

23. THE MESSIAH'S ARRIVAL

The Messiah Promised (Num 24:17, 19)

I see Israel, but not now;
I behold them, but not near in time.
A star will arise from Jacob's descendants,
a ruler will come from Israel.
He'll crush the heads of the Moabites,
He'll destroy all those troublemakers.
They will conquer Edom,
and the land of Seir, their enemy,
and Israel's power will increase...
A descendant of Jacob will become their king,
and destroy the survivors of the city.

Deut 18:15 The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.

Jewish leaders asked John the Baptist if he was that prophet (Jn 1:21). He wasn't. Peter identified him as Jesus the Messiah and said that he must remain in heaven now until the time arrived when God would restore everything as he promised long ago through the prophets (Acts 3:22).

2 Sam 7:11b-16 The Lord's promised David through the prophet Nathan that I he would establish a house (dynasty) for him. The bracketed portion applies to his son Solomon who built the first temple. The balance of the prophecy applies to David's descendant, Jesus, who would rule forever on David's throne.

The Lord declared to him: I will establish a house (dynasty) for you. When your days are over and you pass on, I will raise up one of your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and he will establish your kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. (When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod that men wield, with blows inflicted by man. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.) His descendants and his kingship

will endure forever before me. His throne will be established forever.

Cf. 1 Chron 17:1-14, Ps 89:3-4. This prophecy was partially fulfilled by David's son Solomon, but according to Luke 1:32-33, it was also fulfilled by Jesus. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. God said David's offspring would build a house for my name. Solomon did it literally, Jesus did it spiritually. He said, I will build my church or community. As this community is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, they are the temple of the living God (2 Cor 6:16).

Isa 11:1-5 A shoot will sprout from Jesse's stump,
from his roots a Branch grow and bear fruit.
The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him
Giving him wisdom and insight,
good counsel and power,
knowledge and fear of the Lord.
The fear of the Lord will excite him.
He won't judge according to what he sees,
or decide their disputes according to what he hears.
He'll judge the miserable justly,
he'll make fair decisions for the Earth's poor.
His word will strike the Earth's inhabitants like a rod,
he'll slay the wicked with his breath.
He'll put on righteousness as his belt,
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

Isa 32:1-2 Look! A king will reign justly
His ministers will rule fairly.
Each one will be a shelter from the wind,
a refuge from the storm,
a stream of water in the desert,
a great shady rock in a dry place.

Jer 33:14-17 The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah. In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteous Savior. For this is what the LORD says: David will never fail to have a man to sit on the throne of Israel.

Ezek 34:23-24 I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David. He will tend them, care for them, and watch over them. I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be a leader among them. I the Lord have spoken.

Zech 2:10-13 You Zionists, shout and be glad, for I'm coming and I'll live among you, declares the Lord. Many nations will join me in that day and will become my people. I'll live among you and you'll know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. The Lord will take possession of the Jews in the holy land and he'll choose Jerusalem again. Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling and is coming.

Zech 8:3 The LORD says: I will return to Zion and settle in Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain.

The Messiah arrives in Jerusalem to defend Israel

Ps 2:4-9 The Lord scoffs at (the rebellious nations),
sitting in heaven, he laughs at them.
In his anger he rebukes them, his wrath terrifies them.
He said he has installed his King on Zion, his holy mountain.
I'll tell about the decree the Lord spoke to me saying:
You are my son (regent), today I have begotten you.
Ask me, and I'll give you the nations as your inheritance,
the entire earth as your possession.
You'll rule them with an iron rod,
You'll shatter them as one shatters pottery.

Ps 110:1-2, 5-6 The LORD told David's Lord (the Messiah)
to sit at his right hand (in heaven)
until he makes his enemies his footstool (on Earth).
The LORD extends your mighty scepter from Zion, saying:
rule in the midst of your enemies.
The Lord (the Messiah) is at your right hand,
he will massacre kings on the day of his wrath.
He will execute judgment against the nations,
piling up their corpses.
He will massacre leaders far and wide.

