

REVELATION – SERMON 90

THE REWARD OF JESUS

Revelation 22:12-17

INTRODUCTION

- Have you ever done some work for someone, expecting to get paid, but in the end they never paid you?
- Every week, the courts hear cases of workers not being paid, or being underpaid by their employers
- People want a “fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work”, yet in this world things are not always fair
- But when the Lord Jesus comes, there will be a perfectly fair reckoning; all will receive their dues, all accounts will be settled, as he rewards every man according to his works (Matthew 16:27)
- “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14)
- For the believer, whose sin has already been judged at Calvary, he will receive rewards according to his service for Christ during this life (1 Corinthians 3:13-15)
- For the unbeliever, he will be judged according to his sinful works, and apportioned his place in the lake of fire (Romans 2:5; Revelation 20:12-13)
- In this final section of the book of Revelation, having ended the prophetic vision, the Holy Spirit through John brings us back to the chief theme of the book – the coming of Jesus Christ and his eternal dominion
- This final chapter has many similarities to the opening chapter, as shown by the following chart by Thomas L. Constable:

Origin of the prophecy: God and Jesus	1:1	22:6
Subject of the prophecy: coming events	1:1	22:6
Mediator of the prophecy: an angel	1:1	22:6,8,16
Writer of the prophecy: John	1:1,4,9	22:8
Genuineness of the prophecy: true prophecy	1:3	22:6,7,9,10,18-19
Vehicle of the prophecy: a prophet	1:1,9-11	22:8-10
Addressees of the prophecy: bond-servants	1:1	22:6
Destination of the prophecy: churches	1:3,11	22:16,18
Blessing of the prophecy: for obedience	1:3	22:7,12,14
Warning of the prophecy: for unfaithfulness	1:7	22:11-12,18-19
Centre of the prophecy: Christ	1:2,5,9	22:16,18,20
God of the prophecy: Alpha and Omega	1:17	22:13
Chief character of the prophecy: God	1:5,7	22:12-13,16
Hope of the prophecy: soon return	1:3,7	22:7,10,12,20

- Seven times in this chapter is the word “come” (*erchomai*) used – six of them referring to the Lord’s coming, the other being an invitation to men
- In these verses we are again reminded that Jesus is coming quickly (cf. vv.7,12,20) and it is the urgent duty of all of us to prepare for his coming

I. JESUS REWARDS THE WORKS OF EVERY SOUL (12-14)

A. Christ’s reward is with him (12)

1. The concept of reward on the day of judgment is found throughout the Bible (Psalm 58:11; Jeremiah 31:16)
2. Christ’s words in v.12 are a repetition of the prophecies of Isaiah, who wrote of the LORD, “behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him” (Isaiah 40:10; 62:11), showing that Jesus is Jehovah
3. The reward is with Christ in his people
 - a. Christ’s own reward for his sufferings is the many sons he brought to glory (Hebrews 2:10)
 - b. This includes a glorious and holy church (Ephesians 5:25-27), a purified, peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:14) and a redeemed people out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Revelation 5:9)

- c. When Jesus returns, ten thousands of his saints will be with him (Jude 14)
- 4. The reward is with Christ in his Person
 - a. God told Abram, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1)
 - b. The chiefest blessing of heaven is the perfect fellowship of man with God (21:3)
- 5. The reward is in Christ's possession
 - a. For some this means flaming vengeance (2 Thessalonians 1:8) with the sword out of his mouth (Revelation 19:15)
 - b. For others it means crowns and kingdoms (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 2:25-26; 3:21; 20:4)
- B. Every man will be judged individually (12)
 - 1. There are national judgments, there are judgments upon cities, there are global judgments
 - 2. But ultimately all of us, whether saved or lost, will stand before God and be judged as individuals – the saved at the judgment seat of Christ, the lost at the great white throne
- C. Christ's authority to execute judgment (13)
 - 1. God condescends to describe to us finite creatures, with finite language, his infinite nature
 - 2. Alpha and Omega – he is eternal and sovereign (cf. 1:8; 21:6)
 - 3. The beginning and the end – he originates all things and concludes all things (cf. Hebrews 12:2)
 - a. Not only is Christ the origin and consummation of all things, but as Lord he spans all that lies between
 - b. As the beginning, there is none *before* him; as the end, there is none *after* him; and in the midst, there is none *beside* him

4. The first and the last – he is the cause and the goal of history
 - a. This title is shared by Christ (1:17; 2:8) and the Father (Isaiah 44:6; 48:12)

D. The blessed privileges of the redeemed (14)

1. This is the final of the seven “beatitudes” in Revelation (1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14)
2. This verse does not teach salvation by our works, but only by God’s grace
3. The privilege to have a right to the tree of life (cf. Genesis 3:24) and to enter the city is not an earned or merited right, but a *granted* one by God
4. The word for “right” (*exousia*) is translated “power” in John 1:12, where God gives believers “power” to become the sons of God
5. Salvation comes by obedience to God’s commandment to *believe* (1 John 3:23)
6. God “commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30)
7. The gospel must be “obeyed” (Romans 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17)
8. The only “work” that can merit us eternal life is “the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:28-29)
9. The evidence of a true justifying faith is a life of obedience to God’s commandments (1 John 2:3-4)
10. The Critical Greek Text, based upon the corrupt Sinaiticus manuscript, changes the words “keep his commandments” to “wash their robes”

