

The Lord will Come

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1 Thessalonians

4:13 But we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve like other people who have no hope.

4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so through Jesus God will bring those who have died with him.

4:15 For we declare to you what the Lord has told us to say: We who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who have died.

4:16 With a shout of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of God's trumpet, the Lord himself will come down from heaven, and the dead who belong to the Messiah will rise first.

4:17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

4:18 So then, encourage one another with these words.

[International Standard Version]

Let us look again at the line near the end of the verses we just read, "We will be with the Lord forever." How wonderful! We will be with the Lord forever in just a little while. Jesus may even come today before lunch time! We don't know when it will be. But, he will absolutely come.

Certainly, he will never come at the time we expect. However, we know that he will come at the best time. Indeed, this present time we are living in might be the dark night of world history and we are walking toward the darkest hour of midnight. As we look at newspapers and TV news every day, we see how troubled this world is.

The world is turning its face from the Lord blatantly and people are becoming more and more indifferent to the words of the Lord God. We can clearly see this world sinking down into the power of darkness like a thick black cloud. The next remarkable event in history will be what the Bible calls the day of the Lord.

Jesus will come back on a cloud to draw each believer near to him and see them in the air. This is what will happen on the very day. How does the

Bible explain this great event that will come in the future? As we just read;

1 Thessalonians

4:17 And so we will be with the Lord forever.

4:18 So then, encourage one another with these words.

These verses clearly explain three things. Firstly, Jesus himself will come down from heaven again. Secondly, the dead who belong to the Messiah will rise.

Thirdly, then those who were saved by the grace of the Lord and are still alive will be transformed and will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord Jesus together with all resurrected believers of the Lord.

It is beyond our imagination but it is absolutely true as it is stated in the Bible. Jesus will come again. This day will absolutely come, just like the day of Ascension of Jesus did. It is a fact and historical truth.

Jesus will appear suddenly just like the time he vanished in front of his disciples on that day. The Advent is not only the day Jesus appears in front of his believers, but it is the day believers will show up in front of Jesus.

On that day, those who sincerely believed in him, that is to say, those who had an organic connection with Jesus will be identified. It will be shown whether we have been merely chanting the name of the Lord or we have truly received the grace of Jesus and obtained the eternal life.

Jesus stays near. Jesus will come before long. These words were conveyed from mouth to mouth among the people of the early church. It continually encouraged the witnesses of those days who were under severe persecution and they were even willing to sacrifice their own lives.

Were they deceived? Or, were they waiting for something that would never come? When Jesus said, "I will come again. But, it is my father who would decide when and where," this declaration formed the foundation of our lively faith and the second coming of Jesus was clearly presented as a fact in front of our eyes. That is to say, we can live hoping that he may even come today.

Jesus wants us to devote ourselves every day to relying on a hope that this might be the day. It indeed can be today. The expectation for the Advent of Jesus had at no time been more vivid than in the days of the early church. There has never been an era in which the voice of Jesus sounded more cheerful and stronger than in those days.

All those who are waiting eagerly for the coming of Jesus need to begin to work for the mission of the Lord as soon as possible. Their mission is to go out into the entire world to proclaim the gospel to all of creation that Jesus will come. Jesus is not merely the foundation of our faith, but he is also the foundation of our hope. Let us discuss this through eight questions.

First, where is the sacred hope for those who belong to Jesus?

Titus

2:13 as we wait for the blessed hope and glorious appearance of our great God and Savior, Jesus the Messiah.

Hebrews

9:28 so the Messiah was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people. And he will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to bring salvation to those who eagerly wait for him.

That is to say, the hope of those who belong to Jesus lies in his second coming.

Second, by whom was this hope explained to us in the Bible?

Mark

13:26 Then people will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory.

Here, Jesus explained his second coming in his own words, cited from the Old Testament.

Matthew

25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels are with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.

John

14:2 There are many rooms in my Father's house. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going away to prepare a place for you?
14:3 And if I am going away to prepare a place for you, I will come back again and welcome you into my presence, so that you may be where I am.

