Grace Evangelical Free Church December 18, 2023

**Acts 1:11** Jesus’ Personal Return

Because many have wrongly interpreted the truth of Jesus’ second coming, it is necessary that we understand exactly what the Bible teaches.

**Acts 1:11**: “**Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.**”

* **Grammatical Usage:** “**This**” or in the Greek, “houtos” as a demonstrative pronoun literally means, “This same”; “**will come**” or “erchomai” in the demonstrative directly points back to the subject (Jesus); “**in the same way**” or “hon tropon” in the adverbial accusative to underscore and strengthen the verb, “will come.”
* **Literal Interpretation:** “**Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This same Jesus** (whom you have known Him personally, physically, bodily and visibly) **who** (no one else) **was just taken into heaven, will return exactly in the same form and way you have seen Him go into heaven.**”
* **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. Scripture makes it clear that Jesus will come again literally, personally, visibly and in His present glorified body. **John 14:1-3** and **Acts 1:11** confirms that His second coming will be as literal as was His first. This being the case, it is a simple matter for us to eliminate the mistaken and erroneous views of the second advent which are current today:

1. He was not referring to His “spiritual” presence which He guaranteed in the experience of every one of His children.

It is wonderful to have the promise of Christ’s presence, but how much more wonderful it is to enjoy the experience of it! Old Testament believers had the promise of the Lord’s presence (**Psalm 23:4**; **Isaiah 43:2**) and the last promise our Lord made before His ascension was **Matthew 28:19-20**. We are right in deriving much comfort and inspiration from a present realization of the truth of **Hebrews 13:5-6**, but this is not what our Lord meant when He said, “**I will come back.**” When He ascended, His followers saw Him go up into Heaven suddenly (**Acts 1:10-11**).

2. He was not referring to the coming and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In **John 14:18**, we have the promise of the Lord Jesus concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit, fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-4**). In a new and a wonderful way the Lord Jesus “**came**” to His waiting disciples, but this was not the fulfilment of His word recorded in **John 14:1-3**: “**I will come again**.” Just pause and remember that the promise of His return was repeated many times after Pentecost, so Pentecost could not have been the fulfilment of the promise. It is “**the Lord Himself**” who is coming (**1 Thess. 4:16**), and “**we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ**” (**Phli. 3:20**) not the Holy Spirit.

3. He was not referring to the wonderful experience of conversion.

In a very real sense the Lord does come to us when we receive Him as our Savior (**John 1:12**; **Galatians 2:20**); but this is not to be confused with the promise of His second advent (**Hebrews 9:28**). Per **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10**, these believers had been converted and were serving the Lord, but also anticipating the return of their Lord. The reference here is not to people being converted, but to the sure and certain fact of the personal return of Christ.

4. He was not referring to the death of the believer.

It is quite true that we need have no fear of the dark valley or of death itself, because the Lord who has conquered death will be there with us. We can join with David in saying – **Ps. 23:4**! But death is still an enemy (**1 Cor. 15:26**). We are not to hope for death, but for the Lord’s return (**Titus 2:11-13**). **John 21:18, 19** compared to vv. **21-22**, you see the distinction between death and the second coming. Then again, the second coming cannot refer to death because some Christians will never die (**1 Cor. 15:51-52**; **1 Thess. 4:17**).

5. He was not referring to some historical event that had no connection with His personal, bodily return.

Some have taught that Christ returned at the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70); one modern heretical sect teaches that He returned in 1844; some teach that He came in 1914! Look up **Matthew 24:30** and **26:64**.

6. He was not referring to a gradual improvement which would take place in this world and would eventually usher in His coming.

This “diffusion of Christianity”, as some have called it, is gradual, whereas the scriptures always speak of Christ’s return as sudden and unexpected (**Matthew 24:27, 36, 42** and **44**; **1 Thessalonians 5:2** and **Revelation 3:3**).

7. He was not referring to a return which would be for only some of His people, but for all His people.

In **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**, all the “**dead**” saints are to be raised, and all the living ones too! There is no hint of a partial or selective rapture; see **1 Corinthians 15:23** (last five words). See **1 Corinthians 15:51-52**, and notice the second “**all**” in verse **51**. The Bride, for whom the Bridegroom is coming (**Ephesians 5:22-23**), is composed of every believer (**Matthew 25:6**). It is for every truly born-again, blood-bought child of God that the Lord will come again, and **John 14:3** tells us what He is coming for: He is coming to take us to our Heavenly Home. Who among us is worthy that the Lord should come again and receive us unto Himself? – but that is where His grace is so wonderful!

* **Conclusion**: Do you know the grace of God? The forgiveness of God? Don’t be caught unprepared…in rebellion…scoffing…sin stained…unforgiven…condemned.