

We Would See Jesus: The Son of God

“When the Lord Jesus Is Revealed from Heaven”

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Our theme for this great lectureship is *“We Would See Jesus.”* This comes from the account of the Greeks wanting to find Jesus. John recorded, “Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus’” (John 12:20-21). [All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.] The disciples brought them to Jesus so that they could see Him.

As Jesus was ascending into heaven, the angels told the apostles, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). One day all who have ever lived, and all who are living when Jesus comes, will see Him. John stated, “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him” (Rev. 1:7).

There are several great passages that thoroughly discuss the details of the second coming of Christ, yet none of these tells us when. While we do not know when the Lord is coming, we must be prepared for His coming. Paul comforted the Thessalonians by writing,

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...and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed. (2 Thess. 1:6-10)

We will now study some of these great passages on the second coming of Jesus, in order to gain the knowledge we need to be prepared when He returns and the comfort we need knowing that He will return.

THE GUARANTEE OF HIS COMING

We note that Paul said twice, "...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven..." and "...when He comes..." (2 Thess. 1:7, 10). This speaks to the certainty of His coming back. Jesus guaranteed this to His disciples when He said, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory" (Matt. 25:31). In the upper room Jesus comforted His disciples by saying, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3). Note that He said, "I go.." and "I will..." Jesus was guaranteeing His return.

There is no guessing as to whether He will come or not. Jesus stated that He is coming again, and His disciples were inspired to write about it. He is coming! He did not say, "If I come again," but said "when."

The passages previously quoted come from every section of the New Testament: the gospel accounts (Matt. 25:31-33), the history of the church in Acts (Acts 1:11), the epistles (2 Thess. 1:7-10), and the book of prophecy, the Revelation (1:7). “Irrespective of where we are in the New Testament, there is a reoccurring emphasis on the fact that our Lord is going to come” (Winkler). The certainty of His coming is a fact!

When will Jesus come? No one knows. The Scriptures say, “For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night” (1 Thess. 5:2). “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). In Jesus’ great discourse on His coming (Matt. 25:31-46), no mention was made of a time frame. When thieves come, they do not make an announcement.

Men have mistakenly tried to set a time on the return of Jesus. William Miller, of the Seventh Day Adventist movement, tried to say that Jesus would come some time between 1843 and 1844 (Martin 361). When He didn’t, they tried to reset the date for 1845. Many left the movement. Charles T. Russell, the founder of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, said the Lord was going to come in 1914. Russell and his followers tried to claim that the Lord did come but only the prepared saw Him (McDowell 58). The Bible denies that such could happen for it declares, “Every eye shall see” (Rev. 1:7). Such date setting doctrines are false and deny clear teaching from Scripture. The Lord’s coming cannot be dated, but it is certain.

THE GLORY OF HIS COMING

The next thing we notice concerning the Lord's return is that it will be glorious. "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory" (Matt. 25:31). Two times the Bible mentions glory here. There are several reasons given in Scripture as to why the Lord's return will be glorious.

His Return Will Be Accompanied By Angels

Matthew recorded that He will come with "...all His holy angels" (Matt. 25:31). Several manuscripts do not contain the word "holy," however, by implication we know that these are the holy angels and not those who fell with Satan. "And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:7-9). It is obvious that the angels Jesus will bring with Him are those who remained in good stead.

Angels attended the greatest events in the life of Jesus. They attended His birth (Luke 2:8-12). Angels ministered to Jesus after His temptation: "Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him" (Matt. 4:11). They were present in the garden of Gethsemane: "Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him" (Luke 22:43). Angels were present at the tomb of Jesus (Matt. 28:1-8). And angels comforted the disciples at Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:10). We also note here that the text says, "with **all** His holy angels"

(emp. added). When Jesus comes this time, every angel will be with Him.

He Will Come With Clouds

“Jesus said to him, ‘...I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven’” (Matt. 26:64). Paul comforted the Thessalonians by writing, “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:17). The Revelation says, “Behold, He comes with clouds...” (Rev. 1:7). Clouds, like angels, have also played a significant role in Biblical events. A cloud was present with Israel as they escaped Egypt (Ex. 14:19). The cloud descended on the tabernacle when it was dedicated by Israel (Ex. 33:9). A bright cloud surrounded Jesus, along with Peter, James and John, on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5). All of these situations revealed the presence of God with man.

It is a curious situation indeed, but many religious people believe that Jesus will return to this earth and set up an earthly kingdom. Such is the belief of premillennialism. But to believe such an unbiblical teaching, one would need to ignore all of these clear statements concerning how Jesus returns. He will never again set foot on this earth, but we will meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4:17), and He will stay in the clouds.

