



The Victory of the Lamb

7. Come, Lord Jesus!



verse, we are hearing the Spirit and the Bride responding to the Lord's promise to come soon – a yearning for that return. W. Hendricksen believes the words refer, not just to the final coming of our Lord, but to the whole course of history preceding that event – in the sense, “Carry out your plan in history with a view to your coming.”

“Everyone who hears this” seems to be a broad acknowledgment that God's plan must come to pass (perhaps we think of Phil. 2.10-11 – “all beings... will fall on their knees”). In the final count, God must prevail.

But the third “come” is the final gracious offer and pleading of divine grace. “This is the love of God, so touching and tender, which is addressed here to all those who have been made conscious of the need of living water. Let them not hesitate. Let them come. Let them take. It costs *them* nothing. He paid the price. So let them come, take and drink” (W. Hendricksen).

- Reflect on Phil.1.20-24. Have we ever felt pulled between the tasks of this life and a desire to depart to be with the Lord?
- How can our deep desire to be with the Lord lead us to a passionate desire to call others to come along too?

Read: Revelation 22.18-21

John warns that what has been written is not to be tampered with – it is to be taken seriously. This implies that, difficult as it is, it is not to be avoided, either. It is to be both “heard” and “heeded”. (There was to be no adding or taking away from the Law of Moses – Deut. 4,2; 12.32).

Leon Morris observes, “The Witness here is plainly the Lord Jesus. He affirms that He is coming speedily, and His words are greeted with the fervent prayer that He will do just this. *Amen* is the transliteration of a Hebrew and Aramaic participle with a meaning like ‘confirming’. It indicated assent to what the previous speaker has said. This is reinforced with the prayer, *come, Lord Jesus...* Charles points out that the Greek here is the equivalent of the Aramaic transliterated as *Maranatha* in 1 Corinthians 16.22. There is an air of certainty and of eager longing about the references to Christ's coming.”

The book (and the Bible) end with the reminder that all Christians depend on God's free grace.

- What have been the highlights of this study of Revelation: (a) for our understanding, (b) for our present actions, and (c) for our hope for the future?

The great preacher F.B. Meyer once asked evangelist D.L. Moody, “What is the secret of your success?” Moody replied, “For many years I have never given an address without the consciousness that the Lord may come before I have finished.” This may well explain the intensity of his service and the zeal of his ministry for Christ.

It is said that a tourist driving through West Texas stopped at a petrol station and noticed a piece of rope dangling from a sign labelled “Weather Forecaster.” The tourist wanted to know, “How can you possibly tell the weather with a piece of rope?” “It's simple, sonny,” came the amused reply. “When the rope swings back and forth, it's windy; when it gets wet, it's raining; when it's frozen stiff, it's snowing; and when it's gone... tornado!”

Jesus told us his return was imminent. Nearly two thousand years have passed. Today, more than ever we sense that his coming may be soon.

Leon Morris notes, “John rounds off his book with a series of somewhat miscellaneous observations. The connections here are so loose indeed that some commentators feel that John did not revise this last section and put it into final shape. Be that as it may, this epilogue stresses the importance of the book now concluding and assures its readers that Jesus will be coming again soon.”

Read: Revelation 22.6-7

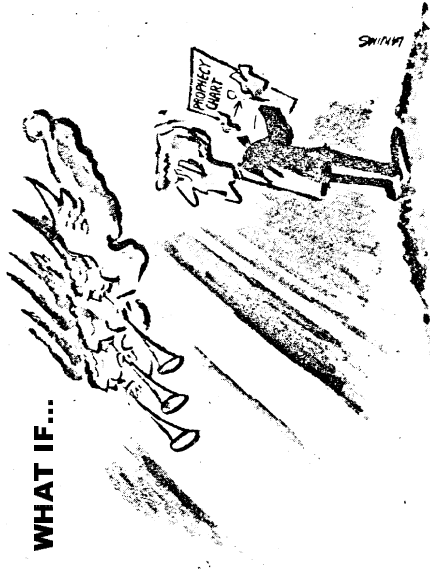
“The angel” is the same one who has shown him the new Jerusalem. He now gives his witness that the Revelation is genuine. “These words are true and can be trusted.” They originate from the Lord God himself. He guides the prophets by his Spirit. He “has sent his angel to show his servants what must happen very soon.”

