

Title: The Lord Is Coming!

#13

Text: I Thess. 4: 13-18

TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE JESUS CAME

Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house
 Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.
 Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care
 In hopes that Jesus would not come there.

The children were dressing to crawl into bed,
 Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.
 And Mom in her rocker with baby on her lap
 Was watching the Late Show while I took a nap.

When out of the East there arose such a clatter,
 I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter
 Away to the window I flew like a flash
 Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!

When what to my wondering eyes should appear
 But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here
 With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray
 I knew in a moment this must be THE DAY!

The light of His face made me cover my head
 It was Jesus ! returning just like He had said.
 And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth,
 I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.

In the Book of Life which He held in His hand,
 Was written the name of every saved man.
 He spoke not a word as He searched for my name;
 When He said "It's not here" my head hung in shame.

The people whose names had been written with love
 He gathered to take to His father above.
 With those who were ready He rose without a sound,
 While all the rest were left standing around.

I fell to my knees, but it was too late;
 I had waited too long and thus sealed my fate.
 I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight:
 Oh, if only I had been ready tonight.

In the words of this poem the meaning is clear;
 The coming of Jesus is drawing near.
 There's only one life and when comes the last call
 We'll find that the Bible was true after all

Today, I would like to share with you what the Bible says about the second coming of Jesus Christ. We are going to look at many passages of scripture. So, have your bibles handy. Let's begin with a Word of prayer.

(Prayer)

Take your Bibles, please, and turn to I Thess. Chapter 4. I Thess. Chapter 4 beginning with Vs 13. I would like to share with you four facts about the second coming of Jesus Christ. Four simple facts.

(1) Number one: the promise of his coming. I Thess. Chapter 4, verse 13.

(Read Vs. 13-18).

Now, notice that this teaching of the second coming of Christ is the only thing that will bring comfort to a person's heart who has suffered the lose of a loved one.

Did you notice that? It is the only thing that will answer a person's questions about the subject of death and life after death. Let me tell you, dear friends, there is comfort in knowing that the Lord, himself, will return to this earth.

Turn, please, to the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John chapter 14:1-3.

(Read Vs 1-3). Jesus clearly says: "I will come again." Dear friends, Jesus is coming again. The Bible promises it.

(2) Secondly, What about the time of his coming? Can we know? Are we near the time? I would like you to turn to Matthew chapter 24. The gospel of Matthew chapter 24 beginning with Vs. 36. The time of the coming of our Lord, are we near that time? Can we know? After all since the days of Peter and Paul all Christians have looked for the return of Christ. Is this the age? Is this the time?

Matthew chapter 24 verse 36- (Read 36-44).....

That is the best teaching in the Bible as to the time of the second coming of Christ.

WHAT IS THE ONE GREAT QUE? IT IS THE DAYS OF NOAH.....And I believe that the days of Noah were world wide in its impacked in that day just as much as it will be in the day preceding ^{Christ} his return. WHAT DO I MEAN BY THAT?

Well, in any given city...in any given town...at any given age in history, you can discovery the days of Noah. Do you understand?.....In one portion of the earth's surface there can be the days of Noah.....But, I believe the Bible's truth here is that the world will be like the days of Noah.....It will be world wide....And then the Lord will return.

Now, there are some important things in this passage that you need to know. ~~I will mention them in a moment. But, in general let me say that the~~ ^{First the} days of Noah will characterize the second coming of Jesus Christ. ~~I might~~ ^{That means} ~~be~~ that business ~~be~~ carry on as usually as is seen in this passage.... marriage, given in marriage, and so forth, eating and drinking....Some folks believe this is done in abundance of what we have. But, I think it means that life is going on as usuall....

But it is interesting that in the days of Noah, if you will look at the O.T. account, there were certain characteristics. Gen 6

For example...the earth was very corrupt....And the Lord saw the wickness of man was great and the thoughts of his heart was only evil. In other words, the whole ^{world} ~~society~~ was corrupt. And God looked for some people. And the Bible says that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And Noah and his wife and his three son's and their wives were the only ones to go into that Ark.....

You say, "Well, the population was small in those days." Oh No..... Conservative essitments put the population of the earth into the millions at the time of Noah.....

And yet, ^{only} 8 people went into that Ark...^{and were saved} ^{It was a corrupt world.}

(2) The Bible, also, says: that the earth was full of violence....Everywhere, Those were the days of Noah. So, shall it be at the second coming of the Son of man.....

So, if that characterizes that time, and we see what is happening in our world, today, certainly we are in the days of Noah. And His return could be very close. In fact, Jesus could come tonight.

