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Why Did Jesus Say He Would Return?

John 14:3: (NASB) *If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.*



The Golden Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem: In Jewish tradition, this is the gate through which the Messiah will enter Jerusalem. Ottoman Sultan Suleiman I sealed off the Golden Gate in 1541 to prevent the Messiah's entrance.

If you are a Bible-believing Christian, the prophecies about the return of Jesus are not in question. If you are a Bible-believing Christian, you know that the return of Jesus coincides with the End Times, again, not a question. The question is: Why does Jesus return? What is the mission, what is the focus, what is the purpose of his return? As we approach the well-publicized date of May 21, 2011, and its accompanied predictions of rapture, chaos and destruction, we thought we would spend the two Sundays leading up to it in an in depth conversation about the second coming of Christ, so today is the "why" of his coming and next Sunday is the "how."

Matthew 24:1-2: (NASB) Jesus is speaking of a dramatic event of startling proportions! Later on...Matthew 24:3: One key for understanding here - the "these things" the disciples asked about was the destruction of the Temple. They *also* asked about Jesus' return - a *separate* set of questions. We believe that to understand the prophecy of Matthew 24, we must understand that Jesus was answering three distinct questions.

The Promised Return of Jesus, 3angelsDVD.com

- *The world's greatest hope is Jesus' promised return to this earth. The scriptures teach that he will come once all people will have had the opportunity to learn about him and his plan of salvation...the New Testament promises at least 300 times that Jesus will return.*
- Matthew 24:14: (NASB) *This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

We want to clarify, however, because that's not exactly what Matthew 24:14 says.



Observations:

- The Good News of a coming kingdom is preached;
- ...Preached, but not necessarily *accepted*. All nations aren't to be converted.
- A testimony to nations, but not necessarily to *every single person*; billions have not individually heard the Gospel;
- By 1861, the Bible Society Reports indicated that the Gospel had been published in all of the nations of the world. The Gospel *did* go out to all nations through the printed word.

So this prophecy seems to already have been fulfilled over a period of time.

Matthew 28:18-19: Jesus isn't instructing them to make all the nations disciples, but to make disciples of all of the nations - to call people out from wherever they are.

**If we understand the first coming of Jesus,
will we better understand his second coming?**

Why did he come the first time? To provide salvation to ALL: Hebrews 2:9 Romans 5:18-19: A perfect man died for a perfect man, satisfying God's justice. As we inherited the sin of Adam, we also inherit the redemption of Jesus.

To provide salvation and the privilege of blessing the world to Israel as their promised Messiah: Genesis 22:15-18 Matthew 15:24: Jesus came to give the Gospel to Israel first and foremost. Their rejection of him as a nation gave the Gentiles the opportunity. Individuals followed, but not the nation as a whole. **But Jesus was rejected by Israel:** Matthew 23:37-39: Jesus essentially casts them off as they cast him off. Just as the nations were witnessed to in our previous segment, so the "nation" of Israel rejected Jesus, yet *all* of his initial followers were Jews. Nations = bigger picture John 1:10-11

So this special call would now be opened to anyone who would receive him: John 1:12-13: It would no longer be necessary to be born into a nation of favor. The calling out to the Gentiles was opened up by the will of God based on the rejection of Israel.



We think it is important to understand all of the reasons for Jesus' return in the first Advent in order to help us to understand all of the many details describing the second. Jesus told his disciples to be ready and to have peace. We need to be prepared and peaceful as well.

Galatians 3:26-29: This shows inclusiveness.

So the purposes of Jesus' first Advent:

1. To pay the redeeming price for the sin of Adam, and therefore to purchase Adam's entire race;
2. To call out a people for his name to be his "royal priesthood" and "ministers of reconciliation" to the rest of the world in preparation for his second Advent and the judgment.

There is more of a judgment aspect of Jesus being present the second time. It is a broader based judgment than that of the nation of Israel at that time. He began a work that needed to be finished.

Does Jesus come to take true believers to heaven?

John 14:1-3: Jesus is clear that he is coming back for his followers - those then and now - which should be a message of great comfort. Christians expect the return of Jesus in many different ways. Here is a very literal, dramatic perspective:

Taking the Believers, The Great Tribulation, YouTube

- *There is a mighty earthquake...the children of God stand in a rainbow...their redeemer and his vast army of angels are coming to take them home.*

The coming of Jesus was not only promised many times over, but we believe it was shown in the progression of the history of the true church in Revelation. There are seven churches for seven stages of history leading right up to our present time.

A quick look at the last four stages of the true church. Remember, these stages cover 2,000 years of time. The promise of a return is always in front of Christians no matter what the age.

<Fourth Stage>

Revelation 2:18,25: (NASB) ¹⁸And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write...
²⁵Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.

<Fifth Stage>

Revelation 3:1,3: (NASB) ¹To the angel of the church in Sardis write:...³So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

The warning is, be careful, because you could lose the privilege about knowing.

