

THE TRIUMPHANT TOUCHDOWN OF JESUS CHRIST! : PART 1

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Faithful Students Of God's Word, Shine The Light Of Scripture On All Doctrines To Verify Them, Bereans Test Paul And Silas' Teachings, Remember The Former Things Of Old, Learn From The Past, Ends Of The World Or Ends Of The Age, God Will Do As He Says, Sure Word Of Prophecy: God Doesn't Lie, The Apostasy: Unbelieving Scoffers Then And Now, Patriarch Job Prophecies Of Jesus Standing Upon The Earth And Also Of The Resurrection From The Dead, The Seventh Trumpet, Biblical Prophetic Pairs, Divine Inspiration Of The Scriptures, Great Anticipation For Jesus' Birth And Earnest Expectation For His Return, Luke The Beloved Physician: Author Of Luke And Book Of Acts, Jesus' Ascension To Heavenly Realm And His Promised Return, Details Of Jesus' Departure And Return, Bethany And Mount Of Olives

As I have pointed out in other articles, I believe that the most important things that we need to know regarding Bible prophecy can be found and understood through a very careful, diligent and thorough examination of the Holy Scriptures. It is our responsibility as faithful students of God's Word to devote our time to the study of the writings of the Prophets of old, to the words of Jesus in the Gospels, and also to the writings of the Apostles, so that we might not only gain a better understanding of God's overall Plan of Salvation, but also so that we can grasp the significance of the amazing events surrounding Christ's Return. After all, it is Jesus' Death, Resurrection and Return which ultimately culminate in the restitution of all things.

In short, as the Scriptures make very clear, we must not only hide God's Word in our hearts, but we must also right divide it, carefully comparing Scripture with Scripture, and also closely examine all teachings and doctrines by holding them up to the light of the Scriptures, in order to determine if they are truly sound doctrine. This is in fact what the Jews

of Berea did when Paul and Silas visited their synagogue and preached Christ to them. It is likewise what the Apostle Paul exhorted Timothy -- who was the first bishop of Ephesus -- to do as well. Consider the following group of verses:

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

Psalms 119:11, KJV

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."

Acts 17:10-12, KJV

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by SOUND DOCTRINE both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

Titus 1:9, KJV

"But speak thou the things which become SOUND DOCTRINE:"

Titus 2:1, KJV

In fact, regarding fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy, the Lord Himself commands us to "Remember the former things of old". Likewise, the Apostle Paul exhorted his readers to take note of the Old Testament Scriptures, and to learn from them, so that they would be motivated to lead godly lives, and so that they could better understand the things which were to come upon the Earth. Consider the following group of verses which confirm these points:

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall

stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"

Isaiah 46:9-10, KJV

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:"

Romans 15:4-5, KJV

"Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted . . . Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE WORLD ARE COME."

1 Corinthians 10:6, 11, KJV

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, ARE SET FORTH FOR AN EXAMPLE, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

Jude 1:7, KJV

Please note that in 1 Corinthians 10:11 above, there is actually a translational error. While in the KJV Bible the verse reads "upon whom the ends of the world are come" -- meaning the people of the First Century -- in actuality, the Koine Greek word which is translated as the English word "world" is "aion". This ancient Greek word means an age or period of time. In fact, you can see how close "aion" is to our English word "eon". As such, the verse should actually read "upon whom the ends of the age are come". If you care to read a more in-depth explanation regarding what Paul is referring to when he writes "UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE AGE ARE COME", please refer to my seven-part series entitled "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?". You will find it listed at the end of this same article.

