Even So Come Lord Jesus

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[0:00] Well, now let's turn to the book of Revelation again, chapter 22. We read this earlier on today, and I want us just to fix our thoughts around verse 20.

We read the words, He who testifies to these things says, Surely I am coming quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus. Even so come, Lord Jesus. I want us to think then for a wee while this evening about the second coming of Christ.
That it is to be desired by his people. Surely I am coming quickly, says Jesus. And the response is, Yes.
Even so come, Lord Jesus. Actually, it is quite a strange and curious thing that people from other religious outlooks, as well as Christians, have a fascination with the coming of Jesus.
[1:28] You find it in Judaism, especially what I might call popular Judaism. Many, as a person said to me, well, you believe that Jesus is coming again.

And I am prepared to believe that. But you see, it will be that he is coming for the first time for us. And the second time for you. Or something like that.
In Islam, the coming of Jesus is considered to be a coming for judgment. The thinking of non-Christians, too, has moved, especially in the last few decades, has moved towards the view that there is some great climactic event just around the corner.
People who have studied the history of the world. And they have seen the way things have raced on. There has been so much achieved. So much discovered.
So much knowledge. We are heading along at such a rapid rate of progress. There is something around the corner there. Some great event.
[2:45] And you get people, not of a Christian persuasion at all, nor of any religious commitment, sizing the thing up and saying, Well, this has probably something to do with what Christians claim is the second coming, the return of Jesus.

And it is true, too, that within nominal Christianity, where there is no particular commitment to the Lord Jesus in a living experience way, but just what you would call the average churchgoer approach, there, too, you get this interest in and a certain belief about the coming of Jesus.
My own experience, especially at times of death and funerals, is that people come on to the subject of the return of Christ.
And they'll talk about how things are getting worse and worse in the world. A pretty standard approach. Nothing new about it. But what happens is their guard is down a bit at a time of death. They're confronted with the reality of death and their own mortality, that they're here for a wee while. And so their guard is down a bit, and they'll tell you what they believe, and they'll usually come on to the subject of Christ's return.
[4:14] I remember talking to somebody, a chap at a funeral on one occasion. And it surprised me that he came on to the subject of the return of Jesus.

And he started to talk about really believing in his personal coming, and so on. But he never stopped to think about what that would mean for him.
It never occurred to him that he needed to know that he was on the right side. He never thought for a moment that he could be under the wrath of God forever.
He could be under the judgment of God and cast away forever. That, of course, was the angle that I raised up with him. What better time, after all, he said it.
So it was up to me to say something, to awaken his conscience, to realize that unless you're fully and wholeheartedly committed to following Christ in this world, which he wasn't, then you ought not to be looking for the return of Christ at all.

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[5:19] You ought to dread the prospect. And so you've got all that unusual, almost strange mix of views, with this notion in it that there's a kind of belief about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But here, at the very close of the canon of Scripture, in the book of Revelation, we have the testimony of Jesus through John, speaking by the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth.
And it bears upon the return. He who testifies to these things says, that is Jesus, surely I am coming quickly.
And therefore, we are encouraged to think about this subject for ourselves, and how it relates to us. Christians, we are told, should be eagerly looking for his return. Are we like that? Are we eagerly looking for his return? Or are, indeed, we ready for his return?
[6:35] I want us, therefore, to think, first of all, about the certainty of his coming. And the certainty of his coming, the point one, has immediately before us a personal testimony of Christ.

I am coming. That's his own testimony. In the Bible I have here in the pulpit, the words of Jesus are in red.
And right there, surely I am coming. In other words, that highlights his testimony. It is the personal testimony of the Son of God regarding his return.
And it's right there at the end of the book of Scripture, the last book of the Bible. And it's as if he is saying to us, now listen, all these things are driving towards this.
This great climactic event you need to be ready for. I am coming. There is a little bit of a difference on the word Amen.
[7:56] Some folk just don't see it as Jesus' word, but as John's word. Amen, even so can Lord Jesus.

