

## GOD WITH US "DECLARATION" REVELATION 22:7-11

### This Week's Core Competency

**Eternity** – I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish his eternal kingdom. John 14:1-4 *Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.*

According to Jesus, God blesses those who live in light of the truth revealed in the book of Revelation (22:7), an idea made explicit in the opening words of the prologue to the book: "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near" (1:3). The notion that God blesses or rewards people according to their works is repeated in verse 12. There Jesus says, "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." Salvation is by grace, but rewards are by works. On the subject of rewards one author writes:

"According to John, Jesus once said: 'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life,

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***Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.***

– Jesus Christ

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and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life' (John 5:24; emphasis added). This is certainly a splendid promise. It offers to the one who believes a most solemn guarantee that not only does he possess eternal life, but also that he need have no fear of judgment. Why? Because that experience is not for him: he 'shall not come into judgment.'

"Yet strangely, in the last book of the New Testament this same inspired writer reports another declaration of his Master which must seem to stand in tension with the earlier one. Here Jesus says: 'And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work (Rev. 22:12). It is true that the word 'judgment' is not actually used here, but it is obviously implied. It is also explicitly stated in other texts of Scripture [see 1Jn 4:17; Jas 2:12-13; 2Co 5:10]. What then is this? On the one hand there is the solemnity of Jesus' promise that the believer does not come into judgment, and on the other hand the repeated apostolic declarations that he does" (Zane C. Hodges, *Grace in Eclipse*, 49-50).

The same author goes on to resolve the tension between no judgment and judgment, salvation by grace and rewards by works. "Since God gives salvation freely to anyone who receives it by faith, the case is closed before it can be opened. Nor will it ever be opened. Or reviewed. The eternal destiny of everyone who has passed out of death into life is settled forever. In that sense there is no judgment for a Christian.

"But on the other hand, many who have perceived this magnificent truth have been reluctant to face the other texts of Scripture on this theme as directly and  
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candidly as they should. There is, in fact, no way to elude the reality that the believer does face a judgment where his works—and hence the issue of 'debt' and 'pay'—must be examined.

"This is exactly what Jesus means when He declares, 'My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work' (Rev. 22:12). The Greek word translated here as 'reward' was one which basically meant 'pay' or 'wages.' Our Lord's meaning is transparent: 'What a man has earned he will get.'

"There is no more lovely doctrine in Scripture than the doctrine of God's matchless grace. But in some quarters of Christendom that superlative theme has been stretched almost beyond recognition. It is perfectly true that grace will play a significant role at the judgment of believers. Who has ever accomplished anything apart from its enablement? But the Judgment Seat of Christ is a place where the Christian's *performance* comes into view. And therefore the question of merit comes into view as well.

"Not to maintain this balance with regard to the biblical doctrine of judgment is to invite—yes, to assure—the distortion of much Scripture" (50).

## day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

### Revelation 22:7-11

7 "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. 9 But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"

10 Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. 11 Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy."

### Cf., another translation

7 (Look! I am coming soon!  
Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy expressed in this book.)

8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things, and when I heard and saw them, I threw myself down to worship at the feet of the angel who was showing them to me. 9 But he said to me, "Do not do this! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets, and with those who obey the words of this book. Worship God!" 10 Then he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy contained in this book, because the time is near. 11 The evildoer must continue to do evil, and the one who is morally filthy must continue to be filthy. The one who is righteous must continue to act righteously, and the one who is holy must continue to be holy." (NET)

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

\* Circle "Behold" in v. 7.

\* Circle "soon" in v. 7.

\* Circle "blessed" in v. 7.

\* Underline "keeps the words" in v. 7.

\* Bracket "heard and saw" in v. 8.

\* Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 9.

\* Highlight "Worship God!" in v. 9.

\* Underline "seal up" in v. 10.

\* Box "because" indicating *reason* in v. 10.

\* Bracket v. 11.

