



**Sunday School Lesson Summary for May 27, 2007  
Released on Wednesday, May 23, 2007**

**"Christ Will Return" (Anticipating Christ's Return)**

**DEVOTIONAL READING: John 16:17–24.**

**BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Revelation 22.**

**PRINTED TEXT: Revelation 22:6-10, 12-13, and 16-21.**

**TIME: about A.D. 96**

**PLACE: from Patmos**

**HOW TO SAY IT**

BARNABAS. *Bar-nuh-bus.*

COLOSSIANS. *Kuh-losh-unz.*

CORNELIUS. *Cor-neel-yus.*

EPHESIANS. *Ee-fee-zhunz.*

ISAIAH. *Eye-zay-uh.*

THESSALONIANS. *Thess-uh-lo-nee-unz* (strong accent on *lo*; *th* as in *thin*).

**LESSON TEXT**

**Revelation 22:6-10, 12-13, and 16-21**

6And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

10And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

...

12And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

...

16I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

17And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

20He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

## **LESSON AIMS**

After participating in this lesson, each student will be able to:

1. Elaborate on several subjects used to conclude the book of prophetic revelation given to the Apostle John.
2. Realize that the promise of Christ's second coming is fully dependable and should be awaited with keen anticipation.
3. Be daily reminded that the sure hope of the return of Christ ought to help believers deal with difficult situations as they arise.

## **LESSON OUTLINE**

WORSHIP ADMONISHED (Rev. 22:6-10)

WORKS AFFIRMED (Rev. 22:12-13)

WARNING ANNOUNCED (Rev. 22:16-21)

## **INTRODUCTION**

Everything seemed normal early on September 11, 2001, when a certain passenger jet took off. But soon a group of terrorists seized control of the plane and directed it toward Washington, D.C. The plan apparently was to ram the jet into the White House, the symbol of U.S. freedom and power. This was to be the last of four planes scheduled to wreak death and destruction on U.S. values and infrastructure that day. When passengers began receiving cell phone calls from concerned family members, those aboard the plane soon realized that this hijacking was not motivated by the desire to extort money. This was an attack against the U.S. itself. A group of ordinary citizens began to see their present situation in light of the bigger picture. They decided to ignore their self-preservation instincts and attack the attackers. The result was a jet that crashed into a field in Pennsylvania rather than into a building in Washington, D.C.

We often get so busy with our lives that we let our busyness drown out the bigger picture of life. Yet every now and then something makes us look up and see that picture. Once the passengers aboard that jet became aware of the bigger picture, they made right decisions because they understood what was at stake.

Today's lesson focuses on the end of the book of Revelation. It calls Christians everywhere to "look up." It is a call to get out of the smallness of our individual circumstances and start acting with reference to the magnitude of eternity.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

The point at the end of the book of Revelation is the same point that John has made all the way through: the Lord's victory is certain. His future return is the hope that enables us to remain faithful in the face of trial. It is important, though, that we

understand the meaning of *hope*. In modern English this word often means something like “wishful thinking,” as in “I hope I win a new car.” But *hope* in biblical contexts means something more like “expectation.” Christian hope is not wishful thinking but rather is confident expectation. As the writer of Hebrews notes, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

Thus, Christian hope is our certainty that the Lord will indeed return. If we know friends are coming for dinner, we are expecting them and that means action is required. An important aspect of expectation is the way that our awareness of what is to happen affects how we prepare for that event. Christian hope reveals its true colors in how we live our lives in the here and now.

The book of Revelation helps the reader develop this true Christian hope. As John comes to the end of the book, all his points will support this major thrust.

## **QUESTIONS**

### **I. WORSHIP ADMONISHED (Rev. 22:6–10)**

#### **1. Who are the speakers in this week’s Scripture text?**

Earlier the speaker was identified as one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls of wrath to be poured out upon the earth (21:9). Now, however, the speaker seems to be Jesus Himself (22:7), though some suggest that the angel was merely echoing the words of the Lord, since John fell at the feet of the angel (vs. 8). That a precise identification of the speaker is not made should not trouble us, though, especially when we remember that from the very beginning this is the “Revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:1) given to John through an angel. “The difficulty of identifying speakers is only superficial because ultimately we hear the voice of Christ, whether echoed by an angel or recorded by the prophet” (Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, Eerdmans).

