



# *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*

*"Save the Date"*

22:16-21

When did people start sending out *save the date* notices?

A *save the date* notice is an item stating the date of a wedding or other formal event. It typically states the date when a couple plans to marry so that recipients will know to keep that date free. They are generally sent out at least six months before the wedding date, and are usually followed by a formal wedding invitation.

As our 81-week study in the Revelation of Jesus Christ comes to its close, I look back on it as one long *save the date* notice. The startling thing is that we're not given the date and are expected to save every day as the day the Lord may return for us.

Revelation 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

This is the first time you encounter the word "churches" since way back in the beginning of the book. That's because the bulk of this

book does not involve the church because it describes the Great Tribulation - *and we are not on the earth during any of that time!*

Occasionally during our studies I've referenced the fact that a common criticism of the pretribulation rapture is that it is a doctrine of recent origin.

Over at the local Catholic church they had this item in their weekly bulletin:

The rapture as known in today's culture is a Protestant doctrine that surfaced in the 1850's. It is NOT a Catholic teaching... There will be no time between the second coming of Christ and the end of time.

It's just not true that the rapture is of recent origin. Listen to these words, attributed to a sermon in a document dating from perhaps as early as 373 AD, and certainly no later than 627 AD.

All the saints and elect of God are gathered together before the tribulation which is to come, and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of our sins.<sup>1</sup>

(If you want to know more about that quote and its documentation visit the website, [www.pre-trib.org](http://www.pre-trib.org) and search for Ephraem. Then click on the article by Thomas Ice titled *The Rapture in Pseudo-Ephraem*).

As the "root... of David," He preceded David as his ancestor. As the "offspring of David," He came through David's line as a descendant. How can Jesus both precede and follow David? How can He be both ancestor and descendant?

**Because He is God come in human flesh.**

The "bright and morning star" is the herald of the breaking of a new day.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pre-trib.org/article-view.php?id=52>

Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

The "[Holy] Spirit" and the "bride," the church, are God's agents to invite lost men to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior in the age in which we live.

The Holy Spirit invites men in many ways, including these:

- By all the invitations recorded in the Bible and by the Bible itself.
- By His being in the world to convict (convince) nonbelievers of sin and of righteousness and of the judgment that is coming.
- By empowering our sharing of the Gospel.

The "bride" invites men to "come" in many ways, including these:

- By its pastor-teachers and evangelists.
- By its gatherings.
- By the lives of individual believers that are a testimony.
- By its work out in the world in the name of Jesus.

"Let Him who hears say, 'Come'" is a simple but powerful reminder of God's method for spreading the Word. It's from person-to-person in relationships with one another. The mathematics are staggering if one person leads another person to Jesus in a year and then each of them lead another person and so on.

Crusade evangelists will tell you that nonbelievers come because a believer invited them or brought them.

"Whosoever desires" may come to Jesus. There is a great and historic debate in the church between those most identified as Calvinist and those most identified as Arminian.

Not 'Armenian,' but Arminian after the famous scholar Jacobus Arminius. Jacobus Arminius was a Dutch pastor and theologian in

the late 16th and early 17th centuries. He was taught by Theodore Beza, John Calvin's hand-picked successor, but he rejected his teacher's theology that it is God who unconditionally elects some for salvation. Instead Arminius proposed that the election of God was of believers, thereby making it conditional on faith.

Arminius' followers, not wanting to adopt their leader's name, called themselves the Remonstrants.

I don't want to belabor this except to say we are neither Calvinist nor Arminian. We believe the Bible teaches that God chose you from the foundation of the world AND that whosoever will from the whole human race may come to Him. We believe both are true simultaneously. To reconcile these truths men devise one or the other system of theology which, in my humble opinion, misrepresents Scripture and thus misrepresents God.

Revelation 22:18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

Revelation 22:19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

The book in question is *this* book, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. In its context, these verses describe the efforts of nonbelievers to undermine these prophecies. The people being described have no part in eternity.

Is this applicable to the rest of Scripture?

[Scholars] generally do further extend the sense of these two verses, considering this as the last portion of holy writ, not only placed last in our Bibles, but revealed and written last. They conceive these verses the seal of all canonical Scripture, and that God here denounces a curse to those who shall pretend any new revelations of his will... as also against all those who shall deny, corrupt, or deprave any part of them." (Poole)

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This solemn promise also implies that the Book of the Revelation can be understood. Why would God assign such a strong rebuke for the addition to or subtraction from a book that just painted big ideas in wild pictures, or if no one could really understand the book anyway? (Guzik).

We are called upon to convey this warning to nonbelievers. We should speak about prophecy in our witnessing, about the Church Age and the rapture, about the Last Days and the Great Tribulation and the Second Coming and the Millennial Kingdom and the final judgment of the wicked.

Revelation 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

We have Jesus' own word that He is coming "quickly." If that isn't enough He qualifies it by saying "surely" and "Amen."

In the Gospel of John He said He was going away to prepare our heavenly mansions and would come back for us. Here He adds that it will be "quickly." In the context we are talking about the bride and her bridegroom so this undoubtedly refers to the Jewish wedding customs of the first century. As we understand them, it was customary for the groom to come unannounced for his bride. She had to keep herself ready at all times because she never knew when he was coming - it was thus always deemed imminent.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" This is a more biblical version of *What would Jesus do?* At every moment of my day and in my walk, can I say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus?"

The imminent, pretribulation, premillennial return of Jesus was important to John. It affected how he lived. He wrote in 1 John 3:2-3,

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

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1 John 3:3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

If you are busy conveying a warning, you will normally be careful yourself. What you believe about the rapture and its timing does affect your entire life.

Revelation 22:21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Nothing will focus your heart more on the grace of God than the doctrine of imminence.

You warn others in a context of grace. It is because you love them with the love of Jesus Christ that you warn them, that you explain to them what is happening and what is going to happen.

Prophecy is a great proof of the love of God as He is shown to give men ample warning to repent and be saved.

## Conclusion

“The Spirit... [says], Come.” The Holy Spirit is in the world today restraining the flood of sin. He is grieved at what He sees. His ministry is to reveal and glorify Jesus. Here we learn, in what I believe is the only prayer recorded that the Holy Spirit utters in Scripture, that He longs for Jesus to return. He knows that when Jesus returns it **will** be in glory, fully revealed.

“... The bride [says], Come.” The church on earth is the bride of Jesus Christ. The church collectively ought to long for His coming just as a bride awaiting the coming of her bridegroom to marry her.

“... Him who hears [says], Come.” The individuals in the church on earth - you and I - ought to, in our personal lives, live in the expectancy of the imminent, pretribulation, premillennial return of Jesus.

“... Him who thirsts come.” There seems to be a shift; this seems to be a different group. This refers to nonbelievers - who are parched

but for a drink of the free living water offered to all by Jesus. But they must come and take; they must receive Him by faith.

Ready or not, Jesus **is** coming!

At the very close of the book is the confession that the answers to the problems of life do not lie in man's ability to create a better world but in the return of the One who in sovereign power controls the course of human affairs. (Mounce)