

THE IMPORTANCE OF BELIEVING THE WORD OF GOD

Our theme is “Behold, I come quickly.” I am happy about this theme, but I am fearful about this theme. The Lord wants to speak final things which means something is going to happen soon. It is a bit of a challenge because we are beginning at the end. Revelation chapter 22 is where we find our verses for this week. It is hard to start at the end at the beginning. I know some people read books and they cheat. They read a couple of chapters and then read the last chapter. I do not think I have to offer a spoiler alert; **GOD WINS**. The Lord Jesus is glorified and God’s perfect will is done.

The Lord says, “Behold I come quickly.” But sometimes if we start with that, we miss all that is involved. If we only read the back of the Book we may miss the feeling of what has gone before. John was brought through some revelations that are amazing, and when he came to the end, the Lord spoke. During this week, may we be caught up in the Spirit so that we can find ourselves so deeply in His throne room that we can hear His voice and respond with a full heart of faith. This is what we are asking and it is a bit of a challenge.

Our Father, we come to You, and we are so thankful for Your precious Word. We are aware of the fact that You specifically spoke to us in Revelation 2 and 3 when You spoke to the churches, knowing that there were only a few who had an ear to hear. Lord, we want to be those who have an ear to hear what the Spirit is speaking to the churches. Do help us as we come in at the end and gather up all that needs to be gathered for us to understand and to hear these precious, intimate wonderful words of our Lord: “Behold, I come quickly.” May this be written in our hearts as well as our response—“The Spirit and the bride say, Come. Let he who hears say, Come. Come Lord Jesus.” Even as we are gathered here, Come, Lord Jesus.” We know that Your Holy Spirit will help us enter in and come into a greater fullness of understanding as we are together. We depend upon Him, and we know that when we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus, all the resources of heaven are granted unto us to fully understand what You are speaking to us in these final days. We thank You, Lord, that we are gathered together. Now gather our hearts before Thy throne. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Revelation 22:6-21—And he said to me, These words are faithful and true, and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bondservants the things which must soon take place.

“And behold, I am coming quickly, Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”

I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

But he said to me, Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.

And he said to me, Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

Let the one who does wrong still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy, and let the one who is righteous still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy."

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

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

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices lying.

I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

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 wishes take the water of life without cost.

I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

We know that our three theme verses, "Behold, I come quickly; the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him who hears say, Come," are very special words. They are intimate words. They are words that you cannot take in a simple way, but we have to have our hearts and our spirits tuned to hear what God is saying in this message. I read this epilogue because I wanted to bring in the context around which these three verses are written. There is a single predominant burden in this epilogue, this final word. It is absolutely essential that you and I believe the Word of God. We see that the final emphasis before the end of this Book is that unless we believe with living faith this living Word we cannot enter in.

These words are familiar to many of us. We have read through it many times, but sometimes the familiarity we have with this Word can prevent us from hearing what the Spirit is saying through the words. It is not just enough to have some kind of vision, for the visions that the Lord would grant to us by a Spirit of wisdom and revelation are based upon the Word of God, the Scriptures that we have been given. I want us to see what the angel says about the importance of believing the Word of God. We live in an unbelieving and wicked generation. Jesus spoke about His generation as wicked and unbelieving. How much more unbelieving is this present generation in which we live!? And if we are honest with ourselves, that unbelief has infiltrated into the hearts of so many Christians. There is so much doubt that it is possible that we can read this great revelation of Jesus Christ given us in this last book and frankly not believe it. For me it is impossible for anybody to read this book without repenting, and one thing I hope we can do is rethink, repent, turn around in this matter of our believing the words that are spoken in this book. And so this is the import of what is being spoken in the context as we read it.

