

## Should I Care About the Return of Christ?

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Rich Nathan  
November 22-23, 2014  
The Return of the King Series  
Hebrews 9.27-28

Back in 1988 a long-time member of our church came to me and said, “Rich, I’ve got this fantastic new book that we’ve got to get into the hands of every single person in the church. It is titled “88 Reasons Why the Rapture Could Be In 1988.”

This book, by Edgar Whisenant, was actually sent to almost every pastor in America. I received a free copy. It eventually sold 4.5 million copies in bookstores. Edgar Whisenant was an amateur Bible prophecy fanatic. And in his study of scripture he became convinced that 1988 was the year that Jesus Christ would return. As one reviewer said,

*This book has stood the test of time. The world did end in 1988. Everything since 1988 is an illusion.*

Now, as I read through this book, I could not believe that anyone would be convinced by his reasons. Let me share with you a few of the 88 reasons:

America was founded in 1776; water boils at 212°;  $1776 + 212 = 1988$

Reason Number 16:

According to the chronological Bible, Adam was created by God on Friday, 3975 BC. The chronological Bible states that Adam was created at approximately 30 years of age. So  $3975 \text{ BC} - 30 \text{ years} = 4005 \text{ BC}$  as the year Adam would have been born had Adam been born of a woman. From 4005 BC to 1995 is 6000 years; or six days with God, with each day being equivalent to 1000 years. So the millennium was supposed to start in 1995. If you subtract out 7 years for tribulation,  $1995 - 7 = 1988$ .

Of course, all of this is predicated on Adam being created in 3975 BC; and that he was 30 when he was created and that the universe will only endure for 6000 years, and the tribulation lasts 7 years. But apart from these four highly unlikely facts, his reasoning was very sound!

Well, I’m probably not telling you anything new, but in case you were wondering, the Rapture did not occur in 1988. In 1989 he published a book titled 89 Reasons Why The

Rapture Will Take Place in 1989. Someone humorously surmised that reason #89 was because the rapture did not take place in 1988. So this man recalculated things and followed up with later books predicting the Rapture in 1993, and 1994. These later books didn't sell quite as well. But amazingly, Edgar just kept going.

Four years ago, Harold Camping, a Christian radio broadcaster and President of Family Radio out in California, predicted that the rapture would occur on May 21, 2011 followed by the end of the world on October 21<sup>st</sup> of the same year. Anyway, Camping and his followers put up massive billboards all over America announcing the end of the world in 2011.

News media called me in 2011 and asked what I thought of Harold Camping's predictions. My exact quote was: "Predictions about Christ's return have a failure rate of exactly 100%!" In fact, Jesus knew that we would have a failure rate of 100% concerning our predictions of his return. That's why he told us multiple times, "Don't do it!" For example, in Matthew 24:36 he said:

Matthew 24:36

"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

My generation, the Baby Boom generation of Christians, was obsessed with the return of Christ. In fact, the best selling non-fiction book of the 1970's in America was Hal Lindsay's Late Great Planet Earth. It was published in 1970 and its influence can't be overstated in terms of forming the thinking of Baby Boom Christians in the 1970's. Hal Lindsay claimed to have found in the Bible, especially in the Book of Revelation and the last chapters of Daniel, a secret history of the world that accurately predicted contemporary events and people. And that he had the key to decipher all of it. And so with great self-confidence he wrote out how events would unfold over the next 20 years including a very lurid description of the Battle of Armageddon. Millions of Christians bought into Hal Lindsay's fantastic scheme of the end times.

Unfortunately, Lindsay made a number of statements that proved to be completely false. For example, he identified the ten horns of the beast in Daniel and Revelation to the ten member states of the European Union. When Lindsay wrote there were only six countries that were part of the European Union and it seemed that he was on to something when it grew to ten. But right now there are 28 nations that are part of the European Union. When Lindsay was challenged about that, he said: "Well, it may be 10 or slightly more than 10," like 28, maybe!

It is predictions like these that have caused many Christians to just stop thinking or talking about the return of Christ. And that any mention of the return of Christ is viewed as part of the lunatic fringe of the church. Over the last 20 years, at least in America, the pendulum in most churches has swung entirely in the other direction

having been burnt so badly by the false prophecies of Christ's certain return in 1988, or 1989. There are comparatively few sermons or books out now about the future whether we're talking about the second coming, or future judgment, or heaven and hell.

Living out your passion, pursuing your dream, living your best life right now is our present day obsession. But for most Christians the over-hyped teaching of the return of Christ, especially from the 1970's and 80's, has driven out an appetite for sound, healthy biblical teaching regarding the future and Christ's second coming.

