

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

We often talk about Jesus coming again, and look forward to that event when we can escape the turmoil and evilness of this world.

It is an event that is near for all the biblical prophecy concerning Jesus' return has been fulfilled. We only have to wait for God to say it is time.

We sometimes wonder why God is waiting so long.

Man is getting worse and worse.

Man is blaspheming God more and more.

Man doubts God's Word more and more.

The Christian world has degraded to such a degree that we don't even know what is sin anymore. Just why is God waiting?

I can tell you why. God is patient with His creation. If He were not, do you think He would tolerate the treatment the world has placed upon His son?

God loves us. He loves the sinner. He loves all of His creation, and because of His love, He has not called a stop to this madness.

But, even the patience of God can wear out, and one day soon, He will say it is enough.

You have stepped on my Word enough.

You have desecrated the name of my son enough.

You have obeyed Satan enough, and I'm calling a halt to all of this.

Today Christ is in heaven with the Father, and the Holy Spirit is at work here on the earth. There are two groups of people in the world . . . the saved and the lost. There are no in-betweens. The next thing to happen in the great prophetic drama, according to the Scriptures, will be the coming of Jesus in the air. Let us notice some facts about this coming.

WE FIRST NOTICE THAT THERE WILL BE SPECIFIC SOUNDS WHEN HE COMES.

WE WILL HEAR FIRST HIS *SHOUT*.

This is the victor's shout. You saw a small example of this on TV when the statue of Saddam Hussein was pulled down in Iraq. But this was a whisper when compared to the

shout the church will hear when Jesus comes, for He comes as a supernatural victor and there will be mighty power in His shout. It will penetrate all the graves, pierce to the deepest depths of the sea and will be heard by every saint upon the earth.

Jesus went one day to the grave of Lazarus and cried out, **“Lazarus, come forth”!** Lazarus was dead, but he heard his Master’s voice and came out of the grave.

So it is that all His people who sleep in the earth or in the depths of the sea will hear His voice and come forth to meet Him. This shall be the redemption of the body.

It may be that His shout will consist of just one word, and surely that word will be “Come.” This is the royal word of grace . . . this is God’s favorite word. He is saying now to lost men everywhere, **“Come and be saved.”** In that day He will say to all who have believed on Him, **“Come up with Me. . . come from the land and the air and the sea and the grave come up to be with Me forever.”**

Let me add that Jesus will call each of us who are saved by name. If He had not called Lazarus’ name at the graveside all the people in the graveyard would have come forth. That holds true of the resurrection of the dead in Christ. We will each hear our own personal invitation by the voice of Jesus to come to Him.

OUR SCRIPTURE SPOKE OF *THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL.*

This is the official spokesperson from God who announces the coming King. The archangel is the leader of the heavenly hosts . . . he is directly connected with the descent of Jesus from heaven. There will be a great commotion in heaven when Jesus goes out, for He will be going out to get all the redeemed souls who have been saved by His grace. Yes, He will go out to bring them with their glorified bodies into the Father’s house.

THE TRUMPET OF GOD WILL SOUND TO CALL OF GOD’S PEOPLE TOGETHER..

WHEN THE TRUMPET BLOWS IN THE army camp, the men rush from their tents and fall into line and march off to battle. When God’s trump shall sound every saved person everywhere will fall in line and be taken up to join the great multitude of heaven. And the shout will be so loud and the voice will be so clear and the trump will be so distinct that every child of God will hear and go up to meet Him.

“OUR SCRIPTURE ALSO SAYS THAT HE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND.”

There will be no substitute. This One who comes is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. This reminds us of what the men in white said to the disciples on the Mount of Olives as given in Acts 1:11:

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.

It also reminds us of what Jesus said to the disciples in John 14:3:

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

He will shout as He descends. . .

The voice of the archangel will be heard. .

The trump of God will sound

And yonder between the heavens and the earth the Saviour will hover, ready and waiting to snatch His children up out of this sinful world and take them home with Him.

