

## Revelation 22:12–21 (ESV)

**MPS: Returning to the Return of Christ is your power to persevere.**

### INTRO:

- We are now in the epilogue of the Revelation.
- This is the LAST sermon in the series...today we finish.
- Our feeling: two *seemingly* conflicting emotions
  - Glad to see the conclusion of the Revelation series
  - Sad to see the conclusion of this series
- This letter has been about perseverance – how to overcome when under attack
- Chapter 12 is the epicenter where we see the dragon being defeated by the child...but now the dragon is after the woman...the people of God.
- This letter is written in apocalyptic language – meaning a mystery is being unveiled ... like a curtain being drawn back to see a drama unfold
- Last week we learned in 22:6 that the symbolism is over – the transmission complete.
- We saw the final curtain had been drawn.
- The Lamb himself steps out in front of the curtain to issue a final word.
- Behold, I am coming soon.

**PRAYER:** *“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.”*

### OPEN:

- How many of you have ever felt this... you have this God moment in a conference, service or group time. It is as if the volume on this loud world has been turned down and the volume of God has been turned up? THEN... you go back home, work, life as usual and the volume of the world and all you are facing is turned up LOUD!
- It could be business at work, being needed at home, frustrations with friends, co-workers, church, neighbors... your stress builds, your anger simmers underneath, you become tired... then you think...“how did this happen? I was just so peaceful in the presence of the Lord?” The volume of the world turned up and seemingly the volume of the peace and joy of the Lord turned down? Anyone?
- Richard Baxter was a profound and prolific pastor/preacher/theologian. However, he suffered terribly in this world. He was asked on occasion, “given all your sufferings, how have you persevered so productively all these years?” To which he replied, I think about heaven for 30 minutes every day.

- Isn't that what we have been studying about, meditating on, seeing unveiled in these last two chapters of Revelation... It's all about the Return of Jesus and what awaits those who have surrendered to Him.

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**Vs 12** *"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.*

- On this day, Jesus will bring both the negative and positive components of His judgment.
- For those who have rejected His grace and forgiveness, He will bring disastrous judgment based on the works of unbelievers
- For those who have received His grace and forgiveness, He will bring anticipatory reward based on the works of believers.

**This isn't 'salvation by works' it is 'judgment by works'**

- So we don't grow weary of doing good, but endure, persevere in good doing.

**2 Thessalonians 3:13 (ESV) 13** *As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.*

**Galatians 6:9–10 (ESV) 9** *And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. 10* *So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

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**ILLUSTRATION:** The kid who suffers through the waiting of three months until his parents take him to Disney World

- He's still got to go to school, do chores, He's still got to save up his money for souvenirs, He's still got to endure a boring 6 hour car ride to Orlando.
- What keeps him going? Staring at and dreaming over the map of Disney World - Considering the worthiness of meeting Mickey and riding rides and all the wondrous sensory input

- And Disney World, no matter how awesome it is, can never meet your expectations...But the New Creation, in the presence of Christ, will exceed our expectations

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**Vs 13-14** *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” 14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.*

- *Alpha* is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and *omega* is last letter of the Greek alphabet.
- From A to Z, and all that is between belongs to Jesus!
- But what exactly is it that falls between A and Z?
- Human history! All of human destiny and history that was in the scroll we saw unfold on the stage of the Revelation.
- This is why he's qualified to be the judge of the entire human race.
- He is the originator of human history, the alpha, the first, the beginning, and he is the consummate of human history, the Omega, the last the end,
- He is History's Lord AND Eternity's Lord – Lord of ALL!
- Blessed - Happy, fortunate are those who washes his/her robe?
- Do you know your robes are dirty? In other words, do you know your life is dirty? Instinctively yes...you know. BUT do you know how to wash your life?
- By the blood of the Lamb.

**Vs 15** *Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.*

- In keeping with this imagery and metaphor of the city, he means that these people are external to the eternal fellowship of God's people in the new creation.
- All those whose robes are still dirty

**Vs 16** *“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”*

- “You” is plural here – this is for the 7 churches AND for us today. OVER and OVER, this book has testified to us! Exactly to what/whom has it testified?
- All throughout the OT, there’s a promise that a king from the line of David will appear as the Messiah who will rule the world.
- Jesus is often referred to in the gospels as the “son of David.” So, he is the descendant of David!
- He's claiming to be the Messiah, God's coming king who would punish God's enemies save God's people and rule the recreated world
- BUT... Jesus Christ is not only *David's descendant*, the shoot, which sprang up from the David’s lineage. Jesus Christ is also David's SOURCE! He is the root of David.
- This is speaking of the two states of Christ – His humanity (descendant of David) and His deity (the root of David)
- Bright Morning Star: The promise of Isaiah 60:1-3 is Christ and the “new morning” he brings with his rule; Jesus is the one who will bring forth a new and everlasting age of eternal perfection, joy, and union between God and Man; as the Bright Morning Star, he brings the dawn of a new Genesis 1:3, proclaiming once again: Let there be light!”

