

## Study Series 14 Lesson 4: The *Parousia*: the Resurrection – the Expectations and Experiences

### **What Did the Pre-AD 70 Saints EXPECT to SEE and EXPERIENCE at the *Parousia*?**

It is a biblical and historical fact that some of the Jewish saints in Palestine sold their possessions, while others abstained from marriage and the pursuit of some of their otherwise normal economic activities. They fled the country when the armies approached. They preached the gospel in the midst of overwhelming persecution and tribulation, frantically trying to rescue their families and friends before the End, with the hope and the promise of being relieved, rescued out of it, and rewarded at the End. Did these Christians really have expectations of a real, historical, visible relief and reward that they knew they would absolutely see and experience without fail at the *Parousia*? What scriptures reveal these expectations of the pre-AD 70 saints? Here are some key texts documenting their expectations of the “big three events: *Parousia*, resurrection, judgment.” Please study every one of them in their context:

1. Some of them would definitely live to “see and experience” the big three events: Matt. 16:28, 24:22-24, 34; Luke 18:7-8; John 21:22-23; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 5:23; 2 Tim. 1:18; Jude 21; and Rev. 2:25.
  - Expectation: Some saints would still be alive at the time of His return. But it would not be a huge number. Most died in the tribulation, or fell away.
  - How Fulfilled: Some of the 12 apostles could have remained alive until AD 66. Not all of the saints died in the tribulation, or fell away in apostasy.
2. They were "eagerly waiting" and longing for His return: 1 Cor. 16:22; Phil 3:20-4:1; Heb. 9:28; Jude 21; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rom. 8:18-25; 2 Cor. 5:2; Matt. 9:15; Luke 12:35-40; 1 Cor. 1:7-8; 1 Pet. 1:13; 2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 6:9-11.
  - Was that longing fulfilled? Could they keep silent about it after being pumped up so much beforehand?

- Expectation: They were **eagerly waiting** and **longing** for His return. They “**loved** His appearing” and “**fixed their hope completely**” on it.
- How Fulfilled: Was that intense longing fulfilled? Could they have kept silent about it after being so pumped up about it beforehand? Especially when some fellow Christians started saying it was still future? And if it did not occur, why don't we see disillusionment and bitter complaints over the nonfulfillment?
  - The only credible answer → they were “caught up” (**raptured**) to be where the Lord is forever.

3. They were promised "rescue," "relief" and "reward": Luke 21:24-36; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:13-14; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 1:4-9, 13; 5:4; Rev. 11:18; 2 John 1:8; Heb. 10:35-37; Luke 21:34-36; Rom. 8:17- 25; and Rev. 3:10.

- Did they get the relief? Did they know they got it? Did they see it and experience it?
- Expectation: They were promised rescue, relief, reward, glory, exaltation, crowns, thrones, be revealed as sons of God, adoption, salvation, redemption, and grace at the return of Christ.
- How Fulfilled: Did they get these things? Did they **KNOW** they got it? Did they see it and experience it in any way? Why didn't they say something about it later? Why didn't they set the record straight?
  - The only credible answer → they were “caught up” (**raptured**) to be where the Lord is forever.

4. They would actually know about it, and "see" Him "revealed," meet with Him at His coming, and "marvel at Him" and "glorify Him" and have "great joy" in His presence at His return: 2 Thess. 1:6-10; 1 Pet. 1:7, 13; 2:12; 4:13; 5:1-4; 2 Pet. 3:12-14; Jude 24; Matt. 16:28, 25:1, 6-10, 21, 23; Luke 21:36; Eph. 5:11-14; Phil. 2:16; 1 John 2:28—3:2; 1 John 4:17; 1 Thess. 2:19, 4:17; Col. 1:22, 3:4; 1 Cor. 13:12; 2 Cor. 4:14; Rom. 8:18-25 ("about to be revealed").

- Did they see and experience it?

- Expectation: They would actually know about His return, and **SEE** Him revealed, **MEET** with Him at His coming, **GLORIFY** Him, **STAND** before Him, and have **GREAT JOY** in His **PRESENCE** at His return.
- How Fulfilled: They were expecting to "enter into" the Kingdom, or "inherit" the Kingdom, or be "gathered into" the Kingdom at the *Parousia*. They were promised that they would be brought before Christ in His Presence at His *Parousia*.
  - Did they experience these things? Why didn't they say something about it later? How could they experience all this and then go on with their lives as if nothing ever happened? This would have been a life-changing experience.
    - The only credible answer → they were "caught up" (**raptured**) to be where the Lord is forever.

