

IN WHAT MANNER WILL CHRIST RETURN?

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2.1 PERSPECTIVES ON THE BIBLE

God reveals well in advance all the essential matters of His Will in parables and symbols, in order that people living in any age can understand the demands of the providence for their time and for the future according to the level of their intellect and spirituality. The fact that God used parables and symbols in the Bible has inevitably resulted in many divergent interpretations. This is a major reason why the churches have become divided. In interpreting the Bible, therefore, the most important matter is to find the right perspective.

For example, consider John the Baptist. For two thousand years we read the Bible with the preconception that John completed his given mission; therefore, its passages appear to support this. But when we re-examined the Bible more closely from a different standpoint, we could clearly recognize that John the Baptist in fact did not complete his mission. (Messiah 2.3)

Until today many of us have read the Bible with the preconceived notion that Jesus will come on the clouds with signs and wonders. This is based on such words of Jesus as:

They will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds. —*Matt. 24:30-31*

If we adhere closely to a literal interpretation, the biblical evidence indeed seems to point in that direction. However, the idea that Christ will return on the clouds is totally unacceptable to the scientific mind of the modern age. We find it necessary to probe

more deeply into the Bible from another standpoint to grasp the true meaning of such verses.

This new perspective is suggested by our earlier investigation of the biblical passages concerning John the Baptist. The prophet Malachi had foretold that Elijah would return before the coming of the Messiah. (Mal. 4:5) As they eagerly awaited that day, many Jews believed that Elijah, who had ascended to heaven, would come down from heaven in the same way he had ascended. Contrary to their expectation, however, Jesus boldly claimed that John the Baptist, the son of Zechariah, was Elijah. (Matt. 11:14) If we believe Jesus' testimony, the return of Elijah was never meant to take place in the miraculous manner many Jewish people expected. In fact, it occurred through the birth of a child. In like manner, many Christians to the present day believe that Jesus will return on the clouds. However, what we have learned about the actual return of Elijah suggests another possibility: that Christ's return may be fulfilled through the birth of a child, just as at the First Coming. From this new perspective, let us closely reexamine the biblical verses concerning the Second Coming.

At the First Coming of Jesus, many of the learned men of Israel thought that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem as a descendant of King David. (Matt. 2:5-6; Mic. 5:2) Yet there were undoubtedly many other Jews who expected the Messiah to come on the clouds. This belief was based on their reading of the prophecy of Daniel, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man," (Dan. 7:13) and other prophecies of supernatural events in the Last Days. (e.g. Joel 2:30-31) Therefore, the Pharisees and Sadducees questioned Jesus, demanding that he show them a sign from heaven as proof that he was the Messiah. (Matt. 16:1-4; Mark 8:11-12) Without any of the supernatural signs from heaven foretold in the Bible, they could not readily accept him as the long-awaited Messiah. The belief that the Messiah should come supernaturally persisted after the death of Jesus, even among some heterodox Christians who believed that he had not come in a body of flesh. The apostle John condemned those believers as antichrists:

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. —2 John 7

Many Christians assert that the prophecy in Daniel concerns the Second Advent of Christ. However, in the Old Testament Age, God was working to fulfill the entire purpose of the providence of restoration with the coming of Jesus, as the Bible attests: "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John," (Matt. 11:13) and "For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified." (Rom. 10:4) Thus, before Jesus himself began speaking about his return, no one ever even imagined a Second Advent. It is obvious that no Jew at the time thought this verse in Daniel referred to anything other than what they believed to be the first and only coming of the Messiah.

Contrary to the expectations of many faithful Jews who believed on biblical grounds that the Messiah would come on the clouds with signs and portents in the heavens, Jesus was born on the earth as a child in a lowly family. Hence, we should re-examine the Bible from the perspective that the Second Advent of Christ may not take place in a miraculous way. It may, in fact, take place in the same manner as the First Advent.

