



## **HOLY LIVING AND THE SECOND COMING**

### **KEY VERSE:**

***Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 John 3:3).***

**1 Thessalonians 5:8.** But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

9. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10. Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

11. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

22. Abstain from all appearance of evil.

23. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

**II Peter 3:10.** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

**1 John 3:1.** 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.

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.

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

### **Background Scriptures**

Psalm 24; James 5:7, 8; II Peter 3:1-16  
Revelation 20:6; 22:11

### **Devotional Reading**

1 Corinthians 15:49-54

### **Central Truth:**

***The life of the believer must be characterized by holy living in order to be prepared for the Second Coming of Christ.***



## **THE LESSON EXPOSITION**

### **BACKGROUND**

In last Sunday's lesson it was observed that holiness is the foundational preparation for Christian service. One cannot accomplish the spiritual tasks assigned by God without spiritual preparation. That spiritual preparation involves repentance of sin, reconciliation to God through faith, and being made "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Tim. 2:21). Isaiah laid down the condition for acceptable service to Jehovah: "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD" (52:11). The Lord gave emphasis to the same truth when, after charging the disciples with the Great Commission, He "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me" (Acts 1:4). He also instructed them, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

In today's lesson the scriptures are heavy with the fact that entire sanctification is the proper spiritual preparation for the Second Coming of Christ to rapture the pure in heart. It is most interesting to observe the number of places in Scripture in which the vital relationship between moral purity and the Second Coming of Jesus is so prominent. A few of those passages comprise today's lesson.



## I. A PROPER PREPARATION (1 Thess. 5:8-11)

**1 Thessalonians 5:8. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith.** "Here the believer is pictured in the character of a soldier, armed and ready for conflict. In **Eph. 6:11-17** the Christian's armour is described in greater detail, mentioning the offensive as well as the defensive. Here he called attention to the defensive weapons that are available to the Christian soldier. He referred to this figure again in Romans 13:12-14, where he insisted that to 'put ... on the Lord Jesus Christ' is practically tantamount to putting on the 'armour of light.' In this passage Paul's exhortations imply the alertness and military precision of an armed sentry on guard" (Terry Pollard).

**9. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation.** "The believer's character as a 'good soldier of Jesus Christ' must be seen in the perspective of his exalted destiny. God's people are not only 'sons of light'; they will not only escape the wrath which the 'day of the Lord' will inflict upon the ungodly; but they are also appointed to obtain eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. Eternal salvation is God's appointed provision for man; that is to say, for 'whosoever' wills to accept it" (Terry Pollard).

**10. Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.** "Christ alone is our hope of salvation and immortality. For the Christian whose heart is fixed upon Christ, the question of whether we wake or sleep is incidental to the glorious hope that we shall live together with Him. We may therefore face the worst that this world has to offer, even death itself, in the unshaken conviction that, we will be one with Him in that life which is everlasting. As we are one with Him in the death which He died for us, so we are one with Him in that life which has triumphed over death" (Terry Pollard).

**11. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another.** "Believers are called to the unique ministry of mutual edification and comfort. The word **comfort** here signifies 'exhort.' Paul used the word **comfort** more than fifty times in his Epistles. But Christians are also urged to build up, **edify** one another. The Thessalonians were already engaged in this ministry – **even as also ye do** – and needed only this further word from Paul to spur them on to still greater solicitude and affection for one another. Would that all of God's people today were as diligent in this regard!" (Terry Pollard).



## II. A BLAMELESS PRESERVATION (1 Thess. 5:22-24; II Peter 3:10-14)

**1 Thessalonians 5:22. Abstain from all appearance of evil.** The injunction is not to avoid only those things which appear to be evil. The real meaning is "Avoid every kind of evil." There are many kinds of evil which Satan and his helpers present in such harmless and even necessary forms. Even these forms of evil must be discerned, understood, and avoided. According to Paul, even "the lesser of two evils" is to be avoided. If the choice is between two evils, choose neither.

