

Pentwater Bible Church

Zechariah
Message 34
The Lord Returns
January 5, 2014



The Last Judgment by Jean Cousin the Younger Cir 1560-89

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The Lord's Second Coming

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THE LORD WILL RETURN

The Bible is very clear that The Lord Jesus will be returning to this earth and in fact we are commanded to watch for and be constantly alert to this fact. As the world increasingly spins out of control it is important to remember what God's Word says about our attitude. First, we must without any reservation believe that Christ will come for us as He promised. Next we look to Scripture for our direct instructions as we wait for our Lord to come for us. We have the blessed assurance that what the Bible tells us will come to pass and we must follow its instructions to achieve its blessings. Therefore,

1. BELIEVERS SHOULD BE WATCHFUL AND ALERT (Matthew 24:42-44; Mark 13:33-37; Luke 12:35-40; 1 Thessalonians 4:4-6; Revelation 16:15)
2. BELIEVERS SHOULD BE MOTIVATED TO GODLY LIVING (Matthew 24:45-51; 1 Peter 3:13-15; 2 Peter 3:11-14; 1 John 2:28)
3. BELIEVERS SHOULD CONSIDER HIS COMING VERY SOON (Romans 13:11-12; Philippians 4:5; James 5:8-9; 1 Peter 4:7)
4. BELIEVERS SHOULD EAGERLY AWAIT IT (1 Corinthians 1:7; Phil 3:20; Titus 2:11-13)

5. BELIEVERS SHOULD ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER (Romans 8:23-25; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
6. BELIEVER SHOULD LONG FOR IT (2 Timothy 4:8; 2 Peter 3:12; Revelation 22:20)
7. BELIEVERS SHOULD PERSEVERE (Matthew 24:12-13; 1 Corinthians 1:7-9; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; 1 Timothy 6:12-14; James 5:7-8)

It is important that we be mindful of this fact; Jesus told His inner circle of apostles, Peter, James, John and Andrew that he would be back. While they was speaking to Him they asked: “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age”(Matthew 24:3). Jesus replied:

Matthew 24:29-31

29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (ESV, underlining added).

Jesus is talking about the Tribulation (Revelation) after which He will return (Revelation) to establish His Kingdom on this earth for a thousand years (Revelation 6:1-19:10-16; 20:4-6). In the Matthew passage above it clearly says that all the people on the earth “will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven”. He will come exactly as He left, visible on clouds. The gathering of “his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” is a reference to the re-gathering of the nation Israel not the Church. The Old Testament Jewish prophets spoke frequently about a re-gathering of the nation Israel from two locations, Heaven and earth (Isaiah 27:12-13, Deuteronomy 30:4). The Jews who are re-gathered from the earth (“four winds”) will be living in Israel. Those “from one end of heaven to the other” will be resurrected Old Testament saints. Acts chapter one describes the Lord leaving after His resurrection and the angels told the apostles when Jesus left He will come back visibly and bodily from heaven:

Acts 1:9-11

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, 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 (KJV).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION DESCRIBES HIS RETURN RIGHT AFTER THE TRIBULATION:

Revelation 19:11-21

¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. ¹² His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. ¹³ And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (KJV).

We know that the tribulation will last for seven years (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 13:5, 12:6). Therefore we clearly know that after the seven year Tribulation Jesus will return visibly and with great fanfare. Some confuse this return with the catching away commonly called the Rapture of the Church when Jesus returns for it (I Thessalonians 4:16-18). In this instance He *does not descend to the earth* and He raptures us to Heaven with *no warning*. These are some of the distinctions between the Rapture and the Second Coming. Some verses that support this distinction are:

Matthew 24:36-44

³⁶ But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. ³⁷ But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ³⁸ 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, ³⁹ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ⁴⁰ Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. ⁴³ But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. ⁴⁴ Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh (KJV).

I Thessalonians 5:1-6

¹ But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. ² For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. ³ For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. ⁴ But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober (KJV)

Many passages in the Old Testament reveal exactly why the Tribulation is coming on the earth. It is to punish the nation Israel for their unbelief in Jesus. Without making a distinction between the nation Israel and the Church it is difficult to separate the rapture from the Second Coming. For example Jeremiah 30:4-6, states that it is the time of "*Jacob's trouble*," and is compared in its sufferings to the birth pangs of a woman about to deliver a baby. In Ezekiel 20:37 it is spoken of as the time when-Israel shall "*pass under the rod*". In Ezekiel 22:19-21, we read how that God is going to cast Israel into His melting pot where they are to be refined as gold is refined. The same imagery of melting a precious metal to make it pure is also found in Malachi 3:1-3, and Zechariah 13:9. Daniel 12:1 speaks of it as a "*time of trouble*" for his people, the Jews. The Second Coming of Jesus will be after a known seven year Tribulation and it will be clearly announced to the world.

