BEHOLD, I AM COMING SOON

Revelation 22:6-21

Key Verse: 22:7

“Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book.”

Thank God for showing us the holy city, the new Jerusalem that shines with the glory of God. We remember that the names of the twelve tribes of Israel are written on the twelve gates and the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are on the twelve foundation stones. And God’s name is written on the foreheads of his servants. Through this God seems to be speaking to us, “You are mine; I am yours.” In that relationship we will serve the eternal God, the God of glory and grace in eternity. How awesome and tremendous it will be! May we truly have this hope in our hearts!

Today’s passage is the epilogue of Revelation. We remember the epilogue of John’s gospel. In that he described that Christian life is to love Jesus and feed his sheep, following Jesus very personally. In this epilogue of Revelation what did he record? He wrote Jesus’ promise of coming soon (quickly) thrice, “Behold, I am coming soon!” “Behold, I am coming soon!” and “Yes, I am coming soon.” What a reiteration at the ending chapter of the Bible which is written in understatement! In light of his sure and imminent coming John leads us based on Jesus’ words how we should live. He wants us to keep the words of the prophecy in this book, which is truly a blessed life, and do not seal the words of this book but proclaim them. And he gives a serious warning to those who add anything to these words or takes any word from them, which implies how serious and absolute these words are.

**First, “blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book” (6-9).** In verse 6 John wrote, “The angel said to me, ‘These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.’” How significant the expression “these words are trustworthy and true” is after actually finishing the book of Revelation! This expression is written beforehand after the description of the new heaven and the new earth, the new Jerusalem and the dwelling of God being with men and he who was seated on the throne saying, “I am making everything new!” The expression of “trustworthy and true” is the same Greek of the rider on a white horse being called “Faithful and True” (19:11) and Jesus’ being introduced as “the faithful and true witness” to the church in Laodicea (3:14).

All that are written in this book of Revelation are the words of God trustworthy and true, though unbelievable to limited human mind: a third of the trees being burned up (8:7), a third of the sea turning into blood and the whole see (8:8; 16:3), one third of the rivers turning rotten and sour and polluted (8:11) and the whole rivers (16:4), demonic horde of locust tormenting people for five months (9:5, 10), 200 million demons being released to infest the earth (9:16), people being scorched and seared by the intense heat of the sun (16:8), tremendous hailstones the size of a hundred pound cake of ice (16:21), the carnage and bloodshed over a span of 300 kilometers to the depth of the horse’ bridles (14:20), a fourth of mankind being killed and then one third of the people remained (6:6; 9:18), all will happened because God says so and his words are trustworthy and true.

God has a perfect record. He said that 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 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. He said Messiah would rise from the dead and he did.

The future record would be just as perfect as God’s past record; He has never missed anything, and he will not 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’s coming back to reign, and He is. He says there will be a new heaven and a new earth, and the new Jerusalem, and they will.

Then the angel said, “The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.” This reminds us of Revelation 1:1, “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John.” The expression “what must sook take place” is written at the prologue of Revelation and at the epilogue of this book. In chapter 4:1, the risen Jesus said to John, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” What an emphasis concerning what must take place!” All the things written in this book will take place.

Now verse 7 says, “Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book.” This is the sixth blessedness in Revelation. This is similar to the first blessedness in prologue written in 1:3, “Blessed is he who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who heart it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.” After saying, “Behold, I am coming soon!” Jesus wants us to receive the blessedness of keeping the words of the prophecy in this book. Here the word “keep” is in Greek *tēreō*. It has the meaning of “watch over” or “guard.”

Apostle Paul said to his spiritual son Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:20, “Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care.” He also said in 2 Timothy 1:13-14, “What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.” This book of Revelation is a treasure, and it must be guarded against anything that tries to destroy its meaning, tamper with it, and obscure its simple and direct significance.

And here in verse 7 to keep also certainly means to heed, observe and obey. The bride of Christ is to love him. To Apostle John loving Jesus means obeying his commands. In John 14 he clearly wrote the words of Jesus three times concerning this: “If you love me, you will obey what I command” (14:15), “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me” (14:21), and “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching” (14:23). 1 John 5:3 says, “This is love for God: to obey his commands…” We can say that the most important word in the Christians life is obedience. Those who love Jesus can obey his words. Obedience is required in love relationship. We need to keep and obey the words of the prophecy of this book as we love Jesus, who is coming.

