

**Revelations**  
**The King is Coming!**  
**Revelation 1:7-8**  
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My family would tell you that there are few things I really love. And when I mean that I don't mean people, obviously, the things of the Lord, all of those things, of course, but in terms of this life, I love good food, and I also love history. And specifically, I love all things World War II history. "I shall return," if you know anything about World War II you know that is one of the most famous lines in American history. It was spoken by General Douglas MacArthur as the final line in a brief statement that he made to reporters after a harrowing escape from Corregidor and his arrival in Australia. This is what MacArthur said, "The president of the United States ordered me to break through the Japanese lines and proceed from Corregidor to Australia for the purpose, as I understand it, of organizing the American offensive against Japan, the primary objective of which is the relief of the Philippines. I came through and I shall return."

MacArthur made that promise in 1942. It was on October 20th 1944, 2 years later, that he waded ashore onto one of the Philippine islands. In a radio broadcast later that same day he declared this. "People of the Philippines, I have returned." I love that expression. I love the, sort of, drama, the triumph, the note of struggle and yet victory that emerges. And yet that statement by Douglas MacArthur pales in comparison to a far greater statement of very similar vein made by our Lord Jesus Christ. Of infinitely more importance to this world is Jesus' promise, I will return.

Tonight we get our first glimpse at that reality. Our first glimpse, really, at the theme of this book, the climax of the book, The Revelation of Jesus Christ. It occurs primarily in an event that we call the second coming. Let's read about it together, Revelation 1, and the introduction to this book runs from chapter 1 verse 1, really, down through verse 8. Next time we'll get some more of that prologue as John introduces us to his circumstances, but I want you to notice tonight just verses 7 and 8. Here we are introduced to the theme,

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to

be. Amen. “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Those two powerful verses come at the end of the introduction to the book and introduce us to its theme, Jesus Christ our Lord is coming. Do you believe that? He is coming. He will return to this planet, of course we know about His secret coming for His church, the rapture. That’s not what this is describing. This is describing the event that occurs at the end of the great tribulation when He will return physically, visibly, suddenly, and gloriously. A day is coming, brothers and sisters, as real as today, when Jesus will return in blazing splendor and unspeakable glory to destroy His enemies, rescue His saints, and establish His kingdom.

In these two verses we learn a lot about the second coming. In fact, there are several crucial features about the second coming that we discover in these verses. And I want us to look at them together. Let’s unpack the truth that’s here. The first feature that we discover about the second coming is its unparalleled importance, its unparalleled importance. This is contained at the beginning of verse 7 in that little word, “BEHOLD.” That Greek word occurs 26 times in Revelation to introduce divine oracles, divine pronouncements, important notes, that are given to us by the Holy Spirit. It calls us to hear stunning truths that deserve and demand our complete attention and acceptance. Three other times this word is used to introduce a statement about the personal return of Jesus Christ, as it does here, but only here and at the end of the book in chapter 21 verses 5 to 8 are the oracles spoken by God Himself.

This oracle introduces the topic of the entire book, the second coming, and it underscores its importance. “BEHOLD, HE IS COMING.” It reminds us that the second coming is not some second rate unimportant teaching of the Scripture. In fact, the second coming is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. To deny the second coming is to be outside the realm of orthodox Christianity. The second coming appears in more than 500 verses in Scripture; 23 of the 27 New Testament books refer to the second coming. It’s mentioned more than Jesus’ first coming. One scholar estimated that one in every 25 verses in the New Testament refers to the second coming.

Charles Erdmann of Princeton Seminary wrote, “The return of Christ is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. It is embodied in hymns of hope. It forms the climax of the creeds. It is

the sublime motive for evangelistic and missionary activity. And daily it is voiced in the inspired prayer, ‘Even so, come Lord Jesus.’” David MacLeod, in his excellent book on last things writes this, “It is often forgotten that the second coming of Christ is not just the aberrant fascination of end time junkies and apocalyptic doomsdayers. It is the historic faith of the Christian church.”

The testimony of the early church affirms the reality of the second coming. In the Epistle of Barnabas, written at the end of the first century, we read this, “When His Son comes, He will destroy the wicked one, will judge the godless, and will change the sun and the moon and the stars, and then He will truly rest.” Justin Martyr, writing early in the second century, says, “Hear, too, how He was to ascend into heaven according to prophecy and how He should come again out of heaven with glory.” Irenaeus, again writing in the second century, says, “When this antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months and sit in the temple in Jerusalem. And then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire.”

