

The Second Coming of Christ

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The first coming of Christ was about 1900 years ago. The second coming will be at the end of the world, when "He shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him."

There are many intermediate comings of Christ, ways and times of self-manifestation to his people and to the world; but these should not be confused with his second and final coming, in his glorified body, to raise the dead, judge the world, and bring his people home to heaven.

Jesus Christ, being divine as well as human, is everywhere present, and can manifest his presence in any place, at any time and to any degree, according to his own good pleasure. In Scripture this is called his coming, his presence, his approach, his apocalypse, his epiphany.

What joy to his people to know that he is always present, and is revealing his glory, power and love, as human eyes are willing to behold him! How often they are constrained to cry out in his presence, "My Lord, and my God!" and this with more ecstatic joy than if he stood before them in bodily form, clothed with cloth from the loom.

The nerve-thrilling expectation of his visible coming at any hour, to establish a visible throne on earth, is not warranted by Scripture. Christ was far from instructing his church to occupy the waiting attitude, to see his dazzling form come down through the sky. His instructions were the very reverse. He sent his people out to work, and to continue working, while the brightness of his constant presence would break upon their souls in visions of increasing glory, until at death they would open up their eyes upon his blessed face, and arise and go home.

Surely Jesus did not commit a work to his people that would cover years and centuries, and at the same time tell them to look daily for him to come and suspend operations.

After standing on the hill of Christ's ascension, Peter never once looked skyward for the coming of the Lord Jesus; or if he did, it was automatic, not rational; for the Lord had told him that he would die, and revealed the manner of his death. Paul looked not up to see Jesus coming down through the clouds; or if he did, it was against his better knowledge; for by inspiration he wrote . . . (Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand; let no man beguile you in any wise; for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed). 2 Thes. 2:1-3.

John looked not up to heaven to see Christ coming in his glorified body; or if he did, it was against reason; for God had given him a revelation of events that covered centuries yet future.

Some may tone up their lives with the fiery stimulant of expectancy; may hold

themselves ready every moment for an overawing surprise; may find supreme pleasure in cherishing a refined delusion; yet the joy is carnal; the faith is without foundation; the doctrine is superficial and unscriptural. All Scripture, that apparently favors pre-millenarianism, must be reconciled to the facts stated above, or suffer perversion.

The coming of Christ! How great the joy of those who realize his presence, unto whom he is becoming more and more real, upon whom the brightness of his face is breaking with increasing glory! This is growth in grace; progress of the soul in the enjoyment of God; transformation of life from glory to glory. To such the Lord Jesus is present with entrancing effect, while larger revelations of divine love, are craved, and brighter expressions of God's face expected, till the great unfolding of the glory of Jesus on the day of final judgment in the presence of heaven and earth.

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