As we learned in Isaiah above, the Lord informs us that He knows everything that has happened, as well as what is yet to happen, because He obviously controls it all. In fact, He plainly declares "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." In short, if the Lord says that something is going to happen, we can be certain that it most surely will. Rest assured that God is a man of His word, and that He does

not lie. In fact, His Word is the "sure word of prophecy". God's Word is so important to Him, that King David tells us that the Lord has magnified His Word above His very Name. Consider the following set of verses where these points are confirmed:

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"
Numbers 23:19, KJV

"We have also a more SURE WORD OF PROPHECY; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts . . . For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."
2 Peter 1:19, 21, KJV

"I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."
Psalms 138:2, KJV

". . . For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven
Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word
. . . Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever."
Psalm 119:89, 14, 160, KJV

"And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them."
Ezekiel 33:33, KJV

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."
Ecclesiastes 3:14-15, KJV

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"
2 Timothy 3:16, KJV

"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."
Romans 3:4, KJV

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"
Titus 1:2, KJV

Concerning Bible prophecy, undoubtedly, the most notable and the most anticipated event which First Century Christians eagerly looked forward to, was the return of Jesus Christ to the Earth. Likewise today, there are also many Christians who greatly anticipate the arrival of Jesus Christ. Sadly, just as we see occurring today with so many nonbelievers who scoff at such a possibility, and who mock Christians who hold to such a belief, it was no different during the First Century. Just as we see happening today, as the years slowly passed following the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, some folks became blinded to and hardened against the Word of God. They slowly lost their faith, if they ever had any to begin with.

The end result of this loss of faith was that some of them began to regard Jesus' Return as pure foolishness, and a tale of religious fanatics who had simply been duped by religious superstition. In the Gospel of Luke, even Jesus warned that such a day of unbelief would eventually arrive. Likewise, the Apostles Peter, John and Paul all wrote about this apostasy, or falling away. Peter warns of scoffers. Paul warns of the coming apostasy. John mentions those disciples who even broke off fellowshiping with the Christian Church because of their loss of faith. In fact, some of them even totally abandoned their faith in Christ. Consider the following set of verses:

". . . Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"
Luke 18:8, KJV

"Knowing this first, that there shall come IN THE LAST DAYS scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."
2 Peter 3:3-4, KJV

"For DEMAS HATH FORSAKEN ME, HAVING LOVED THIS PRESENT WORLD, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia."

2 Timothy 4:10, KJV

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

2 Peter 2:20-22, KJV

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first [apostasy], and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;"

2 Thessalonians 2:3, KJV

"Little children, IT IS THE LAST TIME: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that IT IS THE LAST TIME. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us . . . Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."

1 John 2:18-19, 22, KJV

What may come as a surprise to some people is the fact that this same hope in Christ was also expressed by a man in what is believed by some Christians to be one of the oldest Books in the Bible. That is, the Book of Job. In the midst of his personal affliction, the Patriarch Job was not only aware of the fact that Jesus Christ would stand upon the Earth "at the latter day", but he also foresaw the glorious Resurrection of the Dead, and his own future Redemption from the snares of death and the bonds of the grave. Consider the following set of verses:

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that HE SHALL STAND AT THE LATTER DAY UPON THE EARTH: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."
Job 19:25-27, KJV

Furthermore, the Patriarch Job's words were echoed thousands of years later by the Apostle Paul who also wrote extensively concerning the events of the Latter Days. In the following verses, Paul describes the suddenness with which the First Resurrection occurs. Not only that, he also tells his readers precisely when it will occur. That is to say, at the sound of the Last Trump, which is the Seventh Trumpet that's mentioned in the Book of Revelation. In fact, Jesus mentions this very same trumpet in the Gospel of Matthew. Consider the following group of verses:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, AT THE LAST TRUMP: FOR THE TRUMPET SHALL SOUND, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."
1 Corinthians 15:51-53, KJV

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and WITH THE TRUMP OF GOD: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, KJV

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, WHEN HE SHALL BEGIN TO SOUND, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."
Revelation 10:7, KJV

Please note that in the previous verses from the Apostle Paul's first Epistle to the Thessalonian brethren, the word "prevent" is actually Old English. It is derived from the

Koine Greek word "phthano", which means to come before, or to precede. Thus, as the rest of the verses bear out, Paul is simply saying that the Dead in Christ rise first, to be followed by those Christians who are still alive on the Earth at the time of the Lord's Advent.

