

Redemption of Our Bodies



Longing for His Appearing (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again sharing with you precious insights out of scripture that have made the difference between success and failure in my life, and can do the same for yours. The title of my talks this week is "Longing for His Appearing." It is designed to show you how the return of Christ in glory affects you personally and the way you live right now.

I based my introductory talk yesterday on the words of Paul in 2 Timothy 4:8:

> "Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (NIV)

Paul is looking forward to probable execution at the hands of the emperor Nero. He realizes his life is nearing its end but he's not afraid, he's not downcast because he's looking beyond the end of this earthly life. He's looking forward to a time when he will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and receive his reward for his service. And he states one part of the reward, the crown of righteousness. The crown, I pointed out, is the same as, or the real meaning is the laurel wreath which was awarded to victors in the Olympic Games, corresponding to the gold medal in our day. And Paul says he's looking forward to receive this crown and it will be awarded not only to him but to all who have longed for Christ's appearing.

I pointed out that this speaks of a special class of Christians with a special reward. The special class is marked out by longing for Christ's appearing. The special reward is the crown, the wreath, the medal of righteousness. And this leads me, and I trust it will lead you, to examine myself and say, "Am I one of those Christians? Do I have that special mark? Is it clear in my life that I'm longing for his appearing?" And I'd like you to ask this question of yourself all the time that I'm going through this theme this week. I want you to be asking yourself, "Does this apply to me? Do I qualify?"

I pointed out also yesterday that the New Testament continually emphasizes an attitude of eager expectation

towards Christ's return. It uses language like "longing for his appearing" or "eagerly awaiting for him."

Now, in my talk today and for the rest of this week I'll be giving you four biblical reasons why all Christians should be longing for Christ's appearing. The first reason is this: that at the appearing of Christ, his return in glory will bring out the consummation of our personal salvation. And our personal salvation will not be complete until that point. I'll read again some words from Colossians 3 which I read yesterday. Paul says:

> "For you died..."

When you embraced the death of Christ on your behalf you were identified with him in his death. His death was your death. And so he says very vividly:

> "...you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."

That's where our real life is. It doesn't show on earth. It's hidden with Christ in God.

> "When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (NIV)

In other words, our true life, the glory that God has for us, will not be manifested until Christ is manifested in his glory. So, the full outworking of God's salvation for us will not be completed until Christ is manifested. You see, it's wonderful to have eternal life now through faith in Jesus, that's tremendous. But it's not the end. It's wonderful to know that when you die, your disembodied spirit will go to be with Christ, but that's not the end. God has not planned eternity for us as disembodied spirits. Jesus died to save a whole person, spirit, soul and body, and his salvation will not be completely worked out in us until we have the whole salvation in spirit, in soul, and in body. And that will not take place until the return of Jesus in glory.

Three times in John 6 Jesus likens the fact that the believer has eternal life now with the fact that in the day of resurrection Jesus will resurrect the believer in his resurrection body. He will not permit us to separate these two and think about them as two separate concepts. Listen to what he says in John 6:40:

> "For this is the will of my Father, that every one who beholds the Son, and believes in him, may have eternal life [right now]; and I myself will raise him up on the last day." (NAS)

Notice there are two phases. Having eternal life now, being raised up by Jesus on the last day. And then John 6:44:

> "No one can come to me, unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day." (NAS)

We can come to Jesus now and receive eternal life, that's wonderful. But that's not the end. The end is being resurrected on what Jesus calls the last day. And then in John 6:54 Jesus says:

> "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life [Praise God, has it now!]; and I will raise him up on the last day." (NAS)

So you see, Jesus is very, very emphatic. Our salvation is not merely receiving eternal life, wonderful though that is. It's not merely knowing that when we die our spirit will go to be with Christ in a place of rest and bliss forever. But, our salvation is not complete until it's completed by our receiving our resurrection body at the resurrection when Jesus returns in glory. Then our glory will be revealed when his glory is revealed.

And then I'd like to challenge you with the words of Paul in Philippians 3:8-12 where he describes his life's personal motivation.

> "More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death: [now listen to these words] in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."

What was Paul aiming at? What was all his motivation directed towards? Knowing Christ, sharing his suffering, sharing his glory. But the consummation is in these words, "in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." The word resurrection there is a special form that means the

resurrection out from the dead. Not the general resurrection of all the dead but the resurrection depicted later on in the book of Revelation and elsewhere, the resurrection of the righteous dead, those who have died in Christ. Paul says literally, the "out resurrection." That's his aim. And then he says:

> "Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus." (NAS)

What is that? It's the out resurrection. So he says, "I will not be perfect. I will not be complete until I have attained to the out resurrection." And apparently his whole life's course was directed toward that.

And then, at the end of Philippians 3 he indicates that this should apply to all Christians. In verses 20-21:

> "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ..."

Notice those words again which I have been emphasizing, "eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." One reason why we are eagerly waiting is in the next verse:

> "[He] will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of his glory, by the exertion of the power that he has even to subject all things to himself."

So when he comes in glory he's going to change our body. We'll get what's called a resurrection body. In this present body we are in a body of what Paul calls humiliation. Our present body in its condition is the result of man's rebellion against God and his fall. The key word that describes this body is the world corrupt or corruptible. But that's not what we're going to end with. We'll put away this body in the grave when we die but when Christ comes we'll be given another body which will be like the body of his glory. So, there'll be a change in our body from humiliation to glory but that will not come about until Jesus returns in his glory. His glory will be a pattern of the glory that will be given to us because his glory will exceed that of all believers. But, we will have the same type of glory, the same type of body and then, and then only will the salvation which he purchased through his death and his resurrection be completed. So bear in mind that only at the return of Christ that our personal salvation will be completed. And notice again those words, let me leave them with you, "we eagerly await for a Savior." Is that true of you?

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll be sharing with you a second reason why all Christians should be longing for Christ's appearing.

Radio Program

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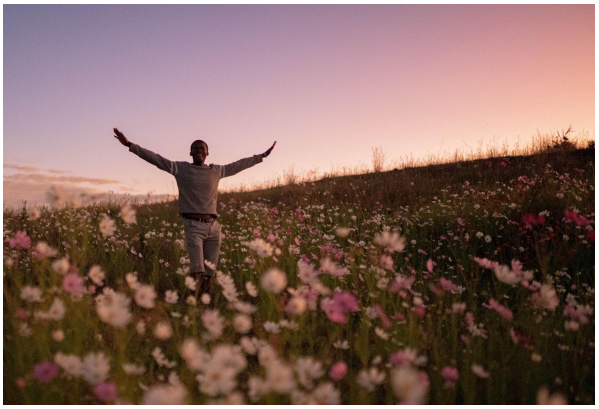

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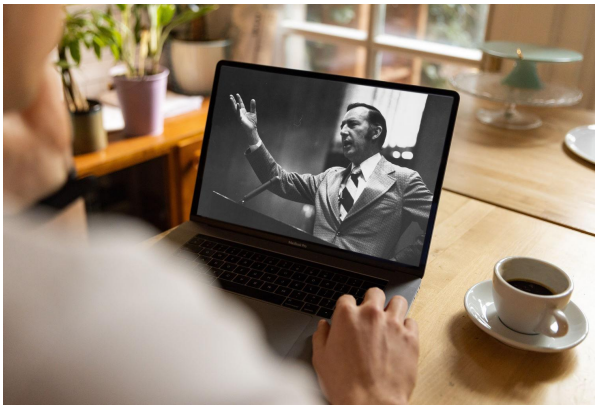

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