



# PTNews

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*(Examining Current Events in the Light of Bible Prophecy)*

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## The Maranatha Mindset

*"Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." [2 Timothy 4:8](#)*

By Mike Wingfield

If most professing Christians in America were honest, they would admit they rarely think about the Second Coming of Christ. And, most pastors in the United States would not think this is all that bad. For these pastors and churches, the teaching of the Second Coming of Christ is something that is not really relevant or significant. It is certainly not the subject of many sermons, and is not considered to be one of the core doctrines of the Bible. However, this kind of thinking is really at odds with the teaching of Christ's apostles and the lifestyle of the early church.

It appears that many of the leaders of various church groups in the U.S. are attempting to reconstruct the church and its teaching so that it will fit into the modern culture and thinking of our times. It does not seem to matter to them that the Bible warns us that we do not have the right to do this. The Apostle Paul warned the believers at Corinth to be very cautious how they spiritually built the

church. He said, *"For we are laborers together with God: ... ye are God's building. ... I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."* ([1 Corinthians 3:9-11](#)) In another context, he declared that the church must be built upon *"the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."* ([Ephesians 2:20](#)) This means that the church must be built upon the teachings of Christ and His apostles. This is the New Testament Scriptures. All of the doctrines contained in the New Testament are considered to be the foundational truth upon which the church is to be constructed. In essence, we are commanded to mimic the teachings of the apostles. ([1 Timothy 1:3-4](#); [2 Timothy 1:13](#); [2:2](#); [Titus 1:9](#)) This truth is to be faithfully proclaimed ([2 Timothy 4:2](#)) and passionately defended. ([Jude 3](#)) We are to oppose those who teach doctrine contrary to the Word of

God, and rebuke those who are teaching error. ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)) We are instructed to *"avoid"* those who are not following the doctrine of the apostles. ([Romans 16:17](#))

We have been warned that there would be a great falling away from the truth in the last days. ([1 Timothy 4:1](#)) The final verses of the New Testament give a solemn warning to anyone who dares to *"add unto"* or *"take away"* from the inspired words of the Bible. ([Revelation 22:18-19](#)) While writing about the Second Coming of Christ, the Apostle Peter wrote: *"I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior."* ([2 Peter 3:1-2](#))

I am convinced that if the apostles were to walk into our American churches today, they would be shocked at the lack of Biblical doctrine in the content of the sermons we are hearing. They would really be stunned at the lack of emphasis upon the Second Coming of Christ. When one examines the epistles of the apostles, it is clear that the anticipation of the Rapture of the church was in the forefront of all that they taught and practiced. Almost one out of every three verses in the New Testament in some way speaks about the Second Coming. It permeated everything they did and taught.

The blessed hope of the return of the Lord Jesus was a cherished doctrine that was wrapped up in a very special word that became a watchword within the church in the first century. When the early Christians meet one another they cried out *"maranatha,"* mentioned only once in the New Testament- [1 Corinthians 16:22](#). Maranatha means "our Lord comes." It is odd that this Aramaic word was being used in Greek-speaking churches. Aramaic was the familiar language spoken by the Lord and His disciples. It is possible that this term, and its passionate and frequent usage, began in the church in Jerusalem. It certainly demonstrates that they were passionately looking for the Lord to return any day.

As the apostles were writing the New Testament, listen to what they were saying to the church. In the first New Testament book, written about 45 A.D., James declared: *"... the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. ... behold, the judge standeth before the door."* ([James 5:8-9](#)) A few

years later, the Apostle Paul said that the entire ancient world was talking about the believers at Thessalonica, and how they *"turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven..."* ([1 Thessalonians 1:9-10](#)) By 68 A.D., only 38 years after the ascension of the Lord, the message of the Rapture was so saturated in the ministry of the early church that the opponents of the gospel were mocking the believers, saying, *"Where is the promise of his coming?"* ([2 Peter 3:4](#))

It is obvious that the early Christians were focused upon Jesus' promise of His return, given to His disciples in the Upper Room in [John 14:1-4](#). At His ascension, two angels standing beside the disciples said: *"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."* ([Acts 1:11](#)) The New Testament indicates that the apostles and the early church believed that the return of the Lord was imminent.