One thing which has always intrigued me about God's Word is what I like to refer to as "prophetic pairs". In other words, I am referring to connecting verses which are found between the Old Testament and the New Testament. As you may already know, many future events which were concealed, or hidden, in the pages of the Old Testament, find their fulfillment, or revelation, in the New Testament. This is particularly true regarding the hundreds of amazing prophecies which describe the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection and Return of Jesus Christ. I discuss this topic to great extent in the article called "Who is Moshiah ben David?". I encourage you to read it.

Sometimes, in a few rare instances, even the actual verse references of these "prophetic pairs" share the same or very similar numbers. One example I have mentioned before concerns the prophecy of Micah regarding the Birth of Jesus Christ. This particular prophecy finds its completion or fulfillment in the Gospel of Matthew, as you can see below:

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Micah 5:2, KJV

After the three magi from the east had inquired of King Herod where the newborn King should be found, Herod the Great was greatly troubled. Thus, he called together the chief priests and the scribes in order to determine exactly what they knew concerning this amazing and prophesied event. In response, they quoted from the Book of the Prophet Micah. Notice that Micah 5:2 is fulfilled in Matthew 2:5:

"And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel."

Matthew 2:5-6, KJV

Certainly, these numeric connections serve to validate the fact that even though the Scriptures were written by many different human writers over a period stretching from the Old Testament to New Testament times, all of these men were inspired by the same Divine Author. That is, God Himself. As the Apostle Peter was inspired to write in his second Epistle, and as the Apostle Paul was likewise inspired to write in his second Epistle to Timothy:

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

2 Peter 1:21, KJV

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

2 Timothy 3:16, KJV

Just as many of the Israelites of the pre-Christian period were very well aware of the ancient messianic prophecies, and as a result looked forward with great anticipation to the Birth of their Messiah, and then hopefully awaited for His Return at the end of that age following His Death and Resurrection from the dead, today, many Christians likewise wait with earnest expectation for the Return of the Lord. In describing Christ's return to the Heavenly Realm almost two thousand years ago, we find the following interesting account written towards the end of the Gospel of Luke:

"And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:"

Luke 24:50-52, KJV

As you may know, it is commonly believed that Luke -- who the Apostle Paul referred to as "the beloved physician" in his Epistle to the Colossian brethren -- was likewise the author of the Book of Acts. This assertion is based on the fact that in the introduction to both books, an individual by the name of Theophilus is addressed. Consider this set

of verses:

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus . . ."

Luke 1:1-3, KJV

"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:"

Acts 1:1-3, KJV

Please notice that Luke uses the phrase "The former treatise" in the opening verses of the Book of Acts. This seems to be a reference back to his own Gospel. In this opening chapter of the Book of Acts, Luke also provides both Theophilus and all Christian readers with a more detailed account of the Lord's departure from this present world, exactly forty days after His amazing Resurrection from the dead, as we can determine by the following group of verses. In other words, Luke is providing an expansion of what he wrote to Theophilus in the twenty-fourth chapter of his Gospel, which I quoted above:

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly 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. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey."

Acts 1:9-12, KJV

As I point out in the article entitled "Fifty Days Which Changed the World", it was ten days after this amazing event

that the Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. But for our current discussion, what is most important from these two accounts are the exact words which were spoken by the two Angelic Messengers. I am referring to these words:

"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."

As you can see, these two Angelic Messengers were clearly telling Jesus' Disciples that, just as the Lord had departed from them, so likewise would He also one day return. So what were the specific details of the Lord's departure from the Earth? If we were to enumerate what we know about the Lord's Ascension into Heaven, it could be summed up in the following five points:

1. Jesus took His Disciples to one of His favorite spots just a few miles to the east of Jerusalem, to a place called Bethany.
2. Bethany was located on or near to the road to Jericho at the Mount of Olives.
3. Jesus stood on, and ascended from, some part of the Mount of Olives.
4. Jesus was taken up into Heaven, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.
5. Jesus returns in the very same manner.

