

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"Its Time"

Revelation 22:10, 11

Introduction

1. Preaching on prophecy used to captivate the hearts of believers. The return of the Lord motivated one's soul. Recent publications have stirred some, but not dramatically.

2. To many the coming of our Lord – especially its timing – is considered controversial and better left alone. The growing affluence among Christians and the resultant "heaven can wait" attitude has dulled the subject. Life is comfy here, so why think of leaving.

3. All the information in Revelation through 22:5 is as chronological as can be. The remaining section of the book clearly appeals for studied, serious, and specific response. The Book of Revelation is a revelation "faithful and true" (22:6, 7), and exhorts to "worship God" (22:8, 9). It also affirms the "explicitness" of it all (22:10, 11).

4. Consider, therefore, two salient issues about this:

1. EXPECTANCY v. 10

This matter is explicated by the angel previously mentioned (21:9 cf. 22:1, 6, 8, 9). Note that the angel spoke his word and addressed it to "me" (John). Two important thoughts are brought to God's servant:

a. An Injunction

A bold command is spoken. Using an aorist tense negative verb with ingressive force, John is told not to begin to seal the prophecy of this book (Revelation). Make no mistake. This verb is used to close up for security (Mat. 27:66; Rev. 20:3), to hide or keep secret (cf. 10:4), but here the words (plural) of the text are not to be kept secret. God wants this Book of Revelation to be read and understood (1:3). All of this is opposite to the instruction given to Daniel (cf. 8:26; 12:4).

b. An Explanation

The reason for NOT sealing the words of this prophecy is really two-fold:

1) About time (καιρός kairos). This term means a fixed, definite period. It is in contrast with time, a space of time, whether short or long. Hence this is the period for season to break seals, not to hide or keep secret!

2) About Imminency. The Holy Spirit employs a very direct word (ἐγγύς enngus estin). To be sure a term is a given word as it is used in a given context and only has one meaning. As a word a term may have several meanings (e.g. "trunk" may be the stem of a tree or the proboscis of an elephant).

Linguistically, the word used here (ἐγγύς enngus) is in Scripture: a) Of a thing spoken while the speaker was yet speaking (Mt. 26:45). b) Of an extended period of time (1 Pet. 4:7). c) Of the eager expectancy of the imminent return of our Lord (James 5:7-9). Note that the coming of the Lord "draweth nigh" (ἤγγικε ennike). This is a perfect tense verb to be translated "has drawn near." The process is completed. At any moment we may be caught up in the presence of Christ! In the same context, this teaching is demonstrated by a figure of speech: "the Judge stands before the door" (KJV). Another perfect tense is employed and the verb (ἔστηκεν hesteken) should be translated "has taken a stand" at the door. At any moment our Lord may open the door and receive us!

Note: Since there is so much discussion about the imminent return of our Lord (Rapture), think of two fundamental questions about the matter: 1) Did the early disciples expect the Rapture at any moment? Emphatically yes. Historically all the Ante-Nicene Fathers (before 325 A.D.) were committed to the concept of imminence. Moreover, the Bible has texts in profusion (cf. 1 Cor. 1:7; 11:26; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 5:23; Heb. 10:37; 1 John 2:28). 2. What does imminence imply? It certainly does not mean Christ could return at any old time, rather, God has a specific time schedule. Hence, where we sit, He could come at any time, but God has the time-table as to when (cf. Mt. 24:36; Mk 13:32). This factor does not invalidate imminency.

2. PERMANENCY v. 11

The second salient issue of the text relates to two inviolate results suggested by a particle in the previous verse. Note that "for" (γάρ gar) is included in the phrase "for the time is at hand" hence, in view of the "imminency" of the time (καιρός kairos) attend to the following:

a. Life Choices

Four are clearly delineated:

1) The one practicing unrighteousness (present, ἀδικῶν adikon) let him keep on doing unrighteousness as an act (aorist, ἀδικησάτω adikesato) – still or more and more.

2) The one who is filthy (morally polluted, present, ῥυπῶν hrupon) let him pollute himself (middle/passive/active, ῥυπαρευθήτω hrupareutheto or ῥυπωσάτω hrupasato) – still or more and more.

3) The one who is righteous (noun, δίκαιος dikaios) let him do righteousness (aorist passive, δικαιοθήτω dikaiotheto or δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω dikaiosunen poiesato) – still or more and more.

4) The one who is holy (ἅγιος hagios, noun) let him be sanctified (ἁγιοσθήτω hagiostheto ,aorist passive) -- still or more and more.

Note: Get the connection. Do not seal the words of the prophecy FOR each of the above are to be pressed forward in their life choices. God' s prophetic word accelerates the choices.

b. Fixity Eternally

For the same delineations mentioned (see above), a most solemn truth must be heeded. When the time has come to which this prophecy treats, what is to be said for the condition of the groups recorded?

1) He who is practicing unrighteousness must remain that way – still.

2) He who is filthy must remain filthy – still.

3) He who is righteous must remain righteous – still.

4) He who is holy must remain sanctified (set apart) – still.

What this means is that the day of grace is over. The day of God' s eternal wrath and judgment has come. The door of mercy is closed. Men are now settled in the condition in which they are found. The seal of permanence has been set upon the spiritual condition of all.

Conclusion The written prophecy affirms the coming of our Lord. We know not the hour, but it is at hand. Sadly, what Scripture records moves some deeper and deeper into sin, rejection of the Gospel, and hatred of God' s Truth. Others, thank God, move more towards righteousness and a sanctified life. Face up to it – which way are you moving. With your whole heart, choose the Lord Jesus Christ. Change while there is time. Do it now!