

“Our Blessed Hope”

John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:50-58; Titus 2:11-13

East Berlin Community Church

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October 17, 2021

Introduction

- Negative signs of the time
- Positive signs that we are living in the last days
 - Return of Israel to the land in preparation for end-time events
 - Global preaching of the gospel
 - Matthew 24:14--*“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”*

“OUR BLESSED HOPE”

A. WHAT is our “Blessed Hope”?

1. Our “Blessed Hope” revealed

- Titus 2:11-13-- *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

2. Our “Blessed Hope” explained.

a. The Surety of Christ’s coming

- John 14:1-3-- *“Let not your heart be troubled; you 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 to receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”*
- 1) Jesus’ announcement of his imminent departure
 - John 13:33-- *“Little children, I shall be with you a little longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come,’ so I say to you.”*
 - John 13:36-- *“Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, where are You going?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterwards.’”*
 - 2) Jesus’ promise of His return. He has given His word on it, so TRUST Him,
 - 3) Use of the present tense instead of future tense to emphasize certainty. “I am coming”
 - 4) Reinforced by the angels at Christ’s ascension to heaven.
 - Acts 1:11-- *“Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”*

b. The Sequence of Christ’s Coming

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 -- *“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. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 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. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”*

- 1) The concern that dead believers will miss out on the benefits of the rapture
 - a) *"falling asleep"* only used of believer's death
 - b) not *"soul sleep"* but rest from physical activity

- 2) Sequence Stated to relieve the concern
 - a) *"the Lord Himself will descend from heaven"*
 - b) *"with a shout"*
 - c) *"with the voice of the archangel"*
 - d) *"with the trumpet of God"*
 - e) *"the dead in Christ shall rise first"*
 - f) *"we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds"*
 - g) *"to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."*

- 3) The two phases of Christ's Second Coming
 - a) The Revelation or Second Coming of Jesus Christ
 - Zechariah 14:3-4 -- *"Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem to the east and the Mount of Olives will split in two, from east to west, making a large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south."*
 - b) Paul distinguishes the two phases in Titus 2:11
 - c) Contrasts between the *"Blessed Hope"* or rapture of the church, and the *"glorious appearing"* or the revelation or second coming of Christ.

c. **The Switch or Change at Christ's Coming**

- 1 Corinthians 15:50-58-- *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written; 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' 'O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?'" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."*
- 1 John 3:2-- *"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."*
- Philippians 3:20-21-- *"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which he is able even to subdue all things to Himself."*

B. WHEN will the “Blessed Hope” occur?

1. **Specifically, no one knows the exact time or date of His coming.**
 - Matthew 24:36-- *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”*
 - Matthew 24:44 -- *“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”*

2. **Generally, four views among premillennialists as to when the rapture will occur in relationship to the tribulation period.**
 - a. **Pre-tribulation view**—Jesus Christ returns for His own prior to the beginning of the tribulation. Thus the church will escape the suffering predicted for those on earth and will be safe in heaven.
 - b. **Mid-tribulation view**—Jesus Christ returns in the middle of the tribulation.
 - c. **Pre-wrath view**—Jesus Christ returns near the end of the tribulation, right before the last judgments are poured out on the earth.
 - d. **Post-tribulation view**—The rapture occurs at the end of the tribulation with the second coming of Christ.

3. All agree that Jesus is coming again! **This is our BLESSED HOPE!**

4. **ARE YOU READY FOR CHRIST’S RETURN?**
 - a. *Do you know Jesus Christ as your personal savior? Are you trusting Him?*

 - b. *Are you living a upright, godly life anticipating Christ’s return?*
 - Titus 2:11-13 -- *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

 - c. *Like the Apostle John, are you anticipating Christ’s return?*
 - Revelation 22:20-- *“Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”*