

## THE COMING OF THE LORD & THE RESURRECTION

### Peter saw the coming of the Lord

The apostle Peter said that he "*made known to us the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, [and] were eyewitnesses of His majesty*" **2Peter 1:16**. Peter refers to the 'coming' of the Lord, to His *parousia* [Greek word for 'coming']. How could Peter be an eyewitness of the coming of the Lord, when we are still looking for the coming of the Lord?

Peter says that he saw the coming of the Lord when he and others, James and John, "*were with Him on the Holy Mountain*" (v.18). Peter says of the Lord Jesus Christ, "*He received from God the Father honour and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: 'This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'*" v.17. Peter is referring to the experience that he and James and John had when Jesus took them up on the mountain and was transfigured (**Matt.17:1-9**).

### It was the transfiguration of Jesus

To understand the power and coming of the Lord that Peter says that he has seen, let us go to **Matthew 17**. Jesus had said, "*Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom*" **Matt.16:28**. Then the Scripture says, "*Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves*" **Matt.17:1**. These three disciples were going to see "*the Son of Man coming in His kingdom*" (**16:28**). It is amazing that things yet to be fulfilled can be seen by revelation beforehand!

In this experience the brothers saw Jesus "*transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun and His clothes became as white as the light*" **Matt.17:2**. Mark says "*His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them*" **Mk.9:3**.

### Moses and Elijah in the glory

Then "*Behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him*" **Matt.17:3**. How could Moses appear to Jesus in the glory, when the Bible says "*So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab ... and He [YAHWEH] buried him in a valley in the land of Moab ... but no one knows his grave to this day*" (**Deut.34:5-6**)?

### Elijah was taken up

We know from **2Kings 2:11** that Elijah "*went up by a whirlwind into heaven. A chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them* [Elijah and

Elisha]." We understand that Elijah was taken into heaven without seeing death. Therefore it is easier to imagine that Elijah could appear to Jesus in the glory.

### **Moses's body recovered by Michael the Archangel**

But how did Moses come to be there? The answer comes in **Jude 9**, *"Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said 'The Lord rebuke you!'"* We understand from this that God in His great wisdom and power saw fit to receive Moses into the glory of heaven, even though he had died in the earth, and Michael the archangel disputed with the devil, because the devil at that time believed that the dead were under his control - this was the case until the cross.

### **The disciples were 'caught up' to see the coming of the Lord**

The experience that the disciples had on the holy mountain with Jesus in the transfiguration, is a precursor to what believers can look forward to when we are *"caught up to meet Him in the air"* (**1Thess.4:17**). The Scripture says we will be *"caught up together with them* [the dead in Christ who will have received their resurrected bodies] *in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air"* (v.17). Even as Jesus was transfigured and His mortal body became a glorious body while He was in the earth, even so when Jesus comes the saints will be transfigured and receive their glorious bodies in the earth realm.

### **The cloud of glory**

It is interesting that when the disciples were on the holy mountain *"behold a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud saying, 'This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!'"* (**Matt.17:5**). Entering into the glory and being able to see Jesus as He is, comes about because the cloud of His glorious presence overshadows as He reveals Himself. [see the cloud in the Old Testament: **Ex.40:34-38**].

### **Preparing for the coming of the Lord**

Peter saw the coming of the Lord and he wanted us to be prepared for the reality of that coming that is yet to be. All of his instructions in **2 Peter 1** are given to us so that *"an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ"* (v.11). Peter instructs us to add seven significant attributes to our faith and it is all to be done in preparation for the coming of the Lord.

The coming of the Lord includes the resurrection of the body of the dead in Christ who are coming with Jesus from heaven: *"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep [are dead] in Jesus"* (**1Thess.4:14**). And it includes the saints who are alive on the earth when Jesus comes. They will be translated [transfigured], as the Scripture says, *"We shall all be changed"* (**1Cor.15:51**).

## The Lord will descend from heaven

Paul assures us that *"The Lord Himself will descend from heaven"* (1Thess.4:16a). The word 'descend' means to come down. Jesus is coming from heaven. Heaven is said to be above. If He is coming down from heaven, where is He descending to? The obvious answer is: to the earth.

