

Maranatha-Our Lord, Come!

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OUR LORD HAS COME!
OUR LORD, COME!

Both of these statements are true, the first serving to undergird the absolute assurance of the second, which may account for the fact that this ancient word has been translated both ways. In fact **Maranatha** is translated either as a prayer or a statement of fact. As discussed in more detail below, the majority of Bible translations favor **Maranatha** as indicative of a prayer rather than a declarative statement. Furthermore, it is widely noted that the word "**Maranatha**" was a watchword of the early church used in greetings as a prayer for the Lord to return. This begs the question - Does the modern church mimic the first century church by praying "Maranatha?" The related applicational question is are we as the Bride of Christ, corporately and individually, living holy lives in the ever brightening light of the return of Jesus, our Bridegroom?

Thomas Constable comments on the occurrence of **Maranatha** in 1Cor 16:22, noting that

It is strange to meet with an Aramaic phrase in a Greek letter to a Greek Church. The explanation is that this phrase had become a watchword and a password. It summed up the vital hope of the early Church, and Christians whispered it to each other, identified each other by it, in a language which the heathen could not understand. ([Thomas Constable's Expository Notes](#))

The 18th Century evangelist **George Whitfield** attests to his "Maranatha Mindset" writing

Let that cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh," (Mt 25:6) be continually sounding in your ears, and begin now to live as though you were assured that this night you were to go forth to meet Him. (And all God's people cry "Amen!")

Comment: Undoubtedly Whitfield's continual awareness of the return of His Lord and Savior Jesus Christ fueled his passion to share the Gospel with hundreds of thousands

of souls.

Elwood McQuaid speaking of the first century church...

God chose to implant the pulsing **Maranatha** hope into the anatomy of His church. From the moment of Jesus' departure from the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, **Maranatha** (Our Lord, come!) became the watchword of the church. It was their greeting and parting word of hope. Perhaps He would come for them today.

Maranatha is transliterated into many (most) of the languages of the world and many of the Bible versions in those languages - Latin Vulgate, German (Gute Nachricht Bibel), Spanish (La Biblia de las Américas), French (La Bible du Semeur), Vietnamese (1934 Vietnamese Bible), Nkwa Asem, Tagalog (Ang Salita ng Diyos), Russian (Russian Synodal Version), Dutch (Statenvertaling) and the list goes on.

Douglas writes...

ANATHEMA MARANATHA - These words (1Cor 16:22) have been taken as being a double imprecation (prayer that a curse may fall on someone) (**KJV**; **Ed**: Because this version does not separate these two words with a period in the English text.) or as having no necessary connection. Maranatha (NASB) may be a distinct sentence made up of two Aramaic words, either Maran atha (JB)—“Our Lord is come [or comes]”—or Marana tha (NEB)—“Our Lord, come” (MLB, RSV). It may have been an expression among early Christians to indicate their fervent hope in Christ's early return...Aramaic, mārānā āthāh, our Lord comes!). An expression of greeting and encouragement as well as of triumphant faith, such as is shown in 1 Corinthians 16:22, RSV mg. That is to say, “Our Lord comes, regardless of man's enmity!” Paul put this word over against anathema, the curse that befalls idolaters. ([New International Bible Dictionary- J. D. Douglas and Merrill Tenney- Zondervan](#))

THE SOLE SCRIPTURAL USE OF MARANATHA

Maranatha is used only once in the Bible, at the end of First Corinthians. Here are several translations of Paul's use of Maranatha in 1Corinthians 16:22...

If anyone does not (Gk negative "ou" which speaks of absolutely does not) **love** (not agapao but phileo from philos = friend and is in the present tense = continually does not want to have anything, at any time to do with) the Lord, he is to be accursed.

Maranatha. (NAS)

If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. **Our Lord, come! (ESV)**

ESV Study Bible: The phrase Our Lord, come! (marana tha) is Aramaic rather than Greek, probably representing an early Jewish Christian prayer for the return of Jesus (cf. Rev. 22:20-[note](#)). It is additional evidence that at an early date followers of Jesus gave him a title that they used of God. This also reminds us that Christians should always be praying for Christ to return soon. ([The ESV Study Bible](#))

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema **Maranatha.** (KJV)

Comment: Note that **KJV** adds "Jesus Christ" which is not present in the best manuscripts. In addition the **KJV** has no period after "Anathema". However even the **NKJV** places a period between anathema and Maranatha, as do the majority of more modern translations.

If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. **O Lord, come!** (NKJV)

If anyone does not love the Lord--a curse be on him. **Come, O Lord!** (NIV)

NIV Note: The Greek for **Come, Lord** (which) reproduces an Aramaic expression (Marana tha) used by early Christians.

If anyone does not love the Lord, that person is cursed. **Our Lord, come!** (NLT)

Let anyone who has no love for the Lord be accursed. **Our Lord, come!** (NET)

NET Note: The Greek text has **marana tha**. These Aramaic words can also be read as **maran atha**, translated "Our Lord has come!"

If anyone does not love the Lord, a curse be on him. **Maranatha!** (HCSB)

If anyone doesn't love the Lord, let him be cursed! **Our Lord, come!** (GWT)

If anyone does not **befriend** (a friend is a person who shares the same interests as someone else and demonstrates that friendship in his attachment to that person. To be a friend of the Lord Jesus Christ involves adopting His interests and making them become one's own. The person who neglects to do this rejects Christ.) the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be reserved unto judgment. **Our Lord comes.** (Zodhiates)

If any one doth not love the Lord Jesus Christ -- let him be anathema! **The Lord hath come!** (Young's Literal)

In the following Bible translations **Maranatha** is rendered as a prayer such as "**Our Lord, come!**," "**Come, Lord,**" or "**Come, O Lord.**"

NAS, ESV, NET, NIV, RSV, NKJV, NRSV, TLB ["Lord Jesus, come!"], Berkeley Version [Modern Language Bible], GWT, International Children's Bible, NLT, Holman Christian Standard Bible, Today's English Version, Contemporary English Version ["May the Lord come soon."], J B Phillips NT ["May the Lord soon come!"], Complete Jewish Bible, Lexham English ["O Lord, come!"], Easy to Read Version, Orthodox Jewish Bible ["Marana (our L-rd), tha (come)."]

In a smaller number of English Bible translations **Maranatha** is rendered as a statement of the fact of the incarnation or a confession that our Lord's first coming has come - "**Our Lord has come**" or "**Our Lord is come.**"

Darby = "The Lord cometh." Mounce Reverse-Interlinear New Testament = "Our Lord has

come! Bible in Basic English = Our Lord Comes. Wycliffe Bible = "In the coming of the Lord." Young's Literal = "The Lord hath come!"

Even a smaller number of English versions render Maranatha as a future event but not as a prayer for the Lord to come. The Amplified version renders **Maranatha** "Our Lord will come!" The Knox Bible renders it "The Lord is coming." New Life Version = "The Lord is coming soon!" Weymouth NT and Centenary Translation of the NT = "Our Lord is coming."

COMMENTS ON 1 CORINTHIANS 16:22

No evidence of love for Jesus, equates with no evidence of genuine regeneration. As alluded to above, Paul is not calling for "perfection!" No born again believer is capable of perfect love in this life. Paul's point is clearly that when there is not one iota of evidence that we love Christ, we are not His sheep. How do we show our love? In fairness, it should be noted that while the majority of conservative evangelical commentators hold to the preceding interpretation of 1Cor 16:22, there are a few commentators (e.g., R B Hughes) who feel that Paul was addressing genuine believers.

Jesus said

"If you love Me, you will keep (heed) My commandments." (Jn 14:15, cp Jn 8:42)

Paul said

In the future 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.**" (2Ti 4:8)

John adds:

The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. (1Jn 2:4-6)

J C Ryle comments that:

Paul allows no way of escape to the man who does not love Christ. He leaves no loophole or excuse. A man may lack clear head-knowledge and yet be saved. He may fail in courage, and be overcome by the fear of man, like Peter. He may fall tremendously, like David, and yet rise again. But if a person does not love Christ he is not in the way of life. The curse is yet upon him. He is on the broad road that leadeth to destruction. (Holiness)

Expositor's Bible Commentary (Revised Edition) comments that...

The phrase translated "**Come, O Lord**" is unique in 1 Corinthians in that it is an Aramaic expression (transliterated into Greek characters)—**marana tha**. The fact that Paul uses

Aramaic to address a church that knew only Greek demonstrates that this was a common element in the liturgy of the early church. (A modern example might be our word "Hallelujah," which is Hebrew for "praise Yahweh.") The use of this expression in Revelation 22:20-[note](#) (though in Greek, not Aramaic) suggests it was a common prayer for NT Christians to pray: "**Come, O Lord**" (cf. also Didache 10:6). Since this expression comes right after **anathema**, it presumably reinforces Paul's curse language, for he knows that the return of Jesus will bring blessings for some but condemnation for others. ([Romans - Galatians The Expositor's Bible Commentary- T Longman III, D E Garland, E F Harrison, D A Hagner, V Verbrugge, M Harris, R K Rapa - 2008](#))

Zodhiates comments that...