5. Texts which promise a "catching up," "gathering," "reception," "upward call," "change," "transformation," "rescue, relief, reward," or "standing in His presence." Expectation statements!

- Matt. 24:31 - "*gather together His elect*"
- Matt. 25:1, 6-10 - "*...meet him...went in with him...door was shut*"
- John 14:1-3 - "*receive you to Myself...where I am, you may be also*"
- Luke 21:36 - "*escape all these things...and to stand before the Son of Man*"
- 1 Cor. 15:51-52 - "*we will all be changed*"
- 2 Cor. 4:14 - "*raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you*"
- Phil. 3:14 - "*the prize of the upward call*"
- Phil. 3:20-21 - "*transform our lowly bodies...like His glorious body*" (NIV)

- 1 Thess. 1:10 - "*rescues us from the wrath to come*"
- 1 Thess. 2:19 - "*our joy...in the presence...at His Parousia*"
- 1 Thess. 4:15-17 - "*caught up together with them ...in the clouds...in the air*"
- 2 Thess. 1:7-10 - "*relief to you...and to us...when He comes...to be marveled at*"
- 2 Thess. 2:1 - "*our gathering together to Him*"
- 2 Cor. 5:1-4 - "*we...if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed...we have a building from God...eternal in the heavens...we who are in this tent groan...further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.*"
- 1 John 3:2 - "*...we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him.*"
- 1 John 2:28 - "*...we...not be ashamed before Him at His coming.*"
- Heb. 10:36-38 – "*...we are not of those who draw back...*"
  - Expectation: **Reunited** and **caught up** together with their departed loved ones, received to Him; gathered, upward call. Their bodies would be **changed**, transformed, to **be like Christ**. Would **see Him appear**, and would **not shrink away** from Him at his *Parousia*.
  - How Fulfilled: What was this gathering by the angels, the catching up, and the being received to be with Jesus where He was? Put on immortality? Redemption of the body? Did they see Him appear? Did they shrink away from Him at His *Parousia*, or draw near to Him? Did they see Him "appear" and cognitively-experientially draw near to Him?
    - The only credible answer → they were "caught up" (**raptured**) to be where the Lord is forever.

6. Strong moral and ethical exhortations connected with their intense expectations of "seeing" and experiencing the big three events: 1 Pet. 1:13, 2:12, 4:13, 5:1, 5:4; 1 Cor. 7:29-31 and Rev. 2:25.
- What happens to their strong motivation before AD 70 if they didn't really expect to see it, and after AD 70 if they never saw it?
7. The sleepers and foolish (unbelievers) would either fail to recognize the time of His visitation, or be killed before they could say anything about what they saw and experienced - Rev. 3:3; Matt. 24:43 (and parallels); 25:10-13; Luke 21:34-36; cf. 1 Thess. 5:2-4; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 16:15; Matt. 13:19.

Were not these expectations given to these first century saints by Jesus and the apostles? If so, then they had to experience those things, or the credibility of the whole Christian faith goes down the drain. Their whole moral and ethical motivation vaporizes if their expectation of seeing these things was not realized. But if these big three events were seen and experienced, how could they remain silent about it and walk away never to mention it again? These are extremely valid questions that demand serious answers.

Strangely enough, we don't have a single record of either the complaint against the nonfulfillment, nor their celebration of the fulfillment. We simply have a "deafening" **silence**. This is a "documentation problem" for any in the Christian world who do not believe in a literal rapture. The silence we are talking about here is regarding the big three events (*Parousia*, resurrection, and judgment), not about the rapture. We will deal with the reasons for the silence about the rapture in a separate section below. Right now we want to focus on the silence about the occurrence of the big three events.

## What Did the Apostles Actually Promise Them?

Unless we grasp how much the pre-AD 70 Church was expecting to see and experience when the *Parousia* arrived, we will not understand the problem of their silence after AD 70. So let us take a closer look at some of the texts cited above. How explicit were the apostles in pumping up the expectations of the pre-AD 70 saints? What did the apostles say they would see and experience at the *Parousia*? Here's just one of the many examples of this:

"For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict **you**, and to give relief to **you** who are afflicted and to **us** as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed." (2 Thess. 1:6-10)  
(We will look into this passage, and other related passages, more in depth in our next Study Series 14 Lesson 5)

The Apostle John provides a prophetic picture of the very folks in heaven whom we would have expected to be raptured (Rev. 7 and 14). This is exactly the kind of evidence we should see if there was a rapture. It is inspired historical documentation of the event written in advance. It seems to me that Rev. 7 and 14 are the places to look for the folks in heaven who go there as a result of the rapture.

In Rev. 6:9-11, John mentions the souls under the altar who had been slain because of the Word of God. They were crying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" It does not say these souls came out of the tribulation, it simply says they were "slain because of the Word of God." It could be martyrs from the Old Testament era, from the transition period, or both. They were disembodied souls who did not have their incorruptible heavenly bodies yet, so the resurrection had **not** happened yet. They were still awaiting the **resurrection** and the **judgment** of their enemies. This would automatically exempt them from being considered for being there as a result of the rapture.

We discover some more about who these martyrs are in chapter 7 when we notice a couple other groups, one of which "comes out of the great tribulation." (Rev. 7:14). If the Rev. 6 martyrs had come out of the "great tribulation," we would expect a mention of it, like there is in Rev. 7:14 for the "great multitude" coming out of the great tribulation. But there isn't any clear statement here as to which period of time the Rev. 6:9-11 martyrs came from, except that they **die before** the resurrection.

Revelation 7 and 14 talk about two groups (the 144,000 and the "great multitude" from every nation). Both these groups are pictured in heaven. **How** did they get there, and **when** did they get there? They were **not** martyred, since Rev. 6 talks about the martyrs in clear language. There is **nothing** said about the 144,000 and the "great multitude" being martyred. And the timing is right for them to be in heaven right **after** the "great tribulation" (see Matt. 24:21-**31**). How did this "great multitude" get into heaven? It says that the "great multitude" came "out of the great tribulation." It does not say they were martyred or killed. They are in heaven somehow, **without** being martyred. If they had been killed, we would have expected them to be included in the group of martyrs mentioned in Rev. 6. Rev. 6:11 talks about the completion of the number of fellow-servants and brethren who were about to be killed even as they were. If the 144,000 and "great multitude" were that completion, there is no indication of it here in Rev. 7 or 14.

Another interesting point is that the "great multitude which no one could count" mentioned in Rev. 7:9 comes "from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues." This is **the very Gentile saints** who were **promised** a "catching up" in 1 Thess. 4.

"After these things I looked, and behold, a **great multitude** which **no one could count**, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, **standing before the throne and before the Lamb**, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands ... " (Rev. 7:9)

They were **Gentiles**, in contrast to the 144,000 Jewish believers who were sealed. This "great multitude" was "standing before the throne and before the Lamb..." and "in His temple" (Rev. 7:9, 15; compare with verses 15-17). This is a description of those who were **in heaven**. See the similar language in Rev. 4 and 5. This language definitely places them in heaven.

The phrase "the ones who come out of the great tribulation" shows the correct timing. We know from Matt. 24:29-**31** that the "gathering" (rapture) event would occur immediately after the great tribulation. So the timing is right for this to be a rapture. This definitely has to be the "elect" whom Jesus said the angels would "gather together" **immediately after** the great tribulation (Matt. 24:31). They are in heaven, it is right after the tribulation. The angels had sealed the 144,000 (Rev. 7:2-3), and they were "purchased from among men as **first fruits**." (Rev. 14:3-4)

In Rev. 14:1, notice that the 144,000 are standing on **Mt. Zion**. We know this is heaven, since there are several clear indications of it in the Rev. 14 text. The first of these indications is the Mt. Zion connection. Jesus is the cornerstone of this new city of Zion. The apostles are the foundation stones.