Studying any ancient or modern map of Israel will indeed reveal that this is where Bethany and the Mount of Olives are located. In our modern day, Bethany is located in the West Bank, and is known as Al-Eizariya or al-Azariya. This name is derived from the fact that this is the place where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Al-Azariya is located on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives, less than two miles from Jerusalem. These points are also confirmed by the following verses which are found in the Gospels of Mark, Luke and John:

"And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and

Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,"

Mark 11:1, KJV

"And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,"

Luke 19:29, KJV

"Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:"

John 11:18, KJV

The following material -- which I extracted from Easton's Bible Dictionary in my Online Bible app -- provides us with additional information concerning the Mount of Olives:

----- Begin Quote -----

So called from the olive trees with which its sides are clothed, is a mountain ridge on the east of Jerusalem from which it is separated by the valley of Kidron. It now bears the name of Jebel et-Tur, i.e., "Mount of the Summit;" also sometimes called Jebel ez-Zeitun, i.e., "Mount of Olives". It is about 200 feet above the level of the city. The road from Jerusalem to Bethany runs as of old over this mount. This mount, or rather mountain range, has four summits or peaks:

1. the "Galilee" peak, so called from a tradition that the angels stood here when they spoke to the disciples.
2. the "Mount of Ascension", the supposed site of that event, which was, however, somewhere probably nearer Bethany.
3. the "Prophets", from the catacombs on its side, called "the prophets' tombs;" and
4. the "Mount of Corruption", so called because of the "high places" erected there by Solomon for the idolatrous worship of his foreign wives. Vulg., "Mount of Offence".

----- End Of Quote -----

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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THE TRIUMPHANT TOUCHDOWN OF JESUS CHRIST! : PART 2

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Jesus Loved High Mountains, My Personal Appreciation Of The Natural Creation, Pinpointing The Location Of Jesus' Return, Jesus Stands Upon Mount of Olives At His Return, Prophecy Of Job And Words Of The Two Angels, The Matthew 27:51-53 Debate, Jesus Returns In The Clouds, Zechariah's Prophecy Concerning Jesus' Return, Battle Of Armageddon, Mount Of Olives Splits In Two At Jesus' Return, Secret Rapture Doctrine, Fault Line Discovered On Summit Of Mount Of Olives, Jordan Rift Valley And Earthquake Danger Facing Israel, Interesting Facts About Mount Of Olives, King David And Jesus, Suggested Reading List

Before continuing our main discussion from part one, I would like to share another interesting aspect regarding Jesus. As some of you may already know, the Lord obviously very much enjoyed the peacefulness, the solitude, the privacy and the security of high mountains. As the following group of verses reveal, the Lord taught some of His most important sermons on the slopes of high mountains. Likewise, He often went to high mountains in order to pray to His Father, so that He could receive instructions regarding certain issues. Such was the case when He chose His primary Apostles. Likewise, we are informed that He and the Disciples climbed a high mountain where the Lord was then transfigured before them during His communion with Moses and Elijah:

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:"

Matthew 5:1, KJV

"When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him."

Matthew 8:1, KJV

"And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone."

Matthew 14:23, KJV

"And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there."

Matthew 15:29, KJV

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart . . . And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead."

Matthew 17:1, 9, KJV

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them . . . And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted."

Matthew 28:16-17, KJV

"And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him."

Mark 3:13, KJV

"And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray."

Mark 6:45-46, KJV

"And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them . . . And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son

of man were risen from the dead."

Mark 9:2, 9, KJV

"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."

Luke 6:12, KJV

"And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray . . . And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him."

Luke 9:28, 37, KJV

"And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples."

John 6:3, KJV

"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."

