Appendix D

The Importance of Christ's Imminent Return to Living a Godly Life

As I have surveyed various discipleship materials, it is amazing to me the utter absence of teaching regarding the Lord's return. Why is this? Probably from the desire not to offend those who hold differing views on the subject. But this motivation does not handle Scripture correctly (2 Tim 2:15) and it does so to the harm and disadvantage of precious souls who would be greatly helped by thorough instruction in the whole counsel of God.

A significant part of the Bible is given to prophecy and if Christians would devote more attention to it, they would not find themselves *distracted* from serving the Lord but enabled to serve Him more faithfully. Christians would see things in the light of eternity and gain much practical encouragement. Their faith would be broader and deeper, and they would be enabled to see the whole scope, purpose, and objective of history.

The imminent return of Christ—that He could come at any moment—is a doctrine that does not have the respect it should because of errors such setting dates when Christ will return. But is that a good reason for either jettisoning the doctrine or not taking it seriously? If the Holy Spirit thought it so important that He guided the writers of Scripture to write about Christ's return and guarded them from error, is it not worthy of our attention? The more you are involved in studying God's Word, the better equipped you are to meet the skepticism and doubt of the day, encouraged to labor faithfully, and motivated to live for Christ.

The whole NT refers to the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ and in a very practical way. It touches every aspect of life. How is the coming of the Lord a practical teaching of Scripture? Consider the following ways in which Christ's imminent return has practical importance:

1) Help against worldliness, Matt 16:26-27

2) Not to be ashamed of Christ, Mark 8:38; 1 John 2:28

3) Promoting faithfulness, Luke 12:42-44

4) Encouraging watchfulness because of its suddenness, Luke 17:24-30

5) Eager anticipation of the Second Coming is commended, 1 Cor 1:4-8

6) It helps guard against hasty judgment, 1 Cor 4:5

7) It is proclaimed every time the Lord's Supper is observed, 1 Cor 11:26; Matt 26:29

8) It anticipates the resurrection of the saints, 1 Cor 15:23

9) It gives encouragement in death, 1 Cor 15:51-57

10) It supports confidence that Christ will finish the work, Phil 1:6

11) An impetus for purity, Phil 1:9-10

12) To keep in mind our heavenly citizenship, Phil 3:20-21

13) To be gentle, Phil 4:5

14) To considering fleshly lusts as dead, Col 3:3-5

15) It is the principle event for which the believer waits, 1 Thess 1:9-10

16) To anticipate rejoicing with the saints, 1 Thess 2:19

17) An encouragement to brotherly love, 1 Thess 3:12-13

18) It is *the* source of consolation to those who sorrow over the dead who sleep in Jesus, 1 Thess 4:13-18

19) To be alert and self-controlled, 1 Thess 5:2-6

20) To faithfulness and obedience, 1 Tim 6:13-14

21) To faithfully preach the Word, 2 Tim 4:1-2

22) To love Christ's Second Coming, 2 Tim 4:7-8

23) To be separate from worldly lusts and live godly, Titus 2:11-13

24) To eagerly wait for Him, Heb 9:27-28

25) To endure and persevere, Heb 10:36-37; James 5:7-8

26) To endure severe trials, 1 Pet 1:7

27) To bear persecution for Christ, 1 Pet 4:13

28) To live holy and godly lives, 2 Pet 3:11-13

29) To abide in Christ, 1 John 2:28

30) To personal purity, 1 John 3:2-3

31) To hold fast the hope until the end, Rev 2:25; 3:11

32) To repentance, Rev 3:3

33) To watchfulness, Rev 16:15