A proper response to truth

(Revelation 22:6-13)

(**Intro:** All the visions John received from 4:1 through 22:5 have ended. Thus, the “he” at the beginning of v. 6 is probably the same angel as in 1:1)

6 Then he said to me, “These words *are* faithful and true.” And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. 7 “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.” 8 Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.9 Then he said to me, “See *that you do* not *do that.* For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.” 10 And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. 11 He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”
12 “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last.

At the beginning of his senior year at Florida State University in 1995, Clay Shiver, who would later be drafted by the Dallas Cowboys, was given a “heads up” by a friend of his. His friend, who was the chaplain of the Seminole football team told Shiver that he would undoubtedly be named to *Playboy* magazine’s All-American football team. Shiver, a dedicated follower of Christ, had a couple of weeks to think about this. But even though being named to this squad was one of the top awards the sportswriters give to college players, Shiver said, “My mind was made up before it was even offered to me.” The 6-2”, 280-lb. center said that he didn’t want to embarrass his mother or grandmother or give old high school friends an excuse to buy that issue. Shiver quoted Luke 12:48: “To whom much is given, much is required” and went on to say, “I don’t want to let anyone down, and number one on that list is God.” Shiver’s response was a resounding “no” to Hugh Hefner and a resounding “yes” to God.

Over the last 39 years since I have been saved, I have been in the enviable (and sometimes, inenviable) position to observe how believers respond to God and to His Word. And ***some*** are definitely like Clay Shiver---they have purposed in their hearts to do what God says regardless of the outcome. But ***others*** seem to struggle. No matter how hard you try to show them what God wants, it seems as if they nearly always choose their wayover God’s.

So this morning, as we look at Revelation 22:6-13, I’d like you to ask yourself the following question: “Am I responding to God and His truth properly? Am I a good listener and responder, or is there a chance I may need to start doing things a little differently?”

**Title:** A Proper Response to Truth

(Prayer)

At a conference, New York City pastor and author Tim Keller shared the following story about his brother-in-law’s newfound ability to respond properly to his warnings. Keller said:

I used to go visit my brother-in-law, and he would never wear a seat belt in the car. I always berated him for it. I remember one time he picked me up at the airport, and he had on his seat belt and shoulder harness. I said, **"What happened? What changed you?"**

He said, **"I went to visit a friend of mine in the hospital who was in a car accident and went through the windshield. He had two or three hundred stitches in his face. I said to myself, *I better wear my seat belt*."**

We talked about that a little bit. I said, **"Did you not know that if you don't wear your seat belt you go through the windshield if you have an accident?"**

He said: **"Of course I knew it. When I went to the hospital to see my friend, I got no new information, but the information I had became new. The information got real to my heart and finally sank down and affected the way I live."**

The apostle James said the same thing, only with fewer words: “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22).

The apostle John also has a burden for a proper response to the truth of God. (It’s a burden ALL of us should have!!!)

But before he focuses on that burden specifically, as John begins his conclusion (or, epilogue) of Revelation, there are two basic truths he wants to revisit. He wants to refresh our memories again. First…

**1. The trustworthiness and truthfulness
of the book of Revelation**

Revelation 22:6a Then he said to me, “﻿These words *are* faithful and true.﻿”

Because so many of the events in Revelation are difficult for people to deal with there is a tendency to ask, “Is all of this really going to happen?”

God’s answer: “These words are faithful (trustworthy) and true.”

There is a strong emphasis here in Rev. 22 on the word of God, specifically, the book of Revelation itself:

v. 6— “**these words** are faithful and true”

v. 7--- “the words of the prophecy of **this book**”

v. 9--- “the words of **this book**”

v. 10--- “the words of the prophecy of **this book**”

v. 18--- (2X) “the words of the prophecy of **this book**”

And in v. 16, we have an extremely strong statement by Jesus Himself regarding the authority of the words of Revelation:

“﻿**I, Jesus,** have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches” (Rev. 22:16).

The book of Revelation, like all of Scripture, is trustworthy and true. It is the word of God Himself.

1. The trustworthiness and truthfulness of the book of Revelation

2. The imminence of the return of Christ

In vv. 7, 12, & 20, Jesus says: “Behold, I am coming quickly.”

All of this repetition RE: the reliability of Scripture and the return of Christ has a purpose.

So what is it that John is trying to impress on us?

Revelation is reliable and Jesus is coming back to this earth! Therefore, believe it and respond to it appropriately!

A proper response to truth includes:

**1. Obedience***(A zealous attentiveness to God’s directives)*

There is a blessing on those who are attentive to God’s will in the keeping of His commands---

7b Blessed *is* he who **keeps** the words of the prophecy of this book.”

**Wiersbe:**

* Children obey because they **have** to (or they get a spanking).
* Teens obey because they **need** to (they want to use the car on Friday night).
* Mature people obey because they **want** to (they have a desire to do so that they might please the one giving the command).

So first, a proper response to truth includes:

1. Obedience

**2. Worship***(A genuine reverence of God’s majesty)*

In v. 8, John has the right idea (what he has experienced moves him to worship), but he is so overwhelmed that he falls down before **the angel**:

Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9 Then he said to me, “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. **Worship God**.”

John is directed by the angel to worship God, because God alone is worthy of our worship and devotion.

Q: How long has it been since, as you have been reading God’s Word you had to stop and worship God for his greatness, or His grace, or His love for you?

If we have not had an experience like that for awhile, we may need to let God’s word sink down into our minds and hearts a little deeper. We may not be thinking like we should as we read God’s word.

Obedience…Worship…

**3. Witness***(A heartfelt declaration of God’s word)*

10 And he said to me, “**Do not seal** the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.

Don’t seal these words up---declare them---the time is at hand.

(Comments on the importance of witness!!!!)

Now, remember, that when you do share, some will respond negatively and some positively:

11 He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”

Just what is John saying here? (explain---like a person being stubborn…don’t want to do what you say---go ahead, but remember that there will be consequences).

Obedience…Worship…Witness…

**4. Service***(a humble imitation of God’s lifestyle)*

12 “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.

Jesus is speaking here and He is reminding us why it is worth it to follow in His footsteps---in a life of service and good works to others. Why? Jesus says, “I am coming quickly, and when I do, I will **reward** you based on the quality of your work.”

Jesus **DOES NOT** say that He will let people into heaven according to their work---He is speaking here only to His children and He is speaking to them about rewards.

(**Story** (go to black)---when I made my decision to go God’s way in my life---sermon: “Is There Not a Cause.” I will never regret that decision.)

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**Closing story:**

In the little booklet called “Our Daily Bread” R.W. DeHann tells the story of a New York man that died at the age of 63 who never held a job his entire life.

A wealthy relative left money to him in a will when he was only a child that stipulated that he was to be given enough money to support him as long as he stayed in school.

So what did the man do? He stayed in school until he died at the age of 63. He had all kinds of different degrees but he lived an entire life that was for the most part, of no practical help to anyone.

Folks, it is very easy to come to church week after week---to learn and learn---but to never respond---to never become a person of obedience and worship and declaration and service.

(Words to saved…invitation to the lost)