That’s just a handful of examples of many others. This has, from the very beginning, been the heart of the Christian faith. Every major creed of the Christian Church refers to the second coming: the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed. All the major confessions of the Christian church speak expectantly of Christ’s return. And of course, our Lord Himself promised that He would return. Matthew 24:29-30, “the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.” What I want you to understand is by introducing this oracle with the word “BEHOLD,” the Holy Spirit is reminding us of the unparalleled importance of this great event.

Secondly, we learn here of its undeniable reality, its undeniable reality. “HE IS COMING.” Things will not continue as they are now. Thank God. The pronoun “HE” here, “HE IS COMING,” refers back to Jesus Christ in verse 5. In the Old Testament Messiah is often referred to as the coming One. In fact, this is how the early centuries expected the Messiah. In Matthew

11:3 they asked, “Are You the Expected One?” Literally the text says, “Are You the Coming One, or shall we look for someone else?” Here John the Apostle says, “HE IS COMING,” again.

The Greek word translated “HE IS COMING” refers to our Lord nine times in Revelation, seven times He uses it of Himself, “I am coming.” This is the theme of the book. It’s The Revelation of, or The Unveiling of, the Coming One, our Lord Jesus Christ. The event that we call the second coming doesn’t appear in this book until chapter 19, verse 11 and following. But Jesus’ coming, in the sense that it’s used here, as we will see, is much broader than that. It includes not only the final event in chapter 19 that we call the second coming, but it also includes all the preliminary phases of His return, even when He comes in judgment against the world in chapters 6 through 18, “HE IS COMING.” “HE IS COMING” in judgment in the tribulation and “HE IS COMING” physically, visibly in the second coming.

The New Testament everywhere drives home the undeniable reality that “HE IS COMING.” Here are just a few examples. Matthew 24:44, “the Son of Man is coming.” Acts 1:11, “The angels said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.’” First Corinthians 1:7, we are “awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Philippians 3:20, “our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” First Thessalonians 2:19, “For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?” Titus 2:13, we live “looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.” Hebrews 9:28, “Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.” Revelation 22:12, “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me to render to every man according to what he has done.” In Revelation 22:20, “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.” Of course, those references encapsulate both the coming for His church at the beginning of the tribulation, the rapture, and the second coming at the end of that period of time. Jesus Christ is coming back. The second coming is an undeniable reality.

Thirdly I want you to note, we learn here of its unbroken promise. The second coming was promised, even in the Old Testament. In fact, at the very beginning of Old Testament history, it was promised by Job. Job lived during the time of the patriarchs and in Job 19:25 we read this, “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth.” The Old Testament ends in Malachi 4:1-3 with the promise of the second coming. But here in Revelation 1:7 John alludes to two specific Old Testament passages that prove the second coming was something that God had promised to His people even in the Old Testament.

The first line in verse 7 is a clear allusion to Daniel 7. Go back there with me. You can see how well these two books, Daniel and Revelation, fit together because here in Daniel 7 we read this, now remember the context here, you had the vision that Daniel had of the successive world empires, human world empires, that are brought to an end by an eternal divine kingdom, the kingdom of our Lord, and that’s what’s described in verse 13,

“I kept looking in the night visions,  
And behold, with the clouds of heaven  
One like a Son of Man was coming,  
And in this case He came up to the Ancient of Days  
And was presented before Him.  
And to Him was given dominion,  
Glory and a kingdom,  
That all peoples, nations and men of every language  
Might serve Him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion  
Which will not pass away;  
And His kingdom is one  
Which will not be destroyed.”

This passage is the culmination of Daniel’s vision in which he saw the future coming of the Son of Man who would be given rule and dominion over a worldwide eternal kingdom. This is part of what we see referred to when you see in verse 7 of Revelation 1, the portion of the verse in all caps, it’s referring to this passage.

But the second half of verse 7 of Revelation 1 is an allusion to Zachariah. I want you to turn with me to the book of Zachariah. Zachariah, Malachi, that ought to give you a clue as to where to find it. Zachariah. Zachariah is really the Old Testament equivalent to the book of Revelation, it has so much to say about what will happen in the end. And specifically, John refers in the book of Revelation to Zachariah 12 beginning in verse 10,

“I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; [*you recognize that expression from our text*] and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. In that day, there will be great mourning in Jerusalem,” [*compared to a particular event*]

And it says, verse 14, “all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves,” they will all mourn, give themselves to mourning.

