

The Second Coming

by J.C. Philpot

The Lord's second coming is a time of salvation and joy for his friends, and destruction and confusion for his enemies, and should influence our daily walk and life to be conformed to the suffering image of Christ and look forward to the glory that shall be revealed at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: John 14:2

Topics: "Second Coming", "Heavenly Hope"

Description

J.C. Philpot preaches about the blessedness of Jesus entering the courts of bliss as the forerunner for His people, preparing a place in heaven for them. His ascension fills heaven with new beauty and glory, where He is adored by angels and the spirits of just men. The anticipation of Christ's second coming was a prominent belief in the early church, bringing comfort and hope to believers. The church is encouraged to be conformed to Christ's suffering image, endure afflictions, and look forward to the day of His return with heavenly desires and spiritual affections.

Transcript

Chapter Fifteen from the book Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of The Blessed Redeemer

We have another view to take of our blessed Lord as having entered into the courts of bliss. He is gone thither as his people's forerunner, as the apostle speaks, "Whither the forerunner is for us entered even Jesus, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." #Heb 6:20. How blessedly did the Lord comfort his sorrowing disciples when he said to them, "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." He is gone to take possession beforehand of his and their everlasting home; for he is ascended to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God. He has, as it were, filled heaven with new beauty, new happiness, new glory. His glorious Deity shining through his spotless and glorified humanity illuminates heaven with a peculiar glory, for he has fought the fight and won the day; he has fulfilled all the types and figures of the Old Testament, accomplished the purposes of the everlasting covenant; glorified God by the highest obedience that could have been yielded to his will, and having finished the work which the Father gave him to do, has returned triumphantly to the courts of bliss to receive the reward of his humiliation, sufferings, and death. In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. His glorious Person as Immanuel is become the object of heaven's praise and adoration. The elect angels, whom he has confirmed in their standing, adore him as God-man; and the spirits of just men made perfect worship him in company with the angelic host.

What a view had holy John of heaven's glorious worship, #Re 5 when he saw the four living creatures and the four-and-twenty elders fall down before the Lamb; when he heard their new song and the voice of many angels round about the throne, and all saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." #Re 5:12. Heaven itself is waiting for the completion of the great mystery of godliness, when the whole church shall be assembled around the throne; when the marriage supper of the Lamb shall come; when the top stone shall be brought forth by the hands of the spiritual Zerubbabel, with shoutings of Grace, Grace unto it. Earth itself is groaning under the weight of sin and sorrow; and "the souls of those under the altar who were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, are crying with a loud voice, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" #Re 6:9,10. Nay, the very signs of the times themselves are all proclaiming as with one voice that it cannot be long before the Lord will come a second time without sin unto salvation.

And this brings us to the last point, with which we shall close our "Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of the Blessed Redeemer," his second coming, and the posture in which his people should be found, as looking for and expecting his return.

When the Lord ascended up on high in the sight of his disciples, "they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up," their faith, hope and love all following him up the shining way; and as they thus viewed his glorious track, they seemed to lose sight of every other consideration. But, "behold, two men," two angelic beings in human shape, "stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? 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." #Ac 1:11. It was as if the angels said to them, "Jesus, your Master, your Head, your King, is not gone away from you for ever. He will one day, according to his own promise, return in the same glorious Person as that in which he is gone up, in the same divine and human nature, and in the clouds of heaven which have now received him out of your sight. For this, meanwhile, look, watch, wait, and pray."

From that moment, therefore, the Lord's return has always been a leading feature in the faith of the church of Christ, especially in the early period of her history. Thus we find Peter at once proclaiming it, "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." #Ac 3:21,22. That it ever after formed a prominent point in the teaching and testimony of the apostles is plain from the inspired epistles of the New Testament, in which it is continually brought forward and alluded to. Thus, not to quote numberless passages, the apostle reminds the Thessalonians how "they had turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven;" #1Th 1:9,10; and seeks to comfort them under their persecutions with the prospect of eternal rest, "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;" #2Th 1:7,8; as well as to console them under their bereavements with the sweet persuasion that "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." #1Th 4:14. To be looking, then, and waiting for the Lord's second coming was the especial hope and consolation of the saints of old. By this prospect their hearts were comforted when they could look forward to that glory which should be revealed at the appearing of Jesus Christ, for they knew that when he should come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, he would be glorified in his saints, and be admired in all them that believe. #Mt 16:27 1Pe 1:7 2Th 1:10. This faith and expectation had a most blessed and enduring influence on their

hearts and lives. It made them feel that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth; and that their Master having promised to return, and it being uncertain at what watch of the night he would come, their "loins should be girded about, and their lights burning, and they should be like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they might open unto him immediately." #Lu 12:36.

We shall not enter upon the question of the nature and circumstances of the Lord's return, or its immediate consequences, as these are disputed points, and we wish to consider the subject more with a view to edification than to controversy. It is sufficient for us to believe that Jesus will come again with all his saints, and that when he comes it will be to the salvation and joy of his friends, and the destruction and confusion of his enemies. We shall, therefore, rather address ourselves to the consideration of the posture in which the church should stand as waiting her Lord's return.