John Is Overwhelmed at the Revelation of Jesus

Now we have to back up just a second to realize how overwhelming this revelation of Jesus Christ must have been to the apostle John. Whatever he saw of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and on the Mount of Olives as He ascended to heaven is eclipsed by the Jesus he saw in the spirit on the island of Patmos when God revealed the Son of God, Jesus, in amazing ways. John was overwhelmed. We do not know how long it took John to write it down, but he said, "I wrote all this down," and he was an old man. We assume he wrote for a while, saw some more, and then wrote for a while longer. Whether he wrote it all in one sitting or it took him a while, we do not know; but we know these things were written in his heart. He was overwhelmed. What visions he saw of Jesus! As he was on the island of Patmos, suddenly he heard a voice and he turned around and saw a Jesus he had never seen before. Yes, it was Jesus—the glorious High Priest, the King with eyes of fire, a voice like many waters, so full of glory that John fell down like a dead man; and that was just the beginning.

An angel caught him up to heaven, and through his tears of weeping he sees the Lamb coming out of the midst of the throne, and he said, "That is my Jesus; that is the One I love, that is the One who says He loves me. Look at Him! He is coming out with angels, celebrating. He takes the scroll in His hands, full of history. Destiny is in His hands, and the Lamb of God is ruler over the kingdoms of this world.

Then we see Him as a mighty Angel with His feet straddled over the earth and the sea saying, "There will be no more delay." And the angels are saying, "The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ." What a mighty revelation!

John gets caught up once again and he sees the Lamb of God standing on Mount Zion with the overcomers. A few visions later he sees this Lord Jesus as the mighty conquering warrior coming down on a white horse and taking His kingdom with a host of an army from heaven. Then he sees Jesus sitting on the white throne of judgment, finally taking care of all that is needed to be taken care of since the beginning of time. Then this angel takes him to a high place and he sees the new Jerusalem coming down and there is Jesus sitting in the midst of the throne with God. Now you can see God and Jesus in the middle of the new Jerusalem which is made out of stones that are totally transparent. Everybody is a living stone and all of these stones radiate Jesus—Jews, Gentiles, all who have been saved. Every aspect of the new Jerusalem is full of Jesus. And out of the throne of Jesus comes a river, trees, healing and life. Is there any wonder that John fell down and worshipped the angel? What an overwhelming vision!

In that moment he fell down and this is what he said in verse 6: "And he said to me, 'These words are faithful and true.'" All that he had seen are faithful and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bondservant the things which must soon take place." Then he is disoriented because now Jesus is speaking in verse 7: And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

John Falls Down At What He Saw and Heard

"Wait a minute; that must be Jesus," and he goes down on his face and he is worshipping. The angel says, "No, it is just me." It was a little confusing to John. When he heard the words, "I

am coming quickly,” it was not the angel; it was Jesus speaking. But John was in such a place that he could hear some ministration of an angel as if it were God Himself, so he fell down. This is the second time it happened. The other time was when the angel said, “These words are faithful and true and the bride has made herself ready.” John fell down and the angel said, “No, don’t worship me. It is God who has done all this” (Revelation 19:9-10). I hope you forgive John for falling down on this one, but when he heard, “I am coming quickly,” I think John made a quick equation in his mind, and he fell before the Lord Jesus. What a revelation!

Here is the amazing thing. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, John got to know more and more about Him. He got to know that He was the Logos and that He was from the very beginning. The Spirit opened his understanding as to who He was, and there were continuous revelations of glory. Every one of those amazing revelations was just seeing what he knew by faith. He knew Jesus was the High Priest, but he had never seen how glorious this High Priest was over His church. He knew, of course, that He was the Lamb of God. From the very beginning he followed Him because John the Baptist said, “Behold the Lamb of God.” But now He sees the Lamb of God coming out from the midst of the throne, he sees the Lamb of God standing on Mount Zion. He had never seen Him in such fullness before. Whether it was His greatness or His coming again a second time as the Messiah to claim His kingdom, He had seen all that by faith. Now he is seeing visions being fleshed out of what he had seen by faith and now seeing by sight. It is an amazing revelation.

