

"We Would See Jesus"

A. T. Jones

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"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast; the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus."

The desire of these Greeks was certainly a very natural one. They had come up to Jerusalem to worship, and had found the name of Jesus upon everybody's lips. From the highest to the lowest, from the proud and courted Pharisee to the outcast leper, from the high priest and the chief priests, supposed to be the purest in the nation, to the abandoned sinner, all, all were talking about Jesus. Of course, all were not praising Him; all were not glorifying Him; the chief priests and the Pharisees were most bitterly opposed to Him, and were only waiting impatiently for an opportunity to kill Him, while the common people were anxious to make Him a king. But whether it was to praise or to condemn, whether it was to kill or to make a king, the sole subject of it all was Jesus, and it was the most natural thing in the world that these Greeks should want to see the Person about whom so much was said.

The Name of Jesus

From that day to this the name that has been used most in this world is the name of Jesus. The one Person about whom more has been said, and of whom more has been made, than of any other person this world ever saw, is the Man Christ Jesus. True, as at the first, some have praised Him, and some have cursed Him; some have worshiped Him, while others

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have sought to kill Him, and often He has been wounded in the house of His friends; still the name more than all others that is used in the wide world to-day is the name of Jesus. And with those Greeks of old we now say, "We would see Jesus;" not, however, as they, simply because much is said of Him, either for or against Him; not because there are even now those who would kill at least His name out of the earth; nor yet because there are those, as the religio-political reformers, who would take Him by force and make Him king of earthly governments. Not because of any of these things would we see Him. But we would see Him as He is.

We Would See Him, for We Love Him

For even as saith the Scripture, having not seen Him, we love Him (1 Peter 1:8); and, because we love Him, we would see Him. Having not seen Him, we

love Him, because He first loved us. We love Him because He loved us and gave Himself for us. We love Him for His gentle pity for sinners such as we are. We love Him for His cheerful mercy to men so fearfully undeserving as are we. We love Him because, in "the great love wherewith He loved us," He "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." We love Him for His lofty humanity. We love Him for His "profound reverence for infinite goodness and truth." We love Him for the moral force and the benign influence of His mighty character. We love Him for His perfect goodness. For this cause would we see Him. We would see Him because of the character He bears, And all the forms of love He wears."

Yet We Would Not Now See Him as He Was

We would not now see His visage so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men. We would not now see Him a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. We would not now see Him oppressed and afflicted. We would not now see Him taken as a lamb to the slaughter. We would not now see Him in His travail of soul. We would not now see Him in His dreadful agony on the cruel tree.

No; We Would See Him as He Is

We would see Him "that liveth," though once dead, yet now "alive forevermore, Amen," and who has "the keys of hell and of death." We would see Him as the disciples saw Him, "His face did shine as the sun," "and His raiment became shining," "white as the light," "exceeding white as snow, so that no fuller on earth can white them." We would see Him as Stephen saw Him, "in glory, standing on the right hand of God." We would see Him as Paul saw Him, "shining in light "above the brightness of the sun." We would see Him as John saw Him; "His head and His hairs white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters;" "and His countenance as the sun shineth in his strength." We would see Him as Isaiah saw Him, "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up," and the train of His glory filling the heavenly temple, about Him standing the bright seraphim shading their glorious faces from His ineffable glory, and crying one unto another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." Isa. 6:1-4 with John 12:41.

We Would See Him Coming in the Clouds

...in heaven with power and great glory, and would hear His mighty voice saying to His angels, "Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." And then and there, in the midst of the church, would we see Him and hear His glorious voice singing that song of promised praise to the Father. Heb. 2:12. Oh, 'tis thus that "we would see Jesus"!

And we thank God, not only for the hope that we shall see Him as He is, but also that the signs are abundant all about us that soon this "blessed hope" shall be fulfilled.

And We Shall Be Like Him

And the blessed promise is that we shall not only "see Him as He is," but "we shall be like Him." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." We would see Jesus. In this hope we live. For its fruition we wait. But, while so living and waiting, we would never for a moment forget that he "that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3:2, 3.