But elders take the view that it is Jesus saying Amen. And we know, of course, from John's Gospel, one of Jesus' favourite terms of phrase was the double Amen.
Verily, verily is the old version. Amen, Amen. That's what it is. And Jesus himself in the book of Revelation is called the Amen.
And it seems to me that there is a deliberateness here in having Amen. The Amen, that is Jesus, the one whose word is guaranteed, certain.
He is the faithful witness, the true witness. And he is saying, My personal testimony is, I am coming.
[9:04] I am coming quickly. Amen. Now, to push that a little bit further, at the very beginning of the book of Revelation, in verse 7 of chapter 1, we read the words, Behold, he is coming with the clouds.

There is that emphasis. That's where the book of Revelation begins. And every eye shall see him, and all the nations shall mourn because of him.
Do you know that from the very earliest times of human history, the advent, the second advent, the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ was proclaimed.
It was foretold. If you turn to the book of, the little letter, I should say, of Jude, it's only one chapter, at verse 14, Jude tells us, speaking about the days of Enoch, and Enoch was the fourth person from Adam.
So, we're way back to the beginning of human history. Enoch was a man of God. Enoch walked with God. And it is said in Jude, in verse 14, that, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment.
[10:38] So, from the very dawn of human history, you have God not only speaking of salvation, but of judgment too, and it is associated with the second coming of the Lord.

He comes to judge theirs. And we were singing about that in the psalm. He comes to judge theirs. He will judge the people in righteousness.
Behold, says Jesus, I am coming. And, just to stay at the beginning of human history, in the book of Job, in verse 25 of chapter 19 of Job, we're told there that Job, in the midst of all his darkness and troubles, I know that my Redeemer lives.
And, at last, he shall stand on the earth. My eye shall see him and not another. In other words, he's given his own personal testimony.
And he's saying, whoever else sees him in the body on the earth, I'll see him. He's coming again.
And you get these glimpses into the teaching that we're looking at here of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
[12:11] And in those great messianic psalms, the Christ psalms, that are clearly Christ psalms, the focus is on his final advent, his second coming.

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We sing, as we were singing a moment ago in Psalm 96, he's coming to judge the earth. Psalm 98 has it as well.
And other psalms too, referring to his second coming. Salvation for his people and judgment upon those who believe not nor receive his word.
And interestingly enough, this is an emphasis that's not simply New Testament.
It's there from the beginning of human history and it's there in the songbook of the church. And this should not escape our attention.
[13:16] But when we turn to the New Testament, of course, we have so many references to his second coming. We have our Lord Jesus Christ's own testimony.

If you think about his teaching in Matthew Gospel 25, when the Son of Man comes in his glory with all his holy angels, he will separate the peoples and he will divide the sheep and the goats and the sheep represent his own people and the goats those who believe not nor receive the love of his truth.
Paul, in 1 Thessalonians, probably, if not the earliest, one of the earliest, of the letters to the churches, tells us there about his coming.
the Lord's coming will be as a thief in the night. People won't expect it. They'll be saying, peace and safety. Life goes on more of the same every day.
And suddenly, he will come like a thief in the night. 2 Thessalonians 1, verses 7 to 10, casts another very solemn, almost terrifying light on his coming.
[14:42] It will be to judge those who opposed his work and his word, and to ensure that they are cast out from him.

The book of Revelation that we're looking at here has more than one reference to the awesome return of Jesus, to the setting up of his throne for judgment.
He comes, if you take Revelation 1, 7 following, or Revelation 19, he comes in awesome power, appearing as the victor in triumph to judge.
So, there is a personal testimony from the Son of God, the Amen, I am coming. And then tucked in there, I am coming quickly.
That is, the little word tachu means without delay, speedily. And the moment you say that, you're confronted with a question, how can this be?
[16:02] how can it be that he says, I'm coming quickly? After an all, two thousand years have rolled on since he said, I'm coming quickly.

