

“We Look Forward to that Great Day”

A Sermon on Article Thirty-Seven of the Belgic Confession

Texts: Daniel 12:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

Article 37 - The Last Judgment

Finally, we believe, according to the Word of God, that when the time, ordained by the Lord but unknown to all creatures, has come¹ and the number of the elect is complete,² our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven, bodily and visibly,³ as He ascended (Acts 1:11), with great glory and majesty.⁴ He will declare Himself Judge of the living and the dead⁵ and set this old world afire in order to purge it.⁶ Then all people, men, women, and children, who ever lived, from the beginning of the world to the end, will appear in person before this great Judge.⁷ They will be summoned with the archangel's call and with the sound of the trumpet of God (1 Thes 4:16).

Those who will have died before that time will arise out of the earth,⁸ as their spirits are once again united with their own bodies in which they lived. Those who will then be still alive will not die as the others but will be changed in the twinkling of an eye from perishable to imperishable.⁹ Then the books will be opened and the dead will be judged (Rev 20:12) according to what they have done in this world, whether good or evil (2 Cor 5:10).¹⁰ Indeed, all people will render account for every careless word they utter (Mt 12:36), which the world regards as mere jest and amusement. The secrets and hypocrisies of men will then be publicly uncovered in the sight of all. And so for good reason the thought of this judgment is horrible and dreadful to the wicked and evildoers¹¹ but it is a great joy and comfort to the righteous and elect. For then their full redemption will be completed and they will receive the fruits of their labour and of the trouble they have suffered.¹² Their innocence will be known to all and they will see the terrible vengeance that God will bring upon the wicked who persecuted, oppressed, and tormented them in this world.¹³

The wicked will be convicted by the testimony of their own consciences and will become immortal, but only to be tormented in the eternal fire¹⁴ prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt 25:41).¹⁵ On the other hand, the faithful and elect will be crowned with glory and honour. The Son of God will acknowledge their names before God His Father (Mt 10:32) and His elect angels.¹⁶ God will wipe away every tear from their eyes (Rev 21:4),¹⁷ and their cause - at present condemned as heretical and evil by many judges and civil authorities - will be recognized as the cause of the Son of God. As a gracious reward, the Lord will cause them to possess such a glory as the heart of man could never conceive.¹⁸ Therefore we look forward to that great day with a great longing to enjoy to the full the promises of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev 22:20).

¹ Mt 24:36, 25:13; 1 Thes 5:1-2 ² Heb 11:39-40; Rev 6:11 ³ Rev 1:7 ⁴ Mt 24:30, 25:31 ⁵ Mt 25:31-46; 2 Tim 4:1; Pt 4:5 ⁶ 2 Pt 3:10-13 ⁷ Dt 7:9-11; Rev 20:12-13 ⁸ Dan 12:2; Jn 5:28-29 ⁹ 1 Cor 15:51-52; Php 3:20-21 ¹⁰ Heb 9:27; Rev 22:12 ¹¹ Mt 11:22, 23:33; Rom 2:5-6; Heb 10:27; 2 Pt 2:9; Jude 15; Rev 14:7a ¹² Lk 14:14; 2 Thes 1:3-10; 1 Jn 4:17 ¹³ Rev 15:4, 18:20 ¹⁴ Mt 13:41-42; Mk 9:48; Lk 16:22-28; Rev 21:8 ¹⁵ Rev 20:10 ¹⁶ Rev 3:5 ¹⁷ Is 25:8; Rev 7:17 ¹⁸ Dan 12:3; Mt 5:12, 13:43; 1 Cor 2:9; Rev 21:9-22:5

There is coming a day when all injustices will be made right, when all human suffering will cease, and when every tear will be wiped from our eyes. For one day our blessed Lord Jesus will suddenly return from heaven to earth to raise the dead, judge all men and women, and renew the heavens and earth by removing every hint and trace of human sin. For those who know not Christ, this will be the most terrible day imaginable. In Revelation 6:15-17, John describes this day as follows:

“the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’”

But for those who are Christ’s, this will be the most blessed day imaginable. In Revelation 21:3-4, John depicts how God’s covenant promise will come to fruition:

“I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’”

We conclude our series on the Belgic Confession, as we come to the final article (thirty-seven). It is quite appropriate that the final article of our confession deals with the final events of human history, the second advent of our Lord and those events associated with it—the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment and the renewal of all things. Not only is our Lord’s second advent the glorious concluding chapter to the biblical drama of our redemption from sin, but this doctrine is also the capstone of our confession of faith.

