

The Coming of Christ

#6

1 John 2:28-3:3

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Perhaps you have recognized in reading the Bible that the second coming of Jesus Christ is one of the most frequently mentioned truths in all the Bible. This great hope of the Christian is found almost on every page of the New Testament. Yet it is puzzlingly strange that it is one of the neglected doctrines of our day. There are people who are totally unaware that the Bible teaches that Christ is to return to this earth for His Church. Yet this has been the hope of believers in every age and has sustained them in the darkest hours of the persecution of the Church.
- B. When we try to tell others that Christ will return, they look at us as if we were crazy and chalk us off as religious fanatics. But the coming of Christ is as certain as any event in God's program for this world.
- C. If the world thinks the Christian to be crazy, let them, but God's Word remains true. As someone of the Campus Crusade group put it, "We are all nuts, but the difference is, we Christians are screwed on to the right bolt."

II. The Coming of Christ Means Accountability to Christ 2:28-29

- A. ***"And now, dear children, continue in him,"*** – The Apostle John commands that all Christians should abide in Christ. The Christian is to be occupied with Christ, taken up with Christ, operating on Christ's power, obeying Christ and living every moment for Him. **Phil. 1:21: "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."** **Phil. 4:13: "I can do everything through him who gives me strength."** Christ is to be the center of the believer's affection and attention and everything is to be related to Him.
- B. ***"So that when he appears..."*** – This appearing is the appearing of Jesus Christ a second time to receive His Church to Himself. The fact of His return is absolutely certain but the time of His return is unsettled. Only God knows when He will return but it could be any moment – this year, this month, this week, or this very hour. Christ is coming! **1 Thess. 4:16-18: "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words."**
- C. ***"We may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming."*** – At the return of Christ, a Christian will either have confidence, boldness or freedom when the Lord returns or he will shrink back in embarrassment. This verse teaches

that every Christian is going to give an account of his life to Christ. This will take place at the Judgment Seat of Christ after His return for the Church. **2 Cor. 5:10:** ***“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”*** – There is coming a day of judgment for Christians, not for sin but for service. Christ died for every Christian’s sin, therefore a Christian can never be judged eternally for sin but he will be judged for his good works and faithfulness to Jesus Christ. There is a day coming when that which is hidden shall be revealed, where everything covered will be uncovered, and that which has been spoken in secret will be shouted from the housetops. It is the day of reality when the secrets of men will be judged by the Lord Jesus. **1 Cor. 3:12-15:** ***“If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. 1 Cor. 4:5: “Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.”*** Men will be judged for indecent actions, hurtful attitudes, and neglected opportunities. The secret to having boldness at His coming is to be constantly abiding in Christ and redeeming the time for Him.

Paul Anderson, the World Champion Weight Lifter and dedicated Christian said the following about his life when he was not a dedicated Christian. “We go through life looking back and thinking, Boy, what I could have done. This is the way I remember Russia. I became one of the most popular men in the Soviet Union. I couldn’t go out in public without being mobbed. Radio announcers trailed me when I appeared on the streets. I caught the empty stares of the young people and reflect now that I could have told them about the One who puts a sparkle in the eyes, but I failed to lift up our Lord. Not once did I mention the name of Jesus Christ because at that time I was not living for him. A once-in-a-lifetime chance to witness behind the Iron Curtain was lost.”

- D. ***“If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.”*** – Now the Apostle John reminds them that practicing righteousness is an essential characteristic of being a true Christian. There were many Gnostic heretics of that day that thought a head full of knowledge was enough for salvation, but John says there must be moral evidences of true saving faith. A changed life is the mark of a true Christian. The God who saves is the righteous God of heaven and earth and every true child of God will progressively manifest this righteousness in his life. This is how we can tell whether one is truly born of God!

Do you have a desire for holiness of life? Do you long for more conformity to Christ? Are you convicted of sin in your life? These are signs that you are a true child of God.

Children bare resemblances to their parents because they have the same nature. There is a family mark. A Christian produces righteousness because he shares the righteous nature of God.

III. THE COMING OF CHRIST MEANS PERFECT CONFORMITY TO CHRIST 3:1-2

- A. ***“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us,”*** – The Apostle John is astonished and awed at the Father’s love. Christians have become objects of God’s love rather than objects of His wrath. God has taken a rebellious sinner and made him a child of God and loved of the Father. Unworthy, corrupt, vile and odious sinners changed by the grace of God and made children of the household of God. That is love!
- B. ***“That we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”*** – A strange love, indeed, that would take a hater of God and make him a child of God. Are you astonished that you are a child of God? If you are not, then you don’t understand the person of God or the depths of your own sin! Christian people do you know the depth of sin you were in when God found you? And do you know that you would still be there if God had not found you? What kind of pride is it that makes us think of ourselves as some kind of special catch that God has made? What arrogance is it that makes us think that we consented to join God’s side? No! No! See what manner of love God has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. We who were proud sinners, ungodly folk who were indifferent to God but God made us His children. Man’s response to God’s grace and love is to believe on Jesus Christ. The only one God ever calls His child is one who has exercised personal faith in Jesus Christ. **Gal. 3:26** ***“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”***

God is not the Father of all mankind and the Bible never says that He is, but he is the Creator of all men, but only those who know Christ personally are the children of God. The concept of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all men cannot be found anywhere in the whole Bible!

