

## **92. The End of the Beginning**

**By John W. Rood**

Pastor Arland Steen: Okay, are you ready?

John W. Rood: I am ready. And we are ready. I'm not going to say is it on. I am really ready now.

[Laughter]

John W. Rood: Praise the Lord. Thank you, Pastor Arland. Really looked forward to being with you today, teaching, primarily a Bible teacher. We're going to stick with the Bible especially when we're talking about end time topics, very, very important. Let's stick to the word of God. Let's let the Bible interpret itself and then let's get the blessing because of what God wants to teach us because he has a plan to accomplish and for us to fulfill in our life. But we're also accomplishing His plan through our life and there's an end time plan for all of us to accomplish as individuals and as a local church. So, I really, really encourage you to be plugged in with your local church, find your place, do your part, plug in and be a part of something bigger than yourself.

And then we're able to accomplish things on the level that God wants us to do. So many, many interesting things as we see, we're actually going to speak what I saw earlier, The End of the Beginning. And so that's thrown quite a bit of interpreters throughout the years. So, try it on for size, The End of the Beginning, because it has a tendency that seemed a little backwards. And what we're going to do is we're actually going to look at three-hundred scriptures in the New Testament, that deal with the second coming. And you might say, how is that even possible that the second coming is mentioned three-hundred times in the New Testament? Well, I'm glad you asked and we're not going to read each one, don't worry, but we have a secret how to get through this and what we'll do is we'll categorize them.

And then I'll give you homework because I like to give homework. And so, you, your homework, we'll be able to read the New Testament and the new light of Jesus soon return and speaking especially of your personal application and part in God's end time plan to get His will accomplished through your life. So that's sort of the angle that we're going to take there. And we want to make a few introductory comments and then we're going to speak about references that refer to Jesus coming in terms of the description. Then we're going to speak about vocabulary that surrounds those verses and putting it all together then you're going to see that in the New Testament, Jesus second coming is mentioned nearly on every page.

Every New Testament writer speaks of it. We have three-hundred scriptures more than that. That's an average of one out of every twenty-five verses in the New Testament. So, we're going to actually do 4% of the New Testament today. So, it's one of the best, one of the most major themes of the New Testament. Many times, we think of the second coming as, you know, we're living our Christian life now and somewhere off in the future, we don't know when and that's another topic. We don't know when, but Jesus is going to return, and He is going to set this place straight. But it started in sort of distant. But when you take the New Testament example and what God's explaining, what He is saying to us, in the word, then we see that our entire Christian life is based on the second coming now.

The second coming affects us now. So, we're going to see this and as we said, we're going to help that you can read the New Testament and the new light of Jesus soon return and especially the Epistles because those are letters that are written to the church. So, Bible truths change your life now. And we're going to focus particularly on the Bible because this is God speaking to us. We want this message to be something that you can take with you and change your life forever and ever and this is going to have an eternal value to you. Just for an introductory scripture, concerning the end time,

let's look at 1 Corinthians 7:29. We're going to make the study. So, we're going to make several references, some you can turn to, some you won't need to.

But actually, we just like to start with this verse in the Message translation, 1 Corinthians 7:29, *"I do want to point out, friends, that time is of the essence. There is no time to waste, so don't complicate your lives unnecessarily. Keep it simple."* Then at the verse 31, *"deal as sparingly as possible with the things the world thrusts on you. This world as you see it is on its way out."* So, the world we see now is not God's final plan. He has a plan for a new heaven and a new earth. And so, time is important. Don't waste your time. Keep your life simple. Keep your focus on the things of God. This world is on the way out. Romans 13:11 and 12, *"knowing the time, that now it is high time to wake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light."*

