Easter 7 Revelation 22:12-17, 20
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"Yes, I Am Coming Soon!"
I. That's a promise.
II. That's an invitation.
III. That's our prayer.

Dear Christian friends,

These verses take us to the END of **Revelation** – the end of the Bible – and we could also say the end of **John's life**. John was at least in his **upper 80s** or low 90s. **No doubt** John didn't live much longer after this. WHAT A LIFE he'd had! I'm sure it **hadn't turned out** the way he HAD EXPECTED it to when he was young.

John had grown up **near Capernaum** along the western shores of the Sea of Galilee. He and his **brother James** worked together and would one day take over their **father Zebedee's** fishing business. SO the plans were. THEN John met Jesus as his Savior and that totally changed everything. For three years John was an EYE and EAR witness of Jesus. He was ***"the disciple whom Jesus loved"*** – a part of the "INNER THREE" with Peter and James. John had BEEN THERE on **Palm Sunday** – Maundy Thursday – at Calvary on Good Friday. John had seen the **risen** Lord Jesus – had watched as Jesus **ascended into** heaven.

John was the only apostle still alive. **The rest** had all been martyred for their Christian faith. John was now exiled to a **tiny island** called ***"Patmos"*** off the western coast of Turkey **because of** his Christian faith. John HADN'T SEEN Jesus since Jesus had ascended 60 years earlier. But then Jesus appeared to John **in these revelations**. John saw Jesus **in His glory**. Jesus showed John VISIONS of scary tribulations and **glorious triumphs**. As Jesus now says **"good-bye"** to John – Jesus' FINAL WORDS to John and all Christians since then are, ***"Yes, I am coming soon!"*** Those words are 1)a promise, 2)an invitation and 3)our prayer.

I. That's a promise.

Three times in these **closing verses** Jesus promises, ***"Yes, look, I am coming soon!"*** After what Jesus has all shown us in the **preceding chapters** that is a promise TO SAVOR!

Last Thursday was Ascension Day. Next Sunday is Pentecost. On God's calendar Pentecost marks the start of the ***"last days"*** leading up to ***"the Last Day"*** – Judgment Day. That's the ONLY BIG THING left on **God's plans** for this world. Here in Revelation Jesus reveals what life in these ***"last days"*** of the world will be like. With STRIKING VISIONS meant to impress and stick with us Jesus MAKES CLEAR that we are not to expect **any kind** of a heaven here on earth. We are the Church Militant – the Church AT WAR and UNDER ATTACK. We hear God's people ask, ***"How long, Sovereign Lord?"*** We hear the refrain, ***"This calls for patient endurance – be faithful."***

Yet AS SCARY and DEPRESSING as **life will get** Jesus also repeatedly shows and assures us of the ULTIMATE VICTORY of eternal life in heaven. Read Revelation's **visions of heaven** and let them life you ABOVE the **hardships** and **trials** of this life! Look often at that ***"great multitude standing before the throne of God and in front of the Lamb."*** See again ***"the new heaven and new earth"*** where there ***"will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain."*** Hear again God's PROMISE, ***"I am making everything new!"***

Then savor Jesus' CLOSING PROMISE, ***"Yes, I am coming soon!"*** **Eternal life** in heaven is not just a NICE THOUGHT or a **pious wish**. That is God's promise to us and God ALWAYS keeps His promises. Life now can BE WEARISOME but we have Jesus' promise, ***"Yes, I am coming soon"*** – coming to take us home to heaven. No wonder Paul wrote that ***"our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."***

"Yes, I am coming soon!" is both a promise AND…

II. An invitation.

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this testimony for the churches." Jesus reveals this to us because He WANTS US TO KNOW this. Jesus doesn't want us to be CAUGHT BY SURPRISE or caught unprepared when He **comes again**. So He repeatedly tells us, ***"Yes, I am coming soon!"*** We're reminded that God didn't give us His Word to BORE or CONFUSE us – OR for us to ignore or **contradict**. God gave us His Word to ***"make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."*** God gave us His Word to be ***"a lamp*** to ***our feet and a light for our path"*** through this **sin-darkened** world. Or as Paul told the Roman Christians, ***"Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through patient endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we would have hope."***

"Yes, I am coming soon!" is an invitation – an URGENT CALL! – to **get ready**. AS REAL and eternal as heaven is **hell** is JUST AS real and eternal. Jesus bluntly warns, ***"Outside are the dogs, that is, the sorcerers, the adulterers, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood."*** Our society may HAVE NO PROBLEM with sex outside of marriage – living together without being married – with **gay marriage**, pornography, etc., - but GOD SURE DOES. Paul warned the Corinthian Christians NOT TO SHRUG the warnings off. ***"Do not be deceived*** (i.e., don't kid yourselves)***: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers, nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."***