The consequence of man's choice was eternally and irrevocably set by God Himself. Nevertheless, God must not receive the blame for man's unbelief, for God prepared hell for the devil and his angels (Mt. 25:41), and man only goes there by his choice. Therefore, the suppositional "if" in this verse is *ei* (1487), the subjective "if" that is entirely hypothetical. It is not *eán* (1437) which is the supposition of reality and experience. Thus Paul wanted to close his epistle by telling the Corinthians that the choice by some not to love the Lord Jesus Christ and become His friend is indeed theirs, but he wanted them at the same time to realize what will come at the end of the road when they meet their Maker.

The next word is translated "anyone" (*tis* [5100], the indefinite pronoun meaning "someone"). This pinpoints the man who has made a decision not to believe on Christ, but it indicates that it makes no difference who that person is. It could be anyone, he could have any amount of money, he could have any amount of fame and even belong to the Hall of Fame that humans have erected....

The judgment that is to come upon unbelievers is definitely connected with the Lord's coming which the word **marán athá** says, "The Lord come." It is a day of great tribulation for the unbeliever (Rev 6-19), but of great blessing and expectation for the Christian (1Th 4:13-18-note). ([Exegetical Commentary on First Corinthians](#))

John MacArthur

If a person does not love the Lord with tender affection, then he obviously has no supreme love for Him, and thus no part in Him at all. Such a person "does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God," and should not be received into Christian fellowship (2John 9-10)....I believe that in this context **Maranatha**, an Aramaic term meaning "Our Lord, come," is Paul's appeal for the Lord to come and take away those who are accursed, the nominal, false Christians who are always such a great threat to the true church. The idea is, "God, come and remove them" before they cause more harm. Maranatha thus contains an implied invitation to those lost church members to receive Christ before God takes them away and the opportunity for salvation is forever gone. ([First Corinthians Commentary\)- John F MacArthur](#))

John Butler

This is a needed warning in any day. First, the compassion in the warning. "Love." The warning is to love Jesus Christ. We note that all the talk about love in the world ends quickly when Christ is mentioned. If you want to show love, you must include love for Christ. Second, the curse in the warning. "Anathema." Failure to love Jesus brings a great curse on the soul of man. You can fail in your love in any area without suffering the dire consequences you will suffer if you do not love Jesus Christ. Loving Christ is the difference between heaven and hell. Third, the coming in the warning. "Maranatha." This word means "the Lord comes." Many churches bear this name to emphasize their interest in the return of Christ. I once pastored a church many years ago named Maranatha Baptist Church. Sometimes we would have to take people to this verse to show where the church got its name. The word used here says that when Christ returns to earth in His glory, judgment will come upon the rejecters of Christ. ([Analytical Bible Expositor - 1 & 2 Corinthians](#))

Charles Hodge

Come, O Lord! This is a solemn warning (Ed: A "solemn prayer!"). The Lord whom people refuse to recognize and love is about to come in the glory of his Father and with all his holy angels to take vengeance on those who do not know God and who do not obey the Gospel. So deeply were the apostles impressed with Christ's divinity, so fully were they convinced that Jesus was God manifest in the flesh, that the refusal or inability to recognize him as such seemed to them a mark of reprobation. If this truth is hidden, they say, it is hidden to those who are lost (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). (1 Corinthians)

David Lowery comments that...

Paul's personal note began with a passionate warning probably aimed at false teachers (cf. 1Cor 12:3) whom he believed to be already present in the congregation (cf. 2Cor. 11:3-4). The verb love (philei) is related to the noun philēmati for "kiss" (1Cor. 16:20). It expresses adoration and devotion, qualities absent in false brethren. Paul invoked God's wrath on these false teachers (cf. Gal. 1:8-9) and in the same breath appealed to Christ to return (cf. Mt 7:21-23-note; Rev 22:20-[note](#)). **Come, O Lord!** renders the Greek words **marana tha** ("Maranatha"), which transliterate the Aramaic "**Lord, come.**" ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

R L Pratt comments that...

Paul placed a curse on anyone who did not love the Lord. Similarly, in Galatians 1:9 Paul cursed all who taught other gospels than the one he preached. Although Paul was convinced that most people within the Corinthian church believed the gospel, he knew that every church also contains deceivers and liars. He declared that the Lord curses even people in the church if they do not love him. The realization that such deceivers infiltrate the church caused Paul to cry out, Come, O Lord. He prayed that Christ would punish those who brought trouble to the church through their pretense of faith. ([Holman New Testament Commentary](#))

William Barclay notes that...

It is strange to meet with an Aramaic phrase in a Greek letter to a Greek Church. The explanation is that that phrase had become a watchword and a password. It summed up the vital hope of the early Church, and Christians whispered it to each other, identified each other by it, in a language which the heathen could not understand.

Reginald Showers comments that...

It would appear, then, that the fixed usage of the term 'Maranatha' by the early Christians was a witness to their strong belief in the imminent return of Christ. **If they knew that Christ could not return at any moment because of other events or a time period that had to transpire first, why did they petition Him in a way that implied that He could come at any moment?"**

The Didache 10.6, an ancient Christian manual of worship, used this petition in statements that were to be made at the end of the communion service. This usage helps to clarify the meaning of this expression, especially in light of Paul's reference to the future coming of Christ in conjunction with the observance of communion (1Cor. 11:26). Maranatha Our Lord, Come!....

It would appear, then, that the fixed usage of the term "Maranatha" by the early Christians was a witness to their strong belief in the imminent return of Christ. If they knew that Christ could not return at any moment because of other events or a time period that had to transpire first, why did they petition Him in a way that implied that He could come at any moment? ([Maranatha -- Our Lord, Come!- A Definitive Study of the Rapture of the Church- Renald Showers](#))

Life Application Commentary...

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming back to earth again. To Paul, this was a glad hope, the very best he could look forward to. He was not afraid of seeing Christ—he could hardly wait! His brief prayer combines the excitement of a cheer and the urgency of a welcome. Do you share Paul's eager anticipation? Those who love Christ are looking forward to that wonderful time of his return (Titus 2:13-note). As for those who did not love the Lord, however, Paul says to let them be cursed. ([1 & 2 Corinthians Life Application Bible Commentary- Grant R. Osborne, Philip W. Comfort](#))

Richard Hays feels that

The second sentence is actually a fervent prayer, written in Aramaic rather than Greek: Marana tha ("Our Lord, come). The prayer addresses the risen Lord and implores him to return—thus bringing about the consummation that Paul sketched in 15:20–28: the resurrection of the dead, the subjugation of all hostile powers, and the final triumph of God. While it is technically possible to understand the phrase as an indicative statement, a transcription of the Aramaic Maran atha ("Our Lord has come"), the use of this same prayer in the Didache at the end of a string of eschatological intercessions strongly

suggests that it was understood in the early church as a prayer calling upon the Lord Jesus to come. The point may be seen clearly if the Didache reference is read in context:

Remember, Lord, thy Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in thy love, and gather it together in its holiness from the four winds to thy kingdom which thou hast prepared for it. For thine is the power and the glory for ever. Let grace come and let this world pass away. Hosannah to the God of David. If any man be holy, let him come! if any man be not, let him repent: “Maranatha, Amen.” (Didache10.5-6)

In such a context, the phrase can scarcely mean anything other than “Our Lord, come.” (This interpretation is confirmed by Rev. 22:20-[note](#), which brings the book to a close with the equivalent prayer in Greek: *erchou kyrie Iēsou* [“Come, Lord Jesus”].) Paul’s uncharacteristic use of an Aramaic expression, in a letter written in Greek to a Greek-speaking congregation, shows that the cry *Marana tha* must have been an established element of the worship of the earliest Aramaic-speaking Christian community. This shows two important things. First, the acclamation of Jesus as Lord (a title reserved in the Old Testament and Jewish usage for God alone) goes back to the earliest known layer of Christian tradition. Second, this early tradition is eschatological at its very roots. Thus, those modern scholars who have imagined a hypothetical non-eschatological Jesus movement at the beginnings of Christianity can do so only by utterly ignoring the evidence of the Pauline letters. ([First Corinthians- Interpretation- a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching - Richard B. Hays](#))

Expositor's Greek Testament comments regarding **Maranatha** that...

it is doubtful whether ‘*atha*’ is strictly past—“our Lord hath come”....or whether the perfect should be rendered proleptically (prolepsis = the representation of a future act or development as if presently existing or accomplished)—“Our Lord cometh,” “will come,” “is at hand,” after the manner of Phil 4:5, 1Th 4:14ff., Jas 5:7ff., Rev 1:7, 3:2, Rev 22:20-[note](#). The latter sense accords with the context, with the strain of 1Cor 15, and with the NT attitude towards our Lord’s return: see 1Cor 1:7, 1Cor 11:26, 1Th. 1:10, etc. So most moderns.....others would read *Maran’a tha*’, making the verb imperative—“Our Lord, O come!”—in keeping with Rev. 22:20-[note](#); but this is questionable in grammar, and less appropriate. The exclamation, like *Abba* (Ro 8:15, Gal. 4:6) and *Amen*, was probably caught up by Gentile Christians from the first preachers, who in moments of rapture naturally reverted to their mother tongue ([1 Corinthians 16 Commentary Online](#))

Craig Blomberg comments that

Paul’s “**curse**” utilizes the expression *anathema*, as in 1Cor 12:3 (cf. also Gal. 1:8). “Come, O Lord” is the more likely of two possible translations of the Aramaic **Marana tha** (the other one being, “the Lord has come”). Together the two expressions reflect the profound seriousness with which the early church viewed faithfulness to Christ in view of his imminent return. ([1 Corinthians The NIV Application Commentary - Craig L Blomberg](#))

P W Barnett notes that...

