

### Key statement:

Henceforth 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.* (2Tim4:8)

### Prayer:

Dear Father, work in us to have that same expectation of Apostle Paul- rejoicing in the righteousness which gives us peace and purpose. Thank you for making us a people of Hope, heirs with Christ and all that belongs to him. Stir our hearts with the truth of his great Return to this earth, to your glory,

Amen.

### Hymn: *by Caroline Noel*

1. At the name of Jesus ev'ry knee shall bow,  
ev'ry tongue confess him King of glory now;  
'tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord,  
who from the beginning was the mighty Word.
2. At his voice creation sprang at once to sight,  
all the angel faces, all the hosts of light,  
cherubim in heaven, stars upon their way,  
all the heav'nly orders in their great array.
3. Humbled for a season to receive a name  
from the lips of sinners unto whom he came,  
faithfully he bore it spotless to the last,  
brought it back victorious when from death he passed;
4. Bore it up triumphant with its human light,  
thro' all ranks of creatures to the central height,  
to the throne of Godhead, to the Father's breast,  
filled it with the glory of that perfect rest.
5. In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue  
all that is not holy, all that is not true;  
crown him as your captain in temptation's hour;  
let his will enfold you in its light and pow'r.
6. Christians, this Lord Jesus shall return again  
in his Father's glory, with his angel train;  
for all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,  
and our hearts confess him King of glory now.

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### Scriptures:

- 2 Timothy 4.1-8
- Matthew 25:1-13

### Message: Longing for Christ's Return – a lover's Hope

This is a strange message to the ears of Australians but it is a message, even a warning from the lips of Jesus Himself. Keep watch, he said because you do not know on what day your Lord will return<sup>i</sup>.

Some study to work out how and when Christ will appear but through all such study the believer has a heart longing for Christ's Return. Apostle Paul meant this when writing to Timothy, and sensing his soon departure spoke these words: *"Henceforth 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"*.

*'all who have loved his appearing'*. Other translations read; 'longed for his appearing', 'all who eagerly look forward to his appearing', and 'all who crave His appearing'.

Is this a description of your heart? If not, if you have grown dry or confused and disinterested it is necessary to ask the Lord to restore this love for Jesus and his Appearing and to keep it fresh and green day by day.

But some say Jesus hasn't fulfilled this promise for two thousand years. Are we mistaken? Is it just a myth, or have we misinterpreted the Scriptures? No, dear friends! Every generation of true believers ought to love, long for, and expect Jesus to Appear and complete the Father's great Kingdom enterprise including Reunion, Resurrection, Judgement and Glorification, the New Jerusalem, eradication of all causes of and effects of sin, and the many wonders we are yet to behold and enter.

Jesus hinted that his return would be a long time<sup>ii</sup>. Apostle Peter gives a clear explanation and warning against a dismissive attitude because of the length of time, and he repeats Jesus' words that everything seems normal in everyday life when The Day actually happens. <sup>iii</sup> His parables indicate our Lord reaches across large expanses of time in his work in us<sup>iv</sup>.

I recently prayed about this matter prompted by this message I am writing now. I asked the Lord why hasn't the Holy Spirit prompted me with things to come as Jesus promised he would<sup>v</sup>.

Then I sensed that the thinking that has entered my mind to speak to believers about this is the Holy Spirit informing me and the more I desire knowledge the more will be given.

How might we inspire interest in the Appearing of Christ our Lord?

Firstly, let Jesus love you day by day. Keep yourselves in the love of God, Scripture urges us, and wait for his mercy<sup>vi</sup>. The One who loved so greatly as to obey unto death on the cross for you and me is the Son of Love who is returning for us over whom he is so passionately

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protective as to call us all his Bride. Strip off any attitude of which you would be ashamed before his presence. Use the grace-gift of repentance.

Second, recognise that time may be longer than we might expect or wish, but it is his timing and even the Son is dependent on the Father's decision as to when. Mentally dismiss the mockers and the gainsayers and the indifferent to this truth of his momentous coming presence. No use arguing with them, they lack spiritual discernment.

It is to be A Great Day called the Parousia, the Presence of the Lord from heaven.

Third, familiarise yourself with the two great signs: the evangelising of the nations and the emergence of the Antichrist<sup>vii</sup>.

So, develop a waiting and working mentality.

### Prayer

**Heavenly Father, I want to repent of an attitude of indifference to this great event of your Coming. Awaken afresh in me the truths your Holy Spirit is ready to share with me about it. Thank you for saving me from idol worship and freeing me from the wrath to come, your just wrath upon the world of rebellion that rejects your saving love. Let me be pleasing to you in all my conduct and live worthily as a child of the Resurrection.**

**In Jesus' Name, Amen.**

### Hymn: *by Isaac Watts*

1. Jesus shall reign where'er the sun does its successive journeys run,  
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more.
2. To him shall endless prayer be made, and praises throng to crown his head.  
His name like sweet perfume shall rise with every morning sacrifice.
3. People and realms of every tongue dwell on his love with sweetest song,  
and infant voices shall proclaim their early blessings on his name.
4. Blessings abound where'er he reigns: the prisoners leap to lose their chains,  
the weary find eternal rest, and all who suffer want are blest.
5. Let every creature rise and bring their highest honours to our King,  
angels descend with songs again, and earth repeat the loud amen.

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### Benediction:

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your entire spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it....

*This service was prepared by Rev Ian Clarkson for HopeNet SA*

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<sup>i</sup> Matthew 24:42 and other places

<sup>ii</sup> Matthew 25:25,5,19

<sup>iii</sup> 2 Peter 3

<sup>iv</sup> Matthew 25:34

<sup>v</sup> John 16:13 "and he will tell you what is yet to come"

<sup>vi</sup> Jude 21

<sup>vii</sup> Matthew 24:14-15, 2 Thess 2:1-12. There are more detailed Scriptures eg in Daniel and fulfilment in Revelation 13.