- " ... having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner **stone**" (Eph. 2:20)
- " ... Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner **stone**, and he who believes in him will not be disappointed." (1 Pet. 2:6)
- "Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." (Rev. 21:14)

"Mount Zion" is a reference to the heavenly city, based on its usage in Heb. 12:18-29. The contrast in Heb. 12 is between an earthly mountain (Mt. Sinai) and the heavenly one (Mt. Zion). Zion was not a mountain that "can be touched." It was associated with the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and myriads of angels. God warned the Israelites at Sinai "on earth," but this warning was coming "**from heaven**."



Notice the other indications in the Rev. 14 text which place the 144,000 in heaven (the boldfaced text below):

- “Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was **standing on Mount Zion**, and **with Him** one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice **from heaven**, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they sang a new song **before the throne** and **before the four living creatures and the elders**; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been **purchased from the earth**. These are the ones who have **not been defiled with women**, they have kept themselves **chaste**. These are the ones who **follow the Lamb wherever He goes**. These have been **purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb**. And **no lie** was found in their mouth; they are **blameless.**” (Rev. 14:1-5)

All of these boldfaced phrases are indications that the 144,000 are in **heaven**, especially when it says their voice is heard "**from heaven**" and that they had been "purchased **from** the earth." They were "**with Him**" on Mt. Zion, following "the lamb wherever He goes" – **like 1 Thess. 4:17 had said**, "thus we shall always be with the Lord." They were "singing the new song **before** the throne and **before** the four living creatures and the elders." It needs little effort to prove that this language is a description of **heaven**. See the similar phraseology in Rev. 4 and 5. So it seems clear to me that we have both **Jewish Christians** (the 144,000) and **Gentile Christians** (the "great multitude") **in heaven** at the very time the Jewish "elect" were supposedly "**gathered**" (Matt. 24:31) and the Gentile saints were "**caught up**" (1 Thess. 4:17). It fits **both** the **description** and the **timing**. It therefore seems logical to assume these two groups were **raptured into heaven** at the **end of the tribulation**.

## 'Put On' and 'Clothed Upon' (1 Cor. 15:51-54, 2 Cor. 5:1-4 and Rom. 8:18-23):

Jesus and the NT writers use some interesting language when talking about what the living could expect to experience at the *Parousia*. An amazing picture emerges from the following collection of texts:

- "caught up" (1 Thess. 4:15-17)
- "receive you to Myself" (John. 14:3)
- "gathering" (Matt. 24:31; 2 Thess. 2:1)
- "change" (1 Cor. 15:51-54)
- "transform our lowly body" (Phil. 3:21)
- "redemption of our bod(ies)" (Rom. 8:11, 23)
- "be like Him" (1 John 3:2)
- "put on" & "clothed upon" (1 Cor. 15:53-54 and 2 Cor. 5:4)

The last text mentioned above (2 Cor. 5:4) is especially intriguing when it is compared with both Rom. 8:18-23 and 1 Cor. 15:53-54. We need to have these texts in front of us as we study them, so they are printed out below for the reader (with boldface emphasis on the significant expectation statements, quoted from the NASV 1995 revision):

- Rom. 8:18 "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory that is to [about to] be revealed to us.**"
- Rom. 8:19 "For the **anxious longing** of the creation **waits eagerly** for the **revealing of the sons of God.**"
- Rom. 8:20 "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, **in hope.**"

- Rom. 8:21 “That the creation itself also will be **set free from its slavery to corruption** into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”
- Rom. 8:22 “For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”
- Rom. 8:23 “And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting eagerly** for our **adoption** as sons, the **redemption of our body.**”
- Rom. 8:24 “For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?”
- Rom. 8:25 “But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we **wait eagerly** for it.”
- 1Cor. 15:50 “Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood **cannot inherit** the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable **inherit the imperishable.**”
- 1Cor. 15:51 “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but **we will all be changed,**”
- 1Cor. 15:52 “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the **dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.**”
- 1Cor. 15:53 “For this perishable must **put on the imperishable**, and this mortal must **put on immortality.**”
- 1Cor. 15:54 “But when this perishable will have **put on the imperishable**, and this mortal will have **put on immortality**, then will come about the saying that is written, “**DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP** in victory.”
- 2 Cor. 5:1 “For we know that if **the earthly tent** which is our house is **torn down**, we have a **building from God**, house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”
- 2 Cor. 5:2 “For indeed in this house we groan, **longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,**”

- 2 Cor. 5:3 “Inasmuch as we, having **put it on**, will not be found naked.”
- 2 Cor. 5:4 “For indeed while **we are in this tent**, we groan being burdened, because we **do not want to be unclothed** but **to be clothed**, so that what is mortal will be **swallowed up by life**.”

