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# Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: The Return of Christ

James Willeford

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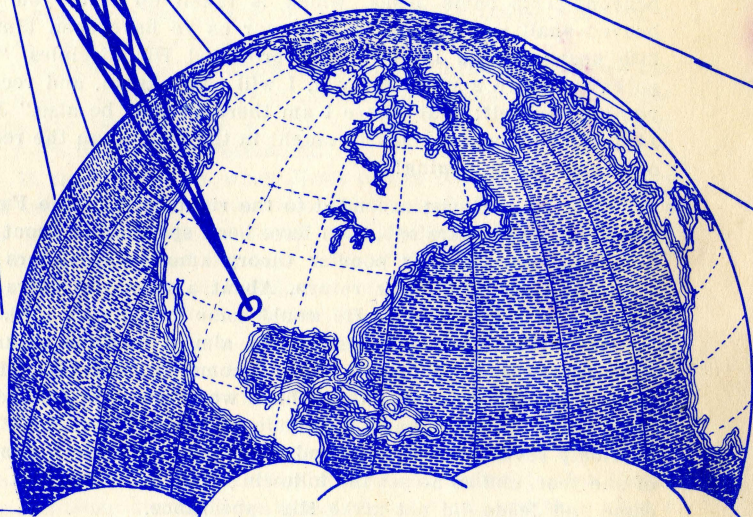
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Churches of Christ  
Salute You  
with a



*The Return of Christ*

James D. Willeford

December 7, 1952

*Herald of Truth*



# The Return of Christ

James D. Willeford

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In the first chapter of Acts we have Luke's statement regarding the ascension of Christ into heaven, and His ultimate return. Luke said, "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." The Lord himself promised His disciples, "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." John 14:3. Nothing is more clearly taught in the Bible than the return of Christ. He is coming!

Ever since Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father more than 1900 years ago, men have been speculating about His second coming. A very popular theory among speculators has been the time of Christ's return. About a thousand years ago men began to predict that He would come in the year 1000. But the year 1000 came and passed and almost another thousand have passed, and still Jesus has not come. In 1831 Wm. Miller made a solemn prediction that Christ would come in October of 1844. When that date passed without Jesus returning, Mr. Miller hurriedly revised his figures and found he had made a mistake of one year, and so he set the following year, 1845. But that year came and Jesus did not make His appearance.

Another would-be prophet of comparatively recent times, Mr. Russell, set the year 1914 as the time for Christ to come and usher in the millennium. (Studies in the Scriptures, Series 2, pp. 170 and 245.)

Following Mr. Russell came Judge Rutherford, who said Christ would come in 1918. It is needless to tell you that all these men were mistaken. They were mistaken because no man knows when the Lord will return. Jesus said, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Mark 13:32.

A few years ago a gospel preacher named Warlick was traveling by train, and was reading his Bible as he traveled. A man entered the car, and began preaching to the passengers. He said Christ would return on a certain day of that year. Mr.

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Warlick asked the man how he knew, and the reply was that he had received a "special revelation" from heaven, and in the revelation God had told him when Christ would return. When Mr. Warlick heard this reply he doubled up his Bible and pitched it on the floor. The would-be prophet shamed him and asked why he thus desecrated the word of God. Mr. Warlick replied: "I have always had confidence in God's promises. The Lord said 'no man knows' when He is coming, that the angels in heaven do not know, and that even Jesus Christ did not know; and if God has told you He has contradicted His word. Therefore, I have no more use for it." Of course, the preacher did not leave his Bible on the floor, but he picked it up and read to the man the passages which say that no man knows when Christ will return. (L. O. Sanderson, Gospel Advocate, Oct. 1, 1942.)

Though we do not know the time of Christ's return we can know from a careful study of the scriptures what will take place when He returns. The events of that great day are clearly set forth in the New Testament.

In the first place, when Jesus comes the second time there will be a general resurrection of all the dead. Both the righteous and the wicked will be raised. Paul declared that "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." Acts 24:15. Jesus said, "Marvel not at this for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29. According to Christ, the resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous will occur at the same hour. We are stressing the point that all men will be raised at the same time for some deny this. They teach that there will be two literal resurrections. According to this theory the righteous dead will be raised at one time, and then after a thousand years the wicked dead will be raised. But the Lord says the righteous and the wicked will be raised at the same time. Christ said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:44. Those who come to Christ will be raised at the last day. But Jesus taught that the wicked will be judged at the last day. He said, "He that rejected me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12:48. So the wicked will be judged on the last day, and of course, they must be resurrected if they are to be judged. Yes, the wicked will be judged on the last day, the very day when the righteous will be judged.

