

How to Prepare for the Return of Christ
Lecture Notes for Ming Dao Press, Hong Kong, China
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Introduction: Expression of appreciation for this invitation.
Mention of my dear wife, Beverly who accompanies me.
Brief greetings from Dallas Theological Seminary
Comment on the nature of the “Assigned Topic.”

Here are some salient steps to live one’s Christian life in expectation for and with an awareness of, the “blessed hope” of the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. **Believe** the clear, repeated Bible teaching concerning the “blessed hope” of the Lord’s glorious return.

Titus 2:11-15 is a wonderful summary!

The ideas are prominent in the prophets, the teaching of Jesus, the letters of Paul, and in the historic creeds of the church.

- a. **Isaiah 9** begins with the birth of a heavenly Child; it concludes with His glorious reign.
- b. **Jesus’ own teaching** on His return forms major sections of the Gospels—something that appears to be ignored entirely by liberal religionists.
- c. **Paul’s early letters to the church at Thessaloniki** are filled with instruction concerning the return of the Lord
- d. **The Apostles’ Creed** includes affirmations concerning the return of Christ.

2. **Beware** of those who prey on the naïve, leading them on false paths and distortions from true biblical teaching.
 - a. **From the times of the early church**, there have been those who have distorted bible teachings (see 2 Tim 3:1-9); the Second Coming of Christ was never except from these dark actions (see 2 Thess 6-15)
 - b. **Through the history of the church**, the teaching of the Second Coming was either distorted or ignored.
 - c. **In our own day** we are aware from time to time of cultic figures who have led people astray, . . . and even to death.

- i. **Jim Jones in California**
- ii. **David Koresh in Waco, Texas**
- iii. **Hobart Freeman in Indiana**

3. Be Watchful as you practice the “balanced Christian life.”

- a. **Jesus’ encouragement** is to watch and pray (Luke 21:34-36)
- b. **Paul’s admonition** is to watch, to stand fast, to be strong, to be brave (1 Cor 16:13)
- c. **The blessed hope** should not produce weird Christians!
- d. Our hope **should lead**:
 - to purity in our personal lives—Tit 2:11-15
 - to balance in our Christian walk—See 2 Tim 4:6-8
 - to love for one another and for others
 - to witness to those who are outside the faith
 - and to worship the only true, living God.

4. Be Discerning in your understanding of the idea of the coming of the Lord.

- a. The biblical language is not lineal in its imagery.
- b. In both Testaments, the idea of Christ’s return is that it will be sudden, unexpected, dramatically surprising.
 - i. Jesus’ teaching, “The Olivet Discourse,” is in Matt 24—25
 - ii. It is also found in Mark 13 and Luke 21
- c. The language of “Nearness” is not commonly understood.
 - i. The “Day of the Lord is Near” does not mean that one is getting closer and closer to a fixed date. Hebrew קָרוֹב — qārōb
 - ii. The Nearness of the Day means that it may **irrupt** (“to break into from without”) at any time into the lives of the people of God and into the lives of those who do not know the Lord. (Note: this is different from the term **erupt**, “to burst forth from within”).

5. Be Confident that the Lord will keep His promise. He cannot forget His own.

- a. *Jesus’ words in John 14*
- b. *The story of Joy, our first grandchild.*

Conclusion:

- a. Preparing for the return of Christ is *not* like cramming for a big examination.
- b. Preparing for the return of Christ is simply *living the Christian life with gratitude to the living God.*
- c. Preparing for the return of Christ should be a joyful thing; *we believe in the blessed hope.*

