

## **Why The Blessed Hope Is Blessed** *By Pastor Art Watkins*

In Titus 2:13 Paul wrote: ***Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.***

As Christians we do not look for and long for the same things as lost people. Lost people look for the world to get better, but we don't. Lost people look for mankind to get better, but we don't. Lost people look for society to get better, but we don't. Lost people look to politics and politicians to make their lives better, but we don't. Why? Because the Bible tells us the world and men and society and politics will only get worse. Our hope is in none of these things. Our hope is totally different than the hope that men have. Our hope is the blessed hope which is the literal, physical, visible second coming of Christ. We really believe he is coming again just like he promised when he left. When Jesus went back to heaven in Acts 1 the angels said to the apostles who saw him go up: ***This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.***

What the angels said to the apostles is our hope. It is the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. We live with this promise in our hearts. We live with the prospect of Jesus Christ coming again in our life time. We desire his return, we love his return and we are eager for him to return. To us, nothing is more important than the second coming of Christ.

This is what Paul meant in Colossians 3:1-4: ***If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.***

Notice carefully that when Paul said seek those things which are above and set your affections on things above, he then mentions the appearing of Christ from above in verse 4. When we seek those things which above and set our affections on things above, it means to seek after and set our affection on the second coming of Christ.

Paul practiced what he preached for in 2 Timothy 4:8 wrote this about Christ's coming: ***Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.***

In Titus 2:12 we look for his appearing, in Colossians 3:1-4 we seek after and set our affection on his appearing and in 2 Timothy 4:8 we love his appearing. And we should, because his appearing is a blessed hope. And when you see the reasons you will look for it, love it, seek after it and set your affection on it too.

## **(1) The Blessed Hope Is Blessed Because We Will Be Re-united With Our Loved Ones Who Have Died In Christ**

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 says: ***But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.***

As you can see, many Thessalonians were troubled about their loved ones who had died in the Lord. They did not understand where they were or if they would ever see them again. Paul wrote these verses to assure them and us that they would not only see their loved ones again, but they would be united with them forever when Christ comes again. He said that when Christ comes again he will bring the dead in Christ with him. If he brings them with him they must be with him now in heaven. The dead in Christ are now with Christ in heaven and when he comes again he will bring them with him. The dead in Christ are the saints who will return with Christ when he comes. In 1 Thessalonians 3:13 Paul wrote: ***To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.***

When Christ comes again he will come with his saints according to 1 Thess. 3:13 and for his saints according to 1 Thessalonians 4:17 which says: ***We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.***

He will come with the saints who are now with him in heaven and he will come for the saints who are still alive on earth. Those alive when Christ comes again will be caught up into the air to be reunited with the dead in Christ and we will never be separated from them again.

This is one of many reasons why the blessed hope is so blessed. It is blessed because we will be united with our loved ones who have died in the Lord. We have not seen them for years and oh how we miss them, but the day is coming when we will not only see them, but we will be with them and the Lord forever never to be separated again by death.

Death is so cruel. It takes people away from us that we dearly love and need. Death leaves empty places in our hearts that no one else can fill. Death steals our joy. It robs our happiness. It makes us miserable. It makes us cry and weep. It makes us lonely. It often ruins the world for us. It leaves empty chairs at the table. Many people are never the same after they lose a loved one to death.

This is why the blessed hope is blessed, for then in a moment in the twinkling of an eye all this will be changed. We will be united with our loved ones in the air and be with them forever never to lose them again.

## **(2) The Blessed Hope Is Blessed Because It Is the Appearing Of Our Great God And Saviour Jesus Christ**

Titus 2:13 says: ***Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.***

1 Thessalonians 4:16 says: ***For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.***

It says, **the Lord HIMSELF** shall descend from heaven. The Lord is not going to send someone else to pick us up. He is coming himself to catch us up. Our great God and Savior is coming again in person just as he promised in John 14:13:

***Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.***

When he comes again we will see the one we have believed on, studied, talked about, preached about, sang about, thought about and looked for nearly 2000 years. This is why the blessed hope is so blessed. It is blessed because it will be the appearing, coming, manifestation and revelation of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Our great God and Savior thinks so much about his church that he will personally come to gather us unto himself.

## **(3) The Blessed Hope Is Blessed Because Our Fight Against the World, Flesh And the Devil Will Be Over**

In writing about the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead and the translation of the living saints Paul said;

***So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

(1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

The victory in verse 57 is against death and the grave, but it also includes victory over all our enemies that war against our flesh. When Christ comes again he will change these corruptible bodies and when these bodies are changed we will then have total victory over all the enemies that war against us such as, the

world, flesh and the devil. They attack us 24 hours a day. It's a never ending battle.