In these three passages, Paul mentions the groaning under the persecution, the bodily "**change**" or "**redemption of the body**," and both the "**putting on**" (for the **dead**) and the "**clothing upon**" (for the **living**) of a **new body** at the *Parousia*.

2 Cor. 5:4 is a commentary on 1 Cor. 15:53-54 and Rom. 8:23. 1 Cor. 15:51-54 mentions the "change" of the living as involving the "putting on" of immortality and incorruption which will swallow up death in victory. It is not exactly clear in the 1 Cor. 15 text what it is that is "put on." Is it merely stating a spiritual or positional "putting on" of immortality (in a metaphorical sense), or is it an actual "putting on" of their new immortal bodies? We know the dead "put on" their new bodies at the resurrection event, as the 1 Cor. 15:35-54 context makes that clear. But what about the "living and remaining ones?" What did they "put on" at the resurrection?

2 Cor. 5:4 text makes it crystal clear they are definitely included in the "putting on." It states that those who are still alive "in this tent" at the time of the *Parousia* will **not** be "unclothed" (disembodied by death), but rather will be "**clothed upon**" with their new immortal bodies while still dwelling in their "earthly tents." Paul flatly declares that the living saints who would be alive at the *Parousia* would be "**clothed upon**" (i.e., have new clothing "**put on over**" the top of their old clothing **without** taking the old clothing off). This is pretty explicit. Those saints who remained alive until the *Parousia* would **not** die and suffer disembodiment (be "unclothed"), but instead would receive their new bodies (be "clothed upon") right over the top of their old ones. The old "mortal" bodies would be "**changed**" or "**swallowed up**" by the new "living" bodies. Now we can finally understand what the "change" in 1 Cor. 15:53-54 is talking about. It is not some metaphorical, spiritualized, positional, covenantal "change," nor the "collective body" of the Church being raised out of sin-death, but rather is an actual change of their physical "**mortal**" bodies to be **like Christ's glorious body** as they were "**caught up**" to be with Christ at the *Parousia*.

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS – RAPTURE – (“Caught up”):

The following six questions focus on some of the central issues regarding the rapture. As you read each question and study the related verses, try to imagine how the **1<sup>st</sup> century Christians who remained alive until the *Parousia* would have responded.**

We know that the dead saints were raised out of Hades and given their new immortal bodies at the *Parousia*, but what about the saints who were still alive at Christ’s return? What does Jesus Christ say they would **see**, **hear**, and **experience** at the Second Coming?

Read each question and search the following Scriptures and their contexts to find the answers (all Scriptures NASB95, except where otherwise noted):

**1.** What did Jesus Christ say the living saints would **see**, **hear**, and **experience** at His return?

Matt 16:28 . . . some of those who are standing here who will **not taste death until** they **see** the **Son of Man coming** . . . .

Matt. 24:30-31 . . . they will **see** the **Son of Man coming** on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great **trumpet** and they will **gather** together His elect . . . .

Luke 21:36 . . . that you may have strength to escape all these things that are **about to** take place, and **to stand** before the Son of Man.

John 14:3 . . . I will come again and **receive you** to Myself, that **where I am**, there **you may be also**.

2. What did the Apostles say the living saints would **see, hear, and experience** at His return?

1 Thess. 5:23 . . . may your whole **spirit, soul, and body** be preserved blameless **at the coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NKJV)

Rom. 8:18-25 . . . the sufferings of this **present** time are not worthy to be compared with the **glory** that is **about to** be [Gk. mello] **revealed** to us. For the anxious longing of the creation **waits eagerly** for the **revealing** of the **sons of God**...for our **adoption** as **sons, the redemption of our body** . . . .

1 John 2:28 . . . abide in Him so that when He appears we may have confidence and **not shrink away** from Him in shame **at His coming** . . . .

2 Thess. 1:7, 10 . . . the Lord Jesus will be **revealed** from heaven **with His mighty angels** . . . when He comes to be **glorified in His saints** on that day, and to be **marveled at** among all who have believed . . . .

