

# THE SANCTIFYING HOPE OF CHRIST'S RETURN

## Titus 2:13-15

### INTRODUCTION

- Many people have recently said, "I just want things to go back to how they used to be"
- The best they can hope for is a less evil world, yet remains under the curse of sin
- Unbelievers are rightly characterised in Scripture as people that "have no hope" (Ephesians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:13)
- But the believer has an altogether different hope to the world – a confident assurance in God's promises of full deliverance from sin and death, and an eternity of blessedness in the presence of God
  - ✓ A lively hope (1 Peter 1:3)
  - ✓ An anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19)
  - ✓ A spiritual helmet (1 Thessalonians 5:8)
  - ✓ An everlasting consolation (2 Thessalonians 2:16)
- In this chapter, the apostle Paul instructs Titus, whom Paul had left at Crete to regulate the churches there, in the things which he needed to preach to those churches (2:1,15)
- Titus was to *exhort* – Urge them on their attention and consciences repeatedly
- Titus was to *rebuke* – Convince and reprove the stubborn, obstinate, gainsayers, warning them of the consequences of neglecting divine precepts
- Titus was to do so *with all authority* – as a minister of God, speaking God's word
- Titus was to *let no man despise him*
- Christ was despised (Isaiah 53:3)
- Those who despise Christ's servants are ultimately despising Christ and the Father (Luke 10:16)
- A sign of the last days is that men will be "despisers of those that are good" (2 Timothy 3:3)
- And all believers are warned: "Despise not prophesyings." (1 Thessalonians 5:20)
- Last week we studied verses 11-12 and saw how these closing verses give the foundation for the exhortations to practical piety which precede – the grace of God in Christ Jesus
- His grace not only saves us but teaches us to live sanctified and separated lives in this present world

### I. THE PAROUSIA OF THE LORD MOVES US TO HOLINESS (13)

- A. It is to be "looked" for by believers

1. The word for “looking” (*prosdechomai*) has the idea of “expectant waiting”, as Simeon who was “waiting for the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25)
  2. The Christian, in all things, looks to Jesus Christ
    - a. We look to him for our justification (Isaiah 45:22)
    - b. We look for our sanctification (Hebrews 12:2)
    - c. We look to him for our glorification (Philippians 3:20-21)
  3. The believer is to have an attitude of expectant waiting
  4. Our attitude affects our actions
  5. This is a present tense verb – a continual waiting
  6. We are to “love” his appearing (2 Timothy 4:8)
- B. This supports the doctrine of imminence
1. This doctrine is clearly taught in the New Testament, and was believed by Christians from the days of the early church, as well as by the Reformers (Romans 16:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:15; 5:23; James 5:8)
  2. The Scriptures exhort believers to look for the Lord’s coming, not for signs that would precede his coming.
  3. This doctrine eliminates any other timing for the Rapture apart from pre-tribulation
- C. It is the believer’s hope
1. Biblical hope is not something merely *wished for* but that is *certain* (Hebrews 6:18-19)
  2. It is *blessed* because we shall see the Lord we love and long for
  3. It is *blessed* because it heralds the beginning of his kingdom reign
  4. It is *blessed* because we will receive immortal bodies, free from sickness, pain and death (Romans 8:18-23; Colossians 3:4; Philippians 3:21)
  5. To the unbeliever, it is neither blessed, nor hoped for (Revelation 1:7)
- D. He is God and our Saviour
1. This is a clear testimony to the deity of Christ
  2. To all He is *the great God*
  3. But only to the believer is He *our Saviour*
- E. Looking for his coming will cause us to live a heavenly life while here on earth. (Hebrews 12:1-2; Colossians 3:1-2)

## II. THE PROPITIATION OF THE LORD MOVES US TO HOLINESS (14)

- A. Christ gave himself
  - 1. The Father loved the world and gave his Son (John 3:16)
  - 2. The Son willingly gave himself (John 10:15; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:25; 1 Timothy 2:6)
- B. This was a substitutionary sacrifice
  - 1. It was *for us* (Hebrews 9:26; 1 Peter 3:18)
  - 2. This one offering is sufficient for all sins (Hebrews 10:14)
- C. To redeem us
  - 1. Redeem means “to set free by paying a price.”
  - 2. From all iniquity (lawlessness)
  - 3. From sins penalty, power, and presence

## III. THE POSSESSION OF THE LORD MOVES US TO HOLINESS (14)

- A. The redeemed have become Christ's property
- B. He redeemed us to purify us
  - 1. God's design for the believer is not *happiness* but *holiness* (1 Peter 1:15-16)
  - 2. The elect are predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son (Romans 8:29)
  - 3. The word for “purify” is *katharizo* – to make clean, to purify from wickedness
  - 4. The redeemed have been *justified*, are being *sanctified*, and will be *glorified*
- C. A peculiar people
  - 1. This word (*periousion*) does not refer to the reality that Christians are distinct from the people of the world
  - 2. It has the sense of *possession*, in that the believer is Christ's own special, treasured possession (Deuteronomy 32:9; Isaiah 49:16)
  - 3. They belong not to the world or themselves, but Christ (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
  - 4. This relationship affords his presence, protection and provision (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5; John 10:28; Philippians 4:19)
- D. Zealous of good works
  - 1. We are created unto good works (Ephesians 2:10)
  - 2. Saving faith is evidenced by good works (James 2:17-18)

3. We are to *provoke* one another to good works (Hebrews 10:24)
4. Zeal in God's service is rare
  - a. The word zealous is derived from a word meaning to boil, to be hot or glow
  - b. We are not to merely *have* good works, but be zealous of them (cf. Acts 9:36)
  - c. Lukewarmness makes Christ sick (Revelation 3:16)
  - d. Our Lord is zealous and so must his servants be (John 2:17)
  - e. Zeal in one can provoke zeal in others (2 Corinthians 9:2)

## CONCLUSION

1. Every person is looking to something which directs the course of their lives
2. Those who *look* to this world, *love* the world, *live* for the world, and will *perish* with the world
3. Are you joyfully looking for and anticipating the Lord's return?
4. One of characteristics of God's saints throughout all ages has been an expectant waiting for the coming of Christ
  - ✓ Enoch (Jude 14)
  - ✓ Abraham (John 8:56)
  - ✓ Job (Job 19:25)
  - ✓ Jacob (Genesis 49:10)
5. The truth of the Second Coming of Christ is not merely a doctrine to be believed, but a spiritual attitude that controls the whole life
6. It is one thing to *hold* the doctrine of the Lord's return, but quite another to be *held by* that blessed hope (H A Ironside)
7. When it comes to belief in the Lord's return there are two kinds of Christians – gazers (Acts 1:11) and goers (Matthew 28:19)
8. Are you one of Christ's peculiar people, his treasured possessions, his jewels (Malachi 3:17) that he will gather to himself at his coming?
9. Soon he will return to claim his people to himself – does your life reflect this reality?
10. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (2 Peter 3:14)
11. Adoniram Judson alluded to living expectantly in light of Christ's imminent return when he wrote:

*A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity. The same may be said of each day. When it is once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it, it will exhibit forever. Each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will affect our everlasting destiny. How shall we then wish to see each day marked with usefulness?! It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power.*