Why is it that the church today is not focused upon the imminent return of their Lord? I believe that part of the problem is that professing Christians today do not have the Biblical mindset of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. What we think is very important. The Bible teaches that who we are is a reflection of our thinking. ([Proverbs 23:7](#)) The Apostles gave their fellow believers four powerful images of the church to intensify their maranatha mindset. These four images of the church are essential for living the Christian life as intended by our Lord. Let us examine these four Biblical images of the church. We are the ...

### 1. Children of God longing for our home

When a person repents of his sins and is regenerated in the power of the Holy Spirit, he becomes an adopted child of God. This is the language of the New Testament. We *"have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."* ([Romans 8:15](#)) Because of this adoption, we immediately have a new family and a new home. We become citizens of heaven. ([Philippians 3:20](#)) When this change takes place, we should begin to biblically think of heaven as being our home. Someone might ask, "How can we think of heaven as being our home when we have never been there?" For the believer, home is where the heart is. Our home is in heaven because that is where

Jesus is. ([John 14:2-3](#); [Colossians 3:1-4](#)) If we have the proper Biblical mindset, we will view ourselves as strangers and pilgrims on this earth. ([Hebrews 11:13-16](#); [1 Peter 2:11](#)) Our love for our heavenly family will surpass the attraction to things on this earth. ([1 John 2:15-17](#))

This kind of teaching is absent in most churches today. I was recently reminded of this reality. My sister and I recently began sifting through my parents' things to prepare for an auction of their earthly possessions. This was a very a difficult thing to do. It brought back many memories from our childhoods. Among the things we found was an old hymnal that we used while my Dad was holding Bible studies in homes back in the early 1960s. I brought that hymnal home and started looking through it. It brought back many memories of the old hymns we sang almost 60 years ago when I was a child. The first hymn in the book is, "This World is not My Home." I started counting the songs that mentioned heaven as being our home. I found that 34 of the first 100 songs were about heaven. I believe this hymnal reflects the blessed hope of heaven that lived in the hearts of believers in this country 60 years ago. This has all changed. The emphasis in the sermons we hear and the songs we sing are primarily about what God can do for me in the here and now. This is tragic! The Bible declares, *"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."* ([1 Corinthians 15:19](#)) The Greek word that is translated miserable in this verse is found only one other time in the New Testament. It is found in [Revelation 3:17](#) as part of the description of the lukewarm church of Laodicea. These believers thought they were spiritually rich, when in reality they were spiritually destitute ([Revelation 3:17](#)) and Christ was not at the center of their lives. ([Revelation 3:20](#))

## 2. Bride of Christ preparing for our wedding

Another powerful image that the apostles gave believers was that the church is the bride of Christ. ([Ephesians 5:22-32](#); [Revelation 19:7](#)) Christians are to think in terms of being engaged to Christ to be married to Him (become one in Him) when we get to heaven. ([2 Corinthians 11:2](#)) As the future bride of Christ, we are to be consumed with preparing for that moment when we will be presented to Him in heaven. The process of sanctification, being made holy, is the desire of Jesus. ([Ephesians 5:26-27](#)) It is the work of the Holy Spirit to prepare the bride for the wedding. He wants to transform

us to become like Christ, making us perfectly compatible with Him as our Holy Groom. The Holy Spirit living in us desires to place within us a holy hunger for our wedding day with Christ at the Rapture. [Revelation 22:17](#) declares: *"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come."* This should be viewed as the passionate prayerful command of the Holy Spirit in the Bride. When we pray, we are to pray in the Spirit. When we are saturated with the Word of God, and filled by the Spirit of God, we will pray according to His will, and not our own. On the basis of this verse, it is clear that the Holy Spirit wants us to pray, *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."* ([Revelation 22:20](#)) It is natural for the bride to be passionately anticipating her wedding. This should be true for the church as she waits for Her Groom from heaven.

We are the chosen bride of Christ. *"We love him, because he first loved us."* ([1 John 4:19](#)) Those who really love Him, will *"love his appearing."* ([2 Timothy 4:8](#)) Do you? If not, maybe it is because you are flirting with other things that you love in your life. Anything between you and Jesus is an idol. Nothing is more important than the loyalty of the bride in waiting. I fear that the real reason why professing Christians do not long for the Rapture is because they are not really in love with Jesus Christ. Like the church of Ephesus in [Revelation 2](#), I fear that too many in the church today have left their *"first love."* ([Revelation 2:4](#)) I believe that the daily hope for the Rapture is one of the best barometers that will point to the true spiritual condition of our heart. While describing himself as *"the friend of the bridegroom,"* John the Baptist declared: *"He must increase, but I must decrease."* ([John 3:29-30](#)) As the bride of Christ, this should be our desire as well. This life is not about us, the bride. It is all about our groom, Jesus Christ.

