

Revelation 22:6-9

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/rev/rev-22/revelation-226-9/>

John's impulse, as a result of what he has seen, is to fall down in worship. Believers are once again urged to read, hear, heed, and, like John, worship.

John's vision now moves beyond the description of the new earth to God's final words at the end of the vision.

And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place." (v 6)

The messenger/angel tells John that these particular *words are faithful and true*. Of course the whole Bible is *faithful and true*, as it says in 1 Timothy:

*"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correcting, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."
(1 Timothy 3:16-17)*

But there is an emphasis here when God specifically points out that these words in particular can be believed. These promises are quite incredible; the idea that creation can be fully restored and God's people can "reign forever and ever" (Revelation 22:5) in harmony with Him is astonishing. God is emphasizing that this really did come from Him, and will really happen.

The pronoun *he* in the phrase *And he said to me* is appropriately not capitalized. This is because in context the one narrating these things to John is "one of the seven angels" who "carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city" (Revelation 21:9-10).

The *angel* shows *to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place* and was sent by *the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets*. The idea seems to be that these words came from the Lord (Greek "kyrios," "master") over everything that was spoken of by the prophets. So in a sense, this word is coming from the ultimate source of prophecy—God who is Lord of all.

The sense seems to be that this particular prophetic word is so important and the culmination of so many things that its dependability needs additional emphasis. This makes sense in light of the overall message of Revelation, which calls each believer to choose to be a faithful witness (Greek "martyrs") and not fear death, loss, or rejection by the world.

In order to choose a perspective that following Jesus into death, loss, or rejection is of great benefit, we must believe that these promises are really true. This emphasis at the end of Revelation underscores again the initial promise at the beginning of this letter, that there is a great additional blessing or benefit for those of God's servants (believers) who read, understand, and then keep/act upon the words of this prophecy (Revelation 1:3).

The passage emphasizes that these events are imminent and inevitable:

the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place (v 6).

God has sent this vision to John so that God's *bond-servants* will know *the things which must soon take place*. The group of all persons who have believed on Jesus constitute the group of God's *bond-servants*. The messages in this book are written to those who believe in Jesus (His *bond-servants*), as is written in the very introduction of Revelation:

“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”
(Revelation 1:3)

To become a *bond-servant* of God requires having sufficient faith to look upon Jesus, hoping to be delivered from the poisonous venom of sin (John 3:14-15). This faith is sufficient to receive God's free gift of being born again, and be spiritually placed into God's family as His forever-child (John 3:3; Romans 5:1-2). God sent *His angel* or messenger to show us *the things which must soon take place (v 6)*.

This is also an echo of the statement at the beginning of Revelation:

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* to all that he saw.”
(Revelation 1:1-2)

Starting and ending the book in the same way brings a sense of finality and completion.

The bookend statements *which must soon take place* both include the word *must*. The idea is that these events are inevitable. What God has decreed shall come to pass. He is on the throne at the beginning and at the end of Revelation. So He is in charge of all things. He has all authority and we can count on it as a future certainty.

These things that are inevitable (*must*) are also imminent (*soon*). The word translated *soon* can also be rendered “quickly” or “shortly.” This could refer to the fact that when the events of Revelation begin to unfurl, they will happen rapidly. It could also mean that they are right around the corner.

From a human standpoint, it might seem that because two thousand years have passed since these words were spoken is evidence that this is not happening *soon*. But in the scheme of eternity this is a small wisp of time. With God, a thousand years is as a day (2 Peter 3:8). In the next phrase the speaker apparently shifts to Jesus, and He reemphasizes that He will return and do so *quickly*:

“And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book” (v 7).

The *I* here would appear to refer to Jesus, who has promised to return to the earth. In Chapter 19, we saw the vision of Jesus returning to earth to vanquish the foes of His people (Revelation 19:11-21). The return of Jesus is imminent and certain. The angels promised Jesus's disciples that He would return just as they saw Him depart (Acts 1:10-11). This was also promised in the Old Testament, even prior to Jesus's first visit to earth to take on human form (Zechariah 14:4). It is certain that Jesus will return to earth, vanquish His foes, and take authority over the earth. It also seems that Jesus will come and meet His people in the air, and take them to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). Biblically speaking, this latter event could happen at any time. Also biblically speaking, Jesus's return will only take place after the Abomination of Desolation, as spoken of in the book of Daniel (Matthew 24:15).