**Vs 17** *The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.*

- Some would argue that this is a call of evangelism to the lost, BUT, who is the passage talking to? Who is the audience? It’s a letter to the church... not a call to the lost. It’s a call for the church to persevere.
- We’ve already learned that the bride is the church that the Lamb finds ready for marriage when he comes again.
- In the Revelation, the bride is always seen from the vantage point of her glorification, her perfected status, the vision of the bride is always the vision of the church *in eternity*.
- In contrast, however, the seven churches in Asia Minor, is in soiled clothes, compromised, indifferent, wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, naked... Also, the case for the church today.

- John sees the church in the future with all of her struggles now behind her.
- To the church in the present, empowered by the Holy Spirit, John is pleading with us saying, keep coming, keep coming, keep coming. So that you can take the living water.

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**Vs 18-19** *I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, **19** and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*

- We don't tamper with the Word of God that illuminates the Son of God that leads to the Worship of God.
- In these two verses, John is referring to Deut 4 where Moses quotes God as saying, "don't add to nor take away from the Word of God" (paraphrase). This periscope of Scripture is steeped in the context of Israel's idolatry.
- In other words, John is clearly stating to the churches, do not fiddle with the word of God so that you can serve other Gods...It says what it says, and the judge of human history has the right and power to establish what is good and right for Him and His people – don't twist it for your own idolatrous desires.

**Vs 20** *He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!*

- Christ ends with the promise: *Surely*, I am coming soon!
- What is the right response? Yes, Lord...please come soon!

**Vs 21** *The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.*

- Jesus has said 3 times in this chapter in some form, "I am returning." All of the things surrounding His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming and the eternal state is because of His grace.
- Grace is God's goodness toward those who deserve only punishment
- Even our works in which we are rewarded come from the power of His Spirit. We can do nothing apart from Him.

## What about what happens to John when the vision is done?

He's still an old man, enfeebled and scarred body  
He's still far away from the churches he's pastored and loved  
His mind and heart are just like yours and mine!  
The experience will be in his memory, fading  
The volume of life on earth gets loud again  
Don't you think he's going to end up being tempted by doubt again?  
He's going to need to keep these words  
He's going to have to return and return and return to the words of Christ

What does He go back to remember?

- Summary of Revelation - from John's perspective. Here is what JOHN sees when he returns:
  - He showed me 'Who He Is' in all his splendor - It's all about Jesus (chp 1)
  - He used me to minister to His people – the church – It's not about me (chp 2-3)
  - He showed me the glory of God and the Lamb (chp 4-5)
  - He saw human history and destiny in the scroll opened by the only worthy One - the Lamb (chpt 5)
  - He gave me visions of his righteous judgment against the enemies of God (all the plagues) like little movie trailers – (chpts 6-18)
  - Jesus is like Aslan – He is not safe but He is good
  - He showed me the true people of God belonging to Him – His church – a number so large he couldn't count (chpts 7 and 11)
  - He showed me the marriage feast of the Lamb and ultimate victory that belongs to us too. (chpt 19)
  - He remembers the white robes, the white horses, the glorious feeling of seeing the backside of the glory of Jesus – not unlike Moses. (chpt 19)
  - He is assured he has the power to plunder satan's palace (chpt 20)
  - He remembers that one day all sad things will become untrue (chpt 21)
  - We can face any battle because THE battle has already been won
  - He showed me the eternal state with all its glory – and best of all the presence of a life giving, ever loving God who sits on his throne.
- That's good for JOHN – BUT How will we persevere? By the grace of the Lord Jesus.

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- The volume of 'life' gets turned up when the visions are done – what does John do, He turns up the volume of the Revelation to douse doubt and to flourish in faith – the power to persevere for John was to return to the return of Christ.
- And may it be so for us Greenbriar – that *The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.*