(3)Now, the third thing that I want to share with you is the nature of His coming. What will actyurally happen? Let me give you two basic things.

(1) First of all, the Bible teaches that it will be a very sudden event. The second coming of Chri8st will be a sudden event. Turn to I Cor. chapter 15. I cor. chapter 15 and notice vereses 51 and 52....I Cor. 15:51-52.

Paul is speaking and we read: "Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep." The word "sleep" is the word for "death." Not everyone will die, in other words. "But, we shall all be changed." Both the dead and those alilve. "We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trupet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptable, and we shall be changed."

Now, Paul is speaking about the second coming of Christ. And notice He says that it will happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. As many of you already know, the blinking of an eye is the fastest human reaction known to man.

But, did you notice in Vs 52 the word "moment"? That is our english word "atom." Do you understand? In an atom...in a twinkling of an eye.....THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST WILL BE THAT SUDDEN. It will happen (snap your fingers) just laiike that.

(2)Now, the second thing about the nature of His coming is that it will be a very selective event. It will be a very selective event.

Now, I would like to share with you, here, a few principles about the two stages of the second coming of Christ. The second coming of Christ is divided into two parts separated by a perjiod of 7 years. And both parts are very selective. WHAT DO I MEAN?

The Bible teaches us that there is coming a day of judgement, a day of trubulation, a day of wrath. Sometimes called the time of Jacobs troubles. Sometimes called "THAT DAY" Or "THE LATTER TIMES" OR "THE LAST DAYS." But, a time is coming when there will be great tribulation on the earth, such as the world has never seen.

Now, praise God, we are not in that period yet. It is called the 70th week of Daniel, if you are interested in Bible prophecy from the book of Daniel. It will be a period of 7 years.

And the Bible goes into great detail as to what will happen in those 7 years. You can read about it in the book of Revelation. There will be tribulation on this earth such as this world has never seen. Vast segments of the population will be destroyed. There will be a series of plagues that will make the plagues of Egypt look like child's play. It will be a time of a fantastic display of the wrath of God against an ungodly rebellious people. People who have refused Jesus and rebelled against Him. A time of great judgement. That day is yet in the future

But, believed, I believe it could start tomorrow or at any moment. But, before, this 7 year period of tribulation begins, the first part of Christ second coming will take place.

The Bible teaches us in the passage that we read, ^{1st} I Thessalonians chapter 4, that Christ will come again. He will come from heaven with a shout. And in Vs 17 it says that we will ^{be caught up to} meet Him in the Air. He will not come to the earth. He will draw all of His people to himself. The church, the body of Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, all are one in Christ. And all will be gathered together unto Christ, ^{in the air} ~~in the air~~

~~Paul~~ ^{Paul} uses the word "caught up together"....which means to "siege violently by force"....The Lord will "siege violently," in a moment, all christians. Those who have died will proceed....The resurrection of the dead will happen first. And then immidiagely, we who are alive will be caught up and changed. And we will meet the Lord in the air.

Now, this part of the second coming of Christ is silent to the general world. OH, they will know that something has happened. The department of missing persons is going to have a busy day. For all Christians throughout this world will be missing all at once. A lot of people will not show up for work. And I suppose there will be a few accidents. Car's and airplanes suddenly without drivers or pilots. And you can picture the whole scene.

But, the general world will not see Jesus. This is the first part of Jesus' second coming. It is often referred to as THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH. The word "rapture" is the word translated "caught up together."

And this first stage, this rapture of the church., is a selective event...WHY?..Because it only involves "believers". The Bible teaches that only those who have received Christ by faith will be caught up to meet Christ in the air. They are the only ones. Born again believer.

And please remember that Jesus taught that many will profess, but not all will posses. This doesn't mean that all church members in American will be on there way to heaven at that point. Because there are many people who are church members, but they do not belong to the body of Christ because they have never established a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. They have never been born again by the Spirit of God.

And my friend, if you are here today and belong to some fine church, Well, God bless you, but it will not save you. The First Baptist church of Citrus Heights which I love will not save you in that day. The only thing that will save you is "Faith in Jesus Christ."

And notice when Christ comes for His church it will happen in a moment, an atom of time. And then it will be too late for you to decide to receive Christ. All those who reject him, now, who are faced with the opportunity to receive Christ, and any neglect, dear friends, is a rejection, those who fail to receive him and neglect Him, there will be no more Hope For Salvation, when the rapture takes place.

^{se} Now, that is the first part.. Only the church.. ^{True Believers} ~~The body of Christ~~ will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air.

