

The Coming of the Lord and Spiritual Readiness

by Peter Brandon

The sermon emphasizes the supernatural nature of the coming of Christ and the importance of being ready for it.

Duration: 45:55

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:16

Topics: "Spiritual Readiness", "Second Coming Of Christ"

Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the supernatural nature of Christ's second coming, drawing parallels to His first coming, which was also foretold and fulfilled in detail. He highlights the importance of spiritual readiness, urging believers to turn from idols and serve the living God while eagerly awaiting Christ's return. Brandon explains that the second coming should impact every aspect of a Christian's life, as evidenced by the early church's fervent faith and evangelism. He encourages believers to live in holiness and to be examples to others, as they await the fulfillment of God's promises. Ultimately, he reassures that just as Christ fulfilled His first coming, He will also return as promised.

Transcript

Our study tonight is on the second coming of Christ. Now already a question has been put to me. The second coming of Christ is totally supernatural.

That is correct. When the dead in Christ shall rise first and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. After the first coming of Christ that will be the most spectacular event in history.

Now I say that with great emphasis and therefore someone has said, why do you believe in such a supernatural coming? Because of his first coming. The first coming of the Lord Jesus was totally supernatural. His birth was supernatural.

A virgin shall conceive and bear a son and his name shall be called Emmanuel. And that was perfectly fulfilled. If you look carefully at the life of the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man and as the Son of God and if you read in the Old Testament especially from Isaiah 40 right up to 44 you will see Jehovah's servant prophesied to come in a supernatural way and live a supernatural life.

And that was fulfilled. Thirdly the death of Christ was predicted. In fact if my memory serves me right there are 99 direct prophecies concerning the death of Christ.

And when the Lord Jesus said on the cross it is finished over 99 prophecies were fulfilled. That is totally supernatural. Again the burial of the Lord Jesus was predicted precisely.

It shows very clearly although his death was one of shame he was going to be buried in the tomb of a rich man. That was minutely fulfilled as you all know. And what about the resurrection? Now my memory may be a little adrift here but I believe it's correct to say that there are 16 scriptures in the Old Testament that depict the resurrection of Christ.

Psalm 16 says thou will not leave my soul in hell neither shalt thou suffer by holy one to seek corruption. And then lastly the ascension of Christ was predicted. And if you read very carefully the scriptures the way in which the Lord went back to heaven was all described very carefully in the Old Testament.

In fact the Lord told them that he was going away and if he would go away he would come again. And therefore all those predictions were minutely fulfilled. Now isn't it logical sensible to believe that the person who fulfilled the first prophecies will also fulfill the second promises in absolute detail.

Therefore dear friends that's why we believe the Lord is going to come. Not because our present world is in a total mess and confusion. We believe that the Lord Jesus is going to come simply because the Bible said he would.

And he never never breaks a promise. Now another thing that's interesting. I'm going to read tonight from various sections of 1 Thessalonians.

And in 1 Thessalonians we have a clear outline on the second coming of Christ. In the second letter we have again a clear outline on his coming to us. One of those comings is called the Lord coming for his saints.

In the second epistle it's the Lord coming with his saints. Now what we're going to do tonight with the subject of the Lord's coming again for his people. Now the historians tell us now that this probably is one of the first pieces of inspired writing that we have in the New Testament.

As far as we know it was written 20 years after the death of Christ. Some believe that Galatians was the first. Others believe that James was the first.

But now the census is that Thessalonians is the first piece of inspiration that we have. Now again that's interesting. Because this gives us an inside information of what the apostles preached in the first century.

I know it's clearly outlined in the book of the Acts. But in this particular chapter and this was written long before the book of the Acts. In fact it was written long before any of the first Gospels were published.

And therefore we have now an insight in what the apostle preached. All the fundamental facts are outlined in this particular epistle concerning Christianity. But the most dominant fact of all is the fact of the second coming of Christ.

It's mentioned in every chapter. And what we're going to do is to go through the scripture and see every mention of that coming in this particular epistle. In chapter 1 it's the coming of the Lord Jesus and salvation.

In chapter 2 it's the coming of the Lord Jesus and Christian service. In chapter 3 it's the coming of the Lord Jesus and stability in holiness. And in chapter 4 it's the coming of the Lord Jesus and sorrow.

In chapter 5 it's the coming of the Lord Jesus and entire sanctification. So can you see how this should affect us. You see the coming of the Lord Jesus is not a doctrinal battle that Christians have among themselves.

When we believe in the coming of the Lord Jesus it should affect every single part of our lives. And if it doesn't affect our lives it's quite meaningless. Now you must remember too that when Paul was writing to the Thessalonians they were all young Christians.

