

CHAPTER 4

SO WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE SECOND COMING OF MESSIAH?

After the time of trouble prophesied for the last days of this age, the Messiah Yeshua will return. There will then be the time of great blessing and renewal on the earth which the Hebrew prophets spoke about. This time will be the worldwide reign of the Messiah from restored Jerusalem, which will follow His second coming.

One common reaction to the idea of a ‘second coming’ is to say, ‘Was it because Jesus did not succeed the first time that he’s got to have another go? It doesn’t say anything in the Bible about the Messiah coming twice.’

Rabbi Kaplan states:

‘The main task of the Messiah was to bring the world back to God and to abolish all war, suffering and injustice from the world. Clearly, Jesus did not accomplish this. In order to get around this failure on the part of Jesus, Christians invented the doctrine of the ‘Second Coming’. All the prophecies that Jesus did not fulfil the first time are supposed to be taken care of the second time around. However the Jewish Bible offers absolutely no evidence to support the Christian doctrine of a ‘Second Coming.’ (‘The Real Messiah’).

Actually there is evidence in the Jewish Bible to support the idea of two comings of the Messiah. The Hebrew Prophets and some rabbinic interpretations point to two different portraits of the Messiah. Some Jewish writings speak of Messiah ben (son of) Joseph, who suffers and is humiliated as Joseph was at the hands of his brothers (Genesis 37-45), and Messiah ben David who reigns and is exalted as King David was.

The prophecies in the Tenach on this subject appear to be saying things which are contradictory. For example, the Prophet Isaiah alone presents the following difficulties. Chapter 2 speaks of one who reigns with power from Jerusalem, all nations going to hear the word of the Lord and as a result living in peace together. Chapter 53 speaks of one who is despised and rejected of men, having our iniquities laid on him, when he is cut off from the land of the living, executed with transgressors, buried and yet living to see the ‘travail of his soul.’

Chapter 11 speaks of the future condition on the earth associated with the end of days when the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, returning to conditions of Eden with even the animals being vegetarian and not devouring each other. Chapter 24 speaks of the future condition also associated with the end of days in which the earth is devastated, cities are destroyed and people scorched with few survivors. This apparent contradiction can be explained by two comings of the Messiah, firstly to suffer and die as a sacrifice for sin, as prophesied in Isaiah 53, then to return in power and glory to reign on earth as prophesied in Isaiah 2. Before His coming there will be a time of trouble and devastation on earth, prophesied in Isaiah 24, to be followed by the glorious time of His Messianic rule, prophesied in Isaiah 11.

As we have already seen, Jewish writers have sought to explain this difficulty by speaking of two Messiahs - Messiah ben Joseph, who suffers and is humiliated before being exalted as Joseph was and Messiah ben David, who reigns as a triumphant king as David reigned. Another explanation for the apparent contradiction between verses which speak of the Messiah coming in glory or in humiliation is this:

‘Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi noted the apparent contradiction in the following two verses. It is written: ‘...and behold one like a son of man (Moshiach / Messiah) comes with the clouds of heaven’ (Daniel 7.13). But it also says: ‘Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king shall come to you, righteous and saviour is he, a pauper and riding on an ass’ (Zechariah 9.9). The verses may be reconciled: If they are worthy, Moshiach will appear with the clouds. If not, he will be a pauper and ride on an ass.’ (Talmud – Sukkoth 52a)

In other words, how the Messiah appears depends on the spiritual condition of the generation when he comes.

A better explanation of this contradiction is to recognise that these verses do not speak of two different Messiahs or two possible ways in which the Messiah will come, but of one Messiah who comes on two different occasions with two different purposes. This points to Yeshua as the Messiah who has already come to fulfil the prophecy of the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53) and who will come again to fulfil the prophecy of the Reigning King (Isaiah 2.1-4).

Far from failing when He came the first time, Jesus succeeded 100% in fulfilling the clear and specific prophecies of the Suffering Servant Messiah. He

came by virgin birth (prophesied by Isaiah 7.14, fulfilled in Matthew 1.18-25) to be born in Bethlehem (prophesied by Micah 5.2, fulfilled in Matthew 2.1-12). He performed miracles (prophesied in Isaiah 61.1, fulfilled in Matthew 9.35) and taught in parables (prophesied in Psalm 78.2, fulfilled in Matthew 13.34). He was put to death by crucifixion (prophesied in Psalm 22.16 and Zechariah 12.10, fulfilled in Luke 23.33), buried in a rich man's tomb (prophesied in Isaiah 53.9, fulfilled in Matthew 27.57-60) and rose again from the dead (prophesied in Psalm 16.10-11, fulfilled in Luke 24.5-6). He died as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world (Isaiah 53.6; 1 Corinthians 15.3-5). The message of the Gospel has been preached to people all over the world (Isaiah 45.22-23, Matthew 28.18-20). His sacrificial death for the sins of the world took place before the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70 (Daniel 9.26; Luke 19.41-44).

He will also succeed 100% in fulfilling the as yet unfulfilled prophecies of the Reigning King Messiah.

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