

Sermon – 21/09/2008 pm

Come Lord Jesus

Study Text: Revelation 22:20-21

Have you heard the word ‘Maranatha?’ You may have come across a bookshop, a band, a business or school by this name. If you were in the Jerusalem church in the middle of the first century you would have heard this word often. In the Bible it is found only in I Corinthians 16:22. It is strange to find this word here because it is an Aramaic word found in the middle of Greek writing. It appears that it was so well known that it passed into Greek speaking churches without translation.

‘It must have expressed a sentiment that the early church regarded as extremely important else it would never have been taken over this way by the Greek speaking Christians’ (Morris). The first part of the word ‘Mar’ means Lord. ‘Maran’ means ‘our Lord’. The end of the word ‘atha’ means ‘to come’. So the word is translated in your Bible by the declaration *O Lord come!* In Revelation 22:20 we find the same words – *come Lord Jesus!* – although these are translated from the Greek.

Faithful Witness

‘Says the one witnessing these things, Yes, I am coming quickly’. This is a literal translation of the first part of verse 20. The reference is to Jesus who is named in verse 16. Jesus witnesses to *these things*, meaning all that is written in this book, as seen in verse 18.

Under the Law of Moses truth had to be established by at least two witnesses. The Pharisees accused Jesus of failing to establish what he was saying with appropriate witness. They said *you bear witness of yourself; your witness is not true* (John 8:13). Jesus countered their accusation saying *I know where I came from and where I am going*. He had the witness of his Father in heaven. On a previous occasion Jesus claimed the additional witness of John the Baptist, of his mighty works, and of HolyScripture.

Jesus could call upon a number of powerful witnesses. But the truth is Jesus is a faithful witness whose word must not be doubted. His testimony will ever be true and faithful because he is the Son of God. Jesus testifies to the truth of what John has written in this book of Revelation. Jesus told him to write in the first place (1:19). Jesus sent his angel to tell John what to write.

The words of this book and indeed of the whole Bible are divinely authenticated. Men who write books often get a famous person to write a preface or forward in an effort to establish their credibility. No such preface or forward is found in this book because it authenticated by Jesus.

Jesus is the only man to have walked on this earth and not sinned. This Jesus testifies to the truth of what is written in this book. Do you accept his testimony? Do you value this book like no other? Do you take this book, the Holy Bible as the best and only guide for your life? The Bible is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God.

Coming One

Yes I am coming quickly (22:20). Paul preached Christ Jesus with a resonating Yes – not a ‘maybe’ or a ‘yes but’. *For all the promises of God in him (Jesus) are Yes, and in him Amen, to the glory of God* (II Corinthians 1:20). *Yes* says Jesus the great ‘I Am’. *Yes, I am coming quickly*. There is no doubt, no equivocation with Jesus. He has made this announcement twice before in this chapter and it will not change.

Let no one miss these words of Jesus. Jesus is coming with the clouds and every eye will see him (1:7). Let no one say when Jesus knocks on their door ‘I was not expecting you. I am not ready’. You know the parable about the five wise and the five foolish virgins waiting for the bridegroom. The bridegroom came at midnight. He went into the marriage supper closing the door on those who were not ready for him (Matthew 25). Jesus is coming soon in power and great glory. He is coming whether you are ready or not.

The early church took this announcement very seriously as we have mentioned. At the Lord’s Supper which they celebrated frequently, they remembered the words of Jesus *I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes* (Luke 22:18). The apostle Paul states how in eating the bread and drinking the cup we proclaim the Lord’s death **till he comes** (I Corinthians 11:26). The solemn sacrament remembering the Lord’s death is also a joyous reminder that he is coming again.

Amen (20:20). This must be John speaking in response to the words of Jesus. Amen – so let it be. John was in exile suffering deprivation because of the Word of God. Hearing the words of Jesus, *I am coming quickly*, he shouted *Amen, come Lord Jesus*. The apostle Paul would have responded in the same way. When he was in chains for the gospel he declared, *for me to live is Christ and to die is gain* (Philippians 1:21). Paul looked forward to being with Christ in heavenly glory – whether through his own death or Jesus coming on the clouds. *I tell you a mystery* he wrote – *we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed – in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet* (I Corinthians 15:51-52).

Praying for Jesus to come and looking to his coming does not mean we sit and do nothing while we wait. Again Jesus told the parable about the manager who gave his servants varying amounts of money when he went on a journey – five, two and one talent (Matthew 25). He expected them to use that money, to invest it and make it grow, not to sit on it or bury it.

The apostles John and Paul longed for the Lord to come, but would serve him valiantly till that day. Peter also writes of *looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God* presumably through faithful service (II Peter 3:12). The full number of Gods people must be brought in (6:11).

Amen. Come Lord Jesus. How often do you hear these words today? How often do you utter these words yourself? Maranatha was such a common word among the Jewish Christians it seems the Greeks started saying it also. But is this the case today? If not, why not? We hear ‘Amen’ but what about ‘Amen come Lord Jesus’! Is it that we are so focused on the here and now, so wrapped up in our earthly existence, our present needs and comforts that we have lost sight of this great truth – Jesus is coming.

In India lots of college students, including Christians, want to go to the USA for further study or for a job. At a student camp I once commented that they were so focused on going to America it was as if America was heaven for them! In our country and our city are Christians

more focused on their earthly mansion than their heavenly mansion? Jesus told his disciples ‘I go to prepare a place for you – a room in my Father’s house’. Are you sure you want to go there or are you comfortable in your earthly home – thank you very much! You would of course be more comfortable if Jesus would answer your prayer for just a few more things to put in your house. Let your prayer be ‘come Lord Jesus’!

Grace

The closing words of this book and of the Holy Bible are *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Surely no more fitting words can be found than these. Our salvation is by grace alone – the unmerited, underserved love of God. Our life is lived in the daily grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his amazing grace we have a future, a hope, an inheritance kept in heaven for us. Paul could find no better words to close his letters and neither could John.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all (22:21). Some translations add the words ‘all the saints’ or ‘all God’s people’, lest it be thought the grace of the Lord extends to those who reject him. But clearly this is not the case. The grace of Jesus, atonement for sin, is limited to those whom God chooses and calls. *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day* said Jesus (John 6:44). Those without the Spirit of God cannot call Jesus Lord (I Corinthians 12:3).

The grace of the Lord Jesus continued to amaze Paul and the first believers. They rejoiced in the grace by which they were saved and the grace by which they lived each and every day. They wanted to know more of his grace each day. They had tasted that the Lord is good and they wanted to have more of him every day. Does the taste of God’s wonderful grace drive you on for more and more of him? Are you looking forward to the day when you will see Jesus in all his heavenly glory? Only on that day will we fully appreciate the wonder of his grace and mercy to us, sinners that we are.

The closer you come to Jesus the more you comprehend his grace because you see your sin more clearly. The brightness of his glory reveals our sin, but his wonderful grace reaches out to cover that sin and draw us even closer to himself. On that great day we will enter into his presence. We will see his glorious face, we shall know him as he is and we shall be like him (I John 3:2). Maranatha, come Lord Jesus!

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