**Revelation**

*Lesson 42 – Revelation 22:6-21*

* This section is properly the epilogue or conclusion to the book of Revelation. The visions are done and now Jesus talks with John and gives promise, exhortation, and confirmation of all that has been previously revealed.

*Verses 6-10: First Exhortation to Holiness*

1. Lest there be any doubt, the one speaking to John assures Him that all John has seen and heard are trustworthy and true. **Daniel 2:45 –** “A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain [true], and its interpretation sure [trustworthy].” **Revelation 21:5** – “And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” It is certain that God is going to establish His victorious kingdom over all the earth.
2. This is also true because God is the “God of the spirits of the prophets.” This means that God rules over and inspires what the prophets say. All the prophets of the Old & New Testaments have received their message from God, not themselves. **2 Peter 1:21 –** “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” This message has come from God who is trustworthy and true, thus His message carries those same attributes of trustworthiness and truth. This entire book is of a divine origin and revealed to John so that he might write it down for God’s people.
3. This message is described as “what must soon take place” and in verse 7 Jesus says that He is coming “soon.” Some interpretations take this to refer to the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 and that all or most of these things have already happened in the past. However, “soon” is a reference to the time period that we are now in because of Jesus Christ. We are now in the “last days” (Acts 2:17; Hebrews 1:2; James 5:3) as Jesus has inaugurated the kingdom of God bringing salvation with Him. On His return, He will consummate the kingdom of God bringing judgment with Him. So we live in this in-between time which is the next major step and is described with time language like “soon.” We are closer to the return of Christ on this side of the cross, than the Old Testament prophets were. What was future for Daniel is now being fulfilled in John’s day and will continue to unfold until Christ’s return.
4. In verse 8, John is once again tempted to fall down and worship the messenger, but the angel responds in verse 9 that John must not do that. This angel is a fellow servant of God with John (and all the OT/NT prophets) as well as a fellow servant with “those who keep the words of this book,” that is, all of God’s people. God’s people are fellow servants of Him alongside the angels. We worship and serve God and God alone.
5. All of this is an exhortation to holiness. Jesus says that “the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book” is blessed in verse 7 and the angel in verse 9 says that he is a fellow servant “with those who keep the words of this book.” **Revelation 1:3 –** “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.” The book of Revelation begins and concludes with exhortations to obedience to what God has revealed in Revelation. What is that? 1) Persevere and 2)Don’t compromise with the world. It’s a call to holiness.
6. How does all of this fit together? We’re to be holy because God’s words are trustworthy and true and if we do not persevere or if we compromise with the world, we will suffer the fate of the world. But if we overcome, even at the cost of our lives, we will be greatly blessed and rewarded by God Himself.

*Verses 10-15: Second Exhortation to Holiness*

1. John, in contrast with Daniel, is told not to seal up the words of this prophetic book because “the time is near.” **Daniel 12:4 –** “But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end.” Jesus says in verse 12 “I am coming soon” for a second time. This is reiterating and emphasizing the nearness of all of this taking place. Thus the Church needs to understand what is going to happen. Daniel wasn’t to fully understand what was going to happen as he was looking forward to the Messiah. But now the prophecies have begun to be fulfilled and the latter days have begun with the first coming of Jesus.
2. In light of the nearness of all of this, Christians are exhorted to persevere in holiness (verse 11). **Daniel 12:10 –** “Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.”
3. How are we to understand this puzzling passage which seems to command unbelievers to continue in sin? This verse comes on the heels of verse 10 which talks about not sealing up the words of this book. This book is said to bring blessing to the one who heeds it, and that implies that the one who does not heed the book of Revelation will not be blessed. Vern Poythress writes, “If people do not repent when they hear the word of God, it increases their hardness. If hearing Revelation does not change one’s course of life, it fixes one more firmly to one’s present course, on whichever side of the battle that may be.” This is a further warning. If you continue to do evil and filthiness, you will be held accountable because as verse 12 says, Jesus is coming “bringing recompense with me to repay each one for what he has done.” We need to understand verse 11 in the context of verses 10 and 12. William Hendriksen says, “We can paraphrase the verse as follows: ‘Do not hinder the man who, in spite of all pleadings, admonitions, exhortations, etc., has completely hardened himself in his wickedness: do not hinder him from continuing in his unrighteousness. Similarly, do not hinder the righteous and holy person from continuing in the way of sanctification.’” This warning and exhortation to holiness is because Jesus is bringing His recompense with Him to judge us according to our deeds and He is the Alpha and Omega and everything in between.
4. This distinction between unbelievers and believers is furthered by verses 14-15. Believers are encouraged to persevere because we are once again “blessed” which occurs earlier in verse 7. Those who persevere are those who “wash their robes.” A better translation would be “who are washing their robes.” It’s a present tense verb which indicates continuous washing from daily defilement. For those who persevere, who have washed their robes “and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:14), they are given 2 things in this verse: 1) access to the tree of life and 2) access to the New Jerusalem.
5. But all of these things are forbidden to unbelievers. They do not have access to the tree of life. They are forbidden from the New Jerusalem. Their garments are still filthy and remain filthy for eternity. We saw unbelievers described this same way in Revelation 21:8.
6. So again, we have another exhortation to holiness based on the nearness of Jesus’ return, in which He will judge our deeds. Wonderful blessings await those who have come to Him through faith and work out their faith, while punishment awaits those who have not placed their faith in Jesus Christ and is evidenced by their evil deeds.

