

INTRODUCTION

One of the most solemn and yet most glorious truths revealed in the Bible is that of Christ's second coming, to complete the great work of redemption. To God's pilgrim people, so long left to sojourn in "the region and shadow of death," a precious, joy-inspiring hope is given in the promise of His appearing, who is "the resurrection and the life," to "bring home again His banished." The doctrine of the Second Advent is the very key-note of the Sacred Scriptures. From the day when the first pair (Adam and Eve) turned their sorrowing steps from Eden, the children of faith have waited the coming of the Promised One to break the destroyer's power and bring them again to the lost Paradise. ... Enoch, only the seventh in descent from them that dwelt in Eden, he who for three centuries on earth walked with his God, was permitted to behold from afar the coming of the Deliverer. "Behold," he declared, "the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all." The patriarch Job in the night of his affliction exclaimed with unshaken trust: "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:...in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." (Ellen White, 1991).

Over the years men have asked various questions regarding Christ's second coming. What signs will precede His coming? And what will the actual event be

like? These and many more are the questions that this discussion aims at addressing.

BACKGROUND

A. CHRIST'S SECOND COMING THROUGH THE AGES

One theme that is so consistently profound in the Holy Scriptures is the theme of the second return of our Lord Jesus Christ to this earth. While His coming is emphatically spoken of in the New Testament, it is no secret that it has been the theme of all ages. From the time God first gave the promise of the coming Messiah (Genesis 3:15), the theme of Christ's second coming to planet earth has been the hope of all ages. The Patriarchs and all of God's children through the centuries have looked, not only for the first advent of Jesus Christ but for His second coming too. Christ's second coming will register an end to the excruciating sufferings of God's faithful children.

As already mentioned, the theme of Christ's second coming has been the resounding topic all through the ages.

i. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Aside the many Old Testament bible texts that give precise descriptions of Christ's first Advent (coming), there are many more that speak about Christ's second return. Job, a true servant of God

spoke of Christ's second coming when in great anticipation He said in Job 19:25-26, that, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:" (KJV). Malachi 4:5 Calls it "the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:" Other Bible texts in the Old Testament include; Joel 2:1, 11, 31, Jeremiah 46:10, Isaiah 2:12, 13, Zechariah 14:8 and many more. All these texts reveal to us the theme of Christ's second coming in the Old Testament.

ii. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament has probably the highest number of references to the second coming of Christ. Even before Christ ascended to heaven He gave His disciples hope of His second return (John 14:1-5). After His death, resurrection and ascension to heaven the theme of Christ's second coming became the core message to the gospel preached by the Apostles (Acts 3:18-21) and the hope of all those that were faced with the decision of giving up their lives as sweet smelling offerings to Christ.

iii. IN THE MIDDLE AGES

In the middle ages, just as in earlier times the church of God longed for the second return of Jesus Christ to save them from the hands of their enemies and sin. “His (Jesus Christ) coming to earth a second time, as King of Kings, was foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament church, and this became a recurring theme in the New Testament church. Through centuries of persecution and martyrdom, the hope of Christ’s return strengthened the Christians in the church of the Dark Ages. The reformers believed the prophecies of this event and recorded their assurance that time would not be long before Jesus returned.” – Church Heritage Manual.

iv. IN OUR TIME

In our times too, men that have developed a firm relationship with Jesus Christ are longing for His second return. The worrying state of today’s society, the plight of the youths and recurring fearful political and religious events all proclaim to us that the return of Christ is near at hand. Those that love Jesus Christ to obedience are daily pleading for the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. They are tired of this wicked world and they long to be taken home.

Jesus said before that, “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 14:3 KJV. Jesus is surely coming in our time as we shall see in the coming sections of our discussion. Portentous signs are thicken all around, Jesus is coming and the million dollar question is always “Are you ready to receive Him?”

SIGNS OF CHRIST’S SECOND COMING

The signs of Christ’s second coming are clearly stated in both the New and Old Testament of the Holy Bible. While they appear scattered in the Old Testament, Jesus Christ Himself clearly outlined them in an almost exact sequence in the New Testament (Matthew 24, Luke 21, 2 Timothy 3:1-5 etcetera). Below we are going to consider a few of the major signs that we are witnessing in our days.

It should be stated that the signs of Christ’s second return as far as the Bible is concerned are many. Most of which have already occurred. Signs like the Great Lisbon Earthquake of 1755 (Matthew 24:29), the Darkening of the Sun in 1780 (Matthew 24:29) and the falling of the Stars in 1833 (Matthew 24:29, Revelation 6:12, 13) are all such signs that have already met their exact fulfillment. Hence we are going to consider a few that are current in our times and are meeting their rapid fulfillment as the day of the Lord draws near.

A. DECEPTION

When the disciples gathered upon the Mount of Olives to ask Jesus Christ about the signs of His second return, it is astounding that Christ did not go straight away to what they expected to hear. He said in Matthew 24:4 “Watch out that no one deceives you.” – NIV translation. In this very statement Jesus Christ made it very clear that deception was going to be one of the characterizing sign of His second return. Today men are deceiving and being deceived. People are deceived even on the point of Christ’s second coming and how it will happen. Some suggest that Jesus will come secretly and “steal” away those that are righteous. They call it the “Secret Rapture”. But this teaching is not according to the word of God, the Bible, as we shall see later on.

B. NATURAL DISASTERS

Another sign that Jesus gave for His second coming is that of Natural Disasters. He said to His disciples in Luke 21:11, “There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.” – NIV translation. After the great Lisbon earthquake of 1755, many great earthquakes are being experienced in diverse places of the world. Men are starving to death in many poor African countries and world over, with a great many dying from incurable diseases such as AIDS, EBOLA, and etcetera. There have always been

earthquakes, famines and diseases, but the frequency and intensity with which we are experiencing them in our times suggests plainly that Jesus Christ's promise of His second coming is nearing fulfillment.

C. INCREASE IN KNOWLEDGE

Daniel too was shown things that would characterize the end times. It is written in Daniel 12:4 "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." – KJV translation. Knowledge of understanding the Bible has increased in our time. Thousands of religious and circular books are being published today. Science too has advanced to unimaginable levels. Life has literally been turned into a world of instants due to increasing knowledge and discoveries; Instant foods, instant money transfers, instant education, instant service deliveries.

D. MORAL DECAY

Perhaps one of the most clear of all signs as it affects directly our homes and societies. Jesus said in Matthew 24: 12 "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." The increase in sin loving men has almost squeezed out completely every element of love in the hearts of humanity. What could be worse than a son drowning his own mother in a

pool of her own cold blood or the story of a young girl that sinks a copper bullet in the skull of her girl-friend because of a man?

In fact, the Apostle Paul in the bible book of 2 Timothy 3:1-5 has this to say, “But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.” – NIV translation. This is an exact description of the times that we are living in. Paul through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was spot on.

E. WARS

This is yet another striking sign of the second coming of Jesus Christ. “But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end [is] not by and by. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:” – Luke 21: 9, 10 KJV translation. The current commotions around the world would rob us of much time to consider in detail. They are so explicit. They speak of the coming Lord and King, Jesus Christ!

F. FALSE PROPHETS

Last of the signs we shall consider in our discussion are false prophets.

On that mountain Christ mentioned this sign clearly. “And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many...Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christ’s, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.” – Matthew 24: 3, 4; 23-26 KJV translation.

HIS SECOND COMING

Much controversy has risen over the manner in which Jesus will come. This can probably be attributed to the deceptions that Jesus spoke of as being among the signs of His second coming. Whatever the case however, the Bible has only one teaching regarding the manner in which Jesus Christ will return. The Bible dramatizes it in a manner so beautiful to the waiting faithful ones.

It will be a scene of such amazing splendor. In panoramic view the saints shall behold Christ their Lord return with thousands of celestial Angels adorning that

glorious trip. Hallelujah shouts all over, trumpets blowing in unmistakable perfection and superbly coordinated harmonious melodies will attend that great event.

Below are some of the characteristics of Christ's second return. Jesus' second coming will be;

A. UNIVERSAL

When Jesus returns, the whole world will know it. Unlike what the false prophets say, "...Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers;..." Matthew 24:26 KJV, Jesus Himself makes it clear that, "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." – Matthew 24:27 KJV. John also makes it clear in Revelation 1:7 when He says, "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."

B. AUDIBLE

The coming of Christ will be audible. 1 Thessalonians 4: 16 KJV says, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"

C. VISIBLE

The second of Jesus will be Visible. Revelation 1:7 says every eye will see Him. Job in anticipation also says, “Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.” – Job 19:27 KJV translation.

D. REAL

When Jesus comes the second time it will be as real as it was when He came the first time. When the disciples stood gazing up witnessing His ascension to heaven an angel appeared to them “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.” – Acts 1:11 KJV translation.

E. IT WILL BE GLORIOUS

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” – Titus 1:13

F. CHRIST WILL NOT TOUCH THE GROUND

At His second coming Jesus Christ will not touch the ground. For this time He is not coming as a Baby in some animal’s house in Bethlehem but as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. At His second return Christ is coming as Judge of this world (John 5:27). 2 Thessalonians 4: 17 says,

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” The righteous will meet their God in the air, not on earth’s sinful ground.

G. THE DEAD IN CHRIST WILL RESURRECT

This perhaps is the most long awaited moment of the second return of Jesus Christ. When the dead righteous that sleep in Christ shall be resurrected by Jesus Himself, they will rise to meet their loved ones they had been separated from for ages, what a wonderful day of reunion it will be! “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:” – 1 Thessalonians 4:16 KJV. “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” – 1 Corinthians 15:52 KJV. Then they shall ascend to heaven with Christ where they will reign a thousand years – Revelation 20:5 KJV “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.” I, Muunda Mudenda, long to be there!

CONCLUSION

I find the message of the second coming of Jesus Christ to be one of the most amazing of truths in the sacred scriptures, the Holy Bible. It is a hope instilling gospel, a pain relieving reality and patience sustaining message. Men in all ages have waited for this glorious moment but have not seen it in their time. How blessed we are to live in the times that the Bible clearly said we shall witness the coming of Jesus Christ. Almost all signs that were given us to watch for have met their exact fulfillment. The few that are remaining to be fulfilled are just in the same manner meeting their fulfillment in quick succession. What more evidence do I, Muunda Mudenda, need to be sure that Jesus Christ is coming soon? We do not know the day or hour but we can be sure Jesus is coming and the million dollar question is always, “Am I ready to receive him when He comes?”

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