John 6:15, KJV

As one who has long enjoyed the beauty and solitude of God's natural creation, particularly at higher elevations when I've had the opportunity to visit such places in the past, I can most certainly understand Jesus' sentiment. When one is in such places, he knows without any doubt that he is truly in God's country. Just being in such a place inspires and lifts one's spirit. One gets the sense that he is in a truly sacred place which has yet to be defiled by human hands. In fact, as I have mentioned on a few previous occasions, it was exactly in just such a location that I personally felt a very strong calling from the Lord during my teenage years many years ago.

Continuing with our primary discussion, with the Scriptural information I have now provided here, particularly the words which were spoken by the two Angels in the Book of Acts, we have now pinpointed exactly how and where Jesus was prophesied to touch down upon His return to the Earth. According to these verses, Jesus appears in the clouds of heaven -- meaning the sky -- and then He lights upon the very same Mount of Olives from which He departed some two thousand years ago. This is in direct fulfillment of the words "shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

I suspect that this may be what the Patriarch Job meant when he said "he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth". In other words, the emphasis here is not just on the fact that Job is talking about the "latter day". It is also about the fact that Jesus stands "upon the earth". The reason why this point is so important, is because there is a long-held belief which is embraced by many Christians, which states that Jesus only returns in the clouds of heaven. In other words, He does not actually touch down on the Earth. However, Job is clearly stating that the Lord does stand upon the Earth. There is no denying this point. And as we have seen, the Angels said "in like manner." In my opinion, this means that Jesus must also descend to the Mount of Olives, just as He ascended from the same Mount of Olives.

Now, it can be weakly argued that Job was referring to when Jesus first walked the Earth in human flesh during the First Century. After all, He did stand upon the Earth at that time. However, upon closer examination of what Job actually said, this theory does not hold up. Why not? Because right after saying that, Job continues with "though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." So in my view, Job is making a direct connection between the Lord standing upon the Earth in the "latter day", and what seems to be the resurrection of the dead.

Now, let's be honest here. Any Bible-knowledgeable Christian knows that a wholesale, worldwide resurrection of the dead did not occur during the thirty-three years or so that Jesus walked upon the Earth. If such an amazing event had really occurred, then surely it would have been included in one of the four Gospels, and it would have been very difficult to conceal, even for the unbelieving Jews who were very quick to try to cover up Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Thus, I hold to the view that Job must be referring to Christ's Return after His ascension to Heaven.

Now, for the sake of honesty and transparency, I do want to mention several verses which are included near the end of the Gospel of Matthew. As I mention in a few other articles, and as you can confirm for yourself, these three verses have caused much consternation, and have likewise resulted in a lot of debate amongst theologians for centuries. One of the primary reasons behind this dilemma is that these verses,

and this event, are found nowhere else in the four Gospels, or even anywhere else in the pages of the New Testament. A lot of ideas have been put forth regarding the true origin of these particular verses, including the belief that they are spurious text which was not included in the autograph -- or original manuscript as written by Matthew -- and were added later in history by a certain unknown copyist. These troublesome verses state as follows:

"And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

Matthew 27:51-53, KJV

One would think that if this resurrection of the Saints did occur following the Lord's own resurrection -- after all, He was the Firstfruits of the Resurrection and thus had to rise first -- then surely Mark or Luke would have mentioned it as well. Yet they do not. As you may possibly know, Matthew, Mark and Luke are referred to as the "Synoptic Gospels", due to the fact that many of the very same stories are included in each one of them, and these stories are often written in a very similar sequence and likewise include similar -- and sometimes even identical -- wording. So again, it begs the question why neither Mark nor Luke included this amazing event in their Gospels. It simply raises doubts regarding Matthew's account.

Myself, I am not sure what to believe, but I am doubtful that it is inspired text. On the other hand, if this event truly did occur as Matthew describes it, then the only way I can reconcile it with the rest of the New Testament, and with my current understanding of the Scriptures, is by proposing that maybe this event was actually the First Resurrection that is mentioned in the twentieth chapter of the Book of Revelation. I am referring to the following two verses:

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign

with him a thousand years."