**23. The very God of peace sanctify you wholly.** In response to man's part in the sanctification crisis, complete consecration, God does what only He can do, **sanctify you wholly**. God cannot consecrate for a believer, nor can a believer sanctify himself. **Sanctify you wholly** (or through and through) indicates the instantaneous work of purifying or cleansing, while **preserved blameless unto** is the work of God in perpetuating the state thus instantaneously wrought. **Spirit and soul and body** indicates that the entire personality is to be maintained in a state of actual blamelessness. It is interesting to note that "faultlessness" is not here demanded. Saints are **preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**. Jude declared that God can keep Christians from falling (preserve them) until in "the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" they are presented **faultless** (v. 24). We are preserved blameless, then presented faultless, after having been changed.

**24. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.** It is God who has called men to holiness (**1 Thess. 4:7**), and because He is faithful, He will do what men cannot do, sanctify them wholly. The unsanctified (those without the wedding garment of righteousness) will be speechless when turned away from the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

**II Peter 3:10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.** "While God is merciful I delaying the coming of the Lord, He has not cancelled this event, even though some ancient scoffers and some modern critics have thus interpreted the delay. The date is still on His calendar, and will be met in 'the fullness of the time,' just as the first advent was (**Gal. 4:4**). The main thoughts expressed here are perfectly clear: (1) Christ's coming is certain, though future; (2) it will be sudden and without warning; (3) it will be accompanied by great cataclysmic events. The certainty of God's program and the unpredictability of men bring to mind the words of Alfred Lord Tennyson: 'Our little systems have their day; they have their day and cease to be. They are but broken lights of Thee and thou, O Lord, are more than they'" (Terry Pollard).

**11. What manner of persons ought ye to be ...?** In this rhetorical question Peter gave the answer. Christians ought to be persons of **all holy conversation and godliness**. God will enable one to be what he ought to be, and to do what he ought to do. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (**Phil. 2:13**).

**12, 13. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.** There is in store for this world judgment such as it has never known – fiery judgment. The fiery indignation to be loosed upon this world will be only a foretaste of the eternity of wrath when "the wicked shall be turned into hell." However, those who have faith

in the promise of God **look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness**. No unrighteousness shall enter heaven.

**14. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace.** "This exhortation is to peaceful and blameless living. It is based upon the believer's looking for **such things** to come to pass. **Such things** probably refers to the new heaven, new earth, and righteousness. It is only righteousness that can dwell in the new earth; therefore, we should cleanse ourselves from all unrighteousness. Peter's emphasis was similar to the exhortation in **Heb. 12:14**: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."



### **1 John 3:1 That we should be called the sons of God.**

Being a child of God is the foundation of "this hope" of Jesus' Second Coming possessed by the Christian as expressed in **verse 3**. The world that refuses to know or acknowledge the claims of God will not consider or acknowledge the claims of the Christian.

**2. It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know.** The hope of the Christian is characterized by an element of mystery. There is a great deal of mystery associated with Christ's Second Coming and the last times.

Man does not know fully the nature of a glorified or spiritual body, the employ of glorified saints, or existence that is not measured by duration. These are mysteries Christians accept in faith. But there are solid certainties also. There are at least three of these certainties in this verse: 1. **He shall appear**, 2. **We shall be like him**, 3. **We shall see him as he is**.

**3. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.** The possession of **this hope** will produce purity in life and cause one to trust the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse the heart or nature from all sin. Hope that is not productive of purity is not **this hope** but presumption. The person who lives carelessly and sinfully has no hope of Christ's return, but rather fear and dread. **Purifieth himself**. The Scripture does not teach self-sanctification. Uncle Bud Robinson is reported to have testified that it took two to sanctify him. When asked who the two were, he answered, "God and me. God sanctified me, and I let Him." God is more desirous to sanctify believers than believers usually are to be sanctified.



