



Is Jesus Really Returning? (Part I)

Matthew 24:3 (NASB) *As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?*



It was about 2,000 years ago when Jesus walked this earth as a man to fulfill the necessary requirements of justice and give his life as a ransom price for Adam and therefore for all mankind. We see his sacrifice as the pivot point of human history - and it was, but Jesus himself assured us that his work to reconcile this world to God was in fact NOT completed at that time. Jesus said that he would come back to finish what he had started and that there would be certain signs in the world to determine when this would happen. So, can we read the signs of his return?



Why does Jesus return?

First, the purposes of Jesus' First Advent:

- To pay the redeeming price for Adam's sin and therefore to purchase Adam's entire race. The man, Adam, was responsible for sin entering the world. Adam brought the human race into sin; Jesus brings the race out of sin.
- 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. Jesus comes to begin the reconciliation process, but also he comes to call out "a people for his name," also called "the heavenly calling" and "the true church," which will be his "bride" in heaven for the preparation of the great Day of Judgment.



What will happen when Jesus returns, John Ankerberg talking to a pastor

- *What happens when Jesus does come back?*
- *Jesus Christ steps back on the Mount of Olives and that false tribulation temple will be destroyed, because when he steps down on the Mount of Olives that mountain is going to divide in the middle. It's going to start from the west, which would be the Temple Mount, and go to the east so the Temple Mount will be wiped out. The temple will be destroyed. Then Jesus Christ is going to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. He's going to lift it up. It's about eight and a half square miles. That'll be twenty-five hundred square miles. He will put the Temple Mount up and that will be one square mile, and on top of that he will build a 21-story high temple, the one that he will rule and reign from in that millennial kingdom, and in fact into the future as well.*

That is a very literal perspective. It takes several Scriptures from the Old and New Testament and puts them together. But is that really what is going to happen?



There are MANY reasons for Jesus to return.

Jesus returns to restore Israel:

Acts 1:6-7: (ASV) ⁶*They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* ⁷*And he said unto them, it is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority.*

Matthew 23:37-39: (NRSV) ³⁷*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!* ³⁸*See, **your house is left to you, desolate.*** ³⁹*For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.*



It is not going to stay *desolate*. The re-establishment of Israel is a very big part of the return of Jesus.

Jesus returns to gather his followers:

Parable of the Talents **Matthew 25:13-14:** (NKJV) ¹³*Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.* ¹⁴*For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.*

John 14:1-3: (NASB) ¹*Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me.* ²*In my Father's house is many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.* ³*If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

This gives us a sense of Jesus' heart toward his followers. Jesus came the first time to pay the price and to call out a people for his name. He paid the price, but whatever he paid for was not received yet. He returns to finish that work.

Jesus returns to cast out Satan:

John 12:31: (NASB) *Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.*

Jesus returns to bring an end to this corrupt world:

2 Pet 3:9-10: (NRSV) ⁹*The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.* ¹⁰*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise,*



and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

There is a lot that he left undone. Many look at the return of Jesus as a monumental singular event, but there are many things that Jesus needs to do.

Jesus returns to establish his kingdom:

Parable of the Pounds: Luke 19:11: (NKJV) *Now as they heard these things, he spoke another parable, because he was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.*

So, the kingdom of God would appear proving that when Jesus often said the kingdom was among them, he was speaking of the preparation or the developmental stage of the kingdom - not the final phase in full glory.

Jesus returns to follow Mohammed, *IslamNetVideo*

- First of all I want to mention [Arabic name is mentioned] is not coming as a prophet. Jesus is not coming again as a prophet. He is coming as a follower of the prophet Mohammed [speaking in Arabic]. That is why when he comes and he descends with his hands on the shoulders of the angels [speaks in Arabic] and travels to Damascus [speaks in Arabic], he will pray behind the leader of the Muslims. He is coming as a follower of [speaks name in Arabic] that is giving to the prophet Mohammed [name in Arabic].*

This is an alternative view with which we do not agree. As Muslims, they believe Jesus is coming with his hands on the shoulders of angels. But this gives us a sense that the return of Jesus is a big deal not only in the Christian world but in the Muslim world as well.

Jesus returns to bring judgment upon individuals:

Matthew 16:27: (NASB) *For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.*

There is a personal process every individual will need to go through as a result of the return of Jesus.

