



# *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*

*"It's a Worshipful Life"*  
22:6-9

You're going to notice the repetition in our verses of the word, "words." You'll see it in verses six, seven, nine and ten. And notice it is plural, "words." This is more than an exhortation to obey the Bible as the Word of God. This is an exhortation that has to do with the specific "words" of this book, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. **You are to keep the "words of the prophecy of this book."**

The "words of the prophecy of this book" emphasize the premillennial rapture of the church.

There are three major views of the study of last things. All three revolve around the return of Christ in relation to the millennium. The three are known as premillennialism, amillennialism and postmillennialism.

Let us hear a brief description by a proponent of each.

John F. Walvoord describes his premillennial faith as "an interpretation that the Second Coming of Christ will occur before His literal reign of one thousand years on earth." After His victorious intervention into history, Jesus Christ will personally reign from Jerusalem producing a time of peace, prosperity and righteousness. Premillennialists see the present era as the Church Age, which is a separate and distinct work in God's plan from that of Israel. Christ's redemptive work is the only basis for salvation regardless of the period of time a believer lives under.

Amillennialism is described by Floyd E. Hamilton as a view "that Christ's millennial kingdom extends from His Resurrection from the tomb to the time of His Second Coming on the clouds at the end of this age." At no time will Christ reign on the earth in Jerusalem. "On earth, Christ's kingdom 'is not of this world,' but He reigns especially in the hearts of His people on earth . . . for a 'thousand years,' the perfect, complete time between the two comings of Christ." After the Second Coming of Christ, believers from all of history will enter into heaven for eternity immediately following the final and single judgment of all mankind.

Norman Shepherd defines postmillennialism as "the view that Christ will return at the end of an extended period of righteousness and prosperity (the millennium)." Like the amillennialist, the postmillennialist sees the current age as the kingdom of God. However, they see the reign of Christ not just in the hearts of believers today, but as impacting society. Postmillennialists believe that since the kingdom was established at Christ's first coming it is currently being expanded through the preaching of the gospel until an overwhelming majority will be converted to Christ. Such Gospel success will create a climate of reception to the things of Christ, like His mediated rule through the church of all the world.

It's a popular criticism to say that the premillennialism is a rather new development in prophecy. *Nothing could be farther from the truth!* According to Thomas Ice,

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It is generally conceded that premillennialism (known in the early church as chiliasm) is the oldest of the three systems... Premillennialism or chiliasm... was the pervasive view of the earliest orthodox fathers. This is the consensus of both liberal and conservative scholars who are experts in early Church theology.

Jesus is coming and He wants you to keep the words of the prophecy of this book.

Revelation 22:6 Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

Our Lord is "God of the holy prophets." Prophecy involves over a fourth of the Bible. Fulfilled prophecies - and there are scores of them - are a great proof that **all** of God's Word is "faithful and true."

Jesus sent His "angel" to the apostle John to "show His servants." This book reveals, it doesn't conceal. It is rendered into signs to clarify, not to confuse.

What you read about in the Revelation "must shortly take place." The events, and their order, "must" occur; you cannot alter them.

"Shortly" means *impending*. From the standpoint of heaven, these events are always impending. We think they are more impending than ever! Each week in our prophecy update we show how the news and trends in the world corroborate the centuries old prophecies of the Bible. Ours is the generation that has seen so much come to pass that was previously unthinkable.

The BBC estimated 2.5 billion people watched the 1997 funeral of Princess Diana. In an article titled, *Will Michael Jackson Break the Internet?*, the author speculated that the Michael Jackson memorial was expected to shatter both online viewership records and servers in the process.

The idea that people from all over the world could see such an event live was first postulated by this book, the Revelation, some two thousand years ago. John told us in chapter eleven that the whole world would watch as the bodies of God's two witnesses, killed by the antichrist, lay in state in Jerusalem. They will watch them rise from the dead - live on television or the internet!

I have no doubts that these are the end times.

Revelation 22:7 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

Jesus is coming "quickly." It doesn't mean soon. Soon gives you the idea that there might be an interval of time. A better word might be *suddenly*.

The events of this book are impending in that we see the signs leading up to them. The Lord's coming for the church, to resurrect and rapture it, is imminent.

Or we might say the things we read about will happen soon whereas the Rapture will come suddenly and before them.

How, exactly, do you "keep the words of the prophecy of this book?" **I think it is by looking for and hastening the coming of the Lord! It is by believing His coming for the church is imminent. It is by "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).**

Here are verses stating that Christ could return suddenly, at any moment, without warning. These passages support the premillennial position and the doctrine of imminence.

- 1Corinthians 1:7, "awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ."