Once before, Jesus was suspended between heaven and earth. Cruel men did it; they hung Him upon a Cross as if He were too good for earth and yet not good enough for heaven. That was a cross of suffering, but, thank God, there will be no suffering for Him when He comes back. He will hover there between heaven and earth in beauty and majesty. His heart will be overflowing with anticipation, for soon He will meet His bride and take her home with Him.

His anticipation was great when He hung upon the Cross. It was here that He sent the message, which tells men to **“Look unto me all ye ends of the earth and be ye saved!”**

He looked down through all the ages and saw those who would believe in Him. He knew the joy that would be in their hearts . . . He knew from what they would be saved and to what they would be saved. As He thought of all this He rejoiced in the privilege of making the supreme sacrifice to save lost men.

But now as He comes in the air His anticipation is greater.

He is going to gather His believers from all over the earth.

He is going to raise the bodies of all those who loved Him and died in the faith.

This will be the greatest reunion the world has ever known. Every trouble will be over and Jesus will throw His loving arms around His believers and His own great heart will overflow with wondrous joy.

OUR SCRIPTURE ALSO TELLS US WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THOSE ON THE EARTH WHEN HE COMES?

1. **It says that *the dead in Christ: shall rise first.*** When the trumpet sounds the dead believers will rise. Not every grave will be opened for those who died without

Christ shall still sleep in their graves. We read these words: **“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.”**

Those who die out of Christ are not blessed and holy . . . they must stay in their graves for another thousand years. Then after the tribulation period and after the millennium they will be raised and brought in judgment before the Great White Throne where they shall receive the condemnation of hell.

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.” These are not lost . . . they are sleeping until He comes and then He will raise them up to be with Him. This is the reason Christians are not to mourn like others who have no hope. We know that when Jesus comes our saved loved ones who have tasted death will be the first ones to rise up to meet Him.

There are sleeping Christians in many different places of the earth. The majority of them are in man-made graves. However, many Christians have gone down into the seas; many have been burned to death . . . some have been lost in the wild places of the earth, and their bones have been picked clean by the birds of the air . . . some have suffered and died in the deserts and their bones have been left to bleach in the broiling sun . . . some have been torn to pieces in explosions . . . some have flown away in airplanes and have never been found. None of this matters to Jesus for He knows everything. He knows where they are and He will show forth His power over death when He comes, for His loved ones will rise from everywhere and not one of them shall be lost.

When I attend the funeral of a Christian I can truly say to him, **“Good-bye, I will see you with Jesus after a little while.”** We can say this of all those who know Jesus for we know that it is well with them.

Now, when the dead are taken up this is the first resurrection . . . it is not a resurrection of the dead but a resurrection from among the dead. The lost dead will be left in their graves, but the saved ones will be raised incorruptible.

2. **After the dead in Christ are raised then *the living Christians will then be caught up.*** Every Christian on the earth will hear His commanding shout and will rise up to meet Him. Take comfort in the fact that the dead in Christ will get a glimpse of Jesus' glory before the living saints do.

3. **Another great event will also occur.** A wondrous change will come both for the dead and living saints. We read in I Corinthians 15:51-53:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Here we are definitely told that the dead saints shall be raised incorruptible and that the living saints shall all be changed.

When we meet Jesus in the air our bodies will be changed. We shall be like Him . . . sinless and perfect. We do not know just what kind of body this will be. Paul calls it a “**spiritual body**,” but surely it is enough for us to know that we shall be like Jesus at the end of the way. We want to be like Him here, but we are hindered by our sin and the desires of the flesh. However, in that minute when He comes we will be free from all evil and we will not be ashamed to meet Him for we will be like Him.

How long will it take God to change our bodies and make us like Jesus? He will bring about this marvelous transformation “**in the twinkling of an eye.**” The very second Jesus comes in the air the greatest change in the world will come to you and me. We will drop this old sinful flesh and be made like unto Him.

We often think of this as a glorious day.

All suffering and pain for the Christian will be over.

