

BEING WITH CHRIST AT HIS COMING

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed and read the Bible for this lesson to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes. When you follow this procedure you will be a better teacher of your students.

Lesson Aim: Establish the students' hearts in holiness at the coming of Jesus with all His saints..

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson. Insert questions that fit your lesson aim for class discussion. Use the ones below where appropriate.

Introduction: In 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20 Paul explains to the church that his failure to return to them was not a lack of love for them or no concern for their welfare. He, in fact, expresses his strong longing to return to them, but every attempt he made was thwarted by Satan. In chapter three we read that Paul finally resorted to sending Timothy in his place. Timothy was to encourage and establish them in their faith. After a short while Timothy returned to Paul in Corinth with good news (this is the only place in all of Paul's writings where he used the Greek word for "gospel" in any other sense than the good news of God's saving grace). This good news from Timothy greatly relieved Paul. He took this occasion to write this letter to these believers to express his joy and thanksgiving to God concerning their steadfast faith. He ended this chapter with a prayer that their hearts would be established "in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints" (1 Thes 3:13).

What causes many church planting missionaries great emotional stress? 3:1-5

Good missionaries have a longing to visit the churches that they have started so they might be able to establish and comfort them in their faith and not let persecution and various trials of life destroy their faith so that the missionaries' labor has not been in vain. That was Paul's great concern.

How did Timothy's good report about the church in Thessalonica affect Paul? 3:7-10

First, it gave him comfort in all his "afflictions and distress" (3:7). Second, it gave him life, that is, renewed strength to serve the Lord (3:8). Third, Paul thanked God for the joy that it brought to him to hear about their zeal for the Lord in spite of the persecution that they suffered (3:9). Fourth, it caused him to pray exceedingly with renewed energy to see them face to face and to perfect their faith (3:10). Pray for the churches that missionaries start that they may remain faithful in spite of persecution and trials. This will give a missionary great joy and encourage him to serve the Lord with renewed vigor.

What does it mean that the Lord Jesus Christ will come "with all His saints"? 3:13

Doesn't that refer to Christ's Second Coming with His angels? "Saints" means they are "holy ones." Since the good angels are holy ones, some Christians believe that "saints" refers to angels and they will come with Jesus Christ as He said they would when He comes back to earth to defeat Antichrist and establish His Millennial Kingdom (Mt 16:27; 24:31; 25:31). However, "saints" most often refers to the believers in the churches that have been made holy by the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 1:2; 6:2; Eph 4:12; Phil 1:1). This meaning for "saints" fits the context of Paul's message best in this verse because he refers to the Rapture of believers in the very next chapter.

What Church "saints" will come with Jesus Christ at the time of the Rapture? 3:13

Church "saints" that die will go to Heaven and receive a body not made with hands eternal in the heavens. This body is given to them so that their spirit will not be naked (2 Cor 5:1-3). This is not the resurrection body. The believers that come with Jesus Christ at the Rapture will receive a resurrected body and the ones that are alive on earth at His coming will have their bodies changed to be like Christ's in a twinkling of an eye. These believers are the Church, His Bride (Eph 5:25-27, 32). He will take His Bride to Heaven where He will marry her (Rev 19:7-9). Are you ready for the Rapture?

Will all believers be given their resurrection bodies at the Rapture?

It is not likely. The purpose of the Rapture is to give the Bride of Jesus Christ a body like His and bring her to Heaven for His marriage to her. The Old Testament believers and those that receive Jesus Christ as Savior after the Rapture will receive their resurrection bodies when He returns with His Bride at His Second Coming. Then all believers will live and reign with Christ for 1000 years in His Millennial Kingdom on earth (Zech 14:9; Rev 20:4, 6).