

God's Eternal Plan #30
When Christ's Feet Touch the Mount of Olives
Zechariah 14:1-9

With God there is no such thing as unfinished business. That which God has promised and purposed, He most certainly will do. When God makes a promise, that promise is as certain as the character of God Himself. That which was left unfinished of God eternal plan at the time of Christ's death will be accomplished when He returns to this earth.

It was a perplexed group of men whom Christ brought to the crest of the Mount of Olives forty days after His crucifixion, as seen in Acts 1:10, "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men 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." **The eyes of these men were fixed on the clouds as though they were hoping that somehow there would come a break in the clouds that would allow them to get one last glimpse of Christ as He was disappearing into glory.** But the angels interrupted their search by telling them that although men could not see Jesus Christ ascend into glory, then would see Him return. The promise is made very clear in the Greek, "Men of Galilee, they said, why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"

In the Upper-room discourse, recorded in John 13-17, Christ had told the disciples He was going away from them and that He would return again. He was speaking of His physical death and on the Cross, and He told them that He would leave them in death. But He also told them He would return to them by resurrection. And then He made this promise, "Again, I will go away, and I will come again." **This time the going away was the ascension and the coming again was the Second Advent or His return to the earth.** So there was a preparation for the incident recorded in Acts 1. Christ took them to the Mount of Olives and suddenly Jesus began to lift Himself up from the earth, and suddenly a cloud received Him out of their sight. **He, who had been with them, speaking with them, commissioning them to go and be His witnesses, was not there anymore.** He had gone into glory. In order to comfort them in their grief and confusion, God dispatched angels with a message of comfort and hope, "Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go."

Jesus went away by physical death and He came back again by resurrection. Ten saw Him in the upper room, and they knew that it was the *same* Jesus; but Thomas, who was absent could not conceive of the fact that one who had been experienced such a horrible death on the cross could actually return from the dead. So Jesus, in His grace, appeared to Thomas, to prove to him that He was the *same* man, He showed him His hands and side. Then Thomas knew that this *same* Jesus, who had gone to the cross, whose body had been placed in the tomb, had come back again. Now as Christ is received up into glory and a cloud hides Him from their natural eyes, the angel says, “This *same* Jesus shall come again.” Not one *similar* to Him, but the *same* one will come again, and He will come in like manner “as you have seen him go into heaven.” Jesus Christ was personally received up into glory and He shall personally come to this earth the second time.

The skeptic or doubter, who does not believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and who has no confidence in the promise of God’s Word, says the Holy Spirit’s coming at Pentecost was Christ’s second coming. Or he thinks that when one believes in Jesus and Jesus comes into his heart that is the meaning of the second coming of Jesus. But those explanations do not satisfy the requirements of Acts 1:11 because the angel said, “This *same* Jesus shall come as you have seen him go.”

As He left personally, He personally is coming back the second time. Jesus Christ was received up into heaven bodily. That resurrected, glorified body the disciples had seen and touched, whose voice they had heard, was received into glory. It was a bodily ascension and it is the comfort of every child of God to know that there is a glorified man in heaven today. He went away bodily and He is coming back bodily; and His glorified body will stand again on the Mount of Olives and walk through the land over which He walked before.

The very same mount that witnessed His departure will witness His return. The Mount of Olives was the mount where the disciples so often had retired with our Lord, where He had sat with them and talked with them, where they had overheard His praying on their behalf. It was a scene that was very dear to their hearts. It was to that mount that our Lord took the disciples so that they might witness this ascension, and it is to this very spot that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again.

This truth is made clear in Zechariah 14, where several significant events are described which will take place when the feet of the Lord Jesus touch the Mount of Olives again. In Zechariah 14:1-3 the prophet describes the warfare that will take place in Palestine and particularly in Jerusalem in the latter part of the tribulation period. During that time there will be four great

invasions by four military powers of the land of Palestine. **This military movement will begin, according to Daniel 11, when the king of the north, or the Pan-Arab block, invades the Holy Land.** They will be joined almost immediately by the king of the north (Ezekiel 38, Daniel 12), whom we believe to be Russia and Russia's allies. These two military powers will have consented to invade Palestine to plunder the riches of that land.