The urge to *heed the words of the prophecy* is first stated at the beginning of Revelation:

“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”
(Revelation 1:3)

There is a repeated theme of read, hear, and heed/do throughout Revelation, as first referenced in the first chapter. God has given us some knowledge of future events, but the emphasis has been on present faithfulness. The point of Revelation is for each believer to be one who *heeds the words of the prophecy of this book* and is therefore one who is *blessed* (v 7).

The primary emphasis of Revelation is to exhort us to be faithful and not fear death, loss, or rejection from the world: to be a faithful witness (Greek, “martyr”). Just as in Hebrews, the emphasis is on TODAY (Hebrews 3:15)—Revelation leads us to live each day in a manner that *heeds* these words of exhortation. No one can do an action in the future; the present is the only time we can act. Therefore, the admonition to read, hear, and heed/do the words of the prophecy necessarily means the focus is on our present application of what we learn from reading and studying Revelation.

Revelation promises a number of blessings for those who heed the words of the prophecy and overcome rejection from the world, even as Jesus overcame (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3:5, 12). Perhaps the ultimate promise is that each person who overcomes receives the amazing inheritance to share responsibility and authority with Christ; to possess the inheritance when the time comes,

“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”
(Revelation 3:21)

Each person who believes in Jesus is given the free gift of eternal life. This only takes enough faith to look at Jesus on the cross, hoping to be healed from the poisonous venom of sin (John 3:14-15). Each person who believes is born again and becomes a new creation in Christ (John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17). When we believe, we are granted an inheritance.

In the Old Testament, Israel was granted the inheritance of the land, but it was left to them to take the actions required to possess their inheritance. In the New Testament, believers are granted an inheritance, but it is left to each person to possess their reward of the inheritance by a walk of

faith (Genesis 15:17-18; Hebrews 3:17-19). We are instructed to possess the reward of our inheritance by doing all we do as unto the Lord, to be approved by Him rather than by the world:

“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.”
(Colossians 3:23-24)

When we overcome sin and the world through walking in faith, we gain the great reward of the inheritance, which includes sharing Jesus’s reward with Him as a “son.” Jesus was given sonship as a reward for His faithful obedience, and was thereby given all authority to rule over creation (Hebrews 1:5, 2:9-10; Matthew 28:18; Revelation 3:21; Romans 8:17b; Matthew 25:21).

In Chapter 1, we were told this great blessing of possessing the reward of our inheritance will be given to any believer (servant) who will read, hear, and keep (do) the words of this prophecy (Revelation 1:3). Here in Chapter 22 we don’t get “read” or “hear.” We only get *Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy* (v 7). Perhaps this is because this is the end of the book, so there is a presumption we have already read and heard the words of the prophecy.

Now what is left to do is heed what we have been told, each day, every day.

When John hears this, he is overwhelmed:

I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God” (vv 8-9).

Revelation began by noting that it was written to Jesus’s “bond-servants.” This *angel* says he is a *fellow servant*. There will be both angels and humans in the next earth who serve together. However, amazingly, although angels are superior creatures, the humans who overcome as Jesus overcame will be elevated to serve with Christ to reign in the new earth (Hebrews 2:5-10; Revelation 3:21).

We seem to get an inference here that John is one who has overcome, since the angel says *I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book* (v 9). Each of these three categories fit into the definition of one who overcomes as Jesus overcame (Revelation 3:21). Each believed. But also each followed in faith, enduring rejection from the world. John testifies to his own witness (Greek, “martys,” as in martyr) in Chapter 1:

“I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance *which are* in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.”
(Revelation 1:9)

John was overwhelmed and fell down to worship the angel, but the *angel* sets *John* right and shows him that he should really *worship God*. The angel described his role to *John*, saying that

he, the *angel*, is a *servant of you, John, and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book* (v 7).

Paul tells us that “we will judge angels” (1 Corinthians 6:3), and that is beginning to occur here in Revelation in that the angel says his aim is to serve John. It appears that God dispatches angels to serve and minister to His people. Angels came to minister to Jesus after He was tempted (Matthew 4:11). Jesus said that children have angels assigned to them, apparently to protect them (Matthew 18:10). Daniel had angels intervene on his behalf to inhibit spiritual forces arrayed against him (Daniel 10:13).

So there might be a lot of angelic activity helping us of which we have little awareness. The implication is that there is more angelic protection given to *those who heed the words* of instruction contained in Revelation. There is an immense reward for those who serve God by following His ways and do not fear rejection, loss, or death from the world.

Biblical Text

⁶ And he said to me, “These words are faithful and true”; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place. ⁷ “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.” ⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.”