

Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending



After getting about halfway through the novel, it was getting complicated. Characters were changing roles and the storyline was getting complex. There was just no telling what was going to happen to the main character. The last page was hours away, and the suspense was just too much. So, with a flick of the thumb, the pages passed by instantly, and the last chapter appeared. Five minutes of reading later, it's all okay. In the end, the good guys win.

Sometimes, we just need to know how it all ends. So it is with Charles Wesley's regal and majestic hymn text *Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending*. It is an epic scene played out in the apocalypse of John. "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. So shall it be! Amen" (Revelation 1:7).

John, the writer of Revelation, is writing to a people under siege. At every turn, their Christ-following way of living is under attack. Emperors, society, culture, all are in opposition to the example Christ gave them. So, in the midst of oppression, John offers a glimpse of hope. With poetic drama and cosmic imagery, the Revelator paints a scene of victory. His words are for more than just the future. They are for the here and now. "Hang in there. Don't give up, and don't give in. In the end, Christ wins."

And so Wesley lends these words to poetry, and gives us a song of hope to sing. "Alleluia!" we sing, "God appears on earth to reign." We rejoice in the coming Savior. We sing of the fulfillment of the coming King. "Savior," we proclaim, "take the power and glory, claim the kingdom for Your own."

And unlike a novel in the bargain bin, this sacred story is one that we are a part of. The words of John are words for us. They are words that Wesley offers us so that we may sing, not just our hope for the future, but our hope for the right-now.

So, as you sing, as you pray, and you go about your life, be watchful. And Wesley's words be your prayer, "O, come quickly! Everlasting God, come down."

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