

Series	Gamma 16 – Study 19
Reference	Revelations 22: 6-21
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Speaker	Dr Peter Ng

Good evening brothers and sisters in Christ. This is the 19th study and the final one in the Book of Revelations. Congratulations and praise the Lord for all those of you who managed to hang on, 19 difficult studies and we come to the last study, which is basically the second half of chapter 22 verses 6 to 21, which is the epilogue, which basically concludes with a challenge to all of us taking into consideration the whole span of the 22 chapters.

So before we start, let's have a word of prayer. Lord, we ask this day that Revelations not just continue as knowledge in our brains, but a prophetic warning of the future where every one of us will be involved. We pray O Lord that we take heed of this morning and we look forward to your coming. For we ask for Jesus' sake.

Now let's look at the landscape. If you look at the whole of Revelations, we're looking at the painful world where tribulation will come, whichever view you take, it's going to be difficult. Revelations 4 all the way to 19. And then you've got on the horizon this coming up of the perfect world, Revelations 21 to 22 verse 5, which we've covered last week. And today the challenge is between the painful world and the perfect world is verse 7,

And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the word of the prophecy of this book.

So this last bit is a challenge to a blessing. You want a blessing? Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. And the main issue here that is coming is imminent, because you look at verse 7,

Verse 7 Behold, am coming soon.

Verse 12 Behold, I am coming soon

Verse 20 Surely, I am coming soon.

So we are going to look at his coming. His coming is imminent and what do we do in the light of his coming? There are three things we should respond.

1. We should prepare for his coming.
2. We should avoid distractions.
3. We should long for his appearing.

Let's prepare for his coming. It says,

And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."

The first thing that we need to do in preparation is that we need to believe and act because these words are trustworthy, you can rely on it and it is true.

Verse 10 And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is

near.

In Daniel, the prophecy was supposed to be sealed up until the proper time. In Revelations, the opposite is said,

Verse 10 And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

This means the time is imminent. He is coming very soon. So therefore this is something not to be put in the back of our minds, but something to be actively brought forward in daily life.

1-John 2:18 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so many antichrist have come. Therefore we know that this is the last hour.

The last hour describes an imminent coming of Jesus Christ and it is the same since 1947, a group of scientist, every since the launch of the atomic bomb started the bulletin of atomic scientists and in 1947 they think that midnight is a day that the whole world will erupt and end. And since 1947 to 17 minutes to midnight because of the proliferation of nuclear arms. As you can see recently it's 100 seconds to midnight as of 2021, because you got a nuclear threat, you've got a pandemic. You see everybody's wearing masks, you've got the climate change, and you got cyber deception. So the world is undergoing turmoil. We've got a warning. Even scientists are telling us that the end of the world is near.

What do you do? Some people will prepare underground bunkers. The rich people will have huge bunkers underneath. They think they can escape, but you know, when disaster strikes, nobody escapes. Or you could eat, drink and be merry, because there is nothing you can do about it, but we should act on the prophecy.

Verse 7, And behold, I'm coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

There is a blessing for the one who keeps the word. That means you apply the words of this prophecy in your life, which means we need to see the world in the light of the prophecy. We need to look at the state of our churches. There is compromise, false teaching. We need to look at the seals, the trumpets, and bowls and recognize of the political, religious, trauma, deception, temptation, and then the judgements are coming. We need to remember that the great white throne is coming. We need to, even if you look at Hong Kong, the new loyalty oath requires all lawmakers to love China and the communist party. So every part of the world is undergoing great turmoil and we can recognize.

These are the prophecies of Revelations coming true. We need to know what will happen to Babylon. If you look at the world, are we still going to invest in a Babylon that is going to find its end. In Revelations chapter 17 and 18. And so we need to invest in preparation, the things that are important, not a doomsday bunker, but remember Revelations 14 and 13,

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors for their deeds, follow them.

Building bunkers isn't going to help us. Building deeds based out of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the only things that will follow us to the next life.

We have to prepare for his judgment,

Verse 12 Behold, I'm coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. I'm the alpha and Omega, the first of the last, the beginning and the end.

