

I am coming quickly – 8/05/2016

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.¹⁰ And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.¹¹ They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:9-11)

Beloved in the Lord,

The last recorded words of Jesus are found in Revelation and they mirror what we heard in our reading today. We just read that on Ascension Day, two angels appeared to the disciples and said: ***“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” (Acts 9:11).***

Uncountable millions of Christians have cherished this promise and lived in hope throughout the time of the Church. Every true Christian awaits the day this promise will be fulfilled. The early Church had a single word prayer “Maranatha”. It means “Come Lord Jesus.” This prayer is a response to the last recorded words of Jesus. We read: ***“He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev.22:20)***

Jesus says “I am coming quickly, and our response is “Come, Lord Jesus.”

The return of Christ Jesus has been and continues to be the central hope of the Christian Church. When He returns, He will complete God’s plan of salvation.

I don’t know about you, but I find myself watching less and less news, and I read the papers less and less, because they are filled with bad things. It seems things are getting worse and worse in this world. That is no surprise because as more and more people are departing from God and pushing Him aside, the darker the world becomes. This is only logical, because God is light and where the light is pushed aside darkness remains.

Praise God, that as Christians, we do not have to live in neither fear nor despair, because we hold on to the promise of our Lord, “Behold I am coming quickly.” Sceptics and doubters, and even weak Christians, do not believe these words of Jesus. They say look how much time has elapsed and He still hasn’t come.

There are a few things we need to consider. Firstly, the word translated “quickly” and in some translations “soon” is “Taxu” in the original. “Taxu” means instantly, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye. When Jesus comes it will be like a sudden flash of lightning. There will not be a slow entrance, but a sudden appearance.

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Secondly, it is a fact of God's great patience and mercy, it is His grace that has withheld Jesus from returning. God is giving time for those who have not heard or have not accepted the Gospel, to be saved. We read in 2 Peter:

³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, ⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. ⁷ But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

⁸ But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." (2.Pet.3:3-10)

Peter is clearly telling us that the day is coming, but it is God's patience, that withholds it, because He does not desire for any to perish. If we feel pain and weep over this world and all the bad things that are happening, how much more our Heavenly Father, who is Love perfected? It is His grace that withholds the hand of judgement for a season, giving us time to fulfil the Great Commission, to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. God is giving us time to allow people to come to Him and be saved.

One day, and it could be today God will say "Enough". He will turn to Jesus and say "Go get my children." What does that mean for us in terms of how we should be living our lives?

Peter gives us the answer:

"Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, ¹⁵ and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, ¹⁶ as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. ¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, ¹⁸ but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2.Pet.3:11-18)

These words are very clear. We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are to walk daily with Him, expecting His return at any time. We are to be ready. It is of vital importance that we keep His return front and centre of our thinking. Jesus said: ***“I am coming quickly.”*** If we have this promise in our heart, and have it firmly established in our thinking, then it affects the way we live this life. It affects our service for Him. If we lose sight of the fact that He is coming quickly, then we can easily become complacent, and we slide into a worldly mindset, and we fall into sin.

If you knew that this afternoon you will be meeting Jesus face to face, what would you need to change in your life? We need to live everyday in the knowledge that it could be our last. We could die without warning or Jesus could return suddenly. Either way, we will see Him at that time. Are you ready? Are you expectantly and hopefully awaiting that day? Is this your true and certain hope? If it isn't, then you probably don't really know Jesus as your Lord and Saviour. It is time to do so now. He loves you. He died on a cross for you. He shed His blood so that you may live with Him forever, in that place where there is no more pain or suffering or heartache.

When Jesus lives in your heart, it is so much easier to live this life, because you know that this is not it. There is so much more to come after He returns. Paul suffered a tremendous amount and was persecuted constantly, for his faith, yet he wrote:

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.” (Romans 8:18-19)

Are you eagerly awaiting that day? If you are – be patient – Jesus said: “Behold, I am coming quickly!” But if you are not eagerly awaiting that day, then Come to Him today, so that when the day comes you will not miss out. He will come as a thief in the night. May that day not find you in sin, asleep in the world. Come to Him and be cleansed, set free from all sin. Let Him light the fire of His love in your heart.

This world is not our home. Therefore we are not to cling on.

John wrote:

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” 1 John 2:15-17

Let us do the will of God. What is His will? To love Him and our neighbour as ourselves. . Let us love, let us be watchful and alert. let us eagerly await and welcome the day of our Lord. He says: Behold, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.
Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.***