

# A Different Take On: Maranatha

According to our English Bible translations, Paul states the following:

**1 Corinthians 16:22** (NIV) – *If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed! Come, Lord!*

“Come, Lord!” is derived from the Aramaic *Marána thá* (מרנאתא) which translates to the Greek *Maranatha* (μαρὰνάθά).

But was Paul stating “Come, Lord”, or something else? If we accept that scripture is holy and perfect, then that’s what he stated in his letter to the Corinthians. However, we’ve seen from our investigations, which I’ve loaded onto my ‘A Different Take’ webpage,<sup>1</sup> that numerous statements in the NT which are accepted as accurate in our English translations, may well not be.

First of all, let’s see what numerous translations have for Maranatha:<sup>2</sup>

- NKJV – *O Lord, come!*
- AMP – *O our Lord, come*
- CSB – *Our Lord, come!*
- CEB – *Come, Lord!*
- ERV – *Come, O Lord!*
- HCSB – *Lord, come!*
- CEV – *And may the Lord come soon.*
- NKV – *The Lord is coming soon!*
- WE – *Come soon, Lord!*
- JUB – *Our Lord has come.*
- WYC – *in the coming of the Lord.*

Well, that’s a huge mixture of translations. Which one was what Paul intended his readers to understand? The answer: We have no idea.

So, how did we get all this variation? Surely the Greek translation from the Aramaic is pretty clear? Not so, and here’s why.

One of the reasons for the variation is the old manuscript source that the translation is taken from. It’s a surprise to learn that there are three variants of Maranatha in the Greek. These are:

1. *Marana tha* (μαρὰνά θά) – Can be either ‘Lord, come’ or ‘Come, Lord’.
2. *Maran atha* (μαρὰν άθά) – Can be either ‘is coming’ or ‘has come’, depending on the tense of the verb.
3. *Maranatha* (μαρὰνάθά) – Can be interpreted any way.

This variation in the actual Greek words being translated means there are 3 basic statements that can come from them:<sup>3</sup>

1. ‘Our Lord has come’ or ‘Our Lord is present’.
2. ‘Our Lord is coming’
3. ‘Our Lord come’

1 – [canberraforerunners.org/?page\\_id=55267](http://canberraforerunners.org/?page_id=55267)

2 – Only one instance of each variety has been listed here from BibleGateway.com  
[www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/1%20Corinthians%2016:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/1%20Corinthians%2016:22)

3 – Marian Vild (2013) “The Aramaic maranatha in 1 Cor 16:22. Translation Queries and Their Theological Implications”  
[www.academia.edu/38930277/The\\_Aramaic\\_maranatha\\_in\\_1\\_Cor\\_16\\_22\\_Translation\\_Queries\\_and\\_Their\\_Theological\\_Implications](http://www.academia.edu/38930277/The_Aramaic_maranatha_in_1_Cor_16_22_Translation_Queries_and_Their_Theological_Implications)

Each of those has a very distinct eschatology attached to them, and they influence the reader's eschatology. That's the main issue. Most readers of "Come, Lord" are waiting for the rapture and the return of Jesus, which supports Futurist Eschatology. However, if the Lord came in judgement of the Jews in 70AD, then Paul was looking forward to a return that's already taken place.

Interestingly, Martin Luther translated the verse differently to even the 3 listed above. He used Maharam Motha, rather than Maranatha. He reasons that maharan is the Hebrew equivalent of anathema (Gk) and moth means 'death'. According to him, the verse should therefore read: "If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be cursed to death".<sup>4</sup> In that way there's no inference about his coming.

**Conclusion:** The reader can make Maranatha to be any one of the 3 possibilities listed, as none can be ruled out. There is no firm reason to choose any one of the three to be what Paul was meaning

## **Believe It or Not!** **The choice is yours**

*Whatever you choose to believe won't negatively impact Father's relationship with you*

Laurence

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*(Readers will need to look up for themselves any scriptures alluded to in this document)*

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4 – Joseph A Fitzmyer (1998) "To Advance the Gospel: New Testament Studies" p:232 footnote 35  
[www.amazon.com.au/Advance-Gospel-Joseph-Fitzmyer/dp/0802844251](http://www.amazon.com.au/Advance-Gospel-Joseph-Fitzmyer/dp/0802844251)