Whatever the case, the one speaking to John reminded him, “These sayings are faithful and true” (22:6). This is understandable, for Christ is “the faithful and true witness” (3:14) and the conquering King known as “Faithful and True” (19:11).

#### **2. How might we understand the Lord’s promise to “come quickly” (Rev. 22:7) in light of the length of time since the promise was made?**

Since we are living nearly two thousand years after John originally received these visions, some find it puzzling that he was told that what he saw were “things which must shortly be done” (22:6).

From the standpoint of the eternal God, time is insignificant, since He operates in a different realm altogether. Concerning those who mock believers because the Second Coming has not yet occurred (2 Pet. 3:3-4), the Apostle Peter said, “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (vs. 8). In short, essentially only two days have passed on God’s prophetic calendar since early Christians were told that Christ would come again.

The Lord Jesus’ declaration “Behold, I come quickly” (Rev. 22:7) should not be seen as an erroneous prophecy. As Peter pointed out, one of the reasons for the seeming postponement of the Lord’s return has to do with His patience toward the human

race. He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

More important than trying to discern God's timetable regarding prophetic events is being faithful to His teachings-hence the blessing upon those who keep the words of the prophecy found in Revelation (22:7).

### **3. How did the angel describe himself to John (revelation 22:8,9)?**

As he had done previously (19:10), John fell in worship at the feet of the revealing angel. Once again, John was told not to worship the angel.

Significantly, the angel reminded John that he was only a fellow servant of the apostle, other prophets, and all those who are faithful to the teachings of the "Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:1). *This includes us!* Our faithfulness is confirmed by doing precisely what the angel told John to do: "worship God" (22:9)!

### **4. Why must we worship only God?**

In a nutshell, God is the only One worth worshipping! "To worship any person or object other than God is a form of idolatry (see Exo. 20:3-5)" (*The Nelson Study Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishers).

Here, John is overcome by the experience and makes the mistake of attempting *to worship ... the angel*. Even given all that the apostle John has seen and experienced, he still makes big mistakes! Even when we try our best, we too will make mistakes.

John undoubtedly knows of the occasions when Cornelius bowed down to Peter (Acts 10:25, 26) and when villagers tried to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:11-18).

### **5. Why was John told not to seal the prophecy?**

For John to be told "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (vs. 10) was quite the opposite of what was usually done in Jewish apocalyptic literature (cross reference Dan. 12:4). There are two reasons he did so. First, he had received his message directly from the Lord, and not from ancient sages (or wise men) who may have warned those entrusted with the message to keep it secret. Second, the time was at hand; that is, the fulfillment of the Apocalypse was imminent.

Again, we must be reminded that God's timetable is different from ours; we should not try to second-guess God regarding His eternal plans and purposes. "The end is always near in the sense that each successive Christian generation may be the last" (Mounce). We must therefore be ready for the return of the Lord. As Paul said, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:1-2).

## **II. WORKS AFFIRMED (Rev. 22:12-13)**

### **6. What role do works play in the final judgment?**

An old saying in the Christian church goes, "We do not work to become saved, we work because we are saved." While works do not save (Eph. 2:8-9), they are

nevertheless the basis of judgment. With regard to the lost, their works condemn them (Rev. 20:12-13). With regard to the saved, though, works are both the fruit of faith (Eph. 2:10; and Jas. 2:14-26) and the basis of eternal rewards (1 Cor. 3:10–15). “The final judgments of both the wicked and the righteous will be judgments of works. This is the joyous expectations of those who are faithful and the fear of those who have not been faithful” (Walvoord and Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor). Works are not the means of salvation but the result!

### **7. Why did Christ identify Himself as “the root and the offspring of David” (vs. 16)?**

By identifying Himself as “the root and the offspring of David” (22:16), Christ was claiming the promise of Isaiah 11:1: “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” Earlier in Revelation, Christ was identified as “the rood of David” (5:5).

That the Messiah would be a descendant of David is clearly taught in Scripture. The angel told Mary, “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:32-33). These promises were now coming to complete fruition!

