

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

by

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CHAPTER SIX

THE BLESSED HOPE

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It is Purifying—Pacifying—Comforting—Glorious—Promised Glories—What Should be our Present Attitude?

WHATEVER MEANING we may put on the prophetic event introduced in the Scriptures as our Lord's second coming, we must observe that it is frequently specified as A HOPE. And as hope implies expectation, the conviction of something unfulfilled, that term alone designates the Advent as a future thing.

Hope is the opposite of despair. It has a definite object in view, and as that object is apprehended at hand or remotely, the soul is swayed by delight or discouragement. The blessed hope and coming in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ should not be relegated to the regions of mystery.

How can it be a hope of any value if it be some uncertain, indefinite, faraway, and nonessential theory which happened to drop into the Bible? In fifty-three places where hope is referred to in the divine Word, it has special relation to future blessings which are to crown the Christian believer at the appearing of Jesus Christ. A few of these we might examine:

1. IT IS A BLESSED HOPE

“Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

A blessed hope means a happy one. The word refers to inward enjoyment apart from external environment. The expectations implied in such a hope make all present circumstances of trial or depression **“not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.”**

2. IT IS A PURIFYING HOPE

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

As linen bleaches under the sun, the light of this hope cleanses the life from the world-stains. It loosens the grasp from the things of earth. The man who has a magnificent mansion in some beautiful locality, and is only tarrying in a city hotel for a few days till he can journey home, will not care to spend his time and money in elaborately decorating his temporary lodging in the strange city. If he purchases bric-a-brac or pictures, the thought in his mind is, "I will take them home." So the Christian, who reckons himself a "**pilgrim and a stranger**" here, will have little heart to spend his energies on things pertaining merely to the earthly. His city and his home lie beyond. His great concern will be to lay up treasures in heaven."

3. IT IS A PACIFYING HOPE

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God." "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

In the power of this hope all questions of provocation can be patiently laid aside for the Lord to settle on His arrival. The child of God who is pervaded with this hope will be willing to waive all rights of self-vindication, knowing that his "**labor of love and patience of hope**" will not go unrewarded.

4. IT IS A COMFORTING HOPE

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope."

The luster of this hope shines most conspicuously in the consolation it brings to those who are called to part with their loved ones by death. The unbelieving bury their dead without any certain or definite expectation of reunion. For in no human scheme of philosophy is the truth of a resurrection even hinted at. But the Scriptures definitely promise this. "**For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.**" The Apostle Paul, after explaining all this to the Thessalonian Christians, and showing them the immense advantage they had over the heathen who knew nothing about the advent majesty of Jesus Christ, or of the resurrection, add finally, "**Wherefore comfort one another with these words.**"

5. IT IS A GLORIOUS HOPE

"For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself."

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure . . . Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.”

This hope would be meaningless apart from the locality and the circumstances where it anchors itself. It leaps over time and space to the period when Jesus Christ shall Himself be glorified as King of kings according to the eternal purpose of the Father.

PROMISES

This blessed hope embraces several promised glories:

1. *We shall be with Christ.* Not as in death, when we are said to be **“unclothed”** and **“waiting to be clothed upon with our house from heaven.”** In an actual sense we shall **“see Him as He is,”** and be ourselves like Him, personally and morally.
2. *We shall be beyond sinning.* Now we groan for deliverance. Pain and the curse encompass us. The consummation of that hope will bring full redemption to the body.
3. *We shall know as we are known.* **“Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”**

What joy to have the hope of one day being masters of all knowledge; to understand the mysteries of science, the marvels of astronomy, the secrets of nature, and the profound depths of the soul!

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR PRESENT ATTITUDE?

We ought to be looking for the blessed crisis. That is, expecting it with desire. We should be praying for it and thereby seek to hasten it. We should anticipate its consummation by our endeavor of personal faithfulness toward all that it involves. We ought to be loving it. If we love the seed of Abraham, if we love the burdened brute creation, if we love the heathen Gentile nations who know nothing of a Saviour, we shall joyfully welcome this hope, for their sakes also. For it is the hope that shall I bring to the Jew his Messiah; to the creature his emancipation from man’s exacting dominion; to mute nature her freedom from thorns and thistles; to the heathen idolater a knowledge of the true and’ living God; and to the waiting Bride the personal presence of the heavenly Bridegroom. Yea, it will bring to Jesus His Kingdom, Crown and Throne.

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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