Beware too of the MOST POPULAR **idol of self** – "I'll do whatever I want. Nobody can tell me **what to believe** or **how to live** my life." We may not bow down and **worship ourselves** but EVERY TIME we ignore or **defy anything** God says – that's idolatry – PUTTING OURSELVES over God. God may tell me I NEED TO CHANGE my attitude or priorities in life – **I need** to clean up my language – be more faithful in worship and prayer – but when I DON'T DO that that's the sin of **idolatry**. I'm not letting God BE GOD of my life – my WHOLE life.

"Yes, I am coming soon!" is a call to DAILY **repentance** and renewed faith in Jesus. ***"Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the Tree of Life and so that they may enter through the gates into the city"*** (the New Jerusalem, heaven). We had that picture a few weeks ago in chapter 7. Those standing in that ***"great multitude before the throne of God and in front of the Lamb"*** they had ***"washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."***

It's only because Jesus CAME THE FIRST time that we can confidently and eagerly **look forward** to His coming again. Our Christian joy and confidence are **not**, "Look how I'VE CLEANED up my life!" but "Look HOW JESUS has cleaned me up!" When we stand before God He won't see a SINGLE ONE of our sins because ***"the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin."*** Jesus' innocent sufferings and death on the cross fully paid for **every one** of our sins. NOT ONLY that God will see us as His PERFECTLY OBEDIENT children **because** Jesus clothes and credits us with **His own life** of perfect love and obedience. TRUSTING in Jesus we have God's **forgiveness** of all our sins – we are God's **beloved** children – and we can't wait for Jesus to **come again** and **take us home** to heaven!

That joy and certainty **in Jesus** has TWO MAJOR IMPACTS on our lives right now. ***"Look, I am coming soon and My reward is with Me, to repay each one according to what he has done."*** IF we were unbelievers it would BE TERRIFYING to hear that. That would be our **eternal death sentence** to hell – ***"repaid according to what we've done."*** But as Christians that JUST MORE PROOF of how **good and gracious** our God is. Our trying to live GOD-PLEASING – God-CENTERED – lives doesn't score us points with God or help us get to heaven. We are saved ONLY BY TRUSTING in Jesus and **what He's all done** but that faith IN OUR HEARTS will show up IN OUR LIVES.

The **other week** I cleaned out some **dead canes** from my raspberry patch. **How** did I know WHICH ONES were dead or alive? I didn't have to **cut them open** to see. IF they're budding they're **alive** – if they're dried up and **bare** they're dead. GET THE PICTURE? Our Christian lives WON'T SAVE us one bit but they are good indicators of WHAT KIND OF SHAPE our **Christian faith** is in. Oh, our **daily Christian lives** NEED CONSTANT weeding and **feeding** – pruning and **hoeing** or our faith will be

overrun and killed by the **weeds of sin**. As an ADDED ENCOURAGEMENT to be diligent in our Christian lives Jesus graciously promises to ***"reward"*** us for **doing what He tells** us to do!

Our joy and certainty **in Jesus** ALSO MAKE us want to boldly share Jesus with others. We know that if we DIDN'T HAVE Jesus **we'd be going** to hell's eternal banishment and punishment. That's also true about EVERYBODY ELSE in the world. Jesus is the ONLY **Savior** – the only way to heaven. John himself had heard Jesus say, ***"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*** Christian love and gratitude COMPEL us to **share Jesus** with others – BOTH our personally telling our **families**, friends, neighbors, etc., about Jesus AND our generously supporting Christian education and mission work.

So the invitation rings out to ONE AND ALL for none are excluded. ***"The Spirit and the bride*** (i.e., the Church) ***say, 'Come.' Let the one who hears this say, 'Come.' Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who wants the water of life take it as a gift."***

III. A prayer.

"The one who testifies about these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.'" Jesus' definition of ***"soon"*** is OBVIOUSLY NOT ours. Peter helps us understand this. ***"The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*** Jesus' seeming delay – His GRACIOUS PATIENCE – doesn't change His PROMISE, ***"Yes, I am coming soon!"*** – and what a day – what an ETERNITY – that will be!

We have Jesus' promise and so we fervently pray AS JOHN DID when he **first heard** it – and as Christians throughout the ages have been praying – ***"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"*** Amen.

Hymn #214