Look! I am Coming Soon!

Revelation 22:6-21

Key Verse: 22:12 “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.”

 In the previous chapter we learned the beautiful picture of new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem. The Lord made everything new because the old order of things passed away. We saw the glimpse of the New City, New Jerusalem where are decorated with all kinds of beautiful and precious stones and jams. Someday we will pass through the pearly gate and walk on the streets of gold. Someday we will walk along the river of water of life and eat the fruits of the tree of life by the river. There is no temple because the Lord himself is our temple who dwells among us, and he will be our God and we will be his people. We don’t need sun or moon because the Lord gives us light and the Lamb is its lamp. There will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain, and the Lord Jesus will wipe every tear from our eyes. What a great city we will enter! What a glorious place we will dwell! What a marvelous hope we have while living on this earth! Let us run the race of faith to the end until we enter this holy city and until we receive the victor’s crown from our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen!

 Today’s passage is the last chapter of Revelation and the conclusion of all what we have studied thus far. Thank God who enabled us to run to this point for the last several months. I pray that God may help us to finish strong. The conclusion of Revelation contains three repeated topics like theme melody in music. The first is the truthfulness of the testimonies (revelation). The second is the imminence of Jesus’ second coming. The third is the warning and invitation for salvation.

First, the truthfulness of the testimonies. Look at verse 6. “***The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angels to show his servants the things that must soon take place***.” Many people, even among Christians, are hesitant to believe the book of Revelation as the absolute truth of God. They think it as a fantasy or imaginary fiction, or unrealistic fairy tale. But the angel said in verse 6, “*These words are trustworthy and true*”. In chapter 1:1 John also said, “*The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place*.” In 1:2-3 John also described this revelation as the word of God, the testimony of Jesus Christ, and the words of the prophecy. Jesus showed this revelation to John through the angels so that he may testify what God is going to do for this world in the future.

 Look at verse 7. Jesus said, “***Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll***.” Jesus blesses those who keep the words of Revelation. John also started this book in the same way in 1:3, which says, “*Blessed is the one who reads aloud 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) Here, we learn that God will bless us when we read it aloud. He will bless us when we hear it and believe it as the trustworthy and absolute word of God. We all desire for God’s blessing. Right? God’s blessing is our strong faith in the absolute word of God. Amen!

While God blesses those who believe Revelation as the absolute truth of God, he judges those who do not do so. Look at verses 18-19. “***I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll***.” God warns those who add or subtract from the book of Revelation. In the Garden of Eden, the serpent tempted the woman by adding and subtracting the word of God. By twisting the words of God the serpent made the woman confused and doubted about the absolute truth of God’s love. God will punish those who manipulate the word of God for their selfish purpose. Above all, those who do not have absolute faith and attitude in God’s word will lose all blessings and benefits in the kingdom of God.

Second, the imminence of Jesus’ second coming. As I mentioned at the beginning of this book, Revelation starts with the second coming of Jesus Christ and ends with the second coming of Jesus Christ. In 1:7 John said, “*Look, he is coming with the clouds, and “every eye will see him,..*” Jesus also said in 22:7, “***Look, I am coming soon****! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll.*” Jesus said that he would come soon. Here, the word ‘soon’ is translated as ‘quickly’ in KJV, but also has a meaning of ‘suddenly’ in Greek version. Jesus will come quickly and suddenly as no one knows the day or the hour. In this chapter Jesus repeated three times the imminence of his return. In verses 12 and 20 Jesus said, “***Look, I am coming soon…***” (v 12) , “***Yes, I am coming soon***.” (20)

 Some may say that Jesus didn’t come soon as he had said. In fact, there were many believers who had expected the imminence of Jesus’ return even during their lifetime. Some left their homes and shelters and entered to caves and catacombs by waiting for the day of Jesus’ second coming. They all died without seeing Jesus’ return. Still, Jesus didn’t come. He may not come while we are still alive on this earth. He may not come during my grandchildren’s lifetime. But he may come again tonight or tomorrow night. No body knows when. But he will come quickly and suddenly. Therefore, we must be ready like the five wise virgins in the Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. In the parable, ten virgins were waiting for the bridegroom who promised to return. The five wise virgins prepared oil in their lamps and waited for the bridegroom at night. The five foolish virgins didn’t prepare oil, making excuse that they didn’t know when the bridegroom comes. At night while the ten virgins were sleeping, the bridegroom suddenly came back. The five wise virgins lit their lamps and went out to welcome the bridegroom. The bridegroom took them to his wedding banquet. But the five foolish virgins who didn’t prepare oil missed the privilege to welcome the bridegroom because they didn’t prepare oil. Here, the bridegroom indicates Jesus, and the virgins are believers or his church. Jesus concluded this parable in this, “*Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.*” (Mt 25:13)

 As for us one thousand years seems too long to wait. To some even one month and one day is difficult to wait. But as the Bible says that with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. (2 Pe 3:8) According to God’s calendar, only two days passed since Jesus had promised to come. Then why did not Jesus come again for the last two millennium? How long do we have to wait for him? Still, no body knows, but we get the answer from Peter, who said, “*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance*.” (2 Pe 3:9) According to Peter the Lord is waiting for God’s time, which is best time for him and for us. God wants to save even one more person from the final judgment. God wants to bring even one more soul to his kingdom. This is the reason why Jesus didn’t come yet, and this is the reason why we have to preach the gospel to the end. Jesus said in Matthews 24:14, “*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come*.”