AND, EVEN SO, WE WOULD INDEED SEE JESUS

"We shall see Him as He is;
Sweeter promise is there none
Than is given us in this,
For Christ's friends to think upon.
Though we walk in darkness here,
With the fogs about our face,
All the mists will disappear
When we gain our resting-place."

The Scriptural Foundation for This Blessed Hope

Christ has been here on earth once, and He has promised to come again.

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28.

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. 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 14:1-3.

"And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, 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 1:9-11.

The second advent of Christ is clearly foretold in the Old Testament, as follows:ó

(a) Enoch prophesied of Christ's coming in glory.

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints." Jude 14.

(b) Job believed in the coming of Christ at the last day.

"For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though

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after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not a stranger [mar-gin] ; though my reins be consumed within me." Job 19 :25-27.

(c) David spoke of Christ's coming to gather His saints.

(d) "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall all to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." Ps. 50:3-5.

Isaiah prophesied of Jesus' coming to save His people and to destroy the wicked.

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall he said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:8, 9.

"For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Isa. 66:15, 16.

Christ's coming will be personal, in the clouds of heaven, and every eye shall see Him.

"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.

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"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Luke 21:27.

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." Rev. 1:7.

"Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. 24:26, 27.

"Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62.

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." Mark 13:26.

"For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." Luke 9:26.

He will come with all the holy angels, and will then gather the saints.

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." Matt. 25:31.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matt. 24:30, 31.

JESUS

"The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels." Matt. 13:30.

Only those who love and prepare for His appearing will then rejoice and be saved.

"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 Tim. 4:8.

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28.

"And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him." Isa. 8:17.

"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:9.

The righteous are then taken up to meet Christ in the clouds, who takes them to the city, New Jerusalem, which He has prepared for the saints.

"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 Thess. 4:16, 17.

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and

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prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." John 14:1-4.

All the living wicked will also see Christ when He comes in glory, but they will see Him with anguish, and will then be destroyed.

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." Rev. 1:7.

"And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. 6:14-17.

For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Isa. 66:15, 16.

He Will Come for His Own

"And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels." Mal. 3:17. He comes not as a thief in the sense of stealing in stealthily and quietly upon the world, and purloining goods to which He has no right. But He comes to

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take to Himself His dearest treasure, His sleeping and living saints, whom He has purchased with His own precious blood, whom He has wrested from the power of death in fair and open conflict, and for whom His coming will be no less open and triumphant, too. It will be with the brilliancy and splendor of the lightning as it shines from the east to the west. Matt. 24:27. It will be with a sound of a trumpet that shall pierce to earth's lowest depths, and with a mighty voice that shall wake the sainted sleepers from their dusty beds. Matt. 24:31, margin; 1 Thess. 4:16. He will come upon the wicked as a thief, only because they persistently shut their eyes to the tokens of His approach, and will not believe the declarations of His Word that He is at the door.

A Glorious Climax of the Plan of Salvation

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Rev. 22:20, 21.

The Word of God is given to instruct us in reference to the plan of salvation. The second coming of Christ is to be the climax and completion of that great scheme. It is most appropriate, therefore, that the book should close with the solemn announcement, "Surely I come quickly." Be it ours to join with fervent hearts in the response of the apostle: "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Thus closes the volume of inspiration, ócloses with that which constitutes the best of all promises, and the substance of the Christian's hope, óthe return of Christ.

Then Shall the Elect Be Gathered

and bid a long farewell to all the ills of this mortal life. How rich in all that is precious to the Christian

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is this promise! Wandering in exile in this evil world, separated from the few of like precious faith, he longs for the companionship of the righteous, the communion of saints. Here he shall obtain it; for all the good shall be gathered, not from one land only, but from all lands; not from one age only, but from ages, óthe great harvest of all the good, coming up in long and glorious procession, while angels shout the harvest home, and the timbrels of heaven sound forth in joyous concert; and a song before unheard, unknown, in the universe, the song of the redeemed, shall add its marvelous notes of rapture and melody to the universal jubilee. So shall the saints be gathered, to be joyful in each other's presence forever and ever,

"While the glory of God, like a molten sea,
Bathes the immortal company."