As we look back at the ground we have covered in this series, recall that articles twelve and thirteen of our confession describe God’s creation of all things and his providential control over everything he has made. Article sixteen sets forth the doctrine of election, as God demonstrates his mercy by choosing to save a multitude so vast they cannot be counted, while leaving the rest of Adam’s fallen children to face his justice. Article eighteen takes up the incarnation of Jesus Christ, while the following articles describe those things our Lord has done to save us from our sins. But all of these things will find their ultimate fulfillment and true meaning in the second advent of our Lord. God will indeed save his elect and bring all of creation to its appointed ends. Ultimately, all of this will come to pass on the great and glorious day when Jesus Christ returns to earth.

Unlike much of the contemporary evangelical discussion of eschatology—which almost always seem to focus upon connecting current events to biblical prophecy—instead, our confession seeks to summarize the biblical teaching about the return of our Lord and then leave the explanation of the mysteries of eschatology (such as the timing of our Lord’s return and so on) to the time of their actual fulfillment. In other words, our confession tell us, “here’s what the Bible teaches about our Lord’s return and we’ll know when it happens as well as finally see how all the details fit.”

It is Geerhardus Vos, the father of modern Reformed eschatology, who reminds us that there are many prophecies, “whose best and final exegete will be the eschatological fulfillment, and in regard to which it

behooves the saints to exercise a peculiar kind of eschatological patience.”¹ We should not speculate, but wait patiently.

Therefore, knowing what the Scriptures actually teach about our Lord’s return is the best way to avoid the seemingly endless speculation of our contemporaries—“pin the tail on the Antichrist,” as some have called it—as well as to properly prepare ourselves for whatever lies ahead.

Furthermore, the many details of biblical eschatology can all be boiled down to a simple theme reflected in all the Christian creeds: “Jesus is coming back at any moment.” And when he does, he will raise the dead, judge the world and make all things new. This has always been the expectation of the faithful. It should be ours as well.

Thus our confession takes on a tone and tenor which is anything but speculative. But this should not be taken to mean that our fathers in faith did not take eschatology seriously or that they neglected it. On the contrary, eschatology is a major theme in Reformed theology, even though eschatology is not treated as a matter of speculation tied to current events. Instead, eschatology is a major source of comfort and assurance—the second coming is the capstone of all of God’s promises to us. It is a day for which we long. In fact, one Reformed pastor, who has written one of the few commentaries on the Belgic Confession writes, “the closing article of the Reformed Confession is, no doubt, the most impressive, heart-stirring and soul-moving of the thirty-seven heads of doctrine composing the Creed. One feels when reading it that it was written during the days when martyrdom was not a historical recollection, but an every day occurrence.”² To someone who lived every day with his own arrest and death as a distinct possibility, it is only natural that Guido De Bres would confess before all his faith in God’s promise to vindicate his people and punish all wrong-doers. De Bres did not fear the wrath of men for he knew that he would never face the wrath of God, but that all those who opposed the gospel would.

In order to most effectively summarize the Bible’s teaching about our Lord’s second coming and final judgment, our confession makes the following points. First, our confession addresses the time of the end—that time ordained by God and unknown to humanity (Harold Camping included). Second, our confession takes up the doctrine of the second coming of the Lord and the present millennial reign of Christ. Jesus will return bodily, visibly, and suddenly, to raise the dead, judge the world, and make all things new. This event ushers in the eternal state, not an earthly millennial reign. Third, our confession takes up the subject of the resurrection of the dead, before turning to the topic of the punishment of the wicked and the reward which awaits all those who are in Christ. Finally, our confession reminds us of the hope and comfort that the doctrine of our Lord’s second coming should give us, especially in times of trial, suffering and persecution.³

As we turn to the final article of our confession, we begin by taking up the question of the time of our Lord’s return.