THE LOCATION OF HIS RETURN

God is very indignant toward the Gentile nations and specifically their armies. He has destined them to a slaughter by the sword and the earth and heavens will shake. When the sword of God strikes all the armies of these nations it will be in the land of Edom. The specific location is the city of Bozrah (Isaiah 37: 1-7). Presently, this is the city of Petra located in Southern Jordan.

Christ Jesus will be on an elevated terrain in Israel looking eastward toward Edom. He appears as a magnificent bloodstained character. His figure is glorious and splendid in its appearance. Isaiah 63:1(a) asks this splendid character a question. He says "*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?*"

The figure that Isaiah sees approaching is coming from the land of Edom and the city of Bozrah. His glory and His strength are apparent from his clothing and His features. This is similar to the description the apostle John had of the Lord Jesus in His resurrected glory, which is described in the first chapter of the Revelation. This man is arrayed with the *Shekinah* glory. He is the Messiah. The Lord then gives Isaiah an answer to his question.

Isaiah 63:1b

I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save (KJV)

There is only one person in all of creation and Heaven who can "*speak in righteousness*" and has the power to save. It is our Lord Jesus. He is marching toward Israel from the city of Bozrah. Isaiah then responds to the Lord with another question:

Isaiah 63:2

Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?

Isaiah sees that the garments of this person are stained with blood. Isaiah then asks how is it that He received these stains?

Isaiah 63:3-6

I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their

blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.
(KJV)

At the Second Coming, Christ will enter into battle with the forces of the Antichrist, which have gathered at this city. The Lord's bloodstained garments were caused by the battle fought in the land of Edom within the city of Bozrah. He alone fought against the nations. During the course of the battle the blood of the combatants were splashed on His clothes staining them red. He had to conduct the fight to redeem the nation Israel. He fought all alone as there were none to help Him. Clearly the battle is initiated at Bozrah and by the time Christ reaches Israel He has stained His garments with the blood of the enemy.



A WINEPRESS IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

An ancient winepress was a rock-hewn open-air system. Grapes were pressed by being trodden underfoot in a treading floor. The juice would pour through a channel, where it would ferment. It would then be collected in jars.

All these passages pinpoint the place of the Second Coming as being in the land of Edom and the city of Bozrah. This matches the place where the remnant of Israel will be located in the last days of the battle. The gathering at Bozrah and the Second Coming are coupled together in the fourth passage of Scripture:

Micah 2:12-13 I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men. The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them. (KJV)

Therefore the remnant of Israel will be gathered at Bozrah where they will be besieged by the forces of the Antichrist. Finally, they will be able to break the siege because Jesus the King is leading them. The “*breaker*”, “*their king*” and “*the LORD*” are all the same.

THE MANNER OF HIS SECOND COMING

The manner of the Second Coming is with the clouds of Heaven (Matthew 24:30; Acts 1:9-11). In the Acts 1 passage the angels didn’t speak of the place of His Second Coming, just the manner in which He would return. The apostle John on the isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea describes the manner of the Second Coming:

Revelation 19:11-16

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. (KJV)

This account of the Second Coming begins by describing Christ as the “*judge*”. It then shows similarities to what is in the Isaiah passages and is the same image of Jesus in book of Revelation chapter 1 as the glorified, risen Lord. The war He engages in is the result of His judgment as one who is “*Faithful and True*”. He wears a diadem on His head indicating royalty that is natural, not given. His garments are stained with blood, just as Isaiah 63:1-6 described. This is indeed the Second Coming of Christ the Judge and the Incarnate Word of God returning to judge the nations in His righteousness.

