

Tuesday's Touch #49

...from Pastor Ed ...December 29, 2009

Christmas Upside Down

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ... Titus 2:13

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 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: 29-31

As we have just celebrated the first advent of our Lord, we now turn our attention to the blessed hope of the church – his glorious second coming. The time between these two appearances is called in scripture *the last days*. As we look upon the arrival of another year, and observe the present state of the world, our hearts are quickened at the possibility that we are in the last of the last days. What shall his next coming be like? I am struck as I consider that glorious event that we can accurately describe it by simply inverting the circumstances of his first coming. It will be Christmas upside down.

He came in meekness and lowliness and few noticed. He shall come in power and great glory and all the world shall see. In the little town of Bethlehem he was born in obscurity, and only a few lowly shepherds were immediately notified. Later, a few wise men visited him, and in his life a relatively few followed him. However, when he comes *again*, he will not be born an infant of lowly estate. He will not gradually emerge as a great world leader. He will not simply come “spiritually” to empower his church to world dominion. He will not again come robed in secrecy. The King of Kings and Lord of Lord shall come with blinding clouds of glory and every eye shall behold him (Matt 24:29-31; Rev 1:7).

Glory splits the eastern sky
Flooding all the land;
The saints rejoice as demons flee
The unveiling of I AM!

The first time ***he came peacefully to send forth a sword. He shall come again with a great sword to bring in everlasting peace.*** There will never be peace on earth while darkness and light, evil and good, error and truth, dwell together. As Jesus sent forth the gospel of salvation it was clear that the truth of himself would not unite these opposites but highlight them and further divide nations and families (Matt 10:34). But when Christ returns he will wield a sword of holiness and truth destroying forever all that is dark and evil. For now, the Prince of Peace establishes his peaceful kingdom in the hearts of believers (Lk 17:20-21), but then, throughout all of his creation. *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever (Isaiah 9:7). And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever (Isaiah 32:17).*

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
God is not dead nor doth he sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail
With peace on earth, good will toward men! *Longfellow*

He came to be judged in place of sinners. He shall come as the Judge of sinners. He first came not to judge the world but to secure salvation for his sheep (John 3:17; 10:11). The Babe in a manger was born to be a sacrifice for sinners (Matt 20:28; 1Tim 2:6). *He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2Cor 5:21).* Now all judgment has been committed to him (John 5:22), and at his coming *we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ...every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. ...every one of us shall give account of himself... (Rom 14:10-12).* And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:15), *...the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their place in the lake of fire (Rev 21:8).* In light of this awful reality to come, how precious are the words of our Savior: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who hears my word, and believes on Him who sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed from death unto life (John 5:24).* And Paul assures us, *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom 8:1).*

My sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought,
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
O my soul. *Spafford*

Finally, ***he first came to be made like us and taste death for every man. He shall come to make us like himself that we may know death no more.*** It was necessary in bringing many sons to glory that he should be made like them (Philip 2:5-8; Heb 2:10-15). But when he comes again he shall *change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (Philip3:21).* *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does 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 (1John 3:2).* *Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ...then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? (1Corinth 15:51-55)* *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (Rev 21:4).*

Then I shall be where I would be,
And I shall be what I should be,
Things that are not now, nor could be,
Then shall be my own. *Kelly*

Lord of Peace and Glory,,
Even so, come quickly!
Amen

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