

## OUR BLESSED HOPE

Titus 2:11-15

What is God doing in His world today? Has He revealed any of this to us? Can we understand something of what is happening in all the turmoil that is around us? The answer is yes, He has revealed to us all that we need to know in order to have peace in the midst of all the trouble.

He has made many promises to us concerning our daily lives and our future. One of the most blessed of those promises is that of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth. We are to be “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”

When He returns, He will first take His bride out of the world then judge the world and prepare it for His kingdom. He will then rule the world personally for 1,000 years. This is the blessed hope of the believer.

To help us understand something of what God is doing in His world today, we must rightly divide the word of truth. **2 Timothy 2:15**, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” We must allow the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. **John 16:13-14**, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

As we do this, we learn first of all that God is definitely ruling in the affairs of this world. **Daniel 4:17, 25, 35**, “This matter *is* by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.” “...the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” “...he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”

We also learn that within this present age between the first and second coming of Christ, God has two very special and very distinct programs that He is bringing to fulfillment. One is the church. The other is Israel. God has a divine plan for each, but they are separate and do not overlap.

God is working openly with the church. Its primary purpose is the preaching of gospel and getting people saved. It is to be a good influence on the world. God is working behind the scenes with Israel to bring the nations in line for His kingdom and His 1,000-year reign here on earth.

The church is an intervention within the program of God for Israel because of Israel’s rejection of the Messiah at His first coming. When the church is completed, when Christ finishes calling out a people for His name made up of Jews and Gentiles, which will be His bride, He will return and take His bride with Him to Heaven. We call this event the rapture of the church (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

### **I. WHEN WILL THE RAPTURE TAKE PLACE?**

The rapture is an event, which is imminent, meaning that we are to expect it to happen at any time.

#### **A. It is next on God’s calendar of events.**

The Bible is very clear as to the basic order of the major events of the second coming. The rapture is next. It takes place before the millennium and before the tribulation. It is next.

##### ***1. This is based on the normal, literal method of interpretation.***

This means, simply stated, that you interpret the Bible by allowing the words to mean what they say and to say what they mean. Unless it is clearly indicated by the passage that they are not to be taken literally, the words are taken literally to mean what they say in our normal understanding of words.

##### ***2. This is based on promises given to the church, the body of true believers.***

a. The Lord has delivered us from the wrath to come.

**1 Thessalonians 1:10**, “And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

b. We are not appointed to wrath.

**1 Thessalonians 5:9**, “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,”

c. We will be delivered from the hour of temptation.

**Revelation 3:10**, “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”

d. The church is not seen in the description of the tribulation (Rev. 4-19)

**Revelation 3:22**, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” **Revelation 4:1**, “After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.” The church will be removed or raptured from the earth before that judgment begins. We will escape that time of wrath. This is illustrated by Lot’s removal before the destruction of Sodom.

### **B. It is secret as to the exact date.**

**Acts 1:7**, “And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. **1 Thessalonians 5:1-2**, “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”

## **II. WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE RAPTURE?**

### **A. There will be a resurrection (1 Thes. 4:14, 16).**

**1. This is the beginning of the first resurrection (John 5:28-29; Rev 20:5-6).**

- a. There is no general resurrection and judgment.
- b. There is the resurrection of the just- before the millennium.
- c. There is the resurrection of the damned- after the millennium.

**2. This is the resurrection of the dead in Christ.**

### **B. There will be a departure from the earth (1 Thes. 4:17).**

**1. This is a sudden event (1 Cor. 15:51-52).**

**2. This is a sobering event.**

- a. Families will be disrupted. Churches will be disrupted. Businesses will be disrupted.
- b. Hospitals will be disrupted. Cemeteries will be disrupted.

### **C. There will be rejoicing because of victory (1 Cor. 15:57)**

**1. Over death and the grave (1 Cor. 15:53-56)**

**2. Over this frail body and over sin**

**Philippians 3:20-21**, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall 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.”

### **D. There will be a reunion (1 Thes. 4:17)**

**1. With loved ones**

**2. With Jesus Himself**

**1 John 3:2**, “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.” **Revelation 22:4**, “And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.”

## **III. WHAT SHOULD WE DO TO PREPARE?**

### **A. We must be born again.**

### **B. We are to watch for His return.**

**Titus 2:11-13**, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”

**C. We are to purify ourselves.**

**1 John 3:1-3**, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 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 every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” **1 John 2:28**, “And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

**C. We are to be about our Father's business until He returns.**

**Mark 16:15**, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” **2 Corinthians 5:17-21**, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Make no mistake. Jesus will return to this earth personally, physically, and visibly. He will take His own out of this world. In the meantime, we are to be about the business of winning souls and making disciples. Are you prepared to meet Him?