

## NCC Roots Spring 2020...7 Churches and the Rapture...led by Terry Cooper

### The Rapture Session #5...April 15,2020

- How now shall we live?
- By this time, we have covered the 7 churches of Revelation and most of the Scriptures revealing of the coming of Christ to take His bride to heaven.
- I wrote these Roots sessions in January, long before we knew anything about a Coronavirus Pandemic.
- How now shall we live?
- All of this teaching is meaningless unless it prepares us for the coming of Christ, the wedding.
- Are you ready for the Rapture?
- Is your family ready?
- Are your friends ready?
- How now shall we live...now that we know what's coming at any time?
- Paul wrote his letter to Titus and the church to answer this question...How now shall we live?
- In light of what Paul knew then and what we know now...How now shall we live?

### **Titus 2:11-14 (NLT2)**

<sup>11</sup> For **the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people.**

<sup>12</sup> And we are instructed to **turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God,** <sup>13</sup> **while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed.**

<sup>14</sup> He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, **totally committed to doing good deeds.**

- This is our high calling, and this is the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who know the Truth.
- This Scripture describes my purpose and my hope in this life...How now shall I live.
- My hope is in the soon return of Christ, My Deliverer is coming!
- This hope is the fuel of my faith...if I ever lost this hope, I fear I would lose my faith as well.
- This is not new...this is how the New Testament writers lived as well...they were anxiously awaiting the return of Jesus for His bride, the church.
- Should we be any less anxious today about the return of Christ than Paul, Peter or John?
- That sense of expectancy regarding the imminent return of their Lord was their call to holiness.

### **Romans 13:11-14 (NLT2) PAUL**

<sup>11</sup> **This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.** <sup>12</sup> **The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here.** So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. <sup>13</sup> Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

- How now shall we live according to Paul.

- Urgent, like time is running out.
- Awake, alert and watchful...paying attention to everything that's happening in the world today.
- The night is almost gone....I have church people make fun of me for this type of talk.
- Look at how Peter describes this how now shall we live life.

### 1 Peter 1:13-16 (NLT2)

<sup>13</sup> So **think clearly** and **exercise self-control**. **Look forward** to the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. <sup>14</sup> So you must **live as God's obedient children**. **Don't slip back** into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then.

<sup>15</sup> But now you must **be holy in everything you do**, just as God who chose you is holy.

<sup>16</sup> For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."

### 1 Peter 4:7-8 (NLT2)

<sup>7</sup> **The end of the world is coming soon**. Therefore, **be earnest** and **disciplined** in your prayers.

<sup>8</sup> Most important of all, **continue to show deep love for each other**, for love covers a multitude of sins.

### 2 Peter 3:13-14 (NLT2)

<sup>13</sup> But **we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised**, a world filled with God's righteousness.

<sup>14</sup> And so, dear friends, **while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort** to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.

- That's Paul and Peter, now John...should we be any less anxious or excited about the return of Christ?

### 1 John 3:1-3 (NLT2)

<sup>1</sup> See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him. <sup>2</sup> Dear friends, **we are already God's children**, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is.

<sup>3</sup> **And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.**

- Can you see how Paul, Peter and John described their life of waiting on Jesus' return?
- **So, how now shall we live...I'm convinced that the church that lives with expectancy of Jesus' return will naturally purify their lives and naturally communicate the gospel to the lost.**
- Jesus has clearly identified the church as the light of the world...how can we influence the dark world if we become dark like the world?
- The church is the restrainer of evil and darkness and one day the church will be taken out of the way and evil and darkness will take the whole planet in the Great Tribulation.
- But until then...we must live in the pursuit of holiness...this is our high calling in Christ.
- We are called to know God the Father by coming to know Jesus the Son.
- We know the Father by experiencing the Son through the Word and the Holy Spirit.
- This is a relationship of light, truth and holiness...it is experiential...we have experienced God.

- This encounter with God has given a new life...maybe a hard life, but know this...we have experienced God.

### John 3:3 (NLT2)

<sup>3</sup> Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

- What do you mean...you cannot see the Kingdom?
- You cannot see any of this truth until you encounter God...the revealer of Truth.

### John 17:3 (NLT2)

<sup>3</sup> And this is **the way** to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.

- These are not some of the ways into the Kingdom of God...they explain **the only way** into the Kingdom of God.
- Many will be left behind when the Bridegroom comes.
- It horrifies me that Jesus’ parable described 5 were prepared to go with the Bridegroom and 5 didn’t make it.
- How were they prepared...they had oil in their lamps, and they had made themselves ready?
- The Gospel of Matthew records both the Parable of the 10 Bridesmaids and the Parable of the 3 servants both at the end of Jesus’ Olivet Discourse where He describes the condition of the world at his return.
- Both of these parables of Jesus deal with people NOT being ready and waiting.
- Why did Jesus tell this story...notice that He specifically says this is about “The Kingdom of Heaven”?

### Matthew 25:1-13 (NLT2)

<sup>1</sup> “**The Kingdom of Heaven** can be illustrated by the story of ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup> The five who were foolish didn’t take enough olive oil for their lamps, <sup>4</sup> but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. <sup>5</sup> When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. <sup>6</sup> “At midnight they were roused by the shout, ‘Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!’ <sup>7</sup> “All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. <sup>8</sup> Then the five foolish ones asked the others, ‘Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.’ <sup>9</sup> “But the others replied, ‘We don’t have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.’ <sup>10</sup> “But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. <sup>11</sup> Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, ‘Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!’ <sup>12</sup> “But he called back, ‘Believe me, I don’t know you!’ <sup>13</sup> “So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.