### **"KEY" COMMENTS**

**Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 John 3:3).**

**This hope** refers to the preceding verse: "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him." At Christ's appearance, the Christians' bodies will be changed "like unto his glorious body" (**Phil. 3:21**), but their present spiritual state will be carried over into the glorified realm. "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (**Rev. 22:11**).

**Every man ... purifieth himself, even as he is pure.** "This is certainly a high standard of Christian purity. Holiness is original in God and imparted to us, so that we actually have the holiness of our Saviour" (Godbey). "John ... dares to assert that we are pure 'as he is pure.' He can make this bold assertion because it is God who does the cleansing. It is because of this purifying that 'we shall be like him'" (**Beacon Bible Comm.**).

**Although the Christian** does not deliberately do anything that he knows to be wrong, there is a purity of life which is not immediately attained. Purity of heart is instantaneous, a definite work of God's grace. Purity of life is progressive, a day by day adding and subtracting in the life. It is God's work to purify the heart; it is man's work to purify the life (counselled by the Holy Ghost). The psalmist asked and answered the question, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word" (**Ps. 119:9**). By eschewing evil and clinging to good, by removing from his love and life those influences and deeds which are contrary to righteousness, by walking in the revealed light, the sanctified one finds that God ever leads into a closer, richer relationship with Himself. Salvation sets one on the solid foundation, Jesus Christ, but every man is responsible for the life he builds thereon. With the heart made pure, the sanctified individual is in the ideal position for development of Christian character, for a holy heart generates a life of holiness. When God tries every man's work, only that which is holy will stand.

"God having purified his heart, it is his business to keep himself 'in the love of God ...' The apostle does not here speak of any man purifying his own heart, because this is impossible; but of his persevering in the state of purity into which the Lord has brought him" (Clarke). And Paul exhorted the youthful Timothy, "Keep thyself pure."

If the key verse is to be taken as regarding the work of heart purity, it must be recognized that God only has the power to actually purify the heart. Man's part is to yield his "members as instruments of righteousness unto God," become crucified with Christ (**Gal. 2:20**), and by faith let God purify His temple. In this sense the Christian purifies himself by cooperating with God in this great work of grace.

*Purge me from every sinful blot:  
My idols all be cast aside:  
Cleanse me from every sinful thought,  
From all the filth of self and pride.*

*The hatred of the carnal mind  
Out of my flesh at once remove:  
Give me a tender heart, resigned,  
And pure, and full of faith and love.*

*Oh that I now, from sin released,  
Thy word might to the utmost prove,  
Enter into thy promised rest;  
The Canaan of thy perfect love!*

- Anonymous



## **EXPOSITION**

### **DOCTRINAL DISCUSSION**

Perhaps in this day it would be well to establish the truth of the Second Coming before we give the requirements for being included in that group that will be with God. We will give just the following references and refer you to a concordance for others.

**1 Thessalonians 4:15-17**, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

**Whether or not one should** go to heaven when the Lord comes will be based on whether we are born again and walking in the light. **1 John 1:7** says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Holiness will be needed to get to heaven. God has plainly stated in **Heb. 12:14** that holiness is the passport to heaven and thus seeing God.

Most theologians will not deny the need to be holy, but there is a vast difference in their thinking on the subject.

**One teaching** is that because we are not what we should be, God has prepared a place where fire will cleanse us from the sins that remain. It remains for those people to reconcile this with the statement that we are saved by the merits of the blood of Christ and that salvation is conditioned on **faith (Eph. 2:8)**.

**Another group agrees** that one has to be made holy, but they see it happening at death! Since death is an enemy to the Christian, it is unthinkable that God would use this as a medium for Him to perform the act of making us entirely sanctified. If He can do it at death, could He not do it now?

**There is a scripture** that makes it plain that we are to maintain holiness continually in our lives. **1 John 3:3**, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The Greek word here carries the idea of moral purity in our hearts. It is in the present tense and therefore gives us the idea that this purity should be maintained constantly.