Go over to Zachariah 14:4, “In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley.” On that day the Lord will come, the day that is described as the day of the battle of Armageddon, He will come and His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. “HE IS COMING.”

So you have these two Old Testament references, Daniel 7 and Zachariah 12, which are promises that the Messiah will come in the way it’s described in the book of Revelation. He will come. He will return. It’s a promise and God will not break His promise.

A fourth feature we learn about the second coming is its unspeakable glory. Verse 7 of Revelation 1 says, “BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS.” Now this reference to the clouds is making a couple of different points. First of all, it’s emphasizing, obviously, that He will come from heaven. The fact that a cloud received Him in Acts 1 at the ascension into the sky, into heaven, and that He’ll return with clouds, points out that in the second coming Jesus will come from heaven. That’s clear and obvious. But it also makes the point that He will come with power and glory, because whenever this appears in other places, that phrase is added.

Daniel 7:13, “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven, one like a Son of Man was coming,” and you see this power that’s given, and glory. Matthew 24:30, “they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.” Luke 9:26, “whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.”

He’s coming with glory, but there’s more here, and it’s related to that second point, but I want to make it slightly different, He will come as God. Because in the Old Testament clouds are always associated with the divine presence. You remember, God’s visible presence in the wilderness with His people was a cloud. You remember that at Sinai a thick cloud covered the mountain, and that was evidence of God’s presence on top of the mountain. At the tabernacle clouds symbolized God’s presence. And the same thing, of course, was true at the temple as well. Christ ascended into a cloud in Acts 1:9, and He will come with clouds. Do you see the connection? It’s describing who He is; He will come not in humiliation and weakness, but He will come surrounded by the cloud of God’s glory. He will come surrounded by the *shekinah*, the blazing glory of God’s presence.

You remember during the incarnation, the glory of Christ was hidden. He had a form that you didn’t look at and go, that’s who He is, I know who He is. And at the transfiguration, Peter, James, and John just caught a passing glimpse of His glory. But at the second coming every eye will see Him in all the blinding brilliance of the *shekinah* glory of God, brighter than 10,000 suns. The Lord Jesus Christ will return to this earth in triumph. He will return, as we just read a moment ago, accompanied by innumerable angels and the redeemed, and He will do so in unspeakable glory. He is coming with the clouds.

John also explains that when we think about the second coming we understand here its universal appearance, its universal appearance, “every eye will see Him.” “BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH CLOUDS,” with the glory of the *shekina* around Him, with the greatness of the blazing brilliance of God, “and every eye will see Him.” Jesus will return visibly, not hidden from human view. In fact, “every” single “eye will see Him.” Matthew 24:27 puts it this way, “just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.” We

live in Dallas. We understand lightning. Do you see this reference? Lightning is like the second coming of Jesus Christ, both in its suddenness, all of us the other night when that storm rolled through were awakened by the suddenness of the lightning and the thunder that came with it, but also the blazing brilliance, its visibility.

A typical lightning strike is about 3 to 4 miles long. Just think about that for a moment. I don't know how far you travelled to be here tonight, but a typical lightning strike is 3 to 4 miles long. But the longest bolt of lightning ever recorded, and this won't surprise you, was right here in Dallas, 118 miles long. The point is, when lightning travels from east to west, when it travels 118 miles across the sky, nobody misses it. And that's the point of using lightning as an illustration of the second coming.

Just as you can't miss lightning on a stormy night, no human being will fail to see the second coming of Jesus Christ, "every eye will see Him." I don't know exactly how He will accomplish that. You know, a lot of people want to prognosticate, well, now we have television, that's how they'll see him. Who knows? When He returns there may be some other technology, or it may just be that He makes Himself visible, in His own power, without human technologies, but "every eye will see Him."

There's a sixth feature of the second coming, its unwavering purpose, its unwavering purpose. Verse 7, "BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen." Scripture records a number of different purposes for the second coming. When I preached a message in the systematic theology series on this issue I listed a number of those, but here in this verse we learn of three purposes, three specific purposes for the second coming. The first is the salvation of Israel. "BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS and every eye will see Him," notice this, "even those who pierced Him." Now, there are commentators who argue that this refers to the Roman soldiers who actually crucified Christ. I think that's pretty unlikely. There are others who say, no, "all those who pierced Him," that's all of mankind because, in a sense, we're all responsible for the death of Jesus Christ, so this is just another way to say, "every eye will see Him." I think that's unlikely as well.

