

The Best Is Yet to Be

The Next Great Event On God's Calendar

1 Thess. 4:13-18

Introduction: What a glorious time this is...to be between two mountain peaks of history — the **crucifixion** of Jesus Christ and the **coronation** of Jesus Christ! Paul's letter to the Thessalonians exhorts them to learn about the second coming of Jesus, to look for His coming, to live for His coming, and long for His coming.

Learn of His Coming

The Thessalonians learned two things about Jesus' coming — the **certainty** of it and the **uncertainty** of the time. Anybody who sets a date for the second coming of Jesus Christ is approaching (if he hasn't already crossed it) the line of blasphemy (see Matthew 24:36 and Acts 1:7).

Many people ask why Jesus hasn't come yet. I believe it is the mercy of God that holds Him back (see 2 Peter 3:9). Even now the raging waters of God's wrath are furiously pounding against the dam of His mercy. And one of these days, that dam of God's mercy will give way to God's judgment and the day of the Lord will come.

The second coming of Jesus isn't an **incidental** truth in Scripture, it is **fundamental**. Want something that will cause the Bible to burst aflame in your heart and in your life — then learn about His second coming.

Look for His Coming

"The day of the Lord" is going to be a **solemn day** (see Joel 2:1-2, Jeremiah 30:7-9, Daniel 12:1-2, and Matthew 24:21). You can combine all the horrors this world has ever known and you will have a faint description of what the day of the Lord will be for those who are left behind.

It will also be a **surprising day**. The Bible compares it to the time of Noah (see Matthew 24:36-39). People were going about the normal routine of life when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, the heavens were emptied, the flood came, and carried them all away. We are to be ready.

Lastly, it will be a **sure day**. As surely as a birth follows labor pains, God's judgment is going to come upon the earth. Indeed, our world is on a collision course with judgment.

Live for His Coming

Be aware and wise up. We are the only ones who can make sense of what is happening all around us. **Dr. Vance Havner** said, "You can give a Bible and a candle to a child of God then put him in a dungeon. Even there, he will know more about what is going on in this world than all of Congress and the Pentagon put together."

Be awake and get up. Do you know the problem with many churches today? They are not preaching the second coming of Jesus Christ. Instead, many are teaching bedtime stories that lull congregations to sleep. We must wake up! Can't you hear it? God's alarm clock is going off all over this world.

Be alert and dress up. 1 Thessalonians 5:8 teaches we are to put on the breastplate of faith and love to protect our hearts. At the same time, we are to put on the helmet — the hope of salvation. And this "hope" is a divine certainty based on the Word of God (see Titus 2:13 and 1 John 5:13).

Long for His Coming

1 Thessalonians 5:11 teaches us that Christ's second coming is a comforting truth. The church is going to be raptured before the great tribulation. And here are three reasons why:

Explanation. Verse 9 tells us that God has not appointed us to wrath (see 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10). Now, that is different from His chastisement which God's children will experience (see Hebrews 12:7-9).

Expectation. Paul writes that he was expecting Jesus in his lifetime. Was he wrong? No, every Christian should be expecting Jesus to come in his life.

Exhortation. There is comfort for us in knowing that as we wait for His second coming that we will be spared the great tribulation. And the Apostle Paul tells us to exhort others with this truth. In conclusion and based on God's word, all of God's children ought to say, "**even so come Lord Jesus.**"