So, the time is the essence. Keep it simple. Be focused on the things of God. This is our purpose and knowing the time. Let's be awake because the day is at hand. So, there is a dawning that's coming for the Christian. There is a new dimension of Jesus' interaction with planet earth. We are living at a time that's at the end of this age and then there's ages and ages to come. So, we want to be focused. There is dawn of Jesus coming back to earth. And so therefore, the Bible is admonishing us to be awake and to be alert, to be watchful and to be hopeful of His return. The Message translation of the same verse, *"Make sure you don't get so absorbed and exhausted in taking care of all your day to day obligations that you lose track of the time and dose off oblivious to God. The night is about over, dawn is about to break, be up and awake to what God is doing. God is putting the finishing touches on the salvation work he began when we first believed."* When Jesus returns, our salvation will have a culmination and will have a completeness. This world, as we said right now, is as it is now is not God's final plan. He has a plan for our entire eternity. This world is about to dawn on the time of Jesus return and the ages and ages to come. So, He wants the church to be awake and enlightened and to be aware of what He is doing. So, the dawn is about to break, be up and awake to what God is doing. That's Message translation. So, what is God doing? This world as we know it is on its way out and Jesus is coming back soon just like He said he would.

That's what's happening. So, if you want to plug in with God's plan, then be aware that Jesus is coming back. It's not just something in the distant future that one day, well, you know, it doesn't really affect me now. As we're going to see, there're enormous amounts of verses in the New Testament, dozens and dozens and dozens that explain our responsibility about Jesus return. What this means for us that we're about to break into this new day. So New Testament emphasis in the end times from just some of these that we're saying about getting our focus correct, get your life in order, stay awake or alert, deal with stresses, be ready for Jesus return, there is going to be a new day.

The Bible teaches us that the time is short. The Book of Revelation which we know has revelation about the end times, the Book of Revelation begins saying the time is short. Revelation 1:3 says, *"the time of at hand."* The middle of the book, Revelation 12:12, says, *"the devil knows that he has but a short time."* And then the end of the book, Revelation 22:10, it says, *"Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand."* So, Revelation, the end time book begins in the middle and ends with the fact that the time is at hand, the time is short, let's focus on what God is imparting to us in this time that we live in.

Now, sometimes we have to take note concerning Bible prophecy. And what we've sort of done is, we've allowed prophecy teachers, we'll say prophecy guys, to sort of hijack Bible teaching. And this shouldn't be the case. So sometimes someone could be born again just a matter of weeks and somehow, we get this perception that there's two types of believers. There's the prophecy guys and then there is all the rest of us. And just being born again a few weeks possibly, someone is already sort of made this distinction. But let me submit to you that the Bible is one-third prophecy. The Bibles,

now, are we word people? Of course, we're word people. And so, if the Bible is one-third prophecy, therefore we have to be prophecy people, isn't that right? So, tell your neighbor, you're a prophecy person. Don't let prophecy teaching be hijacked and even as Pastor Arland said, prefacing that, you know, a lot of times end time teaching has been matters of opinion and if you're listening to various teachers, there can be contradictions. People feel a pressure to come up with something new that no one's ever said before. You have to watch out for that one because it's usually a doozy. So, let's just stick with the Bible and the Bible interprets itself. If you take the Book of Daniel in Revelation, it can be, there's imagery, there's symbolism, yes it can look mysterious. But let the Bible interpret itself. And you can go through the Book of Daniels quite easy to see the symbolism and how it's interpreted by itself.

It will really bless you because Daniel is the Old Testament counterpart of the New Testament Book of Revelation. So, we are prophecy people. The future is bright. You know, our Christian life is preparing to be with Jesus forever and ever. And so, we can't look at end time as some big scary thing if whole thing is about Jesus that we're with him forever and ever, but He has a plan beyond this one time that we're in. This earth right now is not God's final plan. So, let's get with His plan. And then I'll tell you, the future is bright. There is nothing better than being with Jesus. Our Christian life is preparing us to be with Jesus forever and ever.

So, let's just do a little quick quiz here. Are you ready? Sometimes, you know, Japan, they have nice game shows, Spain have some nice games if you catch it on television, so hands on the buzzers, no trick questions. You know, sometimes preachers will say, how many of you believe and then you all raise your hands and you go, no, this is not a trick question. I don't believe in it. So okay, ready. What do birds do?

Crowd: Fly.

John W. Rood: You got it. Only one time did I get a wrong answer, someone said, cheap-cheap and I had to let that pass.

What do fish do?

Crowd: Swim.

John W. Rood: Fish swim.

What do believers do?

Crowd: Believe.

