

Consumption of Union



Longing for His Appearing (Part 3)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again sharing on this week's exciting theme, "Longing for His Appearing."

But first, let me say thank you to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. Feel free to share with us your personal needs, your problems, your prayer requests. Each month our listeners write in to tell us of prayer requests that have been wonderfully answered. Now, back to our theme, "Longing for His Appearing."

In my first talk this week I pointed out that this theme identifies a special class of Christians with a special reward. Paul speaks about them in 2 Timothy 4. He says, first of all, that there is awaiting him in the eternal judgment a crown of righteousness, a wreath, a gold medal, the mark of a victor, a gold medal of righteousness. And then he says it's not awaiting him only but it's for all who have longed for Christ's appearing. So that marks out two things. First of all, a special class of Christians, those who have longed for Christ's appearing. Secondly, it indicates a special reward, the crown, the wreath, the gold medal of righteousness. And at this point we all need to ask ourselves: Do I qualify? Do I belong to that special class?

And then yesterday I gave one important biblical reason why all Christians should be longing for Christ's appearing. The reason was that it's only Christ's appearing that will complete our personal salvation. Our personal salvation is not completed merely when we receive eternal life or even when our spirit goes to the presence of God when we die, but it will only be completed when our body is resurrected with a body like that of Jesus because Jesus purchased a full salvation. He didn't just save a spirit of a soul, he saved an entire person, spirit, soul and body, by an entire sacrifice of himself and our salvation includes our body. So that's where we are headed. Not just for eternity but for resurrection with a resurrected body.

Now today I'm going to share with you a second important reason why you and I and all Christians should be longing for Christ's return. This second reason is that it's the return, the appearing of Jesus, which will bring about the consummation of our union first with Christ himself, second with our fellow

Christians. We have a wonderful relationship now with Jesus. We have many wonderful relationships with our fellow believers but they are not complete. Our relationships with our fellow believers, in a certain sense, are somewhat fragmented. Sometimes they continue, sometimes they are broken off. That's not the end. I want to emphasize that this salvation which God has brought us into through faith in Jesus is a very complete salvation. God is a very complete God. He never stops short of completeness. And so, one aspect of completeness will be a complete, final and eternal union: first with Christ and second with our fellow believers.

Let's look, first of all, at a prophetic picture in the book of Revelation of our eternal union with Christ and as we read this revelation of John we have to bear in mind, of course, that we Christians collectively are the Body of Christ and also the bride of Christ. And this speaks about the time when the bride will be finally and forever united with her bridegroom Jesus, in a glorious marriage ceremony. I think that human language is inadequate to describe the glory which was revealed to John at this point. He says in Revelation 9:6-8:

> "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready. And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." (NAS)

So there's a little anticipatory picture of this final union. It's the marriage of the Lamb and it says "his bride has made herself ready." We need to bear in mind that it's our responsibility to make ourselves ready. We should be doing that diligently. And our readiness will be demonstrated by the clothing, the fine linen, that we will be attired in which is the righteous acts of the saints. You understand? Our righteous acts are preparing our eternal raiment. If we have no righteous acts, how can we expect an eternal raiment?

This picture of the marriage of Jesus with his bride causes the whole universe to rejoice. The whole universe is just exulting: tremendous peals of thunder, shouts of joy, the worship of angels. Now, when I picture the excitement of the universe and then I look at the church, I say to myself, "Surely, the bride should be at least as excited as all the people who are going to attend the wedding." But I have to say that very many times this doesn't appear to be true.

I have traveled widely, I am familiar with many cultures. I've attended weddings in many lands and I don't know of any country or culture where it is not normal for the bride to be excited about the approach of her wedding day. In the natural, every bride is adorning herself, preparing herself. This is what Jeremiah says in chapter 2:32, or rather, it's God through Jeremiah.

> "Does a maiden forget her jewelry, a bride her wedding ornaments?"

No, we know the nearer the day the more she's concerned with the attire that she's going to wear. Then God says:

> "Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number." (NIV)

That was true of Israel in the Old Testament. I'm afraid it's very often true of the church in the New Testament. We are not as excited about the coming of the bridegroom as we ought to be, as God requires us to be.

