

Come and Enjoy

Yehonatan and Shira were married in a traditional Jewish ceremony overlooking the ancient city of Jericho. Shira knew her husband-to-be would be coming for her soon; so she waited for that moment by sitting outside the hall in a wooden swing surrounded by numerous women attendants. Inside the hall, Yehonatan and the rabbi sat at a makeshift table signing marriage documents as numerous men joyfully sang and danced around them, making final preparations for the moment when he would arise to go get his bride. Smiles and laughter abounded as Yehonatan arrived at Shira's swing. After singing, "You Had Me from Hello," he took Shira by the hand and led her to the wedding canopy. There she walked around him seven times to symbolically bring down any walls between them. And thus, their marriage had begun.

For years, Jim had fought off congestive heart failure and kidney disease. For years, his wife took care of him and drove him to doctor's appointments. Jim's once beloved mobility began diminishing every day. But he kept trying. He did what he could to keep up his strength. And he kept his faith. He still read his Bible and prayed every day. But that Sunday morning, he felt he had reached the end of his rope. He was ready to go. And so he prayed aloud in his wife's hearing, "Jesus, come get me." Early that afternoon, Jesus answered Jim's prayer.

A wedding and a death—but both a new beginning of a resplendent relationship.

1. *Why is marriage a good picture of how our relationship should be with Jesus?*

2. *Has there been a time when you felt Jesus should have already returned? Explain your answer.*

3. *How often do you think about your readiness for Jesus' return?*

LESSON FOCUS: Say with the Spirit and the Bride, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

The Final Warnings

Revelation 22:10-16, KJV

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Revelation 22:10-16, NIV

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

¹²"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

¹⁴"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

¹⁵Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

¹⁶"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

In his final words, the angel instructed John not to “seal up the words of the prophecy”—not to hide them away—“because the time is near” (vs. 10). Although everything recorded in Revelation has not been completed, it has begun. Therefore, “Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy” (vs. 11). There is some debate about the meaning, and timeframe, of these words, but it is clear that once judgment has arrived, there will be no time left to repent. John’s readers still had a choice.

Jesus once more warned in verse 12: “Look, I am coming soon!” To those who believe, “I will give to each person according to what they have done” (vs. 12). This does not refer to salvation but to the future rewards believers will receive for faithfully serving God. Jesus could deliver on this promise because He was “the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” (vs. 13). Those who remain faithful, “who wash their robes” and will “have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city” (vs. 14)—the New Jerusalem.

However, those who “continue to be vile”—“the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood” (vs. 15)—will be cast outside, into eternal separation from God (Rev. 20:15).

Jesus’ final words to John again affirmed His message: “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches”—not just the churches cited at the beginning of Revelation (chapters 1–3) but His Church throughout all time, for whom His words remain imminent (Rev. 22:10). And once more Jesus affirmed His identity: “the Root and the Offspring of David,” the Messiah promised to the Jews; “and the bright Morning Star,” another messianic title dating back to the days of Moses (Num. 24:17; see also 2 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 2:28). Jesus, the Morning Star, will soon overcome the darkness permanently.

4. *What were the angel's final instructions?*
5. *What did Jesus declare to John in verses 12-15?*
6. *What did Jesus affirm in His final words to John (vs. 16)?*

The Final Call

Revelation 22:17-21, KJV

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

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

Revelation 22:17-21, NIV

¹⁷The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

¹⁸I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll.

¹⁹And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.

²⁰He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

²¹The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

The Book of Revelation ends not on a note of condemnation but of invitation. The Holy Spirit, the bride, and all who

heard this invitation proclaimed, “Come!” (vs. 17). Whether this invitation was to the reader or to Jesus Himself, every believer would enjoy Jesus’ presence upon His return.

The next invitation certainly was for the reader: “Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life” (vs. 17). This echoed Jesus’ words in John’s Gospel: “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me . . . rivers of living water will flow from within them” (John 7:37-38).

John made one final warning to his readers: “If anyone adds anything to [this prophecy], God will add to that person the plagues described. . . . And if anyone takes words away . . . God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City” (vss. 18-19). Just as Jesus and His angel affirmed His words, John’s readers were to do the same, rather than twist them to make them fit their own viewpoints or desires. Those who chose to try to add or take away from the many judgments in Revelation would, instead, run straight into them.

Jesus’ promise is then reiterated one final time: “Yes, I am coming soon” (vs. 20). Through John, the angel, and His own words, Jesus had testified to everything depicted through the Book of Revelation. His words were true, and would be fulfilled in their time. In response, John proclaimed, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (vs. 20). Here John used the familiar Aramaic word *maranatha*—declaring “come, Lord” in the common language of the people. Jesus’ return will be for all believers, not just an elite few.

John concluded the book, and the Bible as a whole, with the benediction: “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen” (vs. 21). True to John’s words, Jesus’ grace has remained with His people to this day—and will remain forever.

7. *What invitation was made in verse 17, and by whom?*

8. *What warnings did John give his readers?*

9. *How did John end the Book of Revelation—and therefore, the Bible itself?*

Come to Jesus

The great gospel singer Mahalia Jackson wrote a song titled, "Come to Jesus," which many churches sang during the altar call portion of the church program:

"Come to Jesus just now, Just now come to Jesus."

Greg accepted Jesus as His Lord and Savior after dating a church girl named Cathy. He had desired a relationship with her, and she had desired for him to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. He went to church with her not expecting to give his life to Christ but to please the woman he wanted to date.

Greg remembers that day like it was yesterday. After the pastor had preached his sermon, he conducted an altar call, and the choir sang, "Come to Jesus:"

"He will save you, He will save you just now."

Before he knew it, this drug dealer and gang member, who knew little about Jesus, was weeping and coming to the altar to give his life to Christ. When he reached the altar, Pastor John prayed with him, and Greg felt set free from all the weight that sin brings. The young man who trusted no one was now trusting the unseen God of deliverance. Tears ran down his cheeks, and his hands were raised high—the same hands that distributed drugs, the hands that beat up young men as an initiation into his gang.

"He will cleanse you, He will cleanse you just now."

It was a glorious day. Greg went on to conduct soul-winning meetings in the neighborhood where he sold drugs. He eventually married Cathy, and they are ministers of the Gospel. Greg had come to Jesus, and Jesus had come to him.

10. *Why is it important to come to Jesus as soon as possible?*

11. *Why do we need to emphasize that Jesus is coming for everyone?*

12. *What do you need to do to prepare for Jesus' arrival, whenever it is?*

Jesus Is Coming

Truth cannot be changed because it is the truth. The truth is that Jesus will return, and that one day every life will be held accountable. Those of us who are Christians look forward to that day, whether He comes for all of us at once or individually, so we echo the words of the early Christians: “Maranatha! Come quickly, Lord Jesus!”

► *Prepare for Jesus’ coming as you would if you were to see Him this week. What things do you need to get in order in your life? What people do you need to forgive? What bad habits need to go? What people need to hear your testimony before you go?*

KEY VERSE

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

—Revelation 22:18-19, KJV

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.

—Revelation 22:18-19, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK’S LESSON

Week of August 29 through September 4

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Hebrews 11:18-19—The Faith of Abraham.
- Tue.** Psalm 84—Blessed Are They Who Dwell in Your House!
- Wed.** Romans 4:1-12—God Reckons Righteousness.
- Thu.** Romans 4:13-25—A Promised Inheritance.
- Fri.** John 8:51-59—Abraham Rejoiced in the Day.
- Sat.** Genesis 11:27-32—First Steps of Faith.
- Sun.** Genesis 12:1-7; 15:1-7—Called to Be a Blessing.