## 3. Servants of the Lord laboring for our rewards

Believers are to not only view themselves as adopted children of God, longing for heaven, and the chosen bride of Christ preparing for our wedding; but, we are also redeemed servants (slaves) of our Lord laboring for our rewards. This analogy in the New Testament begins with viewing believers previous to their redemption as slaves of sin. ([John 8:34](#)) We were hopelessly enslaved to the cruel master of our sin nature within us. ([Romans 7:12-25](#)) We can all testify to the fact that there are times after we have sinned that we say, "Why did I do that?" We all know that there is a powerful sin nature within us that

pushes us around and draws us all too often into the trap of sin. Christ died to redeem us from the power of this sin nature within us. Only Jesus can set us free from this evil slave master of sin! ([John 8:36](#)) When we appropriate the power of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives, we can say "no" to this slave master. ([Romans 6:1-14](#)) When Christ saved us, He purchased us from the slavery of sin and set us free to become slaves for Him. ([Romans 1:1; Titus 1:1](#)) As slaves of Jesus Christ we are not our own. We have been purchased with His blood. ([1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#)) All that we have and all that we are belongs to our Lord (Master).

Slaves are the property of their master and are expected to labor for him and his rewards. This kind of language is sprinkled throughout the New Testament. Jesus taught His disciples this truth. ([John 13:16](#)) We serve our Lord, not out of obligation, but out of love.

He has promised that He will reward us for our labors as His servants/slaves. ([Matthew 10:42; John 6:27; 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12](#)) As we serve our Lord we should do so with the desire for the day to come when we shall receive our rewards. Just like a person who is employed is always looking for their payday, even so, the believer should be longing for the day of his reward. The judgment of the believer and his subsequent rewards are always connected to the Rapture of the church. ([1 Corinthians 4:1-4; 2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 22:12](#)) James pointed to the farmer as an example for the believer as he waits for His Lord. ([James 5:7-8](#)) Farming is hard work. Farmers do not work just because they enjoy the labor. No, everything they do is with the harvest in mind. They are working for the day of the reward for all of their hard work.

I fear that one of the reasons why people are not really longing for the return of Christ is because they are not really serving Him. They have not invested anything in the service of the master and therefore it is of little significance to them. Jesus taught: *"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."* ([Matthew 24:44](#)) Then, Jesus gave His disciples a parable about servants to illustrate how they were to obey this command. ([Matthew 24:45-51](#)) In this parable, the faithful servant was laboring because He was expecting his master to come at any time. When the master came, this servant was blessed and rewarded.

However, in this same story, there was an evil servant that was saying, *"My lord delayeth his coming."* ([Matthew 24:48](#)) Therefore, when the master unexpectedly showed up, this evil servant was severely punished.

My friend, God knows that a part of our sin nature is to focus on what we want and postpone what God wants. Servants of God should serve Him faithfully each day because they are expecting Him to come for them at any moment. God knows that we are natural procrastinators. The imminent expectation of His return is to motivate us to faithfully serve Him every day!

I fear that this is a real problem in the church today. The overwhelming majority of people who attend church are just pew warmers. They are not involved in the local church and are not serving Christ in their personal lives. As those who love themselves ([2 Timothy 3:2](#)), they only have a have a *"form of godliness."* ([2 Timothy 3:5](#)) These people are not really saved and have not discovered the joy of serving the Lord. Their faith has no works, and is therefore a dead faith. ([James 2:14-20](#)) It is no wonder that they do not look for the return of the Lord. They are too busy serving self and the world.

#### 4. Warriors of the King waiting for our rest

When a person receives Christ, he is very much aware that he has entered into a war against the spiritual forces of darkness. ([Ephesians 6:10-20](#)) He has left the darkness and been called into the light of Jesus Christ. ([Colossians 1:12-13](#)) As believers in Jesus Christ, we have been called and equipped to enter into spiritual battle for the King! We are at war on three levels.