## Announcing the coming of the Lord

Three things will take place to announce the coming of the Lord into the earth realm:

- **a shout** - the shout of the Lord is mentioned in Scripture; for example, when the walls of Jericho came down (**Joshua 6:20**). There are other mentions and in **Psalms** we are exhorted to shout to the Lord. In these days of restoration God has restored a shout to His people - this shout comes out of the innermost being; it is very anointed and comes with power in response to the manifest presence of God in the midst.
- **the voice of an archangel** - the only archangel we know of in Scripture is Michael, and the only communication we know of by Michael is in **Jude 9** when he says to Satan, *"The Lord rebuke you"*, in disputing over the body of Moses. This is significant: as the last days church prepares for the coming of the Lord, we will have the authority to rebuke Satan in the name of the Lord and see him submit and flee.
- **the trumpet of God** - this is mentioned in both Old and New Testament. The blowing of trumpets featured in **Joshua 6:20** along with the shout. It is significant that God has restored the use of the shofar in these days. The blowing of the trumpet in the midst of the saints is very anointed and is preparing us for the trumpet of God that will announce the coming of the Lord.

## The dead in Christ will rise first

According to the Scriptures, the resurrection of the dead takes place in the earth realm. Those who have died in the faith are waiting in heaven to come back to the earth when Jesus comes because the resurrection of the body does not take place in heaven. This is a mystery that must be considered. Just as the resurrection of Jesus from the dead had to take place in the earth, even so the dead in Christ have to come back to the earth to receive their resurrection bodies (1Thess.4:16b).

## We who are alive

At the same time that the dead in Christ rise in their resurrection bodies, the saints who are alive on the earth at the coming of the Lord, will be caught up together with the dead in Christ, *"in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord"* 1Thess.4:17.

Paul confirms that the resurrection takes place at the coming of the Lord, *"For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming"* 1Cor.15:21-23.

## How are the dead raised?

And *"with what body do they come?"* (1Cor.15:35). The dead are raised in a body of incorruption (v.42); the body is raised in glory and power (v.43). *"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body"* (v.44a).

*"The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have born the image of the man of dust, so we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man"* 1Cor.15:47-49. We shall bear the image of the heavenly Man! We shall be like Him (1John 3:2)!

*"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption"* 1Cor.15:50. Brethren this is amazing teaching! This is the word of the Lord! This is the hope of the resurrection and it takes place at the coming of the Lord.

*"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed"* 1Cor.15:51-52.

## There is judgement at the coming

Paul exhorts the church at Thessalonica that God will *"give you who are troubled rest"* (2Thess.1:7a). This church had been suffering persecution and tribulation but Paul promises them that God will deliver them by punishing the oppressor *"when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"* 2Thess.1:7b-8.

The judgement of the wicked and those who refuse to obey the gospel will finally take place at the coming of the Lord. *"These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power"* 2Thess.1:9. This is very serious and we need to be aware of this important aspect of eternal judgement. Jesus told us in **Matthew 24** that His coming will be *"as in the days of Noah"* (v.37). They, the wicked, the unbelievers, the disobedient, *"did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be"* (v.39). The judgement takes place at the coming of the Lord.

## When will the judgement be?

The Scripture says, *"These shall be punished with everlasting destruction ... when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed"* 2Thess.1:9-10. The judgement of the wicked and the glorification of the saints happens in the same day. We have learnt from **1 Corinthians 15:51-52** that the saints will be glorified in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet. We have also learnt from **1 Thessalonians 1:7-10** that the wicked will be dealt with *"in that Day"*.

## Correcting an error

Many have taught from **1 Thessalonians 4:17** that the **catching up** to meet the Lord in the air [notice in the air, not in the heavens] is actually referring to the Lord turning around and going back to heaven with the church. There is nothing in this passage in Thessalonians to suggest such an interpretation. When Scripture is written in clear language there is no need for interpretation. As one has said '*In the beginning was the word, not an interpretation*'.

Such teachers then use **Matthew 24:40-41** to prove their rapture theory. Again in the context of the teaching of the Lord Jesus, His coming will be as in the days of Noah.

- Who was taken in the days of Noah? Answer: the wicked.
- Who was preserved in the earth in the days of Noah? Answer: the righteous.

So shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man.

## There is only one coming

It is called in Greek, *parousia*, and the meaning of this word is very powerful. We quote from the Word Wealth in the Spirit Filled Life Bible, given at **1 Corinthians 15:23**, concerning the word *parousia*.

*The technical term signifying the second advent of Jesus, was never used to describe His first coming [in the flesh]. Parousia originally was the official term for 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 His glorified people.*

**The coming of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead, and the glorification of the saints, will happen in the earth realm, in that Day!**