What John Had Read in Daniel He Now Sees Fleshed Out

Also when you take into account that God basically gathered up all the prophecies of the Old Testament of final things that needed to be done, of judgments that needed to happen before the Messiah would come, John saw all that as well. What a book of seeing trials, martyrs, the antichrist, and that which he had read in Daniel now seeing it fleshed out. He could see the antichrist for the beast that he was, the harlot of Babylon, the war in heaven, and all the gathering up of the prophecies in the Scriptures.

John Knew the Word of God and Was Able to Understand the Vision

This is my first point. When the angel revealed to John these visions upon visions of Jesus Christ and this background of final things that were to take place, if John had not known the Word of God, he would not have understood the revelations. This is how important knowing the Word of God is. When you go through the book of Revelation, you only find perhaps one or two places where the Old Testament is actually quoted in a verse. But, in fact, in the book of Revelation there are more than five hundred allusions to the Old Testament. You need to be steeped in the Old Testament to understand some of the visions in the New Testament. And John was such a man; he loved the Word of God. So when he saw these visions, there was enough connection with that which had been foreshadowed in the Old Testament that he could understand what he was seeing. The Word of God is that important to us.

These precious statements in Scripture: “Behold, I come quickly,” are all based on prophetic meat meant for bondservants and martyrs. This is a powerful word. It cannot be entered into lightly. These words are meant to encourage men and women who were dying and

suffering persecution for their faith. For some reason God has laid upon our hearts to speak these words now which seems to indicate that He is preparing us for final things. This is not a book of speculations for scholars: "I think this vision means this and this." This is not meant to be movie plots for Hollywood. This is meat for men. This is the stuff that bondservants understand. This is consolation, comfort, and edification for those who are going through it for Jesus Christ. Do you believe these things?

As we look in the context here, basically there are three simple things that the angel has to say about the Word of God and believing the Word of God.

These Words are Faithful and True

First of all, this is very unique in chapter 22. It is not very often in the Word of God that you find the Word of God saying this is the Word of God. But the revelation given to us is so important that the angel underscores the faithfulness and the truth of the Word and the revelations that John has already seen. When it comes to believing the Word of God, we need to see what the angel has said in verse 6: "These words are faithful and true, and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bondservants the things which must soon take place."

The Lord attests to this Word of God. We know historically that this book of Revelation has been attacked, disbelieved, mocked, and scoffed at more than any other book of the Bible. The challenge for us in this last day in the midst of an unbelieving generation is: "I tell you these words are faithful and true." Now that is for us to stand on. These words are very important. God revealed them to help us, but unless we believe them, they are merely simple words.

What do these words "faithful and true" mean? First of all, the word *faithful* means this word that I have given you through these revelations of Jesus Christ are sincere. They have not been added to nor are they hyperbole. The angel has faithfully delivered the messages: "Take it down, John, depend on it; live by it; believe in it. These words are faithful."

They are not only faithful, they are true, which with John means objectively true and real; there is a spiritual reality. All the things we have heard and seen of Jesus, seeing Him in His glory, mark it down. These words are faithful and true. Believe it.

The Word Is Real and Not Fantasy

What a challenge to this age! Revelation is not fantasy. I do not know if it is a sign of the end of civilization that people are opting out for fantasy rather than reality. People have decided now that marriage is too difficult so they had rather live with a fantasy online. Kids do not bother with relationships; they are just too busy having a fantasy relationship. Life has become fantasy. If you read the book of Revelation you can probably say, "I saw that movie." Many movies in the last ten to fifteen years are fantasy movies, and mythological movies have found their source in this. It is all fable and fiction, all fantasy. This Bible is not fantasy, and we need to make that clear distinction.

In fact, at the end of the first century the religions of this world were rife with mythology, fables, made up stories of God's coming down and having relationships with women out of which came people who were half-god and half-man living here on earth. There was a hierarchy

of angelic beings, some bad and some good, fighting one another. This was common in John's day, even as it is seemingly more common today.