The first verse is the Father's invitation to the Messiah to sit at his right hand on his throne in heaven at the ascension. In the rest of the Psalm,

the Messiah is seated on his Davidic throne as the Father's regent. Cf. Rev 3:21.

Isa 2:19 When the Lord rises to shake the Earth, people will flee to caves and holes in the ground from the fearful splendor of his majesty.

Isa 40:4-5 Every valley will be filled in, and every mountain and hill will be made low. The rough ground will become level, and the rugged places a plain. The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The Lord has spoken.

Isa 59:20 The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those of Jacob's descendants who turn from their sins. The Lord has spoken.

Jer 25:30-33 The LORD will roar from on high, he will thunder from his holy dwelling and shout loudly against the inhabitants of his land. He will shout like those who tread the grapes, reprimanding all who live on Earth. The sound will reach the ends of the earth, for the Lord has a quarrel with the nations; he will pronounce judgment on all mankind and put the wicked to the sword. The Lord has spoken. The Lord Almighty says: Look! Disaster will spread from nation to nation; a mighty storm will rise from far extremities of the earth. At that time those slain by the LORD will be strewn from one end of the earth to the other. They will not be mourned or gathered or buried but will be like dung on the ground.

Ezek 43:2, 4-7 I saw the glory of Israel's God coming from the East. His voice sounded like the roar of a waterfall, and his glory lit up the land. ... The Lord's glory entered the temple through the gate facing East... then I saw that it filled the temple ... I heard a voice speaking to me from the temple saying: Son of Man, this is the place for my throne, this is my footstool, where I will live among Israel forever.

Ezek 38:19-20 In my zeal and fiery wrath I declare that there will be a great earthquake in Israel at that time. All the fish, birds, wild animals, and reptiles, and everyone in the world will tremble at my presence. Mountains will crumble, cliffs will collapse, and every wall will fall to the ground.

Joel 2:10-11 The Earth shakes before them, the heavenly bodies tremble, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The Lord thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond numerous, and mighty is the army that carries out his command. The day of the LORD is great and dreadful. Who can endure it?

Joel 3:14-16 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord's judgment is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will darken, and the stars will no longer shine. The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem. The Earth and the heavens will tremble but the LORD will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for Israel.

Zech 12:10-12a I will pour out my Spirit on David's descendants and the people of Jerusalem and they will understand my grace and pray to me. They will look at me, the person they pierced. They will wail for him as one wails for an only child, and mourn for him as one mourns the death of a firstborn son. ... The people of the land will mourn, each clan by itself, and their wives by themselves.

Zech 14:2-5, 9 I will gather all nations to Jerusalem to fight against it and they will capture it. The houses will be ransacked and the women raped. Half of the population will be taken captive, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he does on a day of battle. On that day he will stand on the Mount of Olives, just east of Jerusalem. The mountain will split from East to West, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving North and half moving South. You (Jews trapped in Jerusalem) will flee by this valley for it will extend to Azel. ... The Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him. ... The Lord will be king over the whole earth. At that time only the Lord and his name will be known.

In Revelation, it is the armies of heaven who follow the Lord, riding white horses and dressed in fine linen representing the righteous deeds of the saints (Rev 19:14).

Mal 3:1-2 Listen! I will send my messenger to prepare the way for me, and suddenly the Lord you seek will come to his temple. Listen! The messenger of my covenant with you, in whom you delight, is coming, says the Lord Almighty. Who can endure the day of his coming? When he appears, who can stand? For he'll be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's potash.

Mal 4:1-6 Listen! The day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the proud and wicked will be like stubble. The day that is coming will set them on fire, says the Lord Almighty. No root or branch will be left of them. As for you who revere my name, the Sun of

Righteousness will arise with healing in his rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. Then you will trample the wicked and they will be ashes under your feet on the day when I act, says the Lord Almighty. Remember the law that I gave my servant Moses at Horeb, the commands and teachings that I gave him for all Israel. Listen! I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD arrives. He will reconcile the parents to their children, and the children to their parents, so that I won't come and condemn your land to destruction.