- C. ***“The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”*** – Because every Christian is a child of God, he belongs to the family of God and the unsaved world cannot grasp nor understand this. The reason the world does not know us is because it does not know Him.

Do not be surprised if the world discounts your Christian testimony, laughs in your face, and makes scornful, even contemptuous remarks about what you believe. Every new convert to Christ finds the scorn of the world when, in the flush of his new-found enthusiasm for Christ, he goes back to his family and

friends to tell them he has now become a child of God. He expects them to glow with enthusiastic response, but he meets with coldness and “Oh, is that so? I’ll watch and see attitude.” He feels that first bucket of cold water thrown upon his faith. Why? The world doesn’t understand.

- D. **“Dear friends, now we are children of God,”** – The emphasis in the Greek is upon the now. All Christians are the sons of God now! Once a son or daughter is in God’s family, one can never lose that position. Eternal life belongs to us now. We have the life of Christ in us now. We are the heirs of all God’s glory and promises now.
- E. **“And what we will be has not yet been made known.”** – Here is an admission of ignorance by the Apostle John for he says he doesn’t know everything about the state and condition of the redeemed in heaven. Furthermore God doesn’t want us to know because we couldn’t really understand or grasp for it is going to be too wonderful for words. It is sinful to speculate or to pry into things which God has not been pleased to make known.
- F. **“But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him,”** – John does say that at the second coming of Christ for His Church we shall be like him in that we shall have a spiritual body like our Lord’s body. **Phil 3:20-21: “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”** In our redeemed bodies we shall be free of sin forever. We will be perfectly conformed to Jesus Christ with not one imperfection in our whole make up. What a day! No more problems, no more conflict with sin, no more hatred, jealousy, envy, pride. To be spiritually perfect is beyond our human ability to understand at this point in our life.
- G. **“For we shall see him as he is.”** – At the second coming of Christ, we shall no longer see through a glass darkly but we shall see Him face to face. We shall know Him completely and totally. That One on whom we have believed and not seen will now be seen and completely known. We shall be able to understand Him, to enter into perfect communion with him and to fellowship completely with Him. The Bible tells us very little positive about heaven. But it does state a few negative things to help us understand what heaven is not – there will be no tears, no more sorrow, no night, no death, no separation, no sickness, and no pain. But the positive truth of heaven is that is where Christ is and heaven is complete, total and final fellowship, occupation and communion with Christ. What else do we need?

IV. THE COMING OF CHRIST MEANS HOLINESS OF LIFE NOW 3:3

- A. **“Everyone who has this hope in him”** – This is the hope of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for his Church. This is the great anticipation for every true child of God. He longs for the coming of Jesus Christ.

Martha Snell Nicholson, who, for more than thirty-five years was an invalid, bound to her bed, and yet whose spirit was triumphant in Christ said: “The best part is the blessed hope of his soon coming. How I ever lived before I grasped that wonderful truth, I do not know. How anyone lives without it these trying days I cannot imagine. Each morning I think, with a leap of the heart, ‘He may come today.’ And each evening, ‘When I awake I may be in glory.’ Each day must be lived as though it were to be my last, and there is so much to be done to purify myself and to set my house in order. I am on tiptoe with expectancy. There are no more grey days—for they’re all touched with color; no more dark days—for the radiance of His coming is on the horizon; no more lonely days, with His footstep coming ever nearer, and the thought that soon, soon, I shall see His blessed face and be forever through with pain and tears.”

- B. **“Purifies himself, just as he is pure.”** -- The hope of the coming of Christ produces a desire to live for Jesus Christ right now. We know we may meet him face to face at any given moment and we want to be ready and meet him with boldness and confidence. The Apostle John is stressing man’s responsibility to exercise his will in living the Christian life. The real sanctifier is God, the Holy Spirit, but we must, by an act of our wills, appropriate the power of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the means God has provided for the Christian to progressively purify himself in this life. A supernatural power is given to live the supernatural Christian life.

V. CONCLUSION

- A. Today we have spoken about the coming of Christ in relation to His Church. But Christ in His second advent will also come to earth to judge every person who does not have Christ in his life. **2 Thess. 1:7-9: “And give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.”** The non-Christian has only wrath, judgment and eternal punishment to look forward to beyond this life.
- B. But God has promised eternal life and heaven to all who will receive His Son, Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Beyond this earthly life, which is but a fleeting moment, the Christian looks forward to heaven and perfect fellowship with Christ.

- C. The Bible says, ***“He that believes on the Son has everlasting life,”*** and ***“He that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.”***