1 Cor. 15:51-53 . . . **we** will **not** all sleep [**die** before the *Parousia*], but **we** will all **be changed**, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead [Gk. is plural] will be **raised** imperishable, and **we will be changed**. . . . **put on** the imperishable . . . **put on** immortality.

1 Thess. 4:16-17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a **shout**, with the **voice of the archangel** and with the **trumpet of God**, and the dead in Christ will **rise** first. Then **we who are alive and remain** will be **caught up together with them** in the clouds to **meet the Lord in the air**.

3. What **rewards** did Christ and the Apostles say that the **living saints** would **receive** at His return?

Matt. 19:28-29 . . . you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall **sit upon twelve thrones**, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has [forfeited property or relationships] for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will **inherit eternal life**.

Jude 1:21 . . . **waiting anxiously** for . . . **eternal life**.

1 Thess. 1:10 . . . wait for His Son from heaven . . . who **rescues us** from the wrath to come.

1 Thess. 5:9-10 . . . God has **not** appointed **us** to wrath, but for **obtaining salvation**...and to await His Son from Heaven . . . the One **delivering us** from the coming wrath.

2 Thess. 1:7-10 . . . give **relief to you** who are afflicted and **to us as well** when the Lord Jesus will be **revealed** from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire...when He comes to be **glorified in His saints on that day**, and to be **marveled at among all who have believed** . . . .

1 Pet. 1:7 . . . so that the proof of your faith . . . may be found to result in **praise and glory and honor** at the **revelation** of Jesus Christ.

1 Pet. 5:1, 4, 6 . . . **partaker also of the glory** that is **about to be** [Gk. mello] **revealed**...when the Chief Shepherd **appears you** will **receive** the unfading **crown of glory**...**exalt you** at the proper time . . . .

Rom. 8:17-23 . . . if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be **glorified with Him**. For I consider that the sufferings of this **present** time are not worthy to be compared with the **glory** that is **about to be** [Gk. mello] **revealed to us**. . . . the **revealing of the sons of God**. . . . creation itself also will be **set free** from its slavery to corruption into the **freedom of the glory of the children of God**...**we** ourselves **groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly** for our **adoption as sons, the redemption of our body**.

2 Tim. 4:8 . . . in the future there is laid up for me the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will **award** to . . . **all who have loved His appearing**.

Rev. 3:10-11 . . . I also will **keep you from the hour of testing**, that hour which is **about** to come upon the whole world . . . hold fast what **you have**, so that no one will take **your crown**.

**4. How intense were the **expectations** and **emotions** of the living saints?**

Heb. 9:28 [Christ] . . . will appear a second time . . . to **those** who **eagerly await Him**.

Rev. 6:10-11 . . . **How long, O Lord**, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging . . . .

1 Cor. 16:22 . . . Maranatha [Aramaic expression meaning, **Our Lord, Come!**].

Rev 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, **I am coming quickly.**” Amen. **Come**, Lord Jesus!

Rom. 8:19-25 For the **anxious longing** of the creation **waits eagerly** for the revealing of the sons of God . . . **we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly** for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body . . . we **hope** for what we do not see, **with perseverance we wait eagerly** for it.

2 Cor. 5:2-4 For indeed in this house **we groan, longing** to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven . . . while we are in this tent, we **groan, being burdened**...

2 Tim. 4:8 . . . the crown of righteousness, which the Lord . . . will award to . . . **all who have loved His appearing**.

Jude 1:21 . . . **waiting anxiously** for . . . eternal life.



1 Cor. 1:7 . . . **awaiting eagerly** the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 21:36 But keep **on the alert at all times**, praying that you may have strength to escape . . . and to stand before the Son of Man.

2 Pet. 3:12-14 . . . **looking for and hastening** the coming of the day of God . . . according to His promise we are **looking** for new heavens and a new earth . . . since you look for these things, be **diligent** to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless...

1 Pet. 1:13 Therefore, **prepare your minds for action**, keep sober in spirit, **fix** your hope **completely** on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Pet. 4:13 . . . but to the degree that you **share the sufferings** of Christ, **keep on rejoicing**, so that also **at the revelation** of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

1 John 2:28 . . . abide in Him **so** that when He appears we may have confidence and **not shrink away** from Him in shame **at His coming** . . . .