That the date and hour of our Lord’s return is a mystery is clearly stated by our confession: “Finally, we believe, according to the Word of God, that when the time, ordained by the Lord but unknown to all

¹ Geerhardus Vos, The Pauline Eschatology (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1982), p. 133.

² Beets, The Reformed Confession Explained, p. 274.

³ Beets, The Reformed Confession Explained, p. 275.

creatures, has come and the number of the elect is complete, our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven.” The biblical evidence for this point is beyond question as we can see by simply turning to the teaching of our Lord. In the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24), which contains the clearest and most complete teaching by Jesus on the subject of his own return, he makes it perfectly clear, that *“no one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”* The reason why God does not give us this information is spelled out in the following chapter when Jesus says: *“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”*

Thus the tension found throughout the New Testament between the signs which precede our Lord’s return and the warning that he may suddenly return at any moment is surely intentional—to prevent both date-setting and idleness. Because the hour of the Lord’s return is unknown to us, we must be ready at all times. And yet, Martin Luther surely had it right when someone once asked what he do if he knew that the Lord was returning tomorrow. Luther reportedly said, “I’d plant an apple tree today.”

That no one knows the time of our Lord’s return is also taught by the apostle Paul in chapter 5 of his first letter to the Thessalonians:

“Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Since our Lord will comes like a thief (unexpectedly), about the only time you can be sure that our Lord will not return is at the exact moment that some prophecy “expert” predicts that Jesus is coming back! That people even try to set dates shows the lengths to which some will go to satisfy their sinful curiosity. Rather, as Paul sees it, the fact that the time of our Lord’s return is not known is to be a powerful incentive for us to be alert and self-controlled. We belong to the day and not to darkness.

That our confession links the timing of the second coming to the last elect person coming to faith may be a new idea to many, but it is clearly taught in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 6:11, John writes, *“Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.”*⁴ This is an important point because it indicates that God is directing all of human history towards an appointed goal—the salvation of all those given by the father to the son under the terms of the covenant of redemption (that inter-Trinitarian covenant made before time).

When the last one of God’s elect comes to faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord will return to earth to bring all

⁴ It is interesting to note that our confession does not appeal to Romans 11:24-26.

things to their appointed end. This, of course, not only underlies the importance of missions and evangelism, but this should remind us that all things do work together for good and that while some may think the key to figuring all this out lies in some political event in Israel, we should instead be focusing upon preaching the gospel to all those within our own sphere of influence, as well as to the ends of the earth. For when the last one of God's elect comes to faith in Jesus Christ, only then shall the end come.

Next, our confession takes up the nature of our Lord's return and his present millennial reign.

As we noted earlier in our series, Christ's kingly office is mentioned in passing in article twenty-seven, "Christ is an eternal King who cannot be without subjects." This implies a present and not a future millennial reign. With that in mind, our confession simply rehearses the clear teaching of Scripture to the effect that "our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven, bodily and visibly, as He ascended (Acts 1:11), with great glory and majesty. He will declare Himself Judge of the living and the dead and set this old world afire in order to purge it."

The Bible does not teach what preterists of every stripe tell us—that Jesus has already returned in 70 A.D. when he came back to judge the nation of Israel. Nor does the Bible tell us that our Lord's coming is really two returns—one of them being secret, as dispensationalists teach, with their doctrine of a "secret rapture."

No, the Bible is clear that our Lord's return is visible, bodily and no one is going to miss it! For on that day, the glory of our Lord Jesus will be fully revealed!

Given all the current confusion about our Lord's return, it is probably a good thing to recount what the New Testament actually teaches about our Lord's second advent. In the opening chapter of Revelation, John writes "*Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him (1:7).*" This doesn't sound like a secret or a localized return to me! In Matthew 24:30, we similarly read, "*at that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.*" Thus, our Lord's return will be the final and consummate revelation of his glory and that hour when the nations mourn. Why? For the day of judgment is at hand. The same exact thing is taught in Matthews 25:31, where we read, "*When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.*"

Why does Christ come in glory with all his angels? Matthew goes on to tell us in the parable of sheep and goats.

