



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#16)
Does God reveal himself today?

CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK!

JESUS, I WANT TO SEE YOU!
SHOW YOURSELF TO ME!

☞ **AT THE PRESENT TIME:** JESUS IS NOT ON EARTH. HE HAS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN.

☞ **IN THE FUTURE:** JESUS WILL RETURN TO EARTH. WE WILL SEE HIM AT THAT TIME.

☞ **BUT DOES HE EVER SHOW HIMSELF IN THESE PRESENT TIMES?**

FIRST, WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE FOR HIS FIRST COMING.

It wasn't so that we would have something to look at!

- IT WAS HIS DECISION, TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE.
- HIS PURPOSE:
 - To **change** us – to bring us to repentance.
 - To **restore** what sin destroyed.
 - To **adopt** us into his own family, so that we can share his glory in a way that goes far beyond the way we were originally created.

✓ **He became like us, so that we could become like him!**

For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 2:17 (NIV)

❖ Like us ... EXCEPT for sin.

... he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin.

Hebrews 4:15b (NLT)

✓ **He's returning to finish the work he started.**

And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.

Romans 8:30 (CSB)

WHEN HE ASCENDED TO HEAVEN, HE TOLD THE APOSTLES THAT HE WOULD RETURN PHYSICALLY.

NOT FOR THESE REASONS:

- Not for entertaining us or "proving" he exists!
- Not merely because we want it to happen (though that's something all God's people want – 2 Tim. 4:8).

FOR THIS REASON:

- Because it will be time to finish the work he began.

TO DO LIST:

- ✓ **Judge** the world and its people.
- ✓ **Restore** the world to its original sinless condition.
- ✓ **Rule** over it, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

BEFORE JESUS LEFT: He warned us about people who would claim that he had returned physically.

- ALL such rumors would all be FALSE.

And then if anyone says to you, "Look, here is the Christ!" or "Look, there he is!" **do not believe it.**

Mark 13:21 (ESV)

- **WHY?** When Jesus does physically return, it will be a public event: open and obvious to all!

For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. [The nations] will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Matthew 24:27, 30b (CSB)

No where in the Bible is there even a hint that Jesus will return before this "end point in time."

- The constant theme is: "He's gone... he will return at the end of this age."

ONE EXCEPTION (SEE NEXT PAGE) →

- Zech 14:3-4 seems to suggest that he will return to the same location from where he left – the Mount of Olives.

Then the LORD will go out to fight against those nations as he fights on a day of battle.

On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east.

Zechariah 14:3-4a (CSB)

ONLY ONE EXCEPTION: IN REVELATION 1

Here, Jesus shows himself to the apostle John, to give him the book of Revelation.

MORE ABOUT THIS ON THE NEXT PAGE

- **ALL OTHER STATEMENTS** describe his return as:
 - A future event, at the end of the age.
 - The time of final judgment.
- **CONCLUSION?**
 - There is **NO** evidence that Jesus ever appeared physically, in person, to anyone (except for when he gave John the book of Revelation).
 - The theme is always: "He's not here; we're looking forward to his return."

WHAT DOES JESUS LOOK LIKE TODAY?
[AS DESCRIBED IN REVELATION 1.]

- The apostle John was Jesus' closest friend.
- Yet when he saw Jesus, he was completely overwhelmed with terror.

JOHN WAS SO TERRIFIED, THAT HE FELL DOWN AS THOUGH DEAD.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man.

Rev. 1:17a (CSB)

- It would probably be even worse for us!

☞ **WHAT DID JOHN SEE?**

Jesus' appearance was such a "sensory overload" that it went beyond description! John could describe it only in figurative terms.

When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands. And standing in the middle of the lampstands was the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were bright like flames of fire. His feet were as bright as bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was as bright as the sun in all its brilliance.

Rev. 1:12-16 (NLT)

☞ **THIS IS THE JESUS WE WILL SOMEDAY MEET.**

SINCE there is no evidence in Scripture to suggest that Jesus might make a random physical appearance today,
☞ is there any other type of appearance that has occurred, since he ascended (physically) to heaven?

☞ **WHAT DO WE FIND IN SCRIPTURE? 2 THINGS!**

1. Jesus is with us at all times, in spirit. The issue isn't his presence, but the location of his physical body.
2. Jesus sometimes appeared in dreams and visions (not his actual physical presence).