That's not quickly, surely, is that not what we think? It can't be quickly. And that's why we read 2 Peter chapter 3.
People have been saying down through the centuries, where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, since the days of those ancient believers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and so on, everything's gone on as it has gone on.
The round of life, the circle of life, with wars and fighting thrown in, everything's gone on. Where is the promise?
where is the fulfillment of the promise made? 2 Peter 3.8 poses that. But the message that Peter was given by the Lord himself is the Lord is not slack concerning his promises, as people count slackness.
[17:19] No, no, the problem is not that he's forgotten or he's failed to keep his promise. or even that quickly doesn't really mean quickly, speedily.

No, no, we've got to think about his timescale. We've got to think about how he operates. Our problem is that our time is limited.
The oldest person here is over ninety. But that person knows, like many another, that it's all past those ninety years, so quickly.
When you cast your mind back, it's all gone in a flash. We're all that going from. Life is short for us at its longest.
It is like a watch in the night. That's what old Moses said in Psalm ninety. It's like a watch in the night. with us, with the Lord, he deals in eternal ages.
[18:31] The huge eons of time. See, the moment we say that, there's a puzzle. Because there's a sense in which time for us, time in this world, it's not like time with God.

Eternity hasn't got what we call the linea. Eternal, time's eternal, it's circulate, it moves on, it's ever present with God.

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So, it's hard for us to get a mental handle on the thing. The bottom line is the ages roll on. Peter says there, a thousand years are a day to the Lord.
But for us, we are here for a little while. Life said Shakespeare through his character, it's like a walking shadow.
It struts and frets its hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more. That's the way we are. And Jesus says, as the eternal Son of God, I am coming, I am coming quickly.
[19:43] the Ancient of Days says, I am coming quickly. The Ancient of Days says, the judge is standing at the door.

I am quoting there from James chapter 5 verses 8 and 9. And that is the mentality we are to have. Not that, the ages have rolled on.
He hasn't fulfilled this word. Something is all wrong here. No, no. Don't judge the Lord by our little time here. By a couple of thousand years or a little more than that.
No, no. We are to get a grip of things and see it from his perspective. He's standing at the door. He's waiting to appear. We need to live as if we really believe these things.
The coming of the Lord draws near. It's at hand, says James. And did you notice in the reading in 2 Peter 3, seeing how these things must shortly come to pass, how we should live in all godliness and holy reverence, grow in grace, he says, and in the knowledge, the experience of Christ, our Lord and Savior.
[21:08] we're to take him at his word and we're to live as if it's just about to happen. Remembering that with him the age is made all on, but coming he is, and coming from his perspective and therefore ours if we listen to him, coming quickly.

this ought to promote in us a holy carefulness and a burden for those who are not ready for his coming.
That takes us to the second and the final thing I want to look at here. The Christian believer's response to Jesus' words. Even so can Lord Jesus.
Even so can I can't remember who said it, but somebody took the even so as yes. And I like that because there's a sense of excitement about it.
There's a sense of reality about it. Some of us slip into it when our favourite football team gets a winning goal. Yes! Our son said that is coming quickly is yes!
[22:44] We look for it. We desire it, or we ought to decide, as those who are followers of Christ. And that's why we said at the beginning there that a person who is not ready for his coming, who is not united to him by faith, ought not to speak about the coming of Jesus as they're all ready for it.

It's important for us to be united to him by faith, to be born of his spirit and washed in the blood. As we're thinking on Thursday, that simply means that we receive the benefits of his death for ourselves. That we have the forgiveness of sins, that we have peace with God, that we are ready living by faith for his return.
Did I say ready? I mean that we eagerly desire his return. That we are of the yes mentality, looking for death, and hastening to it.
And therefore, believing friend, we ought to see the madness in the person. I don't mean madness madness, I mean the madness, the spiritual madness. The spiritual madness of a person who's looking for the coming of Christ and who's not ready for it.
[24:12] And we ought to have a heart to help them see they're not there yet, they're not ready for it. They're not ready to meet Jesus. having put in ten years of interaction with Jewish people, many stories I could tell you, but I'm going to tell you one about a very highly educated man, who was in many ways a very good friend of mine, and whom I think died in the faith.

