

# Revealing The Soon-Coming All-Powerful Sovereign World Ruler

## [Part 2]

The book of Revelation provides strong reinforcement to the prophetic declaration of the other Christian scriptures.

In evangelical churches, there has always been an expectant hope of Christ's return to earth based on His own stated promises.

Who then can ignore Jesus' own words on the subject of His return?

**Matthew 24:30-31, 36** [NIV] *“At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and **all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.**” ... “No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”*

We find the apostle Paul had similar words with the same significance.

**1 Thessalonians 5:2-4** [NIV] *“for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety”, destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.”*

The apostle Peter wrote the same message of caution and the need for spiritual preparation.

**2 Peter 3:10-12** [NIV] *“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? **You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.**”*

Each generation of believers has its own responsibility to be faithful to the Christian Bible and **all** of its teachings.

That responsibility includes the appeal of our Lord Jesus Christ to watch and pray for the day of His return.

We have to admit that many believers through the long centuries did become weary and discouraged, concluding that Jesus was indeed delaying His return.

The moving tide of history during the first and second World Wars caused many teachers in the church to produce exciting sermons and lectures, complete with colourful charts.

Dogmatically insisting that the old Roman Empire was being restored, some regarded Mussolini to be the soon-revealed antichrist.

They built up all this to an ultimate climax that did **not** happen according to their predictions.

Such teachers presumed to know more than Daniel, and to be wiser than Isaiah.

They held themselves capable of seeing farther into the future than John the revelatory.

Many Christians were “burned” by the extreme and forced interpretations of these would-be prophets.

Many Christians since have come to fear any further exposure to prophetic ideas or study.

Yet thankfully many Christians in the present day do yearn within themselves to be ready to see their Saviour when He does return.

Such Christians have a real understanding of what Jesus has done for them and all humanity, and long to share this good news with as many as they can.

**Yet a great segment of Christian theology emphasis the utility of the cross on which Jesus died rather than the person who died on that cross for our sins.**

Redemption is **not** a commodity that you may obtain whenever you turn your minds to it, a spiritual transaction without emotional content.

This is a very poor substitute for a love inflamed desire to be with the returning Jesus Christ.

**As a result many Christians are only humanly curious as to end time prophecy, looking on it as an amazing jigsaw puzzle.**

They spend time and effort trying to put the various pieces together, hoping to arrive at some new prophetic twist or surprising suggestion.

**To approach the book of Revelation simply out of curiosity is in my view close to sacrilege.**

Similar to examining the grave cloth in which the body of Jesus Christ was supposed to have been wrapped or chemically analysing the blood that was shed for us on Calvary’s cross.

**Spiritual truth such as revealed in the book of Revelation not acted on in obedience becomes darkness.**

Without action we are worse off for hearing, adding to our guilt the sin of disbelief and disobedience.

We must always be careful concerning the motivation of our hearts.

Some Bible students now are seeking a “key” that will unlock scripture.

**There is no secret, magical key that unlocks the meaning of scripture.**

God did **not** give us His Word in the form of a series of interlocking puzzle pieces.

**2 Timothy 3:16** [NIV] *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,”*

The Holy Spirit inspired all scripture in the first place, and He is the **Only One** who can give us understanding.

**2 Peter 1:20-21** [NIV] *“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but **men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**”*

The prophets did **not** invent or interpret scriptures. God co-operated with each writer using their talents, education and cultural background.

To ensure that the message He intended was faithfully communicated in the very words they wrote.

Christian believers do not agree concerning the interpretation of prophetic scriptures, you may find yourself in disagreement with what I say in this study of the book of Revelation.

Many Christian saints of the past believed in the literal return of Jesus Christ to the earth, without adhering to what is now called “*futurist*” school of prophetic interpretation.

All Christians that acclaim the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth do have a common belief.

This solid belief is that the returning Jesus Christ will bring about a deathless, tearless kingdom, that He promised personally and through the apostle John in the book of Revelation.

**Revelation 21:1-7** [NIV] *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. **He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.**”*

I know I have quoted this scripture in the last study, but it is a scripture that we all can hold eternal hope in.

This is a scripture that can prompt our prayers for Jesus Christ’s return.

No-one knows or can know the day or the hour of Jesus Christ’s coming.

No-one knows all the details of Christ’s coming or the exact progression of the historical events that lead up to His return.

## **What, then, does God expect of us as a result of our studying the inspired book of Revelation?**

1. God wants us to believe wholeheartedly in the eventual return of Jesus Christ. This time to rule all human people.

This is the message given to all seven churches referred to in the book of Revelation.

The words “*he who has an ear let him hear*” is mentioned to all these churches, confirming also it was words given directly by the Holy Spirit.

2. God also wants us to send the gracious gospel message of Jesus Christ to all the ends of the earth.

The words “*to him who overcomes*” is also mentioned to all these churches.

The revelation of what this means is given to us.

**Revelation 12:9-11** [NIV] *“The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. **They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.**”*

This overcoming the deceptive influence of Satan is for all Christians in two ways.

- a) Proclaiming the saving blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ can relieve us of the penalty of our sins.
- b) Our own life of reflecting the love of God towards all other human beings.