John W. Rood: Believers believe. You don't encourage a believer to believe. This is where we make a mistake. We're trying to always prod people to believe but that's our nature. You can't teach a bird to fly. You don't teach a fish to swim. Can you imagine that? It'd be like, come on little fellow. I know you could do it. No, I don't think so. So, believers are believers. What do we believe? We believe the Word, the Word is one-third prophecy, so we're prophecy people. So, let's get with the program and let's have our life be a reflection and an action on what the Word of God says about Jesus soon return.

There are three-hundred scriptures that deal with it. And so that's going to be surprising to us because if we pass out cheese and say, write all the verses you know of the second coming, we're going to, one, two, three. So, what is the emphasis from God? What should be our focus? What are we going to act upon? What is our purpose? Jesus soon return of the future is one of the major New Testament themes. It's one of the most major New Testament themes. The early church of the New Testament, this is one of their primary messages. 1 Thessalonians was the very first Epistle that was

written chronologically. It begins with the second coming. And 2 Thessalonians, the whole theme is the second coming, entire New Testament books, the theme is the second coming. 1 Peter. 2 Peter.

You know, sometimes people say, 1 Peter, the theme is Christian suffering. But when you look at it closely, it's that their theme is Christian suffering because anything less than being with Jesus is a suffering. The Christian suffering at 1 Peter is because anything being less than being with Jesus is a suffering. This is not His plan. Now, we're looking forward. All creation is groaning to be with the Lord forever and ever. So now we have a part to play. So, we're going to let the Bible speak for itself and we want to learn the vocabulary of these verses and then we can read the New Testament just as a new book. So, we're looking specifically at three-hundred plus references. I think it's actually three-hundred-eighteen.

Now, we're going to be able to deal with them today by categorizing them. Aren't you glad? It's going to make it go quick when it will change your life.

So, the first category of these second coming verses that we want to recognize and put into practice, put in our heart, put them in the practice where we'll get results, get with God's end time plan, the first category is quite easy. Jesus is coming back just like He said He would. And there are several instances. So, Jesus said it, Jesus taught his disciples. John 14:2 and 3, *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go and I'm preparing a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* Jesus taught His disciples He is coming back.

And then Peter asked Jesus about John's destiny and Jesus reminded Peter about his return. Jesus said, *"If I will that he tarries until I come, what is that to you? Follow me."* that's from John 21. Revelation 3:11, Jesus says, *"Behold, I come quickly."* And then Revelation ends, if you turn to the end of Revelation. Revelation 22, the second to the last verse. *"He who testifies these things says, surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."* So, Jesus said, and that's in red letters in my red-letter Bible here, saying that's Jesus words. So, Jesus again, is saying I'm coming quickly. Do you know when you're saying something, you know, the Bible is something God's saying to us, the New Testament is something God's saying to us, you keep the best for last. And Jesus is signing off, saying, I am on the way. Get ready. And here we are, the whole time thinking, well, this is often the future somewhere and it's not really, you know, the world is falling apart, and this isn't really making much of a difference. But one day, you know, this whole New Testament message is being ready to be with Jesus forever and ever. So, He is coming back just like he said he would. And that's how the New Testament ends. Message translation for that verses says, *"I'm on my way. I'll be there soon."* So, we better get with the program. You know, you can go quite some time these days without hearing about Jesus is coming back. But it's sooner than it was yesterday. So, we've got to get with it. Amen?

The two angels at Jesus ascension went Jesus ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives, they said, *"You men of Galilee, why do you stand up gazing into heaven the same Jesus who went into heaven, he is going to come back in the like manner as you saw him go."* So, the angels as soon as Jesus left, immediately, angels are there saying, He is coming back. I mean, there wasn't even a time for them to think about and leave Him. He's already being reminded that He's coming back. And then the Old Testament has more references to the Messiah's return than the New Testament. There's five-or-six hundred verses in the Old Testament. We're just dealing with the New Testament which has more than three-hundred. So, Zechariah says His feet shall stand on that day on the Mount of Olives and when the Messiah comes back to the Mount of Olives, He's going to split the mountain in two. So that's the first category of the three-hundred scriptures of Jesus return. Jesus is coming back just like He said he would. And maybe you thought of one or two of those.

Now, the second category is descriptions of His coming. And these are most likely the verses that you would think of when we say Jesus return. And these are pictures of the event. These are descriptions of the event. And they're very detailed of this climactic time of the event ending this age.