In the next place, when Jesus comes the second time, His reign as king will end. Jesus is now king, ruling over His king-

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# YOU MAY HEAR THE HERALD OF TRUTH OVER THESE STATIONS

Alabama, Anniston	WHMA	1450	1:00 p.m.
Auburn	WAUD	1230	1:00 p.m.
Birmingham	WSGN	610	8:00 a.m.
Florence	WJOI	1340	9:30 a.m.
Gadsden	WGAD	1350	1:00 p.m.
Huntsville	WHBS	1490	1:00 p.m.
Marion	WJAM	1310	9:30 a.m.
Mobile	WABB	1480	6:30 a.m.
Montgomery	WAPX	1600	1:00 p.m.
Selma	WGWC	1340	1:30 p.m.
Tuscaloosa	WJRD	1150	9:00 p.m.
Arizona, Clifton	KCLF	1400	1:00 p.m.
Phoenix	KOY	550	7:00 a.m.
Tucson	KCNA	580	3:00 p.m.
Arkansas, Eldorado	KDMS	1290	1:00 p.m.
Ft. Smith	KFSA	950	1:00 p.m.
Hot Springs	KTHS	1090	1:00 p.m.
Little Rock	KGHI	1250	1:00 p.m.
Springdale	KBRS	1340	6:00 p.m.
Calif., Bakersfield	KPMC	1560	10:00 a.m.
Blythe	KYOR	1450	3:30 p.m.
Brawley	KROP	1300	3:30 p.m.
Eureka	KIEM	1480	8:00 a.m.
Fresno	KARM	1430	3:30 p.m.
Indio	KREO	1400	3:30 p.m.
Los Angeles	KECA	790	3:30 p.m.
Modesto	KTRB	860	3:00 p.m.
San Francisco	KGO	810	3:30 p.m.
San Luis Obispo	KATY	1340	3:30 p.m.
Colorado, Craig	KRAI	1230	5:30 p.m.
Denver	KVOD	630	3:00 p.m.
Conn., Bridgeport	WNAB	1450	2:00 p.m.
Hartford	WTHT	1230	2:30 p.m.
Delaware, Wilmington	WILM	1450	2:00 p.m.
Florida, Gainesville	WGGG	1230	1:00 p.m.
Jacksonville	WPDQ	600	8:30 a.m.
Miami	WQAM	560	1:00 p.m.
Panama City	WPCF	1400	1:00 p.m.
Pensacola	WEAR	1230	11:00 p.m.
Tallahassee	WTNT	1450	5:00 p.m.
Tampa, St. Pete	WSUN	620	1:00 p.m.
Georgia, Atlanta	WGST	920	1:00 p.m.
Augusta	WGAC	580	2:00 p.m.
Brunswick	WGIG	1440	1:00 p.m.
Cairo	WGRA	1300	3:00 p.m.
Columbus	WGBA	1460	7:30 a.m.
Macon	WNEX	1400	1:00 p.m.
Rome	WLAQ	670	1:00 p.m.
Savannah	WDAR	1400	1:00 p.m.
Valdosta	WGAF	910	1:00 p.m.
Idaho, Boise	KGEM	1140	3:00 p.m.
Pocatello	KEIO	1440	9:30 a.m.
Illinois, Chicago	WENR-WLS	890	2:30 p.m.
Quincy	WGEM	1440	3:00 a.m.
Indiana, Anderson	WHBU	1240	1:30 p.m.
Bloomington	WTTS	1370	1:00 p.m.
Evansville	WJPS	1330	1:30 p.m.
Ft. Wayne	WGL	1250	1:00 p.m.
Iowa, Cedar Rapids	WMT	600	7:30 a.m.
Des Moines	KSO	1460	1:00 p.m.
Sioux City	KSCJ	1360	10:30 p.m.
Waterloo	KXEL	1540	5:30 p.m.
Kansas, Coffeyville	KGGF	690	2:00 p.m.
Topeka	WREN	1250	1:00 p.m.
Wichita	KWBB	1410	3:30 p.m.
Ken., Bowling Green	WKCT	930	1:00 p.m.
Harlan	WHLN	1230	3:00 p.m.
Louisville	WKLO	1080	1:00 p.m.
Mayfield	WKTM	1050	4:15 p.m.
Newport	WNOP	740	2:00 p.m.
Louisiana, Baton Rouge	WLCS	910	1:00 p.m.
Monroe	KMLB	1440	2:00 p.m.
New Orleans	WDSU	1280	1:00 p.m.
Shreveport	KRMD	1340	1:00 p.m.