But the angel said, "John, this is not fantasy, it is real stuff." Now it is true that there is a lot of imagery given in the book of Revelation, but we must understand that apocalyptic literature, as the book of Revelation is called, does not mean it is less true. Actually what it means is that there is a reality so intense that we cannot understand it, but we are given imagery in order to try to understand something that is more real than the imagery. We read of the great dragon in the sky in Revelation chapter 12, but the reality of Satan is even greater and more powerful than the red dragon. You think Babylon is bad in the book of Revelation, but the harlot Babylon is worse than it is portrayed. The antichrist is worse than it is portrayed. Jesus Christ is more glorious than can be portrayed. We are dealing with something our minds cannot fully embrace. So the angel gives us visions and images of a reality that is greater than we can possibly understand.

Right now we are in a much greater spiritual conflict than most of us are aware. Sometimes we feel like the devil is bothering us a little bit; but actually the devil is trying to condemn us day and night. He is working out his schemes upon us and if it were not for the blood of Jesus and God's restraining power, we would all be on the ground, sick, weary, doubting and defeated. But thank God for His great power that has withheld from us the tremendous spiritual opposition that is a present reality. It is important for saints to have their eyes open to that reality, not so we can be fearful, but in order for us to stand on the side of the King of kings and the Lord of lords who is gaining the victory. But that takes living faith, and so the angel is saying, "These words are faithful and true."

There has been some controversy in modern days about the book of Revelation. The early fathers were unanimous when they made it part of the New Testament Canon. When this book was written, there were testimonies outside of the Bible testifying to the veracity of the fact that these things were written by John as he saw them which he said in verse 8: "I saw them and I wrote them down." And there were people from those seven churches in Asia Minor who attested to it and said, "John did write these down and he did see these things."

To give you one example, there was a famous overseer named Papyrus in Hierapolis, which is a sister city of Laodicea. He was a disciple of John, and he was martyred for his faith. But one of the things he enjoyed doing in his lifetime was collecting everything he could find that the apostle John had written. He may have collected II and III John and some of the other ones. Papyrus loved his elder brother John, and he attested to the fact, and we have it in the literature of the early church that this book indeed was written by John according to the experiences that the Lord showed him on the island of Patmos.

John Wrote Revelation and the Angel Testified to It

But the greatest attestation for me to the truth of the Word of God is the fact that John himself wrote it. Now John is the brother who tells us so much about the importance of walking in the light and who gave us revelation of what it meant for Jesus to be the truth. And if there was a disciple that we could say had a particular message regarding truth we would say it is John. These are not lies; these are not fiction; these are not hyperbole. They are not things

made up by an old man who was drowsy one day and thought he saw something. No, this is John who says, "And these things are faithful and these things are true."

Now this angel testified to John these things and when John heard: "Behold, I am coming," (v. 8) he fell down. I do not know how many times an angel has come to you and spoken to you and shown you such things, but I suppose that would be enough to convince you. If it were not enough, in verse 16 Jesus interposes and speaks Himself as if the angel is not true enough: "And I, Jesus (not the angel anymore), have sent my angel to testify to you these things for the churches." This book, this message, this word, "Behold, I come quickly," was written by Jesus and testified by Him. Can we have any greater attestation than that? First the angel says it, then Jesus says it, and it is written down.

Now the question is: do you believe it? Can you break through all the puzzling things, all the skepticism of this modern age and believe what Jesus says? Do you believe? Do you have a hearing heart? He says He is coming. Is that extraneous or do you believe it? "Well" you say, "it has been over two thousand years." That is not the point. The point is when we are caught up in the Spirit and we are before the Lord, can you hear Him saying, "I am coming quickly"? Are we even in that position to hear that or are we so full of unbelief? We hear it, however it is more than hearing, isn't it? There is a need for readiness and a perfecting in our lives in order to hear these words.

Notice what Jesus says in verse 16: "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

Verse 12-13: "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

The first question or the first aspect that we need to lay hold of is this: Do we believe this word? Is it faithful? Is it true? The Spirit wants to convince us of that fact.

