

'I Come quickly.'

by Martin Knapp

The sermon emphasizes the urgency of Christ's return and the necessity of holiness in the lives of believers as they prepare for His coming.

Scripture: Revelation 22:7-20

Topics: "Christ's Return", "Bible Authority"

Description

Martin Knapp preaches on the Divine Authority of Revelation, emphasizing how Satan has sought to cast doubts on its inspiration due to its magnification of Bible holiness, Jesus Christ's reign, the overthrow of sin, and the imminency of Christ's Return and Kingdom. Despite efforts to obscure its revelations, God affirms its Divinity and commands His people to heed its prophecies, promising blessings to those who keep its words. The book of Revelation warns against idolatry, emphasizes the necessity of holy character, and issues a final warning to the wicked, declaring their eternal exclusion from the blessings of holiness.

Transcript

The Divine Authority of Revelation. -- No other book in the Bible presents so strong claims of inspiration as this, and yet no other has been so questioned. The following are doubtless some of the reasons why Satan has so persistently sought to shroud it with so many doubts and false interpretations:

1. From beginning to end it magnifies the reality and triumph of Bible holiness, which he and his agents hate.
2. As the reign of holiness and the reign of Jesus Christ are identical, it also mightily magnifies the personality, the Divinity and the triumphs, present and eternal, of Jesus Christ and His people.
3. It celebrates the overthrow of sin and of all that is opposed to holiness.
4. It advertises the capture of Satan and his agents, and their eternal banishment in the lake of fire.
5. It vindicates a holy God and a holy people, and magnifies their establishment on the new earth, wherein "dwelleth righteousness," and in the holy city, where they triumphantly reign forever.
6. It mightily magnifies the imminency of the Return and Kingdom of our Lord.

In view of these and other related facts, Satan and his emissaries have done their utmost to blind to the startling and glorious revelations of this blessed book. On the other hand, God has fully established its Divinity, and obligated His people to hear and heed it in the following ways:

He declares it to be a "revelation of Jesus Christ," given "to shew unto His servants things that must shortly come to pass." (Ch. 1:1.) In the very beginning of the book, a heavenly blessing is pronounced upon all that read its words and "keep the things that are written therein."

In chapter 22:7, this beatitude is repeated, the angel declaring, "Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book." Awful judgments are pronounced against any that shall add to its words. Jesus Himself declares, "If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book." Christ also pronounces a fearful penalty against any that shall subtract from it, saying, "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book."

"Worship God." -- In heaven, as on earth, adoration of any other than God Himself is idolatry. John here, as in a former instance, mistaking a mighty angelic minister for God Himself, fell down and worshipped him, but was at once upbraided by the commandment, "See that thou do it not." The pure worship and service of God, when the Bride shall be promoted, unhampered to do His service and to behold His face, will be one of the sweetest employments and enjoyments of eternity.

Proclaim the Message. -- John was Divinely commanded, "Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand." Though people disregard its messages, and increase in unrighteousness and filthiness, yet this should prove an incentive to righteousness to those that are righteous, and of higher degrees of holiness to those that are made holy. The whole book is a revelation of things which shall shortly come to pass, even of the return and reign and everlasting victory of a holy God and His people; and all its messages are commanded not to be sealed up and hidden, as Satan and befogged theologians would have, but to be proclaimed and magnified, that people may be blessed in "hearing" and "keeping" the things that are written therein. This commandment stands out a burning rebuke to the emasculating ministry that derides the preaching of the return of Jesus as a sidetrack to be feared, a diverting subject that will hinder the very holiness that its proclamation is Divinely declared to help.

Wages Certain. -- The great rewards for service are here magnified. The estimate in which God holds the rewards which he offers as incentives to holy living is seen in the frequency with which they are mentioned in the Word. He here declares, "My reward is with Me, to render to each man according as his work is."

Holy Character. -- The absolute necessity of holy character as a prerequisite to a right to the Tree of Life and to entering in through the gates into the city is here again magnified. Like a final trumpet-call to a sleepy and deluded people, who fancy that they may have a part in these things without holiness, it is again declared that only those who have washed their robes have this right. Pure hearts, pure lives, and pure characters are the only ones to whom these transcendently glorious privileges are guaranteed.

A Final Warning to the Wicked. -- The cannonade of warnings to the wicked with which this book abounds closes with the final declaration, "Without are the dogs," people of dirty, snarling, snapping characters; "and the sorcerers," all who engage in the manufacture, sale, or use of tobacco, intoxicants, and kindred poisons, and all religious deceivers; "and the fornicators," those guilty of fleshly lust, and also of spiritual adultery; "and the murderers" of either the souls or bodies of men; "and the idolaters," those who adore anything or any one above God; "and every one that loveth and maketh a lie," is possessed of the

character of Satan. All of these, by Divine decree as well as their own character and choice, are excluded for ever and ever from all of the enjoyment and the fruits of holiness which the covenant of God guarantees to His holy people.