Marana tha is the prayer of an Aramaic-speaking church, almost certainly the earliest church in Jerusalem. It is addressed to Jesus as Lord, and most likely arose from his appeal to Psalm 110:1: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool"' (Mark 12:35-37; Acts 2:34). Jesus understood this as Yahweh telling the risen Christ to sit next to him in the place of honour until all enemies are overcome (see 1Cor 15:20-28). After his exaltation to God's right hand and 'until' his enemies are vanquished, the people cry to their Lord, **Marana tha**, 'Our Lord, come back.'

The Aramaic words **Marana tha** within Paul's Greek text are like an archaeological inscription that sheds valuable light on the times from which it came. These words allow us to overhear the worship in the earliest Jewish church after Jesus' resurrection. They make clear that from the beginning Jesus was worshipped as the exalted Mara, 'Lord', and that the believers prayed to him, pleading for his return. These words render null and void the claim that only after many years did Christians introduce the idea of the second coming. The prayer Marana tha makes such views impossible. ([1 Corinthians 1 - Focus on the Bible - Paul Barnett](#))

Ralph Earle comments:

The one who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ is under a divine curse. (Paul is addressing professing Christians.) Behm says that the word means "some-thing delivered up to divine wrath, dedicated to destruction and brought under a curse" (TDNT, 1:354)....In the KJV there is no punctuation between **Anathema** and **Maranatha**, though it seems there should be a period. **A. T. Robertson** says, "It was a curious blunder in the King James Version that connected **Maranatha** with **Anathema**" (WP, 4:204)—a blessing or prayer, and a curse. The Didache seems to give some support to this view. It is our privilege and responsibility to live in constant expectation of our Lord's return. This attitude is one of the strongest safeguards against carelessness in conduct, and it also is a powerful incentive to devoted service for our Master. ([Word Meanings in the New Testament- Ralph Earle](#))

David E Garland writes that Maranatha

reveals that this tradition was eschatological at its core and ascribed the title "Lord" to Jesus early on. ([1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament\)- David E. Garland](#))

Guzik asks

How can we tell if some does or does not love the Lord Jesus Christ? "Love is an affection of the heart, but discernible by overt acts." (Poole)

Anathema was the third of three levels of discipline among the ancient Jews. The **first** level was a simple separation of a man from the synagogue for thirty days. If one did not

repent in the thirty days, he was under the **second** degree of discipline, giving him still an undefined time to repent, but warning him of the dire consequences to come. The **third** level was the **anathema**, and with that all hope of reconciliation and repentance was cut off. The man could never be reconciled to the synagogue, and was no longer accounted as a Jew at all.

O Lord, come! Paul is looking for the return of Jesus. Marana tha is Aramaic for O Lord, come! This was one of the earliest words of the Christian vocabulary.

Accursed (Anathema) ([331](#)) (**anathema** from **anathēmi** = to place, lay up) means strictly speaking something set up or placed so as to be kept, such as a votive [free will] offering which is "set up" in the temple (eg, see Lk 21:5 but see **note** below). Most of the NT uses are by Paul who uses **anathema** in a negative sense of delivering ("setting up" or "placing") someone under divine wrath or a curse (see below).

BDAG notes that **anathema** in the

Septuagint (Lxx) as a rule (signifies) what is 'devoted to the divinity' (which) can be either consecrated or accursed. The meaning of the word in the other NT passages moves definitely in the direction of the latter (as in the Lxx uses in Nu 21:3, Dt 7:26, Josh 6:17, Josh 7:12, Jdg 1:17, Zech 14:11).

Some versions transliterate the Greek directly into English ("**anathema**" in KJV), while others like the **NAS, ESV, NKJV** render it as "**accursed**."

Note that Strong's distinguishes between **Anáthema** and **anáthēma** ([334](#)) which signifies a votive offering or an offering not involving sacrifice, something consecrated in the temple, a gift, an offering (Lk 21:5).

In addition to the use of anathema in 1Cor 16:22, it is used five other times in the NT...

Acts 23:14 They came to the chief priests and the elders and said, "We have bound ourselves under a **solemn (anathema)** oath (verb = anathematizo = to invoke consequences if what one says is not true) to taste nothing until we have killed Paul.

Comment: In this usage anathema means that the conspirators have bound themselves to the plot with a dreadful oath, so that if they failed to carry out their plans, the curse would fall upon them!

Ro 9:3- For I could wish that I myself were **accursed**, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

1Cor 12:3 Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is **accursed**"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

BDAG quoting Laud. Therap. who explains that: When the divinity (daimon = demon) has altered the one it has influenced, then it is altogether the divinity that speaks, for it has skillfully made the victim's mouth its own instrument;

Gal 1:8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be **accursed**.

Gal 1:9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a Gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be **accursed**.

Anathema is used 16 times in the non-apocryphal Septuagint (Lxx) - Lev 27:28 (anathema translates "devoted to destruction" = Hebrew words cherem = devoted thing and charam = devoted); Nu 21:3 (anathema translates "[Hormah](#)"); Dt 7:26 (anathema translates "ban" = cherem); Dt 13:15, 17; Dt 20:17; Josh 6:17, 18; Josh 7:1, Josh 7:11, 12, 13; Josh 22:20; Jdg 1:17 (anathema translates "[Hormah](#)"); 1Chr 2:7; Zech 14:11 (anathema translated "curse" = cherem). The majority of the **Lxx uses of anathema** translate the Hebrew word for "ban" (cherem).

Maranatha ([3134](#)) (**Maranatha**) is transliterated into English from two **Aramaic** words which are rendered either as "**Marana** and **tha**," which is translated as a prayer "*Our Lord, come*" (מְרַנָּא תָא) or alternatively as "**Maran** and **atha**" (מְרַן אָתָא) which is translated as a declarative statement "*Our Lord comes*" or "*Our Lord has come*."

Gromacki writes that

"Mar" means "Lord"; "an" is "our"; and "atha" is the verb "to come."

Jamieson writes that **Maranatha** was

A motto or watchword to urge them (**Ed**: The Church) to preparedness for the Lord's coming; as in Php 4:5, "The Lord is at hand."

Louw-Nida offers a balanced statement that

The expression "**Marana tha**" in 1Cor 16.22 is an Aramaic formula evidently associated with early Christian liturgy. It must have been widely used, since it occurs in 1 Cor 16.22 without explanation. ([Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament- Based on Semantic Domains- 1:138-139 - J. P. Louw, Eugene Albert Nida](#))

As to which is the correct translation of the Aramaic, there is not a clear consensus and the arguments favoring one or the other are much too detailed for this discussion. **Kuhn** writing on the linguistic intricacies concludes that...

Linguistic research thus offers three equally possible meanings of Maranatha: 1. The prayer "Lord, come" as a petition for the parousia; 2. the confession "our Lord has come" (into the world in lowliness); 3. the statement "our Lord is now present" (i.e., in worship, and especially the Lord's Supper)....