<Sixth Stage>

Revelation 3:7,11: (NASB) ⁷And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this: ¹¹I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

There is a greater anticipation of his coming at this stage. The warning is to be more on the alert.

<Seventh Stage>

Revelation 3:14,20: (NASB) ¹⁴To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ²⁰Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with me.

At this last stage, Jesus is knocking at the door - he is present! He is here!



Observations:

- Jesus does come for his followers;
- He takes a long time, so he continually reminds those who are faithful throughout the ages;
- His final reminder is actually an arrival - he is at the door;
- His followers must open the door to him.

Romans 8:17-19: Humanity needs reconciliation to God, and this is one of the reasons Jesus returns.

Does Jesus' return bring perilous times?

Jesus' return has everything to do with the trouble and distress that comes upon the world: 2 Timothy 3:1-4 Luke 21:34-35 Matthew 24:21-22

 **The Vengeance of God, *The Great Tribulation*, YouTube**

- *For those left behind, chaos reigns on the earth...earthquakes...gigantic hail...those that survive are killed by the brightness of our Lord's presence. (Jeremiah 35:31-33)*

Many prophecies do talk about very dramatic things and can be scary, but we need to understand the process of God's plan. Is that destruction the end of the process or part of the process? We will get back to this.

Jeremiah 25:31-33



Important question:

What if the events recorded in the Bible regarding Jesus' return were not all supposed to happen all at once? What if they were a *process* rather than an *event*?

Example: Jesus' first coming - we say that he came to pay the price, that he came to call out a people for his name, that he began his ministry by going into seclusion for 40 days, that he performed miracles in many places, that he preached in many places, that he was pursued by the Pharisees and eventually crucified. We do NOT say that all of these things were simultaneous. Why do we so often assume that all of these prophecies of the return of Jesus will all happen at the same time? Why would his second coming be that different than his first coming?

Does Jesus' return bring a restitution of all things?

Daniel 2:44-45: The crushing of these kingdoms - the removal of the corrupt governments - is part of the trouble in the world at Jesus' return. If we only read that part of the text, it would be a fearsome and troubling event. What we need to understand is the *process*, the necessary process to replace the old sinful way with a new and perfect way. His kingdom endures forever.

 **I will give to everyone accordingly, *3angelsDVD.com***

- *All wicked people will be destroyed at his appearing...those who have accepted him will be taken in the air...and will live in heaven for 1,000 years...*

This is another perspective, but we want to piece together context by context what will happen. Acts 3:20-21



Observations:

- God sends Jesus;
- Jesus comes for the true church;
- He does NOT come UNTIL the period called "the times of restoration;"
- This "time/period" was clearly prophesied;



- Any thorough restoration process requires a dismantling first - it is at the *beginning* of the process, not the end.

2 Peter 2:5: So, God "destroyed" the world without destroying the world! He destroyed the order of things. This is an important concept in how God works retribution and judgment, then restoration. Jesus brings difficulty - "*a time of trouble that never was since there was a nation,*" but he also brings restitution after the trouble.

This shows us both parts of the picture with clarity: Zephaniah 3:8: That sounds serious! Does the earth literally burn to a crisp? Zephaniah 3:9:

Here is an example of the two aspects of the return of Jesus:

- 1) the difficulty, trouble, indignation and judgment; AND
- 2) the restitution.

The context of Jude is also about the convincing of man after the return of Christ: Jude 14-15: The return of Jesus is a *process* much more than it is an *event*.

What about the Rapture?

Thus far we have seen that Jesus comes to gather his saints, to crush the kingdoms of this world and to restore that which was lost. We have also seen that all of these things are much more sensibly looked at as a process rather than an event...

Therefore, according to Rick, while drama is an effective attention getter, it does not equal effective planning; rather a "*line upon line, precept upon precept*" process builds an everlasting Kingdom.



God is warning of Rapture on 5-21-11, May 21, 2011 Warning

- *The Rapture of the true believers will occur on May 21, 2011.*
- *That will be followed by a period of 153 days, the Day of Judgment, after which on October 21, 2011, this entire cosmos will be destroyed by God Himself.*

This is a radical perspective on the return of Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: Notice, no mention of the myriads of angels with him. They do come later. Remember, we are saying this is a *process...and the dead in Christ will rise first*. Here is a straightforward fulfillment of Jesus' own words to his followers. ("*I go to prepare a place for you...*") ¹⁷*Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up* We don't look at the Rapture as a physical event. What does the word "*Then*" mean in this scripture in the original Greek? The Greek word is "epeita," which means "Afterward." Rotherham translates it as "After that." Thus verses 16 and 17 actually tell us that the dead in Christ are raised at the return of Christ, and some remain after that, to be later called home to join the others.

There is a sense of *process*, not necessarily limited to a single event. The return is an event that brings a very distinct process. The process includes coming to take his true followers who have died to be with him, bringing destruction to the existing nations and crushing those kingdoms, and finally, giving the people "*pure lips*" and a "*pure language*" and people worshipping God. These things all fit together as part of the return of Jesus.

**So why did Jesus say he would return?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**