

HE'S COMING ARE YOU GOING

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

Text:

Introduction:

Once in a machine shop there was a fellow named George. His job was to sweep and clean out the shavings underneath the huge lathes and machines we were running. George was born again, and he loved the teaching of Scripture on prophecy. He loved to sing hymns as he worked. Many of them had to do with the coming of Christ, such as "In the Sweet By and By" and "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder."

Late one Friday afternoon about ten minutes to quitting time when everyone was weary, someone looked at George and said, "George, are you ready?" He said, "Uh-huh." But he was all dirty. He was just obviously not ready. In fact, he looked like he was ready to keep on working. The others said, "Aren't you ready to go home?" He said, "Yeah, I'm ready." the others said, "Look at you! Man, you're not ready. You've gotta go clean up." "No," he said, "let me show you something." So he unzipped his coveralls and underneath were the neatest, cleanest clothes you can imagine. He had them all ready. All he did when the whistle blew was just unzip and step out of that

coverall, walk up, and punch his clock and he was gone. He said, "You see, I stay ready to keep from gettin' ready--just like I'm ready for Jesus!"

Friend, are you ready for the return of Jesus? He's coming again! That is the thrust of the verses we have read today. Let's look into these verses. As we do, examine your heart to see if you are ready for His coming. You see, He is coming for a certain class of people: those who are ready to go! So, let's examine these verses together today. As we do, I want you to think about this question: He's Coming, Are You Going?

1. THE PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN THIS EVENT

A. The Savior Will Be Involved -

While He was here on the earth, the Lord Jesus said that the angels would gather the elect at the Second Coming, Matt. 13:26-27.

However, in the Rapture, Jesus will send no angels or other heavenly representatives. He will come take His bride Himself! The One Who died to redeem the bride on the cross is the One Who returns to rapture the bride off the world! (Note: This fits in with Jewish tradition! The bridegroom, after completing a place for himself and his bride in the father's house, would go

with his friends to get his bride and bring her home for the wedding.)

His coming will be accompanied by:

1. A Shout

This refers to a military command. Jesus is calling the hosts of Heaven to assemble for military action against the domain of the enemy: the air - Eph. 6:12.

Of course, this shout has another emphasis. Jesus promised that there would come a day when the dead would hear His voice - John 5:25.

It was this shout that was heard by Lazarus, even in death, which brought him back to life.

2. The Trumpet of God

Throughout Jewish history, the trumpet was used for many different, but important reasons.

a. To announce the feasts - Num. 10:10

b. To announce various celebrations - 2 Sam. 6:15

c. To announce a sacred assembly - Lev. 23:24

d. To sound an alarm during a time of war - Num. 10:9

e. To assemble a crowd - Num. 10:2; Jud. 6:34

f. To make an announcement - 1 Sam .13:3; 2 Sam. 15:10; 1 Kings 1:34; 39; 41

There seems to be a two-fold purpose here:

- To assemble the people of God - Ex. 19:16-19
- To signal His deliverance of them - Zech. 1:16; 9:14-16

B. The Saints Will Be Involved

When the rapture takes place, it will involve all those who are saved by the grace of God, both past and present.

It will not be an event for a select few super-saints. It will be a time when everyone who has trusted Jesus as their personal Savior will leave this world together! (Note: There are two statements that need to be made right here!

- The rapture will include ALL the saints! There is no such thing as a partial rapture. There will be many who we may not think should be allowed go. If they are saved, they will make the trip! Just for the record, none of us deserves to go! The only way anyone goes is through faith in the Lord Jesus and in His finished work at Calvary- Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 10:9-10.
- The rapture will include ONLY the saints! There will be many fine, moral and religious people who will not be taken when Jesus comes. They may be church members. They may be king and good people morally, but if they have never been saved, they will not leave this world in the rapture! One of the tragedies of that day will be that many will be left behind who thought they were ready. Don't think you are ready, be sure you are, Matt. 24:44! (Ill. Luke 17:34-36!)

2. THE POWER INVOLVED IN THIS EVENT

A. There Will Be the Power of Resurrection

The Thessalonian believers believed in the immediate return of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, they were afraid that their fellow believers who had already died had missed out on the rapture, and on heaven as well. They seems to believe that death was the end and that

only those alive when Jesus returned would go to Heaven. Paul writes this passage, v. 13-18, to let them know that there is coming a day when even the dead will rise again!

