

## **When He Appears**

**1 John 2:28 – 3:3**

**In 1 Corinthians 11:26, the Apostle Paul tells us to take part in the Lord's Supper until Jesus returns. This morning we're going to take part in the Lord's Supper AND we're going to talk about the Lord's return.**

**One of the great truths of the Christian faith is that Jesus Christ is coming again.**

**In Acts 1:11 we're told that the one who**

**was seen going up INTO heaven will RETURN in the same way. According to Acts 1:15 about 120 men (plus women and children) witnessed Christ's ascension into heaven. All of these witnesses were followers of Christ. In Revelation 1:7 we're told that when Christ returns, when he appears in the clouds at his second coming, EVERY eye will see him.**

**As you might expect, not everyone will be glad to see the Lord. Revelation 1:7**

**tells us that people from all the nations of the earth will “mourn” when they see Christ. The Greek word “kopto” translated “mourn” means “to cut or beat.” In John’s day it was common for people to beat their chest or head during a time of mourning. In extreme cases these repeated blows would cut the skin. The mourning in question in Revelation 1:7 is self-inflicted pain.**

**As I think about this verse (Rev. 1:7), two questions come to mind. One: “Who**

**are these mourners?” And two: “Why would they do this to themselves?” These are the answers. The “mourners” of Revelation 1:7 are unbelievers – those who have rejected or neglected the claims of Christ. Unbelievers of all nations will mourn when Jesus returns because they will realize that the wrath of God is about to come upon them.**

**In Revelation 6:16,17 we find these words. “They [unbelievers] called out to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and**

**hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne [God the Father] and from the wrath of the Lamb [God the Son, the Lord Jesus]. For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”” In Revelation 9:6 we’re told that the suffering will be so intense during this future outpouring of God’s wrath that “men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.”**

**Yes, for some the return of Jesus will be a time of great mourning. But for OTHERS Christ's return will be a time of great rejoicing! Those who have accepted Christ as Savior and Lord will REJOICE when they see him in the clouds because they will realize that their day of great reward has arrived!**

**When Christ appears in the clouds, the faithfulness of his followers will be rewarded in at least two ways.**

**In 1 John 3:2 we're told that when Christ appears we shall see him as he is AND we shall be like him. When our Lord Jesus returns, you and me and all who have trusted in Christ will receive the same kind of body HE received when he arose from the dead. I'm talking about a glorified body – the “globo” – a body that'll never get sick; a body that'll never get hungry or thirsty; a body that won't age; a body that'll never die; a body that can fly; a body that can appear**

**and disappear at will; a body that can go through walls! Beam me up Jesus!**

**This glorious event, often called the rapture, is described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17. “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ [those who died trusting in Christ] will rise first. After that, we [faithful believers] who are still alive and left will be caught up with them in the clouds to**

**meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be the Lord forever.”**

**When Jesus returns our blessed hope – the blessed hope of believers (see Titus 2:13) will become a reality. We will see him as he is (we will be in his glorified presence) AND we will be like him (we will GET a glorified body). What a day of rejoicing that will be!**

**When Jesus returns his followers will receive glorified bodies. When Jesus returns his followers will also receive**

**special awards for faithful service. These special awards will be in the form of crowns.**

**Four of these crowns are mentioned in Scripture. 2 Timothy 4:8 mentions the “crown of righteousness.” This crown will be given to those who long for Christ’s return. 1 Thessalonians 2:19 mentions what I call the “soul-winning” crown. This crown will be given to those who have been instrumental in leading people to Christ. In James 1:12 and**

**Revelation 2:10 the “crown of life” is mentioned. This crown will be given to those who have patiently endured persecution, suffering, temptations, trials, and tribulations. In 1 Peter 5:2-4 a fourth crown is mentioned – “the crown of glory.” This crown will be given to those who have been good shepherds of God’s flock. My personal belief is that these four crowns are merely examples of the many different crowns that will be given to faithful followers of Jesus when he**

**returns. I also believe that each faithful follower of Jesus will receive one basic crown and that different jewels will be added to represent various awards. Isn't that neat?**

**According to 2 Corinthians 5:10 Jesus himself will give these crowns to his faithful followers. 2 Corinthians 5:10 tells us that "we [followers of Christ] must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the**

**body, whether good or bad.” In 1  
Corinthians 3:13 we’re told that when we  
stand before the judgment seat of Christ,  
he will test (examine) the quality of our  
earthly works (the things we did as  
Christians) with fire. I’m convinced that  
the “fire” Christ will use to test our  
earthly works is the Word of God. In  
Jeremiah 23:29, the Lord declares, “Is not  
my word like fire?”**