The Blessedness of Believing This Word

Read, Hear, Heed

The second thing that has to do with this matter of the Word of God is this: the blessedness of believing this Word

"Blessed is he who heeds the words of this prophecy of this book" (v. 7b). There is that word *heeds*. Maybe that is the catch.

If we go all the way back to chapter 1 when the Lord first comes to John and by an angel says, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy and heeds the things that are written in it for the time is near" (v. 3), maybe we can say that there are three different levels of believing. "Blessed is the person who reads this." Have you read it? What is the difference between reading and hearing it? Many people may have read this book, but have they heard what the Spirit is saying as they read it? It is not only someone who has read it, but how many have heard it?

And the third one is "he who heeds the words of this prophesy." There is some kind of response, something to do. Actually the Greek word is, "he who holds this prophesy." How well do you hold this? There is faith. You have read it, you have heard it, and you are holding it. This

word has become a word of life to you. To hold it means that this word is now influencing and changing your life. There is something that changes in our lives when we have seen it, heard it and are now holding it. What does holding this word do? "Behold, I come quickly"? Now do you hear it? Do you hold it? If you hold that word, you draw nearer to the Lord and He draws nearer to you.

So he says, "Behold, I am coming quickly." What is necessary here? You have faith. What does that mean? Let's be very simple. Now you have read the words: "Behold, I come quickly." What do you do? "Wow that is fantastic. That would really be something." "But blessed is he who heeds the word of the prophecy of the book. Why do we not start here? The Lord says, "Behold, I come quickly." The first thing we should say is, "Lord, I believe it." Now that is a statement of faith. Do you see it completely yet? Maybe not; but let's start with faith. Do you believe this Word? Even if you have not seen these visions that John saw, can you just believe the Word of God, "Behold I am coming quickly"? I believe it! Then you read this word: "Let him who hears say, 'Come.'" Now you say, "I have heard" "Come, Lord Jesus." It is a statement of faith. Are you responding to this word by saying that? Do you know how that truth is going to be made real to you? It will be in standing by faith in the truth and veracity of these words. He said, "I am coming quickly." What will we do about it? Blessed is he who holds on to that word. Then he who hears says, "Come." That's me. I hear, "Come, Lord Jesus." Something happened. There is something in your life; this blessed hope rises in you because you are responding by faith to a reality that you cannot see. And the Lord is pleased with faith in His Son.

Blessed are those who read and hear and heed. How wonderful that word is! But just to put it in the context of the last chapter of Revelation, what this is really saying is that all of us as Christians need to have a spirit of wisdom and revelation. All of us need a prophetic spirit. Listen to what the angel says in verse 6: "And he said to me, 'These words are faithful and true,' and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets ..."

Thank God we have been born again. We have a spirit that is alive, and the Lord wants us to exercise and become prophetically aware of what is going on. As young Christians, when we see things taking place in this world, we think this is what is going on. However, as the Lord develops a prophetic spirit in us, which is the testimony of Jesus, we begin to watch the news at night and see the prophecies being fulfilled. This kind of prophetic spirit is the right and inheritance of every Christian. It is not for us to say, "I cannot understand all these terrible things of bowls, trumpets and seals taking place. It is too much for me, so I will just close the book. Hallelujah, He wins." But there is something in these words that prepare and make us ready as His bride for His coming. There is something worth holding on to here that will keep us from being taken by surprise with the things that are happening in the world today and even our country. If you are surprised by any of that you need to reread Revelation with a prophetic spirit and with an understanding. And the Lord, the God who put that spirit in you and made you able to discern these things is saying, "Blessed is he who heeds, who holds these words." What a tremendous blessing he pronounces on us!