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## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Revelation 22:6-21 is the epilogue to the book. Reading the epilogue, *what* do you notice about the opening words of verse 7, and *what* do you infer from it?
2. Clarify what "blessed is he" means by putting what it means in your own words.
3. We all know how to keep the words of a *command*, but how do we keep the words of a *prophecy*?
4. Explain the *contrast* introduced in verse 9.
5. What excuse could John possibly offer for worshipping an angel?
6. Explain the significance of sealing up a prophecy.
7. Why *not* seal up the prophecy of Revelation?
8. Verse 11 makes it sound like God doesn't want sinful people to repent. Read verses 12-17 and explain how we know this isn't true.
9. **Discussion:** If verse 11 doesn't mean God doesn't want sinful people to repent, talk about what it does mean.

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## day 3

# EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

The book of Revelation opens with a brief prologue (1:1-8) containing a foreword (vv. 1-3), a greeting (vv. 4-5a), a doxology (vv. 5b-6), and the theme of the prophecy (vv. 7-8). It closes with a brief epilogue (22:6-21) containing various elements, the number and structure of which are debated. One commentator writes: "There are thirteen sayings in the epilogue (22:6, 7, 8-9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14-15, 16, 17, 18-19, 20, 21), and the organization is disputed. Some (Vanni, Kavanaugh) see three sections (6-11, 12-16, 17-21), Roloff four (6-11, 12-16, 17-20, 21), and Beale five (6-7, 8-10, 11-12, 13-17, 18-20). For reasons that I will explain below, I organize it into five sections: 6-7, 8-11, 12-19, 20, 21" (Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT, 778). In every case but one, commentators recognize a break after verse 11. This week's passage, verses 7-11, contain the Lord's announcement (v. 7) followed by the angel's commands (vv. 8-11).

The announcement in verse 7 can be divided in two. First, the Lord declares that he is coming soon. His coming is soon because it is imminent meaning that he might come at any time. No signs precede his return for the church. One writer explains: "Many signs were given to the nation Israel, which would precede the second advent, so that the nation might be living in expectancy when the time of His coming should draw nigh. Although Israel could not know the day nor the hour when the Lord will come, yet they can know that their redemption draweth nigh through the fulfillment of these signs. To the church no such signs were ever given. The church was told to live in the light of the imminent coming of the Lord to translate them in His presence (John 14:2-3; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Tim 6:14; Jas. 5:8; 1 Pet. 3:3-4). Such passages as 1 Thessalonians 5:6; Titus 2:13; Revelation 3:3 all warn the believer to be watching for the Lord Himself, not for signs that would precede His coming" (J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 202-203).

Second, he declares that God blesses those who keep "the words of the prophecy in this book." We usually think in terms of keeping *commandments*, not keeping *prophecies*. Nevertheless, our Lord's meaning is clear. Believers are to live in light of the revelation "signified" (1:1) in the book, consisting of what John had seen, what is now, and especially what will take

place later (1:19). This beatitude echoes the opening words of the book, "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near" (1:3). In the words of one commentator: "In light of the sovereignty of God and the realization that he has foretold the imminent end of the world, the Christian must at all times be ready for Christ's return. That readiness consists of right ethical and spiritual living. Every passage on the return of Christ ends with this demand. The Olivet discourse, especially in Matt. 24:32-25:30, ends with a series of parables on readiness for the eschaton (the fig tree, the days of Noah, the wicked servant, the ten virgins, the talents). First Cor. 15:58 commands believers to 'stand firm' and 'give yourselves fully to the Lord.' Second Cor. 5:9 says, 'Make it our goal to please him.' First Thess. 5:8 states, 'Let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.' Second Thess. 2:15 demands that the faithful 'stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you.' In short, the purpose of eschatology in every place is ethics, that is, the demand to walk worthily of the Lord in light of his soon return" (Osborne, 783).

The angel gives three commands (vv. 8-11). First, he commands John, "Worship God!" (v. 9). After hearing what he had heard and seeing what he had seen, John couldn't help himself. He falls down before the angel who mediated the revelation. As before (19:10) the angel admonishes him. "Do not do it . . . Worship God!"