So, Revelation 1:7 is one of those verses. *"Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him, they also which pierced him, all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him."* Revelation 1:7, *"Jesus coming back with the clouds."* Jude 14 and 15, there's only one chapter. *"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."* So now Jesus coming with the clouds, Jesus coming back with ten-thousands of His saints. Why? it's saying here, it's emphasizing to execute judgment.

And we got the ungodly part. It's mentioned three times. This Jesus second coming is not going to be like His first coming. He is not coming being born as a baby in a manger. When He came the first time, He went to the cross, He paid the price for our sins. He came to save us. The second coming, Jesus coming back with great glory, power and authority and He is going to establish His kingdom and He is going to take judgment on unbelievers. So, when we speak about the second coming, there's actually two distinct events. And if you just say, the second coming of Jesus, you don't know particularly if you're speaking of one of these events or both of these events. And so, we have to make this distinction that there is the rapture of the church and there is the revelation of the Lord.

So, the rapture is Jesus coming *for* His saints, and in the revelation, Jesus coming *with* His saints, but we refer to both as the second coming. So, some verses deal very specifically with the rapture, Jesus coming *for* His saints. Now, what we saw earlier, Jesus coming with ten-thousands of His saints, that's the revelation. But the rapture, for example, 1 Thessalonians 4:15 and again, 1 Thessalonians is the very first Epistle written chronologically, and it's all focused on the second coming. That was the first foremost message of the early church. *"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, they which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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. 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."* So here, now it's giving a title to the event saying, "the coming of the Lord." And so, we add that to our vocabulary list. 1 Thessalonians begins, chapter 1 verse 1, *"They themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, which he raised from the dead."* So that was the early church focus from the very beginning, to wait for Jesus and to be preparing themselves for the coming of the Lord.

And so, we have this distinction of the rapture, Jesus, coming *for* His saints and the revelation Jesus, coming *with* His saints and it's two distinct events. Then 1 Thessalonians 1, now we have a picture and we're talking about descriptive verses, the picture of Jesus return. 2 Thessalonians 1:7 is a picture of the revelation. So, 2 Thessalonians 1:7, *"to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."* 10, *"He shall come to be glorified in His saints."* So here we have a picture of the Revelation and so these verses are second category, descriptions of the event. Jesus coming with the clouds. He is coming with ten-thousands of His saints. He is coming with His mighty angels. He is coming in flaming fire. He is coming to take judgment. So, we are getting a picture of the event, every New Testament writer mentioning the Lord's return. Mark 13, *"They see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."* So, we're seeing descriptions of the event.

Then when you take, we begin our vocabulary list of references to the second coming, and we see already mentioned *"the coming of the Lord."* The New Testament mentions *"the appearing of the Lord," "the day of the Lord," "the revelation of Jesus Christ."* Titus says, *"the blessed hope"*. These are the main phrases that describe the event of Jesus return.

*"The coming of the Lord, the appearing of the Lord, the day of the Lord, the revelation of Jesus Christ, the blessed hope."* There're many other references – *"the end of the age, the last times, the day of God, the great day, day of judgment, day of redemption."* There's many, many others but those are the main titles of the event. So, our second category, we're looking at pictures, descriptions and we see these verses are quite graphic. Revelation 19 beginning with verse 11, *"I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon Him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war."* Gives a description of Jesus – *"eyes flame of fire, head, many crowns, name that is written that no man knew, clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, His name is called the Word of God and the armies which were in heaven, followed Him upon white horses."*

So here is another great picture of Jesus return with his saints. What a day that will be. What an amazing, glorious day that will be! Jesus coming back, just like He said he would. And so, if we add up those verses, there are seven, eight, nine verses.

Then category two are descriptions of the second coming in the New Testament. And we add those up, we have maybe a dozen or so of those. So, we have three-hundred-eighteen verses, dealing with the second coming and then let's just be really lenient and say we have a dozen of each of the others so that will be twenty-four. So, we're just under three-hundred. So, we're about to maybe, we'll be really lenient and say we have two-hundred-ninety verses to go. And our message has got to wind up some time, so to our astonishment, there's only one other category.