[For an expanded explanation of the above, please study the series of articles "*The Seven Church Attitudes Revealed by Christ in the Book of Revelation.*"]

We all as Christians can fulfil the above expectations of our Creator God without our views about the "*rapture of the church*" or "*the great tribulation*" or the exact details of the historical events leading up to the literal return of Jesus Christ.

We will be greatly blessed by God if we respond to these expectations.

We will be blessed also if we are constantly asking ourselves these very important questions.

*"Am I ready, am I prepared for the return of Jesus Christ and my personal judgement by Him?"*

*"Am I among those who are longing to see Jesus Christ face to face in His glorified state as described in the book of Revelation?"*

*"Can I confidently pray come Lord Jesus come?"*

**All Christians should live each day as though Jesus Christ might return at once**, but we should also be preaching the Good News of His message of redemption as if His return was a thousand years in the future.

**Luke 12:13-21** [NIV] *"Someone in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.' Jesus replied, 'Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?' Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'" And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich towards God."*

The return of Jesus Christ and His judgement came to this man the same night that followed His personal prediction for His future life.

We all need to take this warning made by Jesus Christ very seriously.

Jesus Christ's imminent return should underscore our need to be Holy, joyful, confident people, who are watching for this blessed event.

As Christian believers who follow the words of Jesus Christ, we are privileged to know the general outline concerning the end of the age of human beings and the arrival of the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we encounter the words "*that day*" or similar statements in scripture we can add to our understanding of this great future event.

**The promise of scripture is that Jesus Christ will appear first to His waiting saints.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:15-18** [NIV] *“According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.”*

There are two types of Christians who are referred to in this promised resurrection and rising to meet the returning Jesus Christ.

- a) Those who have died and are asleep in their graves.
- b) Those who are still alive on the earth.

Both will be among the first to meet the returning Jesus Christ *“in the clouds.”*

Where will they then go?

- a) Will be always with Jesus Christ.
- b) **Zechariah 14:4** [NIV] *“On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.”*

Note the words *“on that day”* referring to the return of Jesus Christ as the context of this verse shows.

**Acts 1:12** [NIV] *“Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city.”*

Note the location of the previous verse of scripture.

**Acts 1:6-11** [NIV] *“So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”*

Context of these verses is the location and the way in which Jesus Christ will return to the earth.

From heaven via the clouds just above the physical surface of the earth, with all the Christians who have risen to meet Him.

The crux of the whole matter is this, the rightful Owner of this wonderfully created world and all its inhabitants is going to return to claim what is His.

**I for one look forward to that day, I want to be there and be a part of that great event.**

Until that day there will be conflict, distress and war among nations.

**Matthew 24:3** [NIV] *“As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”*

The Mount of Olives was a very fitting place for Jesus Christ to reveal to His disciples what would happen before He returned in power to rule.

**Matthew 24:4** [NIV] *“Jesus answered: “Watch out that no-one deceives you.”*

The disciples had asked Jesus for a sign of His return.

**The problem is that when we are looking for “signs”, then we are opening ourselves to deception.**

The only sure way to keep from being deceived is to keep our focus on Jesus Christ and His words.

**Matthew 24:5, 11, 24** [NIV] *“For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.” ... “and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.” ... “For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect, if that were possible.”*

There are now and have been throughout human history many “false prophets” who bring with them counterfeit signs of spiritual power and authority.

**2 Corinthians 11:13-15** [NIV] *“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”*

These “false prophets” who seem to be so righteous, are really vehicles in the hands of Satan.

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 9-10** [NIV] *“Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for [that day will not come] until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.” ... “The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.”*

Satan has the power to perform counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders to deceive the majority of people.

**Matthew 24:6-8** [NIV] *“You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth-pains.”*

Earthquakes are often mentioned in relationship with God stepping into the affairs of humanity.

As we have already read in **Zechariah** that an earthquake occurs as Jesus Christ’s feet land on the Mount of Olives.

**Matthew 27:50-51** [NIV] *“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. **The earth shook and the rocks split.**”*

At Christ’s death on the cross an earthquake occurred.

**Hebrews 12:25-29** [NIV] *“See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “**Once***

*more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken, that is, created things, so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire.”*

The writer of Hebrews is comparing the giving of the Old Covenant that was accompanied with an earthquake that caused Mount Sinai to tremble, and the ratification of the New Covenant at Christ’s death on the cross.

Hebrews then takes us forward to Christ’s return when the whole earth and the heavens also will be shaken.

The only thing that will **not** be shaken will be the Kingdom of God [the family of risen Christians who have met Christ in the clouds? I cannot prove this exception to the shaking but it does seem logical.]

**Fire is also one of the things that will destroy vast parts of the earth at Christ’s return.**

**Revelation 8:3-7** [NIV] *“Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel’s hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake. Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them. **The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.**”*

The human race has always been quick to blame the world’s disasters and tragedies, floods, famine, plagues on “*natural causes.*”

But at the end of the age when the final judgements of God begin to fall onto the earth, how long will it take for people to confess that there is another real, though invisible, force in operation?

**In the end the wrath of God will leave no hiding place for sinning humanity.**