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’s prophesied program 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; 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.”

The eyes of these men were fixed upon the clouds as though they were hoping that somehow there would come a rift in the clouds that had separated the Lord Jesus from them, and they could catch a glimpse of Him as He was disappearing into glory. But the angels announced that although men could not see Jesus Christ ascend into glory they would surely see Him return. The promise was very clear: “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.”

In the upper-room discourse in John 13-17, Christ had told the disciples that He was going away from them and that He would return again. He was speaking of His physical death on the cross of Calvary, and He told those men that He would leave them in death. But He also told them that He would return to them by resurrection. Then He gave another 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 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 relieve their grief, God dispatched angels with a message of comfort and hope: “This same Jesus…shall so come.”

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 taken away could return. So Jesus appeared to Thomas and, 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 veils Him from their natural eyes, the angel says, “This same Jesus shall come
again.” Not one similar to Him, but this same one will come again, and He will come in like manner “as ye 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 that the Holy Spirit’s coming at Pentecost was Christ’s second coming. Or, he thinks that when one believes in Jesus (whatever that means to them—it means something entirely different than what Christ meant when He told Nicodemus he had to believe on Him), and when Jesus comes into his heart that is when Jesus comes the second time. Or they say that if you experience some tragedy or if some calamity befalls you, Jesus is near you to comfort and cheer. That is the second coming.

Those explanations do not satisfy the requirements of this passage, because the angel said, “This same Jesus shall come as ye 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 that the disciples had seen and had touched, whose voice they had heard, was received up 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 now. He went 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 Him praying on their behalf. It was a scene 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 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 has described 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 south, 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, God will destroy those two coalitions in the same way that God 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 beyond 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, “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. When He invades this earth’s sphere as the rider on the white horse, “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” (verse 15) and His name is “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (verse 16). In Zechariah 14:6-7, in describing the day of His coming, the prophet mentions a significant fact, “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.”

The prophet describes some great change that takes 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 is found in 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.”

Lucifer, at the time of his original rebellion against God, wanted to rule over God’s universe. He wanted to control the earth and the stars and all the heavenly bodies and bring them 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 heavenly bodies. 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 that there will be no starlight. The earth will have every source of natural light removed at the time Christ comes. This suggests that the earth would be plunged into total darkness, for if the sun ceases its shining and there is no moon and there are no stars, there would be nothing but darkness that would envelop the earth, as seen in Matthew 24:30, “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 records Christ’s word that there will be a sign in the heavens 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 that appears in the heavens 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, which manifested God’s presence among them as it shone with the glory of God. 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 this 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 dispersed 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 eternal Son of God. Then it can be said that which was 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. That is what Zechariah is prophesying when he says that at the time of the Lord’s return, “It shall come to pass … that the light shall not be clear, nor dark …it shall be one day…known to the LORD, not day, nor night” (14:6-7). The earth will not be illuminated by the sun by day nor the moon by night, but continuously through the cycle of time, Christ will give light to the earth, and the one who at His first coming said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12) will cause the light of His glory to bathe this earth, and men shall walk in His light.

In Revelation 21:23 the apostle John says that the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, needs neither sun nor moon because the Lamb is the light of it, and this earth will not need sun nor moon because Christ will cause the light of the glory of God to shine upon the earth, and the nations who are received into His earthly millennial kingdom will walk in the light of His countenance. That is one great result of the coming of Christ: He will dispel darkness and bring light to the earth.

In Zechariah 14:4 another significant event is mentioned, “His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives.” When God brought Joshua and the children of Israel into the Promised Land, He told him, “All the land is before you,
and every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, I will give it to you.” They had to appropriate the land before it became their possession, and the placing of the feet was the act of appropriation. This earth belongs to God. It is His by creation, and it is His by redemption because Jesus Christ came not only to redeem man from sin, but also to redeem this earth, which has been cursed by man’s sin, from sin. But the earth will not become God’s possession until the Son of God plants His feet on it and possesses it in God’s name. When Columbus touched these shores for the first time; he planted his feet and the flag on the land and claimed it in the name of the queen who had sent him; and when Jesus Christ comes to the earth the second time, it will be to plant His feet on the Mount of Olives. That will be an act of appropriation in which Christ, who came to redeem the world from sin, will reclaim the world and make it God’s possession by that reclamation. But then when His feet touch the Mount of Olives, there will be a catastrophe to the mount itself.

Zechariah 14:4 reminds us, “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.”

The Mount of Olives, located just adjacent to Jerusalem, is the highest point in that part of Judea. That is why the pilgrim always spoke of going up to Jerusalem. The city was located on the top of the hill, and any invader had to come across deep valleys to attack it. It is impossible to water that area with irrigation from rivers or streams because the mountains are so steep that the water would drain away. This land could not be productive; it is called “the wilderness of Judea.” It was an inhospitable, barren, desolate land, even though the soil was rich. Yet God, tells of such a transformation in the land that it will be possible to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 35: The wilderness shall blossom as the rose; the desert shall become a watered garden. How can God turn that desert into a watered garden if the mountains are unchanged? But when Christ’s feet touch the Mount of Olives there will be a division of the mountain and a leveling of the land so that Jerusalem, following Christ’s return, will be located in the center of a vast plain, a well-watered garden which will become the center of Christ’s earthly reign.

When Christ returns, He will not be bent on the destruction of Palestine. He will be demonstrating that He created and that He can reform this sin-cursed earth into that which can serve His purpose and reflect His glory. When Christ rules on the earth there will be no desert, no wilderness, no unproductive lands. This earth shall demonstrate the touch of Christ’s authority as He transforms this earth into what it was before being cursed by Adam’s sin. Therefore, when Christ comes to earth the second time, He shall not only possess it, but He also will refashion it so it will be a suitable sphere in which He will rule.

The third thing mentioned in this passage is when the Lord’s feet touch the Mount of Olives, as seen in Zechariah 14:8, “living waters shall go out from
Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and winter shall it be.”

A traveler passing through Palestine today notices that for the great part of the year there are only dry streambeds. Only for a few weeks does water flow. Then it runs off, leaving the land dry. There is no permanent source of water. But in that day God will provide an abundant source of water so that the land shall become a garden. During Christ’s millennial reign, God will have His own method of meeting the problems of famine, poverty and hunger by turning the whole earth into productive land. There will be bounty for all, and Christ will supply streams in the desert. While Christ supplies “streams in the desert” for the believer today in a spiritual sense, the prophet was referring to what the Son of God will do physically when He comes to earth.

Israel today has gone to great lengths to bring water from the headwaters of the Sea of Galilee through Israel into the Negev, the desert, to turn it into a productive land. While this provides for them today, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes and His feet touch the Mount of Olives, He will transform the whole land so that rivers will flow and the entire land will be watered. Zechariah shows that what Christ has done for us spiritually, He will do for this earth physically. He has redeemed us; He will come to redeem the earth. He has recreated us; He will come to recreate the earth. He has provided us the water of life; He will come to provide living waters for the earth. He has pledged that He will supply our every need; He will provide for the needs of those who are trusting Him when He comes to this earth the second time.

Psalm 24:1 reminds us, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” This earth has never seen what God can do with it because it has been held in the grips of a usurper. 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 the earth shall be full of the glory and the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. When He manifests the glory of God to this earth, we will be with Him, sharing His reign and being used as instruments to bring glory to Him. We shall see Him display His mighty power.