

## **EXPECTING THE LORD'S RETURN 2**

### **1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:6**

Are you ready and prepared for the soon Coming of Jesus Christ? In writing to the saints of God at Thessalonica, Paul speaks of “an event”, on the calendar of God, that may very well happen in our lifetime, namely the rapture, or the “catching away” of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only is:

- **THE LORD'S RETURN....A PROMISE FROM GOD'S WORD.**
- **THE LORD'S RETURN....UNREVEALED TO MAN.**
- **THE LORD'S RETURN....A LIGHTNING QUICK EVENT.**
- **THE LORD'S COMING....AN UNEXPECTED EVENT.**

**1. THE LORD'S COMING...ANNOUNCED BY GOD'S SERVANTS.** While Scripture never does reveal the day and hour when Christ will come, the Father does give us some clues. First, when godly preacher after godly preacher begins to proclaim the Coming of Christ...the Father is preparing His church for departure. Noah's time was a prime example. While no one knew exactly what day or hour the flood came, God gave the people of that time His servant to proclaim His truth. Did proclaiming His truth lead to more being saved? No! Did proclaiming His truth turn the world around? The evidence of Scripture is...No! Since there was no one added to the ship other than Noah's own family, why did Noah preach for 120 years. For the simple reason that God will never do anything without announcing it in plenty of time, prior to the happening. Consider some events that were announced.

The destruction was announced by God's servant...and it happened precisely as God decreed.

The captivity of the nation of Israel was announced by God's servants...and it happened. (approx. 587 BC)

The destruction of Jerusalem was prophesied by Jesus...and it happened. (approx. 70 AD)

*Matthew 24:2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

The rebirth of Israel was announced...and it happened in 1948. Time and time again, God's servants have been used of the Father to proclaim upcoming events...why? Because that is simply part of their God given calling.

It is the Father that lays on the hearts of His servant “His message”. God makes it clear in *Amos 3:7* “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” God did not destroy the world the first time before revealing it to His servant Noah, and God will not take the church home without speaking through His servant, His preachers, His teachers. For the Father will NEVER DO ANYTHING without revealing His plans to His servants. Will the preaching regarding the rapture “change hearts”. Only the Father knows. But the sobering truth is this...He had decreed it...and decreed it to be preached by His servants. Since it is on the “calendar of God”, He will initiate more and more of His servants to preach this blessed event...preparing His church for departure.

**2. THE LORD'S COMING...AN UNBELIEVED EVENT.**

*Luke 17:26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. One of the sobering realities of the flood is the overwhelming reality of “unbelief” in the midst of God’s servant preaching for 120 years. Imagine how many times Noah must have warned the people, proclaimed the flood to God’s creation, not to mention the huge massive ship that was standing before their eyes...all to no avail and unbelief.* The sobering and saddening reality will be that the Coming of Christ for the church will catch the world in “complete disbelief”. The moment that the church is gone...will be the moment that many will develop “scientific reasonings”, all because of their unbelief.

Yet the saddest reality of the rapture is that many of our friends and family who don’t know the Lord...will not be going. No preacher will remain to preach the gospel. No Christian will remain to sing the gospel! No message will be preached to preach the precious blood of Jesus Christ...for the redeemed are “caught up”.

Those in Noah’s time watched in amazement to see the world changed in one day’s time...and their lives washed away. Those alive at the “rapture of the church” will find the entire world to change in a “moment...in the twinkling of an eye”.

Sadly, many believers who claim to know Christ “do not believe” it. The reality is...if we really believe that Jesus could come at any moment... we would guard our lives, guard our behavior, forgive those that have offended us and yearn to affect the world with the gospel of Christ more and more.

Yet, sadly that is not the case in the lives of “some” who name Jesus as their Lord and Savior. All too many who name the very name of Christ, hinder and hamper His kingdom’s work, by attitudes inconsistent with the nature of Christ and hearts that are insensitive to the very proclamation of Jesus Christ, and getting the gospel to the ends of the world.

Yet, the sobering reality in that day will reveal many who claimed to be His...to be left behind...all because of a “head knowledge and not a “heart relationship”. Jesus Himself declares in *Matthew 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* If a “believer” can claim to have a relationship with the Father, yet not be interested in seeing another person saved, seeing the gospel proclaimed to the ends of the earth to advance the Kingdom of God, then they are in jeopardy with God at the very heart of their relationship, if there is a relationship at all.

3. **THE LORD’S COMING...A MOCKED EVENT.** *2 Peter 3:4 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.* In the very heart of Peter, the precious changed apostle of Christ, he made it clear better than 2000, that there would be “those” that raised the question, and would “mock” the reality of His Coming.

The reality of human nature has not changed. Since the very beginning of time, man has walked away from God, and man will continually walk away from Christ “mocking” those that believe in Christ coming and “mocking” at those who cling to the wonderful truth of the “Rapture of the church”. Yet, that is precisely what took place in Noah’s time. In man’s foolish, flawed, fallen nature, he scoffed at the “promise” of God to destroy the world, and mankind will “scoff” at the Coming of Christ. However, all the scoffing did not prevent the “flood” in Noah’s time, and all of man’s scoffing will not prevent the soon Coming of Christ to “rapture” His church.

4. **THE LORD’S COMING....A CALL TO REORIENT OUR LIVES TO GOD.** Since God make it clear that He is going to come “like a thief in the night”, what ought our lives to be like,

and how should we then live. First, the Father calls us to “watch”. Literally speaking, the Father calls each of us to live “with our eyes to the skies”. Sadly, so many countless thousands of believers treat the “rapture” as a “sleeping event” that is not going to take place for hundreds and hundreds of years, but nothing is further from the truth. In the sight of

God, “The Rapture” is a real event, an event that should alert us with each passing day to this reality...today could be our last day on planet earth. If today were your last day on earth and the rapture were today how would you respond to these questions?

- 1) Would you be pleased at the way you have lived your earthly life?
- 2) Would be anxious for the Lord to reward you for the way that You have shown a life of faithfulness or would you be embarrassed?
- 3) Would you be pleased in “your investments” during this one earthly life, or would you be ashamed?
- 4) Would you be found “faithful” or found “lazy” in what the Lord has called you to do?
- 5) Would the Father be honored by your financial investments or would He find you investing in “this earth” with the reality that if the Lord come today, you will leave it all behind.

**THE LORD’S COMING...A CALL TO BEAR WITNESS.** *John 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.* Since the Lord Jesus could very well come at any hour, the call of the Father is to bear witness to the His goodness, grace and salvation.

As a lost world looks in on your life...what do they find? Do they find you loving them? Do they find you being kind to them? Do they find you sensitive to them? Part of the way the apostle Paul declared the gospel of Christ was through first befriending “those without Christ”. “Bearing witness” is not necessarily memorizing a massive number of Scriptures, but becoming sensitive to “God-ordained opportunities” to share “The Hope” that is within you.

Because NO ONE seeks after God, whenever a person ask you spiritual questions...THAT IS GOD AT WORK IN THEIR LIFE. Their question may be, “Where do you go to church?” “Do you believe in heaven?” “Do you believe there is life after death?” A wise Christian, not only is appreciative of God’s salvation, but has a heart that others know. Does the Father find you bearing witness or keeping quiet about His grace? Does the Father find you concerned about a world that is lost, that doesn’t know their right hand from their left, or does He find you indifferent? Jesus makes it clear that there is coming a time when *“the night cometh, when no man can work*