

## “...ALSO TO ALL WHO HAVE LOVED HIS APPEARING...”

By Keith Greer

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” {2 Timothy 4:8} Paul was confined to a Roman prison and aware that his earthly journey was about to end. Soon, he would be put to death because of his faith in Christ. Yet, instead of pitying himself, Paul faced death confidently. He knew what awaited him. He had finished his course and kept his faith. Let’s discuss for a few minutes the “ALL” to whom Paul referred in this passage:

**Have loved His appearing.** “So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” {Hebrews 9:28} Our Lord first came to earth for the purpose of providing a remedy for mankind’s sin problem. We clearly demonstrate love for that appearance through obedience to the plan of salvation, which provides access to our Savior’s blood. {Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 1:5}

**Are not ashamed of His words.** “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God.” {2 Timothy 1:8} God’s people are not ashamed of His words, for we know the gospel is His power to save sinful men {Romans 1:16}. We confidently express God’s word to others, because we know that only by believing and obeying Him can they have eternal life. How could one love his appearing and be ashamed of the words He left to guide us through our lives?

**Know Him.** “For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.” {2 Timothy 1:12} How can we be certain that we know Christ? According to the apostle John, we know Him if we keep His commandments. {1 John 2:2,3} Jesus Himself said we know Him if “we hear His voice and follow Him.” {John 10:27,28}

**Stand ready.** “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.” {Matthew 25:13} God’s people must remain alert and watchful; our enemy is seeking to destroy us {1 Peter 5:8}. We should be on guard to be sure we are walking in His footsteps and being mindful of our duties and responsibilities as His children. We must never fall asleep while on duty!

**Fight a good fight.** “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” {1 Timothy 6:12} Yes, we are engaged in spiritual warfare and must arm ourselves against the foes of our souls {Ephesians 6:10-18}. One fights with courage when he understands the value of what is at stake – his soul.

**Finish the course.** “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” {Hebrews 12:1} Our race is not over until we draw our last breath or the Lord returns, and we must prepare for both.

**Keep the faith.** “Having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck.” {1 Timothy 1:19} God’s children must not waver; rather, they must remain steadfast in their conviction of faith until the very end. {Revelation 2:10}

**Dear reader,** “all who have loved His appearance” will receive rewards—crowns of righteousness! {1 Peter 1:4,5} Each person will have to choose if they desire to receive that crown from the judge following the final resurrection. Does the crown have a part in your future? \*\*\*