The same God Who moved in power to create with world and all that is within it, is the same One Who will raise the bodies of the dead. When you consider the millions who have died in faith over the last 2,000 years and when you think about the fact that many bodies have long since turned to dust, it boggles the mind! However, I do not have to understand the mechanics of the event to be blessed by it!

All you and I need to know is that we serve a God Who is able to exert this kind of power, Eph. 3:20!

(Note: This should comfort our hearts as it did the hearts fo those believers 2,000 years ago, v. 18. All those saints we have known and love who have preceded us into death will one day have their bodies raided from the dead! By the way, not a single one of them is in the grave today, 2 Cor. 5:8! When He comes for their bodies, He will bring their spirits with them. They will receive a new, glorified body and will be taken up from the earth to be transported to glory!)

B. There Will Be the Power of Rapture

Paul tells us that those who are alive when the rapture comes will be "caught up".

In the rapture, the Lord Jesus will claim His bride by force! It is interesting to note that this word conveys the idea of force. Certainly, there is within the heart of the redeemed a desire to depart and to go to Heaven. However, there are forces that would hinder our departure if they could. Among them are the strong pulls of sin, the influence of the flesh, the world and the devil. All these would conspire to keep us here.

However, when He comes, there will be no staying! He will catch away that which He has redeemed by His blood and He will take it home to glory! Praise God, no force will be able to prevent His coming for us! No force will be able to hold us here when He does come.

The bottom line is this: when He comes we go! (Note: It is at this moment in time when the saints will forever lose these fleshly bodies! We will be changed, 1 Cor. 15:51-52 and we will be made like Jesus, 1 John 3:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:42-57! To me, just getting a glorified body will be as good as going to Heaven! Imagine what that body will be like!)

3. THE PROMISE INVOLVED IN THIS EVENT

A. There Is the Promise of Rescue

When Jesus makes His glorious appearance, the Bible says that He will come in the "air". This is significant! According the New Testament, the "air" is the abode of the devil and his demonic hordes, Eph. 2:2; 6:12. In fact, this world is under the dominion of the devil, 2 Cor. 4:4. When Jesus comes, He will comes directly through enemy territory. He will call up His Bride into the realm of the enemy and He will lead her safely and triumphantly through the devil's territory as a display of His power and victory over all the powers of evil! We could never get out of here on our own! He will take us safely through all the way to glory!

(Note: It is also worthy to note that He will take His church out of the world before He judges the world in the Tribulation, Rom. 5:9, Rev. 4:1, etc. We will be rescued from this earth before the wrath of God is unleashed against it!)

B. There Is the Promise of Reunion

The phrase "together with them" implies the fact that you and I will enjoy a blessed reunion with those we have seen taken in death! We all have loved ones on the other side we long to see! We will see them then!

C. There Is the Promise of Revelation

But wait, the Bible also says this: "and so shall we ever be with the Lord." As glorious as a reunion with our

departed loved ones may be, it pales in comparison to seeing Jesus Christ; the One Who gave His life on the cross for our redemption! Imagine seeing Him for the first time! Imagine seeing the marks in His body where He bore our sins on the cross, Rev. 5:9, 1 Pet. 2:24. Imagine seeing His face, hearing His voice and being welcomed into His Heaven. What a day, glorious day, that will be!

D. There Is the Promise of Rejoicing

Verse 17 concludes with the statement, "so shall we ever be with the Lord." This implies that you and I are going to be wherever He is forever! Whether it be in Heaven around the Father's throne or whether it be on the earth ruling with Him for 1000 years, it will be a time of endless worship and praise. It will be a time free from sin and filled with His glory. It will be a time when all the tears are finally wiped away from our faces, Rev. 21:4. It will be Heaven! For to be with Jesus is to reside in THE place of glory!

Close:

The whole thing I am trying to say today is this: He's coming, and He's coming for His people. Now, the question you have to answer is this: when He comes are you going? You can, but only if you are saved! He will come again and He will remove His people. When that day comes, will you go, or will you stay? It will all

depend on what you do with Jesus Christ. In the end, what He does with you hinges upon what you do with Him!