



Network for Revival 19 May 2020

We have looked at two motives for prayer for revival:

Pleading the love of God: He loves his church and wants to bless it. He loves unbelievers and doesn't want any to be lost. See <http://networkforrevival.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Prepare-17-February-2020-1.pdf>

Pleading the name of God: The name of God is being gravely dishonoured by the failings of the church and the godlessness of society. See <http://networkforrevival.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Prepare-18-March-2020.pdf>

In this issue we look at the third motive for prayer for revival.

Praying for Revival: Pleading the Kingdom of God

It is clear that Jesus wanted us to pray for his return because he taught we should pray "Your kingdom come" (Mt 6:10; Lk 11:2). The kingdom will only come in its fullness when Jesus returns. However I think we tend not to appreciate that this is a prayer which includes praying for the King to come. We tend to think it means more or less the same as "Your will be done." We need to realise that the Lord's Prayer includes a prayer for the Second Coming.

The early church prayed for the return of Jesus

Paul prays "Come, Lord" (1 Cor 16:22). The Greek he uses is Maranatha, the transliteration of an Aramaic word. Professor Leon Morris comments "It must have expressed a sentiment that the early Church regarded as supremely important, else it would never have been taken over in this way by the Greek-speaking Christians ... it expresses the eager longing felt by the Church in those early days for the speedy return of the Lord."ⁱⁱⁱ

Jesus says in Rev 22:20 says "Yes, I am coming soon" and the Bride (the church) responds "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." Here are some scholarly comments on this verse:

- Professor G B Caird comments "No one who has read this book can have any illusions about what the prayer is asking. It is a prayer that Christ will come again to win in his faithful servant the victory which is both Calvary and Armageddon."ⁱⁱⁱ
- Dr Philip Edgcumbe Hughes comments "His coming, moreover, should not only be looked for but also longed for by the believer, for it will bring the consummation of our salvation and the completion of our conformity to his likeness (f. 1 Jn. 3:2; 2 Cor. 3:18, Phil 3:20f.), indeed, the renewal of all things (21:5). And so the fervent response of the Bride, longing for the appearance of the beloved Bridegroom, is Amen: Come, Lord Jesus!"^{iv}
- Professor W Hendriksen comments "'Christ has promised to come quickly (cf. Rev. 22: 7, 12) and the bride, that is, the Church, responds by saying, Be coming.' It is an ardent prayer to which the bride is moved by the Holy Spirit. Spirit and bride always work together (cf. Rom. 8: 16). They are constantly saying, 'Be coming.'"^v

What these commentators are saying is that the prayer for Jesus' return in Rev 22:20 (and 1 Cor 16:22) is a fervent, passionate, eager longing for the return of Jesus and the prayer was regarded as supremely important. Bear in mind that Revelation was written some 65 years after Jesus died. So, even at that stage, the church was still earnestly praying for the return of Jesus as Jesus himself urged in "The Lord's Prayer." But how many Christians are earnestly praying for the return of Jesus today?

We need to make praying for Jesus' return a priority. We regularly use the Aramaic words *Amen* and *Hallelujah* in our prayers. We now need to use the Aramaic word *Maranatha* regularly.

What has this got to do with prayer for revival?

There will be revival in the End Times as Joel predicted. Yes, Peter applied Joel's prophecy to Pentecost but we need to remember that many biblical prophecies have more than one fulfilment. It is clear from Peter's quotation that the prophecy goes beyond what happened at Pentecost to a major fulfilment in the End Times: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Acts 2:17-21).

Praying for revival is hastening the return of Christ because it brings holiness to believers and brings unbelievers to faith. Jesus makes it clear that bringing people to faith throughout the world needs to happen before his return “And the gospel must first be preached to all nations” (Mk 13:10). This is not only fulfilled through normal evangelism but through revival. Peter makes it clear that God is delaying the return of Christ to give time for people to repent. “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief” (2 Peter 3:9-10). Revival is the most effective means of bringing many people to repentance. So praying for revival and praying for the return of Christ are intimately related. We are not praying for the Lord to send revival but for him to come in revival. Revival is God.

