

# HEAVENLY PROMISES

8-1998 by Mark Beard

## Text: John 14:1-3

There are those in this world who think that the belief in heaven and a returning Savior is only for those desperate souls who need something to cling to in life. I've heard it said that people only want to believe in heaven and in the return of Christ because life here on earth is so bad. In other words, they need something to get them through the hardships of life. "It's a belief that helps people cope," the critics say.

For those who do not know Christ as their Savior it may seem to be nothing more than a crutch on which to lean. But for those who know Him and are looking for His return, it is not a crutch, it is a confident hope that fills their heart.

■ Clyde W. Buxton writes, "The rapture is not just the wistful thinking of weary followers. It is a paramount doctrine of the Bible, for the hope of the return of Christ pervades the New Testament. The coming of the Lord is called...

- \* the blessed hope (Titus 2:13),
- \* the purifying hope (1 John 3:2,3),
- \* and the comforting hope (I Thess. 4:18)." (pp.53-4)

*In fact, the theme of the return of Christ in prophecy is so pervasive that y.*

One out of every 30 verses in the Bible mentions the subject of Christ's return or the end of time.

Of the 216 chapters in the New Testament, there are well over 300 references to the return of Jesus Christ.

Only 4 of the 27 New Testament books fail to mention Christ's return.

That means one-twentieth of the entire New Testament is dedicated to the subject of our Lord's return.

In the Old Testament, such well-known and reliable men of God as Job, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and most of the minor prophets fixed at least part of their attention on the Lord's return.

Christ spoke of his return often, especially after He had revealed His death. He never did so in vague or uncertain terms.

Those who lived on following His teaching, who established the churches and wrote the scriptures in the first century, frequently mentioned His return in their teachings and in their writings. (Swindoll, 83)

In our text Jesus is telling his disciples that He will be leaving them shortly. He understands how devastating His absence will be to them. He understands their need of direction. He understands their need of assurance. He understands that the hardest part of their life is yet to come. He knows that they need His assurance concerning their future. This is why, before all the instructions for the future, He gave them hope. His is not a fairy tale kind of hope; but a real and eternal hope based on the word and character of almighty God.

This "blessed hope" is not just for a select few. He gives each of us the same hope through these same words. Our walk with Christ and His word is about more than being instructed on "how to do the work." As with the early disciples, it's also about the hope found in His promises

Notice what has been given to us through His *promises*.

## **I. HE GIVES US COMFORT TO STRENGTHEN OUR HEART (v. 1a).**

### **A. He soothes the troubled heart.**

Too often we become preoccupied with unnecessary things that steal our peace.

- Luke 10:41-42 records Jesus answer to Martha when she complained to Him
- that Mary was listening to His teaching instead of helping her serve.

*And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."*

Many things are needful in life but only one thing is to be supreme our relationship with Jesus Christ.

### **B. He gives courage to the fearful heart.**

- In John 14:27 Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

## **II. HE GIVES US ASSURANCE TO BUILD OUR FAITH (v.1b).**

**A. Our assurance is based on the character of God.**

**B. The character of Christ is as solid as the Father's.**

## **III. HE GIVES US HOPE TO KEEP US STEADFAST (v. 2).**

**A. There is a divine plan for our eternal salvation.**

We must remember, despite all that comes our way in this life, God is leading us to our eternal home.

- *An old song by Dr. James M. Gray says, "Who could mind the journey, when the road leads home?"*
- *Hebrews 12:2 tells us of the attitude of Christ in suffering, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross...@"*
- *Paul said in Romans 8:18a, For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*

**B. The security of His promise is based on His Word.**

- Jesus said. "Heaven and earth will pass away: but My word will never pass away."

## **IV. HE GIVES US HIS LOVE TO KEEP US LOOKING (v.3).**

**A. He desires our presence.**

**B. He desires our fellowship.**

## CONCLUSION

■ In *Six Hours One Friday*, Max Lucado wrote of a friend named Joy who taught a Sunday school class in an underprivileged area. Joy had in her class a timid, nine-year-old girl named Barbara. *Max writes:*

(Barbara's) difficult home life had left her afraid and insecure. For the weeks that my friend was teaching the class, Barbara never spoke. Never. While the other children talked, she sat. While the others sang, she was silent. While the others giggled, she was quiet.

Always present. Always listening. Always speechless.

Until the day Joy gave a class on heaven. Joy talked about seeing God. She talked about tearless eyes and deathless lives.

Barbara was fascinated. She wouldn't release Joy from her stare. She listened with hunger. Then she raised her hand. "Mrs. Joy?"

Joy was stunned. Barbara had never asked a question. "Yes, Barbara?" (*Barbara's question*) "Is heaven for girls like me?" (Larson, 103)

No one could be more qualified than someone like Barbara. The *promises* of hope that Jesus left us are for "whosoever will." Comfort and assurance are ours for the asking.

### References

Buxton, Clyne W. (1993) *EndTimes*. Cleveland, Tenn. Pathway Press.

Larson, Craig B. (Ed.). (1996). *Contemporary Illustrations*. Grand Rapids. MI. Baker Books.

Swindoll, Charles R. (1986). *Eternity*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.