This is an unimaginably wonderful promise. In these verses, Jesus stated it in his own words. This promise was made by him while he lived in this world. And now, Jesus himself conveys the same promise from heaven.

Revelation

22:7 "See! I am coming soon! How blessed is the person who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book!"

22:8 I, John, heard and saw these things. When I

had heard and seen them, I bowed down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing me these things.

22:9 But he told me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you, your brothers the prophets, and those who keep the words in this book. Worship God!"

22:10 Then he told me, "Don't seal up the words of the prophecy in this book, because the time is near.

22:11 Let the one who does what is evil continue to do what is evil. Let the filthy person continue to be filthy. Let the righteous person continue to do what is right. And let the holy person continue to be holy."

22:12 "See! I am coming soon! My reward is with me to repay everyone according to his action.

Now, let us read what the two angels said;

Acts

1:11 They asked, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you saw him go up into heaven."

Now, why don't we look at what Peter, John, James and Jude said about this hope? Let us begin with Peter.

1 Peter

1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep a clear head, and set your hope completely on the grace to be given you when Jesus, the Messiah, is revealed.

Not only Peter, but John too said something similar.

1 John

2:28 Even now, little children, abide in him. Then, when he appears, we will have confidence and will not turn away from him in shame when he comes.

James also wrote;

James

5:8 You, too, must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, because the coming of the Lord is near.

After all, all apostles had an expectation and conviction that it would happen in just a little while.

Jude

1:14 Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied about these people when he said, "Look! The Lord has come with countless thousands of his holy ones."

Thirdly, how do we realize that the day of his Advent

is coming? It is stated in the Bible that, as the day of Jesus' second coming nears, fears of the wars to come will spread among nations and people will faint from apprehension. The state of the world today is exactly as described in this part of the Bible, isn't it? There are so many so-called believers, who look faithful outwardly, but are actually superficial and have no conviction or joy of salvation.

Fourthly, what does the nearing day of the second coming of Jesus tell non-believers?

Matthew

24:40 At that time two people will be in the field. One will be taken, and one will be left behind.

24:41 Two women will be grinding grain at the mill. One will be taken, and one will be left behind.

The Bible is telling us that non-believers, those who do not belong to Jesus, will be left behind. There are some other verses.

2 Thessalonians

1:7 and to give us who are afflicted relief when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels

1:8 in blazing fire. He will take revenge on those who do not know God and on those who refuse to obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

1:9 Such people will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction by being separated from the Lord's presence and from his glorious power.

As the fifth question, what does the fact that the day of the second coming of Jesus is near mean to saved people?

1 John

3:3 And everyone who has this hope based on him keeps himself pure, just as the Messiah is pure.

Not only John, but Peter also wrote something similar;

2 Peter

3:14 So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to have the Lord find you at peace and without spot or fault.

Peter sent these words to the believers of those days.

1 John

2:28 Even now, little children, abide in him. Then, when he appears, we will have confidence and will not turn away from him in shame when he comes.

John encouraged the believers of his time with these

words.

Philippians

3:20 Our citizenship, however, is in heaven, and it is from there that we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus, the Messiah.

"We eagerly wait." We too need to maintain this attitude, don't we?

1 Peter

1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep a clear head, and set your hope completely on the grace to be given you when Jesus, the Messiah, is revealed.

This is not just a suggestion to us, but a clear demand.

1:14 As obedient children, do not be shaped by the desires that used to influence you when you were ignorant.

1:15 Instead, be holy in every aspect of your life, just as the one who called you is holy.

Paul wrote to the brothers and sisters in Corinth;

2 Corinthians

6:14 Stop becoming unevenly yoked with unbelievers. What partnership can righteousness have with lawlessness? What fellowship can light have with darkness?

6:15 What harmony exists between the Messiah and Beliar, or what do a believer and an unbeliever have in common?

