

Ephesians 14-01-19a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It's nice to see that we have a fairly full complement. All of our people that have been in and out of flu and gone and back from travel and various other distractions from the best part of the week are back and in full force and it's good to see everyone.

We'll turn now to chapter 51. If you have your book, otherwise just listen to the mellifluous tones of my voice as I read for you our memory verse for this morning which is Revelation 22:20 out of Dr. O.S. Hawkins' book *The Joshua Code, 52 Scriptures Every Believer Should Know*. We are every believer and so we've made sure we know them.

Revelation 22:20, he who testifies to these things says, surely I am coming quickly, amen, even so come Lord Jesus. This is a really interesting verse. We covered it when we did our detailed Revelation study and in chapter 22, as you know that's the last chapter, we are winding things up.

We've been with John in vision through the encounter with the Lord Jesus on the Isle of Patmos in chapter 1, the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. The command come up here in Revelation chapter 4 verse 1 which we think is sort of a picture of the gathering of the church to go up with the Lord Jesus. Come up here and I will show you what is going to take place in days to come. So John's perspective as he witnesses the breaking of the seals, the sounding of the trumpets, the pouring out of the bowls is the same perspective that you and I will have when these things take place on the earth.

This is affectionately referred to as the pre-tribulation rapture as opposed to the mid-tribulation rapture which says we'll be here for the first three and a half years of the rise, reign and influence of the Antichrist and then just before the great tribulation which is all of these judgments of God fall on the earth in the last three and a half years when the covenant is broken, when Antichrist sort of throws off his sheep's clothing and shows himself to be the wolf that he is, pretty much controlled by Satan himself, he's sort of a satanic messiah and in the same way that the Lord Jesus was filled in his humanity with the Holy Spirit, this guy is going to be filled with the unholy spirit. He is going to be a false messiah. He is the Antichrist and his power in the same way that the Lord Jesus did his work, did his preaching, accomplished his ministry, performed his miracles in and through the power of the Holy Spirit, not in his human flesh and not by the way out of his own deity, in the same way the Antichrist is going to be a human being but the spirit that animates, guides and empowers him is Satan himself.

It is truly an antithetical messiah situation and this is God's final concession. Have you ever asked yourself, you know you see all these apocalyptic movies, you hear all this stuff about the Antichrist and all these awful things that are going to happen in the tribulation and you figure why does God let this happen? Does God sort of begin to lose the arm wrestling match with Satan and Satan almost overpowers the saints? This is all an integral and essential part of God's plan.

There is a reason why God has assigned Satan as the God of this world.

He wouldn't be the God of this world. He wouldn't have sway. There wouldn't be all of this death and heartache and misery if God did not allow it.

Many people have big trouble with this. You mean God is purposely allowing suffering, starving children, these little kids. There is nothing more heartbreaking than looking at St. Jude's commercials.

Danny Thomas did a wonderful thing. He is a God-fearing believer, Catholic but God-fearing believer and he took his fame and his fortune and he founded that St. Jude's thing and Marlo Thomas' daughter has carried the thing on and that is a wonderful and Christian ministry. They do not charge the people who go there.

They get donations, they have support, they have endowments, they have bequests and families who have afflicted children with cancer and these terrible maladies can go there and are treated free of charge. That is a biblical Christian way to do it and it is a wonderful work. You ask yourself how many such things exist apart from someone who recognizes the function of charity and there is a gift of charity and I think Danny Thomas had it and it goes on beyond his own life which is a terrific thing.

But when you look at the commercials and they show these children and you think there is a God in heaven, why does he allow this? Ultimately it is part and parcel of the same question. Why does God allow all of the suffering down through human history, all of the pillaging, plundering, devastation of warfare, of oppression, of brutal dictatorship governments and just man's inhumanity or as I call it man's humanity to man, the corruption that characterizes situations large and small. There are criminal brutalities that take place under domestic roofs.

Women and children and even men that undergo abuse, physical abuse, mental abuse, emotional abuse of all kinds for years and this is the corruption of sin. This is the manifestation of the evil that comes when creatures, angelic or human, do not have a connection to God. The case, the question from the beginning has been, Satan says, why do we have to do everything God's way? Way back in eternity past before there was a planet earth, before there were any human beings, the angelic civilization.

We are sort of an analogy. We are the lab rats in a controlled environment mimicking in some ways the larger civilization that were these creatures that are more advanced than us, wiser than us, greater longevity than us who dwell in an environment far beyond us. We are the laboratory experiment so to speak and the question was, the question arose because Satan was the greatest of all of these creatures, the most powerful, the most beautiful, the smartest, the closest to God himself both literally in his job functions and in his endowments, nothing more perfect, nothing more endowed and beautiful ever came from God's hand than the chief angel Lucifer, the chief of the archangels, the guardian of the throne room of God.

But he got to thinking as he did his job and as he looked at God and saw the decisions and the implementation of policy and the settling of disputes and the assignment of functions and the organization of things in realms that are way beyond our comprehension, he began to think, you know, I could do that job. I can already tell you what God is going to say before he says it and I don't really even need to bother God with some of these things. I could do this.

Do you remember the story in 1 Samuel about how Absalom after he was sort of semi-pardoned for his assassination of his brother, David allowed him back in and he started sitting at the gate and he started short stopping people who were on their way in to have their case adjudicated by David, by the royal court, the royal function of adjudication and Absalom stopped people at the gate and started deciding those cases himself. It's a picture. It's an echo of what happened in heaven.

This is the whole satanic thing. I will be like the most high, the five I wills. I will raise my throne above the stars of God.

I will be like the most high. I will do his job. Why can't I take the guys that want to go with me and we just go over here and do our own thing? And this has been the argument.

This has been the objection all down through human history as well. Why do I have to submit to God? Why do I have to be concerned with his standard of righteousness, his plan, his purpose, all of this godly stuff, the godly people? Why can't I just live my life and just be free of the entanglements of this God plan going on? It's all part of the same thing. So what happens? God says, I tell you it's a bad thing, but you can't really understand it.

Any parent understands that when you tell a child, don't touch that, it's hot, they don't get it at first. Have you ever seen a little year and a half old going, don't touch that? They don't believe. It's not like, well if you say it's not, I ain't touching that thing for the rest of my natural life.

They just don't get it. There's some things you only really become convinced of through experience. And it begins when we're young.

And teenagers, you know, get older, you say, you'd really save yourself a lot of heartache and grief if you'd just pick that point on the distant shore and just row toward that. Pick a reference point. If you're rowing by yourself and you've got a double oared boat, pick a point and just row.

If you wander around, it's just going to cause you pain. Well, nobody gets that. Nobody ever listens to their parents.

It's history. Cain, Abel, and Seth didn't listen to Adam and Eve. And it's been that way ever since.

So what happens? You have to learn it by experience. And then we're convinced. Now we know.

There's nothing like falling off a thing because you were careless and breaking something for the rest of your life. You're way more careful. So God said, fine.

Here's what we're going to do. We'll test your vision. We'll test your idea.

I'm going to remove you from the celestial realms. You and all the angels who think you've got a great idea. And I'm going to put you down on one planet, in one solar system, in one galaxy of this giant universe that's going to be ideally suited for this experiment.

It's an environment. God created it. God populated it with animals.

Gave it rain and continents and everything else eventually. And this is where your domain is going to be. And I'm going to create an undergroup of creatures for whom you can be God.

You and all of you. I'm God and I've got my supervising angels up here. And then there's the population of what we call angels.

Well, we'll do the same thing. We'll just scale it down. You will be the God of that world.

What does our verse say? The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not. He's the God of this world. God said, you want to be the most high? You are the most high on this planet.

All I'm going to do is reserve for myself one small little group of people. And while you're running the whole earth, all the ancient Chinese, all the ancient aborigines, all of the ancient civilizations, the Maya, the Aztec, the Inca, the populations of all the continents. God said, I'm just going to take out of the line of Seth and out of the line of Shem, I'm going to get one little family.

I'll just use Abraham and his descendants. You can have everybody else on the planet. Well, that's history 101.

That's why you have all the ancient peoples. And people agonize and say, well, how could the Chinaman in the Ming Dynasty, how could he have ever gotten saved? How would he possibly know the gospel? He's not interested in the gospel. God gave Satan all of the people that in his knowledge and in his omniscience he knew, and they still got the word.

God, the Holy Spirit came and said, you know, there's a God in heaven. I'm not interested in that. Very same attitude as Satan.

God said, look, I'll populate the world with people who have got the same attitude as you, and you can have them. I'm going to have one little line out of Abraham, out of the Shemites. Just Abraham.

Just that guy. He and his descendants. I'm going to claim them for myself.

And I'm going to work with them in your world. And we'll see how it turns out. And so within Israel, and ultimately down to the time of Christ, and then in the church age where it has expanded out, and God said, you know what? We've done it that way for 4,000 years.