We will experience the heavenly bliss that we have so often yearned for.

We will never be exposed to the ungodliness of Satan again.

We will never look back, for our eyes will be fixed on Jesus and we will never experience the sorrow and pain of the old world again.

This really sounds great. It is what we all long for, for this old world is so full of heartaches and pains that we can hardly wait for it to all be over.

BUT AS PAUL HARVEY WOULD SAY’ “ THERE IS ANOTHER SIDE TO THE STORY.”

WHAT IS THE OTHER SIDE THAT WE AREN’T CONSIDERING?

Our lost friends, relatives and loved ones. I know there will be no unpleasantness in heaven. We won’t dwell on those who didn’t make it, but somehow heaven won’t be near as sweet without those we love.

This is what John was writing about in Revelation, Chapter 10 when he took the little book and ate it. It was sweet to the mouth but sour to the stomach. The words sound sweet when we think about being with Jesus, but don’t digest too well when we think of those who are left behind for eternal punishment.

Oh the earth doesn’t end at this time. There is yet the seven-year period known as the Great Tribulation yet to come. I know that some think it will be an orderly transition into the Tribulation, but this is not so.

When Jesus comes for His church, there will be turmoil upon this old earth such as man has never seen. The rapture of the church does not happen in a calm atmosphere that many believe. Some picture it as being a quite orderly transition, but it will not be so. When Jesus returns for His own, things will not be left peaceful and serene. There will be earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and general devastation throughout the world.

Pilotless airplanes will be crashing, automobiles without drivers will be wrecking, buildings will be tumbling down, and many coastal cities will be completely under water. The world will be full of destruction as the Savior comes back to this old place of sin to get His own. This event will make the destruction of the World Trade Center look like tinker toys tumbling for much greater destruction and loss of lives will be happening all over the world.

You see when a sinless God gets near sin, things happen. The hydrogen bomb explosion will seem like a firecracker going off compared to the eruptions that will happen here on earth. The shout from heaven and the translation of the Christian will trigger these devastating events.

Take note that all born again believers will be in heaven with Jesus at this time. When the rapture occurs, there will be great destruction on the earth, and the nations of the earth will be practically leaderless. There will be millions of people killed or missing. All lines of communication will be broken. There will be no running water, no electricity, no gasoline and hardly any food. The people of the world will be desperate and destitute as they try to survive. This is when the great tribulation period begins.

The Bible tells us that a great leader will come on the scene and bring order out of all the chaos. This is the beast of Revelation or perhaps better known as the Antichrist. The events that follow are not pretty or pleasant for God's wrath is about to be poured upon the earth.

I only want to look at the beginning of the tribulation period for us to get a full picture of the situation. It is found in Revelation 6:1-8, the four horsemen of the apocalyptic.

1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

What is the significance of this rider on the white horse? We know that Jesus will be riding a white horse when He comes as conqueror, but this is not the same for Jesus is in heaven opening the seven seals. It has to be a counterfeit.

This is the antichrist. He comes on a white horse, imitating Jesus and he carries a bow without arrows to signify that he is coming in peace.

The antichrist will appear after the church is gone. He comes in the guise of a savior, but he is really Satan incarnate.

He brings peace on the whole earth for a while. The whole world will worship him. He sets himself as the messiah of the Jews and rules the world.

You may think, “**How can he do this so easily?**” You must remember that the Holy Spirit is no longer here to constrain the devil. When the Holy Spirit is gone. Who will stop him? It will be easy to believe the lie.

Even today while the Holy Spirit is still on earth, we are pretty easily deceived. Look at the things that are happening about us each day. We may not be participating in some of these things, but some people are.

It is easy to be deceived if one doesn't have the controlling agency of the Holy Spirit. Many are falling for the lie that God's Word is not inspired. Many are rewriting the precious truths of the Bible to suit their own purposes. We have to be relevant to survive in today's society we are told, and many are falling for this.