Today I'm going to begin a new series for Advent that I've titled The Return of the King. Contrary to popular opinion, I am not going to spend the next five weeks talking about the return of LeBron James to Cleveland.

#### Picture of LeBron James' return to Cleveland

That's the return of a different king to a different city. I'm going to be talking about the return of the Jewish Messiah, Jesus.

I realize that Advent is traditionally four weeks before Christmas, but I'm stretching it to five weeks this year. For those of you who are not familiar with Advent, the English word "advent" is derived from the Latin word "adventus" which means approach, or arrival.

#### Adventus = Approach or Arrival

What Christians around the world celebrate during the four weeks of Advent is the approach or arrival of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, into the world at Christmas. Historically, Advent has celebrated two comings of Jesus, the Jewish Messiah into the world – his first at Christmas, and his second when he returns to gather in his people and to judge the world. This Advent we're going to look at his second coming. I've called today's talk "Why Should I Care About the Return of Christ." Let's pray.

Why should we care about the return of Christ? One reason is because the Lord's return is taught everywhere in the Bible.

#### The Lord's return is everywhere in the Bible

Of the 27 books of the New Testament only two tiny books, Philemon and 3 John, don't call our attention to the future. Almost every New Testament book references Christ's return.

For example, Jesus says this in John 14.3:

John 14:3 (NIV)

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Here is what an angel said to Christ's followers in Acts 1.11:

Acts 1:11 (NIV)

11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

The letters of the Apostle Paul constantly reference the return of Christ. For example, we read in 1 Thess 4.16-17 these words:

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 (NIV)

16 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 will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

And the writer of Hebrews says this:

Hebrews 9:27–28 (NIV)

27 Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

The second coming of Christ was not a peripheral or secondary message for the writers of the New Testament, or for Jesus himself. Many, many of Jesus' parables are about his second coming. Jesus constantly taught that he would come again. Whole chapters in the gospels were devoted to the return of Christ. Many New Testament books such as 1 and 2 Thessalonians and 1 Peter have Christ coming as their central themes.

We need to understand how important the second coming was to the early church. It was so important that it was part of gospel preaching. When the apostles went out and explained the good news regarding Jesus, what had God done in sending Jesus as the Jewish Messiah into the world, part of what they laid out as the good news involved Jesus' second coming. So we read in Acts 3.19-21 these words from the Apostle Peter:

Acts 3:19–21 (NIV)

19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, 20 and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. 21 Heaven must receive him until

the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

The two great Creeds of the early church – the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed which contain a summary of what Christians in the early church believed – both speak about the return of Christ. From the Apostles Creed we read this:

*On the third day he arose again from the dead  
He ascended into heaven  
And sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty  
From there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.*

And from the Nicene Creed which was written in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries:

*He [Christ] suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father, and he shall come again, with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom has no end.*

So the Bible and the early church everywhere taught that the same Jesus, who walked on this earth, doing good, performing miracles, teaching and healing people – that same Jesus, who was crucified for our sins, and rose from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, and that same Jesus, the crucified and risen One, will return one day in glory to judge the world and save his people.

Now even though the New Testament and the Creeds speak about the Lord's return, we need to be careful to note that the Lord Jesus is with us right now.

The Lord is present with us

It is not as if after Christ's ascension into heaven we are on our own right now. Jesus did not say, "I'm going away and I'm leaving you guys in charge. Try not to mess everything up too badly." Jesus didn't communicate to us like parents who are going away overnight to visit grandma in the hospital in another city, who tell their teenagers: "OK, now, kids, you better not party. Don't mess things up too badly around here." In fact, Jesus' ascension into heaven does not mean that he is absent from us right now. Jesus said this in Matthew 28:20"

Matthew 28:20 (NIV)  
20 ...And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

And he told the disciples this in John 14:18:

John 14:18 (NIV)

18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

How do we experience Christ, who one day will return to us, and who is in heaven right now? How do we experience that Christ at the present moment? What does it mean when Jesus says, “I am with you always?” Or when he says, “I will come to you?”

Let me make this more personal for you. If you are a son or daughter of God through your simple trust in Christ as your Lord and Savior and we know from the Bible that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, if you’ve put your trust in Christ to save you, what did Christ mean when he said, “I am with you always?”

