

Maranatha Mirror Messages



THE RETURN



One night in the near future, after a time of severe upheaval on this earth (a time which has already begun) you are awakened by the sound of voices in the street. You look out the window and see crowds of people gazing at the sky.

It's the middle of the night, yet there is this perfect rainbow, bright as day hovering above the earth. What does it mean?

All over the planet people are looking up and seeing a rainbow. On the dark side of the earth it shines with an eerie light. On the daylight side of the planet it's so bright, it hurts your eyes.

People are weeping for no reason at all. Men who never shed a tear are sobbing like babies.

What's going on?

***“Then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven,
and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn.”***

Matthew 24:30

Beneath the rainbow there's a tiny point of light which becomes larger and brighter until everybody can see what looks like a huge cloud made up of living beings in dazzling brilliance, suspended out there in the heavens. It's drawing near. At the head of this multitude is a being of unspeakable splendor as his glory mysteriously surrounds the planet.

Nobody doubts who it is. Everybody knows.



And now the weeping is mixed with shouts of joy, as the earth trembles and the sea roars, and the graves burst open.

“And he will come to judge the living and the dead.”

Many of us repeat those words of the Apostles Creed every Sunday with sober faces. Do we realize what we're saying?

“And he will come to judge the living and the dead.”

Jesus puts it this way....

Then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and 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, from one end of heaven to the other.

Matthew 24



If we're having trouble wrapping our minds around the idea of Jesus coming on the clouds of heaven, we need to listen more closely to how Jesus describes reality. Jesus teaches that there is another world which penetrates this world of space, time and matter. This other world cannot be observed, weighed, or measured by the Hubble telescope or by any scientific instrument. This other world, says Jesus, is the real world.

From time to time, at God's pleasure, this other world breaks through to our world, and strange things happen.

People are suddenly healed.

Stony hearts melt.

Eyes open to see beyond the visible.

When Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God, he is talking about this other world ----which pervades this world, and actually surrounds you, as you read these words.

One day soon our transient world will give way to the real world, God's World.

Then everybody will know who Jesus is.

Meanwhile we need to get two things clear:

1. Everything that happens in this world is moving it toward a Climax. When the Climax arrives, we will all be there---the living will be changed and the ones we think of as dead will be alive. Then will begin the Final Sorting Out, by One who makes no mistakes, and by his servants.
2. The second thing we have to get clear is that God is now giving us all a fair chance to be on the right side of things when the Climax comes. On that Day, nobody will want to be on the wrong side of things.

It's amazing how many people who say they believe in Jesus, completely ignore the things he tells us about the Last Day. Yet everything Jesus taught and did, right up to his death and resurrection, was aimed at preparing us for the Last Day.

Because--- to enter the new world when it arrives, to be a part of things when a Garden of Eden---a place of unspeakable beauty---- opens up before our eyes, we have to be right with God and with our neighbor.

*“Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees,
you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven.”*

Matthew 5:20

When the Kingdom of Heaven arrives in fullness, and this world is transformed into what it was always meant to be, those who are ready will enter this magnificent world. Everybody else will languish in what scripture calls the Outer Darkness, the Second Death.



When we pray:

“Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”,

we are acknowledging that at this hour, God’s will is not being done on earth as it is done in heaven. But soon these days of sorrow and pain will end. The Kingdom of God will be here in fullness.

Until then, we need to remember that everything in this world is temporary.

Our bodies are temporary.

Our health is temporary.

Our money in the bank, our aches and pains.

Soon it will all be gone.

The only permanent thing within our reach at this moment is the Kingdom of God, which is closer to you than your own breath, as you read these words. At this moment the Spirit is saying, *“The door is wide open. Now is the time to focus on God’s Kingdom.”*

And the door to the Kingdom is this mysterious thing called Calvary. Just as the Sign of the Rainbow will one day surround the earth, so the redeeming power of the cross now circles the earth as the door to God’s World. Even if we don’t understand the

cross, (who understands it?) we need to draw near to the cross, open our hearts, and begin to breathe the air of the world to come.

Somehow, when we draw near to that mysterious Event, when all the evil of the earth was funneled into the death of God's Incarnate Heart---the atmosphere of the World to Come surrounds us.

This is why the Spirit of God keeps calling out to us,

“Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”

“Look unto him and be saved, all the ends of the earth.”

“And I, when I am lifted up from the earth (on the cross) will draw all people to myself.”



