

The Son from Heaven



The second coming of Christ is a great motivator for Christians. The scripture teaches very emphatically that He will come again to reward His saints and punish those who did not know Him or obey His gospel, and this return is one of the great themes of Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians. Mankind as a whole tends to live as if this life were the only part of man's existence, ignoring the fact that man is an eternal being who will live forever either in heaven or in hell. The teaching that Jesus is coming again brings eternity to the fore, and causes the honest ones among the sons of earth to take careful inventory of their spiritual condition. The apostle Paul made this clear in the closing portion of his message to the pagan

Athenians gathered at Mars Hill to listen to his discourse: "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance," he animadverted, "God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30,31). Even Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied that the Lord would come with many thousands of His holy ones (angels), "to execute judgment upon all" (Jude 1:14). As the old spiritual queried, "Are you ready for the Judgment Day?"

- **Waiting for His Son** — Christians, having been taught the whole counsel of God, are supremely aware that Jesus is coming soon. Jesus Himself, during the last days of His earthly sojourn, spoke of His second coming. "Therefore be on the alert," He had admonished, "for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will" (Matthew 24:42-44). Thus the apostle Paul commends the brethren in Thessalonica, because as they turned from idols to serve God, they also followed the instruction "to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thessalonians 1:10). This does not mean that they were to sit on their hands and do nothing, such as waiting at a bus stop; they were to be in *expectation* of His coming while they busied themselves in bringing the harvest of souls in. This Son, of course, is the One "whom He raised from the dead — Jesus."

- **Wrath to come** — The scriptures continually warn mankind as a whole of the impending doom connected with the coming of Christ. Jesus informed us that few would find "the narrow gate," that most of the human race would choose the broad path that leads to destruction. Hence the day of the Lord's return, while it is a day of earnest expectation and anticipated joy for the saints, is a day of destruction for the non-Christians and the evil angels. Therefore, when the apostle Paul describes the Lord Jesus, he appends the words, "who delivers us from the wrath to come."

The brethren in Colossae understood the eternal consequences or blessings connected with the choice of following Jesus. The modern saint would also do well periodically to ponder the great blessings of having heard the gospel of Christ, and having had the opportunity to obey it. The brethren of today certainly need to turn from any modern idols to serve God, to wait for His Son from heaven, and to be delivered from the wrath to come. What a deliverance that is! And how worthy of praise is He who accomplished such a great redemption at the price of His own earthly suffering and separation from the Father!

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