What the New Testament says about the second coming is 90% in this third category, not that Jesus says He's coming back, not the description of the event, but there is something really, really major here that God is getting across to us because all the rest of the verses, 90% deal with this third category. It is so ultra-important to us as the church, we're going to have to just say, I have to read the Bible like a new book. Where have I been? Are you ready? And we want to know what it is? Glad you asked. The third category, 90% of all the references in the New Testament is this - what we are to do, how we are to live and our responsibility in the light of Jesus soon return. What we are to do, how we are to live our responsibility in the light of Jesus soon return. So, we take those, the vocabulary, the expressions that describe the event and when we look at those, we see they're not always giving a picture of the event but they're telling the believers their responsibility and something we need to do because our entire Christian life is based on what God wants us to do in the light of Jesus return. It's all about being with Him. So, it's not just making it through the week, it's not just sort of trying to live a Christian life and eventually Jesus comes back. It's the exact opposite. Everything has to do with Jesus. It's not a surprise, huh? Not a surprise. He's got to plan for all the ages and ages.

So, let's just look at some of these verses and then you'll have homework, well, let's do representative verses, maybe one from each book, sort of, to get started. And then you'll be able to capture this, the feeling, the atmosphere of these verses and you'll be able to see them leap off the page. There'll literally be almost every page of your New Testament. So, let's look at the first one, James 5:7 and 8; *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord."* Bam, there is our topic, correct? *"Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receives the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord, bam, draws near."* What's our topic? The coming of the Lord. Does it give us a picture of the event? Not really. Is it Jesus saying he is coming back? No. But it tells us what we're to do as the church. Be patient, wait, be patient, be patient, establish your hearts. And so, these are the things that we need to do. And so,

the farmer is being patient for that fruit of the earth. We don't perceive time like God does. But we're all being patient for Jesus return to set this planet straight. Jesus is coming back, He's going to set this planet straight. This is the Christian life not trying to make it through this existence of earth and this temporary existence of planet, the state of the planet now, but is looking forward to God's ultimate plan forever and ever and ever. God has a plan for your eternity. You have much, much more time ahead of you then you have behind you. We have some decades here on earth. We have all eternity ahead of us. What's God interested in? Your past or the future? He's got a plan and I tell you, it's a good one. It's a good one. So here is just an example of which to establish our hearts.

So, when Jesus is returning, He wants to come back for established, established in His Word. People that are stable to do His Word, to do His will, get His works accomplished. And you know, and the New Testament is filled with stability words, to be grounded, to be planted, to be rooted, established, founded, firm, to stand, to be steady, stable, strong, unmovable. Verses will be coming to your memory as we're saying it. To be unshakable, to be settled, to be unwavering, anchored, fixed, edified.

And so, God is interested in established believers. Why? Because Jesus is coming back. He is coming back for established, establish your hearts. That's the purpose because the coming of the Lord is near. Hello? Thank you, Lord. We're quite well into it now. Yes. Yes, yes. So here we go, 1 Timothy 6:12. Sometimes we find that a lot of our favorite verses, the context is the second coming, we didn't even know. *"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life."* That's 1 Timothy 6:12. But look at verse 14, *"That you keep the commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."* Bam. That's our topic, the coming of the Lord, the appearing of the Lord.

Fight the good fight of faith, why, until the appearing of the Jesus Christ. So, the purpose of fighting the good fight of faith, the purpose of faith is because Jesus is coming back. 2 Timothy 4, verse 1, *"I charge you therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine."* So there, I'm charging you before Jesus who was going to bring judgment at His appearing, preach the word! So, the purpose of preaching the word is because Jesus is coming back. Thank you, Lord. 2 Timothy 4: 7 and 8, *"I have fought a good fight."* Well, what fight is that? That's the fight of faith we know from before from 1 Timothy. *"I have finished my course, I have helped the faith."* There it is, good fight of faith. *"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."* What day is that? The day of His return, *"and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."* So, there it's talking about the second coming again. So, the whole living out your Christian life is in the context of the coming day of the Lord and to love his appearing. But you love His appearing now. You can love His appearing before He appears. And, but, you're looking forward, you're looking to that crown of righteousness. Thank you, Lord. So, the second coming affects us all as believers now on what we're to do, how we are to live and our responsibility in the light of Jesus soon return. And there's dozens of dozens and dozens and dozens of verses like this. So, we're just getting you started.