- How do we keep watch...how now shall we live in light of this crazy world/pandemic?
- Do you feel any urgency for yourself, your family, your friends?
- How do make sure there is oil in our lamps when the Bridegroom comes?
- Will there truly be people left behind after the church is gone and what do you think life will be like in the absence of the church, the restrainer of evil and darkness?

- 5 of the bridesmaids didn't make it and did you notice that all 10 of them had gone out to meet the Bridegroom in Jesus' story?
- All 10 went out to meet the Bridegroom.
- All 10 became drowsy and they all fell asleep when there was a delay in His coming.
- But there was a shout, a warning a message to prepare...light the lamps...the time of the wedding is here.
- Five of them were in it for however long it took.
- Five of them were **not prepared** for the delay...not prepared for the time they would have to wait for the Bridegroom.
- That brings us to here and now.
- Are you prepared for the delay...to wait for however long it takes before the wedding?
- Where are you getting your oil...what is your source of light today?
- Oil is the source of light in Jesus' story and the light is a symbol of truth...where are you getting your truth today?

### John 14:6 (NLT2)

<sup>6</sup> Jesus told him, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.**

- 5 of the bridesmaids needed to go to town and get more oil.
- 5 of the bridesmaids had an abundant and inexhaustible source of oil.
- If this oil is the source of light and light is the symbol of truth...the big question is where are you getting your Truth?
- There is only One Truth that produces this One Light that opens up the Kingdom of Heaven and you can't get enough of this oil in town.
- If the source of you oil, your source of truth is town...you're going to miss the wedding!
- Without this Oil, without this Truth, without this Light...you'll be sick and dying when the Bridegroom comes.
- The religious elites in Jerusalem thought they had the right oil in their lamps, but they were wrong.
- These two fishermen (Peter and John) had just healed a crippled man and put oil in his lamp.
- What was that oil and what does it do?

### Acts 4:10-12 (NLT2)

<sup>10</sup> Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead.

<sup>11</sup> For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, **"The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone."** <sup>12</sup> **There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."**

- This oil (light/truth) saves you...saves your soul by revealing the truth.
- There is no other oil, no other Savior, no other name, no other salvation.
- Paul, Peter and John knew that you would be "left behind" without this oil.

- Paul, Peter and John knew that you will miss the wedding without this oil.
- So how did the oil-less religious leaders respond to this good news about this endless supply of oil and light?

### Acts 4:13-20 (NLT2)

<sup>13</sup> The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. **They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.** <sup>14</sup> But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing the council could say. <sup>15</sup> So they ordered Peter and John out of the council chamber and conferred among themselves. <sup>16</sup> “What should we do with these men?” they asked each other. “We can’t deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it. <sup>17</sup> But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus’ name again.” <sup>18</sup> So they called the apostles back in and **commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.**

<sup>19</sup> But Peter and John replied, **“Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him?”**

<sup>20</sup> **We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard.”**

- How now shall we live...don’t go anywhere else for oil...the oil you get in town is SNAKE OIL.
- This is the week after Easter and I clearly communicated the single source of life on Easter Sunday.
- The origin of human life is the breath of God given to Adam.
- Snake oil tells you another story...chance random processes or exploding stars or aliens from other galaxies and ice crystals.
- Snake oil will not light your lamp as you wait for the Bridegroom.
- They recognized that Peter and John had something different...they had been with Jesus.
- There is it...how now shall we live...the people will recognize that we have been with Jesus too.
- Satan is currently serving up a special snake oil called “tolerance” and many in the church have taken a liking to it.
- This snake oil says there are many ways into the Kingdom of Heaven...Many ways into the wedding.
- Don’t get your oil in town...they’re not pursuing holiness in town.
- They are pursuing self in town...and that’s not the Truth that Jesus came to reveal.

### Jude 1:3-4 (NLT2)

<sup>3</sup> Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to **defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people.** <sup>4</sup> I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, **saying that God’s marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives.** The condemnation of such people was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

- Those people aren’t going to the wedding, they’re going to be left behind with their snake oil.
- One more big point in this session.
- The pursuit of holiness is not salvation by works.

- The pursuit of holiness is experiencing God through faith and obedience to the Truth.
- We are not saved by works, but we are saved for works...do you see the difference?

### **Ephesians 2:8-10 (NLT2)**

<sup>8</sup> God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. <sup>9</sup> Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

<sup>10</sup> For we are God's masterpiece. **He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.**

- What do you think you will do in and during the 1000-year reign of Christ on this present earth?
- If you are Raptured when the Bridegroom comes...you will go with Jesus to heaven and escape the coming horrors of the Great Tribulation.
- Then you will return with Christ as He destroys His enemies (beast and false prophet) and casts Satan in prison.
- What then, what do you think you will do in and during the millennial reign of Christ on this present earth?
- Let's look at how the Apostle Paul describes this race to the finish line.

### **2 Timothy 4:7-8 (NLT2)**

<sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. <sup>8</sup> And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. **And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.**

### **James 1:12 (NLT2)**

<sup>12</sup> God blesses those who **patiently endure testing and temptation**. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

### **1 Corinthians 9:24-25 (NLT2)**

<sup>24</sup> Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!

<sup>25</sup> All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.

### **1 Peter 5:4 (NLT2)**

<sup>4</sup> And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.

### **Philippians 4:1 (NLT2)**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord. I love you and long to see you, dear friends, for you are my joy and the crown I receive for my work.

### **1 Thessalonians 2:19 (NLT2)**

<sup>19</sup> After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you!

**Revelation 19:8 (NLT2)**

<sup>8</sup> She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear.” For the fine linen represents the good deeds of God’s holy people.

- Do you remember all the rewards promised to the overcomers in the 7 churches?
- How now shall we live?
- One last thing...Jesus revealed the ultimate purpose of His life and I pray that this becomes our life purpose as well.

**John 17:4 (NLT2)**

<sup>4</sup> I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.