

A walk with Mr O (25)

A purifying buzz

Mr O, recently I've been thinking quite a bit about the Second Coming. The Bible has an awful lot to say about it, doesn't it?

I'm not sure that I would use the word 'awful'! But, yes, the Bible constantly speaks about our Lord's return. There are 27 books in the New Testament, and 23 of them give teaching on this subject. In fact, biblical scholars are agreed that the Bible contains over 1,800 references to the Second Coming.

Wow! My Bible has just over 1,200 pages. So the Lord's return really is a major theme in God's Word. And, Mr O, that's why I want to talk to you about it.

Go on, then, tell me what's on your mind.

Well, if the Second Coming is so important, why do we hear so little about it? It's hardly ever mentioned in our church services. Our pastor doesn't mention it in his prayers. He seldom, if ever, preaches on it. We don't sing about it. And my Christian friends don't talk about it. What's going on? Why is there this conspiracy of silence? I don't understand.

I fully understand your concern. As you know, I am now 80 years old. Quite a few of my friends have asked me how I feel about the my approaching death. But not one of them has spoken to me about the possibility that I might not die, because the Lord might come first.

So, Mr O, how do you explain all this?

I think we must face up to the sad fact that Evangelicals, generally speaking, no longer believe in the Second Coming.

And yet before I could become a church member I had to read my church's doctrinal statement and declare that I believed it all – and what it said about the Lord's return was biblical and very clear.

Yes, but there is a big difference between mental assent and really believing something. When you really believe something it becomes a conviction that controls your life.

People who really believe in the Second Coming wake up excitedly in the morning and say, 'This could be the day – the day when I see my Saviour face to face; the day when I answer to Him for how I live; the day when I cease sinning and become like Him in body and soul; the day when I am reunited with my loved ones who died in Christ; the day when all wickedness ends and only righteousness reigns !' But how many Christians do you know who go into their day with a purifying buzz like that?

Quite honestly, I don't think I know any at all.

This sinful unbelief in the Lord's return explains almost everything that is wrong with Evangelicalism today. It explains why so many believers do not regularly meet the Lord in secret ; why they do not love God's law and live by it; why they are content to remain doctrinally illiterate; why they allow poor relationships with others to fester; why they are not actively engaged in any gospel work; why they are slow to stand up and speak against evil; and so much more. And all the time the Saviour is saying to them, 'Be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect him' (Matt. 24:44).

So what can be done about it?

The first moment of the day is the one that matters. That is where the battle is won or lost. Each day, what is my very first thought? I must take steps to make sure that it is always about the Lord Jesus Christ – His person, His life, His cross, His tomb, His resurrection, His ascension, His reign, His return, His victory, His final and eternal vindication

This is why I urge and encourage every Christian to learn the Apostles' Creed and to recite it the moment they wake up. If they do that they will never go into a day without thinking about the Second Coming, and they will find that 'all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure' (1 John 3:3 NLT).

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