Revelation 20:5-6, KJV

However, I am not fully convinced of this Gospel of Matthew and Book of Revelation connection. Likewise, if this event in the Gospel of Matthew is true, then I would suspect that this is when the Patriarch Job was possibly resurrected from the dead. Furthermore, I have considered that if this event did occur, then perhaps it was simply a local resurrection. In other words, it was not the "global resurrection" which is described by Jesus in Matthew 24 and elsewhere. My thinking -- or theory, really -- is that maybe the burst of spiritual energy that was released when Jesus rose from the dead also affected the deceased Saints who were buried in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Who knows.

That troublesome issue aside, the following Scriptures do indeed confirm Jesus' promise to His first century followers that He would once again appear in the clouds of heaven -- that is to say, the sky -- at His coming, exactly as those two Angels prophesied to the Apostles in the first chapter of the Book of Acts:

"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: 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. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Matthew 24:29-31, KJV

"Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Matthew 26:64, KJV

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."

Mark 13:26, KJV

"And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Mark 14:62, KJV

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

Revelation 1:7, KJV

The question then is this: Do the previous verses strictly mean that Christ remains in the sky, and that Believers in some manner rise up in the sky to meet Him, and then they are whisked off to Heaven, as we discussed in part one? Or do they mean that Christian Believers who witness this event meet Jesus in the air and then they settle back down to the ground? It would be rather easy to accept the first view -- which I believe happens to be the prevailing view of modern Christians -- except for the fact that Job clearly said that the Lord stands upon the Earth. But the problem does not end there. Why not? Well, you see, because in regard to Jesus standing upon the Mount of Olives at His Return, the Old Testament Prophet Zechariah said this very same thing in the following verses:

"For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD 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, 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."

Zechariah 14:2-4, KJV

Notice very carefully that just like the Patriarch Job, the Prophet Zechariah very clearly writes "his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives." So there should be no doubt at all that they are in agreement regarding this issue. Standing on the Earth is simply not the same as remaining in the clouds of heaven. However, as you may already know, some

modern Christians have apparently found a way around the "in the air" and "stand upon the Earth" dilemma by embracing a doctrine which is generally known as the "Secret Rapture". According to this doctrine, the gathering up or being caught up of the Saints to Heaven -- which is derived from the Koine Greek word "harpazo" -- and the Lord returning to the Earth for the Battle of Armageddon, are two distinct events.

In other words, according to the Secret Rapture belief, only Christian Believers see Jesus arrive in the clouds, at which point His Angels gather them together and carry them off to Heaven. Then, after a number of events which occur both in Heaven and on the Earth -- which I discuss in a number of my other articles -- Jesus Christ and the Saints return to the Earth for the Battle of Armageddon. According to the Secret Rapture doctrine, it is at this point when Jesus actually touches down on the Earth, as described by Job and Zechariah.

As I point out in other articles, the previous verses from the Book of Zechariah seem to be a description of the prelude to the terrible Battle of Armageddon. Notice that we are told that the Mount of Olives cracks and separates, resulting in one part moving towards the north, while the other part moves towards the south. It sounds like a typical earthquake where two tectonic plates slide against each other, which sometimes results in a gorge or deep crack forming at the boundary area between the two plates, doesn't it? The San Andreas fault comes to mind.

While I have never been to the nation state of Israel, I can report that several decades ago while conducting some online Bible research, I did discover that according to a number of different websites, in 1964 when now-deceased King Hussein of Jordan had the Intercontinental Hotel constructed on the summit of the Mount of Olives, his engineers discovered an east/west fissure -- or fault line -- running through their intended construction site. This fault line in fact passes just to the east of the Temple Mount, or Mount Moriah, as it was known in former days. As a result of this complication, they were forced to relocate the hotel site from the brow of this famous mountain, to a more stable area to the south. It has also been said that being as the Mount of Olives holds as many as 150,000 Jewish graves, hundreds of these graves were desecrated when the hotel -- which today is known as the Seven Arches Hotel -- was finally built.

