

The Hope Of His Appearing

1 John 3:1-3:3 KJV 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.

I. INTRODUCTION -- THE WORD “APPEARING”

A saint of God literally lives in the hope of the coming of the Lord. This will be accomplished in one of two ways. The first aspect is by death and the second is by the rapture or “catching away” of the Church whichever comes first in the life of the saint of God. This doctrine of the rapture is present all throughout the New Testament. However, John presents it in a bit of a different light when he gives it not so much as a matter of doctrine but as a motivation for holy living. Just as we have discovered that purity of doctrine comes through abiding in Jesus Christ, righteousness also comes by abiding in Him.

When you begin to unpack the word “appearing” in 1 John 3:2, there are some things that come to light. The Greek word φανερώω (phaneroō) means to make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, or deeds, or in any other way. This “appearing” has actually come to pass once in the life of Jesus Christ. Literally, the word is giving the connotation of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ took the first taste of death for the saint and the hope of the rapture or resurrection from death will be the final aspect of the appearing that we eagerly are waiting for.

The following Scriptures all refer to the same “appearing” that 1 John 3:2 has. It will be the culmination of all of human history.

Colossians 3:4 KJV When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

1 Timothy 6:14 KJV That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Timothy 4:8 KJV Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

II. THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF HIS APPEARING

One will see the Lord in four aspects concerning the Rapture of the saints.

A. Coming For His Saints

The first aspect of this appearing will be when the Lord returns *for* His Church. This is the doctrine of the Rapture of the church. It is systematically displayed all throughout Scripture and we will delve into it in greater detail in another section of this study.

The following Scripture references will bear out this thought of the Lord coming for His saints.

John 14:1 KJV Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 KJV Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, [52] In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. [54] So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 KJV For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. [15] 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. [16] 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: [17] 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. [18] Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

B. Appears With His Saints

The second element of His appearing will be when Jesus Christ appears *with* His saints. This will be a point of incredible victorious response to all of the wickedness that has choked this world since the Garden of Eden. The exact time

This much is known about the body that we shall receive: it will be a body just like the body that Jesus Christ has. This is made abundantly clear by the glorious promises of Scripture:

- *"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" (Php. 3:21; cp. Matt. 13:43; Romans 8:17; Col. 3:4; Rev. 22:5)*
- *We shall be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:9; cp. 1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 3:18)*
- *"We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2)*

(The Berean's Outline and Summary Bible, Peter J. Leary, p. 274)

of this appearing is during the Tribulation (Matthew 24; Revelation 6-19; also known as Jacob's Trouble and the final week of Daniel's Seventy Weeks).

Matthew 24:21-31 KJV For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. [22] And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. [23] Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. [24] For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. [25] Behold, I have told you before. [26] Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. [27] For as the

lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. [28] For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. [29] Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: [30] And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [31] And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

This thought of tribulation is continued in Matthew 25.

Matthew 25:31-33 KJV When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: [32] And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: [33] And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

From Matthew 24:28 one notes the gathering of vultures which is indicative of a time of great judgment on the earth. Furthermore in Revelation 19:11-16 the understanding is that the saints will be clothed in white for time of judgment.

C. Reigns Through His Saints

The third element indicates that the Lord will come to reign through His saints. Note the mention of thrones in the following verses:

Revelation 20:4-5 KJV And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. [5] But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Paul elaborates on this in his letter to the Romans:

Romans 8:21 KJV Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

There will come a point in history that the curse of sin and the devil will be reversed.

D. Dwell Among His Saints

Lastly, the fourth element will be true when He comes to dwell among His saints.

Revelation 21:1-3 KJV And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. **[2]** And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **[3]** And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

From Revelation 21:1 it is clear that the first heaven, the one in which we presently reside will be destroyed. At that point, which will be the final place of God's great plan, will have all come together exactly as He had planned it.

III. THE DOCTRINE OF THE RAPTURE

From the Bible it is very clear that the occurrence of the Rapture is imminent. This means that it could happen at any point in time. There are no other major biblical prophecies to be fulfilled for the Rapture to take place. Every saint of God must live their lives in the light of the coming Rapture. Our hope is in the fact that the Lord is going to appear again (1 John 3:2).

Our Hope -- **1 Timothy 1:1 KJV** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;

Our Blessed Hope -- **Titus 2:13 KJV** Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

A Good Hope -- [2 Thessalonians 2:16 KJV](#) Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

Our Comforting Hope -- [Romans 15:4 KJV](#) For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Our Joyous Hope -- [Romans 5:2 KJV](#) By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Our Hope that brings Rejoicing -- [Romans 12:12 KJV](#) Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

Our Righteous Hope -- [Galatians 5:5 KJV](#) For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

Our Better Hope -- [Hebrews 7:19 KJV](#) For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

Our Living Hope -- [1 Peter 1:3 KJV](#) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Our Sure and Steadfast Hope -- [Hebrews 6:19 KJV](#) Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

A Hope Without Disappointment -- [Romans 5:5 KJV](#) And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Our Gracious Hope -- [1 Peter 1:13 KJV](#) Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Our Eternal Hope -- [Titus 3:7 KJV](#) That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Our Glorious Hope -- [Colossians 1:27 KJV](#) To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

An Assured Hope -- [Hebrews 6:11 KJV](#) And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

A Defensible Hope -- [1 Peter 3:15 KJV](#) But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

The story has not yet been completed until all four elements of this hope has been fulfilled (as mentioned above). Do not allow a distance to come between you and the hope of the anticipation of the Rapture. There is a danger in attempting to spiritualize all of the aspects of the Rapture.

