

Be Faithful!

Jesus Will Reward You!

Sunday, 2/12 at 8:00 & 10:45

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany – 2012

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, today we focus on the middle-part of Revelation chapter 22 – *a very important and relevant section of God’s Holy Word!*

1. **Worship Only God:** ⁸ [And] I, John, am the one ~~who heard~~ [hearing] and ~~saw~~ [seeing] these things. And when I heard and [I] saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel ~~who showed~~ [showing] me these things. ⁹ ~~But~~ [And] he said to me, “**Do not do that.** I am a fellow ~~servant~~ [slave] of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of ~~those who heed~~ [the ones keeping] the words of this book [three categories seem to be identified: angels, prophets/apostles, and other Christians]. **Worship God** [very similar to 19:10].” //
- a. “hearing and seeing” – That is how God revealed the contents of Revelation to the apostle John; therefore, John was an *EAR*witness and an *EYE*witness.
- b. “fell down to worship” – Try to imagine being John; you have just *heard* and *seen* many awesome things *from God through an angel* (see 1:1: God→ Jesus→ angel→ John→ us). Therefore, *caught up in the moment*, you fall to worship the angel. However, the angel quickly warns you to STOP! Why? Dr. Becker

wrote that “such worship is a sin which rouses the anger of the Lord who calls himself a jealous God... (Exodus 20:3-5) (361).” So we should worship **ONLY GOD!** But what does it mean to worship? Webster defines worship as “**extreme devotion or intense love or admiration of any kind** (New World Dictionary, Third College Ed., 1540).” Now, with that definition in mind, ask yourself: Am I *extremely devoted to or intensely in love with* anyone or anything **MORE** than God? For example:

- i. Do I put TV before my daily time in God’s Word?
- ii. Do I put sports before my weekly time in God’s house?
- iii. Do I put my hobby before my service in God’s kingdom?

Dr. Becker wrote: “**Both angels and men have been created to serve God with unquestioning obedience and together to offer their worship and praise to God**” (362). Is God calling you to repent?

2. **The Time Is Near:** ¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for **the time is near**. That is from *God’s perspective*, not ours; however, let us know that the very day of Jesus’ return has already been set: ^{NAU} **Acts 17:30** “...having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring...that all *people* everywhere should repent, ³¹ because **He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness...**”
3. **Don’t Shrink Back:** ¹¹ Let the one ~~who does~~ [doing] wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and ~~let~~ the one who is righteous, still practice

righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.” // What does that mean? Here are two possibilities:

- a. Lutheran Study Bible Note: “Just as those who occupy themselves with works of unbelief continually become more and more unbelieving..., so...faith increases in those who practice godliness” (2236).

Think about the members of Bethlehem: Those who begin to shrink back from Christ usually continue to do so *more and more*, while those who grow in Christ usually live for Him *more and more*!

- b. Dr. Becker: The contents of verse 11 “evidently refer to the moment when the last prophecy will have been fulfilled.... The opportunity for repentance and forgiveness will have come to an end. These words are a solemn warning to the sinner not to delay his own repentance” (363-364). In other words, don’t be stuck in filthiness forever and ever; instead, *THROUGH CHRIST ALONE*, be righteous and holy forevermore!

4. **Rewards Will be Received, but Not Deserved:**

¹² “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to ~~render~~ [give back] to every man according to what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” // Why will our rewards be *undeserved*? Because God has done them through us; therefore, they are not really our works but His works; nevertheless, God will reward us (God → faith → works) (Ephesians 2:10)! How do we know if Jesus will keep His promise? *He will* and *He must* because He is the “Alpha and the Omega...”

5. **The Right Detergent Is Necessary:**

- a. ¹⁴ Blessed are ~~those who wash~~ [the ones washing] their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. // *The stain of sin* is upon every person; sin blocks the way ♦to the tree of life and ♦to the gates of heaven. Many try but all are helpless to remove the stain of sin. Therefore, *in great power and love*, God has provided the right detergent: **The precious blood of the Lamb!** Only through Jesus, *and Him alone*, will we enter the gates and eat from the tree of life!
- b. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs [*the unbelievers*] ~~and~~ [namely] the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone ~~who loves and practices lying~~ [*loving and making a lie*]. // If we are *honest* and *understand the Bible*, we will admit that **we have all committed those sins**. So, what about eternity? **Some** – *by God's loving action* – are sorry for their sins and trust in Jesus as Savior; **others** – *by their own persistent rejection of Christ* – continue in their sins!

Conclusion: Now, *in response to today's section of Revelation*, let us †worship only God, †be ever ready for Jesus' return, †look forward to Jesus' rewards, and †know that we have been washed clean in the precious blood of the Lamb! And all God's people said: *Amen!*