

Unedited Notes of a Lecture Luke 12

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon emphasizes the transformative hope of Christ's Second Coming and its call for Christians to live in holiness and anticipation.

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:13

Topics: "Living in Expectation", "Hope in Christ's Return"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the hope of Christ's Second Coming, urging Christians to live in anticipation of His return. He explains that Christ's first coming dealt with sin and established the foundation for every blessing, while His return promises glory and transformation for believers. Darby highlights the importance of living a holy life in light of this hope, as it shapes our walk and encourages us to comfort one another. He reassures that those who have died in Christ will not miss out on His coming, and that our true treasure lies in our relationship with Him. Ultimately, he calls Christians to be vigilant and prepared, embodying the character of those who await their Lord.

Transcript

I wish to speak a little tonight on the Lord's Second Coming, to look at some of the Scriptures that bring it before us, not as prophecy, but the hope of Christ's coming for His saints as He has promised.

I wish to take it up in a practical way, as it bears on us as Christians, in the walk of Christianity. Christ at His first coming settled the question of sin for us as Christians; and the work He did then is the foundation of our every blessing, whether heavenly or earthly -- the new covenant, the coming glory, and even the new heavens and the new earth, all depend on what He did on the Cross. At His first coming the wrath of God was manifested against sin. On the cross God's hatred to sin was seen, and His love to the sinner shown out. God's righteous wrath was displayed there on the One who had taken the sinner's place, and man's enmity came out to the full. By man's wicked hands the Son of God was crucified; the very determined act of man's wickedness to make sure that Christ was dead, was God's remedy for sin. One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and out flowed blood and water; this was the climax of man's wickedness and of God's love for the sinner. If you can believe the wonders of the cross, there is no glory that flows from it, that can surprise you; there is nothing so wonderful as that the Son of God, the One who had been with the Father from all eternity, should come to this world and become man, and again, humble Himself that He should be capable of dying; we can never fully understand the wonders of that work nor the glories of the Person, neither in time nor in eternity, for none knows the Son but the Father. There are

two great subjects brought before us in the Scriptures when salvation is settled -- the government of this world, and the grace that takes a poor sinner up and puts him in the same place as Christ. This is not prophecy, it is God's purpose concerning them that believe in His word. Christ will come and take those that are His to be with Him, where He is. Prophecy tells us that this world is going on to judgment. 2 Peter 1:19 says it is a light shining in a dark place, till the day dawn. The other thing is, God has taken me, a poor sinner, and put me up there in the same glory as His Son, and at His appearing all shall know that we are sons, for we shall be inwardly and outwardly like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. I know I am going to be like Him, and that I am strengthened practically -- going on as we have it, from glory to glory, showing out the life of Christianity.

In the First Epistle of Thessalonians, at the end of each chapter, we have the Lord's coming brought before us. These Thessalonians were but newly converted (1 Thess. 1:9, 10) but it was to wait for God's Son from heaven, that was a part of their Christianity, their calling as Saints, to expect the Son from heaven, "whom God raised from the dead, even Jesus," etc. This was the foundation as we have said of every blessing and every hope. If it was fruit of his ministry (1 Thess. 2:19, 20) it was Paul's joy to look for the crown of rejoicing he would have in the presence of the Lord Jesus at His coming. When it is a question of walk in these Thessalonians it was in reference to the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 3:13) that their hearts may be established in holiness before God our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus. If the veil was drawn aside for a moment and we could just see this coming Son of Man in glory and our place in Him -- how softly we should walk -- how holy our ways would be in this world!

The hope of His coming always leads to holiness of walk. He that has this hope in Him, purifies himself. The Thessalonians had gone astray as to their friends who had died (1 Thess. 4:3, etc.) and they feared they would be out of the way of all this blessing when the Lord would come; but the apostle tells them it would not be so, "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him. We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep," etc., etc. They would have the advantage, they shall rise first. If it is comfort in the hour of sorrow -- or support under trial -- or energy for service -- it is all the same thing; "comfort ye one another with these words." "The very God of peace," etc. (1 Thess. 5:23).

This is the character of the morning star. Expecting the Lord produces holiness of walk. When the Lord was about to leave this world, it looked as though He was about to desert His disciples, but it was quite the contrary (John 14:2, 3, 16). In the end of Luke it is the manifestation that is referred to, but in the 14th of John it is His coming for His people, but He will not come again until every one of His heirs have been gathered in. In Phil. 3, Paul shows us that our conversation, that is our living associations are in heaven, that is before His coming our risen life is there, "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change, etc." In the end of the Revelations the morning star is presented to us as our hope. "I, Jesus have sent mine angel," etc. The morning star is only mentioned three times in Scripture, always in reference to His coming for the Church--this is not for the world nor yet the millennial earth; when the Sun of Righteousness rises on this world, it will be for judgment. The Morning Star is seen by those that are waiting, those that are looking for the day during the darkness of the night. The Spirit and the Bride say come -- the Spirit -- the Christian -- the Church -- say come. I have the Spirit and I have the water of life, but not the Morning Star; but the Bride does say, Come. The first chapter of Revelations passes over the whole time between the Lord's first coming and His coming again, "Unto him that loveth us," etc. To reign with Him is not the highest glory. Suppose if this King is my husband, shall I be thinking

about His being King? No, the Christian is His bride. No promise of reigning will have the effect on my heart as the consciousness of being His bride. No promise of reigning with Him would be equal to the knowledge that it is my husband that reigns. "I come quickly," that is the promise that cheers the Christian's heart. "He that overcometh and keepeth My works," etc. (Rev. 2:26). This is not the morning star, the morning star is Himself, for myself. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1:19), and prophecy is a light that shines in this dark world but when you have the personal knowledge of His coming, you get the desire of your heart. Your one proper place as a Christian is to be waiting for God's Son from heaven; it is no question of atonement. These Thessalonians were converted to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from Heaven. (See Matt. 25.)

