

HIS COMING

For those who believe in the second coming of the Christ, there have been different forms suggested in which he will come back in. Some say he has already come back, but is invisible to our eyes. Others say he has yet to come but it will be in a phantom form. Still others say that God Himself will come and not Jesus the Christ. If we go by scripture, Jesus tells us that he shall return in the flesh. Why should we believe this? If we accept Jesus to be God's Christ and thus God's spokesman, then we will believe what Jesus said. ***"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 to heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."*** Acts 1:10, 11; ***"...and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them, and it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."*** Luke 24:50b, 51, 52; ***"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father..."*** John 20:17a.

It may be hard to understand and believe in the resurrection of Jesus, however, we know if it had been done through the power of man, there would understandably be doubt in many minds. Nevertheless, the act was done by God, our Creator, who is not limited in the capacity of His power although we often make comparisons of Him with mankind. From the preceding verses, we are told that Jesus, the Christ of God, ascended into heaven. The scripture gives us no other place of his stay than at the right hand of the Father in heaven. ***"And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power..."*** Mark 14:62a; ***"Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God..."*** I Peter 3:22a; ***"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost..."*** Acts 2:33a.

There is the question as to why Jesus would have to go to heaven. After being resurrected, he was in a state of fleshly pureness that could not remain on earth with the flesh of worldly lust about him; he would have to ascend into the heavenly abode until the Father determined the time of his return for the restitution of the earth. It is also worth noting that no one has gone to heaven, except Jesus. ***"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."*** John 3:13; ***"For David is not ascended into the heavens..."*** Acts 2:34.

Jesus' body was not to see corruption, therefore, his body was raised or resurrected from the dead at the end of three days from the time of his entombment. Salvation was gained for us through his victory over death, God's promise being fulfilled in Jesus: ***"... neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."*** Psalm 16:10b; ***"He [ie. King David] seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell [ie. the grave], neither his flesh did see corruption."*** Acts 2:31. God in His own appointed time would send His Christ back to earth. There are those that say that Jesus will return but be in an invisible or phantom-like state. Some had predicted that Jesus would return in 1914, however, when he did not return in the flesh during that year, they then stated that he did return but was invisible. The scriptures say nothing about him returning in an invisible state. When he returns, he will not be seen by all at the same time: some will see him sooner, some later. Those who do not live by his testament shall not meet him for the first resurrection. Let us show in what manner the Christ will return. ***"But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold, my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet."*** Luke 24:37 to 40; ***"...then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."*** John 20:26b, 27. After Jesus' resurrection, he was brought back in a fleshly form, but in a pure and incorruptible form of flesh. For forty days after his resurrection, Jesus walked upon the earth in his new regenerated fleshly state; he did not return in a phantom state. Why was Jesus upon the earth for forty days after being resurrected? So his disciples and those that knew him could attest that he was truly back

from the dead and in the form of flesh. The resurrection doesn't mean anything if we return in a spirit form; God's ability to bring us back to a living state in the form of flesh needed to be verified by those that knew him. Jesus' followers were able to confirm that the resurrection was real so then all those that believe in him could have faith that we, too, could be resurrected at his return. *"...Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up unto 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; *"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."* Job 19:25, 26.

Contrary to an invisible return, Jesus shall return in the clouds with a shout. *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God..."* I Thessalonians 4:16; *"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound..."* I Corinthians 15:52a; *"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him..."* Revelation 1:7a. Some churches have tried to predict the time of Jesus' return, however, the Scriptures gives us none, and tells us that no one knows the time of Jesus' return, including Jesus himself. Only God knows. *"And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."* Acts 1:7; *"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels, which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."* Mark 13:32. See also Matthew 24:36. There are many in Christendom that deny Christ will even return. *"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."* II Peter 3:3, 4; *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* II Peter 3:9. The last verse shows us that God loves his creation and would hope that all would turn to Him and acknowledge Him as their Father. Unfortunately, most will still perish given their stubbornness in refusing to believe in Him. But God still hopes the sinner will have a change in heart: *"Say unto them, As I live, saith the LORD GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"* Ezekiel 33:11. The timing of Jesus' return will catch the wicked off-guard while they continue in sin. *"But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder..."* Matthew 24:48 to 51a. See also Luke 12:45, 46.

