

Final Encouraging Word

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[0 : 00] And turn in your Bibles to Revelation chapter 22. Revelation 22, and we'll be reading verse 7 through the end of the chapter.

! Behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book. I, John, and the one who heard and saw these things, and when I heard 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 all who keep the words of this book.

Worship God. 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.

[1 : 08] 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.

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. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to you to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David and the bright morning star.

The spirit and the bride say, come, and let him who has, who hears say, come, whoever is thirsty, let him come, and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.

[2 : 27] And if anyone takes words away from the 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.

He who testifies to these things says, yes, I am coming soon. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people.

Amen. Revelation is a letter. I don't know if you like to write letters or not, but when I do, I find that I have a problem ending them.

I seem to always have more to say than I have room to say it. And so I sort of have the opposite problem that the apostle Paul had. The apostle Paul said, look at what large letters I use when I'm writing to you with my own hand.

And for me, it's look at what teeny tiny letters I'm using. Now, as I try to squeeze in the last little bit, maybe I go up the side and around the corner, the last words, you want your letters, you want those last words to ring well, to sound well, to leave with a good note.

[3 : 41] And revelation is that letter. And tonight we're just going to look at the very end of it. Those very last words. Revelation, like I said, is a letter. It begins in John, our revelation one, four with John saying, this letter is from John.

And it's to the seven churches in the province of Asia, grace and peace to you. That's very much how the apostle Paul wrote his letters.

That's how James wrote his letter, Titus, Philemon, all those letters. So many are like that, but revelation is special. And that it is the very last letter, the very last apostolic letter, the very last inspired letter.

after revelation, there's no more, no more. This is the very last thing that God saw fit to say to men in an inspired way.

It's about 35 years after all of Paul's other Paul's letters. And so now here, revelation, it's, it's no more. And what does God have to say to us?

[5 : 01] What does the Lord Jesus have to say to you? As he says, the very last thing that he's going to say. Before he comes again.

We're down to the very last hours of 2017. 8,754 and a half hours have now passed in 2017.

We have about five and a half left. And so what does the Lord have to tell us as we tuck in those last few hours of this year? And we forever say goodbye to 2017.

We'll never write a date with 2017 as today's date. You're going to throw away your 2017 calendars. The date will tick over and it will never come back. And so what does the Lord have to say to us at this very, very end? Well, revelation 22, 20. That's where I want to look.

[6 : 05] And our first point is Jesus has an encouraging announcement and encouraging announcement. And he says, yes, I am coming soon.

Now we're going to talk immediately how hard that is for us to swallow and to believe and to take as an encouragement. But what I want to say right away is, is it's meant to be an encouraging announcement.

I am coming soon. We're now one year closer. I don't know when it's going to happen, but we are now one year closer. He's going to come to make all things new.

He's going to make all things right. He's going to destroy the destroyer. He's going to throw death and Hades itself into this into the lake of fire. He's one year closer to bringing his entire bride, his bride to eternal life, to her final home.

And he's saying to us, I am coming soon. Hold on. Hold on. I'm coming soon.

[7 : 12] And unless he comes in the next few hours, he's not going to be coming in 2017. But 2017 brought us one year closer.

But like I said, when we hear this, I am coming soon. It's hard for us to take it as something really encouraging.

And I think the primary reason it's hard for us to take it as something encouraging is because it's been like 1,920 years since he said it. And we say, how can that, like wouldn't soon be sooner than that?

1,920 years doesn't seem very soon. 1,920 years seems to mock our hope that, yes, I am coming soon.

We don't want to get too excited about something that seems like it's never going to come. And so we have to deal with that question. We have to deal with it one way or the other.

[8 : 18] This 1,920 years makes us deal with that question. Now, Peter said in the last days, people are going to deal with that question and they're going to deal with it by mocking what Jesus said.

They're going to say, where is this coming that he promised? As if, if it hasn't happened yet, it's never going to happen. And if it was going to happen, it would have happened already.

So 1,920 years is far too long for that. Jesus is not going to come back. And so they mock. That's their way of dealing with it.

They call him a liar, mistaken, deluded, whatever, but we don't believe that about Jesus, do we? When you read the gospels, he's anything but insane.

He's anything but deluded. He's anything but a liar. We don't think that about Jesus. And so how can I say this is an encouraging truth?

