

Loving Jesus' Appearing Part Two

Introduction/Review: In the final days of the apostle Paul as he was writing to Timothy, he testified to his hope in Christ. Anticipating death by execution, he looked beyond that painful experience to Christ's appearing (2 Tim 4:6-8).

Paul says what remains for us following life on this earth is "THE crown of righteousness."

1. **The reward Paul refers to is a settled condition of righteousness**
2. **Paul's reward was secure ("laid up for me")**
3. **Paul's reward was specific ("who have loved his appearing")**

The Greek word EPIPHANEIA means to become visible. It is used in the New Testament both for the FIRST appearing of Christ at His incarnation and the SECOND appearing of Christ for the church at the rapture Titus 2:11-13.

Who are those who truly "love" His appearing?

- I. **Those who are saved Eph 2:5-7**
- II. **Those who desire to see the glory of Christ manifest 2 Thess 1:10**
- III. **Those who are secure in Christ-righteousness Phil 3:5-9**

Note two truths.

1. **The proof of our justification is our sanctification**
If your faith has not CHANGED you it has not SAVED you
2. **The proof of our sanctification is our love for others 1 Thess 3:12-13**

- I. **Those who do not fear judgement 2 Thess 1:5-10**

When Christ returns to earth, it will mean judgment for those who have rejected Him. If you are in Christ, you are guaranteed protection from the wrath of God and the condemnation it will bring at the second coming of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 - Notice how Paul describes Christians...

- We have turned to God from idols.
- We serve God
- We wait for His Son from heaven
- We know that wrath is coming but we will be delivered from it.

There are two aspects of our longing for Christ to appear:

1. **When Jesus comes, evil will be judged (Acts 10:42)**

Every wrong will be made right either by condemnation on the cross of Christ or by just recompense in hell.

1. **When Jesus comes, Christians will be vindicated. 1 John 4:17**

- IV. **Those who anticipate being rewarded for faithful service 2 Cor 5:10**

When Christ comes for us, our faith will be turned to sight! And when we see Him face to face, we want to hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." The rapture will be followed by a time of rewards for faithful service.

The judgment seat of Christ is the place where Christians will stand before the Lord and be recognized and rewarded for their faithful service on earth. These are the ways that we served Christ with our bodies.

Our labor is a reference to our service in building up the Body of Christ and will also be determined by the quality of our service (gold, silver, precious stones/wood, hay straw). In other words, those whose service is shallow and with inferior motives will forfeit rewards. Nothing that we do for Christ will be overlooked (1 Cor 4:5).

Matthew 25 – Parable of the talents. When the master returned, he called each of his servants to give account. Note that they were commended and rewarded for their diligent, persistent service (25:14, 16-17, 19-23).

Note in verse 23 that their reward was three-fold:

1. **Commendation** (“**Well done, good and faithful servant**”).

2. **Promotion** (“**You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much**”) **Rev 3:21; Luke 19:17**

God’s people are SERVANTS. We live to serve God in this life and look forward to serving Him in the future kingdom of heaven. Our faithful service for Christ on earth will determine our service for Christ in His kingdom – “you have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much”). We will ALL experience the joy of being with Christ in His kingdom, but our opportunities for service in the kingdom will vary based upon our faithful service to Christ in this life (cp Luke 19:11-19).

3. **Communion** (“**Enter into the joy of your master**”) **Heb 12:2**

Heaven will be a place of undiluted joy (no sin/struggle with the flesh/physical pain).

Those who have faithfully served Christ on earth long to see His face and hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” That will be a cause for great joy! This is what keeps us MOVING onward as we LOOK upward (Rev 22:12, 20).

Study Questions:

1. How does the hope of the Christian motivate us to persevere through the trials of this present life on earth (see also 2 Cor 4:17-18)?
2. What is the relationship between our faith and our hope (see Hebrews 11:1)? What causes Christians to become weak in their hope (see Colossians 3:1-3)?
3. How does our hope in Jesus’ return motivate us in the following areas:
 - 1) Evangelism – 2 Cor 5:17, 20; 6:2
 - 2) Ministering to Christians who are sorrowing due to the loss of a loved one – 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
 - 3) Spiritual growth – 2 Peter 3:11-13; 1 John 3:3; 2 John 1:8; Romans 16:20
 - 4) Bible reading – Romans 15:4-5
 - 5) Worship – Romans 15:13; Revelation 22:12-13; 20-21