A ruling Messiah is promised, who will come to fight the nations attacking Jerusalem. The coming of the Lord, depicted as a warrior riding on a white horse (Rev 19:11-21), is symbolic, but confirms that at the end of this age, the Messiah will come to Jerusalem during a time of warfare. He will set foot on the Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4), which will divide in two to form a great valley from East to West. He will empower the leaders of Judah and they will be victorious (Zech 12:6). The New Testament elaborates on this as we will see later.

“Prepare the way of the Lord,” cries a voice in the wilderness, make straight in the desert a highway for our God (Isa 40:3-5). The glory of the Lord will be revealed and all people will see it together. Zechariah says that the Lord will come and all the saints with him (Zech 14:5b). The Messiah will come from heaven with his angels, but when he comes to take up residence in the temple at Jerusalem, it is more likely to be the saints, who after their resurrection will be with him always. The Lord told Ezekiel that his servant David would be king over Israel in the land he gave Jacob (Ezek 37:24). His temple would be among them forever. In the absence of Scriptures declaring that the Messiah will be physically present on Earth during the millennium, and in light of Scriptures which indicate that there will be a bright light above Jerusalem (Isa 60:1-3), indicates that the Messiah will rule the world with his saints from New Jerusalem in the sky, with his temple in earthly Jerusalem, where the nations will come to worship.

The OT contains many messianic prophecies but doesn't distinguish between his two comings. Sometimes the early life of Jesus and his later messianic reign are brought together, as in Zechariah 9:9-10:

Look, your king comes to you; just and victorious, meek and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ... He will

proclaim peace to the nations and rule will from sea to sea and from the River Euphrates to the ends of the earth.

The NT makes it clear that the Messiah's coming to Earth occurs on two occasions. After his birth at Bethlehem, the wise men from the East came and asked where was the one who was born king of the Jews (Mt 2:1-2). The chief priests and scribes informed King Herod that it was prophesied that the Messiah would be born at Bethlehem. Micah's prophecy adds that his existence has been from antiquity, even eternity and that he would be a ruler in Israel (Mic 5:2). However, Jesus was never a ruler during his 38 years on earth; that was to be his role at his second coming. At the end of his brief life, he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy. The crowds recognized the significance of the occasion and shouted, "Hosanna to the son of David." Verse 9 was fulfilled, but verse 10 remains until his return as King. "From sea to sea" to the Jews would mean from the western sea (Mediterranean and beyond) to the eastern sea (Red Sea and beyond) and by implication, the whole world.

NT confirmation of the Messiah's future arrival

Jesus spoke of his glorious return as Messiah several times, disguising his identity somewhat by referring to himself as the Son of Man, Daniel's term for the Messiah. He'll come with his angels, and he'll reward each person according to what they have done (Mt 16:27-28). He'll come and sit on his glorious throne, and his disciples will also sit on thrones in New Jerusalem (Rev 22:3). His Jewish followers will rule over Israel (Mt 19:28) while his Gentile followers rule over other language groups (Lk 19:17-19).

The sight of his coming is compared to that of lightning flashing from East to West (Mt 24:27). The sun and moon will be darkened and the stars will fall from the sky (Isa 13:10). All the tribes of the land, that is Israel (Zech 12:10), will mourn when they see him coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. He will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect, the Church, from one end of the heavens to the other (Mt 24:27, 29-31).

Luke says there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars. The nations will be terrified and perplexed at the roaring and tossing of the sea, possibly due to tsunamis but more likely referring to upheavals among the nations. People will be terrified, and fearful of what is happening to the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. Then they will

see the Messiah coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Christians are advised to stand up confidently with their heads held high, because their salvation is near; they are about to be raptured (Lk 21:25-28).

When Jesus ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12), his disciples were gazing at his departure, when two angels told them that Jesus would return from heaven in the same manner they had seen him departing, physically and supernaturally (Acts 1:10-11). He would even return to the same place (Zech 14:4).