(Kuhn adds that) The untranslated Aramaic term (Maranatha) is meaningful only if it is a fixed formula well-known in the churches. Such a formula might well have arisen in a congregation which spoke only Aramaic, and attained there such special significance and so fixed a form that it remained in the original Aramaic when adopted in Greek

speaking congregations. This means that the origin of Maranatha can be sought only in the first Palestinian community, that it had an important place already in the worship of this community, and that as a fixed term, like the Hebrew "Amen" or "Hosanna," it was then adopted untranslated into the worship of the Greek speaking Christian world. (For detailed discussion see Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Volume 4, page 466-467 but even in his lengthy article on "*Maranatha*" Kuhn writes "*The term is undoubtedly Aramaic but it is hard to explain it linguistically.*")

Unger writes that **Maranatha**...

is thought to have been used as a watchword, common to all believers in the first age. Coupled here with an **anathema**, or **curse**, it is the Christian's reminder as he waits the advent of the judge to execute the anathema. ([The New Unger's Bible Dictionary- Merrill F. F. Unger, Merrill F. Unger, R.K. Harrison, Howard F. Vos, R. K. Harrison, Cyril J. Barber](#))

Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary writes that **Maranatha** is...

an Aramaic expression written by the apostle Paul as he concluded his first letter to the Corinthians (1Cor 16:22KJV). The meaning seems to be, "*Our Lord is coming soon, and he will judge all those who do not love Him.*" The fact that Paul used an Aramaic expression in addressing the Gentile Christians of Corinth indicates that "maranatha" had become a familiar expression of Christian hope—a watchword of the imminent Second Coming of the Lord. ([Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary- Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., Harrison, R. K., & Thomas Nelson Publishers](#))

James A Kelhoffer writes that **Maranatha** is...

A transliterated Aramaic expression (1Cor. 16:22; Didache 10:6), probably meaning "Our Lord, come!" (Aram. māranā ta) but possibly "our Lord has come" (māran ata), depending on how one construes the original Aramaic's spelling and dialect. The contexts of both passages and its Greek translation ("*Erchou kurie Iesou*" = "Come, Lord Jesus") at Rev 22:20-[note](#) suggest the former. Paul ends his correspondence with a curse and this prayer followed by a blessing (1Cor 16:22–24). Didache 10:6, which discusses the Eucharist ("If anyone is holy, let him come. If he is not, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen."), points to a liturgical use of the term. The author of Revelation records the promise of Jesus' return and prays, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20-[note](#)). ([Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible- David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, Astrid B. Beck](#))

Vine has a lengthy note explaining that...

The first part (*Maran*), ending in 'n,' signifies "*Lord*"; as to the second part, the Fathers regarded it as a **past tense**, "has come." Modern expositors take it as equivalent to a **present**, "cometh," or **future**, "will come." Certain Aramaic scholars regard the last part as consisting of *tha*, and regard the phrase as an ejaculation, "Our Lord, come," or "O Lord, come." The character of the context, however, indicates that the apostle is

making a statement rather than expressing a desire or uttering a prayer.

As to the reason why it was used, most probably it was a current sudden utterance among early Christians, as embodying the consummation of their desires.

“At first the title *Marana* or *Maran*, used in speaking to and of Christ was no more than the respectful designation of the Teacher on the part of the disciples.” After His resurrection they used the title of or to Him as applied to God, “but it must here be remembered that the Aramaic-speaking Jews did not, save exceptionally, designate God as ‘Lord’; so that in the ‘Hebraist’ section of the Jewish Christians the expression ‘our Lord’ (Marana) was used in reference to Christ only” (Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*). ([Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#)). ([Free online Version](#)).

Simon Kistemaker commenting on **Maranatha** writes that...

The use of an Aramaic word in the Greek community of Corinth is intriguing but not unusual. The writers of the New Testament were not averse to Aramaic terms. The Christians adopted a Jewish vocabulary that included the words **Abba** (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6), **Amen** (1Cor 14:16; 16:24; 2Cor. 1:20), **Halleluiah** (Rev. 19:1, 3, 4, 6), **Hosanna** (Matt. 21:9, 15; Mark 11:9–10; John 12:13), and **Maranatha**....Paul adds the word **Maranatha** to a curse formula. This means that he implores the Lord to come as Judge to mete out punishment. He prays that the Lord will come quickly and remove those people who do not love him. ([New Testament Commentary- Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians - Simon Kistemaker](#))

KJV Study Bible writes that **Maranatha**...

expresses one of two possible ideas. It may be taken in the sense of “our Lord is come,” signifying the Incarnation. Or it may mean “our Lord cometh,” signifying the Second Coming. The latter seems to be in view here. It is much like John’s concluding remarks in Revelation: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20-[note](#)). ([King James Study Bible](#))

Henry Alford writes that Paul used **Maranatha**...

as a weighty watchword tending to recall to them the nearness of His coming, and the duty of being found ready for it

Maranatha is mentioned in the [Didache](#) as a prayer spoken at the close of a time of communion (Lord's Supper)...

Let grace come and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If anyone is holy, let him come. If anyone is not, let them repent. O Lord, Come (Maranatha). Amen.

Kuhn comments: It is obvious that **Maranatha** is here ([Didache 10:6](#)) to be construed as a confirmation or basis of the warning to repent. This would fit in well with the interpretation: “Our Lord is present.” As a threat it is then a reference to the

presence of the risen Lord at the Lord's Supper. This presence will not tolerate the unholy (cf. the same thought in 1Cor 11:27-30). It is easy enough to see in the term a similar threat in 1Cor 16:22, for the context is much the same: "He who does not love the Lord, let him be cursed, **Maranatha** ." Thus, if we take it to mean "the Lord is present," Paul is saying: "You know that in the congregation we confess the presence of the risen Lord with the cry **Maranatha** , and His presence, expressed in this cry, excludes from membership those who do not love Him."

If we adopt the other linguistic interpretation and see in **Maranatha** the prayer "**Lord, come,**" we cannot link it so directly with the context of 1Cor 16:22 or [Didache 10:6](#). Nevertheless, this view finds strong support in Rev 22:20-[note](#), where the promise of Jesus: "I come quickly," evokes the response of the community: "Amen, yes, come, Lord Jesus." Here again the basis is probably ancient liturgical usage in the worship of the primitive community. The "erchou kurie Iesou" seems to be a translation of **Maranatha** , "**Lord, come.**" In Didache, 10:6 this "Lord, come" would then be a cry at the Lord's Supper, and by quoting it in 1Cor 16:22 Paul would be impressing on the Corinthian congregation once again in short and pregnant form the decisive content of the Christian expectation of faith. Either way it seems that **Maranatha** is connected with celebration of the Lord's Supper. This is the original setting of the cry of the community. For on the one side an essential element in the Lord's Supper is the certainty of the personal presence of the Lord of the community. On the other, yearning expectation of the parousia is linked with the Lord's Supper.

The third possibility, namely, "our Lord has come," stands in no meaningful relation either to the context of 1 C. 16:22 and Did., 10, 6 or to original liturgical usage, and it is thus to be discarded.

Maranatha, then, is either the confession of the exalted Christ present in the community, especially at the Lord's Supper ("our Lord is present"), or it is the cry of the waiting and longing community for His coming again in glory—a cry which is made to the Lord of the community with particular force and fervor at the Lord's Supper ("Lord, come"). (Ibid)

Comment: Paul explains we are to frequently partake of the Lord's Supper because "26 as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." (1Cor 11:26) Notice how the "Lord's death" looks backward to His first coming and His Crucifixion and the phrase "until He comes" looks forward to His Second Coming. This is interesting when one considers the two meanings of Maranatha as "Our Lord has Come" (past) and "O Lord, Come!" (future).

R. Nicole adds: Most scholars....prefer the meaning "Our Lord, come!" in view of the parallel expression, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:20-[note](#)). This rendering too is fitting to the Lord's Supper, at which time Jesus' death is proclaimed "until He comes" (1Cor. 11:26). ([The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible- Revised Full-Color Edition- Merrill C. Tenney, Moises Silva 2009](#))

W E Vine documents a second mention of **Maranatha** in the non-Biblical religious writing known as

the "Apostolic Constitutions" (vii. 26), where it is used as follows: "Gather us all together into Thy Kingdom which Thou hast prepared. Maranatha, Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that cometh, etc." ([Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#)).

Elwell Comments:

The fact that Maranatha occurs immediately after Paul's imprecatory curse (1Cor 16:22) has led many to the view that the Aramaic expression is part of the curse itself. The KJV rendering ("*let him be Anathema Maran-atha*") leaves the impression that the two words are a unit, whereas **anathema** is a Greek word meaning "curse" and probably ends the sentence. It is nevertheless quite possible, some modern scholars believe, to relate **Maranatha** very closely to the curse, since the prayer for Jesus to come in judgment reinforces the solemnity and reality of Paul's imprecation. Interestingly, a church council in the seventh century anathematizes dissidents with the words "anathema Maranatha, let him be condemned at the Lord's coming." ([Tyndale Bible Dictionary - Philip W. Comfort, Walter A. Elwell](#))

Robertson and Plummer write

Why St. Paul gives this warning (1Cor 16:22) in Aramaic rather than Greek writing to Corinth is unknown. The most probable conjecture is that in this language it had become a sort of motto or password among Christians, and familiar in that shape, like 'Alleluia' with ourselves".