There are some direct commands to the church in chapter 2 and 3 that we need to obey, like “Be faithful to the point of death” (2:10b), “Wake up!” (3:2), etc. There are some principles that we see through the book of Revelation, giving glory to God, worshiping God and Christ, not Satan and the beast, the Antichrist, having the patient endurance of the faiths, etc. We need to be obedient to the principles of this book.

Furthermore, seeing the glory of heaven is the issue. Seeing the majesty of Jesus Christ is the issue. Seeing the terror of hell, feeling the heat of judgment on sinners, understanding the seriousness of rejecting Christ is the issue. It is so that we can both long for heaven and witness to the lost, so that we can live a holy life and give a testimony for Christ, so that we can serve God with all our hearts, because we are going to receive an eternal reward. That’s how we keep this book. That’s what the Lord is calling for. Revelation is not entertainment. It is not high-class fascination. It is motivation to live a Christ-centred life with Christ kingdom view of the world and eternal perspective of life. It is truth to shape us.

In this ever-changing world into ungodliness and secularization, keeping these of the prophecy will not be easy. But here is the certainty of the blessedness despite this uncertain world. Those who keep these trustworthy and true words of God in this book will be truly blessed.

Then in verses 8 and 9, John wrote, “I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel, who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, ‘Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!” In chapter 1:9 John identified himself saying, “I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus…” Here in this epilogue he identified himself again, saying, “I, John, the one who heard and saw these things...” He wants the readers not to have any confusion, even a hint of who wrote this book of prophecy. John has testified to the vision and the voice from heaven. He even recorded his shameful act of even trying to worship the angel out of his overwhelming response to what he had heard and seen. This was the second time he was tempted to worship the angel after his response in 19:10 to the heavenly messages, “The wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready” and “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” In this way he testified to the truthfulness of what he wrote. The fellow servants of the angel are those who keep the words of this book. And one strong message in Revelation is, “Worship God!”

**Second, “do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book” (10-19).** In verses 10 and 11 it says, “Then he told me, ‘Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy.” God said to Daniel in 12:4, “But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.” Now it is not the time to close and seal up the words of the prophecy, but disclose and reveal the words of this book of Revelation by proclaiming them. Why? The eternal destiny is determined at the present time. Here is a sarcastic expression, “Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile.” In our understanding we should stop people’s doing wrong and being vile. Yet, such effort has limitation. Rather we should proclaim the gospel of this prophecy that when they keep doing wrong and being vile, they will face the terrible eternal destiny if they do not repent and turn their way of living here and now. When the sinner refuses the message – the warning – there is no cure for his wrong. There is no remedy for his filthiness. And the proclamation of this prophecy encourages people to keep doing right and being holy for their wonderful eternal destiny in the new Jerusalem in the new heaven and the new earth. In either way disclosing and proclaiming the words of this prophecy of this book will work, either as an instrument of salvation or an instrument of damnation. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:18, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

Then the words of Jesus are written again in verse 12, “Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” He comes to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him (Heb. 10:28). He comes also to reward his servants. Salvation and rewards can be two big matters to human beings. When we seek human rewards and human approval, we come slaves of people. But when we seek God’s rewards and his approval, we truly become free and have a true sense of accomplishment. Christ comes with his rewards. Serving him itself is his grace for us. On top of that he rewards as we live for his name’s sake and for the gospel. Jesus said in Matthew 10:42, “And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward” (Mk. 9:41). 1 Corinthians 15:58 says, “…your labour in the Lord is not in vain.” This implies that all things done outside Jesus will be in vain. Only things done in Christ will remain in the end, for he comes with his reward. He promised that he would give to everyone to what he has done.

Then he said, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, and the Beginning and the End.” Here is the triple emphasis of his divinity. He begins and he ends. His words are truly weighty and absolute.

In verses 14-16, “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.” This is the seventh, the last blessedness in Revelation. All the seven blessings are related as the eternal blessings of God. It is good to remember the seven blessedness in Revelation: in 1:3, “Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near” (1:3), “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on…they will rest from their labour…” (14:13), “Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed” (16:15), “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” (19:9), “Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them” (20:6), “Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book” (22:7), and “Behold, I am coming soon…Blessed are those who wash their robes , that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city” (22:14). Those who wash their robes are those who repent of their sins and are forgiven and purified by the blood of Jesus and clothed by the righteousness of Christ Jesus (7:14). What a blessing to have the right to the tree of life and to go through the gates into the city! This is the fundamental and utmost blessing of God.

