

## Them that Look for Him

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*So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

*– Hebrews 9:28 –*

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The Christian life presents us with a “strait betwixt two.” (Philippians 1:23). What Paul encapsulated in those words was the dynamic tension in every Christian’s life. The ultimate goal of our redemption is to partake in eternal fellowship with our thrice holy Creator in heaven. Until that time, we are to occupy until He come. But it is unfortunately also true that in meeting our God-appointed days, our hearts can get so used to occupying that our longing for our Lord’s actual presence wanes.

We in the Western church, particularly here in the United States, have been heirs to the apex of the gospel’s influence upon men and nations. The democratic republic in which we live was birthed out of the permeation of the gospel in Western Civilization’s culture, conscience, and institutions. For centuries, despite the sin in our land, it remained such a part of the warp and woof of the nation’s fabric that it steadied the ship through many tumultuous times. As such, it has always been fairly comfortable to be a Christian in America. We could sing the songs of Zion in a strange land, as it were, but not all *that* strange. God’s blessings have been so abundant here that we have forgotten, at least practically so, that this world is not, nor was ever it intended to be, our home. Maintaining our dwellings, building our retirement, chasing our dreams – all of this, if we are honest, has employed at least as much if not more of our time and resource than sharing the good news out of love for our fellow man in anticipation of Christ’s soon return.

William Law once wrote, “If you stop and ask yourself why you are not so devoted as the early Christians, your own heart will tell you that it is neither through ignorance nor inability, but purely because you never thoroughly intended it.” This is a stinging rebuke. And we could add that perhaps we never thoroughly intended it because we have lost the full persuasion of His soon appearing. The early Christians lived with an *anticipation of Jesus’s imminent return*. They were less certain that they were going to live out their days than that Christ would come in the air to receive them unto Himself. This blessed hope of the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior drove them to great exploits of faith, obstinately defying the constant threat as well as the reality of horrendous persecutions.

Are we among “them that look for Him”? The question is more practical than it is theological. There ought to be in each of our hearts an intense desire – *a longing and anticipation* – for His soon appearing. Should He come today, are we at peace with that? Have we done all we know how to do, while we have our breath and sojourn in this sin-laden world, in obedience to Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and made us kings and priests to reign with Him forever? Does the thought of Him returning today excite our hearts? Or are our hopes and desires to see our children and grandchildren and live out our days greater than our expectation of hearing the trumpet and ascending to meet the Lord in the air?

Brethren, God has richly blessed us. But let us be careful to note that His material blessings are temporal while His spiritual blessings are eternal. We may be grateful for God’s material and societal blessings, but let us repent of our comfort in them. In so doing, we will find it much easier to look for Him.