During our present time-state we are to be conformed to the suffering image of Christ, and to bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal body. Our present life is to be one of trial, affliction, and temptation, that we may walk in the footsteps of our blessed Lord. #Lu 22:28. We are to be persecuted by the world, despised by professors, assailed and tempted by Satan, and walk in a path of tribulation and sorrow, that we may, as members of his mystical body, fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. #Col 1:24. We are to drink of his cup and be baptized with his baptism; for "it is a faithful saying. If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him;" #2Ti 2:11; and "we must suffer with him that we may be also glorified together." #Ro 8:17. The world knew him not, and it is to know us not. It hated and despised him, and it will hate and despise us; for "the servant is not greater than his Lord; and if they called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household." #Mt 10:25 Joh 15:18,19. But to suffer will not always be the portion of the church of God. There is a day coming when Zion shall be raised from the dust; when she shall put on her beautiful garments; when the marriage of the Lamb shall come, and to his bride and spouse it shall be granted that she shall be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, and shall sit down with her Head and Husband at the marriage supper. #Isa 52:1,2 Re 19:7-9. Then those who have been partakers of the sufferings of Christ shall be partakers of his glory. Then the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Then they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever. #Da 12:3. Then the mystery of God will be finished, and there will be time no longer, for all the former things of this miserable time-state shall have passed away. #Re 10:6,7 21:4.

Now what should be the posture of the church as looking for and hastening to the coming of the day of God? and what influence should this blessed truth have upon our hearts and lives?

1. First, it should reconcile us to afflictions, as feeling with the apostle that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." #2Co 4:17. And again, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Weighed in such a balance, what are all our afflictions, though seemingly so heavy? Are they not light indeed, if they are conforming us to the suffering image of Christ, and preparing us for an eternal weight of glory?

2. It should raise up and draw forth heavenly desires and spiritual affections, as the apostle says, "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." #Php 3:20. Believers are called upon "not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their

mind," #Ro 12:2, and to "set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth;" #Col 3:2; they are said to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts; #Ga 5:24; and by the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body. #Ro 8:13. It is true that we are sorely hindered in running the race set before us, for we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, having to carry about with us a body of sin and death, which is our constant grief and plague; and the flesh lusting against the spirit, as well as the spirit against the flesh, we cannot do the things that we would. #Ro 7:24 2Co 5:4 Ga 5:17. We are beset, too, by innumerable temptations, have often to mourn over our darkness, deadness, coldness, and unbelief, as well as on account of the hidings of the Lord's face, and the absence of that blessed Comforter who alone can console the cast-down spirit. Still, though in themselves grievous hindrances, spears in our side and thorns in our eyes, these things do not utterly quench that preveiling bent of the renewed heart to look up and look forward to a brighter day, when tears shall be wiped from off all faces.

As, then, a view of the glory of Christ is obtained, and his coming again is realised by a living faith, the soul looks beyond this time-state, and all the cares and sorrows of this vale of tears, to that glorious day when it shall be perfectly conformed to the glorified image of Christ, and never sin against him more. At his second coming he will 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. #Php 3:21. And "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?" #1Co 15:54,55.

Now, if these things are so, if Jesus is but gone before to prepare a place for us, and has promised that he will come again and receive us unto himself, that where he is there we may be also, #Joh 14:3, will not this heavenly truth, if received into a believing heart, exercise a gracious influence upon our daily walk and life? Such, at least, is John's testimony, "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. And he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." #1Jo 3:2,3. If we are led by divine teaching to see and feel that this present world is an evil world, from which Christ came to deliver us by giving himself for our sins, #Ga 1:4, and as such is under the wrath and curse of God; if we feel everything in it marred by sin and sorrow, and have a good hope through grace that when the Lord appears we shall appear with him in glory, will not this separate us in heart and spirit from the world, and lead us, with God's help and blessing, to walk as becometh the gospel, and to speak and act as a peculiar people, zealous of good works?

But taking a general view of the professing church, can we say that such is its experience or its walk? The wise virgins, as well as the foolish, are sleeping and slumbering; and a cold, lukewarm profession is everywhere prevalent. Error abounds on every side; strife and division widely preveil; and we seem fallen upon those last days when perilous times were to come. We cannot, indeed, marvel that the world is what it ever was, a foe to God and godliness, buried in carnality and death, ignorant of its misery and ruin, and unconcerned at the awful judgment that is awaiting it, and almost ready to burst upon it. But we may justly wonder that the church of Christ, which professes to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, should be sunk so low, and manifest so little of the life and power of vital godliness. Yet this is only what we are led to expect from the word of truth. The Lord himself said. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" #Lu 18:8; and, "Because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold." #Mt 24:12. Thus, instead of expecting that the world will gradually get better and better, as men idly dream, or that bright and glorious days are awaiting the professing church, we may rather expect that things will get gradually worse and worse with both, until he comes who shall come and will not tarry. But come when he

will, come when he may, it shall be well with the righteous. Unto those that fear his name the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings; and to them that look for him the Lord shall appear a second time without sin unto salvation.

Here, then, we close our "Meditations upon the Sacred Humanity of the Blessed Redeemer;" and can only lament that our views of this most glorious subject have been so dim, and our expression of them so faint and feeble. But such as they are, we commend them to the God of all grace; and if they have been or should be in any way blessed to the spiritual profit of his people, to Him and to Him alone be ascribed all the glory.

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