But this turned to this, this is Titus 2, this verse gives a very good summary. In fact, it's remarkably similar to putting the verses that we said before together. This is a very, very good summary. Titus 2:11, *"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 this present world."* This is how we are to live right now in this present world. This is how we live in the present world. *"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."* So, by the grace of God, we are saved, and we are being taught how to live in this present world right now as we're looking to the blessed hope of His return, His glorious appearing of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

That is our purpose of our Christian life right now. Let's just look back. There was one thing I wanted us to look at. Matthew 24. Matthew 24. You know, Jesus was up at the temple mount with His disciples. And the disciples had a question and was their perception that I want as to see about Jesus return. Matthew 24, *"Jesus went out, departed from the temple. His disciples came to him to show him the buildings. Jesus said, you see all these things, truly, I tell you, shall not left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world or the end of the age?"*

And so, you know, the disciples are pretty good illustrations now and then of being natural, so to speak. They have a very human side to them. And so, they've heard Jesus teaching. Jesus is teaching He is coming back. Jesus is teaching that there is going to be an end of this age. And so, they're focused on that. Their questions are:

- When is this going to be?
- What is going to be the signs of the end of the world?

And so, this is pretty typical of man's viewpoint. This is basically how the world's concern is being expressed:

- Is this the beginning of the end?

And we kind of hear this a lot of doom and gloom, you know, very frequently but we have to be geared in not just on man's idea, man's expectation. We've got to be geared in on God's perception.

So how does God see things? Ephesians 2:5, *"when we were dead in sins, he has quickened us, he has made us the life together with Christ, he has raised us up with Christ,"* past tense, *"He's made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."* Past tense. Why? Ephesians 2:7, *"That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."*

So, the disciples are all basically saying, Is this the beginning of the end? But God is saying that we've been saved, we've been raised, we've been seated with Christ for the purpose that in the ages to come, He has a plan for us according to the riches of His grace. So, we're at the end of this age and we're kind of focused here on how things are falling apart, you know, but there are signs that Jesus coming back.

But God's plan for the ages, and ages and ages to come, He's plan for all your eternity. God is not saying, Is this the beginning of the end? God is saying, This is the end of the beginning. It's just the end of this age but it's the beginning of the ages and ages to come forever and ever, showing us the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus. That's really good news, very good news. You want to be onboard for God's perspective of the end time.

So, we are looking at various scriptures, speaking this, Hebrews 10, you know, it's saying, *"Don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together but exhort one another so much more as you see the day approaching."* So, we're exhorted to be a part of church in our local body of believers, and even the more that things are falling apart in the world, even more so as you see the day approaching.

So that's a reason all the more to get together. It's not a reason to stay home, it's the reason to be plugged in. Philippians 3:20, *"our citizenship is in heaven."* That's a favorite verse, *"from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."* He's going to transform our lowly body to be conformed to this glorious body. So, our citizenship is in heaven but it's from heaven that we are waiting for the Savior. This is what we are to do and what he's going to do? He's going to fulfill our salvation and transform our bodies. 1 John 3:2, *"Beloved, we're the children of God, it's not been*

*revealed what we shall be, but we know when he has revealed," the revelation, "we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure."*

So now, we can take the vocabulary of the event, the coming of the Lord, the appearing of the Lord, the day of the Lord, the revelation of Jesus Christ, and then we see there's a vocabulary of what we're to do, how we're to act in our responsibility, that vocabulary now accompanies those verses. And so now you could recognize that. So, we did that with this third category and we say to be patient, to establish our hearts to be spotless, to be blameless, to preach, to be ready, and then many, many verses, to wait, to hope, purify yourself, to watch, to live holy, to look forward, be diligent, continue in him, abide in him, to be doing, occupying, be busy, until He returns, being about the master's business, et cetera, et cetera.