 Verse 12 teaches us what Jesus is going to do when he comes again? Look at verse 12 again, “***Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done***.” Jesus comes again to give reward to those who do good and to judge those who do evil. Paul also said the same in Romans 2:6-8. “*God “will repay each person according to what they have done.” To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger*.” Jesus said that he would reward according to what we have done on this earth. As he said in the Parable of the Ten Minas, he will reward his servants according to what they have done. Our best reward is the crown of life. This is the victor’s crown for those who became faithful even to the point of death. (Rev 2:10) This crown of life is given to those whose robes are washed by the blood of the Lamb and to those who overcame this troubled world. All those who ran the race of faith ahead of us received this reward such as Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Paul, Peter, John, and so on.

 In verses 14-15 Jesus clearly distinguishes those who receive reward from those who are punished. “***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***.” The blessed are those whose robes are washed by the blood of the Lamb. They have right to the tree of life and go through the pearly gates into the Holy City. On the contrary Jesus called those who do evil ‘dogs’ which will stay outside. Here the word ‘outside’ which is *exo* in Greek, also means ‘without.’ The place for those who are without the robes is not outside of the Holy City, but in the fiery lake of burning sulfur according to 21:8.

Third, come! Jesus identifies himself in several ways in this chapter. He said in verse 13, “***I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.***” Jesus said that he is God who existed in the beginning and who will come again at the end. Jesus is the Creator who started this world and the Judge who will judge the living and the dead. He is the pioneer of our faith and the finisher of our salvation. He also said in verse 16. “***I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star***.” In this verse Jesus meant that he is the Promised Messiah who would come as the root of Jesse and offspring of David. He is the fulfilment of all the prophecies and promises in the Old Testament. He is the King of the Jews, the bright morning star, who the magi followed from the east to worship. Jesus is our Messiah and true object of worship and love. He is our salvation.

 Therefore, come to Jesus! Look at verse 17. “***The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.***” The Holy Spirit and the church invite those who hear this testimony to Jesus, who is the Creator, the Messiah, the Bright Morning Star, and true object of worship. They invite those who are thirsty for the living water welling up to eternal life so that they can take the free gift of the water of life. Jesus invited a thirsty Samaritan woman for the living water. (Jn 4:13,14). Jesus also invited all those who are thirsty at the festival of the Tabernacle, “*Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them*.” (Jn 7:37,38) Those who come to Jesus will receive the Holy Spirit as rivers of living water. Jesus will baptize them with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit which flows down from the throne of God will flow within us when we come to Jesus and are washed by his precious blood. Amen!

 John, the author of this prophecy, confirms the truthfulness of his testimony again in verses 18,19. Anyone who adds something to his testimony will be punished with plagues. Anyone who takes away something from his testimony will be taken away from the tree of life in the Holy City. Jesus who endorsed his testimony said again, “***Yet, I am coming soon***.” (20) John responded it by saying, “***Amen. Come, Lord Jesus***.” ‘Come, Lord Jesus’ is known as ‘*marana-tah’* in Aramaic. Christians are the people who repeat ‘*marana-tah*’. Let’s say it again. “*marana-tah*.”

 In conclusion I really thank God for helping us to finish study the book of Revelation. As I mentioned before, I hesitated to study the book of Revelation. In fact, I didn’t like it because of negative pre-occupation about dealing with Revelation. I was warned to interpret all the visions and symbols properly. I also don’t like unrealistic stories. I like the story of God’s beautiful creation. I believe that God opened the Red Sea and let the Israelites cross it like dry land. I love the story of Jesus and believe all his teachings and works written in the four gospel books. But the book of Revelation seemed to be unrealistic like a fairy tale such as ‘the Lord of Rings’ or one of Greek myths. So, I used Revelation only for Bible reference when I taught the Bible to my students. But after studying Revelation I changed my mind. I came to believe that it is the absolute word of God and truthful testimony of John. There should be nothing to be added or be taken away.

 After studying this book three things came into my mind as clear truth. First, I will meet Jesus. I will meet him in heaven if he comes after I die. I will meet him on earth if he comes before I die. Either way I will meet him. Second, I know my place after I die. Before I studied Revelation, the picture of the kingdom of God was blurry even though I believed it. But after studying it, the picture of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, was clear to me. Third, I have to fight a good and holy fight to enter the kingdom of heaven. Salvation came to me as free gift. I didn’t do anything for my salvation because Jesus did all on the cross. I was saved only by God’s grace and received salvation as free gift. But for entering the kingdom of God I have to fight the good fight to overcome the world. I have to go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God as Paul said. (Ac 14:22)

 I thank God that you all have joined my journey in studying this book of Revelation. We are all in the same boat heading toward the kingdom of heaven. I pray that no one, not even one, may miss or drop out from this journey. I pray that we all may get to heaven and pass the pearly gate and walk on golden streets. Above all, we all may sing Hallelujah and say Amen and worship the Lamb, who was slain forever and ever. Amen!