

**** JANUARY 2015 **** JANUARY 2015 **** JANUARY 2015 ****

PREPARING FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD

SETTING THE SCENE

The Table of the Lord

“For as often as you eat the bread and drink the cup [partaking of the Lord’s Table] you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes” 1 Cor.11:26. The Lord’s Table must be celebrated as it is an essential part of getting us ready for the coming of Jesus.

We are looking for His coming. The Lord’s Table is preparation for the coming, bringing into our consciousness all the time that Jesus is coming! Each time we break bread we are one step closer to the Coming of the Lord

The manifestation of the sons

“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God” Rom.8:19. The creation is not waiting for the Lord to come but for the manifestation of sons. Sons need to manifest, that is, to come forth in maturity, to prepare the creation for the coming of the Lord.

Paul instructs that there are sufferings of growing up in Christ which are inevitable in order for us to experience the glory (**Rom.8:18**). We are coming closer to the full revelation of the glory. The ‘King tide’ is coming, that is, the knowledge of the glory of YAHWEH will cover the earth (**Hab.2:14**). The glory is to be revealed in you and me!

Creation has hope

All the animals have hope, crying out for restoration; crying out for something better (**Rom.8:20**). Creation is looking to be delivered from bondage to death and corruption and to come into the glorious liberty of children of God (**Rom.8:21**).

Birth pangs

“The whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now” Rom.8:22.

It is interesting to look at **Acts 2:24** and see that the Scripture says of Jesus *“Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death”*. But this word *“pains”* actually means *“pangs of child birth”*. Jesus did not suffer during the three days His body was in the grave. He was doing many awesome things in the Spirit – see **1Peter**

3:18-20. Jesus was not dead but He was alive in Spirit; He was not suffering “pains” of death, but He was experiencing “birth pangs”, bringing forth a new creation.

We are suffering, to become like Jesus; *“We also who have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves” (Rom.8:23)*. We want to stop being a worm and come out as a butterfly. There is a groaning and the desire and the hope for something better. We have the firstfruits of the Spirit. We want the “adoption” – the redemption of the body. We cry, *“I want a new body, I want to be free of this old tent, I want something better”*

The hope

We were saved in this hope, that is, of being fully adopted as a son, being clothed in a new body (**Rom.8:24**). That is why baptism is so important! We begin to put on the new resurrection body from the day of our baptism. This hope is not seen: we do not see people walking around in immortal bodies yet

We eagerly wait for this hope to be fulfilled *“with perseverance [patience/longsuffering]” (v.25)*. The Holy Spirit will help us. He does this by making intercessions for us and in us. We cooperate with Him. Holy Spirit is wanting to help us prepare for the coming (**v.26**).

The intercession

This intercession is happening in our hearts by the Spirit. The Spirit helps us to persevere in the hope of this new body, the adoption. (**v.27**)

As we cooperate with the Spirit and give ourselves to intercession, adverse circumstances start to turn around and be at peace with us. God turns things for good, for His purpose; the will of God will come to pass, as it is good (**v.28**). Through the intercessions of the Spirit *“all things work together for good”*.

What is the purpose?

The purpose is that we all be conformed *“to the image of His Son” (v.29)*. Jesus is not coming to perfect us; He is coming when we have been perfected! [see **Heb.6:1-3 & Eph.4:11-13**].

When we are in the image of the Son, He will come!

God has prepared everything: He foreknew us; He predestined us; He called us; He justified us; He has glorified us! Everything has been prepared for His coming.

Many sons to glory

The Lord will come when there are many sons walking in the glory. Jesus will bring many sons to glory because He suffered and was made perfect (**Heb.2:10**). He will not do this **when He returns, but He will bring many sons to glory in preparation for His coming!**

THE WORD “COMING”

“coming” – Strongs Concordance # 3952 – Gk “**parousia**”, a being near

1Cor.15:23 word wealth, Spirit filled Life Bible.

“Parousia”: *technical term signifying second coming/advent of Jesus.*

Originally an official term of a visit by a person of high rank, especially a king.

It was an arrival that included a permanent presence from that coming onward.

The glorified Messiah’s arrival will be followed by a permanent residence with and in His glorified people.

The ‘rapture’ doctrine ignores the meaning of this important word *parousia*. Rapture doctrine preaches a catching up to go to heaven. The preaching of the coming, prepares the church to receive our King. Everything is being done to prepare for his coming.

There are four uses of word “**coming**”, **parousia**, not referring to the coming of the Lord. The following Scriptures show us that when the word ‘parousia’ is used, referring to someone coming, it is much more meaningful than simply someone coming or going.

- I. ***“I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours” 1 Cor.16:17-18a.*** When these brothers came, they stayed with Paul and they brought something good to Paul – they refreshed Paul’s spirit and the Corinthians;
 - by their coming they supplied what was lacking;
- II. ***“Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so I rejoiced even more” 2Cor.7:6-7.*** [Notice ‘coming’ is used twice in this passage].

God comforted the brethren by the coming of Titus;

His 'parousia' brought comfort;

When 'parousia' is used, rewards come.

Titus imparted zeal, mourning and desire by his "coming"

III. ***"That your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again" Phil.1:26.***

Paul was going to have a 'parousia' in Philippi

His coming was going to cause the Philippians to rejoice abundantly in Jesus Christ.

These references help us understand the coming of the Lord.

❖ there was rejoicing, blessings, rewards, people built up

❖ when Jesus comes there will much to receive

❖ when Jesus comes, He will stay with us.

PETER TALKS OF THE COMING

"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of His majesty" 2 Pet.1:16'.

Peter while still on the earth as an apostle said he was an eyewitness of the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter saw the coming nearly two thousand years ago. It was when he was on the holy mountain in **Matthew 17:1-5**. Peter says that his experience of the transfiguration of Jesus was an experience of the coming. He saw Moses and Elijah in glorified bodies with Jesus. Peter survived seeing that coming and for rest of his life he tried to get people ready for the coming.

In **2 Peter 1:5-7** Peter tells us that there are seven essential things that we must add to our faith, and in **verses 8, 9, 10, 12 and 15**, he refers to **"these things"** five more times. What are these things? i) virtue ii) knowledge iii) self-control iv) perseverance v) godliness vi) brotherly kindness vii) love.

If Peter saw the coming, and Holy Scripture says he did, what do we learn about the coming? It is not so much about a chronological event as a revelation of the glory. ***"We shall see Him as He is" 1Jn.3:2c.***

WHAT IS THE SIGN OF THE COMING AND THE END OF THE AGE?

The disciples asked Jesus three questions: *“Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age”* Matt.24:3. Remember when you are reading Matthew 24, Jesus is answering the three questions.

He said, *“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be”*v.27. The coming of the Lord will be very hard to miss it; it will be known from east to west!

In **Matthew 24:30**, the word ‘parousia’ does not appear. The word simply means coming or going.

Jesus refers to His ‘parousia’ in **verse 37** and **39**. In this passage He says that His coming will be as in the days of Noah. In the days of Noah the flood took away the wicked/unbelievers. Jesus said this will happen again at His coming. The wicked will be taken away at the coming.

THE HOPE OF THE COMING

Believers being prepared for the coming

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming” **1 Thess.2:19**. Paul says, it is the believers at the **coming** of the Lord that will be his joy. We need to prepare the brethren for the coming. The joy of a minister is to see the brethren being presented perfect in Christ at His “parousia” (**Col.1:28**).

We will meet the Lord in the air – **1 Thess.4:15-17**

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep” **1Thess.4:15**. The hope is that when Jesus comes, we will rise to meet Him in the air and in that meeting we will receive glorified bodies.

We shall be like Him

“Beloved, now we are the children of God and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” **1 Jn. 3:2**. Our hope is that when we see Him we will be like Him. We will be changed in that moment to be like Him (**1Cor.15:51**).

Prepared blameless

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be prepared blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” 1Thess.5:23. Our hope is that God will do this (v.24).

A new heavens and a new earth

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise look for the new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” 2 Pet.3:13. This is our hope.

The lawless one destroyed

“And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming” 2Thess.2:8. All evil will be destroyed by the brightness of His “parousia”.

HOW DO WE GET READY?

A case study of the Thessalonians – 2 Thess.1:3-12

v.3 we need to be in a place where faith is growing. We need to grow in love that abounds toward one another; learn to love the brethren.

v.4 we need patience; we need to persevere and endure in tribulation. It is *“through faith*

and patience” (that we) *“inherit the promises” Heb.6:12b.*

v.5 need to be ready to suffer for the kingdom; to be inconvenienced for the kingdom.

v.6 God will deal with those who trouble us.

v.7 He will do this *“when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven”*.

v.8 He will take *“vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey*

the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

v.9 *“These shall be punished with everlasting destruction”*

v.10 *“When He comes”*

v.11 we are to be found worthy of the calling; we are to be fulfilling all of God’s pleasure and the work of faith.

v.12 we get ready by glorifying the **name** in the midst! We need to understand and **know** the name of Jesus in our midst.

And in **1Thessalonians 3:12-13**, Paul is telling the Thessalonians to get ready for the coming. *“And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints”*

We need patience – James 5:7-8

“Be patient until the coming of the Lord”. We need early and latter rain [this could be a reference to the Feast of Tabernacles]. Again James says *“Be patient. Establish your hearts for the coming of Lord is at hand.”*

There is no shame

We are to abide in Him and have confidence in Him (**1Jn.2:28**).

We should purify ourselves (**1Jn.3:3**).

Beware of false teachers

The Spirit Filled Life Bible has four headings in **2 Peter 2**

- Destructive doctrines
- Doom of false teachers
- Depravity of false teachers
- Deceptions of false teachers

Peter shows us how important it is to expose false doctrines and false teachers; and they abound to this day with all the end time teaching, anti-christ preaching and the false prosperity doctrine. For example, in **3 John 2** there is a wonderful blessing: *“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health just as your soul prospers”*. Prosperity preachers use this verse to say “God wants to make you rich, prosper you”. But what is this prosperity? It is actually soundness of doctrine, soundness of words and soundness in the faith – this is the true prosperity.

How do we prepare for His coming?

In **2 Peter 3**, Peter talks seriously of end time things and the coming of the Lord.

v.13 – we look for new heavens and new earth where righteousness dwells.

v.14 i) we are to look forward to these things

ii) be diligent to be found by Him in peace - stress is your enemy;
God's peace is the answer to stress

iii) be found without spot and blameless

v.15 *"The longsuffering of the Lord is salvation"*. What does this mean? The Lord *"is not willing that any should perish"*(v.9). God wants more people saved.

Peter refers to Paul's writings in **verse 15 & 16**. He suggests that Paul spoke of these things, the same as Peter. He says Paul is difficult to understand and people untaught and untrained twist these Scriptures. What is it about Paul's writings that we need to understand? It is the mysteries that Paul wrote about and especially to understand the coming.

Finally Peter says that we are to remain steadfast in the faith not *"being lead away with the error of the wicked, but grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ"* (2Pet.3:17-18).

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