5. What was supposed to happen to the **bodies** of **the living saints** at the *Parousia*?

1 John 3:2 . . . We know that when He appears, **we will be like Him** . . . .

Phil. 3:20-21 . . . eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will **transform our lowly [mortal] body** that it may be **conformed to His glorious body** . . . . (NKJV)

1 Cor. 15:37-38 . . . that which you sow [the seed], **you do not sow the body which is to be** . . . But **God** gives it [the seed] a **body** just as **He** wished, and to **each of the seeds** a **body** of **its** own. [note the **plural** number of **bodies** here, not one collective body]

1 Cor. 15:51-53 . . . we will **not all sleep [die]**, but **we will all be changed** . . . the dead ones [plural] will be **raised incorruptible**, and **we will be changed**. . . . **put on** incorruption . . . **put on** immortality. [Correct translation of the Greek—note the **plural** number of dead ones, and the **distinction between living and dead saints**. The **dead** saints are **raised**, but the **living** saints are **changed**. So the resurrection is not of a collective body of both living and dead saints. **The resurrection applies only to the dead saints.**]

2 Cor. 5:1-4 . . . in this **house** we groan, longing to be **clothed with our dwelling from heaven**, inasmuch as we, having **put it on**, will **not be found naked [disembodied]**. . . . in this **tent**, we groan, being burdened, because we do **not** want to be **unclothed [disembodied by death]** but to be **clothed upon [with our immortal bodies]**, so that what is **mortal** will be **swallowed up by life**. (cf. Weymouth and NIV)

Rom. 8:17-23 . . . if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be **glorified with Him**. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the **glory** that is **about to be** [Gk. mello] revealed to us. . . . the **revealing of the sons of God**. . . . creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the **glory of the children of God**...we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting eagerly** for our **adoption as sons**, the **redemption of our body**.

1 Thess. 5:23 . . . may your whole spirit, soul, and **body** be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. [NKJV]

1 Thess. 4:16-17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven . . . and the **dead** in Christ **will rise** first. Then **we who are alive and remain** will be **caught up together** with them in the clouds to **meet the Lord in the air** . . . .

[Note that the **catching up** is something that happens to **living people** while they are **still alive, not after they die**. The dead are raised and caught up, but the **living are changed and caught up**. The **bodies of the living saints had to be changed**, since flesh and blood bodies **cannot** dwell in the spiritual realm (1 Cor. 15:50-52). This **bodily change** enabled them to **avoid physical death**, and then they were **caught up in their new immortal bodies** along with the **resurrected dead** to be with Christ forever.]

**6. Where** was Christ, and **where** were the living saints at the time of the *Parousia*?

Matt. 19:28 And Jesus said to [the twelve] . . . in the regeneration when the Son of Man will **sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones**, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Luke 22:30 that you may eat and drink **at My table in My kingdom**, and **you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel**. [cf. Matt 8:11; Luke 13:28-29; 14:15; and Enoch 62:14]

Matt. 24:30-31 . . . they will see the Son of Man **coming on the clouds of heaven** with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will **gather together His elect** . . . from one end of the heavens to the other.

2 Thess. 2:1 . . . the coming [Gk. *Parousia*] of our Lord Jesus Christ and **our gathering together to Him** . . . .

John 14:3 I will come again and **receive you to Myself**, that **where I am, there you may be also**.

2 Thess. 1:7-10 . . . the Lord Jesus will be **revealed from heaven** with His mighty angels in flaming fire . . . when He comes **to be glorified in His saints** on that day, and **to be marveled at among all who have believed** . . . .

Col. 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be **revealed with Him in glory**.

Luke 21:36 . . . stand **before** the Son of Man.

Jude 1:24 . . . **stand in the presence of His glory** blameless with great joy . . . .

1 John 2:28 . . . abide in Him so that when He appears we may have confidence and **not shrink away from Him** in shame at His coming . . . .

2 Cor. 4:14 . . . knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will **present us with you**.

1 Thess. 2:19 . . . in the **presence of our Lord Jesus** at His *Parousia*.

1 Thess. 4:16-17 For the Lord Himself will **descend from heaven** . . . **caught up** together with them in the clouds to **meet the Lord in the air**. And so we will always **be with the Lord**.

