

The coming of the Lord

Part 2

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[00:00:00] We read together John 14, first three verses, where the Lord Jesus told his own not to be troubled in heart, they were to believe in God and believe also in him. Because he said, in my father's house there are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also. And we thought that that wonderful promise is a very engaging thing indeed for all our hearts, I will come again, the promise of the Son of God that has still to be implemented and how wonderful that we're waiting for its fulfillment. Last night we considered in first Corinthians 15 some of the great features that will take place when the Lord comes for his own, particularly the change in our bodies, [00:01:05] the dead bodies of the saints who have died since the day of Pentecost up till the present moment when the Lord comes. And then to the change that will take place in the bodies of the believers who are here upon earth, and that was a very wonderful thing to see the power of God operating in the twinkling of an eye to produce this marvelous change. Now I thought tonight we might look at some very very practical features and yet they still are connected with the coming of the Lord. In Romans chapter 13 the apostle says, knowing the time. You remember that the Lord Jesus upbraided those who had no desire to accept him, he says you can discern the signs of the times but you cannot, you discern the signs of the skies but you cannot discern the signs of the [00:02:05] times. They should have known, they should have had eyes to see what was happening. First of all that they were under the yoke of the Romans, that was a very powerful sign to them that their unfaithfulness had produced this bondage. And secondly that the Messiah was there before their eyes and they saw what he said and what he did was clear proof that Messiah had come and yet they ignored those very definite signs and just went on their way as if nothing had happened. So Paul says to the believers here knowing the time and that's a very important thing for every one of us to know the time in which we live and we've often been taught and rightly taught that we do not see the fulfillment of prophecy before the church is cut away, the correct fulfillment of prophecy [00:03:05] will take place after the church is gone. All the old testament scriptures in relation to Israel and the nations will have their speedy fulfillment after the church at home. But there are signs that we can see and we take account of them and says the apostle knowing the time that now it is high time high time he says to awake out of sleep and I think the apostle is emphasizing the urgency of the Christian period that we are not here forever that there is a time available for the believers to do something for the Lord as guided by the Holy Spirit and that's very very important indeed. It's high time to awake out of sleep he said. I believe it's a great sorrow and grief to the Lord to see the tremendous apathy that exists amongst Christians and perhaps we have all to look [00:04:07] into our own hearts and ask ourselves well yes how much am I really awake as to the Lord's interests at the present moment and so the apostle is really rousing the saints to be awakened out of any condition of apathy and indifference and to apply themselves in the power of the spirit to Christian activity in the day of grace.

We want to say a little word about this matter of sleep. If we think of it naturally well yes it's a call for the natural body to rest something that's natural and very very necessary but it also indicates inactivity when you're asleep there are no activities that you're involved in it's just like death the body is [00:05:01] inactive it's not acting in energy as I say again it's inactive and so I think this is what the apostle is driving at the inactivity of believers in a day that's extremely important the time the time's marvelous time the day of grace the day of the formation of the church the day of the activities of the Father Son and Holy Spirit and nothing can be greater than that. Knowing that says the apostle how are you using your time it's high time to awake out of sleep he says and apply yourself to the things that are really worthwhile. There are some very very sad things when we read the scriptures in connection with sleep you remember that that great man of God Samson it was when he slept that his wife seduced him and took away his power the Nazarite ship was destroyed in him for a while he did regain it but oh how sad it was when he slept. [00:06:07] We think of the disciples sleeping at the time of the Lord's sorrow could you not watch with me one hour he said isn't there a tremendous appeal of love behind that there he was crying his heart out to his father and all the impending sorrow of the cross before him and those who really loved him and who loved to be with him there they were could you not watch with me one hour very very sad and then we find in the epistle to the Ephesians a tremendous unfolding of divine truth and the glory of Christ and the greatness of the church and the father's counsel and many many other things and yet the apostle has to say awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead oh how sad that those who have