I think it's far more likely, and I'll show you why, that John intends this to be a reference to the Jewish people. Why do I say that? Because in the very passage he alludes to in this text, Zachariah 12, that we just looked at a moment ago, Zachariah 12:10, Messiah says of the Jewish people, "they will look on Me whom they pierced." You see the connection immediately with this verse. So this expression in Revelation 1:7 must refer to the Jewish people who are alive at the time of the second coming. So "every eye," that's the entire world, that's the full scope of who will see Him. But among "every eye" there is a group he singles out, it's the Jewish people, "those who pierced Him." So we're talking here about the Jewish people alive at the time of the second coming.

So understand then, and this is what I love, this is not an expression of judgment, this is an expression of grace. Because remember what we have learned, even from Romans, the Jewish people alive at the time of the second coming, when they see their Messiah, they will repent and believe. In alluding to Zachariah 12, John reminds us here that part of the purpose of the second coming is to bring salvation to Israel. Here's how, again, Zachariah 12:10 puts it, "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn." Understand, this mourning, Israel's mourning here in Zachariah at the second coming, will be genuine repentance.

Now Revelation reveals that during the seven years of tribulation there will be many Jewish people who come to believe in their Messiah. There is the 144,000 that we will study. In addition, there are the converts who will believe because of their message. But on the day that Jesus returns there will be a massive conversion of the Jewish people. That's what Zechariah 12:10 is describing. Just a few verses later, in Zachariah 13:1, we read this, "In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity." So this is a mourning of repentance and it brings salvation. As Paul puts it in Romans 11:26, "so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, AND HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.'"

One purpose for the second coming is the salvation of Israel. And don't you love that, because what does that say about God? It says that our God is by nature a savior, a rescuer, a redeemer, that even in the midst of judgment He is still saving. And it also says that He is always faithful. He made promises. He made promises in the book of Zachariah of what would happen at the second coming, and He will fulfill them.

Another purpose of the second coming that's outlined in this verse, not only the salvation of Israel, but the destruction of Jesus' enemies. Verse 7 says, "BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him." And now here's another group in that "every eye will see Him," here's the rest of the people on earth, "and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him." "All the tribes of the earth" refers to the Gentile nations who remain stubborn in their unbelief and in their rebellion, even to the end. Having, can you imagine this, having endured all that unfolds during those seven years, all of the divine judgments that are so clearly from God that even the rebellious people on earth acknowledge that it's from God, they remain set in their sin, rebellious to the end. They too will mourn when Jesus comes, but not like the Jewish people. They won't mourn in repentance, but rather in extreme grief and despair.

In fact, look at that word mourn. The Greek word is from a word that means to cut. It refers to the pagan practice of cutting oneself in extreme grief or despair, a practice, of course, that God forbids among His people. But that's the picture here. When Christ returns, unbelievers from all the nations, driven by despair over their doom and terror over what awaits them, will wail in the deepest grief and despair.

Why will they mourn? Well, they will mourn because of their fatally flawed assessment of Jesus Christ. They will mourn because of their personal hatred of Jesus Christ. That's not going to change, as we'll see in a moment. They will mourn because of their military defeat at Armageddon. They will mourn because of the tragic consequences of their sin. They will mourn because of their immediate judgment and consignment to hell on that very day, and their coming individual judgment at the great white throne of judgment. They will mourn because of the anticipation of their everlasting doom in the lake of fire.

So, they mourn in remorse because Jesus is coming to judge them. Matthew 16:27, “the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.” Everybody is going to get justice. Second Thessalonians 1:7 and following,

the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day

All who have rejected Jesus Christ as Lord will respond to the judgments of the tribulation with grief and despair. But listen closely, they will not respond to them in repentance.

It’s really shocking. Turn to Revelation 9, Revelation 9:20. In response to the sixth trumpet and the judgment that unfolds in that, verse 20 says,

The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

Completely stubbornly rebellious and sinful.

