

Jesus is Coming

by
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THE CERTAINTY OF HIS COMING

There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning ... But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness,- but is longsuffering to us-ward not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God. . . " II Peter 3:3-12.

Those verses of scripture magnify one blessed truth taught in Holy Scripture: Jesus Christ will return to earth! In fact, the next major event on God's prophetic calendar is the return of Jesus Christ to reign upon the earth. Some ignore it. Others deny it. Many do not think of it. But it is true. Jesus is coming!

How can we be certain that He will return to earth? Consider these promises and proofs as set forth in the Bible.

The coming of the Savior to earth was anticipated by ancient patriarch

The Old Testament spoke many times of His first coming in lowliness to be the atonement for sin. But it spoke many other times of His second coming in power and glory to be the governor of men.

The ancient patriarch named Job had such a witness of faith. From the midst of his sufferings and dismay of his trials, he saw the ultimate victory of God in the Messiah and cried out, "*I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*" Job 19:25. And to that witness of faith, the whole Old Testament utters resounding "Amen."

The coming of the Savior back to earth was promised by Jesus Himself.

On the night of His betrayal, just before His crucifixion, He promised the disciples, "*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. 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 unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also*" John 14:2, 3. It will be as He said, for His word is true.

Jesus even told us what His appearing would be like, saying, *ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven*" Matthew 26:64. And His very last words to us, spoken from heaven through the apostle John, were, "*Surely I come quickly*". We respond with the prayer of John, "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus*" Revelation 22:20. It is safe to take the Lord's word for it. He has promised to return, and He will keep His promise.

The coming of the Savior back to earth is recorded in Holy Scripture.

We believe the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God, It is as much the words of God to us as if God spoke to us in audible voice. What is promised or stated in the Scripture, therefore, is as authoritative as what God promises or speaks personally.

In the light of that truth, consider the words of Hebrews 9:28, "*So Christ once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*" What a promise! As surely as He came the first time to bear the sins of mankind, He will appear the second time to reveal the ultimate salvation which He has secured for us. Underscore in your heart the promise: "He shall appear the second time." God has promised it. You can stake your very life upon that promise, for God is faithful.

The coming of the Savior back to earth is taught by the Apostles of the Lord.

Every apostle who wrote Holy Scripture, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, made some reference to the return of Jesus Christ to earth.

Consider these words from the Apostle Paul. "*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ*" Philippians 3:20. Yes, we look for the Lord Jesus Christ to come from heaven, where we hold citizenship in the Kingdom of God. Here is another statement from Paul, "*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God*" I Thess. 4:16. His coming will be personal and evident. Again, Paul wrote, "*And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. ..*"

when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, . . . in that day" II Thess. 1:7-10. He will come to execute judgment on the wicked and to be glorified by the righteous. There is no question but that the Apostle Paul expected the return of Jesus to earth.

Here is the testimony of the Apostle James. *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh"* James 5:7, 8. Though the coming of Jesus seems to be delayed, or perhaps even postponed, He is coming. Wait in patient expectation. He will come. The Apostle John adds his testimony to that of the other apostles, writing, *"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen"* Revelation 1:7. And as he opens the book of the Revelation with that announcement of the return of Jesus, he closed the book with this quotation of the words of Jesus, *"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus"* Revelation 22:20.

Yes, the return of Jesus Christ to earth is certain. There are so many references to His return in the Bible, written by so many different people, related to so many different doctrines, and stated as *"the blessed hope"* of the saints of God, that there can be no reasonable doubt. Do not argue with the doctrine. Believe it and rejoice in Him who has come and who will come again. Are you ready for His return? The time is uncertain. It could be today. I counsel you to prepare today for His coming. Turn from sin of any kind. Receive the forgiveness of God. Offer yourself as the willing servant of Jesus Christ the Lord. Thus you will be ready to live for Him while here in the world and to meet Him when He comes to call His saints to himself.

"Father, we rejoice in the prospect of the personal return of our dear Savior, your only begotten Son. How good it will be to welcome Him in joy. Oh, that is our blessed hope, indeed. Thank you that life is not all, death is not all, but that an eternity with God is the birthright of every born-again Christian. May many enter into the forgiveness of your grace today. For Jesus' sake. Amen".

THE MANNER OF HIS COMING

The last words Jesus spoke when He was personally present on earth were these, *"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"* Acts 1: 1-11.

Yes, the last words spoken before the ascension of Jesus contained a promise of power and a commission to service. The first words spoken after the ascension of Jesus contained a promise and description of the return of Jesus to the earth which He was leaving.

