

THE TRIUMPHANT TOUCHDOWN OF JESUS CHRIST!

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Faithful Students Of The Word, Scoffers Of The Endtime, The Resurrection Of The Dead, The Divine Inspiration Of The Scriptures, The Future Importance Of The Mount Of Olives

As I have shared in other articles, I believe that the most important things that we need to understand regarding the Endtime can be found within the Holy Scriptures. It is our responsibility as faithful students of the Word to devote our time to the diligent study of the writings of the Prophets of old, so that we might not only gain a better understanding of God's overall Plan of Salvation, but also grasp the significance of soon-coming events which will eventually result in the restitution of all things. The Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy, the first bishop of Ephesus, to judiciously study the Scriptures when he wrote to him:

"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)

In fact, the Lord Himself commands us to remember the Scriptures of old that we might understand the end of all things which are to come upon the Earth. Although some of these events were foretold thousands of years ago by the Prophets, we have yet to see their complete fulfillment. Consider the Words of the Lord through the mouth of the Prophet Isaiah:

"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)

If the Lord says that something is going to happen, we can be certain that it most surely will; for as King David tells us, the Lord has magnified His Word above His very Name:

"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)

Undoubtedly, the most notable Endtime event which all Christians eagerly look forward to, is the return of Jesus Christ to the Earth. In this current time of the Apostasy, that is, the falling away from The Truth, many have already become blinded to the Word of God and regard the Second Coming as pure foolishness; a tale of religious fanatics who have been duped by modern-day religion. Well did the Apostle Peter speak of them when he said:

"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)

What may come as a surprise to some is the fact that this same hope of Christ's Return was also expressed by a man in what is believed by some to be one of the oldest books of the Bible, that is, the Book of Job:

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:" (Job 19:25)

Not only was the Patriarch Job fully aware of the Lord's Return in the Last Days, but he also foresaw the glorious Resurrection of the Dead, and his own future Redemption from the snares of death and the grave. Consider what he said in the next two verses:

"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 19:26-27)

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 will occur. Not only that, he also tells us precisely when it will occur; that is, at the sound of the Last Trump, the Seventh Trumpet of the Book of Revelation:

"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)

"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)

In the above verses, the word 'prevent' is actually Old English. It is derived from the Greek word "phthano" which means to come before or precede. Thus, as the rest of the verses bear out, Paul is simply saying that the Dead in Christ shall rise first, to be followed by those of us who are still alive on the Earth at the time of the Lord's Advent. One thing which has always intrigued me about the Bible is the many 'prophetic pairs' which can be found between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Many futuristic events which were concealed, or hidden, in the

Old Testament Scriptures, find their fulfillment, or revelation, in the New Testament. This is particularly true regarding the hundreds of prophecies describing the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection and Return of Jesus Christ. Sometimes, in rare instances, even the Scripture references share the same numbers. One example I have used before is the prophecy of Micah concerning the Birth of Christ which finds its completion in the Gospel of Matthew:

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, 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)

After the magi from the East had inquired of the Jewish king where the new King should be found, Herod the Great was greatly troubled. Thus, he called together the chief priests and the scribes to find out what they knew of this event. Their reply was to quote from 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)

Certainly, these numeric connections serve to validate the fact that, even though the Bible was 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. As the Apostle Peter wrote:

"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)

Just as the pre-Christian era Jews looked forward with anticipation to the Birth of the Saviour, we today wait with earnest expectation for the Return of our Lord at the end of this current age. In describing Jesus' return to the Heavenly Realm almost two thousand years ago, we find the following account in 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)

It is believed that Luke the Physician was also the author of the Book of Acts. The introduction to both books, which is addressed to one Theophilus, seems to bear this out:

"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)

"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:..."

(Acts 1:1-2)

In the Book of Acts, Luke provides Theophilus, and us, with a more in-depth account of Jesus' departure from this world:

"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)

For our current discussion, what is most important from these two accounts are the exact words which were spoken by the two Angelic Messengers:

"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."

These Messengers were clearly telling Jesus' Disciples that, just as the Lord had left them, so shall He also return some day; a Day which many of us believe is in our very near future. If we were to numerate what we know about the Lord's Ascension into Heaven, it could be summed up in the following three points:

1. He 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 was taken up into Heaven and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Studying any map of ancient Israel will indeed show that this is where Bethany and the Mount of Olives are located. This is also confirmed by the following verses from 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)

"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)

"Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs

off:" (John 11:18)

The following material, which I extracted from Easton's Bible Dictionary, 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 -----

With the Scriptural information I have provided, particularly the words of the two angels from the Book of Acts, we have now pinpointed exactly how and where the Lord will touch down when He returns to the Earth: He will appear in the clouds of Heaven, and then light upon the very same Mount of Olives from which He departed almost two thousand years ago. This may be what the Patriarch Job was referring to when he said '...and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth'. The following Scriptures indeed confirm that Jesus will once again appear in the clouds of Heaven at His Coming:

"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)

"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)

Concerning the Lord 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)

As I explained in other of my Endtime articles, the above verses seem to be a description of the prelude to the Battle of Armageddon. Notice that we are told that the Mount of Olives is going to crack wide open and separate; part of it moving to the north, and part of it moving towards the south. While I have never been to Israel, several decades ago, I recall reading that the owners of the Holiday Inn hotel chain were contemplating building one of their famous inns on the summit of the Mount of Olives. However, if the report I read was true, these plans were scrapped when an east/west fissure was indeed discovered on this famous mountain ridge. Could this in fact be the very fault line which will separate when the Lord returns? Surely time will tell. What is also extremely interesting to note is that when Jesus gave His famous Endtime sermon in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, it was while they were sitting upon the Mount of Olives:

"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)

Furthermore, when Jesus made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, He probably came in through the East Gate, being as He passed by the Mount of Olives to the East of Jerusalem:

"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)

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:

"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)

What I also find interesting is that this account of King David, of whom Jesus was a descendant, and the Endtime account in the prophecies of Zechariah, are the only two places in the entire Old Testament where the Mount of Olives is even mentioned. In other words, King David appears to be the only one associated with it besides Jesus and His Disciples.

Thus, in the mouth of a variety of witnesses, we have confirmed that the Mount of Olives will play a very important part in the culmination of Endtime events. If you perform a Scripture search of the Mount of Olives with your favorite Bible program, you will indeed see that it was a very special place to the Lord; and that He visited it often with His Disciples. Before closing this article, let me mention that Endtime prophecy is open to a lot of different interpretations. As with other students of the Bible, I feel that there may possibly be two Comings of the Lord. The first of these may be the aerial Advent described in Matthew chapter twenty-four where the dead and living Saints are Resurrected, and/or changed, and then raptured, (taken up), to Heaven to be with the Lord.

The Advent I have described in this article may actually be a Third Coming a short time later when we, the Resurrected Saints, and the Host of Heaven, return with the Lord for the Battle of Armageddon, which will be fought in northern Israel. It is at this time that The Beast, the False Prophet, and their followers will be destroyed. Please refer to my other Endtime articles for more details concerning these events. Whether there is one Advent or two, the fact remains that, according to the Scriptures we have now studied, the Mount of Olives will be the Lord's Point of Arrival when He returns! For this reason, I urge you to not only keep your eyes on the Lord; but also to pay special attention to events happening in Israel and the Middle East, as wondrous events may be happening there in our foreseeable future. Time may indeed be short, much shorter than some even realize! Are you ready for these things? If not, you can prepare yourself by taking the first step, which is to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour. I pray that this article has been an inspiration and a blessing in your life.

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