

THE ULTIMATE PROMISE OF JESUS RETURN ACTS 1:1-11

Scripture is not only a book of promises, but it is a book of prophecy...telling us what is coming in the future. Scripture revealed 4000 years before the birth of Christ, that the Messiah was coming.

When you read the Book of Micah carefully, Micah tells us that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem. But the Bible doesn't stop there. Did you know that the Bible, just as it announced the first coming of Jesus Christ, it has announced for over 2000 years that Jesus Christ is coming again.

Outside of God's wonderful promise of salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ His Son, there is no promise as grand and as great as the promise from Scripture of the fact that the Bible, the Word of God, declares in no uncertain terms that Jesus Christ is coming back to the earth again. Now if you remember, Jesus has been raised from the dead, and He is in His resurrected body, and He is teaching His disciples, and has talked to them about the Kingdom, the things of God, the will of God, He has given the disciples the assignment to "witness" of Him to all the world, all people groups of the world, and then all of sudden they saw something that they had never seen before. They saw Jesus in a literal body, but a resurrected body, start rising from the earth.

The word that is used for "taken up" literally means to be lifted up. In other words one minute Jesus was on the earth, and the next minute He was being raised up, and a cloud, the Bible says a cloud received Him.

Can you imagine that scene with your spiritual imagination? Jesus had just finished reminding them of the coming of the Holy Spirit and giving them the command to witness of Him in all nations, and then He was lifted away. The disciples didn't know exactly what was happening, yet they watched as their Master, their Lord, their Savior, rose from the earth. What does it mean? No doubt in their hearts they sensed and knew what it meant, as the Spirit of God would lead them to connect the words that Jesus said previously. If you recall on one occasion Jesus said, "A little while and ye shall not see me; and again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father". Now they were watching Jesus go back to the Father.

1. JESUS' RETURN TO EARTH...IS THE PROMISE FROM HIS OWN MOUTH. Jesus knew before going to the cross how His earthly life would end. He knew that He would go to the cross and that He would give His life for the sins of the world. He knew that He would shed His blood for the sins of the entire world. Yet, also knew that He was going to be leaving this earth for a season of time to go back to the Father. That is why you hear Jesus say, "a little while and ye shall not see me: and again a little while you shall see me."

What Jesus is announcing to the disciples is the fact that He is coming back to this earth again. While we are 2000 years away from that event of Jesus coming to earth, can you imagine how much closer we are to the very fact that Jesus Christ is coming back again just as He said.

Listen to the words of Job, some few thousand years before Jesus Christ came to earth the first time. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the EARTH." (Job. 19:25) Zechariah the prophet put it this way, "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, 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..." (Zec. 14:4) This is not a spiritual event, but rather a real event that has been announced through the centuries. It is the promise of God.

2. JESUS' RETURN TO EARTH...IS THE PROMISE FROM GOD'S HOLY ANGELS. When you look at the disciples of Jesus in verse 10, the Bible reveals that they were straining their eyes for another glimpse. The phrase "look steadfastly" literal carries the meaning that "their eyes were riveted and fastened" to the ascension of Jesus. As they watched Jesus slowly rise from the earth and ascend into the sky, they were straining with all their eyes to get one last glimpse of Jesus. They had seen His resurrected body. Thomas had thrust his hands in the side of Jesus, and seen his palms.

The disciples had been with Him for three years, listening to Him, listening the very Son of God as He taught them, shared with them, fellowshiped with them, and they knew that this was going to be the last time they would see Him with their eyes.

But in the midst of their straining and staring, the Bible records

that God came to the disciples through two angels, standing in their midst! Were these the two angels that was at the tomb of Jesus? Were these two angels that announced the resurrection of Jesus Christ? While the Bible doesn't say, the Bible does declare that they made an announcement to the disciples. "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."

Do you hear those words carefully. In the midst of straining and looking into the sky. The disciples hear the most wonderful words that they could ever hear, "Jesus is coming back". "Jesus Christ is coming back to the earth."

In other words, it is going to be a literal event. Just as Jesus birth was a literal event, and His crucifixion was a literal event. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus Christ return is going to be a literal event. The coming of Christ back to this earth is backed by the promise of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. It is further promised through the prophets, and promised by the very angels that stood beside as He ascended into heaven.

3. JESUS' RETURN TO EARTH...WILL BE IN LIKE MANNER AS HE WENT UP. If you want to get a picture of how Jesus Christ is coming back, then it is important for us to understand how He went up.

First, the Bible declares "this same Jesus is coming back". The self-same One that went up 2000 years ago the Bible records is coming back. What type of Jesus went up into heaven? The Bible records that Jesus ascending in a literal resurrected body. It was a glorified body, but a body just the same. It was a body that could be touched. Thomas was directed by Jesus to, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side..." (Jn. 20:27) It was Jesus body that Thomas touched. It will be this same Jesus, in that same glorified body that is coming back. The Bible has said for 2000 years that every eye shall see Him, (Rev. 1:7), but for years, many people have wondered how that could happen. But now we can understand through the means of technology that it is totally possible for that prophecy to be a reality. One of the purposes behind technology is to fulfill the prophecies and the promises of God...for every eye shall see Him. That is how it is going to be. When Jesus

came the first time He came as a baby, to grow, live and die for the sins of mankind, but not so the second time. Hebrews 9:28 says, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he **APPEAR THE SECOND TIME** without sin unto salvation. The next time Jesus steps on this earth, He will walk into Jerusalem and rule the world from His throne in Jerusalem. For "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David." (Lk. 1:32)

The same Jesus who walked on this earth for 33 years, and died on the cross, and rose from the dead...that Jesus is coming back. He will be the same Jesus in attitude, that loves and cares for all that follow Him, and walk with Him. He will be the same Jesus who promised to return and reward His children.

Second, Jesus **WILL** descend from heaven the same way He went into heaven. When Jesus was taken up, Scripture tells us He ascended, He went up without wires, without anything to pull Him up, for He is Holy God. He is coming back the same way.

The Bible says that Jesus will return in the same resurrected glorified body that He left with. As a matter of fact if we could see into heaven, we would see a real literal Jesus in His resurrected glorified body, seated on the throne. But one day, He will get up from that throne, and He will return, just as He promised. He will come back to earth on "in the clouds of heaven". Why in clouds? Because He promised and He cannot break His word! It was the Shekinah glory clouds, Whether His return is another 10, 100, or 150 years, the fact is Jesus is coming back that is His promise.

Third, Jesus will return to reward everyone according to their deeds. When you read Revelation 22:12, Jesus makes it clear, "See I am coming soon, and my reward is with me, to repay everyone according to the deeds he has done." Jesus Christ is coming back the same way He went up. He went up in glory and power, and in a literal glorified body that was touchable. He is coming back in glory and power and in a literal glorified body...the same one that He had 2000 years ago, for death has no hold over Him. But the next time He comes..it is to rule, it is to reign.

Jesus promised through His prophets that He was coming as the Messiah...and He had done so. He has promised through His mouth, and angels, and Holy Word He is coming back. The ultimate promise will be fulfilled. Are you ready? He is coming...ready or not.