Acts 1:11 states that Jesus will return *"in like manner"* as He ascended to heaven. That introduces us to a study of "The Manner of His Coming," when He returns to earth. What will the return of Jesus to earth be like?

His coming will be personal.

The angels said "*this same Jesus*" who was taken up into heaven shall return to earth from heaven. It will be Jesus Himself who descends. He will be attended by angels, of course, according to Mark 8:38. He will be accompanied by the redeemed saints of all ages, according to Jude 19. But, the center of interest will be Jesus Himself. "*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord*" I Thess. 4:16, 17.

The book of the Revelation closes with two quotations of the words of **Jesus in its final chapter**, each referring to His return to earth. Verse 7 reads, "*Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book*". Verse 20 repeats, "*He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.*" Who comes? Jesus said "*I come.*" Jesus is coming personally.

His coming will be unannounced.

The disciples who went with Jesus to the Mount of Olives that day had no idea they were about to witness His ascension back to the Father in heaven, They followed Him there without knowing what was about to transpire. His return will be as unexpected as His departure. That is why the coming of Jesus back to earth is said to be like "*a thief in the night*" I Thess. 5:2. He will come when mankind as a whole is not expecting Him to appear. Life will be going on as usual. People will be getting engaged and being married. Business will be operating with buying and selling. And in the midst of it all, Jesus will appear without warning or announcement.

His coming will be visible.

There are two phases to the coming of the Lord: (1) He will come in the air to receive His saints unto Himself, and then (2) He will come to earth with His glorified saints. His coming in the air will not be seen by the world as a whole, but His coming on to earth will be universally witnessed.

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindred of the earth shall wail because of him" Revelation 1:7. "*For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of man be*" Matthew 24:27.

The appearance of the Lord will bring dismay and fear to the sinners. But it will bring joy to the saints of God. It is with glad anticipation that the Apostle John testifies, "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is*" I John 3:2.

The writer of one of our great Christian hymns caught the spirit which that truth inspires and wrote, "When by *His* grace I shall look on His face, That will be glory, be glory for me." Yes, the heart of every Christian is filled with joy at the prospect of looking upon Him who is "*altogether lovely*" Song of Solomon 5:16.

His coming will be glorious.

Listen to how it is described in the Bible. He will be attended by the angels of heaven. He will come in the glory of God the Father. He will be surrounded by clouds of great glory. He will descend with a shout of triumph. He will be announced by the voice of the archangel. He will be

heralded by the trumpet of God. That indicates a spectacular appearing, doesn't it? It takes all the methods by which men announce and welcome their rulers and important persons, joining them all in a supernatural declaration of the coming of Him who is King over all kings and Lord over all lords.

It is appropriate that His announcement be fitting to His person. Since all heaven declares, *"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing"* and since every creature which is in heaven, on the earth, and in the sea testify, *"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever"* Revelation 5:12, 13, the announcement of His return to earth should be glorious beyond description. And so shall it be.

His coming will be redemptive.

He comes to gather His own to Himself Matthew 24:31 describes it in these words, *"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."* Yes, He comes to claim those who believe in Him and take them to Himself in the ultimate completion of salvation.

That is why the return of the Lord is *"the blessed hope"* for saints of God and a dread prospect for the unredeemed. In which category are you? The Bible does not say that Jesus comes for His church, but for His saints. Emphasis on the return of the Lord stresses individual relationship of the believer with Him whom we trust.

His coming will be literal.

References to the return of Jesus Christ to earth are literal, not figurative. The coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) was not the second coming of Christ. The death of a Christian, when He goes to be with the Lord, is not the second coming of Christ for him. The return of the Lord is literal; He Himself will come to dwell on the earth and to reign a thousand years in righteousness.

There are many things about His return which we do not know. There are some questions we cannot answer. But God has given us all the information we need that we might trust Jesus Christ as Savior and serve Him as Lord. The purpose of Bible revelation is not to satisfy our curiosity, but to enable us to prepare to meet Him when He comes. I admonish you to trust and obey, this day and every day. And when He comes, whether it be soon or late, you will be ready to welcome Him.

"Father, we desire to see the hour when the Lord Jesus Christ will come in the air to receive us to Himself. We pray that time may be soon. But until He comes, we want to be faithful and busy in serving Him. Grant us grace to fulfill faithfully our duties as children of God, For Jesus' sake. Amen. "

THE DELAY OF HIS COMING

The return of Jesus Christ to earth is an oft-repeated promise in Holy Scripture. Scores of references may be cited. The certainty of His return, the nature of His return, the signs of His return, and the significance of His return are set out in amazing detail. And yet, Jesus Christ has not yet returned to earth. On the contrary, it seems His return has been delayed. Scoffers have taken that seeming delay as an occasion to deny the promises that He will return at

all. But God told us in the Bible that such things would happen. The Apostle Peter wrote, ". . . there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, *Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation*" II Peter 3:3,4.