been taught so many wonderful truths can slip into a [00:07:06] state of apathy and indifference and carelessness very very sad indeed. There's a portion that often appeals to me in this way in Proverbs 24 it's the last few verses of the chapter and the writer says he went past the garden of the sluggard and the wall was broken down and the thorns and the thistles were overgrowing the garden there was nothing beautiful everything was derelict and very very ugly to behold and he says a little sleep a little folding of the hands there's another very telling proverb too the slothful man says he clothes himself in rags the poverty and the unlovely appearance of apathy in relation to the things of the lord and so the apostle is [00:08:06] speaking in view of the day of redemption and he's encouraging the saints not to be lulled to sleep oh the enemy desires that wasn't it when men slept that the enemy sowed tares in the field when there was a lack of vigilance carelessness lack of interest and that is when the enemy was busy and so dear friends we have to pay attention to this oh how easy it is to give way to nature how easy it is to be a blow into the state of contentment contentment on one hand with the blessings we possess and yet apathy and inactivity in relation to the things of the lord so he says it's high time to awake out of sleep for now is our salvation nearer than when we believe [00:09:02] is paul thinking for a moment that he's not sure of his salvation until the day of redemption comes is there a little uncertainty in his mind when he speaks about the salvation is nearer than when we believe and everybody here knows no that's not so paul was absolutely sure about his salvation salvation 100 sure that his sins were gone and gone forever because of the death of our lord jesus christ neither was he occupied with day by day salvation that he experienced because christ was on high at the right hand of god that he had experienced on many many occasions he knew the delivering power of the lord from circumstances and the power of the enemy he was talking about complete and final salvation when the lord jesus christ comes the salvation that has to do with [00:10:04] the body that we were speaking about last night when in one moment of divine power the last act of salvation takes place very very interesting if you have mr darby's translation you'll find it in the end of philippians 3 he says we're looking for the lord jesus christ as savior i think you'll find in the authorize it says looking for the lord jesus christ the savior but when he says as savior that emphasizes that it is an act of salvation when he comes to change these bodies and my what a wonderful salvation it will be think of being taken out of this scene where we are tempted and so often succumb where we realize the power of the enemy satan's power and all its wickedness when there are all [00:11:02] the allurements that are in this world

surrounding us to draw us away from the lord all these things and many more things and all that to go in one moment of divine power the salvation that's here than when we believed and for every generation of christians since the time the apostle paul wrote those words that's perfectly true some here have known the lord jesus for a long long time and so it's perfectly obvious that their salvation is nearer than the day they believe and we believe that we are just on the point of experiencing that salvation oh how near it is there are so many things that we can take account of as we look at the times we'll talk about these in a moment but i believe principally what should be in our minds and this is something of course that we're unable to take account of that is the completion of the church [00:12:04] i believe that's the main thing that governs the time when the lord will come when the last saint has been secured and the church is complete god's purpose in the past ages is complete then i believe the lord will come on the other hand there are many many other signs for instance the tremendous apostasy that's taking place in the professing body the increasing and blatant forms of evil where good is called wrong and wrong is called right awful thing to see and also a very very very definite sign the formation of the nation of israel since 1948 its place amongst the nations and also the formation of the european nations where a treaty of rome was signed and there we have this very compact nation or company of nations that might well prefigure [00:13:07] the beast of revelation 13 we cannot close our eyes to these things these things are coming events casting their shadows and so we believe we are very very near to and so the collapse of the communist bloc which leaves the european nations the strongest and most powerful economic and political combination i believe again prefiguring the first beast of revelation 13 and so dear friends oh how near the time we are when the day of salvation will come the day of salvation is nearer than when we believe i suppose in some companies they might have shouted hallelujah when we speak about that kind of thing and yet we can be so cold so unmoved and we're dealing with the greatest [00:14:06] and most wonderful things that were ever committed to men and women the day of salvation what an event when the lord jesus christ shall come and when we all change but look what paul says the night is far spent days at hand let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light let us walk honestly as in the day not in rioting and drunkenness not in chambering and wantonness not in strife and envy put thee on the lord jesus christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof aren't these solemn words we must need them spirit of god would never indicted them if we hadn't needed them that in the face of this marvelous truth that the lord is coming the apostle is to warn us against carelessness in our behavior that there should be a distinct mark [00:15:07] pointing out that those who believe in the lord and are waiting for the lord are distinct in their behavior from the world and my all these things we've read that we have to avoid they're all around us and so easy to be to mark us if we allowed them and so says the apostle at the end put on the lord jesus christ be like him that's the kind of features that really tell before the lord comes to be like him to put him on so that we're here for his pleasure and glory so this is a very solemn passage while on the one hand we are reminded that the day of salvation is nearer for us on the other hand we're warned to avoid the things that are displeasing to the lord and a disgrace to the christian testimony and to put on the lord jesus christ and be like him now we move over to ephesians chapter four [00:16:18] and verse 30 grieve not the holy spirit of god for my you're sealed unto the day of redemption we believe again the day of redemption is looking forward to the time when we shall be liberated from this scene and taken to be with christ marvelous time that that will be we cannot say it enough again and again that this is a marvelous moment for us all to look forward to and really if we grasp it in humility and let the holy spirit bring it home to our hearts it should indeed thrill us that we're just on the verge of experiencing this wonderful moment [00:17:01] ah yes there are those who say today we've heard that over and over again but it's not happening where is the promise of his coming say the scoffers and we say in faith it may be that it hasn't been experienced yet it will be and maybe very soon and says the apostle i want you to be encouraged you've been sealed with the holy spirit of god until the day of redemption now first of all

the truth of the indwelling spirit of god isn't that a marvelous truth that every believer consequent upon belief in christ receives the gift of the holy spirit to indwell him and her and to be there until that life is completed or until the lord comes marvelous truth the power for every christian activity and the power enabling us to enjoy [00:18:04] every christian privilege sad when we see so little evidence of it and yet there it is it's a truth that the holy scriptures bring before us the indwelling spirit of god and notice that the apostle stresses the holy spirit the characteristic name of the spirit of god co-equal with the father and the son and yet here to maintain the christian testimony until the end the holy spirit before we speak about the seal let us pay attention to what he says grieve not the holy spirit i think i'm right in saying that the grief here is similar to that expressed by the lord expressed by the lord in matthew chapter 26 where he was grieved and distressed a deep feeling [00:19:07] produced in him by the approaching cross and by no doubt the enmity of man against him but particularly the approaching cross and so the holy spirit is grieved what is he grieved about i suppose greed because of the lack of response to his ministry concerning the glory of christ you remember in genesis 24 when the servant was seeking a wife for isaac at one point he says hinder me not i have a service to perform for my master for the glory of his son and i believe that that's the great grief of the holy spirit that he's hindered in his positive work in glorifying christ amongst the people of god because their low spiritual state and their moral condition [00:20:05] now you know perfectly well we all know it that we do not get the gain of the spirit service in relation to christ if in any way we succumb to this world or if in any way we fail in moral matters the holy spirit service is held up in us that once repentance has taken place moral adjustment in our lives and then i walk with the lord that is proper and pleasing to him oh how delighted the spirit is to bring christ before us and to magnify him to our hearts and so when the apostle says grieve not the holy spirit i believe he's referring to this great service that the spirit is rendering and is held up in relation to it because of our low condition it's possible to lie to the holy spirit any activity of hypocrisy is lying to the holy [00:21:06] spirit it was so with ananias and saphira definitely all right for them to give a portion of their money to the interests of the lord at that time but sheer hypocrisy to give the impression that they had given it all and so they lied to the holy spirit i wonder if we lie to the holy spirit by creating impressions a facade that hides if you like the moral lowness and failure that attaches to our lives oh the holy spirit doesn't like that kind of thing and this work is held up in