Maine, Bangor	WABI	910	1:00 p.m.
Portland	WPOR	1450	9:00 a.m.
Maryland, Baltimore	WPBR	1300	3:00 p.m.
Cumberland	WDYK	1230	8:00 a.m.
Mass., Gardner	WHOB	1490	1:00 p.m.
Lawrence	WLAW	680	1:00 p.m.
Springfield	WSPR	1270	2:00 p.m.
Worcester	WAAB	1440	2:00 p.m.
Michigan, Battle Creek	WELL	1400	1:00 p.m.
Bay City	WBCM	1440	1:00 p.m.
Detroit	WXYZ	1270	1:00 p.m.
Flint	WFDF	910	10:00 p.m.
Lansing	WILS	1320	1:00 p.m.
Ludington	WKLA	1450	1:00 p.m.
Muskegon	WKBZ	850	2:00 p.m.
Minn., Minn.-St. Paul	WTCN	1280	7:30 a.m.
Mankato	KTOE	1420	2:00 p.m.
Miss., Centerville	WGLC	1580	8:00 a.m.
Aberdeen	WMPA	1240	1:00 p.m.
Columbus	WCBI	1340	6:00 p.m.
Greenwood	WABG	960	1:00 p.m.
Jackson	WSLI	930	2:00 p.m.
Kosciusko	WKOZ	1340	1:00 p.m.
Laurel	WLAU	1490	1:00 p.m.
McComb	WSKB	1250	1:00 p.m.
Missouri, Kansas City	KCMO	810	12:30 p.m.
Rolla	KTRR	1490	8:45 a.m.
St. Louis	KXOK	630	2:00 p.m.
Springfield	KWTO	560	1:00 p.m.
Montana, Butte	KOPR	580	9:15 a.m.
Great Falls	KMON	560	7:30 a.m.
Nebraska, Lincoln	KFOR	1240	10:30 a.m.
Omaha	KOIL	1290	5:30 p.m.
Sidney	KSID	1540	9:30 a.m.
N. Hamp., Claremont	WTSV	1230	1:00 p.m.
Lebanon	WTSL	1400	1:00 p.m.
Manchester	WMUR	610	3:00 p.m.
N. Mexico, Albuquerque	KOAT	1450	3:00 p.m.
Carlsbad	KPBW	740	check sta.
Clovis	KCLV	1240	1:00 p.m.
Los Alamos	KRSN	1490	3:00 p.m.
Santa Fe	KTRC	1400	3:00 p.m.
New York, Albany	WXXW	850	2:00 p.m.
New York	WJZ	770	12:30 p.m.
Olean	WHDL	1450	1:00 p.m.
Rochester	WARC	950	3:00 p.m.
Saranac Lake	WEAV	960	2:00 p.m.
Syracuse	WAGE	620	12:00 n.
N. Carolina, Ashville	WLOS	1380	1:00 p.m.
Charlotte	WAYS	610	1:00 p.m.
Durham	WTIK	1310	2:00 p.m.
Elizabeth City	WGAI	560	12:00 n.
Fayetteville (Sat.)	WFLB	1490	1:00 p.m.
Salisbury	WSAT	1280	1:00 p.m.
Wilmington	WGNI	1340	8:30 a.m.
Winston-Salem	WAIR	1340	1:00 p.m.
N. Dakota, Fargo	KFGO	790	1:00 p.m.
S. Dakota, Huron	KIJV	630	9:00 a.m.
Ohio, Cleveland	WJW	850	1:00 p.m.
Columbus	WHKC	610	1:00 p.m.
Lima	WIMA	1150	9:00 a.m.
Youngstown	WBBW	1240	8:30 a.m.
Oklahoma, Ada	KADA	1230	1:00 p.m.
Enid	KCRC	1390	1:00 p.m.
McAlester	KTMC	1400	1:00 p.m.
Muskogee	KBIX	1490	2:00 p.m.
Oklahoma City	KTOK	1000	9:30 a.m.
Tulsa	KRMG	740	2:00 p.m.
Oregon, Eugene	KASH	1600	1:00 p.m.
Klamath Falls	KFLW	1450	4:30 p.m.
Medford	KMED	1440	7:30 a.m.
Portland	KEX	1190	3:30 p.m.
The Dalles	KODL	1230	1:00 p.m.

