

Revelation 22:12-17, 20 *"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. ¹³ 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, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. ¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." ¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. . . . ²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

Come!

1. Let us come!
2. Let us say, "Come!"
3. Let us pray, "Come!"

Have you ordered anything from Amazon lately? Isn't it amazing how fast it comes. I bought a lawnmower on Amazon a couple weeks ago and got it within days. It's amazing. Of course, the bad thing is that we come to expect to have things immediately. Instant gratification and when things are delayed, we get upset. So twisted is our concept of time that we don't want to wait for anything.

We are like my two year old grandson. One time we were going to visit Amy and family in Milwaukee. A couple days before we were going there, Amy told Josiah that Oma and Opa were coming for a visit. He ran to the living room window and looked out the window wondering where we were. A two year old has no concept of time. We have no concept of God's time. So let us not delay. The time is now to come.

Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. Last Saturday, when it was sunny and hot, I unloaded two trailer loads of mulch – two and a half yards. Working in the hot sun like that, you get thirsty. You get to the point that all you want is a drink.

We are to have that same thirst for eternal life. That should be all that we want. And the good news is that it is free. It's the free gift of the water of life for those who thirst for it. Sadly, many don't thirst for it.

¹⁵ *Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.* "Dogs" was the insult that the Jews called the Gentiles. Anyone who was on the outside was a dog, a filthy, trash-eating scavenger. Now, John applies that term to all those who happily live in their sins and reject the free gift of the water of life.

Is that you? Have you ever lusted or hated in your heart? Has God always been first place in your heart? Have you ever let the truth go unstated? Are you outside or inside?

Maybe you have had the disappointment of not being invited to a party or being part of the group. Being left out can really hurt. Now, think of being left out of heaven. The pain will be much worse and it will last forever. So are you on the outside or the inside?

"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. What do you tell your children when dinner is ready? Go wash up, right? Like a boy who can't come to the dinner table until he washes his dirty hands, we aren't allowed into heaven unless we are clean. Jesus provided a cleansing for us. In the waters of baptism we are washed, we are cleansed, we are made whole. The Apostle Paul said, "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." (Galatians 3:26-27) Washed in Jesus' blood through baptism we are not on the outside, but the inside and we have the right to the tree of life.

They rushed their boat into the water, grabbed their gear and jumped into the boat. They revved up the outboard and zoomed to where they walleye were said to be biting. For the fishermen, the water was a means to an end, a delivery system for what they were looking for: walleyes.

Time for us is much like the water for fishermen. It's big, it's expansive and within it like the treasures that we are looking for. The question then is: What are we looking for in this time we call life? Are you thirsting for righteousness? Are you thirsting for the eternal life of heaven? Let us be careful to enter through the narrow door of faith in Jesus. We prayed this morning, "For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord." Cling to that faith given to you in your baptism so that we don't lose the hope of heaven. Cling to Jesus and his promises and you will have the right to enter the city. Let us come to drink of the waters of life.

Then let us say, "Come!" *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!"* The bride in Revelation is always the church. What a beautiful picture that is for us! It pictures the love of Christ for us, who laid down his life for the Church.

And what is the job of the bride, the Church? Its role in the world is to invite people to drink of the water of life. The Holy Spirit speaking through the Church invites people to believe in Jesus. That's the purpose of the Church in this world.

That's also the picture of each of us in this world. *And let the one who hears say, "Come!"* Have you heard the invitation to drink of the water of life? Have you heard the gospel? Have you come to believe in Jesus as your Savior? Then let us say, "Come!"

Then let us also pray, "Come!" Jesus called himself, *the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.* The root comes before the plant and the offspring, or seed, comes after the plant. Jesus is both the root and the seed of David, David's Lord and David's Son. That is, he is both God and man.

He is also the Alpha and Omega, which are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. As Alpha and Omega, first and last, beginning and end, Jesus Christ is all in all. He is complete. The Greek word for beginning can also mean the he is the highest. His power is over all powers. He is the highest authority. The Greek word for end can also mean goal or fulfillment. He is the goal of life, the reason for our being. All of history and of life has Jesus' glory as the goal.

It is this God-man, the first and the last, the highest power and the goal of life who promises to come soon. *"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.* And he repeats that promise again. *He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."* An old Family Circus cartoon had Billy speaking to God. Billy asked God if a second was like a thousand years to him. God said, "Yes." Then Billy asked God if a million dollars was like a penny to God. God said, "Yes." Then Billy said, "Give me a million dollars." God said, "Wait a second."

That cartoon illustrates the vast difference between our view of time and God's view of time. After two millennia since Jesus gave John this Revelation, it may not seem like soon to us. But we who live less than a century should not be trying to define soon to the eternal God. With all the weight of who he is behind the promise, Jesus said he is coming soon. Believe that.

And pray for it. *Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.* If you have grandchildren that don't live close by, you look forward to them coming to your house. May we have that same attitude about Jesus' coming. Let's look forward to it and pray for it. Maybe the reason Jesus hasn't returned yet is that his people aren't praying for him to come.

Caught up as we are in the hustle and bustle of every living, we can lose sight of the most important day in the world. There's always work to do, a job to go to, meals to fix, dishes to wash, repairs to be made or homework to finish. We can forget to pray for Jesus to come. Perhaps, making this prayer a daily part of our life will help us remember our goal, the glorious day when we can sing praise to Jesus for eternity.

Jesus said, *"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.* Jesus is coming and bringing his reward. Not their reward, but his reward, the reward he earned for us on the cross. He is bringing that reward to all those whose robes are washed and drink of the water of life.

So let us come to drink the free water of life. Let us come to be washed and be clean. Then let us say to everyone we can, "Come!" And let us pray: "Come." *Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*