



Choose the King! (Revelation 22:6-21)

The Purpose of Revelation: Be Holy Because Jesus is Holy!

Hopefully, we've gotten the point by now that Revelation was not written so that the church would speculate about when Jesus was returning. Acts 1:6-8 made that quite clear:

6So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

*7He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
(Acts 1:6-8 NIV)*

Revelation was written to induce holy obedience among God's people so that having persevered; they will receive the reward of eternal salvation. Back on Patmos, the Apostle John sent this book to the seven churches. These Christian communities lived in a world that wanted nothing more than to "normalize Christianity into a homogenized Roman pudding of good Roman citizenship. Christianity's challenge is not *unbelief* but *dulled* belief; not *misbehavior* but *blurred* behavior." (Peterson) The world wants to dilute or pare away what Jesus demands (vv. 18-19). "Everything in this modern world is somehow inexplicably geared to inducing sleep in our souls. Modern society is a veritable cave of Morpheus — the mythical place where men forgot reality and succumbed to dreams."¹ Christ will have none of this: "Wake up and get dressed!"

"I am not making this up!"

Three voices speak in vv. 6-21—the angel, the Apostle John, and Jesus himself. In some of the vv., it's hard to tell who is doing the talking:

- Angel--v. 6
- Jesus--v. 7
- John --v. 8
- Angel--vv. 9-11
- Jesus--vv. 12-20a
- John--vv. 20b-21

¹ Maurice Roberts, *The Thought of God* (Carlisle, Pa.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1993), 105. Also, "Popular culture has the power to set the pace, the agenda, and the priorities for much of our social and our spiritual existence, without our explicit consent. *It requires a great effort not to be mastered by it.*" (Kenneth A. Myers)

Though we hear three voices, there is only one message from one source. All that John has seen and written has come from the throne of God. Each voice asserts the divine origin of the spectacular visions of this message.

“These words are trustworthy and true!”

“I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things.”

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify”

Don't mistake the symbolism of Revelation for fiction. The symbols describe reality. And the reality is deeper, larger, and truer than the sign. Therefore, “Get dressed and be ready.”

It's more fun to worship angels than it is to wash clothes

This is the second time the Apostle—that's right, Apostle—John mistakenly worships the angel. Would we be immune from this were we to see such splendid visions? The seventh and last beatitude of Revelation (1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, & 22:14) blesses believers who don't just *hear* the Word but *do* the Word. Jesus is not just their Savior; He is their Master. This means going back to their dark, godless culture and being light. It's more fun to worship angels than it is to wash clothes. Wash clothes anyway. It means saying: (1) Come, Lord Jesus! Invade this earth and renew it! We're ready! (2) Come to Jesus! Any who thirst! Come drink! Christ thirsted so that we may drink the water of life without price. Jesus died outside the city so that we may live forever inside the city! (Hebrews 13:13)

God has called His people, the New Jerusalem and Holy Bride, to be dressed and ready! What does that look like? The idea is not about hoping we're at a Bible Study when the Lord comes. Or, at Sunday morning worship; as if the employees suddenly look busy when the boss pops in. Martin Luther was once asked what he would do if the world would end tomorrow: "I would plant a tree today." In other words, we show our readiness by feeding the hungry, sharing the gospel, praying with our spouses, reconciling conflicts, and being a priest at work; a bridge between our colleagues and God himself! My attitude is that I'm not merely an employee; but a pastor. My job is to show by my life on this earth that the New Heavens and Earth are real!

Jesus gets the last word—“I am coming soon!”

Coming soon has several layers of meaning: (1) it is the *very next* event in biblical history! In God's redemptive drama, Christ will invade earth—and take over. (2) “Soon” also means quickly; when it occurs, it will happen so quickly that it will be too late to switch sides. (3) “Soon” is God's time clock, not ours. We know this from sports: Two minutes left in a football game means 15-20 minutes. A 40 minute college basketball game takes a little more than two hours. *8But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:8-9 NIV)*

The object of the work of redemption is not limited to the salvation of individual sinners, but extends itself to the redemption of the world, and to the organic reunion of all things in heaven and on earth under Christ as their original head.

The final outcome of the future, foreshadowed in the Holy Scriptures, is not the merely spiritual existence of saved souls, but the restoration of the entire cosmos, when God will be all in all under the renewed heaven on the renewed earth.” (Abraham Kuyper) COME, LORD JESUS!