[9 : 18] Well, Peter begins to, he gives one answer to that. And he says, we have to remember that he's not slow in keeping his promises. Some understand slowness.

He's, this is the key. He's patient with you. What we are seeing in 1,920 years is not slowness. It's patience.

It's not reluctance to come back. It's patience, not wanting anyone to be lost, but for everyone to repent.

And so Peter says, you have to understand this. I am coming soon is wrapped up. It's infused with the patience of our Lord Jesus, with God's patience.

You know, there's only one chance to do the second coming. Now, there's a lot of times that we can have second chances, but there's no second chance for the second coming.

[10 : 23] And when he comes, that's it. That's it. That's it for this world. There's no more chances. There's no more chances after death.

There's no more chances right when he comes that, oh, when I see him, I'll, I'll, I'll, I'll believe, I'll repent at that moment. No, when you see him, you will either instantly become a perfect saint forever.

Or perfectly wretched forever. No, no second chances. No going back. Jesus himself knows how bad hell is.

No one talked more about hell than Jesus did. He knows how bad it is. And he takes no delight in the death of the wicked, but he wants them to turn and to live.

He wants them to repent. And so he's not dragging his feet. What we are seeing in 1,920 years is his great patience.

[11 : 23] Patience with the fallen world. And aren't we glad he waited? aren't we glad he waited because that allowed us to be gathered in so he's not dragging his feet he's not lollygagging um when he says he's i'm coming soon he is saying i will come as soon as my patience runs out as soon as my patience runs out i'll be there i'll be there as soon as possible and we do that as parents don't we i think sometimes when you're a parent or someone in charge with a someone so when you're someone with a bigger picture of things you're you use the word soon and you understand that it's going to be soon but the people who don't understand everything they often question what are you talking about how it doesn't seem like it's ever going to come and so we do this as parents don't we we say to our children we're going to go to the store soon we're going to buy that toy soon christmas is coming soon your birthday is coming soon and you just need to wait but it's happening it's going to happen really quick just hold on and we mean it we we have every intention of going to the store we have every intention of of buying that toy for them uh so they ask will you play with me and we say yeah i will just hold on a minute i'll do we'll do it really soon now there might be a reason or two that we can't do it at that very moment right i mean i have these conversations all the time dad will you play lightsabers with me and i say yeah just soon hold on and i have to finish up a few things well jesus has a few things to finish up before he comes back but he doesn't want us to think that he's reluctant and coming or that he's not going to come no i'm coming very soon but i have a few things to finish up first and then i'll come the sheep have to be gathered and john 10 he says i have other sheep and other pastors i need to bring them in too and so still the lord jesus is going out and collecting his sheep and gathering them the men the nations have to be gathered and then i'll come my plan for the devil and for the antichrist and the great apostasy my plan for them have to be worked out but then i'll be there no delay there are things in my providence that i have to do first but then i'll be there so how can he say i'm coming soon because more than a time stamp more than saying it's going to be such and so so many years jesus is saying this to encourage us we say that to our children it's going to happen soon just you need to be patient you need to hold on i'm sure some of your kids like my kids or they used to would think their birthday is never going to be here they're never going to grow up they're never going to drive it's never going to happen and you say it's going to happen soon before you know it it's going to happen and that's what jesus is saying to us don't lose heart don't lose heart we don't know the day or the hour but we know he's coming he's coming back and he's going to be with us forever and now he's one year closer and as we look back at 2017 we say well that year flew by and all these other years are going to fly by between now and then and then he'll be here and that is the other thing

you know time moves differently when you're time seems differently when you're looking forward as to when you're looking backward i was eating at chipotle with a one a few months ago several months ago and we're you know how it is you just kind of sit wherever you can get a seat and you sit there and some people a young couple with a baby in a car seat came and they sat down and they put the baby with the car seat practically right next to me and they prayed i remember that and i instantly liked them i don't know much about them but their fellow pilgrims with me but i looked at that baby and then i looked at my daughter this great giant of a girl compared to the baby and instantly i thought how quickly it went how quick it went i remember and now look at her and when i got up i couldn't help myself i couldn't help myself and most of you can't help yourself if you're older than me because i've heard it from you you can't help yourself you say enjoy that time it goes by so quickly two weeks ago someone here and actually this morning someone here they have an empty nest both of them dead and they say you need to enjoy this age it goes by so quickly and soon it's over and so brothers and sisters the end of revelation it's now in a way it's taken us all the way to the end of time it's even shown us a picture of our future selves the bride of christ and in revelation uh 22 verse 17 the spirit and the bride the bride there is our the future our future selves the future