Really? Always? Is that true? Is Christ with us always, even when we have an accident? Christ says, “I am with you.” Even when we’re fired from our jobs? Christ says, “I am with you.” Even when we’re in the hospital, or in a funeral home standing by the coffin of a loved one, Christ says, “I am with you.” Even when we turn our backs on God and go our own way, and like the prodigal son, wander in to the far country and live for a season in the pigpen, even there Christ says, “I am with you.” There in the far country, in the pigpen, when you are in prison, you’ve been humiliated, when your face is covered with shame, when we’ve messed things up and stupidly blown up our own lives, Christ says to us, “I will be with you for better and for worse, for richer and for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish – not just till death, but beyond death for all eternity, whatever happens, I will be with you.”

But how? How is Christ with us? Is it just that he is with us in our memories as we reminisce about how incredible he was and all the wonderful things he did – like we remember our own fathers or mothers and say, “Whenever I get in a tough situation, I remember what mom always said. I remember what Pop always did.” Is Christ with us now simply by our calling to mind his example, his words, that we hold his memory in our hearts? Is that what Christ meant by his promise, “I will be with you?”

Holding Christ in our memories is not what Jesus or the New Testament writers meant by Christ being with us. This divine person, Jesus, the one who is the second person of the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – this divine person extends his presence to us right now by the Holy Spirit.

Christ is present by his Spirit

Here is what we read in John 14.15-17:

John 14:15–17 (NIV)

15 “If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

What is Jesus saying here? Jesus is saying, “I am going to be crucified; I’m going to be raised from the dead, I’m going to ascend into heaven, but I will be spiritually present with you. Indeed, I will live inside of you. I will take up residence in your heart by my Spirit.” Everyone who trusts in Christ has Christ’s Spirit living in them. And we can experience his Spirit as we ask for the Spirit’s filling.

The disciples in the book of Acts, who had Christ’s Spirit living in them, were filled with the Holy Spirit. Here is what we read in Acts 4:31:

Acts 4:31 (NIV)

31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

The Apostle Paul talks about the Holy Spirit being poured out into us.

Romans 5:5 (NIV)

5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

What’s all this business about Spirit filling and the Spirit being poured out? I read an illustration years ago that I found very helpful. The writer said, “Imagine that you are taking a walk and there is a light mist, a light drizzle coming down. Over a period of time you may have an increasing sense that you are getting wet. But every once in a while, you are caught in a downpour and are thoroughly drenched. That’s what the Bible is talking about when it speaks of the Spirit’s filling, or God’s love being poured out into our hearts through the Spirit.” It is talking about this drenching, this flooding, the saturating of our whole beings by the Spirit; that you are not scratching your head and saying, “Am I getting wet or now?” You know you are drenched.

Or another way to think about experiencing the Spirit is what the old Puritans used to teach about the Baptism in the Spirit. They said that the Spirit’s Baptism is like being kissed by God. You can believe in God. You can be friends with God. You can read about God in the Bible, but there is something wonderful when God bends down and kisses you. That’s an experience that we should ask for. That’s an experience we should seek. Lord, fill me with your Spirit. Baptize me afresh in your Holy Spirit.

How is Christ present with us right now? He is present by his Spirit.

Christ is present as we take communion

Every week here at Vineyard Columbus and in millions of churches around the world, we take communion and the leader of the communion service repeats the words of Jesus from Matthew 26:26-28:

Matthew 26:26–28 (NIV)

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”

27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Now some of you know that there has been a controversy in the history of the church regarding the exact nature of Christ’s presence in what’s known as The Lord’s Supper or the communion meal. How is Christ present in the bread and in the cup? The Roman Catholics have said that he is physically present; that the substance of the bread and wine are physically changed and become the actual body and blood of Christ. Many Protestants, especially in the Baptist tradition, have thought that Christ is only symbolically present in the communion meal; that Jesus simply wanted to say that this bread represents my body, this cup represents my blood; it symbolizes my body and blood. It is like Jesus is holding a picture up in front of us.

This church has always taken the view of the great Reformer John Calvin, who in the 16<sup>th</sup> century taught that, Christ is not physically present in the communion; Christ is physically at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. But the meal is more than just a symbol, a picture of Christ’s presence. Rather, Christ is spiritually present in the bread and in the wine. The Holy Spirit works through these elements to nourish our souls as we take the bread and the cup by faith. Every week as we take the elements, we say, “Lord, I’m taking these in faith because of what they point to right now. I’m trusting in the broken body and shed blood of Christ to secure for me salvation.” And then the Holy Spirit works through these elements and through our faith spiritually build up our souls. Communion is a Holy Spirit activity, not just an empty ritual.

That’s why we take communion every week here at Vineyard Columbus. Not only because once a week whatever we’re talking about we have the death of Christ brought to our remembrance, but because as we take the Lord’s Supper by faith, the Holy Spirit uses the bread and the cup to strengthen us spiritually.

