

13. Final Restoration of Unity (4Q 2018—Oneness in Christ)

Biblical material: John 14:1–3, Isa. 11:1–10, Rev. 21:1–5, 1 Thess. 4:13–18, Rev. 22:1–5, Isa. 35:4–10; 2 Pet. 3:13.

Quotes

- In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity.
Richard Baxter
- Unity without the gospel is a worthless unity; it is the very unity of hell. *J.C. Ryle*
- True friends face in the same direction, toward common projects, interests, goals.
C.S. Lewis
- A common vision can unite people of very different temperaments. *Tim Keller*
- There is but one God, and they that serve him should be one. There is nothing that would render the true religion more lovely, or make more proselytes to it, than to see the professors of it tied together with the heart strings of love. If God be one, let all that profess him be of one mind, and one heart, and thus fulfill Christ's prayer, "that they all may be one." *Thomas Watson*
- Unity despite diversity is exactly what defines Christianity as distinct from and antithetical to all other religious belief systems. *R. Alan Woods*

Questions

What is involved in restoring unity to the whole universe? Is it God's power that wins the victory? Could it be said that the good are united by excluding the wicked? How does God look as he deals with his enemies? What keeps the universe secure throughout eternity? What is finally accomplished to ensure the Great Controversy is ended?

Bible summary

John 14:1–3 is Jesus' promise to return. Isa. 11:1–10 points to the future when all is good. Rev. 21:1–5 describes a new heaven and a new earth. 1 Thess. 4:13–18 speaks of Jesus coming and the first resurrection. In Rev. 22:1–5 God promises to live with us. He will be our God and we shall be his people. Isa. 35:4–10 describes the joy of the redeemed. "We are looking for new heavens and a new earth that God has promised where everything is right." 2 Pet. 3:13 FBV

Comment

Why does Jesus come? To end all this. To make a longed-for end to sin and evil, to create his kingdom of righteousness.

Why does Jesus come? To solve the problems that we have caused and cannot solve. To re-make the earth, to transform it into a new planet of peace and harmony.

Why does Jesus come? To bring sight to the blind, to heal the lame and to make real all his promises. To totally change not just the physical world, but even the way that we think!

Why does Jesus come? To complete what he has been working for since the beginning: to prove his true nature against the lies of the Devil, to vindicate his trustworthiness, to show right is absolutely right. To end the war!

Why does Jesus come? Ultimately because he has to—because he loves his friends and wants them with him forever. Those who choose to go their own way will have that privilege, even though it leads to their self-destruction. And in order that evil may eventually be wiped out from his universe, Jesus comes to reward everyone according to the choices they have made: to have eternal life with him, or to be left out in the darkness of separation from God, which is the second death. For exclusion from God means non-existence, the inherent result of choosing to go your own way of rebellion and selfishness...

Jesus comes most of all because of you. Like the relationship of parent and child; like husband and wife; like friend and friend.

At the heart of the message of God's love in Jesus is that the Son of God came to us, to show us the way, to tell us, to die at our hand so that he might save us. He came from heaven (Jn.3:13, 6:38, "from above" Jn.8:23), he came to earth and fallen humanity. That is the greatest truth of the gospel. We do not have to approach God—which is impossible in any case. He comes to us. He comes to us where we are. He comes so that God may be with us and save us. "I came...to call...sinners to repentance" (Lk.5:32). That is the truth of God's approach to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

And it is the same when applied to the ultimate, consummative coming that is Christ's second advent. Jesus comes again so that he may be with us. We of ourselves cannot go to where he is, so he comes to us. The God that comes always comes to save, to heal those who respond to him. We might even imagine him saying "I'm coming back to the earth to meet you where you are. I'm willing to come down once more out of heaven so that you may see how much I love you." In the second coming Jesus meets us with open arms.

Ellen White Comments

The church would again have reached that blessed state of unity, faith, and love which existed in apostolic days, when the believers "were of one heart and of one soul," and "spake the word of God with boldness," when "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 4:32, 31; 2:47. {GC 379}

We are looking for the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We are not only to believe that the end of all things is at hand. We are to be filled with the advent spirit that when the Lord comes He may find us ready to meet Him, whether we are working in the field, or building a house, or preaching the Word; ready to say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us" (Isaiah 25:9).--Letter 25, 1902. {10MR 388}

Living power must attend the message of Christ's second appearing... The message for this time is positive, simple, and of the deepest importance. We must act like men and women who believe it. Waiting, watching, working, praying, warning the world—this is our work. . . . {Ev 219}

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love. {GC 678}