

Thoughts of Jesus

15 Someday We'll See Him

THE hour of Jesus' departure had come, but the little group of disciples who were gathered about Him on Olivet were not aware of it. Their souls had been revived since the terrible scenes of Calvary. Their risen Lord had been with them for forty days, and they longed to be with Him forever.

Even now they hoped He would quickly establish His kingdom and make them His statesmen so they could be nearest to Him. One ventured to ask, "Lord, will thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Acts 1:6.

How little they knew the times and the seasons of God's appointment. How frightened and discouraged they would have been if Jesus had revealed all the bitterness, the trial, and the conflict that the followers of Christ must endure before that glorious event should take place.

The Lord was gracious enough not to pull aside the curtain, but He did tell them of the work to be done before His kingdom could be established. He said, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Verse 8.

He had already told them in reply to their question as to the sign of His coming and the end of the world that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14.

So they must go forth and spread the good news of salvation before their hope would be fulfilled. While the disciples spoke of these things with Jesus, "he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." Acts 1:9.

They were astounded at the sight. How mysterious it was! What did it mean? For the moment they forgot that Jesus had told them that He must go away and that "whither I go, ye cannot come." Forgotten too was the wonderful promise that He had made to them: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2, 3.

They stood there growing troubled in heart, until suddenly they saw two angels standing beside them, and they heard them say, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:11.

Now they remembered how the Lord had said, "I will come again." They were saddened no longer. They must be up and doing, to help all they could to hasten His return. Henceforth, this was the hope uppermost in their minds.

In obedience to Christ's commandment they waited in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which was to equip them for this work. Thereafter they went forth with great zeal, bearing witness to the things they had seen and heard. The theme of Christ's return was kept before the early believers.

Soon after Pentecost, Peter openly declared this blessed truth as he called upon the people to turn to Christ. "Repent ye therefore," he said, "and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all

things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3:19-21.

In his epistles Peter wrote of "the end of all things" (1 Peter 4:7), the judgment of the wicked (2 Peter 14), and "the promise of his coming" (2 Peter 3:4). He gave a vivid picture of "the day of the Lord," the destruction of the world, and the creation of a new heavens and a new earth "according to his promise." (Verses 9-11) And then he counseled, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." Verse 14.

John too was among the preachers of the second coming of Christ. He was with Peter when he spoke of the restitution of all things at the coming of Christ. He wrote in his epistle of the glorious event, and that when Christ shall appear those who love Him "shall be like him." 1 John 3:1, 2. And then he added, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure." Verse 3.

John's Gospel account records the exact promise of Christ, "I will come again." John 14:1 The book of Revelation, which John wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and at the direction of Christ Himself, is filled with prophecies concerning Christ's second coming.

James, who was another apostle who participated in the acts of the early church, wrote of these things. He wrote of certain signs of the last days as recorded in James 5. He then offered these admonitions: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." Verse 7. "Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draws nigh." Verse 8.

Last, there is the apostle Paul, who wrote much about what he called, in his Epistle to Titus, "that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13.

To the Romans, Paul wrote of "the earnest expectation of the creature" that "waits for the manifestation of the sons of God." Romans 8:19.

In writing to the Corinthian church about the communion service, he said, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." 1 Corinthians 11:26. He discussed the importance of the resurrection of the body that shall take place at the coming of Christ. (1 Corinthians 15) And he wrote of the coming judgment (2 Corinthians 5: 10), which he spoke of to the Athenians (Acts 17:31) and to Felix, the governor (Acts 24:25).

In the Epistle to the Galatians he lists those things that prevent one from inheriting the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21), and he wrote that Christ gave Himself for our sins "that he might deliver us from this present evil world" (Galatians 1:4).

To the Ephesians he wrote of the "dispensation of the fullness of times" when God would "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." Ephesians 1:10.

To the Philippians he spoke of how God would continue the good work of grace in their lives "until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6), and how he prays that they may be without offense until "the day of Christ" (verse 10).

Writing to the Colossians, he said, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Colossians 3:4. To the Thessalonian church he wrote even more specifically of Christ's coming. He spoke of how they had turned from idols to serve the living God "and to wait for his Son from heaven." 1 Thessalonians 1:10. And he prayed that their hearts might be "unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." 1 Thessalonians 3:13.

He then described in great detail what will take place at Christ's coming. Of this he said: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17. Then he adds, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Verse 18.

He tells them that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief. (1 Thessalonians 5:2.) In his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul corrects the then-common view that Christ would return in their day and states what must first take place before Christ can come. (2 Thessalonians 11-10)

To Timothy, Paul wrote of "the latter times" (1 Timothy 4:1), and "the last days" (2 Timothy 3:1). He referred to "that day" (2 Timothy 1:12), meaning the coming of Christ. At last he wrote those words which express the hope that dominated his life:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7, 8.

And finally in the Epistle to the Hebrews he writes this challenging word:

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Hebrews 10:35-37.

Thus in the witness of the apostles the glorious truth of the second coming of Christ had a commanding place. It was the hope that inspired them in their work and that they used to comfort the believers.

As the dark clouds of persecution gathered about the little church, this hope became the beacon that quickened their faith.

Throughout the Christian Era all those who have learned to love their Lord have looked forward to the time when they would see Him face to face.

And in this our day should we not be living in blessed anticipation of this glorious event? This is the time of His coming to which all prophecies point.

Yes, this same Jesus who traveled the dusty roads of Galilee to bless the multitudes, who sat beside the well of Samaria to speak a word of courage to a wayward sinner, and who often visited the little home in Bethany and brought joy to the hearts of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, is coming again.

Yes, the One who bore our sins upon the cruel cross and died that we might live is coming soon!

Someday we'll see Him. Blessed hope! We'll see Him riding down from glory in all His majesty and beauty. We'll see His winsome smile, feel the tender touch of His nail-pierced hands, and walk with Him in glory. Happy prospect! Hasten on glad day!

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, said the Lord." Zechariah 2:10.

"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out your enemy: the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shall not see evil any more." Zephaniah 3:14, 15.

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“O for a thousand tongues, to sing
My great Redeemer's praise!
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace.”