us when there is any attempt to do this kind of thing paul says that we're not to lie and he's saying there it's not the actual oral lie but the attempt at falsehood that is living a lie [00:22:01] by an outward appearance that is false because behind it behind the facade there is corruption and so dear friends what a serious thing to lie to the holy spirit in view of this great day that's approaching the day of redemption we surely would not like to be in that particular condition and the lord jesus to come what a joyous thing it would be to be in a condition of communion with the lord or engaged in any spiritual activity for the lord and he were to come that would be a happy moment for us all and so dear friends this matter of our response to the holy spirit service is a very very real one indeed we're told not to quench the spirit and we're told and of course blaspheming against the spirit which has particular reference to the lord in his manhood was an extremely serious thing not to be forgiven not at that time nor in any other time and so very very [00:23:06] serious that in any way we hinder the positive work of the holy spirit now then the matter of sealing i consider this very very happy form of truth indeed we believe that when a person accepts the lord jesus christ the savior they understand clearly and distinctly the greatness of the work of christ they understand that his precious blood has cleansed them from all guilt and shame that when that belief takes place conversion takes place then the spirit seals that you have it in the type with the priests and sons you remember the blood was placed upon their ear and their thumb and the great toe and then the oil was placed upon the blood and i think there was the same procedure in connection with the cleansed leper and so the [00:24:06] type tells us that consequent upon the work of the blood the cleansing power of the blood we have the sealing of the holy spirit now there are various thoughts connected

with the sealing and i think they're very very precious connected with the day of redemption first of all there is ownership and this can be seen in second timothy too when the apostle says having this seal the lord knoweth them that are his isn't that wonderful that when we're sealed with the holy spirit it's tantamount to the lord saying this person belongs to me and will belong to me forever and there's no power in earth or in hell can take this person away from me mine sealed with the holy spirit until the day [00:25:02] of redemption oh i think that's marvelous that the indwelling spirit of god is a reminder to us that we belong to god until the day of redemption and no one can take us from him secondly there is what is authentic and we just need to quote one scripture to prove that and you remember paul when the corinthians were questioning his apostleship he says the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the lord that is that before them if they had the eyes to see it was the authentic expression of apostleship they owed their blessing to him they owed the formation of the assembly of god in corinth to him so when we see a person sealed with the holy spirit when any of us is sealed with the holy spirit then it's the authentic article god doesn't seal [00:26:06] unconverted people god may work in on unconverted people he has the right to do that whenever he wills we have the instance of balaam there was a man unconverted no love towards god or god's people and the spirit of god worked through him that's a different thing altogether from being sealed god seals the authentic believers in christ they're real and god says they are mine and then there is security you remember in connection with satan that he's placed in the bottomless pit for a period of a thousand years and he's sealed that's to make sure he doesn't come out for that period of a thousand years and might be a wonderful thing when the the earth is set free from satan's wiles for a thousand years but the emphasis he's secure there he won't cause [00:27:06] any trouble but of course when we transfer that idea to us praise god we are secure until the day of redemption it's only the authentic ones that will be caught out of the scene the professors with no life or no love for the lord they'll be left behind but the authentic ones are sealed until the day of redemption and they'll be caught up to be with the lord and so it is with those who are secure kept right until that wonderful moment and you remember in john chapter 10 oh how i love to quote these words they are very dear to my heart i can assure you when the lord speaks about the sheep being held in his hand and held in his father's hand and there we have tremendous security but there in ephesians 4 it's the spirit who seals them and there is the security they're [00:28:04] secure for god until the day of redemption now lastly that which is irreversible you remember in the book of esther when the king sealed the decree with his signet ring it was impossible that that could be reversed the law of the medes and the persians made it a law that was binding that could not be broken and praise god when we're sealed with the holy spirit until the day of redemption that's irreversible impossible for it to be reversed and so we're deeply thankful for this wonderful truth the