What we have shown thus far is that Jesus' coming will be visible and the timing of his return is not known. The promise of his coming, however, should be a joy to all Christians. Given that we do not know the timing of his return, those who believe should always be alert and watchful for the return. *"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth, and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."* Luke 12:35 to 40; *"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."* I Thessalonians 5:1, 2. See also Revelations 3:3; 16:15; and II Peter 3:10a.

Jesus was asked by his disciples of things that were to happen and the sign of his coming. They were asking of things that were to appear between the time of his crucifixion until his return for the setting up of the Kingdom of God. *"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled."* Mark 13:3, 4. He began by telling them about the magnificent temple which they had just left and its ultimate

demise. ***“The days will come in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”*** Luke 21:6. This prophecy came true in 70 A.D. when Titus first destroyed the temple, and then Hadrian ultimately leveled the temple in about 135 A.D. Another sign was that of the rise of other religions and false prophets. ***“And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any many deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and deceive many.”*** Mark 13:5, 6; ***“Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders: insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”*** Matthew 24:23, 24. Something we should always remember is that Jesus never started a new religion per se since his teachings came from God’s Law (ie. the Ten Words) found in the Old Testament, however, he clarified and broadened our understanding of God’s Will and how to keep God’s Words fully as was intended from the beginning of creation.

Other signs of Jesus’ coming are wars and talk of belief in God. Given the lusts of men, there will always be wars. ***“And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom...”*** Matthew 24:6, 7a. A most beautiful occurrence for every human being will be the hearing of the Word of Truth; it will reach the far corners of the earth, yet there will be many souls who will not listen to that message which was preached by the Christ, his apostles, and now, in these last days, by his saints. Virtually all nations have heard God’s Word but most will still not adhere to Christ’s message. ***“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”*** Matthew 24:12 to 14; ***“And the gospel must first be published among all nations... And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake...”*** Mark 13:10, 13a. This prophecy is applicable to our present time since there is hardly a nation on earth that would not have heard of the gospel. Many that follow Christianity are persecuted for their beliefs. We are in the last times.

It is sad to think that when Jesus has returned to earth, many of the men and women who have lived in a lustful, worldly state will witness his coming and realize their ending is near. It will be agonizing for them to think of the opportunity they had to obtain eternal life but instead chose a life of worldliness. ***“But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*** Matthew 24:48 to 51.

There are other signs spoken of that will herald in Jesus’ coming and they are largely tribulations and troubling events of various sorts. ***“And there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows.”*** Mark 13:8b; ***“... and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.”*** Luke 21:11b. When reading the prophecies from the gospels including Matthew 24:1 to 20, Mark 13:1 to 23 and Luke 21:5 to 23, we need to keep in mind that Jesus’ prophecies included that of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and of the latter end times. The parts of prophecy relating to end times speak as follows: ***“Immediately after the tribulations 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.”*** Matthew 24:29, 30; ***“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.”*** Mark 13:24 to 26. See also Acts 2:19, 20. Each of us are given ample warning of Jesus’ coming and should take advantage of whatever time we are given. ***“And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.”*** Luke 21:29 to 31. Jesus was telling us that when we see the tribulations taking place, we know that Jesus can come at any time so we should pay heed to those signs he

gave us. The Bible also informs us that the bulk of the world will not be waiting or giving heed to the signs of the times. ***“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating, and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark. And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left.”*** Matthew 24:37 to 41. See also Luke 17:26 to 36.

For our salvation, it is very important for the righteous to keep a mental awareness as to Jesus’ coming, but that is not to say that we will know the time of his return. We need to ensure that we do not fall into the world of lasciviousness and other wickedness and end up being one of those left behind at Jesus’ return. ***“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. And I looked and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.”*** Revelations 14:13 to 16. Let the sister and brother who love God watch continually for the return of the Son so that we should not fall into the corruptions of the world and lose eternal life.