All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

Thus the elect receive their inheritance at the time of our Lord's return. But what about the wicked? Their fate is described in verse 41. "*Then [that is, at the time of his return] he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'*" That our Lord's return is also the time of final judgment is reiterated in verse 46: "*Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.*"

In 2 Timothy 4:1, after Paul has discussed the godlessness of the last days and reminded Timothy of the importance of holding fast to Scripture, since it is God-breathed, he gives his young pastor friend a solemn charge in light of the preceding, “*in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead and in view of his appearing and his kingdom.*” Paul also speaks of judgment occurring at the time of our Lord’s return in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9:

This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.

As Paul understands the second advent, when Christ appears, it is to judge both the living and the dead. The same thing is taught in 1 Peter 4:5, when Peter reminds his readers, that the pagans “*will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead,*” presumably on the day Christ appears.

But one of the most significant passages in this regard is found in 2 Peter 3:10-13, where, like Paul, Peter speaks of the suddenness of our Lord’s return, but this time, Peter connects the second coming to cosmic renewal, when every hint and trace of sin is removed from the universe. Peter writes,

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

When Christ returns suddenly, like a thief, we will dwell in a new heaven and earth, redeemed by fire, and now the home of righteousness. And once again, the knowledge of this event is to encourage us to live godly lives as we await that great day yet to come.

Even from this short litany of verses, it should be clear that Jesus Christ will return bodily, in great glory with the heavenly hosts to judge the world and make all things new. No, our Lord did not return in AD 70, and no, there will be no “secret Rapture.”

But at the heart of our Lord’s return, is the resurrection of the dead, a subject to which our confession turns next.

Our confession states that at the time of our Lord’s glorious appearing, “Then all people, men, women, and children, who ever lived, from the beginning of the world to the end, will appear in person before this great Judge. They will be summoned with the archangel’s call and with the sound of the trumpet of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16).” This too is clearly taught in Scripture.

Before we turn to the primary text cited here by the author of our confession (1 Thessalonians 4), it might be useful to consider briefly some of those Old Testament texts which anticipate a bodily resurrection as the capstone to all of human history. In Daniel 12:1-4 (our Old Testament lesson), the prophet connects the time of the end to the resurrection from the dead.

At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.”

Thus the messianic age will culminate in the resurrection of the dead unto the final judgment. Daniel does not foretell of a millennial age yet to dawn upon the earth after our Lord’s return.

Much the same thing can be seen in Isaiah 25:7-8, where the prophet foretells of a time (the coming messianic age) in which the coming redeemer “*will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.*” Somehow and in some way, Israel’s Messiah will overturn the curse, which is death, and renew all of creation.

And then in Job 19:25-27, Job’s comfort in the midst of his intense personal suffering stems from the fact that Job believes God’s promise in spite of his present circumstances. “*I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*” The one thing that keeps Job going is his belief that he will be raised from the dead and that he will see God with his own eyes, knowing that God will keep his promise and that Job will be vindicated. It is not until Christ had come and suffered and died for our sins upon the cross and was then raised from the dead, that we see exactly, how God will do all of this.

This, then, sets the tone for the famous passage in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, in which Paul describes how Christ’s resurrection is the basis for our own resurrection at the end of the age. Paul writes to a Thessalonian church greatly confused about the time of the end,

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Notice what Paul does and does not say. Paul does not say that Christ’s coming will be a “secret” event. Our Lord’s return is accompanied by a loud command, the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God. Unless this is like a cosmic “dog whistle” which only Christians can hear, Paul’s point is that this is the last trumpet, which announces the arrival of the end of the age, which is the day of resurrection, the day of judgment and the day when all things are made new. Notice too that Paul connects our Lord’s return to the general resurrection—the dead in Christ will be raised and all those living will be caught up to meet

the Lord in the air. Paul tells the struggling Thessalonians of this so that they will encourage each other with the hope that the Lord is going to return exactly as he was taken upon into heaven. As the apostles watched the Lord ascend, so too shall those living see him return.

