

THE LAST PRAYER OF THE BIBLE
Revelation 22:20, 21

Intro: It is interesting to me that the last two verses of the Bible should be prayers. That is true of verse 20; it is true also of verse 21.

Furthermore, it is interesting to me (and I hope to you also) that the prayer of verse 20 has to do with the coming of the Lord.

And then you will notice a third interesting thing about the prayer in verse 20: It was prompted by the promise of the Lord. The Lord said, "Surely I come quickly." John the Apostle responded by saying, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The promise became a prayer. John was turning the promises back to the Lord as a petition.

This morning I spoke to those of you who were here from 2 Peter 3:17, 18 about being steadfast, about growing, and about doing all that we do for the glory of Christ. Tonight I want to add two other important matters to that list:

- 1) The coming of the Lord.
- 2) Prayer.

Surely for the Bible to end on this note is an indication of how important these matters are to the Lord. Actually we have two prayers in these verses, don't we? Verse 21 is also a prayer.

But let us think, first of all, about:

I. THE LORD'S PROMISE (Rev. 22:20a).

Back in chapter 3, verse 11, we have this promise given for the first time in this Book. To the church at Philadelphia the Lord said, "Behold, I come quickly."

He said it again here in Rev. 22, verse 7: "Behold, I come quickly."

And then He repeated it in Rev. 22, verse 12: "And, behold, I come quickly...."

In our text for tonight He said, "Surely I come quickly." After giving the promise three times previously, calling their attention to it with the word, "Behold," He finally said, Most assuredly I come quickly. How gracious the Lord is to say it over and over again! This is very important to Him, and He wants it to be important to us.

Now this is His promise. And His promises never fail. But how are we going to handle that word, "quickly"? It

has been almost 2,000 years since that promise was given, and still the Lord has not come! That is not very quick, is it?

Many commentators take it to mean that the Lord's coming will be quick according to His timing. And that may be true. His timing is certainly different from ours. As Peter has taught us, "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet. 3:8b). According to that measurement of time, the Lord has only been gone two days!

But, personally, I am not satisfied with that.

The word that our Lord used (_____) is a word which can mean not only "quickly" in the sense of taking place soon, but it can also mean that it will happen very suddenly when it does happen. It will happen so quickly that no one will have time to do anything once He is ready to come.

I think that Paul was speaking of this when he wrote about the coming of the Lord, saying that it would be "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump...." (1 Cor. 15:52a).

So the promise is that the Lord is coming, and He is coming suddenly. He can come at any minute. We should be watching for Him every day, and every part of every day. When we go to bed at night, we should be aware that He might come and awaken us out of our sleep. We have our plans for any one day, but those plans could suddenly be interrupted, and the Lord would be here.

Now in view of this, we need to be READY! Have your affairs all in order. Be careful that your relationships are the way the Lord wants them to be. Don't be found in any place you would not want to be when the Lord comes. Don't do anything that you would not want to be doing when the Lord comes. **BE READY!**

I believe that the message of the Book of the Revelation supports that interpretation. What else could have been the purpose for our Lord's letters to the seven churches of Asia? And why tell us about the judgments except to have them serve a warning to get ready for the coming of the Lord. And yet, in spite of the warnings, we are foretold in this Book that people will curse God, and go on in their sins, rather than repent and turn to the Lord.

But now let us move on to

II. JOHN'S FIRST PRAYER (Rev. 22:20b).

That is, his first prayer in this series. It is brief. It is a response to the Lord. And it is personal, i.e., John is praying this for himself: "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Now I am sure that we all believe that the time of the Lord's return has been divinely set, and that was decided by the Members of the Godhead in eternity past.

However, we can certainly pray for His coming, just like we pray for the salvation of the lost. God's promise is the seed from which our prayers grow.

But are we just to understand that John the Apostle, this only remaining Apostle, an old man at this time, was just voicing his approval of the Lord's coming? I don't think so. If I am right that the Lord was saying with His promise (in so many words), "I am coming. And I am coming so suddenly that you will not have time to do anything to prepare for it. So get ready now, and stay ready," then I believe that John's prayer meant, "Lord, come, and come now. I am ready!"

How wonderful it would be if we could all say that tonight! The Lord could come before we get away from here tonight. If He did, would you be ready? Are all of your affairs in order. Is there any relationship that needs to be cleared up--and it is a possibility for you to clear it up? How are things in your family?

IF THE COMING OF THE LORD WERE A GREATER REALITY TO ALL OF US, WHAT A DIFFERENCE IT WOULD MAKE IN THE WAY WE LIVE EACH DAY! BE READY! BE READY! HE COULD COME TONIGHT, OR TOMORROW, OR THE NEXT DAY. Think of all that we do to get ready for family or guests when they are coming. We have never welcomed anyone who could even begin to compare with our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Himself said,

Therefore be ye also ready:
for in such an hour as ye think not
the Son of man cometh (Matt. 24:44).

With things as they are in your life tonight, can you say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"?

But let us look at

III. JOHN'S SECOND AND LAST PRAYER (Rev. 22:21).

Here it is: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with

you all. Amen."

Notice how tenderly John spoke of His Lord. First, he called Him, "Lord Jesus." And then he used his Lord's full Name: "our Lord Jesus Christ."

Why would he pray this prayer?

Because, when you have prayed this prayer, there really is nothing more that you need to pray.

But also, if we are talking about readiness, readiness for the coming of the Lord, the only way we can get ready, and stay ready, is by "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." And John was not just asking for a sudden, temporary supply, but his prayer was that "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" would "BE WITH YOU ALL" as a daily, hourly source of strength, enabling us to be and to do that which would keep us ready for the coming of the Lord.

Concl: Tonight, at the end of 1989, and on the threshold of 1990, we are closer in time to the coming of the Lord than any generation of the Lord's people has ever been! That long-awaited event could take place in our lifetime!

Are you ready?

The first thing to do to get ready is to make sure that the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior. If He is not your Savior, you are not ready. Do not delay another moment, if Christ is not yours, and you are not Christ's! Trust Him now. Accept Him as your Savior. There is no one else who can help you.

But for those of us who are the Lord's, are we ready? If the Lord were suddenly to speak out and say, "I am coming tonight," could you say, as John said, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus"?

What an incentive this is for us to be walking with the Lord, and, insofar as it is possible, for us to be walking in fellowship with each other! Don't leave until tomorrow anything that needs to be taken care of tonight. Maybe some of you husbands and wives have some things to get straightened out. Perhaps some of you children have said some things to your parents, or to your brothers or sisters, that need to be made right. There are always some things that we cannot make right. The Lord does not hold us responsible for that. But Paul has instructed us with these words,

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you,
live peaceably with all men (Rom. 12:18).

Jim Elliot, who gave his life seeking to get the Gospel to the Auca Indians, used to say, "When it comes time to die, be sure that that is all that you have to do." I have read similar statements in the Puritan writings.

Let me change that a little and say, "Let us make sure that when the Lord comes, we will not still be planning to do something that should have been done before His coming." Don't even go to sleep mad at anybody. The Lord might come before you can make that right.

The dear old Apostle John wrote very tenderly in his First Epistle,

And now, little children, abide in him;
that, when he shall appear,
we may have confidence,
and not be ashamed before him at his coming
(1 John 2:28).

Business that is not finished when the Lord comes will not cause us to lose our salvation. Nothing can do that. But it will affect our rewards, and it will probably have some affect upon us when we see the Lord, knowing that we were not really ready for His coming.

Through the grace of God, let us get ready, and stay ready, so we, too, can pray, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."