seal seal of the holy spirit that gives us these tremendous blessings and assurance until the day of redemption well then that's the positive side that every christian can take account of and enjoy at the present moment but look let all bitterness and wrath and anger [00:29:08] and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice be kind one to another tender hearted forgiving one another even as god for christ's sake hath forgiven you that's the other side wouldn't it be sad after all that we've said about the sealing of the holy spirit if these awful features in verse 31 were all that was seen amongst the saints of god bitterness and envy and clamor and slander and misrepresentation and lies that would be a novel condition ah the last verse is what we want to see in view of the day of redemption kind to one another tender-hearted forgiving one another even as god for christ's sake hath forgiven you what a [00:30:06] marvelous thing for saints of god to be together in this happy condition until the day of redemption now we move over to the epistle of jude you know that this short epistle written by the covenant of god is dealing very largely with the awful failure of apostasy which means giving up the things of god and accepting something else he wanted to write to them about the common salvation but unfortunately because of the conditions that were prevalent he thought it better to write in this way to encourage them as he does in these verses that

we read together he exhorts them to build themselves up and to pray [00:31:07] and to keep themselves and to be looking for the mercy of our lord jesus christ and to eternal life i believe without doubt that john 14 is the most precious passage that should govern us in our looking for the coming of the lord it's all about him and it's all about the father's house and it's all about the love and the glory that belongs to that place but here this is a different matter this is looking for the mercy of our lord jesus christ unto eternal life and i believe what the apostle is saying is it will be a mercy when the lord comes and takes us out of the scene where there is so much failure and so much wickedness in the professing body wickedness [00:32:02] yes positive evil wickedness in the professing body and that's very very sad indeed that the apostle should write in that way before we speak about that i like to think of verse 24 that he is able to keep us from falling now i've often felt that this isn't the ordinary failure that we might easily succumb to day by day loss of temper or some evil thought or evil word or even evil deed any christian can succumb to that in a moment but here i believe the apostle is speaking about the falling of apostasy he says he'll keep us from that those who are really close to him and building themselves up and praying and looking for the lord these are the people who will be kept from falling into this tremendous evil falling away from the truth [00:33:01] very very sad thing indeed and so that's the encouraging side and praise god will be presented before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy but what a mercy to be taken out of the scene before it gets to that awful condition the lord speaks about in revelation three in connection with laodicea when it's so obnoxious that which bears his name in professing christendom and he says he'll spew it out of his mouth obnoxious and we believe that will be the awful condition of that professing company that's left bearing the name of christ after the church is gone that will be dealt with eventually in the harlot church no dear friends what a mercy indeed to be taken from that what are the things that are going on at the present moment well first of all we can think of the ecumenical movement and the broad platform that it is [00:34:04] presenting now where christ is placed alongside of others for instance we're told that christ is for the christian and every christian says praise the lord for that but those who say that equally say moses for the jew buddha for the buddhists and all the gods of the hindus for the hindus equally say that which means putting christ alongside them and that's the awful apostasy that we are facing at the present moment in the ecumenical movement we have the new age movement where again christ is introduced mixed up with the occult and every conceivable wickedness yes professing believers are prepared to be connected with that and then of course we find the awful things that are said publicly recently i heard that [00:35:03] the bishop of durham was asked point blank do you believe in the virgin birth of christ and he says no no ambiguity there dear friends this is a man who's supposed to be a shepherd of the sheep and this is in the professing body what a mercy then to be taken out of this heartless scene in relation to the person of christ and of course the virgin birth is not the only thing that's denied his glorious physical resurrection from among the dead his deity his miracles what are we left with a man who was kind and produced many wonderful ethics that's all we're left with sad sad thing a mercy to be taken out of that and he says looking for the mercy of our lord jesus christ unto eternal life oh you say i thought that we possess eternal life and praise god we do [00:36:03] because