

The Second Advent Of Our Lord.

Text: Rev 22:12-14

Suggested Hymns:

493T474, 488, 491, 490, 489

1) Behold, I Come Quickly

2) The Reward Which Christ Shall Give

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Revelation 22:12-14, ¹² *“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”* ¹³ *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”* ¹⁴ *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

The Book of Revelation has been called *“a manual of consolation to the Church in her pilgrimage through this world.”* As we read these chapters, we are cheered with the assurance that Christ is mightier than His enemies and that those who die for Him shall live.

Those who suffer for Him shall reign, for the course of the Church on earth is like the course of Christ Himself. It is the business of the Church to teach the world and bear witness of the truth, and in so doing she must expect to suffer injuries from her enemies.

We are told that she will have her Gethsemane and her Calvary, but that she also will have her Olivet. Having passed through pain and suffering, she finally will arise to the glories of the triumphant ascension and to the everlasting joys in the New Jerusalem.

The consolation given to the Militant Church here on earth is amplified particularly in the last chapter of the Book of Revelation. We have the promise of Christ’s second coming reiterated in the chapter which lies before us.

The words “*Behold, I come*” ... “*Behold, I am coming quickly*” are like the clarion calls of a bugle coming in faster tempo to gather the worshipers to take their places in the heavenly temple. Yes, these words are like a rainbow of promise spanning the sky of the future. Let us, therefore, consider today, *The Second Advent of Our Lord*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. “Behold, I Come Quickly”

Time has marched on since these words were spoken. Generation after generation has moved across the face of this earth, but the advent hour of the Son of God has not yet come.

Although the Church has waited for the coming of the Saviour with longing eyes, His foot-steps have not been heard. There are those who, through mathematical calculations, have tried to persuade us that they heard the approach of the heralds and have seen the indications of the rising of the Morning Star.

Yet, events have transpired to demolish their theories. The world goes on as before.

The hymnist writes,¹

We wait for Thee: soon Thou wilt come
The time is swiftly nearing;
In this we heartily rejoice,
And long for Thine appearing.

God is the Timeless One. How are we to reconcile the repeated assertions of the Saviour with the fact that twenty centuries have passed in succession and yet the promise of His speedy coming has not been fulfilled?

Let us remember the words of 2 Peter 3:8, ⁸ *But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*. We dare not measure space and time by the standards of human conception.

We speak of speed in travel today, with our jet planes, which can circle the hemisphere in an incredibly short period of time; but what is this accomplishment in comparison with the angels’ flight, who wing their way from heaven to earth?

We speak of the swiftness of our ‘magnetic-levitation’ bullet trains, and yet, what are they in comparison with the velocity of light, which travels from the sun at the rate of nearly 300,000 km per second?

The period of time which lies between the first and second coming of our Lord seems great to us; but it means nothing to God. To us the time seems long, because so many things have happened upon this earth of ours.

Revolutions of empires have taken place, kingdoms have risen and fallen and new dynasties have sprung up from their ashes. But what is that to an everlasting God, with whom *“a thousand years ... Are like yesterday when it is past, And like a watch in the night.”*²

Our standard of measuring periods of events is time. God’s standard is eternity, in which an epoch or era of this world is but a page in the vast volume of history. As far as God is concerned, the thousands of years are as the beat of a pulse or the swing of a pendulum. God who is eternal takes in all time at a glance and says to us: **“I come quickly.”**

God’s plans unfold according to a Divine schedule. There is a plan in all of God’s dealings and providential arrangements. There was a preparation of thousands of years before the first advent of Christ. The promised Seed of the woman might have come at once, just as Eve expected when she hailed her first-born, saying: *“I have gotten a man — the Lord.”*³

The Lord might have restored the blighted areas of the Garden of Eden immediately, but this was not God’s plan in dealing with the children of men. A long period of blood and sacrifice preceded the first coming of the Lord, to typify the manner and way in which the redemption of the world was to be accomplished.

Age upon age passed by, during which the words of prophecy were spoken pointing to the first advent of our Saviour. Many a pious old Hebrew looked anxiously to the day when the Consolation of Israel should arrive, and *“when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ^s to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”*⁴ The incarnation of Jesus took place no sooner, no later than it was appointed in the divine plan.

Thus it is with the second coming of the Lord, our King. Certain great events must transpire in this world before He will make His appearance. He Himself tells us in Matthew 24:14 that *this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

Peter, while in one breath he speaks of the end of all things being at hand, and this is to be a motive for seriousness, watchfulness, and prayer,⁵ he guards in the next breath against the unwarranted inference that Christ would come in the generation then living.

The purpose of Christ's delay. He seems to delay, but there is work to be done before the celestial veil can be withdrawn and we can see Christ as He is.

We can always depend on Jesus' words, He says, *"Behold, I come quickly,"* and soon will we hear the gladsome invitation, *Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*⁶

Jesus has delayed His second coming to give the world an opportunity for repentance. Let us be mindful of the words that St. Peter spoke when he said in 2 Peter 3:9, *'The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

There was a time of grace for the dwellers of the old world, before the floods came and destroyed them all; and now again, before the deluge of fire sweeps this world and destroys it and the heavens pass away, He is giving a period of grace so that all people might be saved. This is a gracious token of His forbearance.

Christ will give this prodigal world an opportunity, before the gates of heaven are closed, to arise and go to its Father. We recognise the long-suffering of God as He waited in the days of Noah, before the reservoirs were unsealed.