Alexander Maclaren says, "If there is to be this purifying, it must be done by myself. 'Ah!' you say, 'done by yourself? That is not evangelical teaching.' Well, let us see. Take two or three verses out of this Epistle which ... seem to be contradictory of this. 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin' (1:7). 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1:9). 'Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not' (3:6). 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith' (5:4).

"Now if you put all these passages together, and think about the general effect of them, it comes to this: that our best way of cleansing ourselves is by keeping firm hold on Jesus Christ and the cleansing powers that lie in Him. To take a very homely illustration – soap and water wash your hands clean, and what you have to do is simply to rub the soap and water on to the hand, and bring them into contact with the foulness. You cleanse yourselves. Yes! because without the friction there would not be the cleansing. But is it you, or is it the soap, that does the work? Is it you or the water that makes your hands clean? And so when God comes and says, 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings, your hands are full of blood,' He says in effect, 'Take the cleansing that I give you and rub it in, and apply it: and your flesh will become as the flesh of a little child, and you shall be clean.'"

He further states that this is the connecting link between now and the future. I believe he is correct and our moral purity is that link to our being caught up with Christ to be with Him forever. Immoral filthiness will break that link, and we shall fail to be caught up!

W.H. Griffith Thomas says of **1 John 3:3**, "The paragraph appropriately ends by showing that sonship must of necessity have a practical result.

"1. The Incentive to Purity. Everyone that possessed this hope fixed on seeing and being like Christ hereafter will necessarily purify himself here and now. Purity is one of the requirements of sonship."

"2. The Standard of Purity. This purity is to be realized by means of nothing less than the purity of Christ himself, 'even as he is pure.' The thought that He is to be manifested and that we are to be like Him hereafter is to be our constant consideration day by day, and everything in thought, word and deed is to be related to Him" (**The Apostle John, Studies in His Life and Writings, The First Epistle**).

It is important to realize that the hope of the evangelical world is the return of Jesus for His Bride. No person who is deeply in love refuses to change himself or permit himself to be changed in order to have a harmonious relationship with his loved one. The true Church is purifying herself to be ready when He appears. Nevertheless, the story of the ten virgins is a serious warning that alertness is something we all will have to work at to keep from falling asleep and missing the Rapture. Constantly keeping our love life with Jesus will be our greatest incentive to being pure and thus being caught up to be with Him.



## **FOCUS**

### **WORKING WITH THE WORD!**

"**For God hath not appointed us to wrath (1 Thess. 5:9)**. In the previous verse, the apostle pictured the believer in the character of a soldier, armed and ready for conflict. The believer's character as a good soldier of Jesus Christ must be seen in the perspective of his exalted destiny. God's people are not only 'children of light'; they will not only escape the wrath which the 'day of the Lord' will inflict upon the ungodly; but they are also appointed to obtain eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. As we are one with Him in the death which He died for us, so we are one with Him in that life which has triumphed over death" (Terry Pollard).

**Wholly (v. 23)**. Paul's concluding prayer for the Thessalonians was that God would sanctify them wholly, or "May God himself, the God of peace sanctify you through and through." "This word is not found elsewhere in our Greek Bible, but its usage in the few instances known in literature leaves no doubt of its meaning. It is formed from *holos* (all) and *telos* (end), and suggests finality as well as completeness" (**The Interpreter's Bible**).

