

PERHAPS THIS WILL BE THE YEAR
A Message On The Rapture
Tit. 2:11-15

Intro: It is common for men to make predictions at the beginning of a new year. There will be speculations regarding:
--business,
--war,
--politics,
--and many other things.

As Christians we are, or should be, interested in all of these things, BUT THERE IS ONE OTHER THING THAT WE SHOULD BE SUPREMELY INTERESTED IN. It is this: PERHAPS THIS WILL BE THE YEAR WHEN THE LORD WILL RETURN FOR THE CHURCH.

Is this just an escape?

Possibly some use it this way, but what does the Word of God have to say about this? Do we have a right to expect the Lord to return this year? If so, is it important for us to look for His return?

Young people especially look forward to life. They would like a chance to do something. And what a tragedy it is if we ever lose this! BUT, EVEN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO KNOW THE LORD, IS IT RIGHT AND SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY FOR YOU TO BE LOOKING FOR, YES, EVEN PRAYING FOR, THE RETURN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?

Read Tit. 2:11-15.

Beginning with this passage tonight I would like to examine a number of passages which deal with this truth to see what the benefits are if we are expecting our Lord to return. What does it mean in the life of an individual Christian?

I. IT REVEALS THAT WE HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF ALL OF THE GOSPEL (cf. the Tit. passage).

The Gospel is not complete without this truth. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:19,

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," i.e., most to be pitied.

In Rom. 8:29 we read that we are predestined "to be conformed to the image of his Son." The Apostle John tells us that this will take place when we see Him as He is. Cf. 1 John 3:2.

The person who is only concerned about the here and now is a person who has not seen the very goal, the destiny and destination of those who are saved.

II. IT WILL PRODUCE A DESIRE IN YOUR HEART TO BE HOLY.

Do you sometimes get concerned because sin does not always seem to be sinful to you? THEN ASK THE LORD TO GIVE YOU A REAL LOVE IN YOUR HEART FOR THIS TRUTH, TO CREATE IN YOU A REAL SENSE OF EXPECTATION AND ANTICIPATION REGARDING THE COMING OF THE LORD!

- A. You will begin to think more about what it will mean to you. See our text, v. 14.

Have you ever looked longingly ahead to the time when it will no longer be possible for you to sin? When you can never again do anything that will displease the Lord, OR YOU?

That will never happen until you are with the Lord.

- B. You will begin to realize what it means to you right now. Cf. Tit. 2:12; John 3:3.

One of the greatest incentives for living a holy life today is that the Lord may come today. When you are expecting someone, regardless of who it may be, things are just different. How much more so with the Lord!

III. IT IS THE MOST ENCOURAGING DOCTRINE WE HAVE.

- A. It will encourage you in your service which you render to the Lord. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:57, 58.
- B. It will encourage you through the difficult circumstances of your life. Cf. Rom. 8:28, 29; 1 Pet. 1:6, 7. See also Rom. 8:18.
- C. It will bring you peace and encouragement when your loved ones are taken to be with the Lord. Cf. 1 Thess. 4:18. This verse follows the most detailed passage we have on The Rapture.

IV. IT WILL REVEAL THE FACT THAT YOU REALLY DO LOVE THE LORD.

Can you imagine loving a person, but not wanting to be with him (or her, as the case may be)? There is no place we would rather be than with those we love. HOW MUCH MORE SHOULD THIS BE TRUE OF OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE COMING OF THE LORD!

Cf. 1 Pet. 1:8, 9.

The trouble is that too often this never gets beyond the place of being a doctrine, and perhaps a controversial doctrine! The Lord wants us to take it as a positive promise

that He

"will come again, and receive" us "unto" himself, "that where" he is, "there" we "may be also." Cf. John 14:3.

V. IT WILL BE AN INDICATION THAT WE UNDERSTAND AT LEAST A LITTLE ABOUT HOW MUCH THE LORD LOVES US.

Cf. John 17:23, 24.

Concl: In view of all of these things, should we not do more than just say, "Perhaps this will be the year." Does it not seem even more consistent with the Word of God that we pray, as John prayed, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20b)?

I trust that you have seen tonight that this truth is important, not just for the promises it holds regarding the future, BUT BECAUSE OF WHAT THE ANTICIPATION, THE EXPECTATION, IS DESIGNED BY GOD HIMSELF TO MEAN TO US NOW!