Second, the angel commands John, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book" (v. 10). This is the opposite of what Daniel was told to do in the last chapter of his prophecy. He was told, "close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end" (12:4), and "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end" (v.9). One commentator explains: "On occasions when prophets received revelations which did not concern their own immediate contemporaries but some future time, they were told to seal up the book of their prophecy (Isa. 8:16; Dan. 8:26; 12:4, 9). However, John's prophecy was not designed for some remote generation but for the entire Christian church, including John's own generation. Therefore, he is not to seal his book but

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is to leave it unsealed that all may read" (George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, 291).

Third, the angel commands people to choose evil or righteousness (v. 11). While his words seem harsh and their nuance is debated, the gist of their meaning is clear. On the one hand, people will certainly continue to do what is wrong while others continue to do what is right until the very end. On the other, what people do will have no effect on the fulfillment of John's prophecies. The same commentator explains: Their fulfillment is grounded in God actions alone. What's more, people ought to consider what they're doing before it's too late. "As John approaches the conclusion of his book, he holds forth the invitation to

repentance: 'Let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price' (vs. 17). Still, there will come a time when it will be too late for repentance. 'It is not only true that the troubles of the last days will tend to fix the character of each individual according to the habits which he has already formed, but there will come a time when change will be impossible-when no further opportunity will be given for repentance on the one hand or for apostasy on the other.' In view of his sense of the imminence of the end, John in imagination transports himself to the end when repentance will indeed be impossible-when the stand one has taken for Christ or Antichrist will be finally and irrevocably determinative" (292).

## *The Message of the Passage*

*Since Jesus is coming soon and God blesses those who live righteously in light of his imminent return, turn away from doing wrong to do what is right.*

### day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about how God revealed himself to you . . .

–Write about how God wants to change you . . .

–Write about how God wants to use you to change your world . . .

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# notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 7 **soon** "The coming of Christ is to be 'without delay' or 'in a short time.' It is best to take the utterance at face value and accept the difficulty of a foreshortened perspective on the time of the end rather than to reinterpret it in the sense that Jesus 'comes' in the crises of life and especially the death of every man. Revelation has enough riddle without our adding any more" (Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, NICNT, 391). "The promise of 'coming soon' frames 22:7-12 and in a broader way 22:7-20, forming a recurrent theme of the closing section" (Craig S. Keener, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation*, 514). The coming of Jesus in two phases, the rapture of the church (1Th 4:16-17) and the glorious appearing (Mt 24:30), are viewed as a whole in this verse: "here John seems to be referring to Christ's coming for the church rather than His second coming to the earth, though *both are in the larger context . . . the end is always impending because of the imminent return of Christ at the rapture with the ordered sequence of events to follow*" (John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 333-34, italics added); cf., Ladd, who explains "time is near" in verse 10 in terms of the book's twofold perspective. "It is concerned with the struggle between Christ and Antichrist which will come to its terrible climax at the end of the age. However, this struggle also expressed itself in the relationship between the state and the church in the first century, particularly in the deification of the emperors and the growing demand of the state that its citizens recognize the emperor's deity by formal acts of worship" (Ladd, 291).

v. 7 **blessed** "This [*erchomai tachy*, 'coming soon'] is followed by the sixth of the seven beatitudes in the book (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14). These final two may be somewhat different. The first five probably mean 'God blesses,' but this one means 'Christ blesses.' Of course, the emphasis on the unity of Father and Son throughout means that in all cases they act together" (Osborne, 782).

v. 7 **keeps the words** "In light of the sovereignty of God and the realization that he has foretold the imminent end of the world, the Christian must at all times be ready for Christ's return. That readiness consists of right ethical and spiritual living . . . In short, the purpose of eschatology in every place is ethics, that is, the demand to walk worthily of the Lord in light of his soon return" (783).

v. 9 **Worship God!** "John's response is natural, but he is rebuked by the angel who informs him, as he did on previous occasions, that he is John's fellow servant who should be classified with the prophets, John's brethren, and with others who keep the saying of the book (cf. 19:10). It should be noted here as in 19:10 that the one speaking, though an angel, is declared to be a fellow servant and related to human servants of the Lord. The angel's command is direct and to the point: 'Worship God' (aorist imperative); in all acts of worship, worship God only" (Walvoord, 334).

