



Together with Him

The more a person contemplates the plan of God, the more clear it becomes as to how much God loves each person. It is also very clear that God wants a spiritual people who will appreciate what He has done to rescue mankind and reconcile the sinner to Himself. The word of God is so designed that, as it works its way through the masses of mankind, it separates out those who truly are in tune with God from those who are not. "His winnowing fork is in His hand," said John the Immerser of His Lord Jesus, "and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12). The earth is the threshing floor, and, as the process of winnowing goes on, only those

who have an honest and good heart will hear the voice of Jesus as expressed in the written word, obey the gospel, and remain firm and faithful to the end. Jesus, in His prayer before He crossed the Kidron to Gethsemane, expressed His the desire of His heart and thus illustrated the purpose of the winnowing. "Father," petitioned He, "I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). He is looking for a spiritual people who will desire to see His glory and appreciate it, and His sifting the hearts of men is for that purpose.

- **Not destined for wrath** — The faithful brethren at Thessalonica would listen to Paul. They would put on the breastplate of faith and love, and the helmet as a representation of the hope of their salvation — the positive resurrection to life. They would be eagerly awaiting the return of Christ, to be caught up with Him in the air, thus to ever be with the Lord. "For God has not destined us for wrath," the apostle emphasizes, "but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9). Every honest person recognizes that he deserves the wrath of God, but is grateful for the tender mercy extended through Christ the sacrifice and the high priest. The destiny of those regarded as "wheat" is receiving a resurrection body in the likeness of Jesus' glory, and dwelling in the eternal city with the great and awesome God.

*May we desire
to see His glory
enough to live for
Him*

- **Christ the substitute** — The curse that should have fallen on the saints because of even one sin has instead fallen upon Jesus, as it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" (Galatians 3:13). Our salvation, then, comes through our Lord Jesus Christ, "who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him" (1 Thessalonians 5:10). It is true, but not trite, that Jesus died that we might live. So whether we are still making daily choices during the days of our earthly sojourns, or whether we have passed into the realm described as "asleep," Jesus wants us "together" with Him.
- **Ultimate encouragement** — This earthly life is truly short, a vapor. Eternity stretches out beyond the human imagination. Regardless, then, of prison or privation, the saint has a tremendous pick-me-up coming from the assurance of an eternity with Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood. "Therefore," exhorts Paul, "encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Moses said to the Almighty on the summit of Sinai, "Show me Your glory" (Exodus 33:18). This could not happen for Moses because no one still in the physical realm could behold that glory and live. Hence Christ through His gospel plan and winnowing action has produced a people who are able to see that glory. "Beloved," said John the apostle, "now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). Jesus desired it enough to die for us; may we desire it enough to live for Him, regardless of external circumstances.