Leon Morris comments that **Maranatha**

being Aramaic...**cannot have originated among the Greeks, but must go back to the early days of the church in Palestine. Moreover it must have expressed a sentiment that the early church regarded as very important, else the foreign word would never have been taken over in this way by Greek-speaking Christians** (we still use words like **Hallelujah** and **Amen**)....Probably the best way of taking it is to divide the expression as **Marana tha** and take the verb as imperative, '**Our Lord, come**' (a prayer like that in Rev. 22:20-[note](#); 'Come, Lord Jesus'). It would then express the eager longing felt by the church in those early days for the speedy return of the Lord. ([1 Corinthians \(Tyndale New Testament Commentaries - Leon L. Morris\)](#))

Leon Morris also wrote that the term "Maranatha" consists of three Aramaic words: "Mar" ("Lord"), "ana" ("our"), and "the" ("come"); thus, the entire term meant "our Lord, come." In light of this meaning, Charles J. Ellicott declared that "Maranatha" was "practically equivalent to" the expression "The Lord is at hand" in Philippians 4:5-note.

R B Hughes writes that...

The plea, “Maranatha” (1Cor 16:22), was taken from the Aramaic language and meant “O Lord come!” That cry placed the focus on the time when the dark mirror would disappear (1Cor 13:12) in face-to-face communion with the Lord, and the perishable body would be changed into immortality (1Cor 15:52). ([First Corinthians- Everyman's Bible Commentary Robert B. Hughes](#))

Maranatha as a prayer parallels John's prayer at the end of the Revelation...

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. **Come, Lord Jesus.** (Rev 22:20-[note](#))

Tony Garland comments: Unlike the Adam and Eve who hid in shame, the redeemed long for God to come looking for them: "The first word we hear man address to the Lord in the Bible is the solemn word “I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid” (Gen. 3:10). The last word addressed to the Lord by redeemed man is “even so, Come, Lord Jesus.” And between these two utterances in Genesis and Revelation is the story of redemption." (Quoting Gaebelin)

Some describe **Maranatha** as an exclamation of the approaching divine judgment when the Lord returns. 1Co16:22 (cf. Jude 1:14, 15).

**Lo! He comes, with clouds descending,
Once for favored sinners slain;
Thousand thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumphs of His train;
Hallelujah!
God appears on earth to reign.**

Henry Morris

Anathema Maranatha. This unique expression seems to mean "Accursed--the Lord is coming!" This is a final reminder from Paul that there are just two classes of people--those who love the Lord Jesus (because He first loved them) and those who do not. The latter are destined for destruction (2Th 1:7-9), and this message is especially urgent in view of the imminent coming of the Lord. ([KJV New Defenders Study Bible](#))

Apologetic Study Bible comments that 1Cor 16:21-24...

At the letter's end, Paul took the pen from his amanuensis (scribe), concluding the letter with these four sentences written in his own hand. Among these is the original Aramaic prayer Maran atha (“Come back, Lord”). This likely preserves the very words of the Jerusalem church's invocation to the risen and ascended Jesus. This Aramaic prayer indicates a very early tradition known to Gentile Christians, which strongly supports an early belief of Jesus' sharing God's identity. ([Apologetics Study Bible](#))

Wayne A Detzler

When Paul concluded his first Corinthian letter he mentioned another curse. Anyone who

does not love the Lord is accursed (1Cor16:22). This curse is reinforced by the use of "Maranatha" (Our Lord come). The apparent meaning is that the return of the Lord will reveal the curse which rests on those who do not love Him.

Not only are all accursed who do not love the Lord, but those who preach a false gospel are under a special curse. Paul aimed part of his Galatian letter at counterfeiters of the Christian message. Anyone who does not preach the same Gospel as Paul is accursed (Gal. 1:8-9). In this day of wildly divergent theologies, it is good to remember how important Gospel purity is. ([New Testament words in today's language- Wayne A Detzler](#))

Tony Evans...

We don't know when Christ is coming back, but the "answering machine" of Scripture assures us His return is certain. So in keeping with the imminent expectations of the saints of all ages, our cry should be "Maranatha" or "The Lord cometh."

Spurgeon in his book "Perfect Praise" writes...

Christ is unspeakable in His glory. When we think of His resurrection, of His ascending to heaven, and of His glory at the right hand of God, words languish on our lips. However, in every one of these positions, He is the gift of God to us. When He comes with all the glory of the Father, He will still be to His people the *Theo Dora*, the gift of God, the great unspeakable benediction to the sons of men. **I wish that the people of Christ had this aspect of the Lord's glory more consciously on their hearts, for though He seems to tarry, yet will He come again the second time, as He promised.**

With that blessed hope before us,
Let no harp remain unstrung;
Let the mighty Advent chorus
Onward roll on every tongue.
Maranatha, Come, Lord Jesus,
Quickly come!"

Peter O'Brien addresses Paul's exhortation for the saints to be "keeping alert" in prayer in Col 4:2 writing...

Accordingly (in order to facilitate staying alert) the prayer they (the saints at Colossae) are to persist in is for **the coming of God's kingdom**. The petition "**Maranatha**" ("Our Lord, come," 1Cor 16:22; cf. Rev 22:20-[note](#)) is to be on their lips and in their hearts (cf Mt 12:34, Lk 6:45, Pr 16:23) as they look forward in anticipation to Christ's glorious manifestation (Col 3:4) ([Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 44, Colossians-Philemon-Peter T. O'Brien](#))

The renowned blind hymn writer [Fanny Crosby](#) wrote...

Take the world but give me Jesus--
In His cross my trust shall be;
Till, with clearer, brighter **vision**,
Face to face my Lord **I see!**

**Enjoy life, but anticipate heaven
by living with a "Maranatha Mindset!"**

Timothy Cross...

When we pray **Thy kingdom come** (Mt 6:10), we are praying a prayer which has both a present and a future facet to it. God's kingdom is yet to come fully—but fully come it surely will. The goal of history is the kingdom of God. God's kingdom will be gloriously consummated when the King comes to earth in power and great glory, i.e. at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the Second Coming of Christ, all that is incompatible with God's kingdom will be eradicated, and His rule of perfect righteousness and peace will be established for ever.... Thy kingdom come will be fully answered by God in a way more glorious than we can ever imagine. The kingdom of God is the pinnacle of blessing and so we pray Thy kingdom come with heightened anticipation. It is for God's glorious kingdom that we wait. It is for God's glorious kingdom that we eagerly and earnestly desire. It is for God's glorious kingdom that we pray. Our prayers will be answered. God's kingdom will surely come in God's good time....

One of the earliest prayers of the Christian church was **Maranatha. Our Lord come!** (1Corinthians 16:22). The last prayer is but one verse (which is) the earnest plea **Come, Lord Jesus!** (Revelation 22:20-[note](#)). Christians therefore will continue to pray to God **Thy kingdom come**—that He would further the rule of the Gospel of grace in this world, and that He would hasten the coming kingdom of King Jesus in all its glory, to the praise and honour of His glorious Name. Thy kingdom come. ([How to Pray- Lessons from the Lord's Prayer- Timothy Cross](#))

M R De Haan

Maranatha means "our Lord Cometh." This is an admonition not only to the sinner, but especially to the people of God to remind them that the coming of the Lord is drawing nigh, when we shall all have to give an account and stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ([Studies in First Corinthians M. R. De Haan](#))

Hughes commenting on 2Ti 4:8...

Christians are people who love Jesus Christ. And because they love him, they long for his appearing. Their true country is Heaven, and they characteristically look forward to "the blessed hope" of Christ's return (cf. Titus 2:13-note). They pray Maranatha!—"Come, O Lord!" (1 Corinthians 16:22; cf. Revelation 22:20-[note](#)). Do you love his appearing? That is the question the text literally suggests. Do you? Do you truly? If so, "the crown of righteousness" is reserved for you on that day. ([1-2 Timothy and Titus- To Guard the Deposit - Preaching the Word- Bryan Chapell, R. Kent Hughes](#))

John explains that **daily looking** for Christ's appearing will affect **daily living**, writing...

See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. **Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself** (motivated by love not fear...perfect love casts out all fear...perfect love would connote "perfect" as far as humanly possible, obedience.) just as He is pure." (1John 3:1-note, 1John 3:2-note, 1John 3:3-note)

**I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In Him my Star, my Sun;
And in that Light of life I'll walk
Till traveling days are done.**

--Horatius Bonar, 1846

Jesus' promise in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible should be words believers frequently ponder (**Suggestion: Recall this verse to mind every morning when you present yourself to Him as a living and holy sacrifice** - Ro 12:1-note) so that motivated by this truth we would continually, expectantly **look** for Him and continually **live** for Him (1Cor 6:20)...

Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. (Revelation 22:12-note)

J. C. Ryle correctly concludes that the...

Uncertainty about the date of the Lord's return is calculated to keep believers in an attitude of constant expectation and to preserve them from despondency.

Spurgeon adds that...

The fact that Jesus Christ is to come again is not a reason for staring, but for working in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Even an ancient sage such as **Augustine** understood the motivating power of looking for Jesus' return writing...