II. JESUS REFUSES THE WICKED FROM ENTERING SION (15)

- A. In contrast to the blessedness of the redeemed is the misery of the wicked

1. To be excluded from the New Jerusalem is to be cast into the lake of fire (20:15)
2. This is a third catalogue of sinners who will be damned (21:8,27)
3. “Dogs” are added in this list
 - a. Dogs were held in the lowest contempt by the Jews, and it was there was no greater insult than to be called a dog
 - b. Rather than being owned and cherished, they would run wild on the streets in packs, scavenging, devouring corpses and attacking men
 - c. False teachers are called dogs (Philippians 3:2; 2 Peter 2:22)
 - d. The impudently impure, who commit the most gross and unnatural abominations, such as sodomites, are called dogs (Deuteronomy 23:18)

III. JESUS RECEIVES THE WILLING TO ETERNAL SALVATION (16-17)

- A. The identification of Jesus (16)
 1. As the book begins by identifying Jesus Christ as the One revealed (1:1), so here he confirms from his own mouth that he is the giver of this book of prophecy
 2. Significantly, he simply uses the name “Jesus” to identify himself
 - a. Though a common Jewish name (the equivalent of Joshua), it was revealed by the angel to Joseph as the name that the Son of God would bear at his incarnation (Matthew 1:21)
 - b. It means “Saviour”, and the salvation that he came to effect was not merely physical or national, but to “save his people from their *sins*”
 - c. He still bears that precious name, and “this same Jesus” (Acts 1:11) will come again in glory, and in that day “at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow” (Philippians 2:10)
 3. Verse 6 says that the “Lord God” sent the angel, while v.16 says “Jesus” sent the angel, showing clearly that Jesus is the Lord God

4. The churches are the primary recipients of this vision
 - a. The book begins by specifically identifying the seven churches being written to (1:11)
 - b. God entrusted this prophetic vision not only to those seven churches, but to all his churches throughout this age, showing the centrality of the church to God's work on earth in this age (Matthew 16:18; 1 Timothy 3:15)
 - c. Note the word "you" is plural, and may be a direct address to the churches
 - d. This is the first mention of the word church since 3:22, indicating that that church is not involved upon earth during judgments of the tribulation period (chapters 6-18)
5. Jesus is the root and offspring of David
 - a. He is both the ancestor and descendant of David (Isaiah 11:1), showing both his divinity and his humanity (cf. Matthew 22:42-45)
 - b. He fulfils all the prophecies given concerning David
6. Jesus is the bright and morning star
 - a. The morning star appears in the heavens before the dawn, and so Christ's coming will mark the dawn of the bright new day of Christ's kingdom
 - b. Balaam prophesied of "a Star out of Jacob" which is Christ (Numbers 24:17)
 - c. There are many stars in the heavens, but the morning star is distinct from them in nature, and shines the brightest of all of them
 - d. Jesus promised the overcoming Thyatirans that he would "give him the morning star" (2:28), which is a pledge of his own presence to his people

B. The invocation to Jesus (17)

1. The Holy Spirit calls for Christ to come
 - a. His ministry is to glorify Christ (John 16:14)
 - b. His ministry is to testify of Christ (John 15:26)
2. The bride calls for Christ to come
 - a. The Lord taught us to pray “Thy kingdom come” (Matthew 6:10) which is a cry for the Lord’s return
 - b. From the beginning, the church’s continual hope and longing has been for Christ to come (Romans 8:23-25; 1 Corinthians 1:7; Philipians 3:20; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 3:12)
3. “Him that heareth” calls for Christ to come
 - a. This describes all those who read, hear and keep the words of this prophecy (1:3) unto this day

C. The invitation of Jesus (17)

1. The calls for Jesus to come is now taken up by the Lord himself and turned upon men to come unto him
2. The Bible is full of invitations offered by God to men to come unto him, the first being when he called Noah and his house into the ark (Genesis 7:1)
3. The thirsty are those who acknowledge their sin, their condemnation, their helplessness to save themselves, and their need of Christ (Isaiah 55:1; John 7:37-38; Revelation 21:6)
4. “Whosoever will” is the broadest possible invitation, offered to all men, requiring only that they be *willing*
 - a. God himself is willing for all to repent and be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9)
 - b. God in his sovereignty has granted man a free will to choose to either submit to him or rebel against him (John 5:40)

5. The water of life, representing everlasting life, is *free* to us, costing us nothing, but costing the Lord Jesus Christ his very life

CONCLUSION

1. One of the primary purposes of Christ returning is to execute judgment, rewarding both the righteous and the wicked
2. There is nothing more certain that there is coming a day when we will be rewarded according to our works in this life
3. Before we engage in any activity, speak any word, or meditate upon any thought, we should consider, "I must give account to God for this"
4. "It is lamentable indeed, knowing that God has set mankind in such a race where heaven or hell is their certain end, that they should sit down and loiter, or run after the childish toys of the world, forgetting the prize they should run for" (Richard Baxter)
5. Those who live for the praise of men have their reward in this life (Matthew 6:2,5,16)
6. Those who live for God's glory have their reward in eternity (Matthew 6:4,6,18)
7. The scriptures teach that rewards may be lost
 - ✓ Men can take our crown (Revelation 3:11)
 - ✓ Men can beguile us of our reward (Colossians 2:18)
8. If we would not lose what we have wrought, we must "look to ourselves" (2 John 1:8)
9. What does the second coming of Jesus Christ mean to you?
10. Do you long to see your Saviour who bled and died for your sins?
11. Do you tremble in fear of his wrath that will be poured out upon your unredeemed soul?
12. Have you accepted his invitation to come to him in faith?
13. "Lord make me willing!" (Psalm 110:3)