**This is what I believe will happen when  
we stand before Jesus. Using the written**

**Word – the Bible – as his guide, the living  
Word – the Lord Jesus – will separate  
what we have done for HIM (for his  
honor and glory) from what we have done  
for US (selfish reasons) and reward  
ONLY that which was done for him (see 1  
Cor. 3:11-15).**

**In John 2:28, the Apostle John urges  
all Christians (he uses the Greek Word  
“teknia” which means “born ones”) to  
continue in the Lord, to serve him the  
best way we can, so that when he appears**

**in the clouds we may be confident and unashamed. How will you feel when you are caught up in the air and taken into heaven to stand before Jesus? Will you be confident, knowing that much of what you have done as a Christian will be rewarded? Or will you be ashamed because you know that you could have done a whole lot more for Christ, but didn't?**

**Listen carefully. One day – when Jesus returns – our faithful Christian**

**service WILL BE REWARDED. I don't know about you, but I'm going to do my best to get as many crowns as I can. I want to do this NOT because I want to pat myself on my glorified back and boast, but because I want to do as much as I can HERE AND NOW to honor and glorify Jesus. Are you with me?**

**Now we know that Jesus hasn't returned just yet. What should we do "while we wait for the blessed hope – the**

**glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13)?**

**In 1 John 3:3, the Apostle John tells us to purify ourselves and in 1 John 2:29, he tells us do what is right. The Apostle Paul puts it this way in Titus 2:12. He tells us to “say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions [see 1 John 2:16], and to live self-controlled and godly lives.”**

**To do this, to purify ourselves and do what is right, we must think right. The Apostle Paul puts it this way in Romans**

**12:2. He says, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind [compare Eph. 4:22-24]. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”**

**Right action or behavior begins in the mind. The way you think will determine how you act. To act right you must think right. How do you think right? To think**

**right you must know the truth AND  
believe the truth.**

**Where do you find the truth? In the  
person and teaching of Christ – in the  
Bible, the inspired Word of God (see 2  
Tim. 3:16,17 and 2 Pet. 1:20,21). In John  
8:31,32, Jesus says, “If you hold to my  
teaching, you are really my disciples.  
Then you will know the truth and the  
truth will set you free.” Knowing and  
believing in Christ will set you free. Not**

**free to do whatever you want, but free to become all that you were meant to be.**

**Listen carefully. To act right you need to think right. And if you think right AND act right (act on the truth), you will feel right. That's how it works – think right, act right, feel right.**

**Acting right will benefit us in two ways. First, acting right will result in heavenly rewards. We've already talked about this. And second, acting right will result in earthly joy – lasting joy, here**

**and now (Jesus calls this the “full life” in John 10:10).**

**When you think right and act right, when you know and believe in Jesus and live life HIS way, you will feel right, you will experience peace and joy. Your peace and joy are directly related to your walk with Christ. The closer you are to Jesus the more peaceful and joyful you will be.**

**Living life Christ’s way pays off. It has a positive affect on us AND it can**

**have a positive affect on those who don't know Christ. Some unbelievers will look at our Christ-like behavior and realize that something is missing in their life – something they'd like to have. When this happens we need to be ready to tell people WHY we act the way we do (see 1 Pet. 3:15). It's not about US, it's about Jesus!**

**Yes, some people will come to know the Lord because of seeing him IN US and hearing about him FROM US (see Rom. 10:17). Our Christ-like behavior WILL**

**have a positive affect on some people. But there are others who will look at our Christ-like behavior and instead of admitting their need for Christ they will reject the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and continue to live life THEIR way. This response often hurts us, especially when the person who neglects or rejects Christ is close to us. But no matter how people respond, we must continue to live for Jesus and tell people about him. Those who are without Christ**

**are headed for a life of eternal torment in hell (see Luke 16:22-24) and the lake of fire (see Rev. 20:10-15). The only hope these people have is Jesus.**

**At some point in the future the Lord Jesus is going to appear in the clouds. For some people Christ's return will be a time of great rejoicing. But for others Christ's return will be a time of great mourning. I hope and pray that all of you can rejoice when Christ returns – that you are ready to meet Christ in the air**

**and that your reward will be great in  
heaven. If you're a follower of Jesus, I  
urge you to love and serve with  
everything you've got. But if you're not a  
follower of Jesus, I urge you to become  
his follower today. He is your hope. He is  
the one who can set you free. Today can  
be YOUR day of salvation!**