Jesus returns to subject all things unto him:

Philippians 3:20-21: (NRSV) ²⁰*But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.* ²¹*He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.*

Finally, Jesus returns to subject all things unto God:

1 Corinthians 15:28: (NASB) *When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.*

This gives us a sense of the magnitude of the return of Jesus.



Major points of understanding regarding the reasons for Jesus' return:

- Jesus returns to accomplish many things that by nature cannot all happen at once.
- When we read of his return we therefore must envision a **PROCESS** and not an **EVENT**.

How does Jesus return?

Jesus returns with power and glory!

Luke 21:27: (KJV) *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

Is it just the son of man that they see? It sounds like it is a solo act.

Jesus returns with a shout and a trumpet!

Thessalonians 4:16: (NASB) *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*



But that still sounds like he is coming by himself.

Jesus returns with his mighty angels!

2 Thessalonians 1:7: (KJV) *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be **revealed** <602> from heaven with his mighty angels.*

It does not sound like it is one dramatic event but rather a gradual revealing. He is with his mighty angels (his truest followers).

Jesus returns as a thief!



2 Peter 3:10: (NASB) *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.*

A thief comes quietly. That is completely different language than what we just talked about. Is it just the Day of the Lord that comes as a thief or is it Jesus that comes as a thief? This seems to contradict.



What will happen when Jesus returns, John Ankerberg interviews a pastor

- After that he goes to the Jezreel Valley. The Battle of Armageddon takes place. He walks from there over to Petra, which is in southern Jordan today. He gathers in the Jews that he has protected in that place provided by him for the last three and a half years of the tribulation period. He comes across the Jordan valley, comes up behind the eastern mountain of the Temple Mount - that would be the Mount of Olives - crosses the Kidron valley, goes through that eastern gate, walks into the Temple, goes into the Holy of Holies and sits down in the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. God told David, "I will let



one of your sons build a temple in Jerusalem and he will rule and reign from that temple." Jesus Christ is that son of David that will do that. That's all in the future.

This speaker lists several things taken very literally about Jesus, but the second presence of Jesus does not work that way.

Jesus - the thief?

Matthew 24:42-43: (NASB) ⁴²Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

So, Jesus is breaking and entering. When a house is broken into in the middle of the night, no one knows it. Satan's domain (here represented by the *head of the house*) does not really belong to him.

Matthew 12:28-29: (NASB) ²⁸But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

Now Jesus is binding and removing property...this is not a public event. It is done quietly.

Time out! How can you return as a thief AND with a shout and a trumpet and with angels?

You can't - not all at once anyway - remember that the reasons for Jesus' return were all part of a process? Could his actual return ALSO be a process? Consider this next description:

Jesus' return is as the Sun!

Matthew 24:27: (KJV) For as the **lightning <796>** cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

How can this be the Sun? Doesn't it say lightning? Let's look at Luke's rendering of the same verse: (Please see CQ Rewind Bonus Material for a more comprehensive look.)

Luke 17:24: (KJV) For as the **lightning <796>**, that **lighteneth <797>** out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

This word **lightning <796>** can mean "glare, lightning, brightness, or the gleam of a lamp."

Two other examples of this word in the New Testament:

Luke 11:36: (KJV) If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright **shining <796>** of a candle (a steady light) doth give thee light.

Revelation 8:5: And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and **lightnings <796>**, and an earthquake.



Because it is translated to be both a *brightness* and *lightning*, how can we be sure of its meaning here? The answer is in the second word in the Luke text: *lighteneth* <797>

A caller suggests: Luke 19:44: (NASB) *...because you did not recognize the time of your visitation*. Israel is rebuked for not seeing the first advent. We see a parallel today. Most people do not realize Jesus is now present and is doing a work. 1 Thessalonians 5:4: (NASB) *But you brethren are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief...* God is authorizing Jesus to do the work that he is doing. One of the key works is the restoration of Israel.

Only other use of <797>:

Luke 24:4: (KJV) *And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in **shining** <797> garments*:

The Answer

Lightning flashes



Sunlight shines!

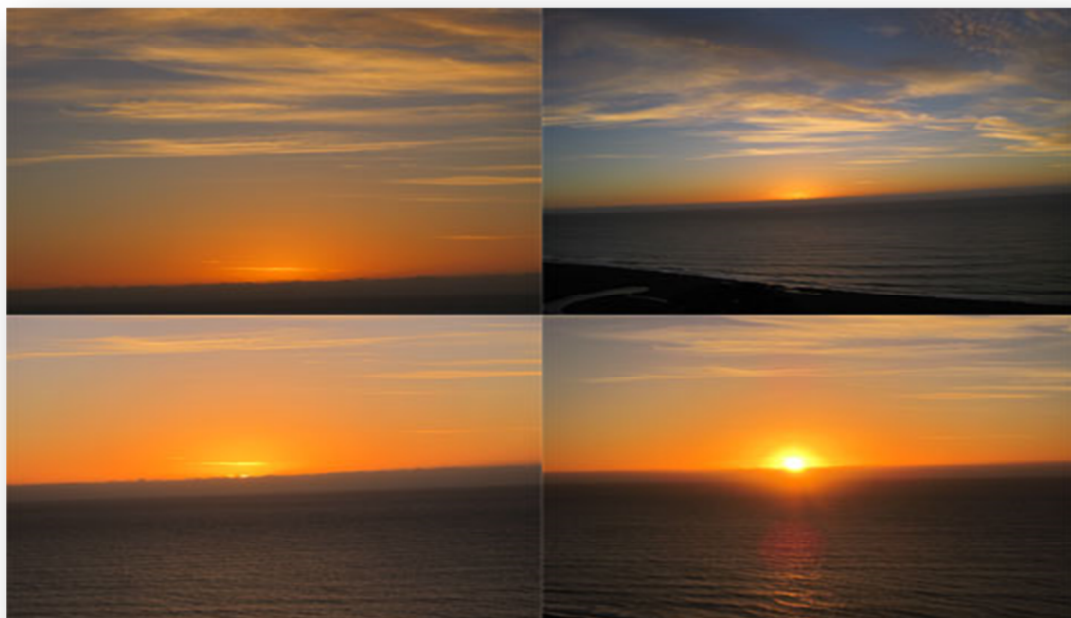


Malachi 4:1-2: (KJV) *¹For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. (Is this literal or symbolic language?) ²But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.*

Since when does the Sun have *healing wings*? This is a major key to understanding Jesus' return.



Based on what we have seen thus far, the Day of the Lord comes in stages like the Sun:



 Every eye to see him, *What Will Christ's Return Be Like*, lastdayz.com

- *It's nighttime; you are outside walking the dog or walking with a friend. You know, you are just enjoying the night, enjoying the beautiful evening, and all of a sudden you hear a big trumpet blast and all of a sudden there is a big larger- than-life appearance of Jesus. I mean the biggest image of him that you can possibly imagine. After all, when he comes the back the whole world - every eye - will see him. So he's going to be pretty big if everybody on the globe at one time can see him. He's going to be larger than you can ever possibly even reason in your mind. Imagine how frightening that's going to be, particularly when his eyes are going to be flaming fire because he's going to be mad when he's coming back; mad because of all the sin on the earth. He's coming back with vengeance to judge the sin but also to greet those who are waiting for him, who are living for him, and, you know, who were righteous.*

The return is to be like the sunrise:

1. Faint and imperceptible at first;
2. Then growing to a point of being obviously manifested;
3. Then rising to the full revelation of its power!

Matthew 24:27: (NRSV) *For as the lightning (brightness) comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming <3952> of the Son of Man.*

Wait a minute! Isn't this text talking about the sunrise analogy relating to the COMING of Jesus and NOT his actual presence? Isn't that what it says?



Matthew 24:3: (NASB) *As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of your **coming <3952>**, and of the end of the age?*

Now, a startling detail of these Scriptures that is almost always overlooked:

Coming: Strong's #3952 *parousia* (par-oo-see'-ah); from the present participle of 3918; a being near; KJV-- coming, presence.

From this word:

Strong's #3918 *pareimi* (par'-i-mee); to be near, i.e. at hand

Some examples of coming:

2 Corinthians 10:10: *For his letters, say they are weighty and powerful; but his bodily **presence <3952>** is weak, and his speech contemptible.*

Philippians 2:12: *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my **presence <3952>** only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

Okay, if you are not completely convinced, let's compare the "counterpart" of **Matthew 24:27** with it:

Luke 17:24: (KJV) *For as the **lightning <796>**, that **lighteneth <797>** out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.*

Another analogy would be energy saving light bulbs. When you turn them on, they start out faint and get brighter and brighter.

Matthew 24:27: (NRSV) *For as the lightning (brightness) comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the **coming <3952>** of the Son of Man.*

For these two Scriptures to agree, **coming MUST mean presence**. So, does this work?

The first phase of sunrise is faint and imperceptible at first:

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3: (NASB) *'Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.*

It seems these early Christians were given a good sense of the stages God's plan had gone through and would continue to go through...

²*For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.*

To paraphrase: It is already obvious to you that the day of the Lord comes unexpectedly.

³*While they are saying, peace and safety! Then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.*



Could Jesus' return REALLY be unnoticed? How long could that last?

It seems evident the return of Jesus begins in a way that is, for all practical purposes, unnoticed.

Acts 1:9-11: (NRSV) ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.



Observations:

- A cloud took him out of sight. Clouds in the scriptures symbolize trouble. If he was taken up in clouds in trouble, Jesus will return in clouds, in trouble. Jesus tells us there will be a time of trouble...
- Two men - angels - *out of the mouth of two witnesses*. The two witnesses of Revelation 11:3? In the Old Testament law it was always important to have two witnesses to establish something to be true.
- *This Jesus* - Jesus the spirit being raised to immortality. This Jesus is spiritual; expect this Jesus to come in the same way.
- Will come in the same way - not the same form, but the same manner - quietly, with no one but his followers watching. The return of Jesus starts out subtly. God is a God of subtlety. He does not need to be dramatic.

We know that Jesus' return cannot possibly remain that way. This next text actually shows us a transition from phase one to phase two:

2 Thessalonians 2:8: (KJV) And then shall that Wicked be **revealed <601>**, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the **brightness <2015>** of his **coming: <3952>** (presence).

The Lord's return comes in **three basic stages**, as there are three different words used to describe it.

The **first stage** was the word for *presence*, which we saw was translated *coming* in Matthew 24 and other New Testament prophecies of Jesus' return but, translated *presence* multiple times elsewhere.



Revelation literally, *End Times Watch*, CNN, Jerry Jenkins

- *So many people try to interpret Revelation symbolically or figuratively and they can interpret it a couple hundred different ways. Dr. LaHaye's view has always been, "Let's take what we can take literally and tell it as if John the Revelator meant what he said when he said, I looked and I saw. Unless he's making some kind comparison, let's just tell it as a literal story." It's really made it come to life for people and opened it up, makes it understandable. It has for me as a writer. All the prophecies of the Old Testament about the coming of Christ as a baby were fulfilled literally, so we're saying what if all the prophecies of the New Testament about Jesus coming back and rapturing his church are also literal and we should treat those that way and just see what it looks like?*



The prophecies of Jesus' return were on a spiritual level, though, not a physical level. Jesus teaches in picture language.

Let's use an illustration of a pot of stew cooking on a stove. Let it sit for now.

The **second stage** is built upon the first: The return is growing to a point of being obviously manifest.

Think of a sunrise on a very cloudy day - you can see the light of the sun, but you cannot see the sun. Several hours after the dawn the dark and stormy sky lightens, so *the sun has obviously risen even though you still cannot see it.*

Why are we adding clouds to the picture? Jesus was *taken up into the clouds.*

Manifestation: Strong's #2015 epiphaneia (ep-if-an'-i-ah); from 2016; a manifestation, i.e. (specially) the advent of Christ (past or future): KJV-- appearing, brightness.

2 Timothy 4:1: (KJV) *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his **appearing** <2015> and his kingdom;*

2 Thessalonians 2:8: (KJV) *And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the **brightness** <2015> of his coming:*

Titus 2:13: (KJV) Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious **appearing** <2015> of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;

Those of us who live at this end time have the opportunity to see the manifestations of Jesus' presence. That can give us great hope even though it is through trouble and difficulty.

What does the final stage of Jesus' return look like?

The **third stage** of Jesus' return is the bright shining - the disclosure stage. Now the sun is high in the sky and will begin to burn off those clouds of trouble so its rays can begin the healing process. The return of Jesus is in steps, not all at once.

Revealed: Strong's #602 apokalupsis (ap-ok-al'-oop-sis); disclosure; KJV-- appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation.

Root word: #601 apokalupto (ap-ok-al'-oop'-to); to take off the cover, i.e. disclose:

Back to the pot of stew: The pot of stew is sitting on the stove and nobody notices it. As it is cooking, you smell it. You walk in the door and think, something smells good. That's a manifestation. You don't know what it is yet, but something is different. When you take off the lid, it is disclosed.



The Judgment Day will be a day of trial and eventually judgment for the world:

Romans 2:5: (KJV) *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and **revelation** <602> of the righteous judgment of God;*

2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: (NASB) *For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,⁷ and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the*



Lord Jesus will be **revealed <602>** from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.