As I have mentioned before, Israel is a seismically-active region due to the fact that it borders the Jordan Rift Valley, which is also known as the Syro-African Depression, or the Syrian-African Rift. This rift -- or tear -- in the Earth's crust runs the entire length of the border region which separates Israel and Jordan. The Jordan Rift Valley itself results from tectonic movements within the Dead Sea Transform fault system. The Dead Sea Transform forms the transform boundary between the African Plate to the west, and the Arabian Plate to the east. It is also referred to as the Dead Sea Rift. Furthermore, the Dead Sea Transform is part of the Great Rift Valley, which itself extends from northern Syria, all the way down to Mozambique in Africa.

To give you an idea of what kind of geological contrasts we are discussing here, consider that the lowest elevation point in the Jordan Rift Valley is in the Dead Sea, and stands at 2,590 feet below sea level. Furthermore, the actual shore of the Dead Sea is the lowest land on earth, standing at 1,300 feet below sea level. In contrast, both sides of the Jordan Rift Valley rise sharply to an elevation of just about three thousand feet. The main point to consider here is the fact that because of the geological nature of this region, Israel is riddled with fault lines. Not only that, but geologists in Israel recognize that the nation is long overdue for a major earthquake, and they are very worried about it. Why? Because for many years now, building construction codes in Israel have been substandard. Obviously, that is asking for trouble, and they fear that many thousands of people could die when the next big earthquake strikes that region.

Scripturally-speaking, there are also a number of interesting things to note regarding this situation. For example, when Jesus gave His followers His famous end-of-the-age sermon in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, both He and they were sitting upon the Mount of Olives. Furthermore, when Jesus made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, it is probable that He came in through the East Gate, being as He passed by the Mount of Olives to the East of Jerusalem. If we look to the Old Testament, we also discover that when King David was forced to flee from Jerusalem because of the evil machinations of his son Absalom, he also fled to the Mount of Olives where he wept before the Lord. Consider the following verses which confirm these various points:

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Matthew 24:3, KJV

"And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."

Luke 19:35-38, KJV

"And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up."

2 Samuel 15:30, KJV

What I also find interesting is that this account of King David -- of whom Jesus was a descendant -- and the prophecy of Zechariah, are the only two places in the entire Old Testament where the Mount of Olives is even mentioned. In other words, besides Jesus and His Disciples, King David appears to be the only one who is directly associated with it. If you are interested in learning more about the deep connection between Jesus and King David, please consider reading my article entitled "Who is Moshiah ben David?".

At any rate, in the mouth of a variety of witnesses, we have confirmed that the Mount of Olives plays a very important part in prophetic events. If you perform a Scripture search of the Mount of Olives with your favorite Bible program, you will indeed discover that it was a very special place to the Lord, and that He visited it often with His Disciples. Not only that, but as we have seen, the Mount of Olives is the Lord's point of arrival.

Before concluding this article, let me remind you of one more thing. If you were paying attention, you will have noticed that in certain verses in this article, I placed in

uppercase letters the phrases "in the last days", "it is the last time", "at the latter day", and "upon whom the ends of the age are come". As you may have guessed, I did this for a very specific reason. Having said that, let me encourage you again to read the seven-part series entitled "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?", as well as the four-part series entitled "The Day of the Lord: What It Really Means", both of which you will find listed at the end of this same article. Trust me, you are in a for a treat . . . or perhaps a shock?

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you have found it informative, enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

Abomination of Desolation: Explained!

Backsliding, Divine Chastisement and the Divine Agreement

Elijah: Where Are the True Prophets of God?

Fifty Days Which Changed the World

Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word

In the Ages to Come

Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?

Modern False Prophets and Worldly Ecumenism

Sorry . . . Jesus Is Not Coming At Any Moment

The Day of the Lord: What It Really Means

The Misguided End of the World Predictions of Harold Camping

The Office of Prophets and Teachers

Tradition or Truth? Old Wine or New Wine?

Understanding the Bible in Context

When Was Satan Cast Out of Heaven?

Who Hindered the Antichrist?

Who is Moshiah ben David?

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