Many of our respected Bible scholars are teaching that the Bible has many errors? They reason that knowledge alone is all that is necessary to rightfully divide the truths of God's Word. If they don't especially like something, they throw it out with a statement that it was not in the original manuscripts. Many are being deceived by this approach to the Scriptures for they will take the scholar's word over the word of a God called preacher.

Confidence men across the centuries have used the old trick of telling people what they want to hear and then cheating them out of their possessions. The antichrist will do exactly the same thing, for following the white horse of the antichrist closely is the rider on the red horse. This is the same rider but his purpose has changed.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

The red in color signifies the blood that will be shed on the earth as the antichrist shows his true colors. He sets out to have power over the entire earth.

I have often wondered why anyone would want such power, but we know from history that there is always a Osama Ben Laden or a Saddam Hussin somewhere in the world that must control everything and everyone around him. It doesn't matter who gets hurt or killed. Power is all that is important.

Remember that during the tribulation period the Holy Spirit is not here.

The church is not here.

The love of Christianity is no longer on the earth.

Satan reigns supreme and he is out to conquer the world and all its inhabitants. He wants to do that now, but the restraining power of God keeps it from happening.

What is the best way for God to pass judgment upon the earth than to let Satan have his way? He always brings destruction. Man wants to serve Satan; let them have him. The streets will run red with blood as he attempts to bring all mankind under his control.

A natural outcome of the destruction that has befallen the earth is famine and we see that as the rider mounts a black horse.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

The black horse signifies the economic depression that will come on all the earth. The cost of food will be astronomical as denoted by the cost of wheat and barley; wheat being the preferred food with barley being the inferior.

The oil and the wine symbolize the wealthy. It seems we always have them with us. They eat while the masses are starving.

Many people will die during the period of the reign of the rider on the black horse.

We have been fortunate in America for we have never experienced wholesale famine, but there are places in the world where this is a way of life. People never get enough food to eat, and what little they do get, the leaders of the countries are busy taking it away from them. You often see these kinds of things on TV, but what we witness now is nothing to what it will be then.

But it gets worse as we see the rider on the pale horse come on the scene.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Someone has said that Death always rides a pale horse. Here we see the true picture of what Satan has always advocated, death and hell. He came in the Garden of

Eden to bring destruction upon the earth. He alone has been the power behind all of mankind's problems, but we still want to worship him in place of the true God.

You see during the tribulation period, he will be worshipped by the world at large. He will feel that he has won, but he has lost and all who worship him will lose.

The book of Revelation tells about his final abode, the lake of fire. Here Satan and his followers will be tormented forever and ever.

I don't know why some people insist on going to hell, but they do.

I don't know why many people won't accept Jesus as their savior, but they won't.

I know that many who believe the Bible, and are not saved think they will have a second chance, but they won't. The Bible is clear, if a person does not accept Jesus here on this earth, they won't get a chance in the hereafter.

Jesus is coming again. Will you be ready, or will you miss your chance for heaven and all its rewards?

If you should accidentally survive the destruction at the beginning of the tribulation, you may have another chance, but it is not likely, for if you are deceived now while the Holy Spirit is here, what chance would you have when He is gone?

Now is the time for decision making regarding Jesus and His offer of life eternal.

A Christian man lay dying. He had three sons, two of whom were Christians, but the third and youngest was a wayward sinner. The old man spoke to the two boys who were Christians and said: **"I am going to leave you for a little while, but it won't be for long. I will see you again some day. . . good-night."** But to the youngest son he said, **"Good-bye, my son, good-bye."** And this boy, with a breaking heart, cried out, **"Father, why do you say good-bye to me with such finality and tell my brothers that you will see them before long?"** The old man replied, **"Your brothers trust my Saviour as their Saviour. You have rejected Him and those who do this never find the way to the heavenly home . . . this is the parting of the way for us forever."** The poor boy broke down and sobbed and said, **"Oh, Father, just tell me good-night for a little while . . . I, too, trust the Saviour right now . . . I will see you again some day."**

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