### **III. WARNING ANNOUNCED (Rev. 22:16-21)**

#### **8. Why is Christ called “the bright and morning star”?**

Christ also referred to Himself as “the bright and morning star” (Rev. 22:16). A prophecy in Numbers 24:17 states, “There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel.” “The star was a familiar symbol in Jewish writings for the expected Davidic king... The morning star is a promise that the long night of tribulation is all but over and that there new eschatological [“Relating to the end of the world or events associated with it,” Merriam-Webster.com] day is about to dawn” (Mounce).

#### **9. Who offers the great invitation? Who is invited (v. 17)?**

Revelation 22:17 consists of four invitations. Some see the first two invitations directed to Christ for His return and the latter two as invitations to the world. Others, however, see all four invitations as directed toward the world.

Obviously, the “Spirit” is the Holy Spirit and the “bride” is the church of Christ (v. 17). Those who have responded to the Spirit’s call and become a part of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) must now extend this invitation to others. The redeemed have had their spiritual thirst quenched by the “living waters” (John 4:10), and they must invite other to “take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17). Far from excluding any who desire to come, the invitation is to “whosoever will.”

#### **10. What strong warning is given about altering the message of Revelation?**

As the Apocalypse draws to a close, there is a strong warning not to tamper with the message that has been revealed to the apostle. Similar warnings are given elsewhere in Scripture (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Josh. 1:7; Prov. 30:5-6; Gal. 1:6-9).

“These verses... are primarily a strong warning to false prophets not to alter the sense of John’s prophecy in this book, either textually or in its moral and theological

teaching. So severe is the danger he is warning against that John says that those who teach contrary to the message of Revelation will not only forfeit any right to salvation in the Holy City but will have visited on them the divine judgments ("plagues") inflicted on the beast worshipers" (Barker and Kohlenberger, eds., *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Zondervan).

Because of this warning given at the end of Revelation, some have been fearful of any attempt to interpret or understand the book. This warning, however, was not given to keep people away from the study of Revelation but to remind them of the seriousness of tampering with God's Word. Indeed, there is a blessing pronounced upon all those who read, hear, and keep these prophetic words (1:3).

The Son of God again confirms that His return is near (Rev. 22:20). "Redemptive history remains incomplete until Christ returns. It is for the final act in the great drama of redemption that the church waits with longing" (Mounce)

## **CONCLUSION**

There was a long period of time when the doctrine of Christ's second coming was downplayed. Thankfully, it is now receiving much more attention. No one has the right to set dates for prophetic fulfillments, but many conditions in our world would indicate that the time is growing ripe for the coming of the Prince of peace.

Consider such things as nuclear destructive power, rampant secularism, declining morality, and worldwide terrorism. Does hope of Christ's return give you optimism and a reason to persevere or carry on?

The Son of God affirms that His return is near (Rev. 22:20). With great anticipation, John and all the faithful pray, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Similar to the final words of several New Testament epistles (letters) (see 1 Cor. 16:23; Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23), John offered a final prayer for his readers: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

## **PRACTICAL POINTS**

If we desire God's blessing, we must scrupulously heed His Word (Rev. 22:6-7).

Faithful servants deserve honor but not worship (vss. 8-10).

We should strive for justice now but recognize that perfect justice awaits Christ's return (vss. 12-13).

The promise of Christ's coming should move us to present the gospel to all (vss. 16-17).

We must be on guard against any distortion of God's Word (vss. 18-19).

Christians should be joyously anticipating Christ's return, not dreading it (vss. 20-21).

## **THOUGHT TO REMEMBER**

Christ's return is certain.

## **PRAYER**

Lord, help us to prepare the world for the hope that You have for us. In our own lives help us to use the message of Revelation to overcome all that stands between us and serving You and Your people. In Jesus' name, amen.

## **ANTICIPATING NEXT WEEK'S LESSON**

Next week begins a quarter about being committed to doing what is right. The lessons will be about life among God's people, finding what God requires, and our response. The lessons will take in Old Testament prophetic books. Read Amos 5:10-15, and 21-24 for next week. This passage will challenge injustice. *Good studying!*

## **LESSON SUMMARIZED BY**

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