We see the long-suffering of God as He waited in the days of Abraham, before fire and brimstone laid waste the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And now, in the last dispensation, His long-suffering and patience are again in evidence.

Nevertheless, His words are sure as written in Hebrews 10:37,³⁷ *"For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.* And in

Revelation 1:7, ⁷ ***Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him.*** Likewise we read in Romans 14:10, ***For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.***

For the believers, this second advent will be glorious; but for the wicked it will be a terrible certainty.

Everything else in this world is uncertain and hinges upon certain contingencies which arise from time to time; but with the second coming of the Lord nothing is left to chance.

The Lord ***“is not a man, that He should lie.”***⁷ He shall come ***“to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe.”***⁸ Are you living in happy anticipation of the coming of the Lord?

The prospect of His second coming put music into the lips of the patriarchs and psalmists of old. We read in Psalm 96:11-13, ¹¹ ***Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;*** ¹² ***Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the Lord.*** ¹³ ***For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with His truth.***

Such should be the tenor of your heart when you think of the day of the Lord's second coming. May it be said of you that your lamps are brightly burning, anticipating the coming of the Bridegroom.

2. The Reward Which Christ Shall Give

Man's sinful robe. Jesus says, in the words of our text, ***and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*** The purpose of His second coming, therefore, is to judge the living and the dead. Each one will receive his reward.

All those who died during the time that the old heaven and the old earth stood; all the dead from Adam on to the last one to give up his soul in physical death; the great and the small, even the tiny babies who died at birth; all will be gathered before the throne at the second coming of the Lord.

Paul says to the Corinthians, in 2 Corinthians 5:10, ¹⁰ ***For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*** We read in

John 5:28-29, ²⁸ ***“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice”*** ²⁹ ***“and come forth -- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.***

Then the books, the unerring records of God’s own accounting, will be opened, and man will receive his reward; not collectively, but individually. In these accounts there are no errors, for they are certified by a three-fold signature of Christ, the Son of God, who says, in Revelation 22:13, ¹³ ***“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”***

What a ghastly record that will be, for it will contain all the sins of those who lived from Adam until that day; national sins and the sins of the individual. All the sins which have been hidden away will be exposed there in the light of that eternal day; sins that will reveal the corruption of the human heart; sins of fraud and sins of deception; sins of infidelity and wastefulness.

Every idle word and every curse word that has ever come from man’s lips will be recorded there. Mountain-high, your sins can rise up to crush you; as a never-ceasing flood they will engulf you, unless — unless you belong to the blessed of whom the Saviour speaks in the words Revelation 22:14, ¹⁴ ***“Blessed are those who [wash their robes],⁹ that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.***

These robes of ours are of our own design. Every thought that we have is a lengthwise thread of the fabric and every deed that we do is the side-to-side threads in the cloth we are weaving. These robes of ours show our errors, our transgressions against the holy Law of God. They are polluted within and without, for the Scriptures say that ***“our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”***¹⁰ The best of us will see ugly stains upon these garments, which we wear until our dying day.

The robe washed clean. But these foul robes of ours can be cleaned! We are told in the Book of Revelation that they ***“have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”***¹¹ Our guilt can be removed; we can be sanctified; we can be cleansed, if we believe in the atoning power of the blood of Jesus Christ, who is the ***“Alpha and Omega.”***

St. Paul uses a beautiful expression as he writes his Epistle to the Colossians, when he says, *having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*¹²

Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us simply implies that the records were destroyed. Just as the scribe of old would take the flat surface of his stylus and run it over the soft clay, in order to blot out what he had written, even so the records are destroyed concerning the evil deeds of those who have washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb.

Not an evil work of the godly will be shown in the records, because *“the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.”*¹³

Only your good works, which are judged perfect by the righteousness of Christ, are recorded in the Book of Life.

Only those who *“have washed their robes”* will have a *“right to the tree of life.”* This expression carries us back to the very beginning of the Book of Genesis. How beautiful that the very last page of the Book of Revelation should go back to the very beginning of man’s existence and the fall of Adam and Eve!

There, because of sin, the angel barred man’s entrance into the Garden with a flaming sword. Now the angel warders are withdrawn, and once more man has access to the *“tree of life”* and may enter into the eternal city of our God, being numbered among those who have triumphed through Christ and obtained their eternal reward.

Longing for the advent. How we long for that day! This longing is expressed in Revelation 22:17, *“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’”*

“The Spirit says, Come.” The divine Agent, whose own coming as the Comforter was declared by the departing Saviour to be more than an replacement for the Saviour’s absence, hails the advent of the Lord, who will have as His crown the Church Triumphant.

“The bride says, Come.” The ransomed Church on earth is longing for the bridal day of perfected bliss. The groaning creation, weary of the bondage of sin

and sorrow and longing to go forth from its leper-couch, walking and leaping and praising God, cries, Come!

And let him who hears say, "Come!" Let us be watchful and waiting for the second advent of our Lord, ¹⁶ *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* ¹⁷ *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*¹⁴ *"Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."*¹⁵
Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Hymn 490 v 4

² Psalm 90:4

³ Genesis 4:1

⁴ Galatians 4:4

⁵ 1 Peter 4:7

⁶ Matthew 25:34

⁷ Numbers 23:19

⁸ 2 Thessalonians 1:9

⁹ AAT

¹⁰ Isaiah 64:6

¹¹ Revelation 7:14

¹² Colossians 2:14

¹³ 1 John 1:7

¹⁴ 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

¹⁵ Revelation 22:20