

Maranatha!

Many today are throwing around expressions like “last days,” “end times,” “rapture,” “Christ’s return.” How do you feel about that? In Jesus’ Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24), Jesus said that He didn’t know when the end times would come, that only the Father knew that date. (Matthew 24:36) He also gives many signs and told us to be wise and discerning about the signs of the last days, and to be ready! So, let me ask you again, how do you feel about that? Panic? Worry? Fear? A sense of loss?

I’ve always found it fascinating that the words of Jesus at the very end of the Bible, Revelation 22:20, are, **“I am coming soon.”** Those words have inspired believers to hope and anticipation for over 2000 years now. But, how do you feel about it?

In 1 Corinthians the Apostle Paul concludes his letter with the insertion of an Aramaic (a Hebrew dialect) phrase into his Greek text. **“Maranatha”** (1 Corinthians 16:22) which is translated as **“Come, O Lord!”** (NIV); **“Our Lord, come!”** (ESV); in KJV and NASB the translators simply use the Aramaic word untranslated. Why would Paul, writing in Greek, use this one Aramaic word? Most scholars believe that the word had become a first century code word, if you will. A secret greeting between believers. **“Maranatha!”** – **“Come, O Lord!”** A greeting that expressed their expectation and joy in anticipating the return of Christ.

So, one more time, how do you feel about it?

I’ve been enjoying a book by Pastor John Piper, “Come, Lord Jesus.” (2023, Crossway) Piper draws on the very interesting words of Paul as he nears the end of his earthly life.

“I am already poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.” 2 Timothy 4:6-8 ESV

Did you catch that? A crown of righteousness for us from the Lord **IF** we have **“loved his appearing.”** Piper’s comments on this really grabbed me.

“Loving the Lord’s coming is an extension into the future of loving the Lord now. And loving the Lord now is essential to being a Christian.”

The signs do seem to be pointing towards Christ's return! Many before have been fooled. I don't want to be found a fool. But I also don't want to be found asleep at His coming!

Let's be ready! And loving the Lord as we proclaim His unchanging Word, as we share in acts of ministry and service in Christ's name, as we baptize and teach new believers, as we plant new churches, as we love and forgive and point to truth. Excited! Anticipating!

How do you feel about His coming? Maranatha!

Larry M. Dentler

Weekly Prayer Point

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." **Mark 12:30 (NIV).**

May we be a people who, in everything we do, seek after Your own heart. **1 Samuel 13:14 (NIV).** Shape our desires to reflect what You desire; align our will with Your will and teach us to love what You love. Remove anything that competes for first place in our hearts, and help us pursue You with sincerity and humility and wholehearted devotion. May our words, choices, relationships, service, and worship bring honor to You and reveal a heart fully surrendered to Your purpose.

Please pray for these congregations and pastors:

- Amazing Grace Worship Centre in Uganda, Africa
- Antioch in Woodstock, VA and Pastors George Bowers and Dale Bennett
- Asher Glade in Friendsville, MD and Pastor Mike Saturday
- Barren Ridge in Staunton, VA and Pastor Dan Rhodes

CBC Prayer Committee