v. 8 **heard and saw** "Throughout the Apocalypse, divisions in the visions have been indicated by 'I saw' (5:1, 2, 11; 6:1, 2, 5, 8, et al.) or 'I heard' (4:1; 5:11, 13; 6:1, 3, 5, et al.). They are the two primary terms for the visual and auditory aspects of the prophetic visions. Thus, this is virtually a legal statement paralleling 1:1 that John is the divinely chosen prophetic channel of these visions to the churches" (Osborne, 783).

v. 10 **seal up** Cf., "But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end" (Dan 12:4). "These verses stand in contrast to the command given Daniel to seal up his book (8:26; 12:4, 9-10) and in contrast to Jewish apocalypses in general. John's message cannot be concealed because the contents of the vision are needed immediately by the churches" (Alan F. Johnson, "Revelation," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 12:601).

v. 11 **let him . . .** Cf., "Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand" (Dan 12:10). John's harsh-sounding words have been interpreted in a number of ways: "(1) Some (Beasley-Murray 1978: 337; Giesen 1997: 485) read Revelation here as similar to Daniel, seeing this as a command to the wicked people to think about what they are doing. But that weakens the command setting too much. It seems there is no longer any opportunity for reflection; the lines are set, and it is too late to change. (2) Others (Morris, Mounce, Hendricksen, who calls this the "let" of withdrawal-'let him be') believe this is related to the imminent end. It will come so swiftly that there will be no time for change. But this message seems clearly to be directed at John's readers and cannot be restricted to the final community at the end of history. (3) Still others believe that this is not to be seen individually but corporately (Michaels 1997: 252). In other words, the individual can change, but the presence of good and evil will continue right up to the return of Christ. This may be a step in the right direction, but it is difficult to prove a switch from the exhortation of individuals this far to a command addressed only to the groups. (4) Finally, some say that this refers not so much to the actions of individuals but to 'the inviolate nature of John's prophecy' (Wall 1991: 264-65). The evil or good deeds of people will have no effect on the fulfillment of these prophecies. They are grounded in God rather than in the actions of people. This is certainly part of the answer but does not explain the commands themselves. A combination of the first and second options understood rhetorically may be the best way to understand this difficult set of commands" (786).

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## Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

In just a few days our trash and recycle bins will be filled with the leftovers of Christmas. There will be boxes and wrapping paper and the last of the ham and fruitcake will be sitting on the curb waiting to be properly disposed. We will have made precious memories with our friends and family. New toys will fill our homes. Despite some unavoidable glitches, we will reflect on a season in which we loved well, served well and celebrated the birth of our Savior. Sometimes, the days following Christmas can be a bit of a letdown. Our long awaited celebration has come and gone. We may find ourselves wondering what's next? The truth is Christmas is not the end but the beginning for us. The ultimate celebration is still in our future. Some day Jesus will come again and what a day that will be! So, what are we to be doing in the meantime? Our text today tells us to live in obedience to God's Word and worship Him. I pray your family finds time this week to reflect on the ways you lived in obedience and worship this year. Did your family take a new faith step? How are your family devotion times and prayer going? The good news is while Christmas is just a few days behind us, the new year is just a few in front of us. May we continue to be faithful to the One we worship!

### What Does The Bible Say

Read: Revelation 22:7-11

1. In verse 7, who is it that is coming soon?
2. What does Jesus want us to be doing as we wait? (v. 7)
3. Who did the angel tell John to worship? (v. 9)

### What Do You Think

When John heard Jesus' words, he fell at the feet of the angel to worship. The angel told him not to worship him but to worship God. What are some things we are tempted to worship other than God?

### What R U Going To Do

Choose a Christmas gift that you received this year and think about a way you could use it to worship God. Remember, the way we live our lives IS worship. How can you glorify Him with your things?

## MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Eternity - I believe in heaven, hell and one day Jesus will come again.

Memory Verse

No memory verse this week!

## KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC \_\_\_\_ and Verse \_\_\_\_\_. Family completed **Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **Think** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do** \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

#### 2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** Ephesians

#### 6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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**Wendy Hollabaugh** (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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