Penn., Johnstown	WCRO	1230	7:00 p.m.
Philadelphia	WFIL	560	2:00 p.m.
Pittsburg	WCAE	1250	3:00 p.m.
Wilkes-Barre	WILK	980	5:00 p.m.
R. Island, Providence	WPJB	1420	1:00 p.m.
S. Carolina, Florence	WJMX	970	10:30 a.m.
S. Dakota, Aberdeen	KSDN	930	10:30 a.m.
Tenn., Chattanooga	WDEF	1370	1:00 p.m.
Jackson	WTJS	1390	1:00 p.m.
Johnson City	WJHL	910	10:30 p.m.
Knoxville	WBIR	1240	1:30 p.m.
Memphis	WMPB	650	9:30 p.m.
Morristown	WCRK	1450	check sta.
Nashville	WSIX	980	4:00 p.m.
Texas, Abilene	KRBC	1470	1:00 p.m.
Amarillo	KFBA	1440	1:00 p.m.
Austin	KNOW	1490	2:00 p.m.
Beaumont	KFDM	560	1:00 p.m.
Big Spring	KBST	1490	1:00 p.m.
Brownfield	KTFY	1300	4:30 p.m.
Brownsville	KVAL	1490	1:00 p.m.
Brownwood	KBWD	1380	5:30 p.m.
Corpus Christi	KEYS	1490	9:00 a.m.
El Paso	KEPO	690	3:00 p.m.
Ft. Worth	WBAP	570	1:00 p.m.
Graham	KSWA	1330	4:30 p.m.
Houston	KXYZ	1320	8:00 a.m.
Longview	KPRO	1370	1:00 p.m.
Lubbock	KFYO	1340	4:00 p.m.
Midland	KCRS	550	1:30 p.m.
New Braunfels	KGNB	1420	8:00 a.m.
Paris	KPLT	1490	9:00 p.m.
San Angelo	KGKL	960	1:00 p.m.
San Antonio	KMAC	630	9:00 p.m.
Texarkana	KCMC	1230	1:00 p.m.
Wichita Falls	KFDX	990	2:00 p.m.
Utah, Provo	KCSU	1490	3:00 p.m.
Salt Lake City	KUTA	570	7:30 a.m.
Vermont, Brattleboro	WTSA	1450	1:00 p.m.
Burlington	WJOY	1230	1:00 p.m.
Montpelier-Barre	WSKI	1240	1:00 p.m.
Virginia, Charlottesville	WINA	1280	9:15 a.m.
Fredericksburg	WFVA	1230	check sta.
Marion	WMEV	1010	2:00 p.m.
Norfolk	WGH	1310	6:30 p.m.
Richmond	WRNL	910	1:30 p.m.
Washington, Aberdeen	KBKW	1450	9:00 p.m.
Omak	KOMW	680	9:15 a.m.
Pasco	KPKW	1340	3:30 p.m.
Seattle	KJR	950	3:30 p.m.
Spokane	KGA	1510	3:30 p.m.
Washington, D. C.	WMAL	630	1:00 p.m.
W. Virginia, Beckley	WVNR	620	1:30 p.m.
Huntington	WHTN	800	3:00 a.m.
Parkersburg, Sat.	WCOM	1230	5:30 p.m.
Wheeling	WKWK	1400	1:00 p.m.
Wisconsin, Green Bay	WDUZ	1400	5:30 p.m.
LaCrosse	WKTY	580	4:00 p.m.
Madison	WIBA	1320	8:00 a.m.
Milwaukee	WCAN	1250	2:00 p.m.
Neeenah	WNAM	1280	8:00 a.m.
Wyoming, Casper	KSPR	1470	9:15 p.m.
Cheyenne	KFBC	710	12:00 p.m.
Cody	KODI	1400	12:00 p.m.
Laramie	KOWB	1340	12:00 p.m.
Rawlins	KRAL	1240	12:00 p.m.
Riverton	KWRL	1450	12:00 p.m.
Torrington	KGOS	1490	12:00 p.m.
Worland	KWOR	1490	12:00 p.m.
Alaska, Juneau (Sat.)	KJNO	630	1:00 p.m.
Canada, Trall, B.C.	CJAT	610	9:30 a.m.
Toronto, Ont.	CKEY	580	9:15 a.m.

