

Holiness, Hope, and Hastening



I Will Shake All Things (Part 7)
by Derek Prince

I just want to turn to two scriptures. The first is Titus 2:11,12 and 13.

> "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."

And notice that Paul calls Jesus God. The great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. And the motivation for holy living is primarily looking for the coming of our Lord. I think if you analyze the teaching of the New Testament on holiness you'll see that in almost every case it's linked up with the expectation of the Lord's return. And personally I believe that where the church loses the sense of expectation of the Lord's return New Testament standards of holiness are impossible. Because I believe that is the key motivation.

And then likewise in 1 John 3:1, 2 and 3:

> "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God, and we are. Therefore, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God. And it has not yet been revealed but what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every one who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure."

You may tell me that you believe in the doctrine of the return of the Lord but I want to look for the evidence in your life. Because it says "every one who has this hope in Him," that's the hope of His coming, "purifies himself just as He is pure." Again, the scripture puts the responsibility on us. There are ways in which God purifies us, there are ways in which we have to purify ourselves. And God has only got one standard of purity, that's Jesus. Just as He is pure.

Then going back to 2 Peter again, just once more, chapter 3, verse 12, it says:

> "...looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God."

The old authorized versions used to say hastening unto. But that's not a very accurate translation. The right translation is the one that's used in the modern text, hastening the coming of the day of God. It's not enough just to be expecting it, we have to be hastening it. How can we hasten it? The Bible tells us very clearly. Turn to Matthew 24, if you're following in the scriptures. The beginning of this chapter, the disciples asked Jesus what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? And in His answer Jesus lists a number of signs: earthquakes, pestilences, lawlessness and so on. But He hasn't answered the question till verse 13. What will be the sign of your coming? And in Matthew 24:13 He gives a specific answer:

> "This gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come."

When will the end come? When the gospel of the kingdom has been proclaimed in all the world as a witness to all the nations.

Who is responsible to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom? I didn't hear you. That's right. So, how can we hasten the coming? By proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.

On the other hand, if we don't do it we are not hastening the coming, we're delaying the coming. And if you consider all the agony and suffering in the world today, to be responsible for prolonging that longer than necessary is a terrible responsibility. But it rests on us Christians if we do not do what we can to hasten the coming of that day.

And then one further answer in Revelation 19:7–8. This is praise that's going on in heaven.

> "Let us be glad and rejoice and give God glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

So the marriage cannot take place until His wife, the bride, has made herself ready. The state of the church affects the coming of the Lord. The Lord cannot come for His bride until she has made herself ready.

And then in the next verse it talks about our wedding garment. Verse 8:

> "To her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

Notice the word, we have to wear linen, pure, white, shining linen. And the shining linen is the righteous acts of the saints. When you and I believe sincerely in Jesus, commit our lives to Him, His righteousness is imputed to us. And the scripture says we are justified, we are reckoned righteous. But that's not what the scripture is talking about here. It's talking about the righteous acts of the saints. We have to translated imputed righteousness into outworked righteousness. And that's the material from which our wedding garment will be made. It's the righteous acts of the saints.

I've permitted myself to say sometimes, according to my observation, the contemporary church has got just about enough material to make a bikini. But that's not suitable for a marriage. So the other way in which we can hasten the coming of the Lord is by performing our righteous acts, providing ourselves with enough material to make the kind of wedding garment that we ought to wear.

Now, having laid that as a sort of foundation, I want to speak about four practical ways we can express our obedience to the word of God.

Number one is align with God's purpose. God has a purpose which is clearly revealed early on in the New Testament. God has never changed his purpose, He's working toward it consistently. And it's stated in a very familiar passage which we call the Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:9–10:

> "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."

That's the approach. That's not a prayer, that's an approach. And the first specific prayer is:

> "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

What is the primary objective of God? It's that His kingdom may come. And we can only align ourselves with God and with His purpose when we are aligned with the coming of God's kingdom, when everything we do is ultimately directed towards the coming of the kingdom of God.

In the same chapter of Matthew, verse 33, it says:

> "Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all the other things will be added unto you."

And when God says first, He means first, not second or third. In other words, our primary concern in life is to be the coming of the kingdom of God.

As I was preparing this message I got a vivid picture in my mind of the prophet Jonah. I want to turn there for a moment. You know the story of Jonah, most of you. God said, "Go to Nineveh and preach what I tell you." Nineveh was east and Jonah went the opposite direction, he went west. I think the reason why he didn't want to preach to Nineveh was that he was afraid the people would repent. And, Nineveh was the number one political enemy of his people Israel. So he did not want to do anything that would forward their cause. That's my personal opinion.

And the remarkable thing is when God eventually got His way with Jonah, the greatest experience of conversion recorded in history happened through him. An entire city—people believe at least six hundred thousand people—was converted.

But before that happened, Jonah had to learn a lesson. This is very interesting. He lived on the mountains of Galilee. And when he turned his back on God every step he took was a step downwards. He went from the mountains to the plains, to the plains to the harbor, from the harbor to the ship. And, that wasn't the end. From the ship into the sea.

And let that be a warning to each and every one of us. When you turn your back on God every step you take will be a step downward.

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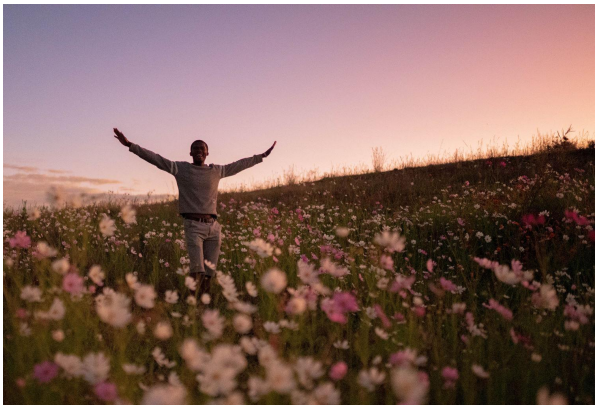
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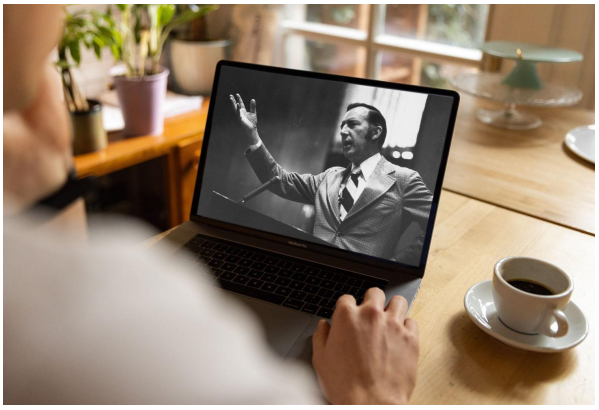
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