Now I'm going to sprinkle people who are positive. Instead of having them all be born in or near Israel, I'll put them out throughout the world. And this is going to be like yeast in dough.

And instead of all being in one place, now they're going to be everywhere. Let's see how your system competes. We'll do it both ways.

I'll keep them isolated for a certain number of millennia, and then I'm going to scatter them, pepper them all through for a certain period of time. That's the difference between Israel and the church in a nutshell. So all of that leads to the end times.

This is Satan's last gasp. God says, all right, you send your Messiah. I've already sent my Messiah.

And we have the church age, and both to Israel and to all the rest of the people on the earth, they have a choice of accepting him by faith, of claiming his work on their behalf, of being justified in my sight, of having a relationship with me. We do that for a while. Then I'm going to take them out.

I'll evacuate the world of all of my people. That's the rapture. The pre-tribulational rapture is the next phase of this demonstration.

It's not so much an experiment, because God already knows how it's going to turn out. It's a demonstration. God is going to take every single person that has a relationship with him out of the world.

Now Satan has got the whole globe to himself, the whole thing. He's going to send his Messiah. And for three and a half years, this guy is going to run the planet.

He's going to have full sway, full control. The only problem is, there are still people who are going to look around and think, eh, there's got to be something more. This doesn't satisfy.

This doesn't have a future. This is all mundane and earthly and temporary. And if I die, there is no future.

Isn't there a God? And you're going to have the 144,000 servants of God. And this, by the way, is the last seven years of the age of Israel. So when they come to God and say, I want a relationship with you, they will be under that original set of covenants that pertained before Christ came.

Because it's not the time of God's Messiah. It's the time of Satan's Messiah. So they will come to

faith in the same way that Abraham's descendants did when the rest of the world was all in the sway of Satan.

It's very similar. It's almost like a second post-flood situation. In the post-flood situation, God took all the unbelievers out and just had no one in his family.

This time, the rapture is going to take all the believers out and just leave all of the unbelievers there. So it's tried both ways. It's a beautiful demonstration.

All of the variables are tested. So this is why, one of many, many reasons why we believe Scripture teaches, and you should know this term, if you believe as I do, then you are a pre-tribulation rapture believer. Meaning, you understand that Scripture teaches that we will be taken out before that last seven years.

Otherwise, it's all confusion. If somebody comes to faith, what covenant are they under? Are they church or are they Israel? God said in Daniel that there are 70 weeks determined on my people. Only 69 of those have happened.

There's one left. Well, if it's determined upon the house of Israel and you come to faith in God, are you house of Israel or are you body of Christ? Well, it's all confusion. Did Jesus come and take the body home and then here are some more people and he left a part of himself here? It's so out of keeping with everything Scripture teaches.

Now, who is Revelation written to? Who is the book of Revelation addressed to? The envelope comes in the mail from the Apostle John via the Holy Spirit to whom? Whose book is it? Israel or the church? It's the church, but chapters 4-19 are all about a time when we're not here. It's all about the tribulation. You've got this scroll that's rolled up and nobody can bring this thing to pass except the Lamb, the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ who is in heaven at that time.

Who is worthy to open the book, break the seals? So then you have the seals, the seven seals opening and that's chapter 4, chapter 5 and so on. You start moving through the book of Revelation and these seals are broken. Then there's a great earthquake and then you come back and now you've got the trumpets and the seven trumpets and they blow and all of these things take place.

And then you have the great earthquake and then you rewind and you see the seven bowls, the seven vials poured out, the bowls of God's judgment. And as we have seen, you should remember if you went through the book of Revelation, most people think that these are sequential. Seven seals open, then you've got the trumpets, then you've got the bowls.

What we have seen and what I firmly believe and I can demonstrate it at least six different ways is that these are three different views. It's a three-dimensional view of the same time period. The seals are opening and the trumpets are blowing and the bowls are pouring all at the same time.

And the great earthquake is the anchor that shows you the end point of that period of time. The seals are made of clay. This is the earthly view.

The trumpets blow in the air. This is the angelic view. The bowls pour from heaven.

That is God's view. And that's the book of Revelation in a nutshell. So after that period of time, the judgments of God, the great earthquake, the battle of Armageddon takes place.

The Lord Jesus descends. He cometh with clouds. He wipes out everything.

He cleans up and establishes the millennial kingdom. Satan's Messiah had his shot and it all went badly. And lest humanity be destroyed entirely, those days are shortened and God ends it.