Reading these words we may incline to the view of the mockers of Peter's time, “He promised to come, didn't he? Where is he? Our fathers have already died, but everything is still the same as it was since the creation of the world!” (2 Pet. 3.4). To our way of thinking, “very soon” has long since passed. T.F. Torrance has the helpful comment, “The New Testament does not think of the difference between the presence of Christ here and now and His Second Advent so much in terms of a passage of

time as the difference between the veiled and the unveiled. That is why the whole of the New Testament by an inner necessity of personal faith thinks of that day as imminent." The Second Coming is ready to occur at any moment, at God's right time. We are to be always in a state of readiness.

Jesus himself assures us, "I am coming soon!" – words which echo 1.7, "Look! He is coming on the clouds! Everyone will see him..."

WHAT IF...



- This cartoon with a caption "You're early!" appeared in *Christianity Today* on 26th October 1973. It arrived in our mail at 8.30am on 4th January 1974 as we were packing to leave Childers for Stanthorpe. We were well organised, had been carefully labelling everything and were very pleased with ourselves. We would be ready for the removalists who were arriving the next day. We chuckled over the cartoon and kept going. Half an hour later – at 9am – there was a knock at the door. The removalists had come – a day early! Suddenly our priorities changed...
- Are we meant to live with the expectation that Christ could return any time? What difference would that make to how we live?

Read: Revelation 22.8-11

In his first letter, John wrote about the incarnate life of the Son of God – "We have heard [the Word of life], and we have seen it with our eyes; yes, we have seen it and our hands have touched it" (1 Jn 1.1b).

In Revelation also, John has not been writing second-hand. He has faithfully recorded what he has heard and seen. He is about to worship the angel who has shown him these things.

"This renewed attempt at angel-worship is curious in view of the fact that a similar impulse had been so recently rejected (19.10). It is possible that among the recipients of Revelation there were some who were tempted to this kind of worship. John may wish to make it clear that he sees its attractiveness but it is forbidden. So he repeats the prohibition" (Leon Morris).

The words of Daniel (Dan. 8.26; 12.4,9) were to be kept hidden because of the long time before they would be fulfilled. But the words of this prophecy are not to be hidden "because the time is near when all this will happen." (In some ways we may still feel them to be hidden!)

V. 11 is rather puzzling. At first sight, there appears to be no time to change. Indeed, when that time does come, it will be exactly so. "John is saying that there will be no opportunity for a last-minute repentance. The Lord will come too quickly for that. But now there is time. Let men repent while they can" (Leon Morris). V. 17c includes this offer of grace.

- Why do people defer making a response to God's gracious offer?
- How can we maintain a proper sense of urgency about spreading the gospel and yet be sensitive to people's readiness to hear and respond?

Read: Revelation 22.12-17

Jesus again insists he is coming soon – "I will bring my rewards with me, to give to each one according to what he has done." We recall that the picture of the last judgment in 20.11-15 speaks of people being judged according to what they have done as recorded in "the books". Salvation is only promised to those who have their name in "the book of life".

There is a division. There is happiness for those who are "washed in the blood of the Lamb" – they have the right to eat fruit from "the tree of life" and to enter the city. Excluded from the city (we are not told precisely where) are those who have persisted in their rejection of God and his grace.

Leon Morris notes that "[Jesus] tells us that the angel has spoken on His authority (cf. 1.1)... Here *root* is joined with *offspring* to emphasise the Davidic descent. Right to the end the point is made that Christ is of David's line. The *bright and morning star* heralds a new day, a new day so sorely needed by John's hard-pressed readers."

In v. 17, who is being asked to "come"? I recall years ago hearing someone suggest that the Church should be saying to the Lord, "Don't come yet – there is still too much to do!" And yet, at the beginning of the