

The Blessed Hope

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[0:00] Blessed Hope Blessed Hope means the second coming of Jesus Christ, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to planet earth.

! That's exciting! In other words, it's a confident expectation. That's what it means. And in the 260 chapters of the New Testament, there are 318 references to the second coming of the Lord Jesus. That's one in every 30 verses. And Titus 2.13, it tells us there that we should be looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. It's not a wishful thinking. It's not some hopeful kind of optimism. It's a hope that's founded on His promise. It's something that's guaranteed. It's in black and white in the Word of God that He's given to us.

And listen tonight, either you've got the blessed hope or you've got no hope. The early Christians used to greet one another with the saying, Maranatha, which means our Lord is coming.

[1:07] Our Lord cometh. And 1 Timothy 1 tells us that the Lord Jesus Himself is our hope. He has promised us that He's going to come. The second coming has two stages. It's got two phases.

Two stages. Firstly, the rapture, where He's a returning for His saints, for His saints in the air. And then there's the second phase, which is coming with His saints to the earth.

So the first phase, the rapture, is where He says, I will come again and receive you to Myself. The second phase is His return, the revelation, where He comes with His saints to earth.

As it talks about in Jude 1, verse 14, the Lord cometh with 10,000 of His saints. So He comes in the rapture in the air. He takes His saints. There's resurrections. There's rapture.

And then He comes at the tribulation close. He comes and takes control of planet earth again. He comes with 10,000 of His saints. He comes with His saints that were raptured.

[2:13] And we read of Christ's return in 1 Thessalonians 4. The word caught up has got the sense of caught away, of pulled away, taken.

Our English word rapture is derived from the Latin translation of this verse, where this word caught up is rapio, which means to be carried away, to be caught up, snatched up, seized, plucked, dragged away.

He descends, comes in the clouds, and we're going to be caught up. It's like a magnet. It's going to pull us up into the air to meet the Lord in the air.

In Philipians 3.21, you could see this as referring to this light time, where it says that the Lord is going to transform our bodies to be like His glorious bodies.

So we see when Christ returns, a couple of things. First, He's going to raise the dead from their graves, the bodies of the dead believers, those of our loved ones who have trusted Christ.

[3:27] They're going to be brought up to life. They're going to return to life in a moment. In the twinkling of an eye, it says, they're going to be raised immortal, eternal, incorruptible, with a glorified body, just as the Lord Jesus had risen from the tomb.

And then, secondly, the living believers will be raptured off the face of the earth. We're going to be lifted off planet earth and changed forever. Our mortal bodies will put on immortality.

Some Christians will never die. It's the next main event on God's prophetic calendar. And God's going to reward His faithful servants. When He comes, He's going to come with rewards.

When He comes, He's going to grant that reward. There's going to be an evaluation time. We're told of the judgment seat of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5.10, it says that everyone may receive the things done in his body.

So this second stage of His coming will happen after that great period of tribulation. When He comes back with His saints, it says, Jude 1.14, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints.

[4:34] And when Christ comes, a massive transformation will take effect. He will establish His kingdom. He'll wipe out the forces of the evil one. He'll rule over the nations of the world.

And from that time, there will be a wonderful peace. We know for a time, the devil is held captive. And then released at the end for a final wipe out of the devil's forces.

But for the time being, brothers and sisters, we're told in Ephesians 2.2, that for the time being, the prince of the power of the air, the enemy, is still at work. And the whole world, meantime, as it says in 1 John 5.19, it says that the whole world lieth in wickedness.

It's under His control. As we know, as you read the headlines of your newspapers, day by day, we know that really who's in control at the present, as it were, of current events, as the enemy's having a bit of a field day, as we're seeing things escalate, as more and more evil and lawlessness and godlessness prevails, as people choose to live Christless, people choose to live godless.

When Christ returns, the devil will be defeated once and for all, and the world will be returned to its rightful owner. And the return of Christ will bring in again an age of prosperity and peace for the world.

[5 : 53] A better day is coming for the sin-cursed planet that we live in. His knowledge will cover the earth. Nation will no longer go to war against nation. And for the meantime, brothers and sisters tonight, we should be encouraged because the Bible says for you and for me that our Lord Jesus can return at any moment.

He could come back at any moment. Are you ready? That's the question. Will we be ready? Will we be prepared? Are you ready to meet Him? Again and again we're urged to watch.

Watch. Scour the horizon. Scour the skies and be prepared because He's going to come. And will we be ready? Will He catch us ready? Or will He catch us unprepared?

We know that He's coming back because He said that He would. He said, I am coming to prepare a place for you and I will come and I will receive you to myself. Our Lord Jesus has promised you. He's coming back for you and He's going to come and receive you. If you're His tonight, He's going to come and receive you and take you to Himself. So fear not, child of God, when you see the things around about you.

[7 : 05] Fear not, child of God, when you may see wars and commotions and distresses and all manner of trouble and distress among nations. Fear not, child of God.

He says, I will come, I will come back for you. I will receive you to Myself. You should be prepared for Christ's return. Are you ready? Do you know Him?

Is He yours? Are you His? Philippians 4 verse 5 it says, Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

Do you have this blessed hope? This blessed hope, this confident expectation, this joyful expectation. In 1 John 3 verse 3 it says, And every man that hath this hope in him, this blessed hope, this hope of Christ, every man who has this hope within him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

So it's telling us there that as God's people, as his child, you'll want to live pure. You'll want to live right. You'll want to have a clean heart.

[8 : 13] You'll want to have a clean heart. A clean life. Our conversation. Our way of living 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.

This vile body with all its faults. And when you look in the mirror and you can see every little defect, it's going to happen that one day it's going to be changed. You're going to get an extreme makeover.

You know, you're going to have that vile body. It's going to be completely changed and completely renewed and revitalised. And you're going to have all new body parts that will last forever.

Immortal. They're going to be changed to be fashioned like unto his glorious body. Are you ready for the return of Jesus Christ? Seeing that these things are going to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be?

What kind of life should you be living in the light of his coming? If everything's going to be dissolved, looking for that blessed hope, looking for that day, that coming of the day of God, looking for his promise, looking for the new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

[9 : 27] Seeing that you're looking for such things, be diligent, that you may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. That word be diligent, it means an effort.

It means put the effort in. Will you be diligent to prepare your heart for his return? Are you going to be ready? Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.