent return for suffering Christians for their encouragement expressing itself through:
 - (a) Obedience: To heed, keep, guard the words of prophecy
 - (b) Worship: to glory in the Sovereign God who rules over every event in history.
 - (i) Romans 8:28: God works good for His people.
 - (ii) Genesis 50:20: God works good for His faithful and trusting people.
 - (iii) Isaiah 38:17: Even in suffering! "Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In Your love you kept me from the pit of destruction;"

(iv) God's command of the events of Revelation is clearly seen:

- (a) Of the great blessing to the reader: 1:3
- (b) Of the Churches in Revelation 1:12-13
- (c) Of death and hades in Revelation 1:18
- (d) Of all the events of Revelation: see 4:1
 - (i) The 7 seal judgements: 6:1
 - (ii) The 7 trumpet judgments: 8:2
 - (iii) The 7 bowl judgments: 15:1
 - (iv) The final judgments:
19:11-20:15
 - (v) New Heavens, New earth:
21-22

(3) To wake up the complacent and warn the unruly and unbelieving that Jesus' return is imminent.

2. (22:11) The responses of those who hear the words of the prophecy of this book:
 - a) MacArthur: "Preaching Revelation draws the line. Its truths will melt the hearts of the repentant and harden the hearts of the unrepentant. Those same truths thus become either an instrument of salvation, or an instrument of damnation." (see 1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:15-16)
 - (1) But our hope is expressed as we preach it, teach it, speak about it while there is still time!

IV. (22:11-12) Hope is expressed by purity and service before Christ

- A. (22:12) Jesus is speaking again and declares plainly to John, "Behold I am coming soon!"
 1. His reward will accompany Him and He will give rewards!
 - a) Our eternal rewards (not salvation) depend on our faithfulness now!
 - b) Basically, are you loving and living out the things God loves and hating the things God hates?
 2. How does hope in Christ's imminent return express itself in purity and service?
 - a) James 5:8: "You too, be patient; strengthen your hearts [keep them energized and firmly committed to God], because the coming of the Lord is near."
 - b) Hebrews 10:37: "Yet in a little while, He shall come quickly."
 - c) Job 11:13-14: "If only you would prepare your heart and lift up your hands to Him in prayer! Get rid of your sins, and leave all iniquity behind you. Then your face would brighten with innocence. You will be strong and free from fear."
 - (1) Tesa: "If you have hope you will examine your heart right now. Be ready to surrender that which is keeping you in bondage right now. Allow the Lord to create a clean and pure heart within you."

What must you ask from the Lord for yourself today? **The TIME IS NOW!**

- (a) This is why the Lord says in Joel 2:12, "Turn to Me **now**, while there is **time**. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping and mourning."
- (b) Job 11:15-17: "You will forget your misery; it will be like water flowing away... having hope will give you courage!"