*Verses 16-21* *Final Exhortation and Warning*

1. The angel back in verse 6 said that these words are trustworthy and true. Now Jesus confirms it as well. Lest there be any doubt (perhaps the angel was a demon masquerading as an angel of light), Jesus says that the angel spoke on His behalf. These are the words of Jesus relayed to an angel relayed to John relayed to the churches. This is Jesus putting His “seal of authenticity” upon Revelation as coming from Him. This One who is authenticating the words of this book is the One who is the Davidic King sitting on David’s throne forever and the one who as the bright morning star indicates the transition from night into day. **Isaiah 11:1-2a –** “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. **2**And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,” **Isaiah 60:3**  **-** “And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.” A bright, new, and glorious day has dawned with Christ, begun at His first coming, completed at His second coming.
2. Jesus has already said 2x that He is coming, and now the Holy Spirit moves the Church to pray, “Be coming!” In other words, we’re not praying only for the return of Jesus at the end, but we’re also praying for all of God’s will in human history to be done that leads up to the return of Jesus at the end. It means, “Carry out Your divine plan in history with a view to Your coming.” So all of the seals, bowls, trumpets, Battle of Armageddon, etc., we are asking God to bring these things about so as to move history closer to its ending. The return of Jesus Christ will be realized through all of these events in human history. The Church corporate considered prays this prayer together in verse 17, but also individual Christians pray this prayer. Individual Christians who “hear” also pray for Jesus to be coming.
3. Then verse 17 turns to a final exhortation. If you are spiritual thirsty, come to Jesus Christ. Come and drink from Him freely. Don’t hesitate. He’s paid the price. Come and drink!
4. Verses 18-19 include a final warning. God’s Word is holy and nothing is to be added or taken away from His book, just like we don’t add to or take anything away from His character and nature. You don’t tamper with the doctrine of God and you don’t tamper with the doctrine of Scripture. Any distortions of God’s truth will suffer the plagues described in Revelation. Why? Because true Christians receive Scripture as God’s truth rather than distort Scripture by adding or removing pieces. Today this would include those who receive “visions” which blatantly contradict Scripture. **Deuteronomy 4:2** – “You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you.”
5. The warning of this verse follows the “eye for an eye” principle. If you add to this book, God will “add” to him the plagues. If anyone takes away from this book, God will “take away” from him his share in the tree of life and holy city. This isn’t to be understood as a loss of salvation. If somebody is distorting God’s truth, they are not a believer so this divine warning says that for those who claimed outwardly to be Christians but never had true faith, they have no real share in the blessings of God because they truly didn’t possess Christ as evidenced by their evil deed of distorting divine truth and revelation.
6. In verse 20, we again have the coming soon of Jesus. Jesus really wants us to know that He is coming again soon. He Himself will enforce the penalties of verses 18-19 to which John responds, “Let it be so. Come on Lord Jesus!”
7. Revelation, and the entirety of Scripture, ends with a divine benediction from God to His people. A benediction is the writer (or the preacher) expressing his desire that God’s grace enable any reader of the book of Revelation to understand it and obey its contents.

**Message for Us**

1. “We are prone to think that with all the chaos and war going on in so many nations today, this world is out of control. But He is coming. That ought to reassure us. When we are despairing or panicking, we need to remember that He is coming and soon will appear.” –Joel Beeke
2. “The main pastoral point of Revelation is that faithful endurance to the end will result in eternal blessing. The main theological point of the book is that such faithful obedience leading to reward should have the ultimate result of glorifying God and Christ.” –Greg Beale
3. “Do you *want* to come to Jesus? Then come. He will never cast you out. Do you prefer not to come to Jesus? Then you have what you want and you have no one to blame but yourself. Do you *desire* the water of life that Jesus offers? If so, then drink! He gives it freely. If you don’t desire it, but prefer to slake your thirst at the well of this world and what it offers, then you can’t complain. Again, you get precisely what you desire.” –Sam Storms