

MARANATHA

TEXT: I Corinthians 16:22

Introduction: We stand on the brink of the greatest timeframe ever, we know from all the signs of the times that the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is at hand. Our chaotic world is falling apart and mankind with all of its ingenuity cannot prevent or stop it from happening. We worry about global warming, we see violence on every hand, we hear about all the potential for war, our leaders go to summits and meetings concerning Nuclear weapons production and so on.

In the day that Paul wrote this letter they had worries and concerns also. If you did not give homage and praise to Caesar then you were considered a traitor and would be subject to imprisonment and even death. But as we are to do so also they did, they stayed true to their faith, and their love for the Lord Jesus and themselves as well as displaying love for their fellow man. Today I want to speak about the coming of the Lord Jesus on the horizon of history that we are a part of and plan on seeing him coming in the skies to take us to that mansion he has built for us, present us to the Father as his chosen bride. In the day Paul wrote this letter the word Maranatha--a aramaic term--of some mystic to those who did not understand simply meant: "THE LORD COMES."

I do not want to explore this from the sense of eschatology or end times--trying to predict the time frame His coming will take place, **but in the same manner that those of first century Christendom did, to use it as a means to exhort us to loving a holy life because he is coming.**

I John 3:2 "Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he appears. And every man that has this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure.

The coming of the Lord being on the horizon of time should cause us to constantly be taking an inventory of our lives and making sure our lives measure up to the level of holiness He has established for us.

As we await the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ we do it with patience, not being in fear or having some great anxiety, but rather with a calm and tranquil spirit allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us in to all truths.

James 5:7-8 Be patient, therefore bretheren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and later rain. Be ye also patient: stablish your hearts for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

If it was prudent for them of first century Christianity to be patient, how much more so for us in the 21st century to be patient. Never forgetting Jesus is coming soon as the words of an old hymn tells us. We should remind ourselves everyday that He is coming and today could be that very day.

Jesus has promised he will return and we should not let his delay to this point every cause us to believe that he will not keep his word. Men may not keep their promises but we can rest assured that Christ will return and in the interim we must stay vigilant looking for his with fervent heatcoming. And ever so much so today than yesterday. So that it drives us to keep living a holy and righteous life.

II Peter 3:9-11 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness: but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt away with fervent heat, the earth also and the works therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt away with fervent heat? Nevertheless we according to his promises, look for a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be dilligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and bleameless.

We can count on the Lord keeping his word and returning to receive us to himself. But in the mean time we are to keep our lives in such a manner as the word "Christian" is really what our lives, in both word and deed, reflects. There were a multitude of promises in terms of prophecy given in the holy scriptures that must take place before Christ can return and place his feet upon the Mount of Olives in what is commonly refered to a the second Advent, **but nothing must take place before the rapture of the Church from this world. There is no scripture that says this or that must take place before He comes to take us the church away. But the promise of his coming should prompt us to live more righteouly today than we did yesterday.**

Titus 2:11-15 For the Grace of God that bringeth salvation hath apperared to all men. Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Looking for that blessed hope; and glorious appering of the the great God and our salvation, Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. These things speak and exhort...

Not only are we to live these things out, we are to exhort others to live them also. We are to do it with love and humility, to encourage other Christians and believers to live in a righteous and holy manner bringing honor to the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

In the 24th chapter of Matthew's gospel a part of scripture referred to as the Olivet discourse, Jesus himself gave three (3) admonitions for his disciples and early believers. And these admonitions are just applicable today for us in the 21st century as in the 1st century:

1. Watch: vs 42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.
2. Be ready vs 44 :there be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the son of man cometh.
3. Be Faithful vs 45: Who then is a faithful and wise servant whom his lord hath made a ruler over his household to give them meat in due season?

In the 25th chapter, Jesus illustrates faithful and unfaithful servants, with two parables: the parable of the 10 virgins--5 wise and 5 unwise, and the parable of talents, 2 men wise and 1 unwise.

Now to the last point: Maranatha. It is an Aramaic word not Greek and means "our Lord Cometh." Believers in the market places each morning or during the day would greet each other with that word as a greeting. It was to remind themselves that this could be the day when the Lord would come back. To keep themselves prepared for his coming, this could be the very day. If that was the greeting then, how much more should it be our greeting today.