john's gospel teaches us clearly and so does his epistle we're in the enjoyment of eternal life now in christ every believer has this eternal life and the enjoyment of it but paul and jude too is presenting it as something that will be realized in the future in its fullness and completion thank god for that this is eternal life that they might know thee the only true god and jesus christ whom thou sent and we believe the knowledge of the father and the son in the power of the spirit the only power that can help us to enjoy those persons is the true engagement of eternal life and at the present moment we are occupied with waiting for that looking for it coming to us in the coming of our lord jesus christ oh what a wonderful day that will be no failure connected with eternal life impossible it's pure it's living it's holy [00:37:06] and dear friends we're going on to that in all its fullness and in all its blessedness now just for a few moments in first corinthians chapter 11. you know this is one of the

things that paul received directly from the lord jesus christ he received this by the word of the lord it might have been easy for the jews to say well now this was delivered by the lord specially for us when he was here upon earth he said this to his disciples in the upper room and we believe this is a distinct jewish bearing but when the apostle the apostle to the gentiles received it from the glory and hands that on to i believe mainly gentile believers in the city of corinth he shows that the truth of the lord's supper [00:38:04] is for all believers and until he comes for the simple instructions what a test it is what a taste it is the simple instructions of the supper to recall him to our hearts and to our minds man has embellished the supper and we've not been a missing that either in adding this that and the next thing to the simple instructions of the supper and contending very very strongly that this is absolutely necessary for the supper and then when you come to put a scripture against the things that we contend for that's another story the supper is an appeal for the affections of the believer for the person of christ and we have the slightest doubt that when the supper is performed as the lord laid down and that is fulfilled in affection [00:39:02] to the lord there will be no doubt that our affections will be led to the father in the enjoyment of his greatness but when we break bread and we partake of the cup and we partake of the bread the supper as presented by the lord is completed what happens afterwards is in the guidance and control of the holy spirit and so we believe that the great thing to draw ourselves together is the attraction that's in christ personally i remember reading about the christians in poland when they were being persecuted severely by the roman catholics perhaps it may be good to say that at one time poland was nearly 100 percent for the reformed truth and that of course was very very galling to the pope and those who followed him and so an army was gathered together and poland was devastated rich country fertile industrious and it was in devastated because [00:40:06] the majority of them believed in the truth and then from that moment up to the present moment poland has been predominantly roman catholic but in the time of the great persecutions christians couldn't meet together and remember the supper and so they met together out in the fields and they tell us they just broke bread and they partook of the cup no singing no ministry they did what the lord told them to do and they separated with great joy would that be a test to us if we only came together just to break bread partake of the cup and then separate would we do it with great joy it would be a great test but the lord says through paul [00:41:02] until he come when he comes for the church there will be no more opportunity to remember him i believe that it might have a distinct reference to his appearing because you remember when he said i will not drink it you with you until i drink it in the kingdom that's not the exact quotation but it's the gist of it and so the lord is talking about his absence from this scene but he will be coming back and have the joy of being with his own and that will be when he appears and publicly takes up his position in this world and establishes the kingdom but without doubt when he comes for his own then the supper will cease there'll be no need to remember him in that way because we'll see him face to face and be like him isn't it a wonderful privilege that we have until he comes a tremendous privilege very very sad if we don't avail [00:42:06] ourselves of that opportunity when we have it now and it would be sad if we went to glory and had to confess to the lord no we didn't remember thee when uh when we were here when we were there on earth we had the opportunity but we didn't avail ourselves of it that would be sad indeed oh how he loves us and proved his love by giving himself for us and so we are very very thankful that we do remember him until he comes i'm sure that we'll gladly dispense with the supper in order to be with him and see him as he is and enjoy his presence forever and faith will give place to actuality marvelous to see the one who loved us and gave himself for us may we be encouraged for his namesake