Having established the fact that our Lord's return is connected to the resurrection, the final judgment and the renewal of all things, our confession now takes up the nature of the final judgment—eternal punishment for the wicked, and eternal blessedness for those who are Christ's.

Once again, our confession speaks of the final judgment in very straight-forward terms, avoiding undue speculation which so often accompanies discussion of this topic. "Those who will have died before that time will arise out of the earth, as their spirits are once again united with their own bodies in which they lived. Those who will then be still alive will not die as the others but will be changed in the twinkling of an eye from perishable to imperishable. Then the books will be opened and the dead will be judged (Revelation 20:12) according to what they have done in this world, whether good or evil (2 Corinthians 5:10). Indeed, all people will render account for every careless word they utter (Matthew 12:36), which the world regards as mere jest and amusement. The secrets and hypocrisies of men will then be publicly uncovered in the sight of all. And so for good reason the thought of this judgment is horrible and dreadful to the wicked and evildoers but it is a great joy and comfort to the righteous and elect. For then their full redemption will be completed and they will receive the fruits of their labour and of the trouble they have suffered. Their innocence will be known to all and they will see the terrible vengeance that God will bring upon the wicked who persecuted, oppressed, and tormented them in this world."

These words—most of which come directly from Scripture—not only remind us that as Christians, Christ's second advent is pure gospel (glorious good news), and not law, but that the opposite is true for those who will stand before God clothed in the filthy rags of their own righteousness. It is a day to be feared like no other. But for the Christian all of the promises in the gospel will be fully and finally realized.

Furthermore, these words certainly reflect the hopes of a persecuted saint and a leader of a persecuted church, namely that God will settle all outstanding accounts by punishing those who seek to take their lives. De Bres goes on to say, "The wicked will be convicted by the testimony of their own consciences and will become immortal, but only to be tormented in the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). On the other hand, the faithful and elect will be crowned with glory and honour. The Son of God will acknowledge their names before God His Father (Matthew 10:32) and His elect angels. God will wipe away every tear from their eyes (Revelation 21:4), and their cause—at present condemned as heretical and evil by many judges and civil authorities—will be recognized as the cause of the Son of God. As a gracious reward, the Lord will cause them to possess such a glory as the heart of man could never conceive."

With this kind of confidence in God's promise—even in the face of civil authorities who were then seeking to arrest him for preaching the gospel—it is no wonder that De Bres was willing to lay down his life for the cause of God and of truth. As he himself says, De Bres knew a glory of the heart of which unbelievers could never conceive.

Finally, the pastoral application typical of the Reformed approach to eschatology is also provided by our confession as well.

De Bres, writes, "therefore we look forward to that great day with a great longing to enjoy to the full the promises of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. 'Come, Lord Jesus!'" (Revelation 22:20). Thus our

Lord's return is not something to be feared, but longed for. For the Christian, the return of our Lord on the last day is what Paul calls the "*blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ*" (Titus 2:13). This is the day when we receive our promised inheritance, as we are finally and gloriously conformed to the image of Christ, and now without sin. As we read in 1 John 3:2, "*Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*"

This is why we look forward to that great day when the story of redemption comes to its glorious final chapter, when sin, pain and suffering finally cease and when all things are made new. For on that day our Lord Jesus himself will appear and we will finally see with our eyes the glory of which we have just read. In an instant sin will be purged from creation, the curse will be removed and we shall be changed from corruption to incorruption. Everything which God has promised will be ours. After all, it is for this end that we have been chosen (that God might show his mercy), it is for this end that Christ has come and died for our sins (to redeem God's elect), and it is for this end that human history rushes forward toward that great and glorious day when history comes to an end.

It is surely fitting to be reminded of one of the great biblical expressions which comes down to us from the apostolic church—the Aramaic expression, *Maranatha*, which means "*come, O Lord* (1 Corinthians 16:22)." Thus, as God's people who believe and confess all those things set forth in our confession of faith as a witness to the unbelieving world around us, what an appropriate place to end. For Jesus Christ is coming back, and even though scoffers say "where is this coming that he promised?" the great day of blessing draws near. Therefore, as we look forward to that great day, we close with the apostolic benediction, *Maranatha!* Come quickly Lord Jesus!