Look at Revelation 16, again, as the bowls of wrath begin to pour out, we read in verse 9, “Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.” So they know it’s God. They come to a point in the middle of the tribulation when they realize, God really is, He really does exist, and He’s pouring out judgement on the world. And how do the bulk of mankind respond? Continued rebellion, refusing to repent, blaspheming God. Verse 11, “they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.” Verse 21, “huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and

men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.”

You see, without regeneration, without a changed heart, rebellion will always continue, whatever judgments are inflicted. That’s why hell continues eternally. You know, a lot of people struggle with that. How is it that a person could be punished in hell forever for sins committed during 70, 80, 90 years? How is that just? Well, you have to remember, as we’ll discover later in the book of Revelation, that people in hell don’t stop sinning. They continue in their rebellion, in their blasphemy against God their creator. They refuse to bow the knee. And so every day they earn more of God’s judgment and His wrath, just as we see during the revelation.

You know, this reminds us not to have that sort of weak image of who Jesus Christ is; MacLeod writes this, “Many have the false notion that Jesus Christ is completely different from the God of the Old Testament. They think that when Jesus appeared God changed His mind and decided to be a gentleman and forgot all His thoughts of judgment. It’s a terrible folly to be misled by such ideas. Yes, there is good news, one need not bear the punishment for his own sins. Another, the Lord Jesus Christ has paid the price in our behalf. But there is bad news for those who reject Christ and it is described here in Revelation.”

Friend, let me warn you, and please hear this in the most serious and sober tones that I can muster. Jesus Christ is not a gentle house cat who will purr and tolerate your sin and leave you perfectly alone. He is a fierce lion who will destroy you if you refuse His grace and you continue in your rebellion against Him. He is coming to destroy His enemies and “all of the tribes of the earth,” all the people on this planet, “will mourn.” They will mourn not in repentance, but they will mourn in grief, despair, and continued rebellion.

There is a third purpose of His coming, not only the salvation of Israel, the destruction of His enemies, but the vindication of His name. John finishes verse 7 by saying, “So it is to be. Amen.” This is John’s response, and ultimately it’s every believer’s response, to the return of Christ, to the salvation that return will bring, and to the destruction of Jesus’ enemies. It combines the Greek affirmation yes, translated here “So it is to be,” with the Hebrew affirmation, “Amen,” let it be. You know what John is saying? As he thinks about that day

when Christ comes and when He saves Israel and when He judges His enemies, John says, let it come, let it come.

Now don't misunderstand, John is not and we are not to be vindictive towards those that Christ will destroy. No, he is celebrating the justice of God. Sin and rebellion must be punished. We understand that; in our flawed judicial system, all of us, we cringe, we mourn when justice isn't done, when someone who's committed a horrific crime isn't properly punished. And we celebrate, even though our hearts break for the results of that on the person who has been found guilty, our hearts celebrate the justice and the vindication of the victims. That's what John is doing here. He's celebrating the justice of God. And he's celebrating the vindication of God and His people.

Leon Morris writes, "The name of their God is reviled and their cause is despised," speaking of the Christians in the first century, "but this is not final. John records the overthrow of the wicked and the vindication of God and of good. And this he does not as a mildly interested spectator. He is wholeheartedly committed to the cause of God and he is eager that that cause be seen to prosper. So he does not simply record that the wicked will, in fact, be overthrown. Their overthrow means the triumph of good and the vindication of Christians who have suffered so much." And I would add, the vindication of God. And so, Morris writes, "John exults in it."

Jesus is coming to vindicate His own name. Do you understand that? That's why John is so eager for Him to come. That's what we're going to see unfold in the book of Revelation. I mean, think about this, in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul lists all of those who saw Christ after the resurrection. There wasn't a single unbeliever among them, not one. That means the last glimpse this world got of Jesus Christ was as a dying criminal. One day He's going to return. He's going to return at the command of His Father, because His Father intends to vindicate His name.

Turn to Matthew 26, Matthew 26 and look at verse 63. Here is Jesus' trial before Caiaphas and verse 62 says,

The high priest stood up and said to him, "Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against you?" But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest

said to Him, “I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, [*whether you are the Messiah,*] the Son of God.”

He puts Jesus under oath. Having been frustrated by all the attempts to bring false witnesses, whose stories all contradicted each other, he finally decides on a bold frontal attack. He walks up to Jesus Christ in the middle of this trial and he says: I put you under oath. Tell us, are you the Messiah, the son of God? Verse 64, “Jesus said to him, ‘You have said it,’” Mark records it this way, “‘I am,’” “‘nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and’” here it is, “‘COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.’” I am, I am the One, the Son of Man described in Daniel 7, and you’re going to see Me someday in that light, the roles will be reversed. You won’t be sitting in judgment, and I the accused, I will be the judge and you will be the accused.

