

4th October 2020

Maranatha

**“Come, God, and leads us to where you are living,
and show us what you want us to do.”**

Kate McIlhagga, The Green Heart of the Snowdrop, ‘Maranatha’

Maranatha is an Aramaic phrase most often transliterated as “Come our Lord”, and which has been used in Christian prayers for centuries. It appears only once in scripture, towards the end of Paul’s first letter to the Church in Corinth (1 [Corinthians 16:22](#)). Now, I am no linguist. But I *can* read books. And I was fascinated to find that there are two ways of using *Maranatha* in our prayers. In the original Aramaic, the word is split in two. If that is taken as “a vocative concept with an imperative verb”, then it becomes a command to God – “Come, Lord!” On the other hand, if we consider the two parts to be a possessive, “Our Lord”, and a perfect verb, “has come”, it would be statement of faith – “Our Lord has come!”

I find this linguist trickery (or accuracy) really helpful. For it illustrates where I am with prayer. There are times when I have little or no grasp of what God means, and, therefore, I have no idea what to pray about or to whom my prayers are directed. So my prayers are commands, shouts, orders, complaints, rants, expressions of pain – to something or somewhere. But I just need to get them out. They require no response other than the satisfaction that I have vented my thoughts. To be honest, there’s often a fair bit of anger and distress in there too. And I don’t care who knows it – God included.

But there are also times in my prayers when I feel God very close – around me, above me, beneath me, within me. So my prayers are statements of faith, affirmations, possessive expressions of God in my life. God has come. God is here. God is now. God is mine – and I am his!

Which of these two approaches comes out on top? It depends on many things. Over time, are they in balance? I have absolutely no idea. Do I worry about it? Not anymore! For it’s enough for me to express my *Maranatha*, however it comes, whatever it means, and leave it at that. I’m sure God will understand ...

A prayer for today

Lord, whatever you are, this is my prayer: “Maranatha”. I think I’ll leave it there. Amen

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