### **Implications of These Statements:**

From the above, it is apparent that the saints **living** at the time of the *Parousia* were **anxiously awaiting** His return, **groaning** within themselves, **longing** to be clothed with their immortal bodies. They were **looking for** and **hastening** the day. They had **fixed** their hope completely upon it. It was **not** something they would let pass by **unnoticed**. They were told they would **not** only be **consciously aware** of Christ's return, but that they would **see** the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, and Christ would send His angels to gather **them**. He told the apostles that all twelve of them (including those still alive) would be received to Him and **sit on twelve thrones** and  **dwell in the places He had prepared for them** in His Father's house (heaven).

Before the saints could be **caught up (raptured)** into the **spiritual realm where Christ and the angels were**, their lowly (**mortal**) **bodies** had to be **changed (transformed)** from **mortal** to **immortal** to be **like Christ's glorious body**. The dead were raised first, then the **living were changed**, and **together as one group** they were **caught up to be with Christ**.

They would not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming, but would **draw near** and **glorify Him** on that day and **marvel at Him** in the presence of all who had been gathered. They would **rejoice** with exultation when they **stood before** the Son of Man in the presence of His *Parousia*, and from that time forward they would **always be with the Lord**.

## No Other Viable Option Besides a Rapture:

What other options are there besides a rapture? No other options or objections we have looked at in our studies are viable in view of the multitude of "**expectation statements**" in our New Testament. The silence about the fulfillment of the big three events is inexplicable – in view of their **intense expectations**. They should have been shouting the fulfillment from the housetops **if they were still around**. There is simply no way they could have kept quiet about it **if they were still left on earth**.

So the only two options we have are these:

1. The *Parousia* didn't happen in AD 70 (nonfulfillment)
2. Every true saint who witnessed it was **raptured**.

There simply are no other reasonable options in view of the numerous "expectation statements" and the "deafening silence" afterwards. Nothing was written about the fulfillments because **all** those who knew about the fulfillments **were gone**. What the "time" statements do for the Preterist view, the "expectation statements" do for the rapture view. The time statements **demand** an AD 70 *Parousia*, and the "expectation statements" **demand** a rapture to explain the silence.

## Did any pre-AD 70 believers 'Live and Remain' Beyond AD 70?

The multitude of inspired Biblical expectancy verses we have just studied in Study Series 14 Lesson 3 and 4 are by far more reliable to give us a clearer picture of what we should expect to find immediately after AD 70 than the uninspired, unreliable and confused **traditions** and **speculation** of later church fathers. James Jordan correctly observed that in many ways the "church fathers" are more like "**church babies**." After the fog clears from the **almost total silence of AD 70-100**, the second century writers begin to muddle their way into developing their theology, and **immediately** plunge into numerous ecclesiastical and doctrinal deviations such as Montanism, Ebionism, Sacerdotalism, and Chiliasm.

If some of the apostle were still around during the period AD 70-100 and were still teaching sound doctrine to their supposed disciples, how could those "apostolic fathers" in the early second century move so far away so quickly? **It is not just confusion about eschatology, but chaos in every doctrinal area.** I find it very hard to believe that any of the apostles, or their faithful disciples e.g. Timothy, Titus, Silas, Luke, Mark, Gaius, Aristarchus, et al) lived beyond AD 70. **We don't hear from a single one of them** during the hiatus of AD 70-100.

Nor do we have any records of **any** of the apostolic disciples (such as Silas, Luke, Timothy or Titus) gathering disciples and teaching them the inspired apostolic traditions. Where did all these early church leaders go? Why do they **vanish without a trace?**

Why is the period AD 70-100 so **silent**, and the period AD 100-150 so **confused and plagued with numerous departures from the apostolic patterns**, if some of the apostles or their direct disciples were still around until well into the second century? If they were still around after AD 70, **this silence, confusion and rapid descent into doctrinal deviation is incriminating.** It surely looks like they were seriously derelict in their duty. This is not what we would expect to find **if any of them were still around.**

- The only credible answer → they were **all** "caught up" (**raptured**) to be where the Lord is forever. (Amen!)