But, there is a second part to the Second Coming. The Christians will go to heaven for 7 years. Then at the end of those 7 years of tremendous tribulation on earth, Christ will come again in POWER AND GREAT GLORY...WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

It means a public display... The Bible says that all His Holy angels will be with Him. That is going to be a tremendous sight...THINK ABOUT IT... The Bible says that the number of angels are 10 thousand upon 10 thousand. And Jesus is going to come to this earth with all His Holy Angels...WOW!!

And, also, He will return with all the Christians who have been with Him for these 7 years of tribulation. WE are going to come back to this earth with Jesus.....WOW!! ISN'T THAT GREAT?

Now, this event is the second part of the Second Coming of Christ. It is called the REVELATION OF CHRIST'S RETURN. Revelation because Jesus will be on public display. The Bible says that every eye in the whole world will see Him. And the whole world will look upon Him whom they have pierced. The world will see His wounds. The nail prints in his hands and feet. And the wound in His side. And there will be no doubt. And all the nations of the world ^{The Bible says} will mourn after Him. For they will see Him come in POWER AND GLORY.

And, dear friends, that event, at the end of the tribulation period, will, also, be selective...The Bible tells us in the Book of Revelation chapter 7 that two groups of people will be saved during this tribulation period.

First, the Bible says that 144,000 ~~Jews~~ ^{Jews} will be saved. 12,000 from each tribe. They will be saved. And they will be the great evangelist during this ^{Tribulation} period. And a second group will be saved. This second group will come out-off every tongue and nation and people. A multitude of Gentiles will be saved during the tribulation period....PRAISE GOD!!

So, the two aspects of the whole second coming of Christ will be very selective. And that is so sad. Dear friends, I wish and pray that everyone would be saved. But, the Bible teaches that only those who have received Jesus by faith will be saved.

(4)Now, fourth, what is the importance of the second coming of Christ to us?

The importance of His coming. Well, I believe I have already indicated the importance of his coming to the unbeliever. But, let me make it very clear. If you are hearing the Gospel, today, you are responsible for what you are hearing. There will be no excuse for you, if Jesus should come. It will be too late. It will happen to quickly. You will not have a moment of time in which to decide for Jesus Christ. Therefore, it becomes imperative that you believe and receive Jesus as your Lord and savior, right now. If you have never ask Jesus to come into your life, then do so, right now.

You say, "Well, I want to think about this." Oh, my friend, we keep giving all these excesses. But, I hope and pray that God will give you another opportunity before he comes again. But, we don't know if he will. Today maybe the day He comes.

(2) But, also, the bible teaches that the coming of Jesus has tremendous importance to the believer. Let me throw a few principles your way.

(1) Number one: the second coming will be a time of the resurrection of the body. And the removal of all sorrow, sickness and pain. Hay! Let me tell you. It is going to be a wonderful day for a lot of people. Our bodies are going to be changed. No more sickness or decease or pain. WOW!

(2) His coming is so important because it will mean the reality of eternal life.

Now, I believe in the truth of eternal life. I believe that because of faith in Jesus I have eternal life, right now. But, oh, the truth of that reality when Jesus comes again. Eternal life forever with the Lord.

(3) And third, God uses the fact of His coming as a motive for believers to witness. The Bible tells us to watch and be ready. To be involved in the work of ministry. To live as Children of the day, not as children of the night.

We talk about His coming. We say we believe in his coming. But, if every one of us believed that Jesus was coming today, we would be changed. If somehow we knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus was coming at 3:00 this afternoon, I know what we would be doing. We would take Paul's words seriously. We would examine ourselves and we would make sure we were personally related to God through Jesus Christ. We would be on the phone calling our friends and neighbors and witnessing to them. Inviting them to come to Christ and his church.

(4) And , then, there is one final thing that I would like to share with you. It is found in I John. Turn to I John chapter 3. I John chapter 3 verses 1 and 2.

(Read I John 3:1-2)

Dear friends, doesn't that bring hope to ;your life? "We shall see Him as He is." I would break m y neck to come to this church, if I knew that Jesus would stand in this pulpit and speak to us. But, think of the excitement which will be ours when we get the first physical sight of Jesus with our own eyes. WE SHALL SEE HIM.

Now, look at Vs 3: “And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”

The importance of the second coming of Christ and believing it, according to John, is that we will be different people. We will purify ourselves. We shall cleanse ourselves.

Now, who is John talking to? CHRISTIANS. Those of us who say we believe in Christ. And we say He is coming again. It says if we really have this hope in us we will purify ourselves, even as he is pure. We will walk as Jesus walked. We will love as Jesus loved. We will let the life of Christ control us. We will be different people. Different from the people who do not know Jesus.

Dear friends, if we believe in the second coming of Jesus, it will transform our lives.

Let's close in prayer