

St. Paul's Dorking Sermon Notes 18th July 2010

'Past Imperfect Future Tense'

The Epilogue! Come Lord Jesus - Rev 22:6-21

Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

After 23 weeks..... we finally come to the end of our series of preaching and teaching on Revelation. This extraordinary letter first written to the Seven churches of Asia Minor in the first century has helped us expand our horizons as we have considered history, politics, the natural and supernatural, the past present and future of the world, and the purposes of God. How like this letter to finish not so much with a so 'that's that', 'they all lived happily ever after' but rather an invitation to a new future and a new hope. *'Behold I am coming soon, Yes I am coming soon, the Alpha and Omega the first and the last, the beginning and the end..... is coming soon'..... Jesus is coming soon!*

This final chapter invites us to:

- Consider the promise of Jesus
- Consider the invitation of Jesus
- Consider our response to Jesus

Consider the Promise of Jesus: "I am coming soon". Jesus says this three times – v7,12, 20. The proclamation we have noted throughout our studies in Revelation– *Christ has died, Christ is Risen, Christ will come again* – is amplified by Jesus himself in John's vision with the emphasis that this will be soon! What John invites us to do is to live our lives embracing each day as a gift in the knowledge of the certainty that we will all meet Christ face to face one day and that it may be sooner than we think. In Matt 25 Jesus tells the story of the Ten bridesmaids waiting for the groom to arrive, five were prepared for his unexpected arrival five were not and so missed out! In the previous chapter of Matthew Jesus exhorted his disciples to *'Keep awake then for you do not on what day your Lord is coming....you must be ready for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'* As we have noted down the ages readers of Revelation have vainly tried to calculate when Christ will come again. This is a futile task as Jesus said *"not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, only the Father knows."* Matt 24:36. When we try to work out the 'when' we miss the whole point for the Biblical message encourages us to live each day of our lives under the call of God, each day bringing his presence - life, peace, forgiveness justice and freedom - into the world; each day focusing our energy, vision and passion in building God's kingdom of love. This is not an optional extra for a future date when we might have more time, it is for now! What difference can we make for God today. Living each day as if Christ will come tomorrow.

Consider the invitation of Jesus - whoever is thirsty let him come. Some Christians live their lives in fear of the coming of Christ - like some dreaded heavenly OFSTED! But let us consider Christ's invitation – read v17. There is freedom when we step out in faith with Christ – perfect love cast's out fear. *"in our daily struggle.... The Holy Spirit of life both sets us free from the bonds of the past and empowers us to move forward in hope, breathing new life into our shriveled capacities and opening them up to receive a flow of power from God's promised future."* Richard Bauckham – Hope Against Hope.

Consider our response to Jesus – Come Lord Jesus. What will our response be to Jesus Christ? This one person who has impacted the history of the world like no other, this one person who can never be consigned or confined to the past, this one person who will always be there in the future, this one person who will come again. Revelation ends with an Ancient Christian prayer prayed for over 1900 centuries. In Aramaic it is translated Maranatha and consists of three words – Mara= Lord, ana = our and tha =come. This is a prayer we can pray to transform every situation. Alan Boesak the South African Minister prayed the following as apartheid was coming to an end:*"For the pain and the tears and the anguish must end.... Come Lord Jesus, For the comfort of this world is no comfort at all.... Come Lord Jesus, For there must be an end to the struggle when the unnecessary dying is over.... Come Lord Jesus, For the patterns of this world must change.... Come Lord Jesus, For hate must turn to love, fear must turn to joy.... Come Lord Jesus.* On a personal level we can pray this 'arrow prayer' at any time for any situation in any place...Come Lord Jesus into my family, my friendships, my marriage, my heartaches, my work, Come Lord Jesus that we might go into the world filled afresh with your power and love Amen



Witness: questions to discuss

Before discussion, read the Bible passages and ask God to help you discern what the Spirit wants to say to your group. Make sure there's plenty of room for prayer, worship and ministry.

1. What one key Biblical truth will you take away from this series on Revelation?
2. How does the knowledge of the certainty that we will all meet Christ face to face one day effect you?
3. Do you identify more with the 5 bridesmaids who were prepared for the bridegrooms coming or the 5 that weren't?
4. What difference might it make if we lived each day as if Christ will come tomorrow?
5. Some Christians live their lives in fear of the coming of Christ - like some dreaded heavenly OFSTED! Do you agree?
6. Spend time praying with the Maranatha prayer - go round the group praying beginning with the words Come Lord Jesus and then naming a place or situation. Make your prayers short and Spirit Lead.