

# Proclaiming the Gospel

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;  
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" ([1 Cor. 1.18](#)).

Edifying the Body of Christ ([Eph. 4.10-16](#))

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The Wise Still Seek Him

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## "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!"

The Lord put before us to read the Book of Isaiah once again, read to hear a fresh word. As we read the Book of Isaiah and reflected on the prophecy about King Cyrus 150 years prior to his reign, we also reflected on the events in the books of Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah that included the reign of King Cyrus. The prophecies in Isaiah are such that one would cry out, "Come, Lord Jesus."

Let us look at the prophecies written for that time frame, knowing that these prophecies are very appropriate for our time. It is a time, as some are aware, that calls us to repentance and crying out, "Come, Lord Jesus." Some have been watching the signs of His coming for several decades now; and it brings us to reflecting upon the Advent season in the Christian year reminding us of the coming of the Lord Jesus so long ago as well as His soon coming return.

The word that we need to heed is "hold fast." Stand firm. Jesus said, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3.11). People, this is a way of life in Jesus Christ. Death is not the great equalizer. One cannot live for Satan, look like, and identify with the world thinking that when death comes "all will be well." As we see and experience such depravation, such sinfulness, how like the dark ages we are!

As we look forward to Advent, to the coming of the Lord Jesus, let us repent and prepare for His coming that we might be overcomers and receive the name of which the Lord Jesus speaks in Revelation 3.12. Three times in Revelation 22, we read the words of Jesus, "I come quickly."

How many of us pray, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus"? Do we really believe in Jesus Christ? Do we want to be with Jesus? Do we believe in a heaven and a hell?

I have long pondered the word from the Holy Bible in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter Three, verse 11, which speaks of the baptism of fire. Some would say there are three baptisms: water, Holy Ghost, and fire. Many years ago, I had reason to endeavor to hear the words Jesus spoke to His disciples, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the

Let us not grow weary in our journey as so much evil comes against us in our desiring to walk with the Lord. The enemy knows how to come against us in ways that seem benign, and we think to make this one detour will not affect us; or the enemy may be so subtle that we do not even recognize his tactics. But, then, when we do, we are discouraged and may find it challenging to repent and walk on with the Lord. No. No. No.

Perhaps a reading of the Book of Revelation, Chapters Two and Three, would be an encouragement to us to see what the "seven churches" went through and how the Lord spoke to them about repenting and walking on in His holiness, the holiness of the Lord God of Israel. Beautiful is Isaiah 35 as we walk on the Highway of Holiness to which the Lord Jesus calls us – praying, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

Mrs. Bettie L. Lowery, M.R.E., Deaconess

The Rev. Mrs. Dr. C. S. Cole, Pastor, Ret.

**Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ**

Come apart and rest ([Mark 6.31](#)).

baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able" (Mt 20.22, 23 and Mk 10.38, 39).

The disciples answer so casually, "We are able." But notice Jesus goes on in the next verse and says, "... Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with. . ." The disciples *seem* not to understand what He asked them – like so many today who read the Holy Bible with a surface reading. They, like the disciples, react within themselves believing they have arrived, answering "Oh, yes. No problem."

Even our Lord was pressed in Luke 12.50 as we see His humanity expressed knowing what was lying before Him, desiring to be faithful and, yet, knowing the agony of it all. How can we be so casual with answers concerning the Lord Jesus Christ?

It is a deep concern that many hiding behind a pulpit while standing on a pulpitum (stage) do not, I say, do not see what lies before this nation. You mention something, and they react with politics as an answer and their stance on a political party. Where, oh where are those who have eyes to behold the glory of the Lord and ears to hear the Word of the Lord and hearts to submit to the King of kings. Where are they whose eyes and hearts are stayed upon Jesus Christ, the only Begotten Son of God the Father of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel)?

How can we pray, "Come Quickly, Lord Jesus," if we are reacting when the Word of the Lord brings the plumbline of Jesus Christ before us – instead of responding to Him with, "I'll say, Yes, Lord"?

When the Lord Jesus said to the disciples, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with," was He not speaking of the baptism of fire, the baptism of fire that shall be in these days as we pray, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus" ? There will be a burning of the dross in our lives, a cleansing that shall come as we are called to pass through the waters as Isaiah writes in Chapter 43, verse two.

When thou passest through the waters, I *[will be]* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

All through history there have been those followers of the Lord Jesus Christ who have endured through the fire. Bishop Polycarp, St. Ignatius of Antioch, and many others come to mind. There are those in our time who have walked this way for the Lord Jesus Christ out of their deep and abiding love for Him Who died for them and rose victoriously over sin, hell, and the grave.

### St. Ignatius of Antioch

Born in Syria, Ignatius converted to Christianity and eventually became Bishop of Antioch. In the year A.D. 107, Emperor Trajan visited Antioch and forced the Christians there to choose between death and apostasy. Ignatius would not deny Christ and thus was condemned to be put to death in Rome.

Ignatius is well known for the seven letters he wrote on the long journey from Antioch to Rome. Five of these letters are to Churches in Asia Minor; they urge the Christians there to remain faithful to God and to obey their superiors. He warns them against heretical doctrines, providing them with the solid truths of the Christian faith.

*Saint of the Day*

As we pray, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus," will we hold fast, stand firm? Will we pass through the waters, through the rivers, knowing that the Lord is with us through it all, that He has gone before us in it all? When we walk through the fire, the Word says that we shall not be burned. Will we have the faith to go through it all for the Lord?

It is so easy to focus on our bodies rather than our souls. We need to be concerned about our souls and pray to be strong. Remember Matthew 10.28.

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Matthew and Luke record the words of John the Baptizer.

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *[with]* fire (Mat 3.11).

John answered, saying unto *[them]* all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Lk 3.16).

The Lord God Almighty of Israel is holy God, and He calls His people to be holy – even as He is. This comes through walking with the Lord daily that our hearts, our minds, our lives might be purified in the baptism of fire. The passage of scripture in the Book of Malachi 3.1-3 comes to mind.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *[is]* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit *[as]* a refiner and purifier of silver . . . .

A word of encouragement and exhortation: Let us not be fearful of the baptism of fire that purifies the true Christian who desires to go on with the Lord in these days that lie before us and as we pray, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus." The following passage of Scripture comes to mind when we think of St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Paul, and all who have gone before us giving their lives for Jesus Christ.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *[my]* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (II Tim 4.6-8).