

THE RETURN OF CHRIST

Acts 1:9-11 ... "Now when he [Jesus] had spoken these things, while they [Jesus' Apostles] watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men [angels] stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw him go into heaven."

There are many references in the Bible to the return of Christ to earth, including prophecies in the Old Testament, promises by Jesus himself, prophecies in the New Testament, plus today's verse which is an eyewitness account of Jesus returning to heaven. That account includes the message of two angels (remember, angels are messengers from God) who reassured Christ's followers that he would return. They tell us that not only will Jesus return, but he will return in the same way he left: in a cloud.

I believe, as do most believers, that Jesus will first return to take believers out of the world to await the completion of the tribulation, a 7 year period in which the earth will be tormented by satan and his representatives. We call that escape, the Rapture. Jesus will not set foot on earth at that time, but he will call us from the clouds to join him in heaven for that 7 year period. After the tribulation, Jesus will return in the clouds again to earth, with us and other believers who previously died or were raptured. He will then defeat satan, sit in judgment on David's throne in Jerusalem, and rule the earth forever. (There are a few other events that take place, but that is the simplest description of the plan.) To be fair, some believers feel that Christians will remain on earth during the tribulation, and that Jesus will then return and rule as I described above. Regardless, the promise that Jesus will return in the clouds, will happen.

If you are a believer, the return of Christ is something you look forward to more than any other thing. If you are not a believer, meaning you have not confessed your sins to God, repented of those sins, and accepted his death as payment for your sins, the return of Christ should strike fear into your heart. Because, whether you die today in your lost state, or are still alive when Christ returns, it will be too late for you to change your mind, and you will face judgment and hell without recourse or second chances.

The return of Christ could occur at any moment. I pray that you will be ready to welcome him, instead of running from him.

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