This gathering has nothing in it but that which is desirable. The saints can but sigh and pray for it. Like Job, they cry out for the presence of God. Like David, they can not be satisfied till they awake in His likeness. In this mortal condition we groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon. We can but be "upon tiptoe" for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. Our eyes are open for its visions, our ears are waiting to catch the sounds of the heavenly music, and our hearts are beating in anticipation of its infinite joy. Our appetites are "COME, LORD JESUS, COME QUICKLY. No news more welcome than the announcement that the command has gone forth from the Lord to His angels,

"Gather together unto Me My elect from the four winds of
heaven."

The Goodly Land

There is a land which stands in a wonderful contrast to this.

"Oh, how unlike the present world
Will be the one to come!"

There are fields smiling in living green, trees majestic in their wealth of verdure, flowers dazzling with their rainbow hues, and on neither field nor tree nor flower is there the touch of frost or the pale hand of decay. There are no footprints of the curse, no scars of sin. No pestilence walks in darkness, nor destruction wastes at noonday. There are no forms distorted with pain, nor brows furrowed with anxiety and care. I see no mournful shafts, telling where weary forms and sad and broken hearts have in darkness moldered into dust. There are no painful messages passing over that land, telling that a friend, a brother, a fellow-laborer has fallen beneath the cruel stroke of a relentless foe. There is no darkened room where the tide of a precious life is ebbing slowly away. There are no bosoms heaving with anguish, no badges of mourning, no funeral trains, no

yawning, insatiate grave. But, on the other hand, there is a glorious company, who bear bright palms of victory over death and the grave.

There every eye is sparkling with the fulness of the joy that reigns within. On every cheek is the bloom of eternal youth and everlasting health. Every limb is lithe and strong. The lame man leaps as an hart. I see the blind gazing with rapture on the celestial glory. I see the deaf listening enchanted to the heavenly melody. He who was once dumb joins with loud voice in the anthems of praise. The mother clasps to her bosom the children she had lost awhile in the land of the enemy, but now recovered forever. Long-parted friends meet in eternal reunion. There

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is the river so pure and clear, so charged with every element of refreshment and life that it is called "the river of life." One overarching tree is so healing in its leaves, so vivifying in its fruits, so potent in its ministry, that it is called "the tree of life." There is the great white throne, in whose effulgence there is no need of moon or sun to give us light; and from its center a voice is saying to that victorious company, "This is your rest forever, and you shall no more be acquainted with grief; for there shall be no more pain or death, and sorrow and mourning have forever fled away." And in all the universe there is thenceforth no trace of sin or suffering, but from every world and from every creature rises a joyous anthem, like the sound of many waters, going up to God; and they say, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

The Place of Gathering

has nothing but attraction. Jesus, the fairest among ten thousand, is there. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Noah, Job, and Daniel, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, the perfection of heavenly society, will be there. Visions of beauty are there, flowers that never fade, streams that never dry, products in variety that never ends, fruits that never decay, crowns that never dim, harps that know no discord, and all else of which a taste purified from sin and raised to the plane of immortality can form any conception or think desirable, will be there.

We Must Be There

We must bask in the forgiving smiles of God, to whom we have become reconciled, and sin no more; we must have access to that exhaustless fount of vital-

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ity, the fruit of the tree of life, and never die; we must repose under the shadow of its leaves, which are for the service of the nations, and never again grow weary; we must drink from the life-giving fountain, and thirst nevermore; we must bathe in its silvery spray, and be refreshed; we must walk on its golden sands, and feel that we are no longer exiles; we must exchange the cross for the crown, and feel that the days of our humiliation are ended; we must lay down the staff and take

the palm branch, and feel that the journey is done; we must put off the rent garments of our warfare for the white robes of triumph, and feel that the conflict is ended and the victory gained; we must exchange the toil-worn, dusty girdle of our pilgrimage for the glorious vesture of immortality, and feel that sin and the curse can never more pollute us. O day of rest and triumph and every good, delay not thy dawning! Let the angels at once be sent to gather the elect. Let the promise be fulfilled which bears in its train these matchless glories.

"Even so, Come, Lord Jesus"

