

THE SECOND COMINGS OF CHRIST (2nd Coming)

There is no fact in history more clearly established than the fact of the First Coming of Christ. But as this First Coming did not fulfil all the prophecies associated with His Coming, it is evident that there must be another coming to completely fulfil them. It was because the religious leaders of Christ's day failed to distinguish between the prophecies that related to His First Coming, and those that related to His Second Coming that they rejected Him.

Peter tells us (1 Peter 1:10-11) that the prophets themselves did not clearly perceive the difference between the Sufferings and Glory of Christ. That is, they did not see that there was a TIME SPACE between the Cross (Christ's crucifixion) and the Crown, (The Second Coming) and that the Cross would precede the Crown. But we have no such excuse. We live on this side of the Cross and we can readily-pick out all the prophecies that were fulfilled at Christ's First Coming and apply the remainder to His Second Coming and the Rapture.

While the First and Second Comings of Christ are separated by this Dispensation of Grace, they are nevertheless not complete in themselves, the Second necessitated the First, and the First demands the Second. They are both necessary to complete the Plan of Salvation. The first to choose out a people from all nations to become the Body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:27 "Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular". Ephesians 1:23 "Which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all". Ephesians 4:12 and Colossians 1:24-25 "his body's sake which is the church: whereof I am made a minister.."

The Second is for the salvation of the Hebrews. He will come with the clouds of heaven, Daniel 7:13, Revelation 1:7 with power and great glory, thus completing Gods plan of salvation.

THE SECOND COMING TO EARTH - AS TO THE FACT

1. THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS HIMSELF.

Matthew 16:27. "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

Matthew 25:31-32 "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."

John 14:2-3. "In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And 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 21:22. "If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

2. THE TESTIMONY OF HEAVENLY BEINGS

Acts 1:10-11. "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."

This passage declares that the SAME JESUS shall return IN LIKE MANNER as He went, that is, that His return will be visible and personal. The two "men" that "stood by" were probably Moses and Elijah. They appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. They were doubtless the two men who testified to the women at the tomb that Jesus had risen (Luke 24:4-5), and they could be the "Two Witnesses" that shall testify during the Tribulation. Revelation 11:3-12.

3. THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES

PAUL "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the Second Time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28.

JAMES "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." James 5:7.

PETER "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty." 2 Peter 1:16. Peter here refers to the Transfiguration of Christ on the Mount (Matthew 17:1-5), which was a type of His Second Coming. Moses was a type of the "resurrection saints," and Elijah of those who shall be translated without dying.

JUDE "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoke against him." Jude 14-15.

JOHN "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." 1 John 2:28. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Revelation 1: 7.

4. THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death TILL HE COME." 1 Corinthians 11:26.

The Lord's Supper is not a permanent ordinance. It will be discontinued when the Lord returns. It is a Memorial Feast. It looks back to the "Cross" and forward to the "Coming." An engagement ring is not intended to be permanent. It is simply a pledge of mutual love and loyalty, and gives place to the wedding ring. So the Lord's Table may be looked upon as a betrothal pledge left to the Church during the absence of her betrothed.

Paul in all his epistles refers but 13 times to Baptism, while he speaks of the Lord's return 50 times. One verse in every 30 in the New Testament refers to Christ's Second Coming. There are 20 times as many references in the Old Testament to Christ's Second Coming as to His First Coming

2. AS TO THE TIME

We are not told the time of the Rapture but as to the Second coming we have clear guide lines as to the timing of Christ's return. Following the Rapture the world will start it's final stage toward judgement and it will be initialled by the rise to power of the Anti-Christ and what is called the 'abomination of desolation' (Daniel 9:27 & Mathew 13:14). This is when the Anti-Christ turns on the Jews. From the point when the Temple in Jerusalem is desolated the Second Coming can be calculated and will be by the Jews, who are waiting for their Messiah.

PRE-MILLENNIAL

By Pre-Millennial we mean before the Millennium. That is, before the period of a "Thousand Years" spoken of in Revelation 20:1-6 and not before the year 2000. This period is spoken of in other scriptures as "The Kingdom," and is described in glowing terms by the prophets as a time when the earth shall be blessed with a universal rule of righteousness. The passage in Revelation 20:1-6 simply tells us that the length of the period shall be 1000 years.

The very structure of the New Testament demands that Christ shall return before the Millennium. Here are a few reasons.

1. When Christ comes He will RAISE THE DEAD, but the Righteous dead are to be raised BEFORE the Millennium, that they may reign with Christ during the 1000 years, hence there can be no Millennium before Christ comes. Revelation 20:5.
2. When Christ comes He will SEPARATE THE "TARES" FROM THE "WHEAT." but as the Millennium is a period of UNIVERSAL RIGHTEOUSNESS the separation of the "Tares" and "Wheat" must take place BEFORE the Millennium, therefore there can be no Millennium before Christ comes. Matthew 13:40-43.
3. When Christ comes Satan SHALL BE BOUND, but as Satan is to be bound during the Millennium,

there can be no Millennium until Christ comes. Revelation 20:1.3.