It means to me that every believer should be able to heed and hold onto this word. Now I know there are many interpretations of the book of Revelation. There are people who study these things their whole lives. There are charts and different interpretations, but frankly to hear the Lord say, "I am coming quickly," and for us to respond, "Lord, come," does not take an understanding of charts and interpretations. Whatever your interpretation is, do not let it get in

the way. But may we hear a *rhema* as we are called in the spirit together and the Lord speaks to us. Don't get distracted and say, "No, no, that cannot happen until this happens." Let all those things go to the side for a moment. If this blessedness is true, it is for any believer who hears and holds this Word of God. No one understands this completely. As a matter of fact, I hope you do have an interpretation which means you have been digging in the Word of God. You believe this is going to happen and that is going to happen, but I guarantee that whatever interpretation you have there are some parts of the book of Revelation that does not fit into your system. So hold onto your interpretation, but do not get too smug about it. In the end we may all have to repent of some crazy idea we had.

When The Lord finally comes, there is going to be some people who have been believers for decades and then there will be some who have become new believers. But the new believers are not disqualified because we just read, "Let him who is thirsty come and take of the water of life freely." The youngest believer can have a heart that holds on to these words that Jesus said, "Come." He is coming quickly and I say, "Come Lord Jesus," and they can hold that in such a way that they will be blessed with the same blessing as those who have known the Lord for decades. Do you see how important it is to believe this word now?

The Washing of Robes

In verse 14 it says, "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city." This is speaking of something more than just having our robes washed in the blood of the Lamb which happened at our salvation. This is talking about a sanctifying work in our lives. "Blessed is he who has washed his robes ..." As Jesus speaks to the seven churches He mentions the need for washing robes as a sanctifying work going on in their lives. It is a process; there is something that has to do with preparation that makes us blessed and welcomes us to the tree of life and the gates of the city.

So our first responsibility as we come to this word is: Do you really believe it. If you don't say, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief." But start with a statement of faith. Don't just say, "It is too much for me; it is too spiritual for me." No, it isn't. The least child of God can be blessed and that is the second point. Do you want to be blessed by this word of God? Then you need to hold on to it. Read it until you hear it and hear it until you hold it. And you will be blessed by this word. It will change your life; it will draw you closer to Jesus. You will be ready for His coming because you will be sensitized to this reality. There is something going on just over our heads. The Lord is coming, and He is at the door. Are you prophetically sensitive to that? Do you have a sensing of holding fast these words?

The Warnings

The third thing that is said in the context of these great words is the warnings. There are two warnings regarding the treating of the Word of God in the wrong way. First of all in verses 10-11 John is warned: "And the [angel] said to me, 'Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.'"

Do Not Seal Up This Prophecy

That is the first warning. “Do not seal up this word, this prophecy.” There were times when the prophets were asked to seal something up because it was not time to reveal what it meant. It was sort of like a secret to be treasured and later explained, and the context will explain it. But now the angel is saying that we are so near the end, it is time to open it all up and speak the full counsel of God. That is why many people shy away from this book of Revelation because it is a powerful word. It speaks of rewards and loss, trials and warfare, blessings and martyrdom, repentance. This is a word from the Lord, a word for us to see and hear. Don’t seal it up; share the whole Word of God. It is implying that at this point it is not a question of hiding anything or being subtle in any way, thinking maybe some sinner is going to change his mind because of your subtlety; but share the whole counsel of God. Let those who get saved, get saved. Let those who continue in sin, continue in sin. The time is near and the full counsel of God needs to be revealed regarding the nearness of His coming and the final events of world history.

Do Not Add or Subtract From the Word

Finally, this second warning is in verse 18: “I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book; if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.”

This is a word that we all have heard, a word that warns us of selecting, adding and subtracting to God’s Word. In this day we want to love everybody; but I do not know how you make this book of Revelation palatable for everyone. “Oh, don’t worry about the antichrist; it is just a story.” Don’t take away the reality of the story, and do not add to it which results in craziness.

I went to school and college and then to seminary. I prepared to be a pastor, and in the seminary they had one semester in which we studied the book of Revelation. I was required to read a commentary on Revelation written by one of the professors of this denomination. It was the worst commentary I have ever read. It was so watered down; it relegated these tremendous revelations of Jesus to moments of history that were almost insignificant. It twisted and redefined and by the time you were through the book of Revelation it was like a comic book. I was just two years old as a Christian, but I knew it was wrong. Now I have read some brothers like Govett on his book of Revelation. I still do not understand it, but I like what he has to say. I think he is on the right track; and he is not watering anything down.

