

Looking For Jesus' Return

🕒 December 7, 2014

Intro: What are you looking forward to? finishing school, getting a degree; having a family; retiring (I have a good friend who is counting the days on Facebook); there is always the next big thing that occupies our minds and fills our anticipation. What is the Christian looking forward to?

I. Looking for Jesus' Return: Titus 2:11-14 – *1 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 **looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,** 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

A. The apostle Paul describes the Christian as looking for the ***blessed hope*** and ***glorious appearing*** of Jesus. Our blessed hope is the glorious appearing of Jesus.

1. No belief is more commonly assumed by the writers and readers of the N.T. than the second coming of Christ. The anticipation of Jesus' return is present throughout the apostle's teaching.

- The writer of Hebrews stated clearly, He will *appear second time*,

without sin, unto salvation (Heb. 9:28)

- Paul wrote, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven" (**1 Thess. 4:16**).
- Further, he said, "For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (**Phil. 3:20**)
- The apostle John wrote, "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:2-3)
- Luke records the source of the disciples' confidence in Jesus' return: **Acts 1:10-11** – *And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."*

B. 2 Peter 3:10-13 – *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in*

holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. These verses describe some important facts concerning Jesus' second coming, and we hope to discuss some of them later. But notice again, in v. 12, the assumed anticipation of the Christians concerning Jesus' return.

1. Peter's use of the phrase "**looking for**" expresses an attitude of expectancy, where one is anticipating that an event is getting ready to happen. It is more than just knowing about it. The same word phrase is used in John the Baptist's question of Jesus, "*are you the One who is to come, or do we **look for another***". It is similar in meaning to the "*looking for*" Paul used in Titus 2.

- Used to describe Joseph of Arimathea, who was **waiting** for the Kingdom of God; the prophet Simeon who was **waiting** for the consolation of Israel. These were not casual expectations.

2. **How often do you truly contemplate and look for the return of Jesus?** We almost always consider it at the funeral home. We might think about it in response to all of the false theories and false predictions that come around. But it is a reality that we do not contemplate often.

II. Living Like we are Looking: What impact should the anticipation of the Lord's return have on us? If we are looking, how should we be living? What part does the promise of Jesus' return hold in our lives?

A. **1 Thess 1:8-10** – *For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. 9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

1. Paul commended the Christians at Thessalonica for *sounding forth the word*. They were teaching the lost and preaching the gospel to places beyond. Why?

2. He also commended the change he witnessed among them. They “**turned to God from Idols to serve the living God**” - this was true conversion. They were exhibiting to their community a new allegiance, repenting of their past ignorant worship. Why?

3. **v. 10**– He then articulates the attitude of their changed lives – they were “**waiting**” for Jesus from heaven. Those who are looking for Jesus truly live differently.

4. I like the observations of **Albert Barnes** on 1 Thess. 1:10 – *“In the passage before us, he says that the return of the Son of God from heaven was an important point which had been insisted on when he was there, and that their conduct, as borne witness to by all, had shown with what power it had seized upon them, and what a practical influence it had exerted in their lives. They lived as if they were” waiting” for his return. They fully believed in it; they expected it. They were looking out for it, not knowing when it might occur, and as if it might occur at any*

moment. They were, therefore, dead to the world, and were animated with an earnest desire to do good. This is one of the instances which demonstrate that the doctrine that the Lord Jesus will return to our world, is fitted, when understood in the true sense revealed in the Scriptures, to exert a powerful influence on the souls of people. (from Barnes' Notes)

B. Colossians 3:1-4 – *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.* As with the Thessalonians, Paul produces a twofold motivation to godly living – to setting their minds on spiritual pursuits.

1. *If you were raised with Christ...* What has happened in the past. You died to sin through repentance and have been buried with Jesus in baptism, and raised to walk in a new lifestyle. The things of this earth hold no promise or hope anymore.

2. *When Christ who is our life appears...* What will happen in the future. Since we are dead to the world here and now, our life is hidden in Christ Jesus. Thus His return is the central focus of our future. He is returning to turn the kingdom back to the Father, and judge all men. How could this realization NOT change how we live?

C. John 14:1-3 – *Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and*

prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. How does the disciple of Christ face the most difficult circumstances of life? What answers to the sorrows and sicknesses of life? Jesus urged comfort to His disciples in the hours before His crucifixion, when they would face the sever temptation to retreat in fear. How did HE comfort them?

1. *"I will come again and receive you to Myself"* – Lenski notes that the reunion of Jesus with His disciples is a cause for "pure joy." There is nothing that could happen that would or could erase the comfort of that promise. **Rom 8:18** – *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

D. 1 Thess 4:13-18 – *13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

1. Paul comforted the Thessalonians with a vivid picture of the descent of Jesus. No matter what happens to us here, even death – we do not lose

out because Jesus is coming back for us – ***we shall always be with the Lord.***

Conclusion: What does the fact that Jesus will return mean to you? One writer states... *“Among the early Christians there was, perhaps, no doctrine that was more the object of firm belief, and the ground of more delightful contemplation, than that their ascended Master would return”.* (from Barnes' Notes) Why was this truth so important?

- There is no consummation of God's purpose for us here on this earth. As we will notice in a future lesson, when Jesus returns this earth and that is in it, will be destroyed forever. Jesus is coming to take us where we were made to be – with Him in heaven. Paul told the Thessalonians in **1 Thess 2:19** – *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*
- **Are you looking for Jesus' return?** Are you living like you are looking? Or is the coming of Jesus just a theological conclusion derived from your religious traditions?
- *“ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God”*
- **Heb 10:35-37** – *Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 “For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.*

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