4. When Christ comes the Antichrist is to be DESTROYED, but as Antichrist is to be destroyed before the Millennium there can be no Millennium until Christ comes. 2 Thessalonians 2:8 & Revelation 19:20.

5. When Christ comes the Jews are to be TOTALLY RESTORED TO THEIR OWN LAND. As they are to be restored to their own land BEFORE the Millennium, there can be no Millennium before Christ comes, Ezekiel 36:24-28; Revelation 1:7; Zechariah 12:10.

3. AS TO THE MANNER

He will return in the SAME MANNER as He went. Acts 1:11. He went up BODILY and VISIBLY and He shall come in like manner. He went in a cloud, and He will return in a cloud. "Behold, He cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." Revelation 1:7. The only difference will be that He went up alone, He will return as a King (Luke 19:12), followed by a retinue of the angelic hosts. "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with his angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works." Matthew 16:27.

THE IMMINENCY OF THE SECOND COMING

One of the objections to the Doctrine of the "Second Coming of Christ" is the claim that He may come back at any time. Revelation 16:15. "But of the 'times' and the 'seasons,' brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the 'Day of the Lord' (the day of His Return), so cometh as a thief in the night, when they shall say, "Peace and Safety;" then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." This refers to the Second Stage of Christ's Coming the "Revelation when He shall take vengeance upon His enemies. 2 Thessalonians 1: 7-10. But Paul adds "But ye brethren, are not in darkness, that that day (the day of His Return) should overtake you as a thief." 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4.

Post millennialists tell us that the writers of the New Testament looked for Him to come back in their day, and that He did not do so, is proof that they were mistaken, and that Paul in his later writings modified his statements as to the immanency of Christ's return. It is a fact that while Jesus said: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. . . Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:42-44), He did not in these passages teach that He would return during the lifetime of those who listened to Him. In fact, in His Parables He intimated that His return would be delayed, as in the Parable of The Talents, where it is said: "After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh." Mathew 25:19. What Jesus wanted to teach was the sudden and unexpected character of His return.

As to the Apostles, while they exhorted their followers to be ready, for the "night is far spent, the day is at hand" and the "coming of the Lord draweth nigh," their language simply implied "immanency," but not necessarily "IMMEDIATENESS." And the use of the word "WE" in 1 Corinthians 15:51, "WE" Shall not all sleep, but WE shall all be changed," is not a declaration that the Lord would return in Paul's day and some would not die but be translated, for the Apostle is talking about the Rapture and he means by "WE", a certain class of persons, the saints that shall be alive when that event occurs, whether in his day or at some later time.

It was clearly known to our Lord that certain events must come to pass before His Return, but to have disclosed that fact would have nullified the command to "Watch," therefore He in "mystery form" as in the seven parables of Matthew 13 hid the fact that His Return would be delayed. It would take time for the "Sowing of the Seed, the growth of the "Wheat" and "Tares," the growth of the "Mustard Tree," and the "Leavening of the Meal."

So rapid was the spread of the Gospel in the first century that the followers of Christ were warranted in looking for the speedy Return of the Lord, but it was true then, as in every century since, that we do not know what the extent of the "Harvest" is to be, and when it will be ripe, so the Lord can return. Matthew 13:30. Uncertainty as to the "time" of the Lord's return is necessary to promote the "watchful" spirit. If the early Church had known that the Lord's Return would have been delayed for 20 centuries, the incentive to watchfulness would have been wanting.

By "Immanency" we mean "may happen at any time. For illustration you hurry to the train station to catch a train. The train has not arrived, though it is on the way, and it would not be safe for you to leave the station, for it may arrive any minute, but as a matter of fact, it does not come for half an hour. Now if you had known that it would not arrive for half an hour you would have used the time in some other way than "waiting" and "watching." So we see that "Immanency" does not necessarily, imply "IMMEDIATENESS," but does demand "Watchfulness."

It is the firm conviction of the writer that there has been unnecessary delay in the Return of the Lord, caused by the failure of the Church to obey the "Divine Commission" to evangelise the world (Matthew 28:19-20), and it is past the time when He should have returned. The delay is to give time to the Jew to repent and to sort out the person who is willing to watch and wait, expectantly. Mathew 24:48 and Luke 12:45. 2 Peter 3:9 also tells us of the patience of God that he does not want people to perish just because of a timetable.

Of course, this was foreseen by God, and His foreknowledge has held back the development of the forces of "evil" etc. until the "Fullness of the Gentiles" should be gathered and the "Harvest" is ripe for the gathering. Revelation 14:14-20. At no time in the history of the Christian Church have the conditions necessary to. The Lord's Return been so completely fulfilled at the present time; therefore, His Coming is IMMINENT. And will not probably be long delayed. Let us be ready and, watching.

Conclusion

The "Hope" of the Lord's Pre-Millennial Return fills the heart of those who believe it with joy. In Luke 24:52 we read that when Jesus was parted from His Disciples and ascended into, Heaven, "They returned to Jerusalem With GREAT JOY and were Continually in the Temple, PRAISING and BLESSING God." That seems strange conduct on their part, for naturally we would suppose that His Departure would have filled them with sadness. But when We recall that, when He Ascended, two men stood by in white apparel and told them that Jesus would come back again, we can understand their joyfulness Acts 1:11.