And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:20b (CSB)

JESUS' APPEARANCE IN DREAMS AND VISIONS

☞ **IN SCRIPTURE? YES!**

This occurred in special situations, and only for a special purpose.

- NOT to those who were arrogant and demanding.
- NOT to curiosity seekers.

☞ **TODAY? PERHAPS SOMETIMES.**

[EXAMPLE]

IN ISLAMIC COUNTRIES, IT SEEMS THAT JESUS OCCASIONALLY REVEALS HIMSELF IN DREAMS AND VISIONS TO PEOPLE WHO ARE DESPERATELY SEARCHING FOR THE TRUTH.

COME, FOLLOW ME!

WHEN IT HAPPENS, IT TENDS TO BE FOR ONE OF THESE REASONS:
 1) to direct them to the Bible for salvation; or
 2) to prepare them for service and persecution.

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WARNING! THIS SOUNDS LIKE A FUN EXPERIENCE!

It's the FRUIT OF GODLINESS that counts, not the EXPERIENCE!

☞ **IT CAN BE FAKE.**
 The visions of your prophets were false and worthless; ...
Lament. 2:14a (NIV)

... they tell dreams that are false, ...
Zech. 10:2b (NIV)

☞ **IF GENUINE, it results in people who:**

- ✓ Are characterized by humility and obedience.
- ✓ Consider Jesus to be more important than the dream or vision. **(They might not even tell others about the experience!)**

HE'S NOT GOING TO APPEAR PHYSICALLY BEFORE ME ...

IT'S NOT LIKELY THAT I'LL SEE HIM IN A DREAM OR VISION, ...

I'M DISAPPOINTED!

YOU SHOULD BE EXCITED!

FIRST OF ALL: Those things are usually not necessary!

☞ WE DON'T NEED TO SEE JESUS — ESPECIALLY FOR PROOF THAT HE'S PHYSICALLY ALIVE!

- We have accurate historical records of those who did see Jesus. We can trust their testimony about him!

☞ JESUS HAS GIVEN A SPECIAL **BLESSING** TO THOSE WHO TRUST HIM WITHOUT DEMANDING THAT THEY SEE HIM!

Jesus said to Thomas, "You believe because you've seen me. Blessed are those who haven't seen me but believe."
John 20:29 (GW)

(*NOTE: THE WORD "BELIEVE" REFERS TO TRUST.)

☞ WE CAN LOVE HIM WITHOUT SEEING HIM!

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
1 Peter 1:8-9 (NIV)

ANOTHER REASON: While he's gone, great things are happening to us!

EXAMPLE #1: We have the HOLY SPIRIT in us!

- Jesus told us that he had to leave, so that the "Comforter" or "Helper" (the Holy Spirit) could come!

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.
John 16:7 (NIV)

THIS IS THE SPIRIT THAT HAS AN ACTIVE ROLE IN ALL ASPECTS OF OUR SALVATION. WITH JESUS NOT PRESENT, THE SPIRIT IS EVEN MORE INVOLVED IN OUR LIVES!

EXAMPLE #2: Jesus is MAKING US MORE LIKE HIMSELF – more like God!

☞ WE HAVE BEEN ADOPTED INTO GOD'S FAMILY!

In love, [God] predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will ...
Ephes. 1:4b-5 (NIV)

☞ WE ARE GROWING IN HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS!

You were taught... to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
Ephes. 4:22a, 23-24 (NIV)

(THOUGH WE ARE STILL HUMANS – CREATED BEINGS – WE ARE BECOMING MORE LIKE GOD!)

☞ HE PREPARING US TO SHARE IN HIS GLORY!

Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Romans 8:17 (NIV)

☞ HE IS INCREASING OUR GLORY, WHICH IS A REFLECTION OF HIS GLORY!

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Cor. 3:18 (NIV)

WE BELONG TO A NEW FAMILY... BY ADOPTION, NOT BY NATURE, WE WILL SHARE IN HIS GLORY... AND THE PROCESS HAS ALREADY BEGUN!

OUR OPPORTUNITY:

Rather than demand to see God now... Prepare to see him later!

- **Our KNOWLEDGE:**
We know we will see him someday ...
- **Our DUTY:**
We are to get ready!

Remember this:

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Matthew 5:8 (CSB)

You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.
2 Peter 3:11b-12a (NIV)

... those who are not holy will not see the Lord.
Hebrews 12:14b (NLT)

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