6:16 What agreement can a temple of God make with idols? For we are the temple of the living God.

In the last chapter of the Revelation, there is this verse; "See! I am coming soon! My reward is with me to repay everyone according to his action."

Paul also wrote to the brothers and sisters in the town called Thessalonik.

1 Thessalonians

2:19 After all, who is our hope, joy, or reason for rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming? It is you, isn't it?

From these verses, how the believers will be on the day to come can be summarized as follows: They will stay clean, have perfect peace of mind, remain in Christ and eagerly wait for the Lord Jesus. They will behave well, refuse to give in to their lust and seek holiness. Furthermore, believers and unbelievers have nothing in common. Unfaithful people will have to face their punishment, while believers will have hope and reason for rejoicing in Jesus, according to the Scripture.

Sixth question. How does the Bible depict this historical fact, which is the realization of our hope? The answer can be found in these verses;

1 Corinthians

15:20 But at this moment the Messiah stands risen from the dead, the first one offered in the harvest of those who have died.

15:21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also came through a man.

15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in the Messiah will all be made alive.

15:23 However, this will happen to each person in the proper order: first the Messiah, then those who belong to the Messiah when he comes.

1 Thessalonians

4:16 With a shout of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of God's trumpet, the Lord himself will come down from heaven, and the dead who belong to the Messiah will rise first.

4:17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

As the seventh question, who will become one with Jesus in the cloud at the time of his second coming? It is clearly stated in the verses we just read, it will be "the dead who belong to the Messiah" and then, "we who are alive and remain." And so we will be with the Lord forever."

1 Corinthians

15:23 However, this will happen to each person in the proper order: first the Messiah, then those who belong to the Messiah when he comes.

We can see from these two parts that it is those who died in Christ and those who belong to Christ who will be allowed to see the Lord. In these verses, two churches are described, the church in Thessalonik and the church in Corinth.

It can be seen from the Bible that the church in Thessalonik was very ideal and well-accepted, while the church in Corinth was problematic. However, still believers in either church will be taken up to heaven. The word 'we' in these two parts apparently refers to all believers and it is proof of this fact.

Elders of churches and new believers may seem quite different from each other in many aspects, but they both will be taken up by the Lord Jesus. The believers in Corinth will surely be raised to heaven just like the believers in Thessalonik. Likewise, we who gather in each assembly and belong to the Lord Jesus will absolutely be taken up to heaven.

The last and eighth question. What will the Advent of the Lord mean to each believer? John has answered this question.

1 John

3:2 Dear friends, we are now God's children, but what we will be like has not been revealed yet. We know that when the Messiah is revealed, we will be like him, because we will see him as he is.

Colossians

3:4 When the Messiah, who is your life, is revealed, then you, too, will be revealed with him in glory.

Peter wrote similar things;

1 Peter

5:1 Therefore, as a fellow elder, a witness of the Messiah's sufferings, and one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I appeal to the elders among you:

Peter could confidently call himself 'the one who shares in the glory to be revealed.'

1 Corinthians

15:49 Just as we have borne the likeness of the man who was made from dust, we will also bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

15:53 For what is decaying must be clothed with what cannot decay, and what is dying must be clothed with what cannot die.

15:54 Now, when what is decaying is clothed with what cannot decay, and what is dying is clothed with what cannot die, then the written word will be fulfilled: "Death has been swallowed up by victory!"

Philippians

3:20 Our citizenship, however, is in heaven, and it is from there that we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus, the Messiah.

3:21 He will change our unassuming bodies and make them like his glorious body through the power that enables him to bring everything under his authority.

Paul explained the same fact;

Romans

8:23 However, not only the creation, but we who have the first fruits of the Spirit also groan inwardly as we eagerly await our adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Paul did not write much about himself except in the Second Epistle to Corinthians, in which he mentioned a lot;

2 Corinthians

5:2 For in this one we sigh, since we long to put on our heavenly dwelling.

5:3 Of course, if we do put it on, we will not be found without a body.

5:4 So while we are still in this tent...,

which refers to our body, our physical existence,

5.4 ...we sigh under our burdens, because we do not want to put it off but to put it on, so that our dying bodies may be swallowed up by life.

Furthermore, Revelation, the last book of the Bible explains a lot of things that will happen in the future.

Revelation

5:10 You made them a kingdom and priests for our God, and they will reign on the earth.

3:21 To the one who conquers I will give a place to sit with me on my throne, just as I have conquered and have sat down with my Father on his throne.

20:6 How blessed and holy are those who participate in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them. They will be priests of God and the Messiah, and will rule with him for a thousand years.

Each one of the saved will be transformed into the image of the Christ. They will share the glory of Jesus and eventually will belong to heaven. They will be raised never to decay, never to die. Each believer will be made like his glorious body. They will be accepted as his children and their bodies will be redeemed. Moreover, they will be given a house in heaven, accepted as citizens of the kingdom and will reign the world as they sit with Christ. If the hearts of believers face toward the direction of the Lord Jesus alone, they will be richly rewarded.

Finally, let us take a close look at one character who appears in the Old Testament.

Genesis

5:24 (Enoch lived) communing with God—and then he was there no more, because God had taken him.

He went straight up to heaven without seeing death. Let me read some other verses regarding Enoch.

Hebrews

11:5 By faith Enoch was taken away without experiencing death. He could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he won approval as one who pleased God.

11:6 Now without faith it is impossible to please God.

Jude

1:14 Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied about these people when he said, "Look! The Lord has come with countless thousands of his holy ones."

Don't we want to have the same experience as Enoch? Our desperate desire should be "Jesus, please come." If we want to be like Enoch, we need to have the same intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus that Enoch had. It is written that Enoch lived communing with God.

It is wrong for us to consider the Rapture, in which those who belong to Jesus will be raised from the earth to meet him as one of the many historical events that will occur anyway. If we intend to live like Enoch and to reach the path he walked, we need to walk every day in the presence of the Lord and liberate ourselves from all mundane concerns of life.

We need to be released from such concerns internally by the work of the cross and we need to be transformed to heavenly things. We have to try every day to lessen our dependence on worldly things and rely more on someone who will take us up to heaven.

If we do, then on the day the Lord shows himself to us, we will not have to be surprised or dismayed. The Advent of Jesus will never bring a horrible revolution into this world. Actually, we need to be part of the revolution. I trust that we all will be allowed to walk into where Jesus resides. Because we have been walking toward that direction throughout our lives. Peter also wrote;

1 Peter

2:11 Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and exiles to keep on abstaining from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul.

In this world, we are all travelers and foreigners. As worldly things are left farther behind, heavenly things will become closer and more familiar. The way to the Rapture is the way of faith. According to the Bible, through faith alone Enoch was delivered to heaven without seeing death.

Faith is based on something obscure or even totally invisible. Faith does not depend on what eyes can see. In our lives, we always face so many ordeals and agonies which we cannot understand. Why does the Lord lead us that way? There are some important factors we need to understand.

No matter what happens to our lives, we should not become perturbed, but should maintain our faith

firmly. As I just mentioned, the ultimate purpose of our life of faith is the Rapture, in which we are raised to heaven and we meet Jesus. All pain and suffering we face but cannot understand today will be clearly explained there. The Lord will come soon. We hear what they say, "Be prepared and have no regrets," but we know that Jesus is standing behind the door and we are all convinced of that. Let us finish today with these verses;

Romans

13:11 This is necessary because you know the times—it's already time for you to wake up from sleep, because our salvation is nearer now than when we became believers.

13:12 The night is almost over, and the day is near. Let's therefore put aside the actions of darkness and put on the armor of light.

13:13 Let's behave decently, as people who live in the light of day. No wild parties, drunkenness, sexual immorality, promiscuity, quarreling, or jealousy!

13:14 Instead, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, and do not obey your flesh and its desires.

End