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- 1Corinthians 16:22, "Maranatha." "Mar" ("Lord"), "ana" ("our"), and "tha" ("come"), meaning "Our Lord, come." The Arabic greeting implies an eager expectation.
- Philippians 3:20, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."
- Philippians 4:5, "The Lord is near."
- 1Thessalonians 1:10, "to wait for His Son from heaven."
- 1Thessalonians 5:6, "so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober."
- 1Timothy 6:14, "that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- Titus 2:13, "looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."
- Hebrews 9:28, "so Christ... shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him."
- James 5:7-9, "Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord... for the coming of the Lord is at hand... behold, the Judge is standing right at the door."
- 1Peter 1:13, "fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."
- Jude 21, "waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life."

Those of you currently in or familiar with the military understand the concept of an inspection. When you're given notice that an inspection has been scheduled you get to work making certain everything is ready for the white glove treatment. There's nothing worse than a surprise inspection if you are unprepared.

Since Jesus coming is imminent you keep yourself ready. You "keep the words of this book." Not grudgingly, but lovingly.

No book of Scripture promises you'll be "blessed" as much as the Revelation. This is the sixth blessing conferred in the book with the seventh and final coming in verse fourteen.

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Revelation 22:8 Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

John experienced “these things” as an observer. He saw them; he heard them. They weren’t simply impressions or visions or dreams.

His very human reaction was to be overwhelmed. He’d seen so much about Jesus that he “fell down to worship” the angel. It was wrong, of course; only God is to be worshipped. But I think we might cut him some slack. In fact, we can be guilty of this or something like this ourselves.

There may be a time you can remember, or a time yet coming, when you will sense the presence of Jesus very powerfully. The tendency is to covet that experience and, in coveting, to try to repeat it. **Your worship can then take on a nonbiblical component.**

Let me illustrate. Unusual things sometimes occur, or are at least reported as occurring, during times of genuine revival. Martyn Lloyd Jones wrote this about Jonathan Edwards and the revival of the 1740’s:

Edwards’ wife, on one occasion, exhibited the phenomenon which is known as levitation. She was literally carried from one part of the room to another without making any effort or exertion herself. Sometimes people would swoon and become unconscious in meetings. Edwards did not teach that such phenomena were of the devil.

OK, but is it really the Lord, really revival, when *every* church service week-in and week-out folks are supposedly slain in the Spirit? I think not. I think it’s people worshipping the experience and missing the Lord.

Revelation 22:9 Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

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Only God is to be worshipped. That's why it is so revealing that Jesus receives the worship of angels (Hebrews 1:6) and of men (Matthew 8:2, 14:33, John 9:38).

Angels are pretty spectacular. They do some amazing things in Scripture. The greatest thing about them, to me, is that they always perfectly obey the Lord. He gives them a mission, a message, and they are always on task. We sometimes portray angels as bumbling - like Clarence in *It's a Wonderful Life* trying to earn his wings. But in real life they are solid servants.

I want to be solid in my service. Dependable. To stay on task. It's doable.

The angel is content to identify himself as a "servant" and to thus put himself on a par with John, the "prophets," and all the saints who will read the Revelation and, in looking for the imminent return of Jesus, "keep the words of this book."

It's not so much that I am equal to an angel as it is an angel is willing to humble himself and identify with me. It's an example of the attitude I ought to have as a servant of the Lord.

The angel gave John great advice: "Worship God." Redirect your focus to the person and work of God. Get your eyes off of everything else and on to Him.

There are a lot of definitions we could give for "worship" and what it means to "worship God."

In an interesting article in the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, G.W. Bromiley suggests that our English word is painfully inadequate to capture the greatest sense of what is meant. After looking at the words translated worship, both Hebrew and Greek, and at their contexts, his conclusion is that worshipper must be a humble person who is willing to do three things:

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1. Subordinate their goals to God's goals by prioritizing service toward the Kingdom of God.
2. Express gratitude and praise toward God, and,
3. Tell others about God, His truths and the love they have enjoyed as His child.

Along those lines another author wrote, “Worship is the response of grateful and humble people to the living God where submission, sacrificial service, praise, profession, testimony and gratitude are freely expressed in innumerable ways.”

It's become somewhat of a cliché but I think it's accurate to say that worship is a lifestyle that brings glory to God. With that in mind we can look at everything we do and infuse it with worship by serving in ways that further a sense of the Lord's kingdom, by expressing gratitude and praise, and by sharing the Lord. I can choose this at home, at work, in school, and at church.

I hope you know at least one person who is this kind of worshipper! Whose very lifestyle reeks of worship.

It's a beautiful thing to live a worshipful life.