"It should be noted that **sanctify** is in the Greek aorist tense. In the preceding verses (19-22) Paul used the present tense, which indicates continuing action for the five verbs involved. But the aorist indicates, not continuing action or process, but an action which takes place and is conceived of as completed. This is not to say that the act is such as to preclude a continuing process of growth in holiness after the crisis. Paul **is**, however, praying for the purifying action of God in the lives of these believers so that they will say, 'The work has been done; we have been and are now, entirely sanctified (**Beacon Bible Comm.**)

**Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it (v. 24)**. In this verse is found evidence of a basic scripture principle. That is, that God does not tantalize men with impossible ideals or unreachable goals. What He gives as a precept, He provides as a possibility. This at once makes sanctification both a duty and a privilege. The Father is so gracious that He does not simply hold out this ideal of being sanctified wholly and then walk off and leave one to obtain it the best way he can. No, but He is faithful to each; He stays beside believers to give them this experience and to preserve them in this life.

**Be diligent (II Peter 3:14)**. Peter gave an invitation to look forward to the end time, and says there are some things that should consume one's attention. Diligence would certainly indicate bringing the powers of concentration to bear and giving utmost energy to bring about the object of one's diligence. Christians are first to be diligent to "be found of him in peace." Wesley comments on this that all "may meet Him without terror, be sprinkled with His blood, and sanctified by His Spirit." Then sanctified persons are to be without any outward impurity in their lives, and their motives are to be blameless in the sight of God. Although Christians are interested in the signs of the times, these are the things that should really claim their attention.

**Hope (1 John 3:3)**. In this verse hope and purity are seen as connected. It seems that hope is a motivation or incentive to purity. The purity mentioned here is more than a onetime purification, but encompasses the concept of a life that is continually kept pure. Hope will encourage one to be pure. Specifically, hope in the Second Coming will help keep one pure from worldly entanglements. Perhaps this is what the old-timers meant when they testified, "I'm wearing this world as a loose garment." If Christians are truly convinced that Jesus is coming, and if their hopes are fixed on that blessed and glorious event, then it becomes increasingly difficult for them to get mired down in the things of this world. Thus, it is clear that hope is a powerful inducement to purity.



## POINTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

### On Guard

It is said that a friend of the sainted Murray McCheyne, on a visit to London, was introduced to another man with the words, "This is a friend of McCheyne's."

"What!" said the gentleman, "Did you know that remarkable man?"

"Yes," he replied, "he was an intimate friend of mine."

"What do you think," asked the gentleman, "was the secret of McCheyne's holiness?" And without waiting for a reply, he answered his own question: "Don't you think it was watchfulness?"

The friend answered, "I think you are right." And he added, "He was always on guard."

### **Spiritual Soap and Water**

Speaking further of the word "watch," the late Dr. A.J. Gordon used to tell a humorous story that helps to illuminate its meaning in this case. When his children were small, it was his custom to spend his summer vacation with them at their old farmstead in New Hampshire. On one occasion, after being with them for a while, he surprised them by saying that he must return to Boston for an important business engagement.

But observing their disappointment at the thought of his absence, he comforted them by adding that he was coming back again, "And," said he, "I will expect you to be at the station watching for me."

The children went to see him off, but hardly had the train moved out of sight before they hastened back to the farm again and began pleading with their mother to wash their hands and faces and comb their hair, and put on clean aprons, or what not, that they might be ready to return to the station for the afternoon train! Moreover, this was repeated day after day until Dr. Gordon did return. Mrs. Gordon never knew her children to be so interested in soap and water in all their lives as they were on that particular occasion!

John's first Epistle emphasizes the motive where it is written, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, but it doth not 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 3:2, 3).



### **Notes: Instruction tips**

The lesson this week talks about the importance of living a holy life in order to be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The following questions concerning this topic might be used for either class or group discussion.