Verse 65,

the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; what do you think?” They said, “He deserves death!” And they spat in His face and they beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, and said, “Prophecy to us, You Messiah; who is the one who hit You?”

They’re saying, You blasphemed, You’re a blasphemer, You’re a wicked sinner who deserves the worst death a criminal can get. That’s the last they saw of Jesus Christ. And John the Apostle says, “BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH CLOUDS.” He’s coming to vindicate His name.

There’s a final feature we learn about the second coming in this passage, and that is its unalterable certainty, its unalterable certainty. Verse 8. Verse 8, you’ll notice in Revelation 1, is God Himself speaking. Verse 8 is really God’s signature on the promise of the second coming. “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’” Now there are a couple of issues to deal with here. The first one is, who exactly is speaking in verse 8? Is it Jesus the Son or is it God the Father? Well, let me just tell you, there are really good arguments on both sides.

The arguments for Jesus the Son, Jesus has been the central person in the last few verses of this passage. A switch to the Father in verse 8 without some sort of clear transition seems unlikely. Verse 8 also begins with the Greek words *ego eimi*, I Am, which is an expression the Apostle John uses often in his gospel for Jesus. In chapter 22 verse 13 of Revelation Jesus calls Himself, clearly it's Jesus there, He calls Himself "the Alpha and the Omega." And in verse 7, Christ is the one coming, so it seems reasonable to say that He's the coming one in verse 8.

But the arguments are equally impressive for the Father. The title there in verse 8, "the Lord God," that is a title used for God the Father throughout the Old Testament. And that next expression, "the one who is and who was and who is coming," was clearly a title for the Father back in verse 4, we saw it there. And the Father speaks words very much like verse 8 in chapter 21 verse 6. So which is it? I don't know. And in the end, it doesn't matter. Because regardless of which member of the Trinity is speaking here, the meaning of this expression is unchanged.

Let's look at it. "I am," "*ego eimi*." That intentionally recalls the personal name of God, Yahweh, from Exodus 3:14. "I am the Alpha and the Omega." Alpha, as you know, is the first letter in the Greek alphabet. Omega is the last letter in the Greek alphabet. So what does this expression mean, "I am the Alpha and the Omega."? Well later John explains this expression further. In chapter 22 verse 13 we read this, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." The point of this expression, "the Alpha and the Omega," is that God controls the beginning, He controls the end, and everything in the middle. In other words, God is sovereign over all of human history. He existed before history began, and He will bring it to its end, and He deals with all of the details in between. He is the Lord of history. He is "the Alpha and the Omega." He was there at the beginning. He'll be there at the end. And He's over every single detail of every event of human history and every life in between. He is "the Alpha and the Omega."

Verse 8 goes on to say, "says the Lord God." As I said, that's an expression that occurs frequently in the Old Testament, especially in the prophets and especially in Ezekiel. It speaks of God's greatness, His power. Verse 8 goes on to say, "who is and who was and who is to come." We encountered that expression back in verse 4, "who is," God is self-existent, eternal, unchangeable; "who was," He continually existed in the past; "who is to come," that speaks not

of His future existence, but of His coming. And I noted for you that when the Son returns, the Father will come in and through the Son to save and to judge. In other words, the One who is coming means He is coming to bring human history to its end.

And He is, verse 8 ends, “the Almighty.” God is referred to as “the Almighty” nine times in Revelation, but only once in the rest of the New Testament, with this word. This is an interesting word because in the Septuagint, in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the word here translated “Almighty” is used most frequently to translate the Hebrew expression the Lord of Hosts, the Lord of Armies, the Lord of the Armies of heaven, who has infinite power at His disposal. Not only personal power but the power even of those creatures that He has made.

But the focus here is not merely on raw unlimited power, although certainly that’s true of God, but rather the focus in this expression “Almighty” is His power to rule and to control. Nothing happens or can happen outside of His powerful control. He is “Almighty.” He is perfect in controlling power. Now why is that important here? Well, we’ve just been promised that the Lord Jesus Christ will come. He will save His people, Israel. He will destroy His enemies. He will vindicate His name. To which we have the divine signature, whether it’s the signature of the Father or whether it’s the signature of the Son doesn’t matter. We have the divine signature that says, I have the power to make this happen. It will come. Puny humans can’t stand against Him. He is “Almighty.”