So Jesus Christ is in control of the entire span of history and as such he will require of us accountability when he comes. Everyone is aware of accountability. It is amazing. Even Socrates, he was actually made to take hemlock, which is a kind of poison and just before he died, he was lying down quite content to take the poison, even though he didn't believe in God and suddenly set up, just as the poison is going to take place. He said, remember, I owe a cockerel male chicken to somebody. Can you please repay that. We are acutely aware, even at the end of time that there is a balance, there's an accountability which we must give.

Remember the parable of the 10 bridesmaids. There were about five of them who didn't bring enough oil and five of them who brought enough oil and the bridegroom Jesus saying in Matthew chapter 5 was a bit late. It was a bit late. They ran out of oil. The five ran off to get more oil. The five who had the extra oil were okay and when the five came back, this is what he said.

Matt 25:11-13 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, Lord, lord, open the door for us. 12 But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I don't know you.' 13 Watch therefore, for you neither know the day nor the hour.

So the teaching in Matthew 25, which is a series of three parables about the coming judgment of God, is that you've got to be ready. Watching is to make sure that you actually have the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It's very difficult, because you could be in the church for a long time and still not have true genuine saving faith in the Lord. Jesus Christ. Look at John Wesley. He basically was a pioneer of the Methodist movement. He was a deacon and he was a missionary, went to theological college and he hadn't even become a born again Christian. It was only right after that when he became a Christian.

So you could be in church for a long time and not have a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Martin Luther who rebelled against the Roman Catholic church, nailed the 95 thesis talking about justification by faith in 1517 and he was not converted till 1519. He could have debated Roman Catholic authorities on how to get saved but he wasn't saved. So preparing your oil like bridesmaid is becoming ready, really understanding your faith, having a true faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We prepare for his judgment by washing their robe.

Revelation 22:14-15 Blessed are those who wash their robes.

What you wash the robe in? You wash the robes in the blood of the lamb, in the redeeming sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ,

so that they may have the right to the tree of life, that they may enter the city by the gates. 15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

So preparing for his judgment is washing the robes. And if you look back at the start, the first three chapters. The churches under pressure, Pergamon, Smyrna, Ephesus, Laodicea, Thyatira, Sardis and Philadelphia. All of them had problems with persecution or succumbing to temptation or compromise and what did our Lord Jesus tell them to do? Well, the washing of their robes is basically repenting,

turning back from their trusting of physical riches and their own efforts, repenting, holding fast to the gospel and not compromising. That's how we are to wash our robes in the blood of the lamb.

We prepare for his judgment because it is coming and is certain.

16 I, Jesus have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.

So there are two symbols, which Jesus used. By saying I am the root and the descending of David, he is taking us back to Isaiah where his first coming was already predicted. This is a prophecy, which we always mentioned in Christmas, where there shall come forth a shoot for the stump of Jesse, which is David's father and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit and the spirit of the Lord shall rest on him.

So he's a descendant of David and this already happened in the first coming. In the second coming, he was told about in Isaiah 60,

Arise and shine for your light has come (it is a morning star). The glory of the Lord has risen upon you, for behold darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples, but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen on you. And the nations will come to your light, and the Kings to the brightness of your rising.

So Jesus Christ, his second coming is cast as the morning star, so bright that everybody rushes towards it and surely as he has come in the first time he will come second time as well, because these are both predicted at Isaiah's prophecies. So here we are to prepare for his coming. We have to avoid distractions. There are a lot of distractions that will actually bring us down. We need to be careful and John is warning this of us,

8-9 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, 9 but he said to me, "You must not do that! I'm a fellow servant with you and your brothers and the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.