- 1. When is Jesus Christ returning to earth?** No one knows when He is coming back. There have been many who have predicted the date, but none were correct. The scripture (Matt. 24:36) makes it plain that no man knows the day nor the hour. (It would seem that time could be better spent **preparing** for His return instead of predicting the time of His return!)
- 2. What will it be like on earth at the time Jesus Christ returns? What are some of the signs to be present?** The Bible identifies a number of situations that will exist at the time of Christ's return.
  - a. There will be wars and rumours of wars (Matt. 24:6).
  - b. Nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom (Matt. 24:7).
  - c. There will be famines (Matt. 24:7).
  - d. There will be pestilences (Matt. 24:7). (**Vine's Expository Dictionary** calls them deadly, infectious maladies or illnesses.)
  - e. There will be earthquakes in many places through the earth (Matt. 24:7).
  - f. Many false prophets will arise and deceive many people (Matt. 24:11).
  - g. Sin or iniquity will abound, and the love of many will wax cold (Matt. 24:12).
  - h. It will be like it was in the days of Noah. There will be eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage (Matt. 24:38).
  - i. It will also be like it was in Lot's day. People will eat, drink, buy, sell, plant, build, and be involved in homosexuality (Luke 17:28; Gen. 19:5).
  - j. The church will be lukewarm (Rev. 3:14-16).
  - k. There will be a form of godliness, but a lack of power in some of the professed church (II Tim. 3:5).
  - l. People will be pleased-maddened (II Tim. 3:4).
  - m. A list of various descriptions of ungodliness is given in II Timothy 3:1-5. These sound very similar to conditions in our day. Luke 21:28 tells us that when these things occur to "lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."
- 3. Why has Jesus Christ delayed His Second Coming?** God loves mankind and does not want anyone to be eternally lost. It would seem that He has delayed His coming so that others may be saved (II Peter 3:9, 15). We

also know that God is gracious and longsuffering (Ex. 34:6). It is also possible that all necessary signs have not yet been fulfilled. All these point to possible answers for His delay.

**4. For whom is Christ returning?** He is coming only for those who are ready to meet Him – the redeemed and holy. 1 Thess. 4:16, 17 tells us that the dead in Christ will miraculously rise from the dead, and the Christians who are alive on earth will be caught up with them into the air to meet the Lord. Heart purity or holiness of heart is a must for these people (Matt. 5:8; Heb. 12:14).

**5. Who will be left behind at Christ's return?** Obviously, the sinners will be left behind. The scripture mentions several types of sinner who will be left.

a. It appears that some church people will profess, not possess, and be left behind (II Tim. 3:5; Matt. 7:21-23). Profession and good works are not enough to make it to heaven.

b. The unholy will be left (Rev. 20:6).

c. Revelation 21:8 lists the fearful and unbelieving, the abominable (unclean – Vine), murderers, whoremongers (those guilty of illicit sexual practices), sorcerers (drug users – Vine), idolaters and all liars as missing the Rapture.

Good moral people who are not genuine followers of Christ as well as the heinous sinners will be left. It appears that more will be left than taken (Matt. 7:13, 14).

**6. What will happen to those left behind?** Some will go through the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21; Rev. 3:10; 7:14). Arguments exist as to the length of the tribulation after the Rapture of the Christians. Regardless, all types of wrath will be poured out on the earth by God. It is difficult to fully understand which are literal and which are figurative descriptions given in Revelation for this time. Suffice it to say it will be immeasurably better for a person to be raptured than to have to endure life then.

God will eventually punish with everlasting destruction from His presence those who do not obey Him (II Thess. 1:8, 9). They will be cast into hell and ultimately into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14, 15). The wages of sin will be death (Rom. 6:23).

**7. What type of life does the Bible tell us to live in order to be ready for Jesus' Second Coming?** The Bible instructs us to live holy lives before God in order to please Him in this present world. Since we do not know when we will die or when Jesus is coming back, we need to constantly live in readiness and preparation to go or stay. The lifestyle should be the same for either case. We need to be living blameless, pure and holy lives of faith and obedience before God. Fast and loose "take-it-or-leave-it" experiences with God will not be enough. We must live as He wants us to – holy – if we expect to make it to heaven.

Several scriptures point out the necessary life for the child of God at Jesus' return. (See Rev. 20:6; Heb. 12:14; Matt. 5:8; Luke 21:34-36; Titus 2:12.) No changes will be made after the end of one's life (Rev. 22:11). So we must be ready at all times!