This is kind of like if you're in chemistry class and the teacher says, okay, so you think you know how to make this particular compound? Go ahead. You start pouring chemicals in and you've just now made nitroglycerin and it's about to go off. The teacher steps in and says, hold up, hold up.

Before you blow up the entire classroom, I'm ending your experiment. Let me show you how it's supposed to be done. That's basically the end of the tribulation.

That's Armageddon. That's the removal of Satan's experimental materials to a place of safety. He himself is going to be sent to the principal's office for a thousand years.

He's down in the pit and God says, look, here's how you run a messianic kingdom. The Lord Jesus comes down and you have a thousand years of his government and the contrast with everything that has gone before with the God of this world and then with the Lord Jesus being in charge demonstrates that creatures must have that relationship, that connection, that fellowship with God or it will all end in degradation and destruction. The reason there are starving children, the reason there are patients in St. Jude's is because it is necessary to show us the inevitable outcome of a corrupt, fallen, sinful world.

It is corrupt and fallen and sinful because people choose to not be connected to God. That choice has not only corrupted our civilization and our society and our culture and our thinking and our actions, but the environment itself is corrupted and defiled by our very presence. We think that we're the greatest thing for the planet.

We are a cancer on the planet. We have wiped out more animal species as human beings. We have taken up all the space.

Get up in an airplane and look at everything we've paved over. Look at what we're doing to the environment. Every time you take your trash out, where does that stuff go? Where has it been going for decades and centuries? Well, I don't know.

I don't see it anywhere. Yeah, because we're burying it in the ground and it's seeping into the

water table. We try to help ourselves.

My favorite thing now, I'm on a kick about flame retardancy, trying to figure out why our dogs are scratching. I got to looking around because I heard a thing on the radio about flame retardant. The chemicals they put in flame retardants, which is federally mandated, the upholstery you are sitting on right now, the clothes you are wearing right now, the carpet you're walking on right now is federally mandated to be flame retardant.

Those flame retardant chemicals can kill you. They make you sick. They are carcinogens.

They have created all of these maladies that people can't figure out, mess with every different system in your body. They're just now beginning to discover this is like the thalidomide babies. This is like so many other things that mankind thought was a great idea.

Well, how can it be bad that things don't catch fire and burn you up? The little kid doesn't put their pajama sleeve in the candle flame and suddenly turn into a human self-immolation. You think, how can that be a bad thing to try to prevent that? Well, we're so ignorant and we're so uninformed and we don't know that when we fix one thing, we break three others. Ever hear the side effects of any advertised medicine on television? Side effects may include, my gosh, I don't even want to be in the same store with some of that stuff.

Side effects may include, you know, nasal hemorrhage and, you know, heart exploding and, you know, limbs falling off and, you know, kidney damage and, you know, eyes bulging out. It's just, you think, who would take that? I would rather have any disease than the side effects that these medicines, you know, if this lasts more than a certain amount of time, call your doctor. No kidding.

This is the nature of man's fixes, man's wisdom apart from God. So, say all that to say, Revelation 22, verse 20, he who testifies to these things says, surely I am coming quickly. And quickly is actually a pretty good translation of this word because as long as you understand what quickly means, it means that when the return begins, it is going to be very sudden and it is going to be accomplished in a short amount of time.

This doesn't mean necessarily, you know, seven minutes from now. We say, well, you know, I'll be there pretty quickly. Got a flat tire, you call me up, I'm five blocks away, I'll be there quickly.

That's not what it's talking about. It's talking about how much time is going to elapse until it happens. It is when the Lord is in the process of coming, that coming is going to transform everything in a very short amount of time.

The coming itself takes up a very short space of time. And John responds with, so be it. Amen.

May it be so. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Come in that way, with that effect.

What has taken centuries and millennia to corrupt and defile and break and destroy and ruin, the Lord Jesus is going to fix quickly. All of the detritus, all of the damage, all of the horror that has been perpetrated on this planet ever since Adam and Eve walked out of the garden will be corrected in less than a year. Less than a year.

It says that it will take seven months to bury the dead after the battle of Armageddon. There will be apparently something like radioactive hot spots that will be marked and have to be avoided and hazmat teams will have to go out and clean those up. It is not instantaneous, but it is quick.

His coming will be quick. The reformation, the restoration of the world will be quick. The release of the curse on this earth that causes death and disease will be lifted.

People who die at the age of a hundred, people will say, he was just a baby. He was just a youth. Lifespans such as pertain before the flood.

How long did Methuselah live? 969 years. That's the kind of restoration that will take place quickly. Behold, I come quickly.