When He returns He is accompanied by “*armies*”, and the plural here indicates that at least two armies will return with Him. One army is known as the hosts of the Lord or the angelic army. Matthew describes the Lord stating this:

Matthew 16:27

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works (KJV)

The other army that will return with Jesus is the army of the Church saints who were raptured prior to the Tribulation. Jude the Lord's brother relates this event:

Jude 1:14-15

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard [speeches] which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. (KJV)

THE SECOND COMING IS ALSO CLEARLY DESCRIBED BY HABAKKUK

Habakkuk 3:1-19

¹A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, set to Shigionoth. ²O Jehovah, I have heard the report of thee, and am afraid: O Jehovah, revive thy work in the midst of the years; In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy. ³God came from Teman, And the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of his praise. ⁴And his brightness was as the light; He had rays coming forth from his hand; And there was the hiding of his power. ⁵Before him went the pestilence, And fiery bolts went forth at his feet. ⁶He stood, and measured the earth; He beheld, and drove asunder the nations; And the eternal mountains were scattered; The everlasting hills did bow; His goings were as of old. ⁷I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. ⁸Was Jehovah displeased with the rivers? Was thine anger against the rivers, Or thy wrath against the sea, That thou didst ride upon thy horses, Upon thy chariots of salvation? ⁹Thy bow was made quite bare; The oaths to the tribes were a sure word. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. ¹⁰The mountains saw thee, and were afraid; The tempest of waters passed by; The deep uttered its voice, And lifted up its hands on high. ¹¹The sun and moon stood still in their habitation, At the light of thine arrows as they went, At the shining of thy glittering spear. ¹²Thou didst march though the land in indignation; Thou didst thresh the nations in anger. ¹³Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, For the salvation of thine anointed; Thou woundest the head out of the house of the wicked man, Laying bare the foundation even unto the neck. Selah. ¹⁴Thou didst pierce with his own staves the head of his warriors: They came as a whirlwind to scatter me; Their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly. ¹⁵Thou didst tread the sea with thy horses, The heap of mighty waters. ¹⁶I heard, and my body trembled, My lips quivered at the voice; Rottenness entereth into my bones, and I tremble in my place; Because I must wait quietly for the day of trouble, For the coming up of the people that invadeth us. ¹⁷For though the fig-tree shall not flourish, Neither shall fruit be in the vines; The labor of the olive shall fail, And the fields shall yield no food; The flock shall be cut off from the fold, And there shall be no herd in the stalls: ¹⁸Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah, I will joy in the

God of my salvation. ¹⁹Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength; And he maketh my feet like hinds' feet, And will make me to walk upon my high places (ASV 1901).

He has a vision of the Second Coming and in verse 2 writes a prayer pleading for the remnant of Israel to be saved physically (“*revive your works*”) and spiritually (“*in wrath remember mercy*”). In answer to this request God is seen coming from Edom in all His shining glory. At His coming He will begin to render judgment against the gathered nations by different means. Nature will also be greatly affected by the Second Coming as will the heavenly sphere. Christ is then viewed as marching in indignation and threshing the Gentile nations on behalf of the nation of Israel. The head of the Gentile armies is the Antichrist and both he and his soldiers will be smitten. Habakkuk trembles at this knowledge the Lord has given Him to record and pass on. The world has had this prophecy at least 2700 years. Habakkuk takes comfort in the knowledge that his personal salvation rests in the Lord who will make all things right at the Second Coming.

THE VICTORY SWEEP UPON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

When the actual fighting finally comes to a close, Christ will then and only then ascend to the top of the Mount of Olives.

Zechariah 14:3-4a

Then shall Jehovah 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. (KJV)

Notice that it is only *after* He has completed the fighting will His feet stand upon the Mount of Olives. Along with the victory ascent a number of major earthly convulsions will happen (see also Revelation 16:17-21). Zechariah gives us additional information regarding the earthquake.

Zechariah 14:4b-5:

and the mount of Olives shall be cleft 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. And ye shall flee by the valley of my mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azel; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with thee. (KJV)

The earthquake, which Jesus caused by His victory ascent from the Valley of Jehoshaphat to the Mount of Olives, will cause the mount to split into two parts causing a cleft, which will allow the Jerusalem Jews to escape the destruction of Jerusalem. In this way they will be rescued as Jesus rescued the Jews at Bozrah when He descended in clouds there. The text finishes with a comparison to the earthquake that occurred during the reign of Uzziah one of Judah's kings (Amos 1:1).

NEXT WEEK:

LIVING WATERS GO OUT FROM JERUSALEM AS JESUS BECOMES KING OF THE EARTH

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