

REVELATION—UNVEILING THE END, ACT 3 THE FINAL CURTAIN

STUDY FIFTEEN

Come, Lord Jesus

Revelation 22:17–21

We live in a weary world. Weary of wars. Weary of disease. Weary of heartbreak. Come soon, Lord Jesus, and deliver us. May we know the joy of being free at last.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

LAST words are the most meaningful words. Thoughtful people weigh their words carefully when their days are coming to an end. Their statements become precious drops of wisdom, distilled from a lifetime of experience, worth listening to very carefully.

Paul's last words wrapped up his entire life's work. Knowing his time was near, he wrote:

I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.
(2 Timothy 4:7)

Last words like Paul's resound with vital truth. They clarify what life is all about. They solidify a person's thoughts. They prioritize what's truly important. They summarize a person's life into principles others can live by. If we're smart, we pay careful attention to a person's last words.

What last words did John write? Let's listen closely as we study the final verses of the Bible's final book.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

“Encourage one another with these words,” Paul wrote, after promising Christ's return (1 Thessalonians 4:18). Ask the Lord to encourage your heart through His Word today.



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TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

You recall, at the beginning of Revelation, the prologue set a tone of expectancy:

This is a revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants the events that must soon take place. . . . [God] blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near. (Revelation 1:1, 3)

Now Revelation’s epilogue echoes the same expectancy—“Do not seal up the prophetic words in this book, for *the time is near*,” the angel declared (22:10, emphasis added)—but it doesn’t end there. Expectancy leads to invitation.

During his earthly ministry, Jesus invited people: “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Christ’s offer weaves implicitly through Revelation. Each prophecy implies an invitation to come to Jesus before it’s too late. In the book’s final words, Christ’s appeal rings loud and clear.



Observation: Invitation, Exhortation, Benediction

Read [Revelation 22:17–21](#) as if John is speaking to you personally. One of the goals of observation is to feel the emotion of the writer’s words.¹ What emotions does this passage evoke in you?

Invitation—Revelation 22:17

What is the invitation in [Revelation 22:17](#), and who makes it?

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The “Spirit” is the Holy Spirit, and the “bride” represents God’s people, those “from every tribe, and language and people and nation” who have been ransomed by Christ’s blood (Revelation 5:9; see [19:7–8](#); [21:2, 9](#)). At first, we might think that the “Spirit” and “bride” are appealing for Jesus to come, but here, the appeal is not toward Jesus but to whom? And what is being offered?

Come! Come! If you’re without Christ, come! Don’t wait until you’re at death’s door. The blessings, the benefits, the joys are more than we could number. It’s an open-ended, unrestricted, wonderful invitation to all. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Exhortation—Revelation 22:18–19

Both Jesus and the angel had authenticated the prophecies in Revelation as “trustworthy and true” and worthy of our obedience (Revelation 22:6–7). In light of the book’s sacred nature and divine origin, what exhortation and warning did John give in [Revelation 22:18–19](#)? What two actions are forbidden?

Not just the general concepts but the “words” of Scripture must not be tampered with. Why was John so particular?

While we do not worship the words, the words are to be preserved, guarded, accepted, most importantly obeyed. These words form the standard of our faith and the basis of our practice. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Benediction—Revelation 22:20–21

What do the last words of Revelation say, according to [Revelation 22:20–21](#)? What hope forms the capstone of the book, indeed, of all Scripture? What is the response? Who is the focus?

“Yes, I am coming soon” is Jesus’ final promise. Scoffers will deny it. Doubters will argue over terms. Agnostics will wonder what all the excitement is about. But God’s own people find their fire fueled by these words.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Coming Soon

Scripture traces God’s plan of redemption from the creation to the fall, from God’s covenants with Abraham, Israel, and David to the birth of Jesus, from Jesus’ death and resurrection to the birth of the church and the teaching of the apostles. While the final chapters of Revelation close Scripture’s story, they compose the opening chapters of eternity’s story.

Christ’s declaration, “Yes, I am coming soon!” looks forward to redemption’s next phase, the end of the curse and the new creation. But what did He mean by “soon”?

Some in Peter’s day tapped their toes impatiently, saying, “What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again?” (2 Peter 3:4). How did Peter reassure them in [2 Peter 3:8–9](#)?

An eternal God doesn’t measure time as timebound humans count time. *Soon* may mean millennia. But there’s a bigger meaning to the word. The word *soon*, as Jesus used it, emphasizes imminency rather than immediacy. Read the article, [“Is Jesus Coming Soon?”](#) at gotquestions.org, and write down your conclusions on the meaning of “soon” and the imminent return of Jesus.

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Christ's coming is the next event in God's prophetic timeline. Nothing else must happen first, so Christ could appear anytime, even before the end of this sentence! In addition, He won't give a warning—other than the warnings He's already given. He'll come unexpectedly . . . like a thief in the night.

Jesus said, "I am coming imminently, in any hour, at any time of the Father's choosing. I am coming!" He is coming at any moment.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: The Importance of Words

John cautioned those who hear these prophecies not to add to them or remove any of “the words of prophecy written in this book” (Revelation 22:18). The *words* themselves are to be preserved.

John's warning recalls God's warning to the people of Israel. Read [Deuteronomy 4:2](#) in the New American Standard Bible and write down God's command about His word.

Why might people try to add to or take away certain words in Scripture? What motive might they have?

Words are important. Those who take lightly the authority of Scripture tend to tamper with the words. How might people find ways around obeying Scripture by adding to or removing the words of Scripture?

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What conclusion do you draw from John's insistence that the words of prophecy in Revelation, and the rest of Scripture, remain as written?

John's warning is directed to those who deliberately falsify and misrepresent Holy Scripture. Those who twist the truth to say what they want it to say for the purpose of deceiving. We must uphold, love, guard, and most importantly obey the Word of God. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Final Words

The prophecies of Revelation call to our hearts.

First is *a wake-up call*. To those who are indifferent or apathetic, the message is that Christ may come at any moment. Our present choices have eternal consequences. Believe in Christ now.

Second is *a call to peace*. To those who are anxious and fearful, God freely offers the water of life to quench your soul's deepest thirst and calm you through life's fiercest storms.

Third is *a call to hope*. To those who are lonely and lost, Jesus is the security your heart longs for. He's coming soon, and until then, His Spirit is with you always.

Which call of the three calls above do you hear in the final words of Revelation?

If John left you with a single message from this profound book to carry with you today, what might that be?

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Families awaiting the late arrival of a loved one usually leave the porchlight on as a welcome whenever he or she might walk up the sidewalk and open the door. When John wrote, “Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!” he turned on the porchlight of planet earth. Our welcome never dims. Our love-light never fades. Our hope burns brighter every day.

Come, Lord Jesus! Come!



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, as each page of the calendar turns, the day of Your Son’s coming gets nearer. Time never turns back but always moves forward, closer and closer to the day when time itself will end and eternity begins. I long for You to make things right in this world, but mostly, I long to feel Your presence, when You will be with me and I will be Yours for eternity. May that day come soon. In the name of the coming Savior, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the article, “[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)”

For the 2024 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll’s messages. Copyright © 2004, 2024 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