First, we are at war with self! As mentioned previously, we have a powerful sin nature residing inside of us. Consequently, after we are saved, there will be a real daily spiritual battle between the Holy Spirit in us and the old sin nature in us. We have been exhorted to *"abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."* ([1 Peter 2:11](#)) Those who are really saved are constantly aware of this struggle going on inside their soul. They have the potential to say no to the sin nature within them. However, all too often they suffer defeat and must confess their sin to the Lord. This is one way we can really know we are saved. The spiritual struggle within us is real. *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ... If we say that we have not sinned,*

***we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:8,10)***

The second level of the spiritual warfare is with our Lord's adversary, Satan and his demons. **(Ephesians 6:10-20)** These evil companions of Satan are always trying to lure us away from God's truth and deceive us with their lies. **(1 Timothy 4:1-2)** They want us to doubt the Word of God. **(Genesis 3:1-5)** They tempt us to harbor resentment and unforgiveness, causing division in our relationships with others. **(Ephesians 4:26-27)** They attack us at our weakest moments to lure us into sexual sins. **(1 Corinthians 7:5)** They will tempt us to trust in ourselves, rather than in the total sufficiency of Jesus Christ. **(2 Corinthians 11:3)** They want to deceive us into following false preachers and Christians who claim to be followers of Christ, but are in reality agents of Satan and his demons. **(2 Corinthians 11:13-15)** This is a real war.

The third level of this daily spiritual warfare is with the world system. After a person is saved, he will quickly realize that he is living in a world system that is anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Bible, and anti-church. We live in a world that says that God's way is foolish. **(1 Corinthians 1:18; 2:14; 3:19)** Jesus warned His disciples to not fall into the trap of wanting the world to love them. **(John 15:18-16:4)** He plainly told them, ***"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."*** **(John 15:18)** The Bible warns us against considering the world system to be friendly to God and His way. Do you not know ***"that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."*** **(James 4:4)** We have been commanded: ***"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."*** **(1 John 2:15-17)** Therefore, the goal of the believer is to be in the world, but not of the world.

While we as believers in Jesus Christ do experience victory and contentment in Jesus Christ, we realize that it is all because of Him. However, we also know that our heart is still ***"deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."*** **(Jeremiah 17:9)** We know that Satan and his

demons are not yet bound in the bottomless pit. **(Revelation 20:1-3)** We know that we live in a world where ***"evil men and seducers [are getting] worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."*** **(2 Timothy 3:13)** Therefore, this spiritual warfare is real and becoming more intense.

If you realize that this is true, then you and I should sense the desire that as warriors of the King, we are waiting for the day when all of this conflict, fighting, and struggle will be over! We are longing to enter into His rest from all of this. That rest will not come until He comes and takes us home to be with Him. We should view the Christian life as a journey of difficulty, waiting for that day when the battle will be over! We should expect difficulties to come in this world. Jesus promised us: ***"In this world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*** **(John 16:33)**

Our war against our self, Satan, and the world will not be over until Jesus comes to take us unto Himself in the Rapture. We can be confident that this raging battle will be over when He comes. The Bible assures us that we can be ***"confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ Jesus."*** **(Philippians 1:6)**

My friend, if you are not aware of this war, then perhaps you are not saved and are still being controlled by ***"the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."*** **(Ephesians 2:2)** You are not experiencing this struggle because you are still in darkness and are still standing on Satan's side. You have surrendered to the world system. You are a close friend of this godless world. If this is true, make no mistake about it. You are not saved and that is why you are not longing for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I fear that many professing Christians really do not want Jesus to come today. This is the last thing they want. They are standing with the world, who will consider the coming of Christ to be ***"as a thief in the night."*** **(1 Thessalonians 5:2)** For the world, the coming of Christ will be a sudden intrusion and interruption to their ambitions.

Some people hide behind the excuse that they want Jesus to delay His coming because of their unsaved family and

friends. If this is really the case, what are they doing to win these people to Christ? Furthermore, listen to these words of Jesus: ***"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."*** ([Matthew 10:37-39](#))

A song has been written that expresses this excuse, asking Jesus to delay His coming. That song is "Wait a Little Longer Please Jesus." This song is not Biblical. The Holy Spirit will not lead a believer to pray, ***"Even so, come Lord Jesus"*** ([Revelation 22:20](#)), and then lead them to sing "Wait a Little Longer Please Jesus."

