

EXPECTING THE LORD'S RETURN

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

What would you do if you knew for a fact that the Lord Jesus Christ would come this morning during this very message that is being preached? There is one wonderful, awesome, truth held in the Word of God that sadly is not preached, but nonetheless is the “Wonderful Truth of God’s Word” and that is the very return of Christ Jesus for His church...the saints of God. While many people talk about the end of the world and how things are going to be as we draw closer to the end...the Bible makes it abundantly clear, that for those who have placed their faith in Christ, and are a part of the church, there will be a day, and that day could very well be in our life time when Christ comes, “in the twinkling of an eye” and takes His very church out and brings her home to Him. The coming of Christ was such on the mind of the early writers of Matthew apostle Paul that he encouraged the saints of his day to “watch”, and be ready

1. THE LORD'S RETURN....A PROMISE FROM GOD'S WORD.

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that every “promise” of God is established. In other words, whatever God says He will do...that will He do. Before the first coming of Christ, it was prophesied that Christ would come. *Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

It was prophesied where He would be born, and it was prophesied how he would die. *Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

Before the very first coming of Christ, God made it abundantly clear that He already had marked the precise way Christ would come, where He would be born, and how He would die. The very promise of God is exactly the same when it comes to the very “Coming Of Christ”. Just as the promises were filled regarding the first coming of Christ...the Bible makes it clear that Christ is going to come...and the next issue on the agenda of God is the coming for His church.

While we can't figure out the ways and the mind of God...that changes nothing when it comes to the very fact that Jesus is coming for His church. As a matter of fact the truth is, man cannot figure out how God did one single mighty act of Scripture...but that changes nothing.

The Second Coming of Christ will happen precisely as the Father intends, and one of the most sobering realities is that HIS COMING COULD TAKE PLACE EVEN TODAY. Jesus declared Himself over 2000 years ago that he was coming back. In speaking to his disciples, Jesus declared, “And if I go away and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.” (Jn. 14:3) Jesus is not speaking of death, but rather “His Coming” for He clearly declares “I will come again”.

The very fact of Jesus Second Coming was even spoken by the angels as Jesus went away into heaven in *Acts 1:10-11, “The very angels of God declared, “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.”*

Just as Jesus returned to heaven bodily and literally, so will Jesus come back “bodily and literally”. But first He will come to “catch away His church”. The very next “great event” on the calendar of God is the “catching away of the church” or “the snatching away of the saints of God” in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. Paul even declared the “Second Coming of Christ to the precious saints of Corinth in *1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* Paul lived even in his day “anticipating and expecting the coming of Christ”. Why? Because the Coming of Christ for His church is “imminent” meaning that it could very well happen at any moment, of any day, or any hour. Paul wasn't looking for “signs” but rather he was looking for “A Person” namely Jesus Christ.

If you fail to believe that Jesus Christ could very well come this very day, you are missing ONE OF THE GREATEST TRUTHS HELD IN THE WORD OF GOD. For the Coming of Christ for His church first, and with His church second, is a settled issue in the very word of God.

2. THE LORD'S RETURN....UNREVEALED TO MAN.

While the coming of Christ is a “settled issue”, Scripture makes it clear that there is no person that knows the day or the hour when Christ will come. *Matthew 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.* While there may be many that desire to set a date for the Coming of Christ for His church, Scripture makes it clear that the Father has disclosed to no one the time of the events regarding the Coming of Christ for His Church, or even the dates for the end of the world. But the fact is THEY ARE COMING.

3. THE LORD'S RETURN....A LIGHTNING QUICK EVENT. One thing that Jesus does remind everyone with a listening heart is this...IT WILL TAKE PLACE QUICKLY. *Revelation 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.Revelation 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.Revelation 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

The sobering truth is that Jesus is giving to all listening that when He comes for His saints, the church...it will not take place in minutes, hours, or even a one day time... It will be immediate.

If God sends Jesus with clouds to gather his church today...it will happen quicker than you can “blink” your eye. Like lightning from east to the west will God resurrect the saints, take up the living saints just as Paul declared. *1 Corinthians 15:51-54 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. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

You may very well be on your way to work...when Jesus comes for His church. The greatest sound like lightning will take place, and for all the unredeemed, once they settle from the alarming events, they will look around and notice people missing, friends missing...for the Lord will have come for His saints...His church.

You may very well be in bed at night resting...when Jesus comes. You may be here sitting in church...when Jesus comes. The sobering truth of Scripture is this....Jesus is coming. Scripture declares it like this, *Matthew 24:40-41 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

Imagine all the events of the world taking place on that day when God sends His Son to take the church home. Events of all kinds will be taking place...when saints are taken. It will be a most exciting day for the saints of God, but the world will not know what took place, because they believe not the truth of God. It will be an event that covers every paper, in the world...for it will be the universal “catching up of the saints of God in the Rapture, declared by God in His Word for hundreds of years...but the ultimate question that must be asked it this...will you be a part of the Rapture? If Christ comes today for His church, will you be “caught with Christ in the air” or will you be one of those that have no clue as to what has happened? The desire of the Father is that You be a part of those that will be “caught up”.

4. THE LORD’S COMING....AN UNEXPECTED EVENT.

While the Bible makes it clear that Jesus will come to “catch up” His church, the truth is many, even believers are not expecting this to come for hundreds of years. Jesus even declared this truth when He comes. *Matthew 24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.* If it happens in our time, it will happen when we are least thinking about it, least expecting it, after all it has been declared for centuries. But God’s Word holds firm. Man will be amazed, even believers will be amazed, but it will happen, for God Almighty had decreed it.