After that twofold invasion those two coalitions will be destroyed by God the same way He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. The land of Palestine then will be occupied by the third invader under the leadership of the beast or the head of the federated states of Europe (Daniel 11). Palestine will become a military camp and be occupied by the armies of the west, who will continue in authority over Palestine until their right to rule is challenged by the king of the east (Revelation 16) leading an army made up of Orientals. **Coming from the Euphrates River they will move toward Palestine to occupy and control it.** This great military movement, referred to in Scripture as the campaign of Armageddon, is summarized in Zechariah 14:1-3. In verse 2 the prophet says, "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle..." **As these nations move into that land God will destroy them and remove them from the earth.** This judgment is described in Revelation 19:11-16 where Christ at His second advent is pictured as a conquering general invading on a white horse. Verse 15 tells us that when He invades the earth's sphere as the rider on the white horse, "Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron." And verse 16 says His name is "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Zechariah 14:6-7 describes the day of Christ's coming, and mentions a significant fact, "It shall come to pass in that day that there will be no light; the lights will diminish. It shall be one day, which is known to the Lord - neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light." **The prophet is describing the great changes that take place in the heavens so that the earth is bathed in light throughout a twenty-four hour period.** There is an extended twilight. The explanation for this event is found in Matthew 24:29-30, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, 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."

Lucifer, at the time of his original rebellion against God wanted to rule over God's universe. He wanted to control the earth and bring the universe under his authority. But he was not the Creator and he could not change the course of the stars nor change the orbit of any of the planets. **But God is the Creator and He can control that which He created.** In connection with the second advent of Christ, there will be a great convulsion in the heavens in

which the one who holds all things together by the word of His power (Hebrews 1) will change the natural orbit in which the heavenly bodies have been moving since the time of their creation by the Word of God. God will touch the sun so that it shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven so there shall be no starlight. The earth will have every source of natural light at the time Christ comes. That would suggest that the earth would be plunged into total darkness, for if the sun ceases its shining and there is no moon and there are stars, there would be nothing but darkness that envelop the earth.

Look again at Matthew 24:30, “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, 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.” The Lord tells us that there will be a sign in heaven that will serve notice to those on the earth that God is present on the earth again. The Lord does not explain His word, nor does He identify the sign of the Son of man in heaven, but it is possible to draw certain conclusions as to what this sign of the Son of man actually is.

In Exodus 40, after Moses had erected the tabernacle and set the furniture in place and had completed what God had ordained, the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. The *glory of the Lord* manifests itself by the shining of light. It is referred to as the *Shekinah*, or the *glory of the Lord*. The tabernacle became a vehicle that manifested God’s presence among them as it show with the glory of the Lord. When Solomon erected the temple (1 Kings 8) and the ark had been put in place, the *glory of the Lord* filled the temple. It was the same *glory* that revealed God’s presence in the tabernacle. In the wilderness, when God wanted the children of Israel to strike camp and move, He went before them; and His presence was revealed through the pillar of cloud or the pillar of fire.

With that observation in mind, a conclusion can be drawn concerning the sign of the Son of man in heaven. When the sun has withdrawn its light, the moon has ceased its shining, the stars shine no more on the earth, and the earth is in that darkness, suddenly the Light of the world will penetrate that darkness, the Son of God will come as the Prince of Glory to manifest His glory on the earth! That darkness will be dissipated and dispelled in the same way in which the darkness of the holy of holies in the tabernacle was dispelled by the presence of the *glory of God* in it. The Son of God will appear in the heavens manifesting to the earth the glory of God, and the darkness will be dispelled and the earth will be bathed in light, not the light of a created sun or moon, but the light of the uncreated Son of God! Then it can be said that spoken by Isaiah the prophet is fulfilled, “Immanuel has come” – “God is with us.” And the

nations that were gathered together to fight against each other will see that light from the *glory of God* and will join together to seek to prevent Christ's return. But no earthly force can stop the return of Christ.

In Zechariah 14:4 another significant event is mentioned, "And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south." To understand what is happening here on the Mount of Olives we have to look at Romans 8:18-22, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now." This passage is much more clear in the Greek, "Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time."

This earth belongs to God. It is His by *creation*, and it is His by *redemption* because Jesus Christ came not only to redeem humanity from sin, but also to redeem this earth, which has been cursed since the Garden of Eden and the fall of man. In Joshua 1:2-3 God spoke to Joshua, "Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you." Although God had promised the land they had to *appropriate* the land before it actually became their possession, and the placing of the feet was the *act of appropriation*.

Psalms 24:1 reminds us, "The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein." **From the Garden of Eden this earth has never seen what God can do with it because it has been held captive of Satan.** But the Lord is coming personally, visibly, and physically in His glorified body to possess it and redeem it from Satan's grasp, to transform and remake it into an instrument that can be used for His glory. And when Christ plants His feet on the Mount of Olives that will be the act of appropriation.