

1 Corinthians 16:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be
Anathema Maranatha.

Analysis

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema—*Ei tis ou philei ton kyrion, ētō anathema (εἴ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον, ἥτω ἀνάθεμα).* Philei (φιλεῖ, "loves") differs from agapaō (ἀγαπάω), emphasizing affection and devotion. Anathema (ἀνάθεμα) means "accursed, devoted to destruction," translating Hebrew herem (הָרֵם)—divine ban, ultimate rejection (Galatians 1:8-9, Romans 9:3). This shocking anathema follows Paul's tender personal greeting (v. 21), creating dramatic contrast. Love for Christ isn't optional; it's the essence of Christianity. Failure to love Jesus incurs divine curse.

Maranatha—Marana tha (μαρανα θα) is Aramaic, transliterated into Greek, meaning either "Our Lord, come!" (marana tha) or "Our Lord has come" (maran atha). Most scholars prefer the imperative: "Our Lord, come!" This reflects the earliest Christian prayer (Revelation 22:20, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"). The Aramaic, Jesus's native language, preserved in Greek letters reveals primitive church liturgy. The juxtaposition—curse on Christ-rejecters, prayer for Christ's return—emphasizes eschatological urgency.

Historical Context

That Paul leaves maranatha untranslated suggests it was a familiar liturgical formula across early churches, even Greek-speaking ones. The Didache (late first century) ends the Eucharistic liturgy with "Maranatha," confirming its use in worship. This Aramaic preservation (like "Abba," "Amen," "Alleluia") connects

Greek Christianity to Jesus's Aramaic-speaking disciples, providing linguistic continuity with the earthly Jesus.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul pronounce an anathema immediately after his personal greeting—what effect does this jarring contrast create?
2. What's the significance of Paul preserving the Aramaic 'Maranatha' instead of translating it into Greek?
3. How does the eschatological prayer 'Our Lord, come!' relate to the anathema on those who don't love Christ?

Interlinear Text

εἴ	τις	οὐ	φιλεῖ	τὸν	κύριον	Ἰησοῦν	Χριστόν,	ἵτω
G1487	G5100	not	love	G3588	the Lord	Jesus	Christ	let him be
	G3756		G5368		G2962		G5547	G2277
ἀνάθεμα		ἀθά		ἀθά				
Anathema		Maranatha		Maranatha				
	G331		G3134		G3134			

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 6:24 (Love): Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

John 14:21 (Love): He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

1 John 4:19 (Love): We love him, because he first loved us.

1 John 5:1 (Love): Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

Matthew 10:37 (Love): He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

John 8:42 (Love): Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

Revelation 22:20 (References Jesus): He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Hebrews 6:10 (Love): For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

Romans 9:3 (References Christ): For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

1 Peter 2:7 (Parallel theme): Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,