Revival will bring the Church to repentance, to become more like the Bride of Christ for whom he is returning. So we hasten the return of Christ through holiness. “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming” (2 Peter 3:10-12). Peter said “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you – even Jesus. Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets” (Acts 3:19-21). The Jewish rabbis in those days spoke of the need of repentance to bring about the coming of Messiah. For example they said: “If Jews would genuinely repent for one day, the Messiah would come.” So in praying for revival, which brings believers to much deeper holiness, we are speeding the return of Christ.

We should not be lulled into a false sense of apathy, thinking Jesus’ return must be a long time away. Looking at what is going on in the world it could all happen more quickly than we think. Let’s not think of Jesus’ return being at some fixed date in the future, but as an event which we can hasten by our prayers and obedience and particularly by our prayers and preparation for Revival.

A RELEVANT PRAYER

Maranatha - Come, O Lord. Come in revival to purify your Bride. Come in revival to bring many to repentance. Then come to manifest your End Time glory, majesty and power. Come to manifest your holiness and justice. Come to gather, protect and bless your saints. Come to destroy evil, idolatry and oppression. Come to disarm, restrain and destroy the evil one. Come to establish your rule of peace and justice on earth.

Remember that the devil is trying hard to:

- Prevent Revival.
- Undermine Christians’ submission to Scripture (especially in the area of sexuality).
- Stop Christians proclaiming biblical truth by them being accused of extremism and hate-speech.
- Destroy the church’s reputation (especially in the area of sexual abuse).
- Cause churches to die of old age

All of which would undermine God’s rule – his Kingdom. **So pray regularly “Your kingdom come. Maranatha.”**

Does the Bible predict an End Time Revival?

Acts 2:16-21 links a great outpouring of the Spirit with apocalyptic events which refer to the End Times: “wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.” These did not happen at or after Pentecost. They are reminiscent of Matthew 24:29 and Revelation 6:12 which relate such events to the End Times. Biblical prophecy often has more than one fulfilment. It seems clear that the Joel prophecy (Joel 2:28-32) quoted in Acts 2:16-21 was not completely fulfilled at Pentecost. So it is not correct, as some believe, to think that special outpourings of the Spirit ended at Pentecost or soon afterwards.

I hope you are finding more time to pray for revival during the lockdown.

Be assured of my prayers for you, in the continuing crisis.

God bless you,

Tony

You may be interested in my paper “**SECULARISM AND POPULISM UNDERMINE THE FOUNDATION OF SOCIETY**” See <https://christianteaching.org.uk/blog/uncategorized/secularism-and-populism-undermine-the-foundation-of-society/>

SECULARISM seeks to undermine Christianity which is fundamental to the establishment of the rule of law, democracy and human rights. I quote agnostics and atheists who agree with this. I quote David Alton who said that by dissociating “religion and liberty, democracy and faith, we have unstitched the fabric that holds a society together and endangered its future.” POPULISM says a country’s “true people” are in conflict with outsiders and the elite. It whips up emotion to re-establish the will of the people. It tends to disregard democracy by fearmongering about our being in crisis, promoting conspiracy theories, undermining trust in institutions and the media. Populists might relate closely to Christians but it is not a Christian movement. We need to recognise that what is happening through secularism, populism and the growth of authoritarianism is a trend towards a godless dictatorship.

Revival is a supernatural event in the church and society. It is a work of the Holy Spirit which brings: an overpowering sense of God’s presence leading to uplifting, inspired worship; an awesome sense of God’s holiness leading to a deep conviction of sin, even amongst those outside the church; a supernatural drawing of people together and an outpouring of love for one another, all of which leads to a huge number coming to faith. People’s lives and whole communities are transformed.

ⁱ Matthew, Tyndale NT Commentaries.

ⁱⁱ Maranatha could be understood as meaning “Our Lord has come” but many scholars and Bible translations believe it means “Come Lord” cf Rev 22:20 “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

ⁱⁱⁱ The Revelation of St John the Divine, Black’s NT Commentaries, 1984

^{iv} The Book of Revelation, Intervarsity Press, 1990.

^v More than Conquerors, An interpretation of the Book of Revelation, Tyndale Press 1962.