"I Am." -- The authority and magnitude of these messages are further manifested by the statement that they are dictated and sent by Christ Himself; that they come from Him who declares,

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End," "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright, the Morning Star." Hence, all of the revealments and all of the commandments and promises of this book are clearly as authoritative to the believer as the Four Gospels. Jesus gave the Gospels when here on earth, and He gives expression to this, His last Gospel after He was glorified; hence, the person is equally criminal who neglects or minifies this book as he who does the Gospels recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

For the Church. -- "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things for the Churches." It is repeated in this book that its messages are not secrets that can not be understood, but that they are revealments that are proclaimed. It is declared that they are revealed for the express purpose of being proclaimed to the Churches of God -- another nail in the coffin of the unscriptural teaching that Revelation is a sealed book, and that the return of Jesus should not be preached to the Churches.

The Two-fold Invitation. -- "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and he that heareth, let him say, Come." The Bride of Jesus and the Holy Spirit who fills her, both unite in echoing this invitation, "Come." In response to the word which comes from the royal Bridegroom that His return is near at hand, they say, "Come." To the multitudes whom He has redeemed with His precious blood, the unsaved, the unprepared, and to the slumbering, they say, "Come with us, and we will do thee good." To unsanctified believers, who are saying, "My Lord delayeth his coming," they say, "Come, and prepare; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

"And He that Heareth, let Him say, Come." -- Woe unto the hearers of these eternal truths who neglect to make the preparation of heart which prompts the true believer to say "Come" to sinners perishing around him, and also to the King whose return is herein magnified.

Conditional. -- Final participation in the glories of the new heaven and of the new earth is conditional. It is only those who thirst so intensely that they will turn away from every earthly joy, and, like Moses, choose to "suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, having respect unto the recompense of reward," that will finally become partakers of the water of life.

The Time at Hand. -- This chapter declares that "the time is at hand." Three times it is proclaimed in these closing verses, "I come quickly." Thus, in His very last message to His ministry and His people, Christ proclaims the imminency of His return. While no man may know the day nor the hour, yet Christ Himself declares that "it is at hand." As it will occur the moment certain conditions are met, and as no one can tell just when that will be -- as it might have been in an earlier day, and may be at the present time -- it behooves every reader to be constantly ready. It is now nearly two thousand years nearer than when these words were first proclaimed, and when we remember that a thousand years with Him are as one day, and one day as a thousand years, His words come with added emphasis.

To those who, like the unfaithful servant, are saying, "The Lord delayeth His coming;" to all who are eating and drinking and plunging on in business regardless of His warning; to His slumbering children who are

neglecting to take the oil of holiness with them in their vessels with their lamps, and who have not on the white garment; and to all, either in pulpit or in pew, who are eliding, opposing, and discouraging the proclamation of His speedy return, so mightily magnified in all His messages, He warns in this chapter, with a mighty voice, as of threefold thunders, "I come quickly!" Though God's "quickly" and man's have differed, yet they soon shall meet and kiss each other.

"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." -- This is the spontaneous heart-response of His Bride to the sweet promises of the return of her beloved Bridegroom. Regeneration brought her into an experience where she learned a hearty "Amen" to all of His will; the baptism with the Holy Ghost, which sanctifies wholly, makes it the joyous response of her whole being. Through the sanctified temple of her whole being there echoes continually the victorious, beautiful anthem, "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!"

His coming means to her the ringing of glad marriage-bells and union with Him forever, such as that which she now experiences in her heart as a glad pledge and foretaste. It means the defeat of all her foes, the realization of all her brightest hopes and noblest aspirations.

It means her union with all the saints of all the ages, who, with their glorified bodies, shall celebrate the marriage in the skies and reign with Christ triumphant. It means the damming up of the awful stream of human souls with which Satan is swiftly peopling the regions of eternal despair. It means that the holiness which she has embraced and preached and confessed, and for which she has been ready to lay down her life, becomes universally and eternally triumphant. And it means, finally, after her wedding in the skies, after her glorious bridal tour to earth, and sweet millennial reign, after her complete vindication before an assembled universe, then, at last, has come the sweet, glorious, long-anticipated housekeeping in the Bridal palace, where, with her adorable Bridegroom, she shall reign for evermore.

The Benediction. -- "The grace of the Lord Jesus" -- the grace that saves, the grace that baptizes with the Holy Ghost, the grace that makes more than conquerors, the grace that finally glorifies and enthrones with Jesus in the city of the New Jerusalem -- be with the saints for evermore. AMEN!

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