How is Christ present with us now? He is present by his Spirit. He is present as we take communion. And

Christ is present as we gather together in prayer

In Matthew 18:20 Jesus makes this promise to us:

Matthew 18:20 (NIV)

20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

There is something that happens when you bow your head in prayer and join together with another believer, who is also praying. Christ says, “I’m there. You don’t need a huge crowd. Just two or three of you who say we’re going to pray together regarding this illness, or this burden you are carrying regarding your family, or this job situation. Let’s bow our heads together and agree.” There is Christ completing the circle. And

Christ is present as we care for the poor, the immigrant, the sick, and the prisoner

Matthew 25:35–40 (NIV)

35 [Jesus said] For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

37 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

Friends, so often as we go through our lives we say, “I’m not experiencing Christ in the way Jesus promised when he said, ‘I’m with you always.’ I’m not experiencing Christ. I believe in him. I’ve invited Christ to come live inside of me by his Spirit. But I’m not experiencing him. How can I experience more of Christ?” Here’s the answer, friend: Be where Christ is. He tells us where he is. He is with the poor. He is with the hungry. He is with the immigrant. He is with the prisoner and with the sick. He’s with the woman who is being trafficked. He’s with the pregnant single girl thinking about getting an abortion. He’s with the homeless man sleeping out in the cold.

Here is my experience as a follower of Jesus for 40 years – whenever I put myself in a position of being with the people that Jesus talks about in Matthew 25 – the hungry, the immigrant, that’s what the stranger means, the foreigner, the immigrant, the prisoner, the sick – whenever I put myself in a position to be with these folks, to serve them, to pray for them, I experience Jesus. So often I start off on my way to volunteer at our food pantry. Do you know that Vineyard Columbus has two food pantries:

181 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
4664 Cleveland Avenue

You can just show up on any Saturday morning to help out. So often I start out on Saturday morning at 8:30 a.m. I’m a little tired and I don’t know if I’m really into this this morning. But then I pack some groceries for a person, who is hungry, and I carry the groceries to their car and simply ask them what I can pray for you for? If you could have

God do one thing for you, what would you ask God for? I need God to heal me. I need God to find me a place to live. I need God's help with my son. I tell you, friends, I come away from volunteering at our food pantry, or visiting someone in a nursing home or hospital, not feeling like I've given so much, but rather that I've experienced Christ. Try it. If you are not experiencing Christ, put yourself where Christ is. Be where Christ is and you will experience him.

Now, ordinarily, someone's presence and absence are mutually exclusive concepts. If someone is absent, they are not present. And if someone is present, they are not absent. But this normal human distinction breaks down concerning Jesus Christ. Why do we need the second coming if Christ is present with us in the communion, with the poor, by his Spirit, as we pray? Why do we need the second coming?

Because there is a very real sense in which Christ is absent from us right now. We don't have it all right now. We have the invisible presence of Christ now. But we want his visible presence. We live by faith now, but we want to live by sight. We experience God's hand now, but we want to see his face. We have a foretaste of his kingdom now, but we want to sit down and enjoy the Messianic banquet of the Lord.

The Lord will return to us

Why are we Christians urged to constantly look forward to the return of Christ? Because

We look forward to judgment

Hebrews 9.27 says:

Hebrews 9:27 (NIV)

27 Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

Death is not the end of our existence. We're going to talk more about this next week. But this idea that death is not the end of our human existence is one of the things that distinguishes the Christian view and the secular view of humanity. See, secular folks believe that people are just material beings and that at death we lose all consciousness and cease to exist. The terrifying thing about the secular view of death is that when we die, we cease. There's no more us. All that we are evaporates like our footprints in the sand after the tide rolls in – not even an impression of us is left.

But the Bible continually urges us saying though we may die, we don't cease to exist. Hebrews 9.27 says:

Hebrews 9:27 (NIV)

27 Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

...after death comes judgment, we don't cease to exist, not reincarnation – not as a dog, or a lobster, or another person. After death comes judgment. And for those of us who are alive at the coming of the Lord, we also will face judgment.

What is encouraging about judgment? Why do we look forward to the return of the Lord and judgment? We look forward to judgment for two reasons.

#### Because of who the Judge is

Jesus, our Savior, is the Judge. Jesus, who knows us totally and loves us still, is the Judge. Do you know that there is nothing that you can do or think that will catch God by surprise? Its not as if God says, "I didn't know that about you! WOW, I'm really shocked. I never would have thought that you would say something like that, or do something like that!" Jesus, who knows us totally, loves us still.