Paul gives more details about Jesus' return. Jesus will return with the saints, the Church (1 Thess 3:13, 4:14, Zech 14:5, Rev 19:14). Paul stresses that Christians who are still alive at the Lord's coming, will not precede those who have died. He said:

The Lord will descend from heaven with a loud command, the voice of the archangel, and the sound of God's trumpet. The Christian dead will rise first, and then we who remain alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess 4:16-17).

Resurrection precedes rapture in a loud, visible, public event. In his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul says that the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels (2 Thess 1:7-8). He goes on to rule out a pretribulation rapture by saying that Jesus' coming and our being gathered to him will not happen until the rebellion occurs and the Man of Lawlessness is revealed, the Antichrist who will exalt himself above God and sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God (2 Thess 2:1-4, 8). The Lord Jesus will overthrow him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming.

Peter says the Day of the Lord will come unexpectedly like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare (2 Pet 3:10). However it is not the end of the world; in keeping with God's promise we are looking forward to a renewal of and the (Isa 65:17-25).

John, in Revelation, has the last word and his whole book leads up to a climax, the arrival of the Messiah. He said Jesus will come with the clouds (Rev 1:7), and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the tribes of the land will mourn for him. This is an allusion to Zechariah 12:10-12 where it is Israel who mourn when they

look at the one they have pieced. The Greek is ambiguous; they use the same word for earth and land, and most English versions translate 'all the tribes/peoples/nations of the Earth,' even though we are told that unbeliever will only curse God on that day (Rev 16:9,11,21).

After the seventh trumpet is blown, angels celebrate the Messiah's victory over the nations:

The seventh angel blew his trumpet and loud voices came from heaven saying: The kingdom of the world has become the possession of our Lord and his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever. ... We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, you who are and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign (Rev 11:15, 17).

The Kingdom of God has finally been established on Earth replacing all previous human kingdoms (Dan 2:44). Christ has finally become king and begun to reign. The nations were angry and rebelled (Ps 2:1), but God's wrath has finally come. Jesus will reign with his saints for a thousand years.

Jesus' return is depicted symbolically as a victorious rider on a white horse coming from heaven with the armies of heaven, presumably the saints because they are dressed in fine linen, which stands for the good deeds of the saints. ... On his robe and his thigh he has this name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev 19:11-16).

Daniel prophesied that the saints of the Most High, (or, the saints of the heavenly realm), would possess the Messianic kingdom. He said, the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the saints. John refers to these people when he says he saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And he saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because they testified about Jesus and the word of God. They didn't worship the beast or his image and didn't receive his mark on their foreheads or their hands, They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years (Rev 20:4-5)

The future coming of the Lord has two purposes: judgment and salvation. He comes to judge the wicked, whose rebellious behavior typifies that of mankind generally. They come to fight a war against God, his regent Jesus, and his people Israel. He also comes to bring salvation by resurrection and rapture to Christians, many of whom have been slaughtered by the Antichrist. He also comes to rescue

Israel, who have been fighting a battle against the nations of the world. His outward display of power and majesty is directed towards the unbelievers, as he comes to destroy them, accompanied by lightning, thunder, earthquake, windstorm, and fire. He comes for his Church whose resurrection and rapture brings them permanently into the spiritual realm. The angels are sent out to gather them from all over the world, and they meet the Lord in the air and remain with him forever. However, the Bible does not say anywhere that Jesus is coming to take the Church home to heaven. Their home will be in the heavenly New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from God.

Isaiah prophesies the Lord's coming as a day of vengeance and pictures the Lord as a warrior who treads the winepress alone, staining his apparel with blood. The grapes in the winepress are symbolic of the wicked, as the Lord tramples them in his anger and pours out their lifeblood on the earth. The Messiah is appalled that no nation supports him, he must do it alone. He will trample the people in anger and pour out their lifeblood on the earth. (Isa 63:1-6). The Isaian context is in southern Jordan 60 miles south of Jerusalem.