Is the return of the Lord Jesus to earth truly delayed? What explanation is there that He has not returned in the almost two thousand years since His incarnate ministry on earth? The answer to those questions cannot be found in human speculation. The answer must be sought in the Holy Bible, the inspired Word of God. So, let us examine the Scriptures for an answer to the question, "Why is the return of Jesus to earth so long delayed?"

The return of Jesus to earth seems delayed because its date is uncertain.

The time is unknown, as the Bible declares. Jesus said, "*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only ... Watch, therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come*" Matthew 24:36, 42. And at another time Jesus admonished, "*We ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not*" Luke 12:40. The very uncertainty concerning the time of His coming makes it seem delayed to us.

I remember when I was a child living with my family in a farm home. One day my parents went to town, leaving me at home with the other children. I knew they were going to buy me a new bicycle and bring it back home with them. They had other business to care for, so there was no particular hour when they would return. Again and again, I looked up the road to see whether they were in sight. I played outside that day so I could hear the car coming before it reached our house. That was one of the longest days I can remember. My excitement and anticipation of their return made it seem as if they delayed unduly.

Just so, the uncertain time of Jesus' return and the excitement we feel as we consider it, makes it seem delayed to us. But He who is coming will come soon.

The return of Jesus to earth is assured, even though it may seem to be delayed.

The passing of time between the promise and its fulfillment does not mean the promise is cancelled nor forgotten. Absolutely not!

Hear this word from Hebrews 10:35-38, "*Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith.*"

The Apostle James gives this advice, "*Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient, - stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*" James 5:7, 8.

Our God is faithful. He does not make promises and forget them or ignore them. He is described in the Old Testament in these words, "*Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations*" Deuteronomy 7:9. Encourage your heart with hope. "*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, - but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*" II Peter 3:9. Instead of doubt, we can have "*a strong consolation*" that what He has promised, He will perform Hebrews 6:18.

Man might promise and then change his mind. Man might promise and find himself unable to

fulfill his promise. Man might promise and his promise never be fulfilled. But God is not man. He is God who promises and fulfills every promise made. The writer of a Christian song said, "He will keep His promise to me. All the way with me He will go. He has never broken any promise spoken; He will keep His promise, I know."

The return of Jesus to earth does not seem delayed in God's sight.

We must learn that God works on a different time schedule from man. He is not limited by time, as we humans are. He works in view of eternity and through all the span of time, *"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"* II Peter 3:8. That means He is above time, beyond time, independent of time. You and I are limited in relation to time. We have but a set time on earth, a relatively few years. God has all the time in the world. He works in view of the whole expanse of human history, not in the limits of one person's life-span on earth. Even if Jesus does not return to earth in your lifetime, that does not mean He will not return at all. Let us be confident that God's schedule is best. He knows all things involved in human history. Jesus will return when the exact time has come. Be patient.

The return of Jesus to earth is delayed because of His mercy.

Consider once again II Peter 3:9, which reads, *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

What a word that is! God is not negligent nor careless about performing what He has promised. Then, why has Jesus not returned to earth already? God has delayed the coming of the Lord to give sinners time to repent. He is *"not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

The return of the Lord Jesus to earth will mark the close of the dispensation of grace. The door of salvation will close eternally for multitudes in that day. God has commissioned us to go into all the world and present clearly the gospel of salvation to all people. We are busy doing that. When he says, "it is enough," the Lord Jesus will return. But the return is delayed to give sinners time for repentance.

Are you trusting Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? It might be God is delaying the return of the Lord just for your sake. Hasten to Him today in repentance from sin and personal faith in Jesus Christ alone. And let every Christian be faithful in witness of the gospel. Jesus is coming soon.

"Father, the anticipation of the return of our Savior quickens our hearts with joy. How we wish it could be today. And yet, we are conscious of many who have not yet heard or have not yet trusted Jesus Christ as Savior. We turn our attention from the personal desire to see Jesus to a concern for those who have not yet been saved. So, while we desire His return with all our hearts, we set ourselves for faithful service until He appears. In Jesus' name. Amen

THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING

Consider this reading of Matthew 16:1-3, *"The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It*

wild' be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" Now place that reading in the context of the return of Jesus Christ to earth and you have the theme for this part of our study of the subject, "Jesus is Coming!"

