

Sermon Supplement, Lord's Day, March 2, 2008
Kihei Baptist Chapel, Kihei, Maui, Hawaii
Morning Worship Services Message
Part Seven: LIVING ON THE EDGE OF ALMOST BEING READY FOR THE RAPTURE
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**Part seven: LIVING ON THE EDGE OF ALMOST BEING READY FOR THE
RAPTURE, Titus 2:11-15; II Thessalonians 2:1-11**

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REVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

This is the seventh study in a series designed to challenge continued Christian living, maturing, growth, and service to our Lord.

One of the scriptural motivations since the earliest days of the church to challenge Christian living is the prophetic anticipation of meeting Christ. All the eschatological events listed in the scriptures have been downgraded by liberal theological teachings and rationalism. This is now to the extent that many, and maybe most, church attendees have never heard of the rapture, the return of Jesus Christ and related world events. With one look at current international situations, every eye should turn toward the second coming of Jesus Christ.

This series on LIVING ON THE EDGE OF ALMOST now includes:

1. LIVING ON THE EDGE OF ALMOST BELIEVING
2. LIVING ON THE EDGE OF ALMOST FOLLOWING JESUS
3. LIVING ON THE EDGE OF ALMOST PRAYING WITHOUT CEASING
4. LIVING ON THE EDGE OF ALMOST LOVING THE LORD WITH ALL OUR HEARTS
5. LIVING ON THE EDGE OF ALMOST WITNESSING WORLDWIDE
6. LIVING ON THE EDGE OF ALMOST BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT
7. LIVING ON THE EDGE OF ALMOST BEING READY FOR THE RAPTURE.

(Early studies may be picked up at the literature file or by visiting our website: kiheibaptist.org)

I. EXPOSITION OF TITUS 2:11-15 - WARNING, WAITING AND WATCHING

A. This letter from the Apostle Paul to Titus confronts the “deceivers” 1:10 who Titus was to correct as a church leader in the church. The problem came in the form of vain talker (mataiologoi) and deceivers (phrenapatai). The people were being misled by teachers who filled the minds of new believers with empty talk. This talk was contradictory to sound doctrine, 1:9 and used for profiteering (gainsayers). Paul was very concerned about the corrupting influence of false preachers. Sound teaching will always be in harmony with divine revelational information.

B. God expects theological error to be stopped, 1:11 and not supported. Stopped here means to be, “reduced to silence”. The Christian faith is easily corrupted by humanistic input. It is never a Christian virtue to tolerate known theological error by letting it go unchallenged.

C. Two doctrines were corrupted by the early “loose talkers” 2:11. These doctrines are to be “adorned” not altered since they cheapen the truth of Christ the Savior, 2:10. The two doctrines are:

1. The first coming of Jesus Christ in the Incarnation of God.
2. The second coming of Jesus Christ.

D. The first coming of Christ brings salvation to mankind, 1:11. Any denial of deity becoming enfleshed in humanity at the birth of Jesus is to be considered heresy and never accommodated! Salvation and the incarnation are inseparable. Believers are instructed to live differently in this present world than unbelievers while waiting on the second coming of Christ.

E. When Titus received this letter from the Apostle Paul the second coming of Christ, 2:13, was presented in two phases:

1. The first phase, the rapture, called the blessed hope for all believers.
2. The second phase, the return, called the glorious appearing, the hope of the future for the whole world.

F. The believers are instructed to be looking for the Lord’s return. The word looking has a meaning of: “to receive favorably”, “to wait expectantly” and to “keep looking for.” While we wait, the instruction of the text states we are to make good use of the time, stay away from evil, live pure, be particular people and zealously work while we wait.

II. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE RAPTURE AND THE RETURN

Rapture:

1. from earth to heaven
2. saints translated
3. saints go to heaven
4. world unchanged
5. delivers from wrath
6. imminent
7. relates only to the saved

Return

1. from heaven to earth
2. no translation
3. saints remain on earth
4. righteousness rules
5. ends wrath
6. preceded by known events
7. relates to saved and lost

8. Satan still loose
 9. saints bodily changed
 10. relates to church

8. Satan bound
 9. saints have natural bodies
 10. relates to Israel and tribulation saints

II. EXPOSITION OF II THESSALONIANS 2:1-5, GATHERING, DEPARTURE , MANIFESTATION OF THE ANTICHRIST

A. END TIME EVENTS

1. The coming of Christ 2:1. This text is addressed to the "brethren", meaning, "people of the same womb, and of the same family." The teaching of the text relates to believers in particular and not to the world in general. The coming of Christ is from the two Greek words, "*para*" meaning along side of a personal presence and "*ousia*" meaning to be. "Paraousias" means to be personally along side of Christ. This is different from "apokalupsis" meaning the uncovering or revelation of Christ. This text concerns the rapture rather than the return. See also, I Thessalonians 4:13-18 with Revelation 19:11-16.

2. The gathering of believers 2:1,2. The second event mentioned in this text is a "gathering together" to the Lord. The wording implies a time when some believers are "gathered together with others who are already assembled." Actually, this is the event that brings living saints together with saints that are already assembled in glory, Ephesians 3:14-15. "Gathering" is "*episunagoge*" meaning to gather together along side. The only other use of this word is in Hebrews 10:25 where believers gather together with others for worship. The point of the gathering is directed to the Lord Jesus Himself.

The clear point of this verse in its context is to explain to the Thessalonian believers that there will be a gathering together of believers with the Lord before the Day of the Lord comes. Thus, they should not be shaken or troubled neither as if they had missed the gathering nor as if the Day of the Lord's wrath would be unleashed upon them, 2:2.

Apparently forged letters had circulated that troubled the early believers implying Paul had a new revelation about the Day of the Lord. It is not the will of God for believers to be shaken or troubled by false teachers. Be sure your understandings of theological issues are based on the inspired Bible rather than what may be presented as extra Biblical information from God. A stable state of mind will come from God and His Word while it will be the purpose of false teachers to invent some information for the very purpose of getting a personal following. Ephesians 4:14.

The Day of the Lord refers to the futuristic return to the earth of Christ for the purpose of judging and controlling the government systems of the world. This "day" will not take place until two events occur, a departure of believers and the revealing of the Antichrist.

3. Departure before the Day of the Lord, 2:3.

The text teaches that a "falling away" will precede the return of Christ. The usual handling of this verse is the falling away represents moving away from solid Biblical doctrine. While this clearly is one sign of the end time trends, it is not the major truth of this text.

The word for "falling away" is *apostasia* meaning to depart, remove, disappearance. It is translated 11 times depart, 8 times a departure of a person from a place and 1 time to depart from the faith. The predominant meaning of the word is to depart. The immediate context determines what the departure is related to. Here it refers to the gathering together of believers to the Lord – the rapture.

Raptures of the bible include: the rapture of Enoch, Elijah, Jesus, believers, two witnesses of Revelation chapter eleven.

4. Revealing of the Antichrist, 2:3-11.

- A. When the removal of believers in the rapture takes place the presence of the Holy Spirit of God will also be removed in His restraining power 2:6. This will release the only force that limits the activity of the Antichrist.
- B. This person is called the son of perdition, the wicked one and will be able to persuade the world to follow him by speaking great things.
- C. This person will come onto the world scene as a man of peace and protector of Israel, etc. He will be so Christ-like that if possible he will convince even the believers that he is Christ. Once in power he will change to control the world, break with Israel, control the world economy by his ability to limit who can buy and sell. He will be against everything that is Christian and even God Himself.
- D. The antichrist is a particular person not an influence. He is already doomed and destined for destruction even when he is most powerful. He will be defeated by the return of Christ after seven years of operation.
- E. In the mean time he is yet to be revealed (uncovered, laid open, now concealed).