And John recognizes having seen the vision, everything that that is going to accomplish. What we break over a long period of time, God can fix quickly. Now, this is, O.S. points out, this is the last promise in the Bible and it is the last prayer in the Bible.

Jesus says, I will come and fix it. And this is emblematic. It is suggested to us that when the Lord Jesus is in our life, in the same way that his presence on the planet is going to heal and restore and lift the curse, he became a curse for us so that we could have a relationship with God.

And his presence releases the curse. When he touched a leper, the leper didn't defile him. He cleansed the leper.

When the blind came to him, when the diseased came to him, he didn't get infected. He didn't catch what they had. He wasn't diminished by them.

They were restored by him. When he comes back to this earth in his power and glory, not as the suffering servant, but as the crowned and conquering king, his presence will lift the curse, break the curse, restore this earth to what it was in the pre-fall condition. He does the same thing for us.

In our hearts and in our lives, when there is a connection to the Lord Jesus Christ, the curse is lifted. We think, well, but I've got longstanding issues. I've got things that have been a part of my past and a part of my life forever.

Behold, I come quickly. The presence of the Lord Jesus Christ can take longstanding problems and eliminate them, overcome them, convert them from cursing to blessing. And it doesn't take long.

It's not like, well, if I'm a Christian and I wear a hair shirt and make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem or something, somewhere near the end of my life, everything will start turning out right. The presence of the Lord Jesus makes an immediate difference, an immediate blessing, an immediate restoration. How long did it take people to get healed when they came to the Lord Jesus? Did he lay his hand on them and say, three months from now, you'll be feeling a lot better? Here's a bottle of pills, and if you stay on this chemotherapy for six months, your disease will go away.

How long did it take the Lord Jesus? There's only a couple of instances where, for communication reasons, there was progress in healing. Remember the blind guy? I see men like trees walking. That was for the disciples' benefit.

That was a two-stage healing to teach them something. But in 99.9% of the cases, when Jesus said, go your way, your faith has made you whole, it was immediate. Not just withered legs and limbs, but the skill that takes little kids months to learn to operate them came immediately.

Blind people could not only see, people had been blind from birth, but their brain was given the ability to interpret what they saw. When it takes babies months and even years to learn, they were immediately granted. It's immediate.

What is the application? What is the point? When you think of Revelation 22.20 and Jesus says, I come quickly, the presence of the Lord Jesus has its effect immediately, and it is powerful. It is curative. It is restorative.

It makes a difference right now. Now, not every circumstance, not every problem is going to be resolved. You're not going to instantly be living in the millennial kingdom if you return to or come to the Lord Jesus.

Sometimes we've just been at a distance. He's there and we're elsewhere. But our peace, the progress in our lives, the cursing that may still be in our periphery becomes a blessing.

Things that we have learned, as they say, a broken bone where it's healed is stronger at the break than even the rest of the bone. If you ever break that arm, it's going to be in a different place because that mend is stronger even than the original bone. There is an immediate difference.

Everything in history, everything in this life boils down to a simple truth. We are either connected to God through Christ or we're not. All of human history is a demonstration.

Anytime you see misery, anytime you see suffering, that's what happens when you're not connected to God. When you see charity, when you see love expressed in a self-sacrificing way, sacrificial toward self, beneficial toward others, that's connection to God. That's connection to Christ.

And everything else is subordinate to that simple truth. Jesus says, I come, and when I come, I make a difference quickly. Life becomes worthwhile.

Life has meaning and purpose and a destination and a bright hope. Everything else falls into line, even our problems, even our weaknesses. In our weaknesses, God's strength is made manifest if God is there.

If he's not there, how can his strength be made obvious in weakness? If he's not there, it's just going to be weakness. And the prayer, the response, which ought to be the response of our heart is, Amen. Even so, come.

That is the reception. That is the acknowledgment. And it is a requirement.

He is not going to come where he is not welcomed. He's not going to come. What did he tell Israel? I'm not coming back until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

You will not see me again until you have that attitude. And they're not going to have that attitude until the end of the tribulation. And those 144,000 servants and others who come to faith during that period of time are going to be looking skyward in the midst of the reign of Satan's Messiah and say, I wish someone would come in the name of the Lord.

And that's when the Lord Jesus is going to come. Seven years after he has come and taken us to himself, he's going to return with us to redeem the world, to redeem Israel, to fulfill his covenant promises to Israel. That's two years of eschatology in seminary in 20 minutes.