He who loves the coming of the Lord is not he who affirms it is far off, nor is it he who says it is near. It is he who, whether it be far or near,

awaits it with sincere faith, stead-fast hope and fervent love.

Reuben A. Torrey wrote that...

The **imminent** return of our Lord is the great Bible argument for a pure, unselfish, devoted, unworldly, active life of service.

John Blanchard has several pithy comments on the Second Coming...

It is a bad sign when people start discussing eschatology instead of preparing for the coming of Christ...When Christ returns, the second advent will no longer be a subject for discussion....The certainty of the Second Coming of Christ should touch and tincture every part of our daily behavior....Many people will be surprised when Jesus comes again—but nobody will be mistaken. ([highly recommended resource useful in teaching and preaching - the best of its kind I have encountered - The Complete Gathered Gold A Treasury of Quotations for Christians by John Blanchard or Wordsearch Computer Version](#))

C S Lewis in a discussion of the Second Coming said...

If this is not an integral part of the faith once given to the saints, I do not know what is.

As Puritan **William Gurnall** phrased it...

Christ hath told us He will come, but not when, that we might never put off our clothes, or put out the candle.

Billy Graham was correct when he said...

The subject of the second coming of Christ has never been popular to any but the true believer.

Hudson Taylor put it this way...

Since he may come any day, it is well to be ready every day.

**The watchers on the mountain
Proclaim the Bridegroom near,
Go, meet Him as He comes,
With Hallelujahs clear!**

**The marriage feast is waiting,
The gates wide open stand
Up, up! ye heirs of glory,
The Bridegroom is at hand!"**

**ILLUSTRATIONS RELATED
TO MARANATHA**

What's Ahead? - American theologian Carl Henry gave a thought-provoking lecture with these three major points:

1. The barbarians have come. Evil forces have entered the gates and are tearing down the values Christians embrace as true and good. Many thoughtful people believe that we are witnessing the moral collapse of Western civilization, and they are afraid.

2. Jesus is coming. Christians have lived for 20 centuries with the hope that they will witness the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. The darker the night, the brighter shines that hope. The barbarians may have won a battle, but they will not win the war.

3. The church doesn't know whether it is coming or going. Many of those who claim to know God deny Him by their words and actions. A great number of Christians believe that the hands on the clock of history are nearing the midnight hour, but they don't know just how close. Whether our Lord comes today or in a thousand years, Christians must say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present evil age (Titus 2:12).

Let's get our eyes off the barbarians, keep looking for the coming of our Lord, and live for Him today.

Faithful and true would He find us here
If He should come today?
Watching in gladness and not in fear,
If He should come today?

—**Morris**

**What we believe about the world (One) to come
shapes how we live in the world today.**

><>><>><>

Looking for the return of our Lord Jesus brings great joy and hope to our hearts. It also leads to a numbering of our days to that we might present to Him a heart of wisdom as illustrated by the following story:

A tourist who visited an exquisite garden on a lovely estate in Italy spoke to the caretaker:

“How long have you been here?” he asked.

“Twenty-five years.”

“And how often has the owner been to see the estate?”

“Four times.”

“When did he come last?”

“Twelve years ago.”

“Who comes then to look after things?”

“I am left pretty much alone.”

“Yet you keep the garden so spic-and-span that one would think you were expecting the owner tomorrow.”

“Today, sir, today! replied the caretaker. ” **Perhaps today!**”

><>><>><>

Our Only Hope - An unknown author wrote, “When I was first converted, and for some years afterward, the second coming of Christ was a thrilling idea, a blessed hope, a glorious promise, the theme of some of the most inspiring songs of the church. Later it became an accepted tenet of faith, a cardinal doctrine, a kind of invisible trademark of my ministry. It was the favorite arena of my theological discussions, in the pulpit and in print. Now suddenly the second coming means something more to me. Paul called it ‘the blessed hope.’ But today it appears as the only hope of the world.

From the human standpoint, there is no solution for the problems of the world. Leaders seem to be completely frustrated in trying to deal with the unrest and increasing violence in society. The only complete and permanent solution is found in the return of Christ. When He comes, He will set up His kingdom. He will rule the nations in righteousness, and “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14).

As we await our Savior’s return, let us keep on praying, working, and watching, while “looking for the blessed hope”—our only hope for this world.— by Richard De Haan

And for the hope of His return,
Dear Lord, Your name we praise;
With longing hearts we watch and wait
For that great day of days!
—Sherwood

**As this world grows darker,
the promised return of the Son grows brighter.**

The King is Coming!

by Ira Sankey

Rejoice! Rejoice! our King is coming!
And the time will not be long,
Until we hail the radiant dawning,
And lift up the glad new song.

Refrain

Oh, wondrous day! oh, glorious morning,

*When the Son of Man shall come!
May we with lamps all trimmed and burning
Gladly welcome His return!
Rejoice! Rejoice! our King is coming!
And the time will not be long,
Until we hail the radiant dawning,
And lift up the glad new song.*

With joy we wait our King's returning
From His heavenly mansions fair;
And with ten thousand saints appearing
We shall meet Him in the air.

Refrain

Oh, may we never weary, watching,
Never lay our armor down
Until He come, and with rejoicing
Give to each the promised crown.

Refrain

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Waiting - Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Php 3:20) In the 1940s, Samuel Beckett wrote a play called *Waiting for Godot* which is now regarded as a classic. Two men stand on an empty stage, hands in their pockets, staring at each other. All they do is stand and stare. There is no action, no plot, they just stand there waiting for Godot to come. But who is Godot? Is he a person? Does he represent God? Christian ethicist Lewis Smedes suggests, Godot "stands for the pipe dreams that a lot of people hang on to as an escape." As the play ends, those men are still standing on the stage doing nothing, just waiting. When the 50th anniversary of that play was celebrated, someone asked Beckett, "Now will you tell us who Godot is?" He answered, "How should I know?"

Waiting for Godot is a parable of many people's lives--empty and meaningless, a pointless matter of waiting. And if there's no God of love, grace, and wisdom, then life really is a hopeless waiting for empty time to pass.

How totally different, though, is Christian hope! We're waiting and "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13-note). That hope sustains us--a hope that beyond this world lies a life of indescribable blessing. —
Vernon C Grounds

We're waiting for You, Lord, to come
And take us home to be with You;
Your promise to return for us
Gives hope because we know it's true.

-Sper

**The greatest joy on earth is
to the sure hope of heaven**

><>><>><>

Is Your Vision Hampered by the Fog? - In 1950 Florence Chadwick crossed the English Channel in world record time and then in 1951 crossed the Channel again swimming in the other direction to become the first woman accomplish this feat. In 1952, Florence Chadwick attempted to swim the 26 miles between Catalina Island and California, but after 15 hours a thick fog set in causing Florence began to doubt her ability to finish her course. After telling her mother she didn't think she could make it, she swam for an hour and still unable to see the coastline due to the fog, stopped swimming. It wasn't until she got onto that boat that she discovered that the shore was less than half a mile away. At the news conference the next day, this is what she said:

'All I could see was the fog, I think if I could have seen the shore I would have made it'.

Two months later, Chadwick tried again, but this time when the thick fog set in, but she kept swimming because she kept a mental image of the shoreline in her mind while she swam. Beloved even through there may be a dense fog in our life for a variety of reasons, making it difficult to may God's Spirit grant us the power to continually fix our eyes on Jesus, redeeming every moment of this new year, by living with a "**Maranatha Mindset!**"

><>><>><>

Are You Looking Up? - Are you so eager for Christ's return that you hope it will take place today? I wouldn't be honest if I answered an unqualified yes to this question. You see, I'm enjoying life right now. I love what I'm doing. My wife and I are having fun watching our grandsons grow toward manhood. There are still people and places we would like to visit during our retirement years.

Does this mean that I'm not "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing" of Jesus Christ? (Titus 2:13-note). No, it doesn't. I believe that His return is indeed "the blessed hope." Earthly pleasures are only temporary and cannot compare with the joys of heaven. Besides, I am troubled by the sin, sorrow, and suffering all around me.

All Christians are thankful for Jesus' promise, "I will come again and receive you to Myself" (Jn. 14:3). But our own circumstances affect how eagerly we anticipate His return. Whether life for us today is a joy or a struggle, we are to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly" (Titus 2:12-note).

God wants us to enjoy life. But He also wants us to live each day as if it may be the one in which He will return. Are you looking up? — Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Take the world but give me Jesus--

In His cross my trust shall be;
Till, with clearer, brighter vision,
Face to face my Lord I see.

