

# THE RETURN OF CHRIST

Acts 1:6-11

**John 14:3**, “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.”

Men scoff at the idea that Jesus Christ will personally return to this earth. They say that God has never intervened in human history, and that He never will. **2 Peter 3:3-4**, “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.”

Peter goes on to say that they are willingly ignorant of the facts. God has intervened. He sent the flood and destroyed all but eight souls from the face of the earth. **2 Peter 3:5-6**, “For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:” He says He will intervene again, **2 Peter 3:7**, “But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

We had better believe what He says. One of the reasons He has not yet returned is to allow more men and women to be saved. **2 Peter 3:9**, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

## I. HIS RETURN IS CERTAIN.

The Bible is very clear on this. Perhaps no other doctrine except the doctrine of salvation stands out as clearly. Those who scoff at His return are very foolish indeed.

### A. It is promised by the Old Testament prophets.

Every book in the Old Testament speaks definitely of or refers to Christ's return. **Zechariah 14:1-4**, “Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”

### B. It is mentioned 318 times in the New Testament. (One verse out of twenty assures us of this.)

#### 1. *Jesus said He would return.*

**Matthew 24:29-30**, “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.”

#### 2. *Angels said He would return.*

**Acts 1:11**, “...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.”

#### 3. *The apostles wrote extensively about it, Paul and John the most.*

**1 Thessalonians 4:16**, “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:”

## II. HIS RETURN IS THE ONLY REASONABLE ANSWER THE WORLD'S MESS.

**A. Nineteen civilizations have failed without a lasting peace.**

**B. Our civilization is failing.**

*1. Immorality, crime and violence are increasing all over the world.*

*2. Insurgency threatens many governments of the world.*

**III. HIS RETURN IS THE KEY TO RIGHTLY UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE.**

**2 Timothy 2:15**, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

There are different methods that men apply to interpreting Scripture. All but one of these actually makes the mind of the interpreter to be the final authority. Do we want the mind of man to be the final authority, or do we want God to be the final authority?

The only method that allows the actual words of Scripture, God’s words to be the final authority is the normal, literal method of interpretation. Simply stated this means that you interpret the Bible by allowing the words to mean what they say and say what they mean. Unless it is clearly indicated by the passage that they are not to be taken literally, the words are taken literally to mean what they say in our normal understanding of words. This will allow for the different dispensations or ages to be factored in.

With careful study of the Scripture applying this method it is easy to see the order of His return. Here is the basic outline:

1) **RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH**- All born-again believers in Christ will be taken out of the world suddenly along with the dead in Christ (1 Cor. 15:51-58; 1 Thes. 4:13-18). **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**, “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.”

2) **JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST**- This follows the rapture and takes place in Heaven. All the saved will stand before Christ and give an account (Rom. 14:10-13; 2 Cor. 5:9-11). **2 Corinthians 5:10**, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

3) **TRIBULATION PERIOD**- This also follows the rapture and consists of seven years of God's judgment being poured out on the inhabitants of the earth (Rev. 6-18).

4) **RETURN OF CHRIST TO THE EARTH**- Christ will return to the earth visibly, bodily, and with all His saints after the tribulation period (Rev. 19:11-16).

5) **THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON**- This final campaign will end in the valley of Megeddo when Jesus returns to the earth. He will destroy all of the armies (Rev. 19:17-21).

6) **BINDING OF SATAN**- He will be bound for 1,000 years in the bottomless pit and will not be allowed to tempt anyone during that time (Rev. 20:1-3).

**7) THE REGATHERING AND PURGING OF ISRAEL**

**Ezekiel 20:33-38**, “As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.”

8) **JUDGMENT OF THE LIVING NATIONS**- All those remaining alive on the earth after the battle of

Armageddon will be brought before the Lord for judgment (Matt. 25:31-46).

9) **THE RESURRECTION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND TRIBULATION SAINTS** - (Rev. 20:4-5) **Daniel 12:1-3**, “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

10) **THE 1,000 YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST ON EARTH**- Jesus Christ Himself will reign as king of all the earth for 1,000 years from His throne in Jerusalem (Rev. 20:6).

11) **RELEASE OF SATAN AFTER THE 1,000 YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST**- Satan will be released for a short season to tempt the nations and then be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:7-10).

12) **THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT**- This present heaven and earth will be destroyed, and all the lost from the beginning of time will stand before God (Rev. 20:11-15).

13) **THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH**- God will create a new heaven and a new earth. He will place the New Jerusalem on the new earth (Rev. 21-22).

#### **IV. HIS RETURN IS IMMINENT.**

**Matthew 24:35-36**, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” **Acts 1:6-8**, “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Make no mistake. Jesus will return to this earth personally, physically, and visibly. He will right all wrongs then. Are you prepared to meet him?