2.2 CHRIST WILL RETURN AS A CHILD ON THE EARTH

Jesus made a number of predictions foretelling what would happen to the Lord at his return:

But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.
—*Luke 17:25*

If Jesus were to return literally on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory and with the trumpets of angels, (Matt. 24:30-31) would he not readily be accepted and honored, even by this sin-ridden world? Returning in such a manner, there is no way he would ever suffer persecution or rejection.

Why, then, did Jesus foretell that he would face such a miserable situation upon his return? The Jews of his day were eagerly looking forward to the day when Elijah would come down from heaven. He was supposed to come before the Messiah as his herald, as Malachi had prophesied. (Mal. 4:5) Instead, before the people had heard any news of Elijah's return, Jesus, a man of lowly birth, came like a thief, claiming to be the Messiah. Therefore, they despised Jesus and persecuted him. (Messiah 2.2) As Jesus reflected upon his situation, he foresaw that at the Second Advent, the Christians awaiting his return would once more fix their gaze upon the sky. Hence, they would be likely to persecute Christ at the Second Advent when he is born in the flesh and appears unexpectedly, like a thief. They would condemn him as a heretic, just as Jesus was condemned. That is why he foretold that the Lord would suffer and be rejected by his generation. This prophecy can be fulfilled only if Christ returns in the flesh; it cannot possibly come true if he comes on the clouds.

Jesus said:

I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth? —*Luke 18:8*

As the world enters the Last Days, increasing numbers of Christians are striving to develop stronger faith. How can they all fall into faithlessness at the Second Advent of the Lord if he literally comes on the clouds of heaven amidst the sounds of angels' trumpets and the glory of God? This prophecy also cannot be fulfilled if Christ returns in a supernatural manner.

In Jesus' day, many Jews thought the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and emerge as their king, (Matt. 2:6) but only after Elijah had returned from heaven. Contrary to this expectation, before Elijah had appeared, a carpenter's son from Nazareth stepped forward and presented himself as the Messiah. It is thus understandable that Jesus could not find any believer among the Jews faithful and zealous enough to follow him even to the point of death. Jesus grieved over this situation and lamented that something similar might happen upon his return. He foresaw that at the Second Advent, the believers would be looking only toward heaven, thinking that Christ will return on the clouds in glory. Therefore, when Christ does in fact return to the earth as a man of humble origins, he may not find any faith, as was the case in Jesus' day. This prophecy in Luke can never be fulfilled unless the returning Christ is born on the earth.

Some scholars interpret this verse to mean that the tribulations in the Last Days will be so severe as to cause all believers to become faithless. Yet in the course of the providence, no tribulation, no matter how bitter, has effectively blocked the way of the faithful. How much less so in the Last Days, when faithful Christians are eager to pass through the last gate to Heaven! It is the universal nature of faith that the greater our trials and tribulations, the more zealously we seek God's salvation.

Jesus once said:

On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers." —*Matt. 7:22-23*

If a Christian is so faithful as to perform miracles in the name of the Lord, then how much more ardently would he believe in and serve the Lord when he comes on the clouds in great glory? Wouldn't Jesus then receive him warmly? Why, then, did Jesus speak as if he would reject such faithful Christians upon his return? If the returning Christ rejects such devout believers, who in the Last Days can possibly be saved? This prophecy also cannot be fulfilled if Jesus comes on the clouds.

In Jesus' day, there must have been many Jews whose faith was so ardent that they could perform miracles in God's name. Yet, since they believed that Elijah himself would descend from heaven before the Messiah came, it was hard for them to accept that Elijah was present among them as John the Baptist—all the more so because of John's denial. (John 1:21) Hence, they did not accept Jesus as the Messiah and ostracized him from the community. Consequently, Jesus had to abandon them in tears. In like manner, at the Second Advent of Christ, those Christians who expect his miraculous and glorious appearance will almost certainly reject him if he comes in the flesh of humble birth. No matter how faithful they may be, the Lord will be left with no choice but to abandon them because they will have transgressed against God.

The series of prophecies concerning the Last Days in Luke, Chapter 17, cannot possibly be fulfilled if Christ returns in a supernatural manner. These verses can be explained only on the premise that Christ will return by being born on the earth. Let us examine each of them closely.

The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed. —*Luke 17:20*

If the Lord comes on the clouds or in some miraculous way, the Kingdom of God will arrive in a manner conspicuous to everyone. Even at the First Advent, the Kingdom of God had already arrived on the earth with the birth of Jesus. Yet the Jewish people could not see it, for since they were still waiting for the return of Elijah from heaven, they could not believe in Jesus. Likewise, at the Second Advent, although the Kingdom of God will dawn upon the earth with the birth of Christ, Christians who believe that he will come on the clouds accompanied by supernatural events will disbelieve in the Lord and thus not see the Kingdom of God.

Behold, the kingdom of God is within you. —*Luke 17:21 (KJV)*

In Jesus' day, those who believed in and followed him had already partaken of the Kingdom of Heaven in their hearts. Likewise, at Christ's Second Advent, because he will be born on the earth, the Kingdom of Heaven will be realized first in the hearts of those who believe in him and follow him. When these individuals increase in number to form societies and nations, the Kingdom of Heaven within will gradually be manifested in the world as an outward, visible reality. Accordingly, Jesus meant that the promised Kingdom of Heaven will not be realized in an instant, as it would if Christ were to return on the clouds.

You will desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and you will not see it. —*Luke 17:22*

If the Lord comes on the clouds with the sounds of angels' trumpets, everyone will be able to see him. Who, then, would desire to see the day of the Son of man and not see it? Yet Jesus foretold that the people will not see the day. At Jesus' First Advent, the day of the Son of man dawned upon the earth with his birth, yet the disbelieving Jews could not see the day. Likewise, at the Second Advent of Christ, the day of the Son of man will have dawned with his birth on earth. Yet many Christians will not be able to see the day because, convinced as they are that he will come in a miraculous way, they will not believe in him or follow him even after encountering him. Even though the day of the Son of man will have already come, they will not be able to see it.

And they will say to you, "Lo, there!" or "Lo, here!" Do not go, do not follow them. —*Luke 17:23*

As was discussed earlier, (Resurrection 2.2.6) in the Last Days Christians who have attained a certain spiritual level may receive the revelation that they are the Lord. Not

understanding the basis in the Principle for such a revelation, they are likely to proclaim themselves to be the Messiah and thus become antichrists before the Lord to come. Therefore, Jesus spoke these words as a warning not to be misled or confused by such people.

As the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of man be in his day. —*Luke 17:24*

When Jesus was born, the news of the birth of the King of the Jews reached King Herod and troubled all of Jerusalem. (Matt. 2:2-3) At the Second Advent, advances in transportation and communication will allow the news of the Second Advent to travel to the far-flung corners of the globe, East and West, with lightning speed.

As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of man. —*Luke 17:26*

When Noah knew that the flood judgment was imminent, he called the people to enter his ark. (2 Pet. 2:5) Yet they did not heed his words, and all were drowned. Similarly in the Last Days, Christ will return in the flesh and call to the people to enter the ark of truth. Yet Christians who stubbornly fix their gaze upon the sky, expecting to see miraculous signs of the Lord's appearance, will not heed the words of truth proclaimed from the earth. Instead, they will reject the Lord as a heretic. Heedless as the people of Noah's day, they will have failed to serve God's providential Will.

Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it. —*Luke 17:33*

Would anyone have to risk his life to follow the Lord if he comes on the clouds with the sounds of angels' trumpets? Because Jesus returns through a physical birth, he will appear to be a heretic to Christians who expect him to come in a miraculous way. Hence, those who follow him must be ready to face even death. The verse means that if the people believe in and follow him at the risk of their lives, they will live. If on the other hand, swayed by worldly circumstances, they turn against him and retreat from him to save their own skins, death will befall them.

Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together. —*Luke 17:37*

Thus Jesus answered a query about the place of the Second Advent. We recall that birds of prey descended upon the dove and pigeon which had not been properly divided on Abraham's altar. (Gen. 15:11) This taught us that Satan is always looking for an opportunity to claim what is not sanctified. We can thus understand the meaning of Jesus' enigmatic reply: just as vultures gather around a carcass to eat it, and devils gather around those who are spiritually dead to claim them, the Lord, who is the source of life, will come to a place of abundant spiritual life. Jesus meant by these words that the Lord will appear among the faithful believers. At Christ's Second

Advent, people of ardent faith will gather together in one place with the assistance of many spirits. (Resurrection 2.3.2.2; 3.1; 3.2) This will be the place of life where the Lord will appear. Jesus was born among the chosen people, who worshipped God most faithfully. In particular, he revealed himself as the Messiah to those who had the faith to follow him and become his disciples.

Since Christ will be born on the earth at his Second Advent, it is written: “She brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne.” (Rev. 12:5) The rod of iron here signifies the Word of God, with which the Lord will judge the sinful world and restore the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. It was earlier explained in detail (Eschatology 3.2.2) that judgment by fire is judgment by the Word. (Jer. 23:29) Hence, the Word of Jesus, which will be our judge on the Last Day, (John 12:48) is the same Word by which heaven and earth will be cast into the fire of judgment, (2 Pet. 3:7) and is the very breath of the Lord’s mouth by which he will slay the lawless one. (2 Thess. 2:8) The Word Jesus speaks is also called “the breath of his lips” and “the rod of his mouth.” (Isa. 11:4) It is symbolized by the rod of iron, as it is written, “He shall rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces.” (Rev. 2:27)

The verse speaks of a male child, who is born of a woman and is caught up to God and to His throne. Who, then, is born of a woman as someone worthy to sit on God’s throne and rule all the nations with the Word of God? He can be none other than Christ at the Second Advent, who will be born on the earth with a new name known only to himself. (Revelation 2:17; 19:12) He will rule as the King of Kings and build the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. At the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew, there is a record of the four adulterous or gentile women in Jesus’ lineage. (Matt. 1:3, 5, 6) This shows that the Savior of humankind is to be born as a sinless man out of a sinful lineage to save all the descendants of sinful lineages. **Many Christians have interpreted the woman in the above verse as the Church.**⁴⁰ They drew this interpretation based on the premise that Christ at the Second Advent would come on the clouds.

Some Christians believe that the Second Advent of Christ occurs whenever Jesus comes to dwell within the hearts of people (John 14:20) through the descent of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:15-17) Jesus has been dwelling within the hearts of faithful believers ever since his resurrection and the Holy Spirit’s descent at Pentecost. (Acts 2:4) If this were truly the Second Advent, then it already took place two thousand years ago.

Moreover, some denominations teach that Jesus will return as a spirit. However, immediately after his resurrection from the tomb on the third day, Jesus appeared before his disciples with the same appearance as he had during his earthly life. Ever since that time, he has freely visited and taught many Christians who have attained a high spiritual level. Thus, this sort of Second Coming also first took place two thousand years ago. If these were correct understandings, then we would have no reason to anticipate the historical Second Advent and look forward to it as the day which will fulfill our most cherished hopes.

Even though Jesus' disciples had frequent encounters with the resurrected Jesus who appeared to them in spirit, they still awaited his Second Advent. We can deduce that they were not anticipating the Second Advent to be Jesus' return as a spirit. For example, when Jesus appeared in a vision to the apostle John, he said to him, "Surely I am coming soon," to which John replied, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20) Here, Jesus and John both clearly distinguished Jesus' spiritual appearances from the Second Advent. This shows that Christ at his Second Advent will not come as a spirit. He will be born as a child on the earth, just as at the First Advent.

There are several reasons in the Principle why Christ must return as an earthly man. God created both the incorporeal world and the corporeal world. Then God created human beings with the aspects of both spirit and flesh, intending for them to rule over the two worlds in fulfillment of His blessings. (Creation 6:3) Due to Adam's Fall, human beings lost the qualification to be lords of the two worlds. Consequently, the creation was deprived of its true masters and has been lamenting and longing for the appearance of the children of God who can truly rule it. (Rom. 8:19-22) Jesus, the perfected Adam, came as the perfect Lord of the two worlds. (1 Cor. 15:27) By engrafting all believers with himself (Rom. 11:17) and bringing them into oneness with him, he intended to make them qualified to be the lords of the universe.

Nevertheless, when the Jews turned against Jesus, God had to commit his body to the cross as a ransom for the redemption of humanity. Since Jesus' physical body was delivered into the hands of Satan, physical salvation was left unaccomplished. Jesus ascended from this earthly world with the promise that he would return and complete the salvation which he had realized only spiritually. (Messiah 1.4) In the meantime, there has not been even one person on the earth who has attained perfection both spiritually and physically, ruled the spiritual and physical worlds, and brought them into harmony. This is the reason Christ cannot return only in a spiritual body. As at the First Advent, he must come as a human being and grow to perfection in both spirit and flesh. Then, by engrafting all humanity with himself both spiritually and physically, he is to guide them to perfection both in spirit and flesh and make them qualified to be the lords of both the spiritual and physical worlds.

Jesus was originally supposed to restore the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. He was to become the True Parent of restored humanity and the king of God's earthly kingdom. (Isa. 9:6; Luke 1:31-33) However, due to the people's disbelief, he could not accomplish this original Will of God, but went to the cross promising to return at a later time and surely fulfill it. Accordingly, at the Second Advent, Christ is again responsible to build the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and there become the True Parent and king of all humanity. This is another reason why, as at his First Coming, Christ at his Second Coming must be born on the earth.

The redemption of sins is possible only through an earthly life. (Creation 6.3.2) To

redeem our sins on the earth, Christ must come as a man on the earth. The salvation which Jesus provided through his crucifixion, however, is limited to the spiritual dimension. It does not resolve the original sin, which is transmitted through our physical bodies and remains active within us. Therefore, Christ must come again to provide complete salvation to humanity, including physical salvation. He certainly cannot achieve this if he comes only as a spirit. He must come in a physical body, as at his First Coming.

We have thus clarified that Christ's Second Coming will not be a spiritual coming, but a physical coming similar to the First Coming. Even supposing that Christ were to come back in spirit, it would be perplexing that the spirit, transcendent of time and space and perceptible only to the spiritual senses, would ride on clouds composed of matter. On the other hand, if the Second Advent were to occur through Christ's sudden appearance in the flesh, riding on the clouds, how could he stay aloft? Where would he reside prior to his appearance? Some people may object to such questions, arguing that for the omnipotent God nothing is impossible. However, God cannot ignore His own laws and principles. God does not and need not work His providence in violation of His own Principle by having Christ, who should return in flesh no different from our own, reside in outer space and then return borne on clouds. In conclusion, we have demonstrated beyond any doubt that the Second Advent of Christ will take place through his physical birth on the earth.

2.3 WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE VERSE THAT CHRIST WILL RETURN ON THE CLOUDS?

Since Christ's return will take place through his birth on earth, what can be the meaning of the biblical prophecies that he will come on the clouds? To probe into this matter, we must first investigate what the clouds represent. The following passage is typical:

Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, every one who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. —*Rev. 1:7*

According to this verse, everyone should be able to see Christ when he returns. When St. Stephen was martyred, only he and those faithful Christians whose spiritual senses were open were able to see Jesus sitting at the right hand of God. (Acts 7:55) Likewise, if Jesus is to descend from the spirit world as a spirit, then only those believers whose spiritual senses are open will be able to see him; thus not every eye would see Christ when he comes again. The biblical prophecy that everyone will see the Lord can be fulfilled only if he returns in the flesh. Since a body of flesh cannot ride on the clouds, the clouds in the verse must symbolize something else.

In the same passage, it is also written that even those who pierced Jesus will see his return. Those who pierced Jesus were Roman soldiers. However, those Roman soldiers

will not be able to see the Lord at his return. To behold the returning Lord, those soldiers must be resurrected; but according to the Bible, those who will be resurrected at Christ's return are only those faithful Christians who participate in the first resurrection.

The rest of the spirits will be resurrected only after the passage of "a thousand years" in the Kingdom. (Rev. 20:4-5) Therefore, "every one who pierced him" must be a metaphor describing some other group of people, not the Roman soldiers. In fact, it refers to those Christians alive at the time of the Second Advent who hold fast to the belief that Jesus will return on the clouds. When Christ returns to the earth through a humble birth contrary to their expectation, they will not recognize him but will persecute him. If "every one who pierced him" is a metaphor, then the clouds in the same verse should also be metaphorical.

What do the clouds actually symbolize? Clouds are formed by the evaporation of impure water from the earth. In the Bible, water often symbolizes fallen people. (Revelation 17:15; Ps. 144:7) We may deduce that clouds symbolize devout Christians whose hearts dwell in heaven and not on the earth because they have been reborn and raised from their fallen state. The Bible and other sacred scriptures also use the symbolism of clouds to indicate the multitudes. (Heb. 12:1; cf. Ezek. 38:9) We sometimes find this figure of speech used in casual conversation. In Moses' course, the pillar of cloud which guided the Israelites by day represented Jesus, who was to come as the leader of Israel; the pillar of fire by night represented the Holy Spirit who, as Jesus' counterpart, would guide Israel by the fire of inspiration. We can conclude that Jesus' coming on the clouds signifies that he will emerge from among a group of reborn believers to become the leader of Christians, the Second Israel. Recall that when Jesus was asked about the place of his return, he replied, "Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together." (Luke 17:37) Jesus meant by this that he will return to the place where faithful believers have gathered, which basically signifies the same thing as the biblical prophecy that Christ will return on the clouds.

When we interpret the clouds metaphorically in this way, it is evident that at his First Coming Jesus himself symbolically came down from Heaven on the clouds. It is written, "The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven," (1 Cor. 15:47) and "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man." (John 3:13) Even though Jesus was born on the earth, from the standpoint of the providence and with regard to his true value, he indeed came from Heaven. This is also the true meaning of the prophecy in Daniel (Dan. 7:13) which foretold that Jesus would come on the clouds.

2.4 WHY DID JESUS SAY THAT THE LORD WILL COME ON THE CLOUDS?

There are two reasons why Jesus prophesied that the Lord will return on the clouds. First, it was to prevent the delusions of antichrists from creating confusion among believers. If Jesus revealed plainly that he would return through a physical birth, then

it would have been impossible to prevent false messiahs from causing great confusion. Since Jesus emerged as the Messiah from a humble background, anyone from any social stratum with a certain level of spirituality could claim to be his Second Advent and dazzle the world with a great delusion. Fortunately, since most Christians have expected Christ to return on the clouds and have fixed their gaze upon the sky, this turmoil has been largely avoided. Now, however, since the time is full, the truth that Christ will return through a physical birth must be revealed.

Second, it was to encourage Christians who were walking a difficult path of faith. There are other occasions when Jesus gave paradoxical words to encourage his followers to accomplish God's Will as rapidly as possible. For example, he said, "Truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of man comes." (Matt. 10:23) This led his disciples to believe that the Second Advent would take place in the near future. When Jesus told Peter of his approaching martyrdom, Peter asked him what would become of the disciple John. Jesus replied, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" (John 21:22) Jesus also said, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matt. 16:28) These sayings led the disciples to think they would meet the returning Jesus in their lifetime.

The hope of Jesus' imminent return inflamed the zeal of his disciples and gave them the strength to overcome persecution by Judaism and the Roman Empire. Encouraged by the ardent hope of the Second Advent, they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4) and established the early Christian Church, even amidst great adversity. Jesus wanted to inspire and encourage his disciples, who would be carrying a heavy cross. For this reason, he prophesied that he would come on the clouds in the power and glory of God and accomplish everything at lightning speed.

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