He Will Come Personally

Our context in Matthew 25 is very complicated. Jesus began by talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in the previous chapter (Matthew 24). However, He switched subjects as He answered the questions that the disciples had asked previously, “Tell us, when will these

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things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matt. 24:3). The first two questions have to do with the destruction of Jerusalem. To this Jesus said, “But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matt. 24:37). Jesus came in the event, not personally. Jesus said the same thing about the coming of the kingdom, the church. “Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom” (Matt. 16:28). Jesus had already ascended into heaven when this event took place on Pentecost. He came in the event, not personally.

This is not the case with the second coming of our Lord. “Then we who remain shall be caught up with Him in the clouds” (1 Thess. 4:17). When Jesus comes again we will see him personally, “...every eye shall see Him” (Rev. 1:7).

When Jesus comes it will be a glorious event because He will come with all of His angels, He will come with the clouds and He will come personally to take us home. There never has been and never will be an event like the second coming of Jesus.

THE GRAVITY OF HIS COMING

Not all will see the coming of the Lord as glorious. Jesus said, “All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left” (Matt. 25:32-33).

All Nations Will Be There

The Bible clearly shows us the nature of that day. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah will be there

(Matt. 10:15). The inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon will be there (Matt. 11:22). The Ninevites will be there (Matt. 12:41). The Bible goes on to tell us that all who have previously died will be there. "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books" (Rev. 20:12-13). We are finally told that everyone will be there, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom..." (2 Tim. 4:1). This day will carry great solemnity because everyone will be there. However, knowing that the whole world will be there must not keep us from responding to Jesus personally and individually. We sometimes get lost in the corporate and forget that we will be judged as an individual. God loved the world (John 3:16), but He also loves the individual (Rom. 5:8; Gal. 2:20). Don't neglect to obey Christ and don't neglect to live for Him simply because everyone will be present on that day. No one will slip through the cracks, and no mistakes will be made.

The Judgment Will Take Place

Jesus said that we will be separated and judged. Can you imagine the pain of that separation from the Lord? There is no indication that we will know what is happening to others at that time, but the Lord will know. John was told by the Lord about what will happen after judgment to those who did not obey.

...He (Satan) himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the

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presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. (Rev. 14:10-11)

Jesus did all He could to save mankind, and yet most reject His offer.

Obviously, not all of the news is bad concerning the judgment taking place when Jesus comes. "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'" (Matt. 25:34-35). There is no guessing as to the requirements for entering the joy of the Lord. He described a conversation between the righteous and the Lord on that day,

"...For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me." Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?" And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me." (Matt. 25:35-40)

Jesus said the opposite would be true concerning those who did not obey Him. They will have neglected what they were supposed to have done and will hear the dreaded words, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the

everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

On the day of judgment, when Jesus comes again, there will be no questioning of the fairness of the decision of the Lord. Men will be judged based on what they have done with what Jesus told them through His Word. For those who disobeyed, this will be a grave day.

The Final Separation Will Occur

The Bible says that "...He will separate them one from the other, as the shepherd divides the sheep from the goats..." (Matt. 25:32). This will be the final act of the Good Shepherd (John 10:11).

This separation will be permanent. "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25:46). The final abodes of both the righteous and the wicked will begin at that time.

There are some among us today who no longer believe in eternal hell. Some in our brotherhood have fostered the idea of annihilation as the way God will punish the wicked, and others have accepted this false teaching. But, the Bible says, directly recorded from the mouth of our Lord, that the wicked will go away into "...**everlasting** punishment" (emp. added). Revelation says that the smoke of their torment rises "forever and ever" (Rev. 14:11). The "and ever" here is a modifier indicating infinity.

Men put forth such false ideas thinking that they are protecting the reputation of God by doing so. The concept is that God is a loving God and would not punish men so harshly. God's reputation is not for us to question, nor is it in jeopardy. All those who will go away into everlasting punishment will be justly judged. The punishment will be fair and will fit the crime. Also, there

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is the fact of the equality of justice. While those who obeyed Jesus will enjoy eternal life, those who did not will suffer eternal punishment. Why do these brothers who reject the concept of everlasting punishment not also reject the concept of everlasting life?

In that final day, there will be a separation. Such will carry with it the greatest gravity of any trial that has ever happened. The wicked will go away forever, and the righteous will go home to be with God. Jesus comforted the disciples who sat at His feet in the upper room with these facts (John 14:1-6).

CONCLUSION

The second coming of our Lord is guaranteed, glorious and grave. We must be ready at all times, for Jesus will come like a thief in the night. Peter asked, "What manner of persons ought you to be?" (2 Pet. 3:11). The answer is obvious, A PREPARED PERSON!

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