

Desire and the End of the Age

by A.W. Tozer

The absence of real yearning for Christ's return is often due to an emphasis on the utility of the cross and a comfortable life, which can distract from a personal, emotional relationship with Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-21, John 14:3, Romans 8:18, Philippians 3:20, Colossians 3:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Hebrews 11:16, 2 Peter 3:12, 1 John 3:2-3, Revelation 22:20

Topics: "The Return of Christ", "Yearning for Christ"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the importance of a deep, personal yearning for the return of Christ, contrasting it with a mere intellectual understanding of eschatology. He argues that the modern church has often prioritized the utility of the cross over the beauty of Christ Himself, leading to a contractual relationship with Him rather than a personal one. This lack of emotional connection results in diminished anticipation for Christ's return, as many Christians find comfort in their current lives and material possessions. Tozer warns that this comfort can dull the desire for heavenly hope, which should be a vibrant part of a believer's faith. Ultimately, he calls for a rekindling of love and longing for Christ to restore the power of the advent hope.

Transcript

It is precisely the "yearning" and the "fainting" for the return of Christ that has distinguished the personal hope from the theological one. Mere acquaintance with correct doctrine is a poor substitute for Christ, and familiarity with New Testament eschatology will never take the place of a love-inflamed desire to look on his face.

If the tender yearning is gone from the advent hope today, there must be a reason for it; and I think I know what it is, or what they are, for there are a number of them. One is simply that popular fundamentalist theology has emphasized the utility of the cross rather than the beauty of the one who died on it. The saved man's relation to Christ has been made contractual instead of personal. The "work" of Christ has been stressed until it has eclipsed the person of Christ. Substitution has been allowed to supersede identification. What he did for me seems to be more important than what He is to me. Redemption is seen as an across-the-counter transaction which we "accept", and the whole thing lacks emotional content. We must love someone very much to stay awake and long for his coming, and that may explain the absence of power in the advent hope even among those who still believe in it.

Another reason for the absence of real yearning for Christ's return is that Christians are so comfortable in this world that they have little desire to leave it. For those leaders who set the pace of religion and determine its content and quality, Christianity has become of late remarkably lucrative. The streets of gold do not have too great an appeal for those who find it so easy to pile up gold and silver in the service of the Lord here on earth. We all want to reserve the hope of heaven as a kind of insurance against the day of death, but as long as we are healthy and comfortable, why change a familiar good for something about which we know very little? So reasons the carnal mind, and so subtly that we are scarcely aware of it.

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