

THE SAINTS GLORIFIED

I. What will we be like?

II. What will we look like?

1 John 3:2-3

TEXT: *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

In Jesus' name, fellow redeemed:

What is going to happen the moment Judgment Day begins? Here is the scenario as Scripture depicts it:

There is coming a moment in time when suddenly the presence of the Lord Jesus in all His glory will burst through the heavens in a way cannot be imagined. Jesus said: *At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.* Mt 24 What will that look like? I can't exactly say how this will look since ALL eyes will see Him. Again, Jesus speaks about this moment in time: *A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.* Jn 5 What will that look like? Based upon the previous verse that says: *And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.* ... and then add the inspired word of Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians where it is written: *According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that ... the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.* 1 Th 4 These words clearly describe that moment when by the power of our Creator's almighty word, all souls ever conceived on the face of this earth will rise from the dead. Their souls will be re-united with their earthly bodies buried from wherever they may have been buried. Scripture says that the sea will give up it's dead. Those who have done good will rise to live. Those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

Jesus also tells us this about this quick and decisive separation of humanity into two groups: *When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.* Mt 25 Now as this separation is taking place, and as you and I (if we are still alive when this happens) witness first hand the resurrection of the dead and are, as Paul says being *caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...* Paul also informs us of this fact: *Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.* 1 Co 15 And it is this

moment in time, in the very near future, about which Jesus is speaking when He said to His disciples: ***Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.*** Mt 13

That's what is about to happen when on Judgment Day Jesus returns. It will happen quickly and powerfully. There will be no mistaken identities since it is while on this earth, during our lifetimes here that faith in Jesus purifies us before the Judge of heaven and earth, just as it says in today's sermon text: ***Everyone who has this hope in him (that is, Christ) purifies himself, just as (Christ) is pure.*** In the twinkling of the eye, we will be glorified and taken to heaven.

I have two questions that we might consider this morning. I. What will we be like? II. What will we look like?

I. John addresses these questions: ***Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him...*** What that will be like is then defined as this: ***Everyone who has this hope in him (that is, Christ) purifies himself, just as (Christ) is pure.*** You've heard me say this before: We must be as pure and good and holy and perfect as God Himself. Unless we know how this can be, there can be no comfort at all because who can possibly make the claim that he is as good as God?

If Judgment Day were indeed as it is often portrayed, as standing in line before the Judge of heaven and earth, and if it were indeed as it is often portrayed as coming up to the "pearly gates" to hear St. Peter ask us why we deserve to enter, who could be certain? Only those who think that there is no Judgment, or who think that God is only kidding, or who think that God is also a sinner who really doesn't mean what He says and that He would never really damn any one to hell except for those people whom WE judge ought to go there.

There is, however, a purity, a moral perfection and goodness, a righteousness that is outside of ourselves. It is the righteousness of God Himself seen in the life of Jesus. Jeremiah refers to that righteousness of God when he says of the coming Christ: ***the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. ... This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.*** Jer 23 Jesus' blood paid for our sins and His perfect life is the righteousness that is our glorious dress!

Believe it or you are on your own. But John warns those who doubt and comforts all who believe with this: ***when he appears, we shall be like him, ... Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*** Be like Jesus through faith in this hope that is substantiated by His death and resurrection, declared to be true by God Himself, or try to get to heaven by your own good works.

God's children know the answer to that and look forward to Christ's coming when we will be like Jesus in another way. Paul anticipates this question in his letter to the Corinthians when he writes: ***someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"*** 1 Co 15 John says, "look at Jesus' body!"

II. ***Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*** How much more clearly could this be said? Not that we will be God, but according to Jesus' human nature we will be like him who rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. What our Lord looked like was not what He looked like when they buried him.

The only wounds that He had left on His body were the wounds that remained for us to see for our comfort and joy: the nail prints in his hands and feet, and the spear wound in His side.

But for us, there will be no wounds. The Apostle Paul writes this concerning the bodies that we will have upon our resurrection: *But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" ... The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.* It sounds to us like a contradiction in terms: spiritual body, natural body. We know what is a natural body, since we all have one. But there is a new creation of this body, a rebuilt body. It will still be our body, as Job says: *After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes-I, and not another.* Job 19 Like they identified Jesus after they overcame their disbelief and amazement over His glorious resurrected body, we will identify ourselves and others even with these glorious bodies.

Paul goes on: *I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." 1 Co 15* And with this body, your glorification will begin. It will begin and last forever in God's paradise.

The One who makes these promises has sealed them with His blood. So we pray: Come quickly, Lord Jesus! Amen.