Most of them were only nine months old in the faith. Now this would be interesting in a congregation like this. Would there be someone that has been saved in the last nine months? Would you raise your hand? Not one.

Now remember that these were new Christians nine months old in the faith. And yet as we go through this reading we find that these Christians have made a whole impact upon Greece and Macedonia. Now this gives us a key to a great secret.

How was it possible for 40 men to go all over the Roman world and preach the gospel and shake that Roman empire with the gospel? Was it just through public preaching? Now forgive me shouting this. No! Immediately the Christians were saved they all became publishers of the truth. And we shall see they went everywhere preaching the word.

That means if we all caught the fire of these early Christians every single person would endeavor to be a sole winner. And that would be the beginning of revival. So now we're going to look at this great subject the coming of the Lord and salvation.

Would you turn please to the first chapter and we'll read from verse 7. So that he were an example to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. That means the Christians who had been saved. For from you sounded out or resounded out the word of the Lord.

Now what does that mean? It's the idea of echo. And that's where echoes of service comes from this particular verse. Now what do we mean by an echo? If you go to a valley where there is a vast mountain in some parts of the earth.

You can actually just say a word like I'm saying and then the echo would come back to you. Now that's the meaning of the word. Now the apostle gave the whisper of the gospel.

And these Christians who were saved they were resounding it, speaking it out. The echo was coming back all over Macedonia concerning the kind of lives that they lived. Now can you see the brilliance of that? Now go on.

For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia. But also in every place your faith the God would be spread abroad. So that we need not speak anything.

For they themselves that could refer to the Christians. And then the people who were watching the Christians. Show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you.

How ye turn to God from idols. Now I want you to think of that. That is a perfect expression of what we were speaking about last night.

Repentance. What is repentance? It's the change of mind. And because your mind is changed the change of your attitude.

And therefore when the apostle preached the first thing he did was to give them a complete outline of the glorious character of the infinite God. Now that's vital in our preaching. That's why we were singing tonight Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty.

Now these Christians they got such a glimpse of the glory of God through his preaching. They turned to God. Now what does that mean? You remember that mighty man of faith whose name was Abraham.

He was sitting in his vast house in the Ur of Chaldees. And no doubt it was full of luxury. For even then he was a rich man.

And all around the walls there would be terrapins. And Sarah if she was going to cook something that was special would consult a terrapin. If there was a problem in the house she would consult another terrapin.

It was a household God. And immediately the glory of God appeared unto Abraham. And he got a glimpse of his holiness, his righteousness, his severity, his compassion and love.

All those terrapins seemed to disappear. Now you're getting the word. They turned to the glory of God from all their silly little idols.

Beloved let's face it when I was reading this I had to say to the Lord this morning, where are my idols Lord? And all of us need to say that. An idol is a thing that you love most. The preeminent thing in your life.

It can be yourself, it can be your family, it can be your business, it can even be your retirement, it can even be your house. There are many idols. But these Christians, these early Christians they got a glimpse of the majesty and the glory of God and they turned to God from their idol.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we got that glimpse tonight. And we dealt with these stupid idols that trip us up so often. And then notice what happened.

They turned to God from idols to serve the living and the true God. Now first of all look at their idols. I'm not going to name them because they're not really named in this epistle.

But the naming doesn't mean anything. But they got a glimpse of the true and the living God and they looked at their idols and they must have said as the Psalmist said. They have eyes that see not, noses that smell not, lips that speak not, hearts that not even function, ears that do not listen.

They're dead and all our idols are dead. We're going to leave them all behind very shortly. They turned from their idols in order to serve and the word serve there is strong.

Don't miss it. It's the word Julos which means to serve as a slave. This doesn't mean for one moment that God held them by a whip.

You see the principle of slavery in the New Testament is not enforced slavery. You remember the old servant who said I love my master. I love my wife.

I love my children. I will not go out free. That was voluntary enslavement and that's ours.

You know why? Because our master has his hands pierced, his feet pierced, his side pierced and as we see his infinite love for us we yield ourselves and the motive is not the motive of a whip but it's the motive of worship. The motive of giving ourselves wholly to the man who loved us and then you'll remember the old slave went to the door post and his ear was pierced but his master was never pierced. But our master is and isn't it lovely to have a pierced ear.

Now I'm not saying we should all come tomorrow night with a golden earring. Please don't think that that's awful but all of us should have our ear pierced because our savior was pierced for us and then you will notice it's to serve the living and the true God. In other words when we talk about the judgment seat of Christ we shall see that when we stand before the Lord we shall stand before him with glorified bodies and all of us will stand there before him in grace and we shall see what we did in the body and all that we spent on ourselves will be burnt up and praise God for it.