John sees a vision of an angel, not the Lord, swinging his sharp sickle and harvesting grapes, throwing them into the great winepress of God's wrath. The grapes are trampled in the winepress outside Jerusalem and blood flows from the press, rising as high as a horse's bridle for 180 miles (Rev 14:17-20). Whether the Lord or an angel, the vision is a symbolic description of judgment on the wicked, especially those who fight at Armageddon.

Isaiah sums up the Lord's battle with the nations, also known as Armageddon as follows:

Look! The Lord is coming with fire and his chariots are like a whirlwind. He'll come upon them with fury and rebuke with flames of fire. For the Lord will execute judgment on all people with fire and with his sword. Those slain by the Lord will be numerous (Isa 66:15-16).

Malachi says that the Day of the Lord is coming, burning like an oven, and all the arrogant and evildoers will be like stubble. They will be ripe for judgment when the Messiah arrives with blazing fire. But for those who fear the Lord, the Sun of Righteousness, interpreted by many in the early church from Justin downwards as the Messiah, will arise with healing in his rays. The sun will burn, but its rays will bring

healing to Israel who will be empowered by the Lord. They will go out leaping like calves from the stall and treading down the wicked as the Lord gives them victory.

Glory, Noise, and Retribution at the Messiah's Return

The OT concept of the Messiah's coming is terrifying, a day of vengeance and judgment on all mankind. God Listen to the prophets shout their warnings concerning the end of the age:

Isa 2:21 When the Lord rises to shake the Earth, people will flee to caves and clefts in the rocks to hide from the terrifying splendor of his majesty.

Jer 25:30-33 The Lord will roar from on high and thunder from his holy dwelling, he'll roar mightily over his land. He'll shout like those who tread the grapes against all the Earth's inhabitants. The tumult resounds to the ends of the Earth, for the Lord brings charges against the nations, he brings judgment on all mankind and puts the wicked to the sword. ... Look! Disaster will spread from nation to nation, a mighty storm will rise from the ends of the Earth. On that day those slain by the Lord will be everywhere, from one end of the Earth to the other. They will not be mourned or gathered up or buried but will lie like dung on the ground.

Ezek 38:20 All the fish, birds, wild animals, reptiles, and all the inhabitants of the Earth will tremble at my presence. Mountains will crumble, cliffs will collapse, and every wall will fall down.

Joel 2:11 The Lord leads his army with shouting, his forces are beyond number, and mighty is the army that obeys his command. The Day of the Lord is great and instills terror. Who can endure it?

Joel 3:16 The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem. The Earth and the sky will tremble. But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a place of protection for Israel.

Where is the Messiah's destination?

Isa 60:2 Look! Darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the nations. As for you (Jerusalem), the Lord will rise upon you and his glory will appear over you.

Ezek 43:2, 4, 6 I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the East. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters and the land was lit up with his glory. ... The glory of the Lord entered the eastern gate and filled the temple. ... He said: Son of man, this is the place of my throne, this is my footstool. I'll live here among Israel forever.

Mal 3:1-2 Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple ... but who can endure the day of his coming? When he appears, who can remain standing?

Zech 14:4 On that day, the Lord will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. The mountain will split in two from East to West forming a very great valley.

Building on the OT foundation, the NT has much to say about the Lord's coming. It makes it clear that it is the Messiah who is coming and that the Messiah is Jesus.

Lk 21:25-27 There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars, and the world's nations will be terrified. They will be worried about the roaring and tossing of the sea. In anticipation of what is happening to the world, they will faint with fear, for the heavenly bodies will shake, and then they will see the Messiah coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

2 Pet 3:7, 10 Tgod's word ensures that the present heavens and Earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. ... The Day of the Lord will come like a thief when the heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be burnt and dissolved, and the Earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

Lk 17:24, 26-27 Just as lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other, so will the Messiah's coming be. ... As it was in Noah's day, so it will be when the Messiah comes. People were eating, drinking, and marrying until the day when Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. The same also in Lot's day; people were eating, drinking, buying, selling, sowing, and building. When Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

2 Thess 1:7 When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels, he will punish those who

do not know God and have not believed the good news about our Lord Jesus.