I want to point out one thing, too. Only the Holy Spirit can give us this anticipation. We cannot work it up in our flesh, it has to be a work of the Spirit. Right near the end of the book of Revelation, chapter 22:17, it says:

> "...the Spirit and the bride say, Come."

Notice, when the Spirit says, "Come," then the bride says, "Come." It's our being moved by the spirit that gives us this excited anticipation. I believe the more people are moved and filled with the Holy Spirit, the more excited they'll be about the Lord's return. That's one good way of measuring how much influence the Holy Spirit really had in your life.

However, this union will not only be with the bridegroom, that's the first and foremost, but it will be with all our fellow Christians. There are some beautiful words of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18:

> "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope."

When he says "those who are asleep" he means those who have died in faith in Christ. For them it's not really death, it's just falling asleep.

> "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in

> Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep [those who are dead]. For the Lord himself [isn't that wonderful?] will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

That's the first stage of the drama is the dead believers are resurrected with their resurrection bodies. Then Paul goes on:

> "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air..."

There's going to be a tremendous release of divine power that will lift the entire church from the earth up into the heavenlies to meet the Lord there in the clouds. And then he concludes:

> "...thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." (NAS)

So you see, Paul emphasizes this eternal union that will take place at Christ's return. We'll forever be with the Lord. But by implication we shall also forever be with one another. This is the dramatic climax of all history to which all history now is moving. It's a message of hope and comfort. Paul says, "comfort one another with these words." Many Christians today need to be reminded of this. I have met so many Christians whose attitude and outlook are hopeless. How can that be? This is the blessed hope that's set before all Christians. It is with these words that we are to comfort one another. I would like to ask you, perhaps who are listening: Can it be that you feel depressed, lonely, in need of comfort? Somehow hopelessness has gripped you, as it has so many in this age. One main reason is you haven't really grasped the truth of the Lord's return and what it will mean for you. You aren't longing for his return. You aren't eagerly awaiting him. You need to make that change. You need to bring your life into line with the teaching of the New Testament. You need to be one of those who are marked out by longing for his appearing, for whom he is reserving a crown, a gold medal of righteousness.

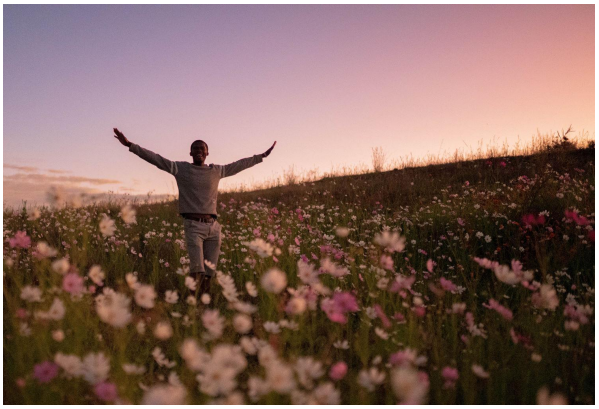
Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll be sharing with you a third important reason why all Christians should be longing for Christ's appearing.

Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



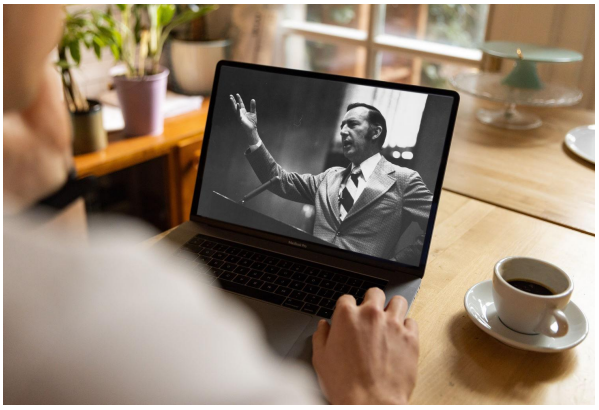
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries