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First Coming to Church Age to Second Coming



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #49 ~

"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders..." (Isaiah 9:6-7). *"As for you Bethlehem Ephratha, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel..."* (Micah 5:2-5a). These are *"1st coming – 2nd coming"* prophecies. To the person who wrote them and the people who initially read them, it would have seemed like these events would occur in the same time period. But that didn't happen. Now over 2500 years later, we can look back and see that these prophecies were to take place at two different times, at Christ's 1st coming and at His 2nd coming, with the church age in between.

Let's first look at Christ's 1st coming, and by reading Luke 1-2, we see that Mary, Joseph, Simeon and Anna, were all looking forward to the fulfillment of these prophesies about the Messiah. And lo and behold,

these four godly Jews literally see the baby Jesus, and see these predictions come true, at least part one. Then Jesus, this perfect God-man grows up, and thirty years later His ministry begins and many more prophecies about Him are fulfilled. In particular, there's Psalm 16, Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 accurately predicting that Jesus would suffer and die for the sins of man, and then be raised from the dead. Fifty days after His resurrection, this victorious Savior ascended into heaven to be with His Father. But most Jews weren't happy with Jesus, for they had wanted Him to be their King, but they didn't understand that He first needed to be their Savior. They also didn't understand that Christ's 1st coming work had been completed, that His mission was accomplished. Luke 2:11, John 1:29, John 17:4

It was during Jesus' ministry years that He had promised to build the church, instructing His disciples to preach the gospel and to go and make disciples, which has been taking place now for nearly 2000 years (Matthew 28:20). He also made it very clear to them that He'd be returning at the end of this church age – He wanted to make sure His disciples knew He was going to fulfill all His promises, particularly that He'd be coming back as the King. Zechariah 14:9, Matthew 24:3-41, Luke 19:11-15

Do you see that Jesus' disciples were thinking about these prophesies regarding Jesus' future Kingdom, for right before His ascension into heaven they ask Him, *"Lord, is it at this time that You are restoring the kingdom to Israel*" (Acts 1:6)? Then a little later in Acts 3:18-21, we read that Peter was preaching "*that His (God's) Christ would suffer* (1)... *repent and return, so your sins might be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the Lord* (2); *and that He may send Jesus... whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration"* (3). Peter and some of the other Jews were finally seeing the big picture, for in this passage the 1st phrase represents Christ's first coming, the 2nd phrase is the church age, and the 3rd phrase is Christ's second coming. The disciples knew that the Christ had come, and that they were to be His witnesses to the world, but they longed for their Lord and Savior to

return to reign as King over the earth.

Then there's 1 Corinthians 11:26, which commemorates the Lord's death, a verse many Christians read during their communion time, but it also gives this big-picture perspective. *"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup* (church age), *you proclaim the Lord's death* (1st coming), *until He comes* (2nd coming)". Can you see that our Lord wants to continually remind Christians of the past (Jesus dying for our sins), the present (Jesus building the church) and the future (Jesus reigning as King)?

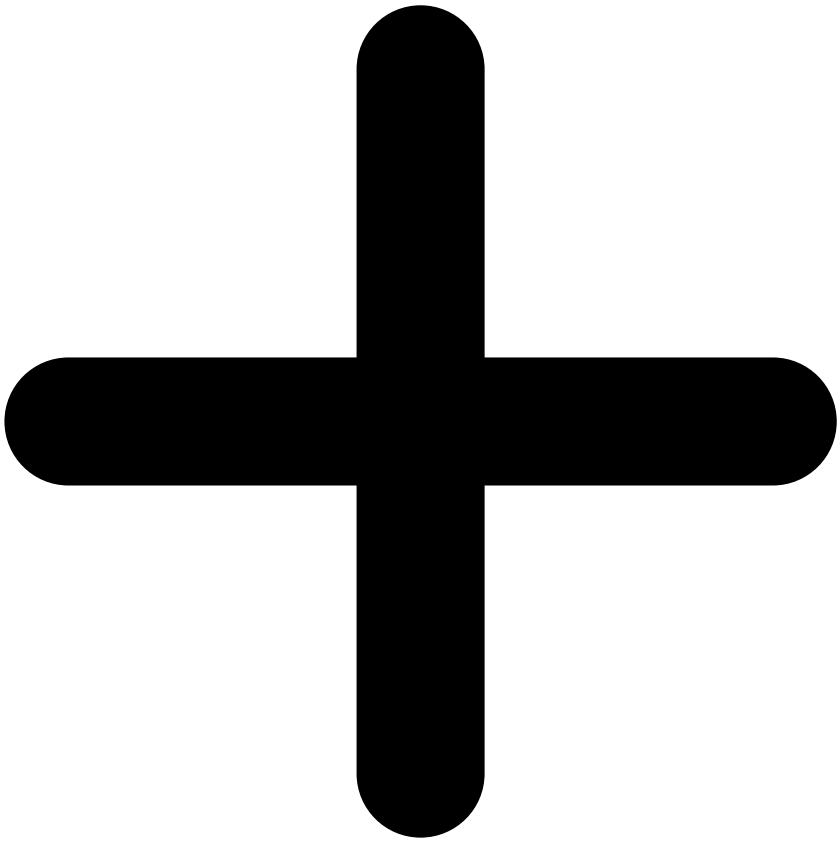
Now it's Christmastime 2017. To sum up, Jesus came as a baby, lived a perfect life, died a most purposeful death, was raised again, ascended into heaven, and since that time has been building His church. But the Jews are back in their land and therefore, we're living in the end times, which means it won't be long before Christ comes back. I am so excited to be alive at this particular time in history, at the end of this church age, knowing that our Lord may soon appear in the clouds to rapture us, suddenly and safely snatching us from earth so we can be at home with Him in heaven.

Do you realize that you are living between Christ's 1st and 2nd coming, during the church age, but more importantly at the very end of it? Do you see that this is your time to live for God, your one time on this earth to serve Him, and that Jesus has instructed you, *"Do business until I come back"* (Luke 19:13)? It won't be long before Christ returns, and part two of these *"1st coming – 2nd coming"* prophecies will come true, when Jesus will be King over the entire earth, bringing peace to this planet – and we will reign with Him for a 1000 years!

"Joy to the world, the Lord is come; let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing… Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns; let men their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the

sounding joy, repeat the sound joy… No more let sins and sorrows grow; nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found… He rules the world with truth and grace; and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love, and wonders of His love…”
– A Christmas Carol about the 2nd Coming of Christ

P.S. I just finished a very instructive and encouraging article: The Rapture of the Church.



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