Those who will accompany the Messiah

Zechariah said, “Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him” (Zech 14:5). ‘Holy ones’ could be translated as ‘saints,’ but it is more likely that Zechariah has angels in mind. Jesus said that the Son of Man would come with his holy angels (Mk 8:38, Lk 9:26) and that he would send his angels to gather the elect from all over the Earth (Mt 24:31). Paul said the Lord Jesus would be revealed from heaven with his powerful angels (2 Thess 1:7), but he also said that the Lord Jesus will come with all his saints (1 Thess 3:13) and that God would bring with Jesus those who had died in Christ (1 Thess 4:14), bringing them down from heaven to Earth to be resurrected. After the angels are sent out to gather the elect, the dead saints rise from their graves, and the living saints are caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air, all in their resurrection bodies, and from that moment, they will always be with the Lord. Daniel said, Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the Earth will awake, some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. He may have seen the resurrection as one event but the NT makes it clear that there are two resurrections. The righteous are resurrected at Christ’s return and they immediately reign with Christ for 1000 years. This is the first resurrection. The rest of the dead do not come to life until the thousand years are ended (Rev 20:5) after which they are judged at the great white throne judgment.

The resurrection and rapture of the saints is not a drawn-out affair. They will all be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet (1 Cor 15:52). And it is at that same last trumpet, when the seventh angel blows his trumpet, that “the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and his Messiah (Rev 11:15). It is the same moment when the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the saints of heavenly realm (Dan 7:27).

The resurrection and rapture of the saints prepares them for the wedding of the Lamb. They are not only saved from their sins, they are now clothed in immortal resurrection bodies and clothed in fine linen, bright and clean which symbolizes their righteous acts. As the Messiah rides forth on a white horse with a sharp sword coming out of his mouth to strike down the nations, his Bride, the armies of heaven,

follow him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, bright and clean.

So when Zechariah said that the Lord his God will come, and all the holy ones with him, the 'holy ones' are better interpreted as saints than angels, for it is the saints who are going to rule the surviving nations with an iron scepter for a thousand years.

The Lord will be king over the whole Earth (Zech 14:9).

In the parable of the sheep and the goats, the Messiah comes in his glory with all the angels and sits on his glorious throne. All the nations are gathered before him and he separates them from one another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He puts the sheep, the recently resurrected righteous, on his right, and the goats, the unbelievers, on his left. Then he says to those on his right: Come, you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. Those on his left are told to depart from him and go to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (cf. Rev 20: 5, 12, 15).

Jesus promised the victorious at Thyatira that he would give them authority over the nations and they would rule them with an iron scepter and dash them to pieces like pottery. He promised the victorious at Laodicea that he would give them the right to sit with him on his throne, just as he was victorious and sat down with his Father on his throne.

Harmonizing the above verses concerning the angels and the saints who accompany Jesus on his return results in the following: When Jesus descends from heaven, he will be accompanied by myriads of angels whom he will send out to gather his elect from all over the Earth. The resurrected and raptured saints will then rise to meet the Lord in the air, and from there the Lord will continue his descent to the Mount of Olives, from where he will enter the temple via the east gate. There from Zion, he will roar out against the nations who surround Jerusalem.

We have to keep in mind that the number of resurrected saints will number in the hundreds of millions. As immortal beings, their habitation is heavenly, not earthly. More precisely, they will be inhabitants of New Jerusalem, the Holy City that comes down out of heaven to Earth. The description of the city is symbolic, its cubic dimensions of 12,000 stadia (1,380 miles or 2,200 km), indicate that it

is huge and it will likely rest in the sky above Israel. New Jerusalem will be intimately connected to the Israeli Jerusalem, the two realms overlapping one another. Earth's inhabitants will see it as a bright and glorious light (Isa 60:1-3, Rev 21:24).