So we're going to be judged by the one who is our Savior. We're going to be judged by the one who is our best friend. We're going to be judged by the one who is our lover, who died for us, who bore our sins and who promised to never leave us or forsake us. We're going to be judged by that person. We look forward to judgment

#### Because of what the judgment entails

Most of the time when we think about judgment we think about punishment. The notion that God will judge is translated into our brains as God will punish us. And punishment does exist for those who reject Christ and slap away the lifeline that God continually throws to us. For those who slap away the hand of God and say, "no, I'm going my own way; leave me alone," they will be left alone without a Savior on the Day of Judgment.

But the reason that judgment is something that encourages us who have taken hold of the lifeline God has thrown us, who have said, "I need a Savior now and forever." We will not stand alone on the Day of Judgment. We will have a Savior with us who will say, "Father, this one is mine." Judgment is not just punishment, judgment in the Bible is revelation. When Christ returns, the true nature of everything will be revealed. Nothing will be hidden anymore. The covers will be pulled back. Every mask will be ripped away. Everything buried will be exposed. Every secret will be revealed. And every whisper will be shouted from the housetops.

So what is so encouraging about that? Consider what will be revealed when Christ returns in judgment.

#### Christ will be revealed

This Messiah who came the first time as a suffering servant, this Messiah that the Hebrew prophets spoke about in the Hebrew Bible; this Messiah about whom Isaiah said,

Isaiah 53:1–3 (NIV)

Who has believed our message

and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot,  
and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,  
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by mankind,  
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

Like one from whom people hide their faces

he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

This is a text, by the way, that as an 18-year old secular guy, ran me through. I thought that this is the way that I and my people treated the Jewish Messiah. Isaiah, the Hebrew prophet said we despised him. We held him in low esteem. We used Jesus Christ as a curse word. This Messiah, who in his first coming, was despised and rejected, who was spit on and beaten, and nailed to a cross – this Messiah will be revealed. He will come back in a totally different way, not as a suffering servant to die for sins. No. IN his second coming Christ will come back as a glorious king.

Matthew 24.27, 30 says this:

Matthew 24:27 and 30 (NIV)

27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

30 “Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.

The second coming with its accompanying judgment will be an unveiling, a revealing, a pulling back of the curtain regarding who Christ truly is. We’ll see him the way that Peter, James and John saw him on the Mount of Transfiguration with his glory shining through; an experience that they kept with them for the rest of their lives.

But not only will Christ be revealed,

Sin and hypocrisy will be revealed

In the face of the coming of the Lord what every person is will become absolutely crystal clear. Right now people work so hard to preserve their reputations. Affairs are hidden

by separate email accounts and separate phones and lies about staying late for work, or going out for drinks with friends. Addictions are hidden by denials, by minimization, by attacks on the accuser. Right now sin wears a thousand masks in which bad masquerades as good and darkness is called light. But one day the masks are going to be ripped away and all of people's pretenses and all that is done for show will be taken away. The things that we use to cover ourselves, the cover will shrink and folks will be left hanging out, exposed, laid bare before the eyes of Jesus the Judge.

But it is not only that Christ will be revealed and sin and hypocrisy will be will be revealed. We look forward to the judgment that's coming at the return of Christ because

God's children will be revealed

Right now so many of God's best children are hidden. They pray in obscurity, alone in apartments, alone in dorm rooms, kneeling in churches in the morning with a few others, in a hospital bed, in a nursing home. So many of Christ's best children are hidden serving Christ in hard places in North Africa, in the Middle East, in Asia. So many precious people, who the world right now doesn't recognize, going about doing good in a quiet way, denying themselves to make a better life for their children, denying themselves to care for an elderly parent, or sick spouse, denying themselves to live in obscurity on the frontier of missions, denying themselves to give sacrificially, to serve in inconvenience, to resist temptation. One day all of God's children will be revealed for who we are and what we've done.

Here is what 1 John 3.1-3 says:

1 John 3:1-3 (NIV)

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Right now, friends, it is the loudest, the most self-promoting, and the person who owns the biggest and has the best – that's what gets all the attention. But when Christ returns, the people who have spent their lives pursuing Christ, promoting his interests, promoting the interests of others, saying no to themselves and yes to him – all of that one day will be revealed.

Let me show you just a glimpse of what it will be like for us when Christ returns.

VIDEO – Returning Soldiers

That's what it is going to be like for those of us who have spent our lives loving Jesus. One day he's going to show up. He's going to surprise us. and we will see him as he is. Let's pray.

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November 22-23, 2014  
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