You'll be glad to see it burnt up and all that we spent for the Lord will be wonderfully rewarded to serve the living and the true God and then go on and to wait for his son from heaven. Now the word wait here is quite weighty and it's the idea of waiting expectantly. You know in the east when they were looking for a person to come they would go to a brow of a hill and then they would stand on their toes and then if they couldn't see them they would stretch their neck and sometimes the word wait in scripture means stretching the neck.

There are two kinds of necks in scripture there's the stiff neck that means the rebellious person and the stretch neck if you like a drop neck and it means they were waiting stretching themselves lifting their heads up saying he might be here today. Waiting constantly for his presence and then I want you to notice where the deliverance comes and to wait for his son from heaven why because he has gone into heaven and there's a man in the heaven and the person who is head of the church his head is in heaven his body is on earth and that's where the Holy Spirit lives in the habitation of the church and because the Lord Jesus is there our head we all long to be there with him in heaven the abode of all the saints the father's house whom he raised from the dead the word is from among the dead now what does that mean?

Lazarus was raised as we were saying last yesterday afternoon from the dead but obviously as far as we know he died again but when the Lord Jesus was raised from among the dead he was raised in the power of an endless life never never to die again and that man is now in the glory and it's a guarantee that the Lord is there that we're going to be there now can you see the setting they turned to God from idols to serve like a slave the living and the true God and to wait constantly and patiently for his son from heaven whom he raised from among the dead now there comes a time especially if a person is at university when you have died some doubted as we were hearing yesterday morning the way in which to exclude those doubts is to get into your mind and heart the glorious evidence of the

resurrection we do not believe in the resurrection of Christ like a story or a fairy story we believe it to be an infallible fact and that's what the apostle Luke addresses the whole of the book of the act and he gives us the infallible facts of his resurrection now what are they first of all he gives us textual evidence he keeps talking about the scriptures secondly he gives us accurate historical evidence then he gives us critical evidence by showing that the greatest critic of Christianity became a Christian that's why thousands of Christians are now praying for the conversion of Professor Dawkins and what a moment it would be if registered on the papers you saw his conversion it's possible and then he gives us legal evidence and

then last of all he gives us experimental evidence he

shows that Christianity is not a religion but it's a complete change of life when no longer you're conformed to this world but transformed by the renewing of your mind now can you see the brilliance of that whom he raised from the dead even Jesus who delivered us from the wrath to come now what is that wrath I have no doubt to believe that that wrath includes first of all the great tribulation I'm sure that's correct no Christian will go through the tribulation there is nothing in scripture that gives you the slightest indication of talking about the blessed tribulation you read of the blessed the happy hope but never the blessed tribulation we have been delivered from wrath but then there is a present wrath now when our country I'm referring to Britain a country that I love brought in

the easy way of divorce we knew that judgment was coming and then when they licensed homosexuality we were certain judgment was coming and now it's coming all its view and thousands are unemployed and in that state people are now beginning to turn to God you may see a similar situation in Australia that's why all of us should be ready for a harvest of soul because when the toys are taken away people begin to think of God Laodicea is a terrible disease that has affected the church of God when we love the material more than spirit well there is a wrath that's to come there is wrath that's imminent but remember the Lord Jesus has delivered us from the wrath to come but don't stop there now can you see from that one setting if we had salvation that affected people like they did in the first

century we would see Sydney really bubbling with blessing but you see the gospel that we preach is so mediocre that it doesn't really touch the lives of people look at these early Christians that were suffering tremendous persecution they turned to God from idols serving the Lord like slaves the living God waiting for his son from heaven even Jesus that delivered us from the wrath to come but go on now we come into the second chapter verse 17 that we brethren being taken from you for a short time in presence not in harm endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire now if you go through this epistle you will find this that he uses the face more than he does in any other epistle now why he wanted to see the face now your face is not really defined by the refinement of

your features your face as far as God is concerned expresses intelligence expresses identity and it can express spirituality they looked unto him and were radiant again I'm quoting now from Ephesians 5 awake thou that sleepest arise from the dead ones and Christ shall give thee light that means radiance in other words there is something about the faces of people who are spirit filled who are radiant I'm not talking about your features I'm not even talking about your inner personality but there's something about people who are filled with the spirit who are filled with the joy of the Lord and we need that we need a face that reflects something of the loveliness of Christ now go on wherefore we would have come unto you even I Paul once and again but Satan hindered us now do you believe that

do you believe that you know in my own life there were times when I wanted to go to a group of Christians and everything was arranged but I knew that the devil hindered sometimes by sickness sometimes by immorality Satan can hinder now let me say this in passing it's wrong for the servant of the Lord to be governed meticulously by a diary that can hinder us you mustn't imagine that God is going to be squeezed into our tram line always remember this he is transcendent he is outside of time and space his imminent he projects his glory into everything that he makes and you cannot put the almighty God in the tram lines of our minds we must be open to the leading of the spirit all of us so that all our service is really controlled by him and constantly as companies of people we must begin to