Jesus said there are indications in the present which reveal events of the future. A red sky in the evening indicates fair weather, in the land of Palestine, just as a red sky in the morning indicates foul weather. As the sky indicates the weather of the day, so there are spiritual signs which indicate what is happening in the spiritual realm.

The disciples of Jesus understood that truth and asked Him, "tell us, *when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* And Jesus answered and said unto them, *Take heed that no man deceive you*" Matthew 24:3, 4. That means some people will arise with interpretations of the "signs of the times" which will be misinterpreted and will be deceptive rather than true. The follower of Jesus must watch for the true and reject the false. Are there signs which indicate that the coming of the Lord is near?

Yes, I understand the Bible to teach that there are such signs. I will list some of them, with the Scripture references which teach them, and let you study them for yourself.

Increasing social problems are a sign that Jesus is coming soon.

II Timothy 3:1-5 reads, "*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affections, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. from such turn away.*"

That is seen in our present generation with the increase in crime (which increased 48% when the population increased 8%), in the breakdown of the home (with a 1400% increase in divorces from 1908 to 1948), breakdown of moral standards and the increase of sexual perversion, increasing economic tensions with inflation and related problems, as well as riots in the streets in otherwise civil communities. Social unrest in the present generation indicates we are approaching a crisis and major turning point in human history, which I understand to be the return of Jesus.

International changes indicate that Jesus is coming soon.

Luke 21:25 speaks of "*signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.*"

The rise of Russia to a great military power is predicted in (Ezekiel 38, 39). The rise of a great military power in the Orient, which is able to field a 200 million man army, is predicted in Revelation 9:14-15 and 16:12. The rise of a one-world government, to which all national governments are subject, is described in Revelation 13. (The Antichrist will rule as supreme commander of the world over that government.) The rise of the nation of Israel is mentioned in many passages of Holy Scripture. Her being re-gathered (Ezekiel 11 :17; 34:12, 13; Jeremiah 30:11), resettled in the land (Amos 9:15), reviving her ancient language (Jeremiah 31:23), planting and producing crops in former desert land (Isaiah 35:1), planting forests of trees (Ezekiel 36:30), and such things are vividly described.

It is happening! Those very international changes are being discussed in secular news programs day by day.

Religious revolution indicates that Jesus is coming soon.

The Bible tells of apostasy from the truth: *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition"* II Thess 2:3. Scoffers will arise denouncing Bible teachings (II Peter 3:3, 4). Heretics will come, false prophets who teach heresies which will condemn men to hell (I Timothy 4:1-4; II Peter 2:1, 2). Coldness will grip the hearts of many who profess to be followers of Christ (Matthew 24:12; Revelation 3:16). Deceivers will arise, evil men who seduce those who follow them (Matthew 24:5; 24:24-27; II Timothy 3:13). Spiritism will spread as people give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (I Timothy 4:1). Piety will be pretended by many who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof (II Timothy 3:4). The spirit of ecumenism will increase until a one-world church will arise, but it will be overspread with heresy and rejection of Bible truth (Revelation 13:12, 16: 17:6; 18:24).

A great evangelistic harvest indicates that Jesus is coming soon.

There will be a great outreach of missionary evangelism to all the world. *"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come"* Matthew 24:14. Yes, bless the Lord, these last days are days of great evangelistic harvest. Compare what is happening in our day. In 1800 there were 7 missionary organizations, which invested \$50,000 in missions, and witnessed **15,000 converts**. In 1900 there were more than 150 missionary organizations, which spent \$15,000,000 for missions, and recorded over 4,000,000 converts. Today, there are even more organizations, investing more money, and seeing far more converts than at any time in human history.

This is the time when the Holy Spirit of God is given to all who trust Jesus, With the Spirit there comes the power of God for service (Acts 1:3, 2:17). Out of the great tribulation of the last days there will arise a great multitude who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:9-17).

The spirit of expectation among believers indicates that Jesus is coming soon.

Believers will sense in their inner spirit that the time of His return is nearing. They will begin to look up, knowing their redemption draws near (Luke 21:28). A time of great expectation, even among non-Christian scholars, will mark the end of the age.

And yet, the signs will not arouse universal expectation. They will be sufficient to warn believers. Those who are spiritually sensitive will know what is happening (Matthew 24:32, 33), but the majority of mankind will not know. Those signs are sufficient to keep Jesus' return from being a surprise to believers (Matthew 24:37-41). They will serve as a call to watchfulness (Matthew 24:42-44). But they are not definite enough for any person to set a date for the Lord's appearing. *"Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father"* Mark 13:32. Be warned and be ready, but do not be led beyond clear Bible teaching.