I am convinced that these four images of the church are absent in most of the preaching and thinking within the church today. The message that people want to hear today is what God can do for them here and now. Christ is not first in their lives, and they do not want to think about eternity because they are too busy living life now. All of this is foreign to the message given to the early church by the apostles.

Too many pastors have caved in to this expectation. If this is the case, then they have become servants of men, rather than servants of God. This is nothing new. While the doctrinal error was different, Paul had to deal with the preaching of another gospel in his day. To the church of Galatia, he wrote, ***"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."*** ([Galatians 1:6-10](#))

Having this maranatha mindset does not bring revival, but is the result of real revival living in our daily lives. True repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change in of

action. The church desperately needs to repent and return to the model given by the apostles to the early church.

Some may think that this is old fashioned or archaic thinking. They may think that modern times call for modern change. However, this is not Biblical thinking. God has not changed. The sinfulness of the human heart has not changed. God's message is eternal and will never change. Therefore, the message of the church must never change.

### Is the West Collapsing?

The following report was given by the *Gatestone Institute*: "According to U.S. President Trump's strategic advisor [Steve Bannon](#), the 'Judeo-Christian West is collapsing, it is imploding. And it's imploding on our watch. And the blowback of that is going to be tremendous'.

The impotence and the fragility of our civilization is haunting many Europeans as well.

Europe, according to the [historian David Engels](#) will face the fate of the ancient Roman Republic: a civil war. Everywhere, Europeans see signs of fracture. Jihadists seem to be leading an assault against freedom and against secular democracies. Fears occupy the collective imagination of Europeans. A survey of more than 10,000 people from ten different European countries has revealed increasing public opposition to Muslim immigration. The Chatham House Royal Institute of International Affairs carried out a survey, asking online respondents their views on the statement that 'all further migration from mainly Muslim countries should be stopped'. In the 10 European countries surveyed, an [average of 55%](#) agreed with the statement." (To read the entire article go to the following link: [www.gatestoneinstitute.org](http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org))

Those who have been reading my newsletter will recall that I have been reporting that this would happen. On the basis of the prophetic Scriptures, I believe the Antichrist and his global kingdom will be Islamic, with its center in the Middle East. This disturbing report continues to illustrate that this is exactly what is developing.

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# Walk in the Footsteps of Jesus in the Holy Land

*Due to popular demand, Mike has postponed his fall tour this year and will host a tour to Israel in March 2018.*

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- See where Peter denied the Lord
- Walk on the stones of Pilate's Judgment Hall
- Worship at the foot of Calvary
- Stand inside of the Garden Tomb
- Climb the steps that went up onto the Temple Mount
- Walk the streets of the Old City of Jerusalem



**Mike leads tours to Israel each year and it is always safe where he travels.**

**Mike's Speaking Schedule- Call today to schedule him to speak at your church.**

May 5-7- Worthington, PA	Bethel Baptist Church	1-724-859-0961
May 18- Roanoke, VA	<u>Monthly Bible Study at Grace Baptist Church</u>	1-540-798-5110
May 21-23- Front Royal, VA	Front Royal Baptist Temple	1-540-551-0580
June 1- Rocky Mount, VA	<u>Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist</u>	1-540-798-5110
June 15- Roanoke, VA	<u>Monthly Bible Study at Grace Baptist Church</u>	1-540-798-5110
July 6- Rocky Mount, VA	<u>Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist</u>	1-540-798-5110
July 20- Roanoke, VA	<u>Monthly Bible Study at Grace Baptist Church</u>	1-540-798-5110
August 3- Rocky Mount, VA	<u>Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist</u>	1-540-798-5110
August 6-8- Catawba, VA	Mountain View Baptist Church	1-540-375-3227
August 17- Roanoke, VA	<u>Monthly Bible Study at Grace Baptist Church</u>	1-540-798-5110
August 20-23- Coolville, OH	Grace Brethren Church	1-740-667-3710
August 24-27- Vienna, WV	River Valley Community Church	1-304-295-7801
September 7- Rocky Mount, VA	<u>Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist</u>	1-540-798-5110