say to God are we in the will of God by doing this don't go by the clock don't go by the diary but go by the direction of the spirit now this mighty man of God was hindered in coming to them always remember that and that's we need to be constantly for what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing now I've heard believers say that we shouldn't serve for reward now I don't believe that if the reward is the motive for your service that is wrong but the Lord Jesus distinctly said that we should lay up treasure in heaven now that is emphatic and in the scripture there are rewards for instance we shall all have a glorified body now we're going to discuss that tomorrow night but there will be some Christians more like Christ than others you see the more Christ forms in you now he will take from

the body of humiliation or at least the soul that's in that body of humiliation and put it in the body of glory and therefore this particular crown of rejoicing is a soul winning crown let's read on so we get the context for what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming now here's something that I must weigh up before you now the people that I might lead to Christ during this mission will probably be not my souls when I stand some of you dear people are going to bring in the unsaved some of you have prayed for them in fact agonized for them especially your children now when you stand before the fema I may be the last link in the chain but they're not my souls the souls that will be with me are those that I have influence in

my own area by my life now let's ask a question how many people am I influencing for Christ if the Lord came tonight would there be many standing around you now I know some of our sisters will say but we're not all as brave as probably what some people are it doesn't matter about bravery even a godly life is a witness for instance I remember in my own area where I go from door to door knocking in order that people might come to know the Lord I was speaking to one lady and she was talking about a sister in the assembly now she's quiet she's reserved and she's always saying I'm not much of a testimony but what that lady told me about this particular sister in Christ was beautiful when she comes in and attends to us she's like an angel that's the witness here is a father in the home and he's

got some boys that are wayward if he keeps blowing his top is he a witness when those boys are saved they will praise God for the life of their godly heart so when we stand before the fema all the people that we have influence will stand with us and that's where Paul wanted to see the converse complete in him as he stands before Christ at the beaming go on for what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing honor even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming for ye are our glory and our joy now why constantly this man of God had been praying for these Christians that Christ might be formed in them and God was answering his prayer although he wasn't with them now if God raises up in your ministry in your meeting a godly sister who spends hours in prayer or a godly brother

praise God for him you can never tell the spirituality of a man by the hours he spends over the word that might be a natural ability you can tell the spirituality of any man by the hours that he spends in prayer now let's look at this carefully for ye are our glory and our joy this man was a mighty man of prayer and he was praying that Christ should be formed in them let's get to the third chapter and we have to close here verse 11 now God himself and our father referring of course to relationships and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way unto you now can you see that Paul wanted all his movements to be in the direct will of God now I wonder if I could open my heart and discuss something with you that my wife and I discussed just before she died we were going to places preaching the

gospel that had the usual mission once a year and quite frankly some of these places we saw no blessing whatever my wife and I were having our reading together and we were up to John 12 and we read that

little expression that where I am there shall my servant be immediately after the reading my wife said did that stand out as you read it Peter I said what's your reaction I believe that we're going to places where God is not working and she quietly said amen when we receive an invitation from the assembly to go let's pray so that we are sure that we're in the will of God at that time I was having a mission in Newcastle and as you know they have a 1200 seater tent and the place was being packed and in the morning I was ministering the scriptures from 11 to 12 and I was standing at one tent

door shaking hands with some of the people and a man came up to me and I shall never forget he says brother I've got a word from the Lord for you I said what's that that where I am there shall my servant be I nearly fell through the grass therefore it's absolutely essential that in all the missions and in all movements should we should be in the will of God look at it again so we get the the impact of this God himself and our father and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way unto you and the Lord make you to increase and to abound in love one toward another and toward all men even as we do toward you to the end he may establish your heart unblameable in holiness before God even our father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all things now you will notice the word unblameable in

holiness there is no such thing in scripture as sinless perfection but we are told to be unblameable in holiness now could I now speak to those who have the authority of overseer make sure your life is unblameable in holiness remember scores are following you and watching you that is why all of us have to be very careful what we do especially in regard to marriage if you are married only let one person and only one be the object of your physical affection and no one else the same applies to the wife you see there is moral sin in the local church far more than we realize and all of us have got to be an example to the Lord that is why when the Lord comes all of us should say am I unblameable in holiness how vital this is and with that I'm going to close but I'll read it again so that the

impact comes to us to the end that he may establish your heart unblameable in holiness before God even our father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all that means after we have stood before the beamer and we have been corrected for anything in our life that may not be related to holiness we shall come with him to reign with him when he comes to set up his kingdom upon us

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