Many of the verses have to do with this aspect of waiting, hoping, watching, so forth, the Lord's return. Not describing it but telling us what to do that we can live in God's blessing right now, fulfill His plan on earth right now, take our responsibility for Him right now but His plan for us is for all the ages and ages to come. So, if you just take, now you can take one of those words, you can just take wait. And then you can see the many, many verses that just speak about one of the words, just to wait. And this is a way you can study this like we said, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth. Our citizenship is in heaven from which we wait for the Savior. 1 Corinthians 1:7, *"you come behind and no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

This is how 1 Corinthians begins. There was a lot of correction in the letter of 1 Corinthians. He was answering their questions. He knew he had to correct them, so he had to say something good to them first. You know, in business, it works that way. You tell them something good and then you hit them with the correction news. Well, that's what he was doing. Paul is thinking, what could I tell the Corinthians? *"You come behind and no gift"* but the deeds that have some pointers about that, we're going to get to that later. And so, but waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, waiting for Jesus return was something that they had right.

And so, Hebrews 9:28, fantastic verse, we're going to be wrapping up. *"So, Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; to those who eagerly wait for him, he will appear a second time apart from sin for salvation."* So, Jesus came the first time, paid the price for our sins, went to the cross, made salvation possible, but now we are eagerly waiting for Him to appear a second time that we'll have this fullness of our salvation.

So, we see the admonishment to wait for the Lord's return but what does it mean? We, as it just like waiting by looking at your watch, you know, some time table at the bus stop, or just kind of looking? Is that what it's about? Not exactly. To wait for Jesus return, this is what it means. It's to have a certain unsettledness. It is to know that the things surrounding us right now are just not altogether. It just doesn't seem right.

To wait for Jesus is to have an awareness that the current situation of planet earth is only temporary. To wait for Jesus is a longing for Jesus to return and bring this planet to God's intended purpose. To wait for Jesus is to expect Jesus return to set this planet straight. He is going to turn this right side up. To wait for Jesus is an expectation for the final condition of this world when Jesus returns from heaven. To wait for Jesus is the hope of being with Jesus for all eternity. His return in the future affects us now.

And then 1 and 2 Peter, the entire books have the theme of the second coming. And let's just turn to 2 Peter and we'll close there. It's just so dramatic, so, so, so dramatic.

God wants us to know He is coming back, and we have something to do. It's our responsibility. 2 Peter chapter 3 and if you read 1 and 2, I usually take the whole session on 1 Peter. You start reading that,

you're going to see the second coming. It's just, you know, you're going to go wow. You know, read 1 Peter. You'll love it. 2 Peter 3:3, *"Knowing this first, in the last days scoffers will come after their own lusts."* Bam, that's our topic. Verse 4, *"Where is the promise of His coming?"* Jesus is coming back. And it speaks about the day of judgment. Verse 7, *"One day with the Lord is a thousand years, and a thousand years is a day."* We use that to express that God's not limited by time, which is true. But it's saying that His time is not like our time in the context of Jesus return. His promise, His promise, He's not slacks concerning His promise of Jesus return. He is not willing that any should perish but He desires all to come to repentance. Verse 10, *"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night."* So, do you see what we got here? The last days, His coming, day of judgment, His promise, day of the Lord. We're talking about Jesus coming back, as a thief in the night, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements will melt, fervent heat, it's where we get it, it's all going to burn. The earth also and the works therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved ...

How would you finish that verse? It's kind of a strange thing to say. But seeing this cataclysmic event, Jesus returning to earth and everything put together, what would we do? How could we be a part? How would you finish that verse? All these messages, all these verses about Jesus return, seeing that and all these things are going to be dissolved. What does God say? The same thing He is saying in the other verses. What does 2 Peter, this is 2 Peter 3:11. *"Seeing all these things shall be dissolved. What manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"* It's how you act, it's what you do. *"Looking,"* - that's one of our vocabulary words - *"Looking and hasting into the coming of the day of God."*

Verse 13, *"We, according to His promise, we look for a new heaven and a new earth."* Verse 14, *"Seeing, we look for such things, will be diligent to be found in him in peace without spot and blameless."* Verse 18, as the book closes, *"Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever, this present age and the ages to come."* Do your part now, all in the perspective of God's perspective that we're going to be with Jesus forever and ever. He has a plan for your eternity. Get with the plan and the future is right in Jesus name. Thank you, Lord.

Pastor, Pastor Arland.