But he for a while was very resistant, and his mentality on the return of Jesus, which he knew about, he knew very well about it, he had read it, studied it, but his mentality was arrogant and unbelieving in the extreme.
When I meet him, he said, I'll tell him a thing or two. I'll speak to him about what he did to the Jewish people, and on he went. And of course, my own response to him was, I better not say his name, because you never know who, Mary, listen to this, but we'll call him Bob.
I said to him, I said to him, Bob, your mouth will be shut. You'll have nothing to say. You'll be as guilty as guilty can be.
You will say nothing. And that's the truth, that's the truth of it. Every mouth shall be shut, and all the unbelieving world shall become guilty before the eternal Son of God when he comes.

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[26:00] In fact, in the book of Revelation, we're told they'll call upon the mountains and the rocks to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb of God.

That's Jesus. They will be filled with shame and confusion that all that they thought they might say to him about how wrong he got it in history of this world, they'll have nothing, in fact, to say.
And that day when in the body we will see his blessed face, oh, we need to be ready for that. So that here in this world we're looking for and hastening towards his coming.
And it's only then when he comes for the Lord's people that the longings of our hearts will be realized, and that in a wonderful and glorious way.
But you see, and we read this in 2 Peter 3 as well, Peter takes us, if you like, back to earth. He wants us to be looking forward, eagerly looking for the return of Jesus.
[27:17] But he says, now, in the meantime, I'm paraphrasing here, in the meantime, he says, you've got to live as Christ's followers. You've got to be seeking to grow in his grace, and then experience knowledge of him.

You've got to be developing, you've got to be launching out by faith every day in him. you've got to be urging and encouraging others along the way.
This is what we're to do. This is how we're to use the truth. We're not to be distracted or absorbed in the last things.
A certain member of my family has a particular delight in the country western singer Dolly Parton, and recently got a new CD.
And I just happened to put it on the radio the other night in the car. They weren't there, the family wasn't there. And this song came on, and it was actually all about the last times and the return of Jesus.
[28:32] And interestingly she was saying in her psalm that we're not to get bogged down in the when or the how, but to live here for him.

That's the issue here. That's what we're to take out of this. Even when we say yes to his coming, even when that is our believing response, come Lord Jesus, in the meantime, we are to live for him as those who have been transformed by him, and are encouraged, and motivated by the prospect of seeing him.
We're to study the return of Christ, the reality of it, his testimony concerning it, and to be motivated to live for him here.
Actually, I came across one or two interesting characters from the past who were just like this. I'm taking St. Columba, because he was the main carrier of the gospel.
St. Columba came from Northern Ireland, and he brought the gospel to the west of Scotland in particular, and the Western Isles as well.
[30:03] And he said to his disciples, to his followers, followers, they were obviously followers of Christ, but they were his disciple band, he led them, and they were great evangelists, they carried the good news to other people, pagan people, steeped in druidism and the like.

And he encouraged his disciples to persevere in the work of spreading the good news, in the light of the blessed hope of Christ's return.
And that is found in his writings. John Knox, famous in Scotland, wherever else, for his contribution to the Reformation in Scotland, John Knox could say remembrance of that day is of inestimable comfort and encouragement.
The great and saintly preacher and teacher, Samuel Rutherford, in 1637, said, Oh, how long is it to the dawnings of the blessed marriage supper of the Lamb?
These folk, you see, were living their lives in the light of the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ.
[31:32] and it made a difference to their lives. And so, as we leave it, whenever it may be that he will return in great power and glory, let us look forward and eagerly live out our days in the spirit of these words and say with true faith in the Son of God, yes, Lord Jesus, come.

Amen.

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