But here is a great warning to us. Let’s share this revelation like it is. I know that in this day of mockers and scoffers for you to say, “I believe what the book of Revelation says,” it puts you on the track for the crazy house. People say, “How can you believe it? How can you believe there is a devil? Surely you do not believe there is a devil or heaven and hell.” It is all right here. You can be a fool for Christ now or you can be a fool later. Do you believe these things? Don’t add to it, don’t subtract from it. Don’t make it palatable, don’t reinterpret it, don’t fluff it up

and make it all flowery. We are protecting people too much these days. I think it is time to speak the truth.

There was a teacher in a school giving an address for the commencement of the graduating students. And he said, "You are not exceptional." He told them the truth. Most of you will just be average people doing this or that. It was one of the most popular commencement addresses ever given. He wrote a book about it because no one tells the kids the truth. They are always being told that you can be anything you want, even the president of the United States. I know you were born in Moscow but so what? Everybody believes they can be anything and every kid in little league wins even if they lose. But when we do this to the Word of God, we are asking for trouble. How can the Holy Spirit speak to our hearts and convict us and bring us to repentance if we do not really think our problem is that we have left our first love or if we do not realize that we are lukewarm. There is a wonderful saving realization in Revelation that comes to us when we read this book if we will hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

So this simple introduction is simply to say that this precious Word of God will speak three things this week: "The Lord says, Behold, I come quickly. The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him who hears say, Come." Do you believe that? Do you desire that? Will you be speaking that by faith as we gather together this week? What a wonderful assemblage of people, folks who know the Lord and yet He wants to reveal something more to us, the intimate things of who He is. He is speaking to your heart. He is not speaking to your doctrine. He is speaking to your heart and hoping it will hear and respond.

A Renewed Heart Belief in the Coming of the Lord Jesus

I do believe that we have seen through history that whenever there has been some kind of a real recovery of the Lord's testimony throughout history, it has been marked, among other things, by a renewed heart belief in the Lord's soon coming. Wherever you read in history that there has been a reviving of God's people and a recovery of His Word, suddenly they feel He is going to come at any moment. What is that? When those brethren were raised up in the 1840's, they had such a clear sensing that the Lord was right at the door. It is part of the Lord recovering something and we suddenly realize how near He is and start calling out to Him. I hope we can recover that in our assemblies. I know we gather many times and take the Lord's Table, but I think part of this Lord's Table is asking the Lord to come. Do we do that? With all of our hearts do we sense it? But He is so near. His second coming needs to be recovered.

Oh, may He recover it among us as we are gathered together this week. May the Lord stir up people who can really hear Him and who are responding to Him. What is it going to take? How many more saints are going to have to join that bride and issue this desire: "Oh, come Lord Jesus" before He finally comes. May everyone here be caught up in the blessed hope with a heart that is pulsating with these words. John told us in his first letter that a dialogue was going on, a fellowship between the Father and the Son and we who believe, and it is only in terms of that fellowship with Father and Son that we can hear these words; "Behold, I am coming quickly." And it is only in this living fellowship we have with the Word of Life that we can say, "Yes, come, come"—not as a matter of doctrine but in living fellowship. I wonder what will happen if we all find ourselves by the end of the week saying, "Yes, come Lord Jesus; come Lord Jesus."

Lord, we pray that You will do something in our hearts this week. We realize in these final things that it is not a matter of more doctrine but a matter of a heart that is prepared for Your coming. We thank You for all those who have been gathered here. We do believe that You want to send forth this word by the power of Your Spirit and so we ask that You begin to deal with our hearts and bring us to a living relationship into a tug of war with the Word of God that we might hear your voice and repent and respond and say, "Come." May that be the fruit of our gathering this week. We pray in Jesus' precious name. Amen.