

SATURDAY, MAY 28, 2011 – Pastor Greg Laurie

Jesus Is Coming! Are You Ready?

Yes, Jesus Christ is coming again.

As a student and teacher of Bible prophecy for 35 years, it is my belief that the next event on the prophetic calendar will be **the Rapture of the church**, as I mentioned last week. The Rapture is the event when we will be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

The teaching of Christ's return is a real litmus test of where you are spiritually. For the person who is right with God, it motivates and purifies them. For the person who is not right with God, it frightens and alarms them.

For the believer who is watching and waiting, Christ's return is welcomed. For the person who is not where they need be spiritually, He will come as a thief.

So, in light of this hope of Christ's return, how are we to live? What are we to do as we await His return? Three things come to mind: We need to wake up, sober up, and suit up.

Paul tell us, "Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation" (1 Thessalonians 5:6–8).

We need to wake up. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines sleep as "a state of inactivity, with a loss of consciousness and a decrease in responsiveness to events taking place." There are people in the church today who have gone to sleep. They are not watching the signs of the times, nor are they observing the "times and seasons." There is a lethargy and passiveness, even a laziness. There seems to be a disconnect between their so-called "spiritual life" and real life. Instead of "walking in the Spirit," they are sleepwalking.

What Paul is saying in this verse is "Wake up and be ready for the Lord's return!"

Remember when you were a little kid and it was so hard to fall asleep on Christmas Eve? Maybe it was the excitement of opening your presents the next day. Or perhaps it was the hope of seeing Santa Claus. But it was a joyful anticipation that kept you awake, not some kind of dread or fear.

In the same way, looking for Christ's return is not a miserable, repressive, or confining way to live. It's a happy, joyful, purposeful way to live.

Let me close with the words of C.H. Spurgeon, who said, "It is a very blessed thing to be on the watch for Christ, it is a blessing to us now. How it detaches you from the world! You can be poor without murmuring. You can be rich without worldliness. You can be sick without sorrowing. You can be healthy without presumption. If you are always waiting for Christ's coming, untold blessings are wrapped up in that glorious hope."