The essential message is this: Come to the door of God's Kingdom, while there is still time. Enter God's world through the forgiveness of the Lamb, and you will find yourself in the realm of the world to come.

This is his message to us, and to the whole human race. But who's paying attention? Seems like everybody's busy doing their own thing.

The call is going out, "Wake up! It's getting late!" But everybody's busy telling their Facebook friends what they had for breakfast.

Long ago, there was this crazy guy building a huge boat on dry land far from the ocean.

“What are you doing, Noah?”

“Can’t you see? I’m building a boat.”

“But the Ocean is far away. Why are you building a boat up here?”

“There’s going to be a flood.”

“Yeah, right.”

“They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the flood came and swept them all away.”

“Okay, so God told Noah there was going to be a flood. Why didn’t God tell everybody?” God was telling everybody through Noah. The word got around about this crazy man, preparing for a flood. He was the butt of jokes on all the talk shows. Who could imagine that in this monotonous world, where things never change, that there would be a flood?

“...until the flood came, and swept them all away.”

This time God is giving the whole world an unmistakable heads-up.

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come.

Matthew 24:14

This is not theory. The Spirit of God is trying to shake us out of our slumber, as I write these words, and as you read them. Calling us to wake up and pay attention. Because the Day of the Lord is near.

But why are you making it so complicated? (You say.) We’ve always been taught that when we die we go either to heaven or to hell. That’s it. Who cares about the end of the world? Who ever thinks about the Last Day?

According to Jesus there’s more to it than “going to heaven when you die.”

Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.

John 5:28-29

“So what happens to me, if I die tonight?” you say. “Where do I go?”

Jesus tells us that when we die, we become more conscious than we were when we were alive. The Rich Man and Lazarus knew exactly what was going on after they died---the Rich Man knew he was in Hades; Lazarus knew he was in Paradise. But they were both incomplete. They were without bodies. Then, on the Last Day, according to Jesus’ teachings, the Rich Man and Lazarus will emerge into a new state of being.

----those who have done good, to the resurrection of life,
and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.

So the goal of your life and mine is the Last Day, the day when the Lord returns and everything is sorted out. The Day when the will of God will finally be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

The Day when this world becomes a place of unspeakable beauty and splendor.

The life you and I live right now has a double destination:

First, the life we now live will determine where we go immediately after we die, if the Lord doesn’t come in the meantime.

Secondly, the life we now live will also determine where we fit when this troubled world gives way to the new world of God’s Kingdom. When the “trees clap their hands, and the dry places gush with crystal fountains, when the mountains and the hills sing for joy!”

Here’s the part we need to focus on: If we enter the Kingdom of God now, we are already breathing the air of the Last Day. If we are living now under the power Jesus’ resurrection, we are the new Noah. We are preparing ourselves, and anyone who will listen to us, not for a flood, but for the final fire of Judgment ...and the glory beyond.

The world looks at us and says, "You guys are crazy!"
And all we can say is, "The door is open.. Come on in, while there is still time."

The door is open to what?

To the Kingdom Ark.

Noah built an ark. Our ark is already built. When Jesus rose from the dead, his risen body became the new Noah's Ark, which will survive the coming fire of judgment. And that Body quickly grew into something more: a Body made up of many souls, which we call the Body of Christ, including that motley crew where you gather in Jesus' Name.

Such as we are, our fellowships are part of the New Noah's Ark, where the King who will be revealed on the Last Day is already at work.

So when they mock us and say, "Why are you wasting your time in that rickety boat?" we answer, "You better get on board, while there is still time!"

Will we still be here, when the Sign of the Son of Man appears in the heavens? Will we look up in the middle of the night and see the rainbow? Only God knows.

But whenever that Day comes, if we walk in his steps, we will be gathered from wherever we are to take our place before the One who died for us all, and calls us now to receive his Grace and walk in it.

"And he will come to judge the living and the dead."

Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.



Prayer

Dear precious Lord, your return is with us now as we embrace your cross. May we breathe and exude the air of your Kingdom now. Sweet Lamb of God, the power that lies in your gift to us is unspeakably beautiful and holy... the true gospel of loving, redemptive sacrifice. There is no power living or dead, on heaven or on earth that can overcome it. May we rise up and truly live in the power of your redemption, so that your testimony will be spread throughout the world before your imminent return. Lord, grant that we may bow down in humble adoration and release that power to the world now.

Maranatha Mirror