But it's important and we need to understand it. It is one of the essential truths of the faith. And there are people who say, well, you know, the timing of the rapture, faithful men will disagree.

Hear me closely. If you do not understand the timing of the rapture of the church, if you do not understand the difference between Israel and the church and God's plan and purpose and the covenant promises that pertain to Israel and pertain to the church, if you don't understand your privileges in this age as a believer, your specific assignment to Jesus Christ, Israel does not belong to Jesus Christ. Israel is never said to be his body.

Israel is never his bride. He is their king. And he will rule and reign on the throne of his father David over them.

But you know who the royal family is? You know who the body and bride of Christ are? That's you. It's a completely different set of promises. It is a completely different destination.

And it is essential to understand it. If you do not understand when the rapture takes place, you do not understand those truths. You can't understand those truths.

And you'll never get very far down the road in understanding God's plan. And guess what? If you

don't understand the plan, how can you serve? The best officers in any military conflict are those who understand the strategy so that they know how to employ the tactics. If there are two objectives and we can only take one, which one should we take? Well, if you know the larger plan and purpose, you know which one takes priority.

If you're just waiting for orders, you'll sit there and won't take either one. We have to understand who we are and why we're here. That's the big picture.

This is the great promise. And this is the distinctive of the church. And we say, in Revelation, the book written to the church, addressed to the church, that's got Jesus Christ personally talking to the church.

It's the only place in the whole Bible where Jesus Christ directly speaks to the church. Even in Acts, he spoke to Paul and Paul spoke to the church. Paul is the apostle of the mystery, as we'll see in our study in the second session.

But the only place where the Lord Jesus Christ speaks directly to the church is in this book, Revelation chapter 2, Revelation chapter 3. It's the only red ink directly to us. This book is a revelation. And notice, the final thing I'll point out about 2220 is, He who testifies to these things says, Surely I come.

I thought John was the one testifying. John says, Here's my testimony of this vision that I saw. But it's not John who says, Surely I am coming quickly.

I'm not looking up at the sky waiting for the apostle John to come down, am I? He who testifies to these things, and this is kind of a little chiastic thing, He who testifies to these things, and look at the end of the verse, Lord Jesus. He who testifies to these things is the Lord Jesus. And you think, well, He didn't say that to me.

In what sense is He the witness? Well, look at the chiastic structure of the book. Even so, come Lord Jesus. Who is in chapter 1? Who shows up at the beginning of the book? What does chapter 1 say? I, John, Revelation of Jesus Christ.

It's the very first phrase in the letter. The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him, Jesus Christ, to show to His servants. This entire vision is sent from the Lord Jesus Christ.

God the Father has revealed the plan to the Son. The Son has revealed it to His servants. Things which must, and it says, shortly take place, things which will quickly take place.

When this seal breaking begins, it's going to be very short. In the span of human history, seven years is not a long time. He sent, He, Jesus Christ, capital H, He sent and signified it by His messenger to His servant, John.

But it is the testimony of the Lord Jesus. And the one who testifies, that's the authority of this

message. The book of Revelation comes under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

He handed it to an angel, who handed it to John, who hands it to us. So, that's Revelation 22, chapter 20. And this coming is not the second coming, this is the rapture.

I come quickly, that coming and then the second coming bracket the contents of this book. And because we know that this is happening, what should we then do? We should recognize the difference that the presence of the Lord Jesus makes. We can say, come now.

What does Revelation 3.20 say? Behold, I stand at the door and knock, and if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come. I will come in. And I will come quickly.

How long does it take to walk through a doorway? Not long. And I will sit down and have a, share a fellowship meal with that person. And that presence makes all the difference, all the difference in the world.

We're going to pause here and take our break. I wanted to, we're coming to the end of our Joshua Code study, and I wanted to cover that verse because it's a short verse, it seems like a simplistic thing, but it sums up in many ways everything that God is doing in human history. And all of the difference that the Lord Jesus Christ can make in an individual life or in a worldwide environment.

When He comes, things happen quickly. But it is a matter of accepting the invitation that has been extended. Notice who initiates the contact in Revelation 3.20. It doesn't say, I was out in a void, I was lost at sea, and I cried out and said, oh Jesus, come into my heart, come into my life.

Who initiates the invitation here? The Lord Jesus has come to the door. The Lord Jesus is knocking, saying, I would like to come in, and it is up to us to respond. And when we respond, everything changes, and it will stay changed for all eternity.

Let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll continue our study in the book of Ephesians, picking up in chapter 3.