And then in verse 15, “Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.” Outside is the same as the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The list of those who cannot have access to the holy city is written three times in 21:8, 21:27 and here 22:15. Here dogs are used to describe humans because of their impudently impure behavior. Interestingly liars are mentioned in all three as expressed, “liars” “anyone who does what is deceitful” and “everyone who loves and practices falsehood.” As we thought of in Revelation, the fundamental battle is the battle between God and Satan, the battle between true witnesses and false teachers or the battle between the truth and the lie. This was so from the Garden of Eden and will be so to the end of the age and God will make an eternal distinction.

In verse 16, “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.” Firstly and lastly Jesus says here, “I, Jesus…” This testimony of Revelation is for the churches. And when he said, “I am the Root and the Offspring of David”, he is divine and human. He is God-man. And he is the bring Morning Star. Everyone can see the Sun rise. But the Morning Star that dawns right after the black darkness, only those who search and seek and wait can see the star. He wants his church to be able to see him the Morning Star before he becomes visible to all the inhabitants of the world only to mourning in surprise.

In verse 17, “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.” Here are the expectation in prayer and the invitation in an earnest plea. The Spirit and the bride have been witnessing and eagerly anticipating Christ Jesus, the bridegroom of the church his bride. They exclaim, “Come.” It is the desire of the Holy Spirit and the desire of the Church that Jesus come.

Those who have ears to hear can put their faith in Christ Jesus and obey him. They are encouraged to exclaim, “Come.” These two are addressed to Christ. And the invitation goes to the end and cannot be omitted in this epilogue, “Whoever is thirty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.” These two are addressed to sinners. This is God’s broken and burning heart for the eternally-going to be lost, as Apostle Peter expressed in 2 Peter 3:9, “He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

In verses 18 and 19, “I warn everyone who hears the words of this prophecy of this book: If anyone adds any thing to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.” What a strong warning! This makes a contrast to 22:7, “Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book.”

Here the one who warns should be more than John himself. It could be Jesus in the speaking, “I warn everyone…” For verse 20 says, “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’” Here our Lord Himself offers an extended word of testimony regarding the authority and finality of the prophesy. He had commissioned John to write it, but He was the author of it.

Actually, this kind of warning is written Deuteronomy (the Pentateuch, the first volume given by God through Moses), Proverbs (wisdom literature) and Jeremiah (the book of the Prophets). Deuteronomy 4:2 says, “Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you” and 12:32 says, “See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.” Proverbs 30:5-6 says, “Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.” Jeremiah 26:2 says, “This is what the LORD says: Stand in the courtyard of the LORD’s house and speak to all the people of the towns of Judah who come to worship in the house of the LORD. Tell them everything I command you; do not omit a word.” The warning in Revelation is the strongest with God’s severe punishment. The warning forbids any alteration of this book as well as that of 66 books of the Bible, since Revelation is the last book of the Bible.

May we believe and keep these words of Revelation as they are and teach them as they are without addition and subtraction in this end time.

**Third, “Yes, I am coming soon” (20-21).** In verse 20, “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’” “Yes, I am coming soon” is the last words of Jesus in Revelation and in the whole Bible. Jesus mentioned his coming seven eight times in Revelation before this (2:16; 2:25; 3:3; 3:11; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20). Here is the last one. “Yes, I am coming soon.” It means he will stand on the earth again soon (14:1). After death, no one came to life. But he rose from the dead. He was ascended into heaven and he is coming back. Many prophets in the Old Testament prophesied Jesus’ coming again and all the new Testament writers did so. Jesus himself said of his coming back in many occasions while he was in the world. Now in heaven he speaks, “Yes, I am coming soon.” “Yes” means he confirms all the prophecies concerning his second coming” and he says, “I am coming soon.” We expected for 2021 to come and it came. Now it is spring and summer will come. Jesus said of the sureness of his coming this way: “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near” (Mt. 24:32; Mk. 13:28; Lk. 21:29-30). His coming is like summer coming or a new year coming. We don’t know whether summer coming is ahead or his coming, whether 2022 new year comes ahead or he comes ahead. The early church believed in imminency. They believed that Jesus could come at any moment, and they lived in that expectation. The early Christians lived in such an expectation that Jesus would come in their life time, though more two thousand years have passed since then. Still God wants us to live in such a sense of imminency of his coming in light of Jesus’ words in this epilogue, “Behold, I am coming soon!” “Behold, I am coming soon!” and “Yes, I am coming soon.”

Here is the wonderful response, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.” This is a beautiful readiness. Lord, help us to have such readiness, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

Then verse 21 says, “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people Amen.” One single most beautiful word and we need most can be the word “grace.” Most significantly we need the grace of the Lord Jesus from the beginning to the end.

Let’s remember Jesus’ words, “Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of this prophecy in this book.”