

Introduction

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

The study of the prophetic Scriptures is a rewarding study. It is rewarding whether one is viewing the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures that pointed to the first advent of our Lord Jesus Christ; or whether one is viewing the Scriptures that point to the events that will bring about the second advent of our Lord, to establish His Kingdom upon this earth.

All that was prophetic in the Old Testament Scriptures, regarding our Lord's first advent upon this earth, began to be historic with His birth in 4 or 5 B.C., and by the time of His ascension into heaven they had all been fulfilled. Even so much of the Old Testament, as well as vast portions of the New Testament, prophesy of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and His second advent. One day these prophecies will also be historic. *God cannot lie.*

Prophecy is not an easy subject. Before prophecy is fulfilled, many of the events prophesied may seem to be contradictory. It may seem that all of the events prophesied cannot possibly occur as prophesied. There are many mysteries. This facet of prophecy puzzled the

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rabbinical scholars, who lived before our Lord's first advent, as well as many who lived at the time of our Lord's earthly ministry. They simply could not put the events prophesied in terms that they could understand. The lesson for us to learn from this is, despite their difficulties, every prophecy of the first advent of our Lord was fulfilled completely and perfectly. This should strengthen our trust in the absolute truth of the Scriptures and expand our view of God's prophetic Word.

The Scriptures declare, *The just shall live by faith*. They also say, *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*. Faith is believing *that what God has promised, He is able also to perform*. This makes the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ a primary focus for all believers, along with their judicial standing before the Lord, as well as their heavenly inheritance.

Paul wrote Timothy, *But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing* (II Timothy 4:5-8).

This text shows us believers should live their lives in the expectancy of our Lord's soon return. There is *a crown of righteousness* for all believers who desire that day. Does this mean we all understand the sequence of events that will lead to His coming? No. It means that when the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the establishment of His Kingdom shall have

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taken place, what may have been unclear to us with our imperfect prophetic vision (yet believed by us), will find its perfect and complete fulfillment exactly as prophesied.

As we approach the wonderful subject of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must prepare ourselves for the study. There can be no question in our minds about the authority of the prophecies. This is of primary importance. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God...* Thus the source of prophetic utterance is not in the prophet, nor is it in Christian tradition, but in the Holy Spirit of God, Who cannot lie! So when we come across prophecies that seem to be contradictory, we must remember, it is impossible for God to lie. The problem is not with the prophecy, but with our lack of understanding or lack of sufficient information to be able to understand. God's Word is true whether we understand it or not. (Incidentally, this applies to the study of all Scripture, not just prophecy.)

In our study of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the first chapters of this book will not deal specifically with the second coming. They will provide us with information that is absolutely essential to a proper approach to the subject. They will provide lessons on the structure of prophetic utterance; lessons on the many prophetic overviews recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures; and lessons on some basic rules of interpretation, which include God's revelation of Himself. These overviews, through the mysteries of the Scriptures, project the entire prophetic scene to those who can discern them.

One such overview is found in the twenty-third chapter of the book of Leviticus. It speaks of the Sabbath and of seven feasts of the Jews, most of which were observed as Sabbaths. The feasts span events from the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of our Lord, through the church

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age to the first resurrection, the second coming of our Lord, and the establishment of His Kingdom upon this earth.

Another important overview is in the vision of the seventy weeks of Daniel. This vision supplies us with an important time frame for the first advent of our Lord as well as the second advent of our Lord. Within the framework of this vision is God's prophetic clock of events, which span the period of time known in Scripture as the *times of the Gentiles*.

This time began with the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar in the sixth century before Christ. It extended through seventy years of captivity in Babylon until the first year of the reign of Cyrus. This was the starting point for the vision of the seventy weeks. Thus, with the decree of Cyrus, the seventy weeks began to unfold unto the crucifixion of Christ.

Then, interestingly, the last week of the sequence was delayed unto the time of the first resurrection, when *the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air...* This will be followed immediately by the revelation of the antichrist; the beginning of the great tribulation period; and the culmination of these events with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to destroy the fourth world empire. After which, He will establish His Kingdom upon this earth.

We make no claim to understand all of the prophecies relating to the second coming of Jesus Christ. However if we learn the structure of prophetic Scripture and recognize the major prophetic events, and apply all of the rules for the interpretation of Scripture as well as specific rules for the prophetic Scriptures, we will become as well informed as it is possible to be about

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events that are promised, but have not yet been fulfilled.

Throughout a lifetime of studying the Word of God, my understanding of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ has come from many sources. Some of these I can remember and some of them I do not remember. Consequently throughout this study I will document sources to the best of my ability; but at seventy-five years of age, and over fifty-four years of studying the Word of God, commentators, theologians, and expositors, I possess knowledge from sources that have long since been forgotten. When I make a direct quotation, I will cite the source. However when I deal with information that has been gleaned over a period of time, no attempt will be made to document it, apart from its Scriptural veracity. This is as it should be. Remember, Paul wrote to Timothy ... *the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

At the close of this Introduction, I would like to thank Megan Nolan for editing the book for me. I would also like to thank my wife, Jo Ann, for her patience. The only place I have taken her in the two years that it has taken to write this book is a speedy trip to California to visit my mother before her death.

Dale Andre, D.D., 2008