"Father, thank you for the blessed hope of the glorious appearing of your Son and our Savior. How the thought of His return quickens our hearts with joy and anticipation. Keep us from such thought of personal advantage in His coming that we forget to be busy in His service until He

appears. Keep us from the exaggerated claims of some who misunderstand or misinterpret. Enable us to keep our commitment clear, our hearts pure, and our hands busy in your service. For Jesus' sake. Amen. "

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS COMING

I was discussing the truth of the return of Jesus Christ to earth when my companion said, "What difference does it make, anyway? He will come when He will come and we cannot change it one way or another. Why should it be of concern to me today?" His attitude is typical of many others. The question is worth consideration. What influence does the return of Jesus have upon the way we live day by day? I say it has great significance upon our lives.

To believers in Jesus Christ, the return of the Lord will be the time they leave the world. Those who have died will be raised in new and glorified bodies; those who are alive will be changed into new and glorified bodies (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:12-38). Each will be caught up with all the others to meet the Lord in the air and will remain with Him forever thereafter.

To those who do not believe in Jesus Christ, the return of the Lord will be a time of great distress and dismay. The unsaved dead are not raised when the saints of God are resurrected. The unsaved living are not caught up to meet the Lord in the air, but are left to live upon the earth. Instead of meeting Jesus in peace, they will experience the great tribulation on the earth. Their hope of salvation will be gone. They will be left to the fearful consequence of their sin and rejection of God's salvation in Jesus Christ.

But let us speak more in detail concerning the saints of God. The fact that Jesus is certainly coming to earth influences the lifestyle of those who trust Him. How are the saints to live as they await His coming?

We will be patient as we wait for Jesus to return.

Like the farmer who plants the seed, cultivates the soil, and waits for the harvest (James 5:7, 8), so we will work with patience until Jesus comes. Even if trials come, we will continue to be patient. We believe that *"if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him"* I Timothy 2:12, so we will continue to bear the load without complaint nor regret as we wait for the appearing of Jesus Christ. Our waiting will not be with a spirit of helpless resignation, but in a spirit of glad expectation. We have the promise of God upon which we base our hope, and that hope is like an anchor of the soul which is set in the presence of God Himself (Hebrews 6:18, 19). We will be patient in all circumstances as we wait for the coming of the Lord.

We will be pure as we wait for Jesus to return.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world,, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" Titus 2:11-14.

We will be as we have become. God has "washed, sanctified, justified" us in salvation (I Corinthians 6:11). That is the lifestyle we will live,

Purity is encouraged by the fact that we will lose this world, when Jesus returns. He has commanded us, *"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" IJohn 2:15-17. "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" II Peter 3: 10, 11. Why should we follow the lifestyle of the world when we know it is doomed to pass away?

Purity is encouraged by the fact that we will face judgment. *"therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" ICorinthians 4:5. "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" ICorinthians :13-15. We will be pure because we will see Jesus. Paul's prayer for the believers in Thessalonica is appropriate for us today: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" IThessalonians 5:23. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" I John 3:3.*

We will be watchful as we wait for Jesus to return.

To watch for the coming of our Lord does not mean we will go about looking up into the air. It means that we will be diligent in service, faithful in commitment, and expectant in spirit day after day. Jesus himself admonishes us, *"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" Matthew 24:42, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" Matthew 25:13.*

We will watch in love as one of those who *"love His appearing" II Timothy 4:8. We will watch in hope knowing that all the promises of Scripture regarding His return were written for our instruction "that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" Romans 15:4. We will watch with concern lest any of our friends, acquaintances, or loved ones should be unprepared to meet Him when He returns. Yes, we will watch and wait until Jesus comes.*

We will be faithful as we wait for Jesus to return.

The Lord Himself warned us about a servant who was left with a solemn trust during the absence of his master. For a while the servant was faithful. But when the return of the master seemed delayed, he began to abuse his fellow servants and became a glutton and drunkard. The master of that servant came unexpectedly and gave him just rewards for his conduct (Matthew 24:45-51). It must not be so with us. On the contrary, we must be characterized by the spirit expressed in I John 2:28, *"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

One day the call will be issued, *"Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him" Matthew 25:6. Oh, be ready against that day. Be ready by. repentance from sin and personal faith in Jesus Christ as your own Savior.*

Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming soon. *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast,*

*unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord"*1 Corinthians 15:58.

"Father, we pray you will hasten the day of our Lord's return. How we want to meet Him whom, having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But on the other hand, we long that others might come to know Him in forgiveness of sins and be ready for His return. Use these studies to speak to hearts of men and women all around the world, and call them to faith in Jesus Christ, For Jesus' sake. Amen.