-Fanny Crosby

Enjoy life, but anticipate heaven

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Today in the Word - Biblical prophecy provides some of the greatest encouragement and hope available to us today. Just as the Old Testament is saturated with prophecies concerning Christ's first advent, so both testaments are filled with references to the Second Coming of Christ. One scholar has estimated that there are 1,845 references to Christ's Second Coming in the Old Testament, where 17 books give it prominence. In the 260 chapters of the New Testament, there are 318 references to the second advent of Christ—an amazing 1 out of every 30 verses. Twenty-three of the 27 New Testament books refer to this great event. For every prophecy in the Bible concerning Christ's first advent, there are 8 which look forward to His second!

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It's Late! - A young boy was playing in his grandmother's house near a large grandfather clock. Noontime was approaching, and when both hands of the old timepiece reached 12, the chimes began to ring.

As he always liked to do, the boy counted each gong as it sounded. This time, however, something went wrong with the clock's inner mechanism. Instead of stopping at 12, it kept right on chiming--13, 14, 15, 16 times.

The boy couldn't believe his ears! He jumped to his feet and ran into the kitchen, shouting, "Grandma! Grandma! It's later than it's ever been before!" In his excitement, the youngster expressed a truth we all would do well to consider.

It is later than it's ever been before--in the history of the world, in the days allotted to man, and on God's calendar of events. With each passing hour, the words of James 5:8 take on added significance: "**The coming of the Lord is at hand.**"

This fact is both comforting and sobering. It is reassuring to know that the day our Savior will come for us may be near. But at the same time, we must honestly ask ourselves, "Am I living in a way that will bring His commendation?" Think about it!

Remember, "It's later than it's ever been before!" — Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

May I live so that I will be ready
With joy my Savior to meet,
And feel no alarm at His coming
But hasten His heralds to greet.

-Anonymous

**Be ready for the last moment
by being ready at every moment.**

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The Hope of the Coming of the Lord

By Daniel Whittle

A lamp in the night, a song in time of sorrow;
A great glad hope which faith can ever borrow
To gild the passing day, with the glory of the morrow,
Is the hope of the coming of the Lord.

Refrain

*Blessèd hope, blessèd hope,
Blessèd hope of the coming of the Lord;
How the aching heart it cheers,
How it glistens through our tears,
Blessèd hope of the coming of the Lord.*

A star in the sky, a beacon bright to guide us;
An anchor sure to hold when storms betide us;
A refuge for the soul, where in quiet we may hide us,
Is the hope of the coming of the Lord.

Refrain

A call of command, like trumpet clearly sounding,
To make us bold when evil is surrounding;
To stir the sluggish heart and to keep in good abounding,
Is the hope of the coming of the Lord.

Refrain

A word from the One to all our hearts the dearest,
A parting word to make Him aye the nearest;
Of all His precious words, the sweetest, brightest, clearest,
Is the hope of the coming of the Lord.

Refrain

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Donald Campbell told the story of

Two men left the factory where they worked and approached a car belonging to one of them. 'What does that mean?' asked one man, pointing to a bumper sticker that read,

"**Maranatha!**" The owner of the car, a Christian, replied, "It means '**The Lord is coming!**'" "I don't believe that!" his companion snapped. "Well," said the Christian, "I've got news for you. He's not coming for you!" That blunt reply awakened the man to a sense of responsibility and concern regarding the future and his preparation for it. ([Daniel- God's Man in a Secular Society- Donald K. Campbell-Excellent Commentary!](#))

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After World War II there was a sign on the shore of New York harbor facing all incoming troop ships, which read:

**WELCOME HOME.
WELL DONE.**

When the Lord Jesus Christ appears in the air, He is going to "WELCOME HOME" every saint, for at that time He shall come to take us home to heaven. Our entrance into heaven is solely on the basis of our faith in His shed blood and death on the cross, and every believer shall receive the same "WELCOME HOME." But, how many of us will receive His "WELL DONE," and the "crown of righteousness"? (2Ti 4:8-note, Mt 25:21, 23, Lk 19:17)

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THE EARLY EDITION - THERE was a show I used to watch a couple of years ago called Early Edition. The host of the show would get the next day's newspaper, read it, and then do a show about the upcoming news. He'd read a newspaper about the morrow and related it to his viewers today. Because he had tomorrow's newspaper today, he had information nobody else did. Most of our coworkers don't have the information. Most of our neighbors don't have the information. But as Christians, we've got an Early Edition. God has given us the Early Edition. We can function today in light of what we know about God's plan for the future. ([Tony Evans' Book of Illustrations](#))

O Son of God, We Wait for Thee

Philipp Hiller (1699-1769)

O Son of God, we wait for Thee,
In love for Thine appearing;
We know Thou sittest on the throne,
And we Thy Name are bearing,
Who trusts in Thee, may joyful be,
And see Thee, Lord, descending,
To bring us bliss unending.

We wait for Thee 'mid toil and pain,
In weariness and sighing;
But glad that Thou our guilt hast borne,
And canceled it by dying;

Hence cheerfully may we with Thee
Take up our cross and bear it,
Till we relief inherit.

We wait for Thee; sure Thou wilt come;
The time is swiftly nearing;
In this we also now rejoice,
And long for Thine appearing.
Oh, bliss 'twill be when Thee we see,
Homeward Thy people bringing,
With transport and with singing!

There are several Aramaic words and phrases in the NT, such as **Talitha koum** (Mark 5:41), **Ephphatha** (7:34), **Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani** (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34), **Maranatha** (1 Cor 16:22 footnote), **Abba** (Mark 14:36; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6), and many other words and names. It has been generally assumed as proven that Aramaic was the colloquial language of Palestine from the time of the return of the exiles from Babylon. But some believe that Hebrew was spoken in Galilee in NT times. It is probably safe to assert that our Lord habitually spoke Aramaic and occasionally Greek and could read and speak Hebrew.

J C Ryle comments on "**Do you love Me?**" (Jn 21:16)...

Hear what Paul says to the Corinthians "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" (1 Cor. 16:22). Paul allows no way of escape to the man who does not love Christ. He leaves him no loophole or excuse. A man may lack clear head-knowledge, and yet be saved. He may fail in courage, and be overcome by the fear of man, like Peter. He may fall tremendously, like David, and yet rise again. But if a man does not love Christ, he is not in the way of life. The curse is yet upon him. He is on the broad road that leads to destruction.

John MacDuff

GOD'S CLOSING CALL - "Now is the time of God's favor; behold! now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6:2

Reader! How does it stand with you? Is the question of your soul's salvation finally and forever settled? Are you at peace with God? Can you say with Paul, in the prospect of death, "I am now ready?" Have you been led to feel the infinite peril of postponement and procrastination, and responded to the appeal- "Behold, Now!" Ah, how many have found, when the imagined hour of deathbed preparation had come, that the tear of penitence was too late to be shed, and the prayer of mercy too late to be uttered! Let there be plain dealing between your conscience and your God. Seek not to escape from the pressing urgency of the question. You may dismiss it now, but there is a day coming when you dare not! Let it not merge in vague generalities- let it be realized as matter of

personal concern; of infinite importance to yourself- "Am I saved, or am I not saved? Am I prepared, or am I unprepared, to meet my God?"

You may have, perhaps, an honest purpose of giving it some future deliberation at another and "more convenient season." Do we ever read of Felix's "more convenient season?" It were better not to risk the experiment of a dying hour for the solution of the problem- "Is it safe today?" Take it on trust, that it is a difficult matter- a conference about the soul on the brink of eternity! Remember, God's Spirit "will not always strive." All His other attributes are infinite, but His patience and forbearance have their "bounds and limits."

The invitation which is yours today, may be withdrawn tomorrow. The axe may be even now laid at the root of the tree, and the sentence on the wing- "Cut it down!" How awful, if it really be, that you are yet living in this state of estrangement and guilt! What a surrender of present peace! What a forfeiture of eternal joy! Hurry! flee for your life, lest you be consumed! Your immortality is no trifle.

"The night is far spent." Who can tell how far? It may be now or never with you! You are about once more to lie down on your nightly pillow. What if your awaking tomorrow were to be "in outer darkness?" But, take courage, that night is not too far spent. Close this last of the "Night Watches," by fleeing, without delay, to Jesus- the Sinner's Savior and the Sinner's Friend. It was on the last watch of the night, He came of old to His tempest-tossed disciples. Like them, receive Him now into your soul; and have all your guilty fears calmed by His omnipotent "Peace, be still!"

Are there not ominous signs all around, as if the world's last and closing "night-watch" had set in? The billows are heaving high. We hear the footsteps on the waters. Amid the fitful moanings of the blast, the watchword is heard- of joy to some, of terror to others- **"Maranatha" - "The Lord is coming!"**

Reader! are you ready? Is the joyous response on your tongue- "Come, Lord Jesus; Come quickly"? If this night were indeed your very last, and the thunders of judgment were to break upon you before daybreak; would you be able, in the assurance of an eternal dawn, to say- "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." Psalm 4:8

R. C. H. Lenski stated, "The simple fact is that Paul did not know when Christ would return. He was in the exact position in which we are. All that he knew, and all that we

know, is that Christ may come at any time.”