You remember in school, you read Jonathan Swift’s classic story. A ship’s doctor named Gulliver finds himself the sole survivor of a shipwreck. And when he awakes, he finds himself on an island, the island of Lilliput, where the people are only six inches tall. And he realizes that at a moment, as he comes to the situation, that he could crush them all in a moment. In fact, at one point he’s tempted to grab 40 or 50 of them and hurl them to the ground. Folks, that does not even come close to illustrating the power of the Almighty. How little God’s enemies are to the One whom the heavens can’t contain. He is “Almighty.”

Now again, what is the purpose of verse 8? What is this signature of God intended to accomplish? I like the way one writer puts it. Bullinger suggests we can legitimately paraphrase verse 8 like this, “I, the almighty Lord of Hosts, the unchangeable God, will

accomplish all My will, fulfill all My word, and execute all My judgments. Nothing will stand in the way of My accomplishing My purpose.”

Now I want you to step back from this text for a moment and I want you to remember our Lord’s first coming. I want you to remember what you read of Him on the pages of the gospel records. You see, in the incarnation Jesus came in humiliation. At the second coming He will come in exultation. In the incarnation He came as the suffering servant. In the second coming He will come as the conquering king. My question for you tonight, and I mean this with all my heart, are you ready for His coming? He is coming, are you ready?

You know it’s interesting, Revelation portrays Jesus as two different animals. Literally two different animals. Revelation portrays Him on the one hand as a little pet lamb, as if having been slain. And the same book portrays Him, as we will see, as a ferocious roaring lion. You see, Jesus is not one or the other. He’s both. And which of those attributes of His you experience depends entirely on your response to His offer of grace.

Dane Ortlund writes, “The point is that Jesus deals gently and only gently with all sinners who come to Him, irrespective of their particular offense and just how heinous it is. What elicits tenderness from Jesus is not the severity of the sin, but whether the sinner comes to Him. Whatever our offense, if we come, He deals gently with us. If we never come to Him, we will experience a judgment so fierce it will be like a double-edged sword coming out of His mouth at us. If we do come to Him, as fierce as His lion like judgment would have been against us, so deep will be His lamb like tenderness for us. We will be enveloped in one or the other, to no one will Jesus be neutral.” You will either receive Jesus now as a lamb slain to pay the debt for your sin, you will submit to Him as Savior and Lord and receive Him as a lamb, or one day He will destroy you as a lion, not because of vindictiveness, but because His pure justice demands it.

So my question to you tonight as we meet these two sides of Jesus in this verse is, what’s your relationship to Jesus Christ? Have you truly repented of your sins? Have you truly put your faith in Him? Are you resting, as we sang earlier, with your only hope in Him and His work? Then toward you He will always be a little pet lamb as if He had been slain. On the other hand, if you refuse, if you love your sin and you hate the control that He would bring into your life,

and you refuse to humble yourself, then understand this, He will destroy you forever. He can't help but do it because He is perfectly holy and just.

So hear the invitation that comes at the end of the book. This is His invitation to you today. Revelation 22:17, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'" Come to Jesus. If you'll come to Him, He will receive you and treat you gently like a lamb. "Let the one who hears say, 'Come.' Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost." That's His invitation to you today. Come, find Me as the Lamb slain for you before the foundation of the world. But He just as seriously says to you, if you will not come, then you will come to know Me as a destroying lion. Let's pray together.

Father, these are sobering realities. And yet for us who are in Christ, for us who have come to Him, for us who have trusted in Him, who have put our faith in Him as the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, He is to us a wonderful savior. Lord, we have nothing to fear. Our sins have been addressed. He will receive us to Himself with all gentleness and tenderness, as friends, as brothers and sisters. Father, help us, like John, to celebrate the day that Jesus will come and set all things right, to say with John, "Let it be," "Amen."

Father, I pray for those who may be here tonight who linger in their sin and rebellion, who have refused to bow their knee to Jesus Christ, to accept His offer of pardon and forgiveness, to accept the reconciliation that He purchased on their behalf through His death on the cross and His resurrection. O God, help them to see the reality that if they will not bow to the Lamb, they will face the Lion. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.