It's a bit odd, isn't it. After seeing the magnificence of the perfect city, the perfect bride, the perfect temple and the new heavens and new earth, John falls down and actually sins. He is actually worshipping an angel. This is the angel, which is great. This is the angel, who showed him the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne. It is wonderful. The angels is huge. For example,

Revelation 10:2, He had a little scroll in his hand and he set his right foot on the sea and the left foot on the land,

Huge angel doing miraculous things, magnificent and the tendency for us is to worship things other than God, because these are the things which are proximate, which we can see and feel. And so therefore there are some sectors of the Christian faith that worship saints, because they are the ones closer to us than God whom you cannot see, or I remember in my hospital some time ago there was a dust forming on a windowpane that look like the Virgin Mary and suddenly the whole world came to Subang Jaya Medical Centre to worship. Look at all these people worshipping and praying to this image of the Virgin Mary on the third or fourth floor of the hospital block, and this had to be removed and moved to a church in Klang.

So people are very, very easily led to worship things other than God. We would like someone a proximate source of blessing rather than to have faith in God whom we cannot see. I want to address the Ravi Zacharias sex scandal that actually came to light in this month. They actually did an extensive investigation over this servant of God and it is very-very disappointing. It turned out that he had been actually having sexual abuse for a number of women in his spa, which he co-owned and all of this came out to light.

It was at first denied by Ravi and his administration, later on they confirmed after he died that he actually was involved in a double life where on one hand he span the globe preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and on the other hand, he has a secret life where he actually had sexual abuse of quite a number of women. It is not something like King David that happened one time with Bathsheba. This had been going on for years and years and years, and people asked, was Ravi actually a Christian. We need to be very careful, we don't know. He has got to face God in the end, but Revelation says,

Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

Fruit matters, not your gifts. And in fact, in the New York times written by Ruth Graham recently, one of the women who was sexually abused by him, actually testified that he actually warned her never to speak out against him. Otherwise it would be she who would be responsible for the millions of souls whose salvation would be lost if his reputation was tarnish or damage. And this is actually true because if Ravi Zacharias was brought down as that icon of Christian purity and the gospels authenticity, it would mean that many people who are believed would fall away. If you believe that people have faith in Ravi Zacharias rather than the faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You see the point is Ravi is not very much different from the angel. Because we all like to worship something which you can see and feel and touch and the warning here in Revelations is that we are only to worship God. Christian witness is important. Titus 2:9 says,

Bond servants are to be submissive to their masters and everything; they are to be well pleasing and not argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the of God our savior.

As Christian teachers, preachers and leaders, our behavior, even bondservants should be consistent with the gospel. If our behavior is in line with the love of the gospel we will adorn or make attractive the doctrine of God, but even if it wasn't, in Ravi Zacharias case, Philippians says,

Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, others from goodwill. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Jesus Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

So the bottom line, you may have Christian leaders who have fallen but it doesn't matter. What really matters is the truth of the gospel. I remember years ago when I came to Christ at the age of 17, the person actually brought me to Christ 10 years later on renounced the Christian faith. My faith didn't fall because he fell away, because if your faith is based on the truth it won't fall. So we have to learn this lesson, some of the distractions is that if we worship men or we basically idolized them. So we need to be aware of that.

The second thing is that we need to be aware of is that distraction of hard hearts.

And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book for the time is near. Let the evil doers still do evil, the filthy still be filthy and righteous still do right and the Holy will still be Holy.

What does he mean? Well, this is actually taken from, the same idea is taken from Daniel and Daniel clarifies it.

Many will be purged, purified, and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand. But those who have insight will understand.

So as a prophecy of Revelations goes out, he is actually anticipating the response. As the prophecy goes out, the evildoers will still do evil, the filthy people will still be filthy, the righteous will still be righteous, so you shouldn't modify the prophecy. You should still go out, but you want people. If you're hard of heart, this message will make you even continue to be more hard of heart. If you are righteous, you will then be warn and you will actually change your behavior and you will continue to be holy.

The prophecy of Isaiah is the same,

Go and say to these people: “Keep on hearing, but don't understand, keep on seeing, but don't perceive’. Make the hearts of these people dull and their ears heavy and blind their eyes lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand what their hearts , and turn and be healed.