church they're saying come come to the water it's like us from the future is saying to us now come it's worth it it's worth it it's worth it just keep going and so this i am coming soon isn't so much from not 1920 years ago as it is from heaven eternal future speaking back to us saying i am coming soon it's going to happen before you know it and from that perspective you know from 10 million years from now what are we going to say well jesus came and he died and he rose again and then it was a few years and he came back there's no time at all he was back again and so hold on be faithful keep persevering keep overcoming and so that's jesus encouraging announcement saying hold on be patient i'm coming soon and then now secondly we have our hopeful response our hopeful response and the answer is amen so jesus says to us yes i am coming soon and then what should we say and what do we say amen so be it yes yes come lord jesus that's our response that's faith's response what would make 2018 the best year ever i'll tell you what it would be jesus coming back that would make 2018 the best year ever and so what are we saying when we say come lord jesus well we're saying i'm ready for this world to be done

i'm ready for this world system to be over revelation paints this horrid and ugly picture of military might and false prophets and powerful empires and global financial dealings that just grind up men chapter 18 has this great trade operations of wall street and london and walmart and amazon and ships and merchants and traveling all back buying and selling and all the riches and splendor all the pomp and the pride all the boasting of what we have and what we've done and along with it slavery and injustice and all the rest but now they're all destroyed they're all destroyed because the lamb has come and so to say come lord jesus what we are saying is i'm ready to see it all end all the injustice all the pride all the boasting instead come lord jesus come quickly and so what are we saying when we say amen come lord jesus we're saying i'm not living for any of that i'm not living for any of that that can all go away and if i have jesus i have everything i need if i have jesus i have everything i want none of it means anything to me jesus christ is my life and in the words of colossians when he appears then i will appear with him in glory none of that is my life he is my life and so come quickly because i want to live and i'm only going to live when i'm with him the world has nothing i desire give me jesus and so are you saying that you know in a lot of ways this this passage even those those four words amen come lord jesus they're like a stethoscope on our heart how much do you love jesus how undivided is your heart is it beating for the things that are eternal or is your life here this is what you want more of this just more of this and that would be fine you don't say come lord jesus because it's not what you really want he can stay away as long as he wants because what i have right here is what i want well if that's you maybe christian that's maybe where you've stumbled into or maybe that's where you're at at least see it see where you stand what will a profit man to gain the whole world and to lose his own soul revelation paints this picture of utter and complete devastation of all of that of this world's system in chapter 18 the merchants and the sea captains they are weeping over what they have lost but god's people have a totally different response all these people that live for that they're weeping because they've now lost everything but god's people it says rejoice over them oh heaven rejoice saints and apostles and prophets god has judged her for the way she treated you and the picture is babylon is in ashes there's not one stone left on top of another one it's all burnt and now it's just haunted by demons and ghosts it's just a haunted empty ruin and god's people rejoice why are they why are we so happy because jesus has come jesus has come and he's worked justice for us and so what are we saying when we say come lord jesus what are you saying you're saying i'm ready to see all that end you're saying i'm ready to see death end i'm ready to see the cemeteries in a mess i can't wait to see the cemetery across the street from my house with the gravestones overturned and the graves empty and life coming out of death and what are you saying when you say come lord jesus you're saying i'm ready to lay down my sinful self-will i am ready to be done with sinning i never want to sin again and that's going to be the best thing of all or one of the best things of all and i'm ready to hear and see the lord's prayer answered we even sang a little bit of it that your will be done on earth as it is in heaven i can't wait for jesus to come because that's when that prayer is going to be finally fully completely answered and i'm saying i'm ready to see jesus glorified i'm ready to see jesus glorified alone the only one standing that's what i want to see and so putin and trump on their knees and gates buffett and the richest people on their knees and kanye and beyonce the queen bee on her knees before jesus and so i want to see every knee bow and so if they never make another record they never make another speech they make never make another dollar that is fine i want to see jesus glorified and i'm ready to see him exalted and everyone else and especially me down down on my face because that's my joy that's my wish to have my heart