This is especially true of the old nature of sin that dwells in us. We have an old nature of sin that dwells in these bodies that is evil and wicked and capable of any sin you can imagine. Paul said this about the sin nature in his flesh: Romans 7:18-20:

***For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin (the sin nature) that dwelleth in me.***

The old nature of sin troubles us day and night. We struggle with him constantly. Paul also wrote about this struggle in Galatians 5:17: ***For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.***

Every saved person understands this verse. We all know the fight that goes on inside of us every day. On one side is the new nature who pulls us toward God, Christ, the Bible and godliness but on the other side is the old nature pulling us away from God, Christ, the Bible and godliness. It's a never ending battle.

This is what makes the blessed hope so blessed for when Christ comes again this war will be over. He will change these vile bodies and give us a new body minus the old nature of sin and then and only then will we gain the absolute victory over sin, death, the flesh, the world, and the devil.

#### **(4) The Blessed Hope Is Blessed Because Our Bodies Will Be Changed And Made New**

Philippians 3:20-21 says: ***For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.***

1 John 3:2 says: ***Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.***

When a person is born again their spirit is quickened and made alive by God's Spirit according to John 3:6. But, the new birth does not change our bodies. And until our bodies are changed our salvation will not be complete according to Romans 13:11. But, when Jesus Christ comes again our salvation will be finalized, for then our bodies will be redeemed and transformed and made like

Christ's glorified body according to Philippians 3:21 and 1 John 3:2. Then and only then will we be totally conformed and transformed into the image of God's Son.

1 Corinthians 15:49 says: ***And as we have borne the image of the earthy, (Adam) we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. (Christ)***

The blessed hope is blessed because it is our guarantee of a new body that will not be subject to sickness, disease, pain and weakness. These calamities take a physical toll on us today. We lose physical strength, mental abilities, wellness and health every time we get sick. We are never the same. We get progressively weak over time until these bodies give up and die.

I have had dear friends that I have known for years, but due to sickness, they do not recognize me today. Sickness has taken a toll on them both physically and mentally and it's sad. I have another dear friend of mine that I have known since junior high school days who has been sick for 6 months and can't seem to get better. She has one set back after the other. I know many of you have many stories like this too.

This is why we should look for, love and long for the second coming of Christ. The blessed hope is our guarantee that our bodies will never again have to contend with sickness, disease, weakness, pain or death. They will never again have to visit a doctor, put in the hospital, be operated on, take medicine and grow weak and tired. Our body will be like Christ's body in every way and no longer subject to the pain and the calamities of this life. (Until then pray for the sick, visit the sick and stay as healthy as you can)

#### **(5) The Blessed Hope Is Blessed Because We Will Be Rewarded For the Works We Did For Christ In This Life**

Hebrews 6:10 says: ***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.***

The Lord does not forget our work and labor for him in this life. Men may forget and ignore your work and labor, but not the Lord, because he keeps records. (Malachi 3:16) And the proof he does not forget our work and labor of love for him is that when he comes again he will judge our works and reward our works if they are good. 1Corinthians 3:13-14 says: ***Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.***

The blessed hope is blessed because when Christ comes again he will reward our good works and we will see in that day that the works we did for him in this life were not in vain and worth it all. There is an old song that says: *It will be worth it all when we see Jesus, Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ. One glimpse in his dear face all sorrows will erase. So bravely run the race till we see Christ.*

This is why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:58: ***Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.***

Our work and labor is not in vain for he will reward our works when he comes again. The two greatest works you can do for the Lord in this life is the work of evangelism and edification because according to 1 Timothy 2:4, ***God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.***

Lost men are saved by hearing and believing the gospel when we preach it to them. This is the work of evangelism. Saved men come into the knowledge of the truth when we teach it to them in the local church. Most evangelism is done in the world and most edification is done in the local church. (Ephesians 4:11-12) Our only regret when Jesus comes again will be that we did not do more while we had the time to do it.

## **(6) The Blessed Hope Is Blessed Because It Will Usher In The Glorious Kingdom Of God**

One of the main reasons the blessed hope of Christ coming is so blessed, is because when he comes again he will usher in the glorious kingdom of God. 2 Timothy 4:1 says: ***I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.***

In Matthew 16:28 Jesus said: Verily I say unto you, ***There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.***

Paul said to the Saints in Thessalonians: ***That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.*** (1 Thess. 2:12)

The Kingdom of God is a literal, physical, visible earthly kingdom. The Kingdom of God is one of the greatest promises in the Bible for it meets every need of man. The Kingdom of God will solve every problem men have politically, environmentally, spiritually, religiously, physically, morally, and economically.