The revelation or disclosure is the third stage. This now makes so much more sense in light of all the other events that are a part of Jesus' return.

The sons of God will also be revealed - Jesus' mighty angels from the previous text:

Romans 8:19: (KJV) *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the **manifestation <602>** of the sons of God.*

Jesus will be revealed with his angels, his true church. The church will be revealed and thought of as very special. They will be involved in the reconciliation process of the world to God. This will be in the third stage.

1 Peter 1:5: (KJV) *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be **revealed <601>** in the last time.*

We believe we are now in the second stage. There are manifestations of his presence to the followers of Jesus at this time.

 **Israel's role, End Times Watch, CNN, Joel Rosenberg**

*My theory is the Ezekiel options; the copper scrolls are about the events that lead up to the rapture and return of Christ. People are interested. The rebirth of Israel, the fact that Jews are living in Holy Land today, that is a Bible prophecy. When Iran, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, Russia began to form an alliance against Israel, those are the prophecies from Ezekiel 38-39. That's what I'm basing my novels on. I've been invited to the White House, Capitol Hill. Members of Congress, Israelis, Arab leaders - all want to understand the Middle East through the lens of Biblical prophecies. I'm writing these novels that keep seeming to come true but we're seeing Bible prophecies bit by bit unfold in the Middle East right now. **This point about Israel being the main focus will be examined in Part II coming up in a few weeks.***

Bottom Line: Jesus having returned is already in the process of taking down the kingdoms of this world and setting up his kingdom of righteousness:

Daniel 2:44: (NASB) *In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.*

Zephaniah 3:8-9: (NASB) ⁸Therefore wait for Me, declares the LORD, for the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal. ⁹For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder. Jesus returns to restore that which was lost. What was lost?



Jesus returns to restore that which was lost. What was lost? Perfect human life on earth.

Major points of understanding regarding the manner of Jesus' return:

- With power, glory, angels, a shout, a trumpet, like a thief - too many things for one event
- His return is a process, just as the accomplishments of his return are a process
- The word for "coming" actually means "present" or "alongside"
- His return is likened to a sunrise - faint - there but behind clouds - finally shining

When Jesus returns, it is hidden to anyone but those who are really looking. As time goes on, the manifestation will be seen. There will be a time when the return of Jesus will burn off the clouds of trouble and bring righteousness to the world. That is the ultimate result of the return of Jesus!

*So, is Jesus really returning?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



Matthew 24:27: (NRSV) *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.*

Is Jesus' return to be like the sun or like a brilliant flash of lightning?

Luke 17:24: (KJV) *For as the **lightning <796>**, that **lighteneth <797>** out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.*

Lightning: Strongs #796 astrape (as-trap-ay'); from 797; lightning; by analogy, glare; KJV-- lightning, bright shining.

(Source: NAS Lexicon) 796. astraph astrape; from 797; lightning, brightness
NAS-flashes of lightning (4), lightning (4), rays (1)
AV-lightning 8, light shining 1; 9
1) lightning 1a) of the gleam of a lamp

All other uses:

Matthew 28:3: (KJV) *His countenance was like **lightning <796>**, and his raiment white as snow:*

Luke 10:18: (KJV) *And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as **lightning <796>** fall from heaven.*

Luke 11:36: (KJV) *If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright **shining <796>** of a candle doth give thee light.*



Luke 17:24: (KJV) *For as the **lightning <796>**, that **lighteneth <797>** out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.*

Revelation 4:5: (KJV) *And out of the throne proceeded **lightnings <796>** and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*

Revelation 8:5: (KJV) *And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and **lightnings <796>**, and an earthquake.*

Revelation 11:19: (KJV) *And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were **lightnings <796>**, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

Revelation 16:18: (KJV) *And there were voices, and thunders, and **lightnings <796>**; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.*

How do we know which shade of meaning to give this word? Is it like a literal lightning, or is it like a literal glare as from the sun? It comes down to the second word in Luke:

Luke 17:24: (KJV) *For as the **lightning <796>**, that **lighteneth <797>** out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.*

(Source: NAS Lexicon) 797 astraptw astrapto as-trap'-to, probably from 792
AV-lighten 1, shine 1; 2
1) to lighten 1a) of dazzling objects

Only other use:

Luke 24:4: (KJV) *And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in **shining <797>** garments:*