The Lord never speaks of His coming beyond the life of the persons He is speaking of: they were the same who went out to meet the Bridegroom, that went in with Him to the marriage. The Lord shows Peter that he shall put off this tabernacle: the exception, as we say, proves the rule. We should be waiting for Him, that is the rule for us: death is the exception for the Christian. What would people think of us now if we were to go and say to them, you shall put off this tabernacle -- in other words, you shall die? They would say, that is what I am looking for when the day comes. That is not the Christian's hope; the Christian's hope is to meet the Lord in the air. If we die, it will be absent from the body, present with the Lord; and when He appears, we shall appear with Him: we shall see the Lord face to face; we shall be like Him; that is the Christian's joy. He is coming a second time, without suffering. He has suffered, and we cannot fathom what those sufferings were, none knows them but the Father; eternity will not unfold their depths. Well! I shall see Him. If I love a person, I shall want to see him. Suppose all the people in Edinburgh were waiting for the Lord from heaven, what a change it would make in the place! It is not the same thing as dying; men expect to die; they are accustomed to people dying round them constantly; but looking for the Lord to come would alter the whole course of things in this world. If we are going on with the world, the thought of His coming will put a stop to all our plans; but to the Christian, who knows he shall never be completely conformed to the image of God's Son till He comes, it is what he longs for. A Christian is a person between the first and second coming of Christ. He is associated with Him now, serving Him, waiting and watching for His coming. If we die, we shall be with Him.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:34). There is a warning in this Scripture, and yet a positive promise. Your object is not the world, but your responsibility is to present Christ before it. "let your loins be girt about, and your lights shining," etc. Get that which is heavenly in your souls, and that will judge all that is contrary. We have to work of course, provide things honest: we need food and raiment. The Lord worked; He was not only a carpenter's son, but He was called a carpenter (Mark 6:3). It was not His object; His heart was not in it. We hear very little of His history during those thirty years, but from the little gleanings we get, when He was twelve years old, we know that His object was God's will: "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business." He was always the obedient One, ever waiting for the Father's word. I must have "my loins girt about with truth, and my lights burning," and be as men waiting for their Lord, getting through this world as those whose associations are in heaven. My ways must be like a man that is waiting for his Lord; that is the character God looks for in the Christian, and his position is expecting His Son from heaven. The evil servant did not say his Lord would not come, but that He delays His coming, and so he beats the men-servants and the maid-servants, he pleases himself. The character of a Christian is a man waiting for his Lord, not knowing the time: and blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He comes shall find watching. That is where the heart ought to be, that is what He looks for from me. If I have my heart filled with Christ, I shall be looking for Him. It is one's joy to think of His coming to take us to be with Himself, when not one single saint will be there that is not

inwardly and outwardly like Himself. Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils -- and the thief that was crucified on the cross -- with Him, and like Him, conformed to His image.

"Having predestinated us, after the counsel of His own will, that we should be to the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:11). God will have us far above all heavens in the glory with His Son. Christ has made Himself a servant for ever (Ex. 21). He did love us unto death, the death of the cross; and He says, when I get to heaven I will still serve. Now you must have your loins girded and your lights burning, that is not rest; but when I get my way -- when I am master of my own house -- you shall sit down with me and I shall serve still. He would not have twelve legions of angels, no -- it was His glory to serve: love delights to serve (John 13). His ministry never ends; when He has me in heaven, His delight will be to serve. I will make them sit down to meat, and I will serve them. I can marvel at nothing, when I find that the Son of God came down from heaven, became a man to die for me, I can expect anything. He will make us ungird and sit down and He will serve. It is intrinsic blessedness to be with Him -- to sit down and have Him to serve. There is no difficulty in believing He will do anything for us, when we know He left the glory, and became a man to serve me; and the secret of God's heart is to have me conformed to the image of His Son -- this is what He has predestinated me to, and Christ will never see of the travail of His soul till He has every member of His body in the same glory as Himself and perfectly like Him. We shall reign with Him, but that is not the highest thing -- there is a far higher joy to the true wife -- the better thing is being with her husband; she knows if He reigns, she shall reign with Him too; but her joy is -- He that reigns is my husband. Well, I shall reign with Him, but that is but the second thing--the Father's house is above all the glory of the kingdom, "I go to prepare a place for you" etc. (John 14:1-3). Christ could not keep Himself distant from us. He has not given us this world, but He gives us what the Father has given Him. The glory He has taken as Son of Man, that is the glory He gives to us. Do you believe that God loves you as He loves His Son? We do not give God credit for the love He has for us. We do not believe the love that is in God's heart to us. If He has not spared His Son, what will He not give us with Him! God always reasons down from Himself; we always begin with ourselves and reckon upwards; the better way is to take God's plan. If I am looking for the Lord -- expecting Him -- I shall have my loins girt and my lamp burning. I believe He will soon come; I do not say He will -- I may be wrong; but that is my thought. If I am longing for the lord's return, I shall be looking and watching, and "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

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