William Barclay explained the significance of Paul’s using this Aramaic term in a letter to the Greek church: It is strange to meet with an Aramaic phrase in a Greek letter to a Greek Church. The explanation is that that phrase had become a watchword and a password. It summed up the vital hope of the early Church, and Christians whispered it to each other, identified each other by it, in a language which the heathen could not understand.

Wikipedia - Maranatha (either מְרַנָּא תְּא: maranâthâ' or מָרַן אֲתָא: maran 'athâ') is an Aramaic word occurring twice in the New Testament (see Aramaic of Jesus) and also in the Didache which is part of the Apostolic Fathers' collection. It is transliterated into Greek letters rather than translated, and is found at the end of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor 16:22) . The NRSV translates it as: "Our Lord, come!" but notes that it could also be translated as: "Our Lord has come"; the NIV translates: "Come, O Lord"; the NAB notes: "As understood here ("O Lord, come!"), it is a prayer for the early return of Christ. If the Aramaic words are divided differently (Maran atha, "Our Lord has come"), it becomes a credal declaration. The former interpretation is supported by what appears to be a Greek equivalent of this acclamation in Book of Revelation 22:20-[note](#) "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

THOUGHTS ON A "MARANATHA MINDSET": A Google search retrieves over 11 million hits for "Maranatha" (many associated with names of churches or ministries), so clearly this word is very popular. A brief informal survey of believers reveals the majority were uncertain of the meaning of Maranatha which prompted this post. Maranatha is used only once in the Bible by Paul who closes his first letter to the Corinthians with the surprisingly strong statement "If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed (anathema). **Maranatha.**" (1Cor 16:22-note). Similar to Hosanna, Hallelujah, and Amen which are transliterated Hebrew words, Maranatha is a transliterated Aramaic word, which has one of two meanings: "Our Lord has come" or "Our Lord, come!" Thomas **Constable** notes that "It is strange to meet with an **Aramaic** phrase in a **Greek** letter to a **Greek** Church. The explanation is that this phrase had become a watchword and a password. It summed up the vital hope of the early Church, and Christians whispered it to each other, identified each other by it, in a language which the heathen could not understand." In short, "Maranatha" became the early church's "Mindset!" The apostle John clearly had a "**Maranatha Mindset**" when he prayed "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" in response to Jesus' promise "Yes, I am coming quickly." (Rev 22:20-[note](#)) The majority of modern Bible versions and commentaries interpret **Maranatha** as a prayer beseeching the Lord Jesus Christ to return quickly/soon! Indeed, every time we pray "Thy Kingdom come" we are in a sense crying "Maranatha," asking for the return of the King of the Kingdom (Mt 6:10a-note, cf Rev 19:16-[note](#)).

Paul writes that those with a "**Maranatha Mindset**" have a sense of urgency and know "that it is already the hour for us to awaken from sleep (from spiritual slumber, apathy, backsliding!), for now salvation (Our Savior and our final redemption and glorification) is nearer to us than when we (first) believed. The night (spiritual darkness of this present world) is almost gone and the day (of His Return) is near (we are standing on the "edge of

eternity"! Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness (including attitudes and actions we think are "secret" but in fact are fully exposed to God, Pr 15:3-[note](#)) and put on the armor of light...put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh (thinking of ways to arouse, to indulge or) to gratify its desires!" (Ro 13:11-14-note) **Puritan William Gurnall** (author of the classic: The Christian in Complete Armor) wrote that "Christ hath told us He will come, but not when, that we might never put off our clothes, or put out the candle (Mt 24:42-[note](#), Mt 25:13-[note](#), Mk 13:35-37-[note](#))." "Since He may come any day, it is well to be ready every day." (Hudson Taylor) Amen!

The famous hymn writer Fanny Crosby although physically blind had a vibrant "Maranatha Mindset" which gave her "vision" and passion to pen words like "Take the world but give me Jesus--In His cross my trust shall be; Till, with clearer, brighter VISION, Face to face my Lord I SEE!" (1Co 13:12-[note](#)) **Maranatha!**

One scholar has noted that in the 260 chapters in the NT, there are 318 references to the Second Coming of Christ which means that about 1 of every 30 verses refers to the return of the Bridegroom (Mt 25:6-[note](#), Jn 3:29-[note](#), cf Rev 19:7-[note](#))! It is also notable that for every prophecy describing Jesus' First Coming, there are eight which look forward to His Second Coming! Surely the Spirit desires to stir up in the Bride (Christ's Body, the Church - Eph 1:22-23-note, 2Co 11:2-[note](#)) a "Maranatha Mindset" which causes us to long for our Beloved, much like Solomon's bride who cried out "**Hurry, my beloved!**" (Song 8:14-[note](#))! And so it is fitting that James encourages us to live with a "Maranatha Mindset" writing "You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." (Jas 5:8-[note](#)) **Augustine** said "He who loves the coming of the Lord is not he who affirms it is far off, nor is it he who says it is near. It is he who, whether it be far or near, awaits it with sincere faith, stead-fast hope and fervent love." Beloved, we can be ready for the last moment by being ready at every moment (Lk 21:36-[note](#))!

Illustration of a "Maranatha Mindset:" In 1950 Florence Chadwick crossed the English Channel in record time and the next year crossed in the other direction. In 1952 she attempted to swim the 26 miles from Catalina Island to California, but after 15 hours a thick fog set in causing her to begin to doubt her ability to complete her course. After telling her mother she didn't think she could make it, she swam for an hour and still unable to see the coastline due to the fog, stopped swimming. It wasn't until she got into the boat that she learned that the shore was less than half a mile away. At the news conference she said: 'All I could see was the fog. I think if I could have seen the shore I would have made it'. Two months later, she tried again, but this time when the thick fog set in, she continued to swim, because she focused on her goal, the shore. Beloved, we all experience "dense fog" from time to time for a variety of reasons, and it becomes difficult to fix our eyes on our goal (Php 3:14-note), Christ Jesus, the Author and Finisher of the race of faith (Heb 12:2-note). As this world grows darker, the promised return of the Son grows brighter. **Paul** who ministered with a Maranatha Mindset continually looking "not at the things seen, but the things unseen, remembering that the things seen are temporal, while the things unseen are eternal"(2Co 4:17-18-note, cf Col 3:1, 2-note), encouraged Timothy (and us) with his very last words (always important words): "I have fought the good fight. I have

finished the race. I have kept the faith. In the future 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 (~living with a Maranatha Mindset)." (2Ti 4:7-8-note) The great British expositor G Campbell Morgan modeled this mindset writing "I never begin my work in the morning without thinking that perhaps He may interrupt my work and begin His own. I am not looking for death, I am looking for Him." Little wonder that Morgan was so mightily used by God in His Kingdom work!

What we believe about the eternal world to come, shapes how we live in this temporal, passing world (cf Ec 1:2-3-note, Ec 12:13, 14-note). **C S Lewis** said that "If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world, were precisely those who thought most of the next (~Maranatha Mindset). It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this (world). Precisely because we cannot predict the moment, we must be ready at all moments." Yes, enjoy life, but anticipate heaven by living with a **Maranatha Mindset** continually "looking for the Blessed Hope (which is) the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13-note) If we are looking for Christ to return at any time, this "uplook outlook" will be a powerful incentive to spur us on to fight the good fight of faith (1Ti 6:12-note) necessary for godly living and bold proclamation of the Gospel (cf 2Cor 3:12-note, Ep 6:19-note). Am I living with a "**Maranatha Mindset**?" Do my day to day choices reflect the reality of my expectant attitude? "Expectant looking" is always a great "antidote" for "apathetic living." "The certainty of the Second Coming should touch and tincture every part of our daily behavior." (Blanchard) Indeed, "Uncertainty about the date of the Lord's return is calculated to keep believers in an attitude of constant expectation and to preserve them from despondency." (Ryle)

John Piper asks "Does your mind return frequently to the truth of Christ's appearing? When your mind turns to the truth of His appearing, does your heart want it—is there an eagerness to see Him? Do you pray for His coming? **Maranatha**, prayed the early church! Come, Lord Jesus!"

C H Spurgeon sums up this "**Maranatha Mindset**" declaring "Oh, that the Lord would come! He is coming! He is on the road and traveling quickly. (Rev 22:12-note) The sound of His approach should be as music to our hearts!"

May the cry of our hearts continually be "Hallelujah! Hosanna to God in the highest. Maranatha (Our Lord, come)! Amen."

Take a moment to sing "Maranatha" as your prayer...

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8Y_k077fdQ

For in depth study of Maranatha see

<http://www.preceptaustin.org/maranatha.htm>

See related post on "The Blessed Hope"

<http://preceptaustin.wordpress.com/2012/09/30/are-you-looking-for-the-blessed-hope/>