swell with unadulterated adulation perfect praise perfect worship that's what you're saying when you say come lord jesus i want to see all of that come to pass but then well what does it take to say that you know not everyone can say amen come lord jesus i know for a fact that some people are terrified at his coming it keeps them up at night it haunts them even while they lie there in their beds saying what's going to happen if jesus comes well what does it take to say that's what i want well you have to have it be confident of your reception what i'm saying is you have to be confident and when when he shows up it's going to be good for you that you're going to be received that there's not going to be any sin between you and him that he'll welcome you and all your sin will be under his blood and in order for him to get to it he's going to have to deny his own sacrifice in order for him to judge me and condemn me he's going to have to say his blood was worthless in my case and he'll never do that his cross removes all doubt and so when i see him there will be no sin and no darkness and no gloom and no shade it's going to be his heart loving me and my heart loving him a confident reception ready to see him happy to see him no fear well are you sure of that are you ready to meet him are you ready for him to come well you can be

you know there's still five hours and fifteen minutes six hours and fifteen minutes now of time left in 2017 there is still time in 2017 to be saved so why not go into 2018 ready why not go into 2018 ready to meet him not unsure why would you go another day another year without a savior why would you do that there was a savior that was born saw this a couple weeks ago savior born to you ready and able to save sinners so receive him that's faith's response come lord jesus and if we have our minds on things above like colossians says where it says set your hearts on things above where christ is seated at the right hand of god if you have your heart and your mind set on those things that's what you're going to be saying come lord jesus and last of all very quickly what until then how do how do we live until then and that's this last little bit how do we face those temptations how do we fight this undivided hearts or this divided heart where can can i find help to hold on revelation paints this awful picture of persecution this ugly picture of temptation and we have to fight on both fronts both the splendor of the world and the world can be so beautiful and so tempting and then just the sword of the world that if you don't do what it says it's going to destroy you so how do you resist both the splendor and the sword well it's right here at this very end this is our inheritance until we get everything else this is what we have verse 21 the very last word the very last words the grace of the lord jesus be with god's people amen so how do we hold on until then well the grace of our lord jesus is with us and you pray for it this is a prayer jesus i need you to help me the world is too much the devil is too much you are the faithful witness you're the king you're the prophet teach me you're my priest pray for me you're my king rule over and defend me give me strength even now jesus is with his churches walking among the candlesticks not far away but in the presence of his people with us and his eyes are on those who fear him waiting to help looking to help and he's coming soon and we want him to come but until between now and then here's our help here's your help for 2018 while you go on holding on the lord jesus is with us the lord jesus is with you his grace his heart is with you and so no matter where you are no matter what your condition married single widowed rich poor beautiful ugly slave free man woman old young if you're one of his

[31 : 28] the grace of our lord jesus is with you and what that means what that means is you have him you have him in all that he is you have his loving heart you have you have his you have you have his pity you have his sympathy you have his word you have his spirit you have his holiness you have his justice you have his mercy you have his kindness you have his righteousness you have his wisdom you have his compassion you have his glory you have his fame you have his name you have his people you have his father you have him all is yours and it's all grace and what that means is all that he is is bent in for you bent towards you bent for your good it's all working for you and so when you lay a hold of him you don't get just one little bit of him you get all of him all of his saving power all of his kingly my all of his priestly prayers all of him it's all yours it's all grace and so that's why we're going to be able to make it through 2018 and all the way to the end because the grace of our lord jesus is with us and so in 2018 we don't know we saw this this morning there's going to be lots of secret things we don't have any idea what it's going to be come what may but we do know two things he is coming soon and his grace is with us and so what we do is we say come lord jesus come lord jesus let's pray oh our lord jesus we do thank you that you are with us you are for us your grace is for us all of your heart your mercy your compassion your pity your power your wisdom your righteousness your justice it is all ours there's not the least bit of you that is against us but you are all in love for us and so we lean upon you and we want to learn in 2018 to live more upon you to drink from the living water that is in you to know moment by moment fellowship and

union and communion with you we thank you that no matter the temptation there's help in you and no matter the problem there is wisdom no matter the hurt there is sympathy no matter what we are going to face in this coming year thank you that we can know these two things that you are coming soon to undo all the wrongs to undo all the pain and that now your grace is with us you have not abandoned us but you love us and your mercy is for us lord you are a merciful savior and there are lost sinners in this room who need you please go to them and gather them in your arms and rescue them pray this in your name amen