You name the problem, the Kingdom of God will solve it. Read the following promises of the coming Kingdom of God

\*In the Kingdom of God the bodies of the saints will be changed and made like unto Christ's glorified body. Isa. 25:8, Isa. 26:19, Hosea 13:14, 1 Cor.15:49-56.

\*In the Kingdom of God, God's throne will be on the earth. Ps:132:11, Jer.23:5, Isa.42:4, Rev.21:3.

\*The government of His Kingdom will be a theocracy. God himself will reign in the person of Christ. Isa.9:6-7

\*In the Kingdom of God his government will be pure and free from corruption. Isa.11:4, 61:11, Jer.23:5

\*In the Kingdom of God, war and crime will cease. Isa.2:4, Isa.9:6-7, Micah 4:3

\*In God's Kingdom the Devil will be vanquished from heaven and earth. Rev.20:1-5, Rev.20:10

\*In the Kingdom of God the creation and environment will be regenerated. Isa.35:1-7, 51:3, Matt.19:28

\*In the Kingdom of God the earth will become like the Garden of Eden. Isa:51:3:

\*In the Kingdom of God all physical infirmities and sickness will be healed. Isa.35:3-6, Psa.103:3, Jer.30:17, Rev.22:1-2

\*In the Kingdom of God the animal creation will be tamed. Isa.11:6-9

\*In the Kingdom of God prayer will be answered without delay. Isa.65:24, John 16:23

\*In the Kingdom of God great rapidity of growth will be seen in nature. Amos 9:13, Lev.26:4-5

\*In the Kingdom of God hunger and starvation will disappear. Amos 9:13, Isa.49:10

\*In the Kingdom of God the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Isa.11:9

\*In the Kingdom of God the Law of God and the Word of God will go forth from Jerusalem into all the world. Isa.2:1-7

\*In the Kingdom of God he will destroy all his enemies. Psa.2:8-9, 1 Cor.15:24-27

\*In the Kingdom of God the heavenly city New Jerusalem will be established upon the earth. Revelation chapters 20 – 21.

\*In the Kingdom of God all idols, false teachers, false religion, cults will be purged. Rev.22:15

\*In the Kingdom of God sin, sorrow, suffering, sickness and death will be finally abolished. Rev.21:4

The coming of Christ is truly a blessed hope for when he comes again his kingdom will come. This is why men like Paul preached the good news of the coming kingdom of God throughout his ministry. (See Acts 14:22, Acts 19:8, Acts 20:25, Acts 28:23, Acts 28:31.) He also wrote about it throughout his epistles.

He preached the Kingdom of God when he preached the gospel of grace because the Kingdom of God is the inheritance believers are given when they believe the gospel of grace. He said in Acts 20:24-25: ***But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.***

You have just read some of the many reasons why the blessed hope of Christ's second coming is so blessed. But, even though it is a blessing to Christians it will not be a blessing to the lost and here is why:

In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 Paul gives us another view of the second coming of Christ that is not so blessed if you are not saved. He wrote: ***And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.***

Notice that in the same day Jesus comes with his angels the saints will be glorified in verse 10 and rest in verse 7, but the lost will be punished with

everlasting destruction and fire in verses 8-9. Jesus said his coming will be like the days of Lot in Luke 17:28-30. He will come with his angels and deliver the saints out of this world as his angels delivered Lot out of Sodom. And in the same day the lost left behind will suffer the fire and vengeance of God's wrath as the sodomites in Lots day. This is the picture Paul paints of the second coming in these verses. The saints will be delivered from the coming eternal wrath, because in verse 10 they believe the gospel and the lost will suffer the wrath because they believed not the gospel in verse 8.

Have you believed the gospel, for it will mean the difference between salvation and destruction when the Lord comes again? To believe the gospel means you place all of your faith, trust and confidence in Christ alone to save you now and in that day. He died and paid for your sins in full and God raised him from the dead and he offers you salvation from wrath now and in the future as a gift. But, to receive the gift you must first own up to being the sinner God says you are. Once a person takes the first step of owning up to being the sinner that God says they are the rest is easy. A drowning man does not have to be convinced to call out for someone to save him and a man who sees what a sinner he is in the eyes of God will have no problem calling out to God to save him from his sins either. Don't let pride keep you from being saved.

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