**8. The Bible tells us to "occupy until I come" in Luke 19:13. What does this say about how we should live in this present age?** Matt. 22:37 tells us that our number one job on earth is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." We are to actively love and serve God. Verse 39 tells us to "love thy neighbour as thyself." We are to love others and try to help them love and serve God. These are to be our greatest jobs.

We must be aware that Jesus' return is apparently soon. We must ever be prepared for it. Yet, to occupy indicates that we need to continue to carry out our responsibilities to God and man as if He was not coming back for some time. Plans may well be made and perhaps carried out – both in the religious and secular realms. People need to be loved and told the gospel story by our word and deed.

Plans for advancing God's kingdom should be made and carried out. Our daily lives should have order, normalcy and responsibility apparent. Still, we cannot afford to let these things supersede our preparedness for the Rapture at any time. Balanced with that we should not be so "heavenly-minded that we are no earthly good" and thereby fail to help others see by our lives the reality of serving Jesus Christ.

**9. Why will the unholy be prohibited from entering heaven?** God is a holy God, and heaven is a holy place. If he allowed any unholy thing to enter, it would soon make heaven unholy. God hates sin. His character refuses to tolerate sin. The plans of redemption and entire sanctification have been provided to rid man of sin and make him fit for a holy heaven. Several scriptures speak to this issue (1 Cor. 15:56, 57; Lev. 11:44; Titus 2:12, 13).

**10. Will it be easy to stay true to Jesus until the end? Can a person be ready to meet Jesus? Explain.** It will not be easy to stay true. Luke 18:8 says, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" 1 Peter 4:18 says, "And if the righteous scarcely be saved." Sin will intensify (and already has intensified) as Satan realizes his time is short. Incredible evil abounds. Yet, some sin is so subtle that it is easy for a Christian to succumb to it. Pressures are mounting on every hand – in the church, in the home, at school, on the job, in the neighbourhood, in the business world, and just about everywhere else. It likely will get worse.

Still, the child of God can be victorious! Promises such as Phil. 4:19; II Cor. 12:9; 1 Cor. 10:13; and 1 John 5:4 can give us courage and confidence that we can make it. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb [Calvary], and by the word of their testimony [confession]; and they loved not their lives unto the death [commitment]" (Rev. 12:11).

Certainly we need to live godly lives in this ungodly age. The signs point to the soon return of Jesus Christ. We can be ready to meet Him. Revelation 2:10 says, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." It is possible to live a holy life unto death or until the Rapture, which will then enable us to live in a holy heaven with a holy God for all eternity!



### PERTINENT PRINCIPLES

\* In order to get to heaven, it is necessary to turn right and then go straight.

- Wilbur Williams

\* Belief in Christ's imminent coming is the secret of holiness.

\* A habitual outlook toward the Lord's return fosters a spirit of preparedness which is the most potent aid to sanctification.

### FURTHER THOUGHT

**Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation (1 Thess. 5:8).**

**Faith, love, hope** – these three form the defensive armour that guards the soul; and these three make self-control possible. Like a diver in his dress who is let down to the bottom of the wild, far weltering ocean, a man whose heart is girt by faith and charity, and whose head is covered with the helmet of hope, may be dropped down into the wildest sea of temptation and of worldliness and yet will walk dry and unharmed through the midst of its depths and breathe air that comes from a world above the restless surges.

**Faith** will bring you into communication with all the power of God.

**Love** will lead you into a region where all the temptations around you will be touched as by Ithuriel's spear and will show their own foulness.

And **Hope** will turn away your eyes from looking at the tempting splendour around, and fix them upon the glories that are above. The reins will come into your hands in an altogether new manner and you will be able to be king over your own nature in a fashion that you did not dream of before, if only you will trust in Christ and love Him and fix your desires on the things above. Then you will be able to govern yourself, when you let Christ govern you.