A. A Jaded View

If one is not careful this is exactly what will happen. Some of that jaded view actually has some merit. Some of it has been brought on by the well-intentioned and some of it has been brought on by those seeking to make gain of the Church.

To get a good idea of how this occurred, one would have to at least retreat to the 1970's. America was on the downside of the Cold War with Russia and prophecy was big business. In fact, I can remember going to a church in the 1970's that rented out a high school auditorium to show a 16mm film on the battle of Armageddon. The machine itself was an enigma as it worked to roll a huge roll of film through a projector and then be caught by another reel. I remember that there were folks who came out of the wood-works on that Sunday evening to see this film about prophecy. This was cutting-edge church growth back in the day (as they say). We saw the whole book of Revelation unfold right in front of our eyes. Seals, bowls, and trumpets were enthralling. There was even an antichrist who was firmly enthroned and ruled the world.

At the same time, Hal Lindsey had entered the scene and became a highly sought after author and speaker because he was a prophecy “scholar” who knew what was going to happen. His books *Satan Is Alive and Well on Planet Earth* and his real claim to fame was in *The Late, Great Planet Earth* sold with huge success. People started believing that Russia was the great bear and that communism would soon rule the world. The world was going to be nuked with bombs from Russia and this caused more fear and backyard bomb shelters were being built in earnest.

Henry Kissinger, Richard Nixon, the Illuminati, and a host of other things took a very undiscerning church by the throat and it was not pretty. I remember as a kid hearing all of this stuff pour out of prophecy “teachers” and more times than one could not sleep at night for all of the fear that would grip me. I remember hearing about the monetary system of the United States was going to crash and how that a very savvy group of Belgium bankers controlled by the Rothschilds were going to take over the world. This is going to lead up to the mark of the beast and if you don’t take the mark you will die and on and on.

Evangelists got in on their lion’s share of the market and had a heyday. A revival was not successful unless an evangelist came in and scared the socks off the church and so on. There were revivals scattered around the country where large amounts of people were being “converted” and filled with the Holy Ghost. Interestingly a few short years after the so-called revivals took place very few of the converts could be found. As a disclaimer, I need to let you know that none of that ever happened here in Dothan.

But you cannot keep this kind of sensationalism going without having to trump it the very next Sunday or desensitizing people. As time went on Nixon died and Kissinger disappeared from the national and international scene. The wall fell in Russia and all the appointed “antichrists” either died or smothered in obscurity, those good folks who had heard all this begin to scratch their heads a bit. They seemed to think that they had been duped (and they had been). Enter 1987 and fresh wind was about to breathe life back into the prophecy scene.

Oddly enough it would get help from a mathematician and not a student of the Word. Edgar Whisenant wrote a book on the 88 reasons the Lord would

return in 1988. He missed it and then revised the date and missed it again. Again many saints begin to have a very jaded view about the concepts of prophecy (more properly, eschatology, or the study of the last things). They lost faith in the teachers but more detrimental was the loss of faith in the Word of God.

Slowly, surely and certainly, the devil's tricks that worked in the Garden of Eden were again manifesting inroads into the Church. The mystery of the Rapture was being subverted and the seed bed of a heresy was in the making. In fact it had been around for a long time and the time for old idea to be pulled from the closet was getting ripe. So now the game of date-setting and name-calling opened itself back up to preterism to come on the stage.

B. Preterism

The basic premise of preterism is that the book of Revelation has been fulfilled. There are varying degrees but all eradicate the hope of the Rapture that John was wanting men to place their hope in.

Preterism

Preterism

- ❖ **Preterism** -- The Kingdom is a present reality.
- ❖ **Radical Preterism** -- All future prophecies in the NT have already been fulfilled.
- ❖ **Moderate Preterism** -- Many future prophecies in the NT have already been fulfilled. Some crucial prophecies have not yet been fulfilled.

This doctrinal idea had its inception with James Stuartt Russell in the 1870's and his works were reprinted in 1983. His works were reprinted primarily as a

response to what some saw as out-of-control date setting concerning the Rapture and identities concerning the antichrist and other prominent characters of Revelation (including Daniel and Ezekiel).

Just briefly, I would like to list some points of preterism and then move on. Preterism states or infers the following points:

1. This earth that we now live on is permanent.
2. Sin and evil will never be eradicated.
3. Satan has already experienced as much defeat as he will experience.
4. No tangible or physical existence will be beyond the grave.
5. At death, the saint becomes a disembodied spirit because there is no resurrection.

There are many other finer and more varied details that could be explored concerning preterism but for the sake of keeping focused with the 1st John series we will forego those. One of the reasons in introducing this thought to you is because at some point you may have someone ask you about it. However, the main focus was to primarily warn you that when those who choose to set dates and even name characters of the Revelation it is always wise and prudent to allow time to work out God's plan and just remain ready for the Rapture.

IV. CONCLUSION -- A SELECTIVE RESPONSE

The concepts of preterism become prominent when one allows his prophecy to be selectively fulfilled. The greatest question for these teachers of preterism is when did 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15 become fulfilled in A.D. 70? Furthermore has 2 Peter 3:10 been fulfilled? The answers to all of these questions are fulfilled by the preterists who will spiritualize and/or allegorize these passages to make it fit.

Preterism blocks all hope in the denial that Jesus Christ will return. The Bible clearly stipulates that there will be a return of the Lord. From Acts 1:9 at the Ascension the angels asked the question, "What are you doing simply waiting here?" The Greek infers that they were looking longingly after the Lord as if He were gone forever. The Second Coming is one of the core doctrines of the

Church. We do not know when He will return (Mark 13:32) but we must be constantly ready for His return at all times (Luke 12:40).