So the message of prophecy, the message of gospel is always divisive. The moment it goes on, clearly you see a break at the ground. There is one side who believe and one side who won't and the ones who do not want to believe will be more resistant. It's like Trump. Everybody either loves him or they actually hate him. Remember, you're looking at the military coup in Burma. Everybody is jumping up and down there and protesting as a military coup. A group of people in the Burma, a lot of them are actually democratic Christians. And actually the reason why they're Christians because years and years ago the chap call Adoniram Judson actually came there in 1890. He had a difficult time, first 15 to 20 years, no converts at all. And I like to quote his words in preaching the gospel. He says,

In joy or in pain, our course be onward still; We sow on Burma's barren plain; We reap on Zion's hill”.

The message of gospel goes out. It often goes on Burma's barren plain, but one day we'll reap on Zion's Hill. God's work will achieve its purpose.

Lastly, we need to be careful of the deception of idolatry.

I warn everyone who hears the word of the prophecy of this book. If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and the holy city, which are described in this book.

So here you actually have words warning people, not to tamper with the words. These are taken from Deuteronomy chapter four, same issue back in the old covenant.

You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commands of the Lord, your God, that I command you. Your eyes have seen what the Lord did at Baal-peor, for the Lord your God has destroyed them among you all the men who followed the Baal of Peor.

But you who held fast to the Lord your God are all alive today.

So the Old Testament background of these words is not adding to God's word in the light of idolatry. If we look very carefully, the warning is not to add or subtract, it is actually not to the scribes who actually copy down the Book of Revelations, it is for the people who hear, I warn everybody who hear. So, what he's saying is that when you hear God's word, we have a tendency to add stuff, which you don't like to hear, so therefore you add stuff to make it look better or you take away the stuff that basically causes you pain. For example, all the passages that talk about judgment, talk about discipleship, talk about sacrifice, we take them out. We put in stuff and add stuff that adds to blessing and there is a warning to all. And why do we do that? We do that because we are basically idolaters at heart. Paul warns in Galatians,

I'm astonished that you are so quickly (this is Paul right after Jesus has left, Paul is doing ministry) deserting him who called you into the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel, not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

If you add anything to the gospel of Christ, it is no longer the gospel of Jesus Christ. Right? You've distorted it completely. So how we distorted it? We are distorted by focusing basically, some Christians will focus on the ceremonies, baptism to save you or the Lord Supper to save you. Some people focus on the commandments to save you. Some people focus on the mysticism of Christianity. Some people focus on Jesus plus good works in order to save you. So those are things that are adding to the gospel of Jesus Christ and we need to be careful in the last days of distorting the understanding of gospel.

Lastly were also told to prepare, to be careful for distractions. We are to long for his appearance,

The spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires to take the water of life without price.

Our response is a longing where the Holy Spirit moves the church and they both say, come Lord Jesus. Everyone who hear us should have a burning desire, a thirst to await the coming of our Lord Jesus. That should be our only response to the prophecy of Revelation and Jesus says in the last two verses 20-21,

20 He who testifies to these things say, "surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!
21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

I want to end with a very comprehensive verse and you can actually see in Titus. It is a very comprehensive verse that actually tells us what we should do in the intervening time between now and the final coming of Lord Jesus.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people. And this grace is training us to renounce.

So what we have to do? We have to renounce ungodliness, worldly passion and to live in self-controlled upright godly lives at the present moment. God doesn't tell us or challenge us to do mighty things. He actually brings salvation to all people and he is training us to live upright Godly lives. Because in the end we are going to be judged on the fruits of our works, which are a result of our faith. And so therefore we have to renounce ungodliness, worldly passion, live in self-control, upright godly lives.

If Ravi Zacharias could have fallen in that manner, what about the rest of us. Waiting and what keeps us alive? Because we are waiting, we are longing, we are thirsting for our blessed hope. The appearing of

the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people of his own possession who are zealous for good works.

So we are a people who are to be characterized to be driven by the hope. We are the people with our eyes on the horizon, the eye to see any moment our Lord Jesus will come. He is the one who died for us, who redeemed us, so that one day we will be his bride, his people zealous for good works. So I pray this prophecy will be the one that inspires all of us in Gamma as we live out the rest of this year in a difficult time of the pandemics. May his word, his prophecy give us hope and give us strength to continue to live godly lives to honor him. Thank you.