

Sermon – 07/09/2008 am

Come, Come, Come

Study Text: Revelation 22:16-17

The book of Revelation began with a vision of the glorified, risen Jesus – with hair as white as snow, eyes like fire and face like the shining sun, and a two edged sword coming out of his mouth (1:14-16). Jesus spoke to John declaring himself to be the first and the last, the one who was dead but is now alive forever and ever. He told John to write what he saw and heard. John did that, writing down whatever the angels showed him, and their explanations.

We are told very clearly how this book originated. Jesus sent an angel to John who wrote what he saw and heard and passed this on to the churches. It was sent to the churches as a testimony – divine testimony. Note how often the word ‘testify’ occurs in these closing verses – and in the opening verses of this book. Some translate the word as ‘witness’. It has overtones of legal authority.

These words have divine authority. These words are true in every respect and what they declare will be accomplished. These are not vague predictions about the future but are the words of one who determines the future, the creator of heaven and earth and judge of all people.

This testimony of Jesus is for the churches. This book was sent out as a letter to the seven churches in Asia Minor, and is meant as a letter for all churches during the last days. The individual letters were like divine appraisals of those churches. Their faithfulness was acknowledged but their failures were also pin pointed. They were called to repent and return to the true gospel. They were told to hold firm this gospel and persevere until the end – or unto death.

The end is what this book is all about. It tells about the coming of Jesus, his coming in power to judge the living and the dead. It tells of his coming in glory in the new heaven and new earth. Jesus has triumphed in the Cross and resurrection, and taken his place on the throne in heaven. Jesus is coming with a crown for those whose names are written in his book, those who worship God and God alone.

All churches, including ours, should listen to these divine appraisals. Do we need to re-focus upon the Lord Jesus Christ, upon his first coming and his second coming? Both are of course tied together. We cannot believe the one without the other. You can have no hope in heaven if you do not believe in Jesus Christ and him crucified. This is the whole gospel that must be proclaimed. This is the work of the church. Too many churches are focused on other things – on meeting their own goals, upon buildings and budgets and other worldly matters.

Jesus – The Root

I am the root and offspring of David (22:16). Why does Jesus refer to himself in these words? What has David got to do with Jesus – they lived a thousand years apart? One thing we have noticed in Revelation is the many references and allusions to the Old Testament. By looking into Daniel and the prophets we get a better understanding of this revelation of the time of the

end. The prophets looked forward to the day of Christ, as did David and even Abraham. They looked beyond his first coming and to his second coming, beyond their earthly land to their heavenly home.

Jesus did not just appear out of the blue as it were 2000 years ago in Palestine. He came in the fullness of time according to the eternal plan of God as revealed in the writing of Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets. In Psalm 110 King David wrote *The LORD said to my Lord sit at my right till I make your enemies your footstool*. Who is this ‘my Lord’? Isaiah spoke of a shoot coming out of David’s father Jesse. *He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked* (Isaiah 11:4, 11). Who is this shoot? It is the Messiah/Christ, the anointed of God. It is Jesus who spoke these words to John.

When God called Abraham he made a covenant with him – ‘in you all the families of the earth will be blessed’. From Abraham came Isaac, Jacob and Judah. David was born into the tribe of Judah. A man after God’s own heart, David was the greatest king of Israel. Jesus was born into the family of David. He was the *son of David according to the flesh* (Romans 1:3).

The root and offspring of David therefore points to the humanity of Jesus. As the root he was before David. He is also the offspring or Son of David. Jesus was fully human. He was born into this world like any other man, but at the same time he is ‘the beginning and the end’, the eternal Son of God.

Jesus – The Star

Balaam was a prophet, but not a prophet of God. He prophesied for profit, yet God overruled in his utterances. He spoke of a star coming out of Jacob and a sceptre rising out of Israel (Numbers 24:17). Such words may seem a bit obscure but remember the birth of Jesus was signalled by a star. A star led the wise men to the stable in Bethlehem. *We have seen his star in the east* they said (Matthew 2:2).

The coming of Jesus was the dawn of a new era. Political leaders like to speak of a new world order but Jesus has already inaugurated a new world order and he will consummate this world order soon. He will draw the curtain on this present world and usher in a new heaven and new earth according to his promise.

Jesus is the light of the world. He is the light of life. He is the bright and morning star, the star that shines in this dark world and *the morning star that rises in your hearts* (II Peter 1:19). He is the star that will never burn out. With the coming of the new heavens and new earth all other stars will cease to shine. There will be no need for the sun and the moon, for Jesus the Lamb is the light (21:2).

Jesus is the radiance of the Father’s glory (Hebrews 1:3). We saw his glory when he came into this world and we will see it again when he returns on the clouds of heaven. As you gaze into the night sky do you reflect on Jesus, the bright and morning star? When you see the first light of a new day do you remember that Jesus is the bright and morning star? Do you pray ‘even so; come Lord Jesus’, and live as if this is the last day of this present world?

Come

Jesus calls to us to come to him – ‘come unto me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest’ (Matthew 11:28). But the call to come in the passage before us does not come from the mouth of Jesus. It comes from the Spirit and the bride – the first call that is. There are two calls in this passage. Who makes these calls and who is being called to come?

The first ‘come’ is thought by some to be addressed to Jesus, like the later call in 22:20. But the second is a call to come and drink the water of life freely. Clearly this is not a call to Jesus but to the thirsty, to lost men and women in this world. It is best to understand the whole verse as being the people of God calling to one another, and to the lost of this world, to come to Jesus.

‘Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near’. This was the call of the prophet and continues to be the call today. It is a call that will soon cease. When Jesus returns, the opportunity to repent will be gone. Do not be deceived by any talk about purgatory, nirvana, or some state of limbo. Jesus is coming in judgment, final judgment, heaven and hell judgment. But in the wonderful grace of God this call goes out even unto the end. Come to Jesus. Repent and believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The bride of Christ is the church, the church indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:22, 5:25). The Spirit and the bride say come. *And let him who hears say, come!* (22:17). The call goes out from the church, from the people of God. It goes out to the world even as the end approaches. Time is short. Jesus is coming soon. Let those who hear and believe in Jesus pass on the good news. Let them cry out to those walking in darkness to come. Let us be as shining lights (Philippians 2:15), let us be as heralds in this world in which we now live.

Let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires let him take the water of life freely. Have you ever been without water in a hot, dry place? In hot summers in India people sometimes come to blows to get water to drink. One summer I was travelling on a train and it got very late. I was carrying drinking water but it was getting low. People began to get desperate for water. The water on the train was dirty but some started drinking this polluted water.

Nowadays men carry bottles of Coke and Fanta in a bucket to sell to the train passengers. But this sweet fizzy water does not quench your thirst – it makes you even thirstier. Pure water is the only thing that will truly quench your thirst.

People today are thirsty for life. They are living empty and meaningless lives. As they seek to satisfy their thirst the world offers them all sorts of sweet fizzy drinks. Drink and drugs are being consumed as never before. Sex and sport are being offered as never before. But still the thirst is not quenched. Suicide rates are going through the roof. How tragic to hear that we have a suicide every 5 hours in this prosperous nation.

We have something to satisfy thirsty souls. ‘Come’ we call to such people. Come to Jesus. Come drink of the water of life freely. Jesus offered living water to the world-weary Samaritan woman. She drank and was satisfied. Come see the man who told me all about myself. *Could this be the Christ* she said (John 4:29).

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