

Our Return to Planet Earth

Jesus' first coming to earth began with his birth in Bethlehem, Israel. But during the years of his public ministry, Jesus made it perfectly clear that he will return to earth a second time.

“The Son of Man is going to come in Father’s glory with his angels.” ⁽¹⁾

“Men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.” ⁽²⁾

“In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the mighty one and coming on the clouds of heaven.” ⁽³⁾

But Jesus' second coming involves more than his return to planet earth. All his resurrected followers will accompany him! The apostle Paul asked a question in order to remind us of our future place in Jesus' coming earthly kingdom. “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world...”? ⁽⁴⁾ Later the apostle encouraged us to patiently put up with persecution and life's hardships because “if we endure we will also reign with him.” ⁽⁵⁾

In the awesomely fascinating book of Revelation, John quoted Jesus as saying, “To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations.” ⁽⁶⁾ When John saw Jesus returning at the battle of Armageddon, he specifically points out that Jesus doesn't come alone for, “The armies of heaven were following him.” ⁽⁷⁾ As John continued relating the revelation given him by Jesus, he declared, “I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge.” ⁽⁸⁾

Our Departure

If we return to planet earth, we must first depart our terrestrial home. This departure takes place in one of two ways: physical death or what is commonly called the rapture.

For those who love Jesus, death is merely a departure from earth into a place called heaven where we live with him. At present, Moses, Esther, David, Matthew and all those who love our Savior, live with him awaiting the resurrection of their bodies.

Not everyone who loves Jesus will die, but everyone who loves him must be changed from mortal to immortal, from perishable to imperishable. Therefore,

“We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed into immortal humans.” (9) At the moment of our change, Jesus “will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.” (10)

Return to What?

The glorified Jesus, accompanied by his resurrected followers, returns to this planet earth. We leave heaven and move to the earth that’s currently under your feet. You are not headed for “pie in the sky”—you are destined to come down from the place we call heaven to this very globe on which you’ve spent your whole life. The continents will still be here, as well as the oceans, rivers and lots of other geographical features. But some things will be very different.

Our loving God gives mankind every opportunity to either accept Jesus as Savior or invent a salvation based on human effort. Well, the human effort thing has completely failed and will end in the total destruction of mankind’s hope for self-improvement. Jesus, along with you and me, descends to an earth devastated by human mismanagement and “a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake...The cities of the nations collapsed.” (11)

Why Return to a Ruined Planet?

The resurrected Jesus and his saints come back to a ruined earth in order to revive it. We return with our Lord to remove the gloom that surrounds humanity.

Many people survive the tribulation. Not everyone on earth takes the mark of the beast. Otherwise, no human would be left alive when Jesus comes back to earth. During Jesus’ 1,000-year world-wide government, two types of humans live on earth: resurrected people who inhabit imperishable bodies and mortal humans who inhabit perishable bodies like the ones we now live in. These mortals are the people Jesus and his resurrected followers will manage, love and guide through our Lord’s 1,000-year reign. (Space does not allow a recounting of the hundreds of Hebrew predictions about Jesus’ absolutely wonderful kingdom.)

You are extremely important in God’s plan for the future of mankind. He intends to staff his government with people like you. He is preparing and will continue preparing you for a particular place in his coming kingdom. No wonder you need to come back to earth with Jesus! The Lord depends on your partnership during his 1,000-year kingdom. Jesus will share his authority with you which you will unselfishly exercise over the mortal humans under your care.

Just before his arrest and crucifixion, Jesus met with his apostles in Jerusalem. The promise he gave them applies to all of us who love him. “You are those who have stood by me in my trials and I confer on you a kingdom just as my Father conferred one on me so that you may...sit on thrones....” ⁽¹²⁾

We want to bless humanity here and now. But all we do in this present life isn't worth comparing to the blessing we will be after returning with Jesus to planet earth.

Footnotes:

1. Matthew 16:27
2. Mark 13:26
3. Matthew 26:64
4. 1 Corinthians 6:2
5. 2 Timothy 2:12
6. Revelation 2:26
7. Revelation 19:14
8. Revelation 20:4
9. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52
10. Philippians 3:21
11. Revelation 16:18-19
12. Luke 22:28-30
13. Romans 8:37