All times are Sunday unless otherwise indicated.



dom, which is the church. Christ began His mediatorial reign over His kingdom on the first pentecost after His resurrection, and He will reign until He comes again. Paul says "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." I Cor. 15:24, 25. The apostle Peter said Christ was raised to sit on David's throne, and He has been on that throne since His resurrection. Acts 2:30. Paul said God has placed Christ "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and domination, and every name that is named, not only in this world; but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. Eph. 1:21-23. Christ will never return to the earth to be king. The earth is His footstool, not His throne. He is king now, and when He returns He will deliver up the kingdom to His Father.

Another purpose of Christ's coming is to judge the world. Paul said God "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Acts 17:30, 31. John tells us that Christ will judge the righteous and the wicked on the same day, and Jesus Himself said, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Matt. 25:31, 32. Peter said "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." II Peter 3:10. The last day will be the last one! On that great day of all days Christ will be our judge, and His word will be the standard by which He judges us. If we refuse to obey His will in this life He will be forced to say "Depart from me for I never knew you."

May I suggest finally, that when Jesus comes the second time, every eye shall see Him. There will be no question about His coming. In the last book of the Bible the Lord says, "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him." Rev. 1:7. Jesus said, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. 24:27. The angels

said as Christ ascended "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." We have the promise of God, the promise of Christ Himself, and the promise of the Holy Spirit through the apostles, that Christ will return. My friend, if the Lord should come today, are you ready to meet Him in judgment? If you knew that He would come today, would you not set your house in order without a moment's delay? Would you not prepare? Since we cannot know the day nor the hour of His coming, we should be ready at all times.

The Lord has not left us in doubt what we must do in preparing to meet Him. Before we become Christians the Lord describes us as "being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Eph. 2:12. After we are brought nigh to God through the blood of Christ, and are reconciled unto God in the one body by the cross, we are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Eph. 2:19. If we can learn how to reach Christ's blood, and come into His body we will know the terms whereupon God will adopt us as His children. In Rom. 6:4 the Lord says we are baptized into Christ's death. Since His blood was shed in His death, then we reach His blood when we are baptized into His death. In the second chapter of Acts we learn how to get into Christ's spiritual body. Luke tells us that when the Jews on the day of Pentecost heard the gospel, it produced faith in Christ and they asked what to do. Peter commanded them to "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins." Luke says "they that gladly received his word were baptized . . . And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:41, 47. When these Israelites did what the Lord commanded they ceased to be aliens and they became fellow-citizens in the kingdom of God. To come into the Lord's kingdom they were born of water and the spirit. John 3:5.

To become a naturalized citizen of the United States, an alien must learn our laws and study our Constitution; he must come to believe in our country; he must then renounce allegiance to all foreign powers, and finally, he must be inducted into citizenship by a formal ceremony. For an alien sinner to become a naturalized citizen in God's kingdom he must hear the Gospel, believe in the Lord, renounce his allegiance to Satan, declare his faith in Christ, and then be inducted by baptism into the Lord's kingdom. He is then an adopted son.

One summer evening a little girl, walking with her father, was gazing up into the starry heavens. She made no comment,



but she seemed deeply fascinated. Finally, her father asked for her thoughts and she said, "If the bottom side of heaven is so beautiful, how wonderful the other side must be!" The apostle John described heaven as a city that lieth foursquare, where the gates are not shut by night, for there is no night there. He said that in that city "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." The Lord teaches that heaven will be given to those who are ready when Jesus returns. Christ said of His coming, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." Mark 13:32, 33.

Why not obey your Lord today, for as the poet has well said,

"The clock of life is wound but once,  
And no man has the power  
To tell just when the hands will stop,  
At late or early hour.  
Now is the only time you own; live,  
Love, work with a will;  
Place no faith in tomorrow, for—the  
Clock may then be still."