



Messiah: His Glorious Appearance Imminent

In a previous tract we saw the scriptural outline of Messiah's redemptive career. According to it, He comes in humiliation, entering the world by virgin birth, and allows Himself to be slain for the redemption of all who will accept His atonement. After His resurrection He ascends to the throne of God and awaits the time when Israel will repudiate the national sin of rejecting Him and will accept Him wholeheartedly.

We have also seen that Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth made His first appearance on scheduled time. In fulfillment of the Old Testament prediction He was cut off and had nothing. After His resurrection He ascended to the right hand of the throne of God where He has been throughout the entire Christian Dispensation, awaiting the time for the Jewish people to accept Him as the Lord and Messiah.

It is now proper for us to investigate the Scriptures to ascertain the events that will transpire immediately before and at His second coming. In the first place, let us examine Messiah's second advent according to the Old Testament: Throughout the Scriptures there is constantly sounded the note of triumph in regard to His coming and delivering Israel from her position of servitude and bondage. Since these predictions were not fulfilled at His first coming we may be absolutely certain that they will be accomplished when He makes His second advent.

For instance, Moses, in impersonating King Messiah, declared in the “national anthem” of Deuteronomy 32:39-43:

See now that I, even I, am he,
And there is no god with me:
I kill, and I make alive;
I wound, and I heal;
And there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
For I lift up my hand to heaven,
And say, As I live for ever,
If I whet my glittering sword,
And my hand take hold on judgment:
I will render vengeance to mine adversaries,
And will recompense them that hate me.
I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.
And my sword shall devour flesh;
With the blood of the slain and the captives,
From the head of the leaders of the enemy.
Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people:

For he will avenge the blood of his servants,
And will render vengeance to his adversaries,
And will make expiation for his land, for his people.”

When we study this passage in its context, we see that the time will come which is termed “the day of their calamity” — namely, Israel's. When their strength is gone, God says that He will intervene, for vengeance belongs to Him. If this entire passage is studied in the light of other statements from Moses and the Prophets, it is seen that Israel will be oppressed by the nations of earth and will be reduced to the direst circumstances imaginable. In the critical moment before she is completely defeated in the final conflict, God appears on the scene in the person of King Messiah and routs her enemies, delivering His Chosen People.

Another presentation of our Lord after He has conquered a hostile world appears in the last four verses of Psalm 24. In this glorious passage the author saw King Messiah as He will majestically step forward, marching to the city of Jerusalem after He has with a smashing blow conquered His foes. The sacred writer, realizing the entire situation, shouts to the inhabitants of Jerusalem to welcome their King and speaks of their receiving Him in terms of the doors and the gates through which the people anciently entered the city:

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory will come in.” (vs. 7)

Very dramatically he asks, “Who is the King of glory?” Without waiting for a reply he declares:

Jehovah strong and mighty,
Jehovah mighty in battle.” (vs. 8)

Again in this wonderful poem he shouts to the inhabitants of Jerusalem to accept their approaching Monarch (vs. 9). Once more he inquires, “Who is this King of glory?” Again he answers his own question by saying,

“Jehovah of hosts,
His is the King of glory.” (vs. 10)

In this poem the psalmist as a herald on the mountain top shouts to the people of the city for them to welcome their victorious, conquering King.

We see another portrait of King Messiah in action as He goes against His enemies. This scene is found in Psalm 45:3-5:

Gird thy sword upon they thigh, O mighty one,
Thy glory and thy majesty.
And in thy majesty ride on prosperously,
Because of truth and meekness and righteousness:
And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

Thine arrows are sharp;
The peoples fall under thee;
They are in the heart of the king's enemies.”

Here the psalmist sees a situation arising in which the people of Israel will be downtrodden and oppressed notwithstanding the fact that their lives exemplify the virtues of truth, meekness, and righteousness. Responding to the prophet's call, Messiah goes into action, slays all His enemies, and marches forth to victory. After this conquest, as we see in verses 6-8, King Messiah mounts the throne of David and reigns from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

In vision Isaiah saw King Messiah appearing on the eastern horizon, and marching from His conquest at Bozrah in Edom on His way to Jerusalem. In order to convey to his auditors a vivid picture of the revelation, the prophet gave us the message in the form of a dialogue between the victorious Messiah and himself (Isaiah 63:1-6):

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the peoples there was no man with me: yea, I trod them in mine anger, and trampled them in my wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my wrath, it upheld me. And I trod down the peoples in mine anger, and made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.”

This conqueror marching in the greatness of His strength is, according to Himself, the one who speaks in righteousness and who is mighty to save. The reason for His garments being besprinkled with blood is that He has been in mortal combat with His enemies in the region of Bozrah. From this vivid description it is evident that He has slain His enemies and conquered others who submit to Him. His explanation for this conquest is that the day of vengeance is in His heart, and the year of His redeemed has come. There will come a time for God to take vengeance on the enemies of Israel and to redeem them from their sorrows. This picture in Isaiah 63 vividly sets forth Messiah's conquests.

Another graphic picture of His coming is given in the third chapter of Habakkuk's prophecy. In this wonderful revelation we see King Messiah coming in the strength of His glory and power and slaying all His enemies. His sudden appearance upon earth confounds His enemies and, as it were, throws the whole physical universe out of gear. The prophet's poetic language concerning the disorders in the physical realm is but a graphic description of the great changes that will take place when Messiah appears in behalf of His people.

In the second place let us now investigate Messiah's second coming as set forth in the New Testament.

John the Baptist heralded the advent of Jesus by speaking of the sudden appearance of Messiah and of His being like a man who winnows his wheat, gathering the grain into the garner but burning the chaff with unquenchable fire. Thus John spoke of a day of wrath and vengeance.

The Lord Jesus Christ when He was here upon earth sounded the same note. On different occasions, He spoke of this time of unparalleled wrath when God will pour out His judgments upon the world.

That there is a moral necessity for this period known as the Tribulation is clear from the fact that a righteous God must punish the evildoers. To every informed person today it is abundantly evident that the world is on a toboggan, sliding down to lower depths of immorality and sin. When Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities of the Plains made such a plunge into the depths of degradation, God's righteousness was stirred. By a miraculous judgment He overthrew those cities and their civilization. Whenever the modern world has reached the point that God can no longer tolerate its wickedness, there is but one thing that He, a righteous Supreme Being, can do—namely, to send His purging judgments upon the world. Such is the prophetic picture which is presented in the Scriptures.

Will true believers pass through this Tribulation: Whether or not the church of Jesus Christ will go into the Tribulation is a question of debate in certain circles. Some very earnest brethren believe that they see absolute proof in the Scriptures that the church will enter it; on the other hand there are brethren who are just as honest and who are positive that the Lord will take His people out of the world before that time. Of course, both positions, being so diametrically opposed cannot be correct.

Will the church pass through the Tribulation: According to my understanding of the Scriptures, she will not. Prior to the Tribulation the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God. The dead in Christ will rise first. The saints living at that time will be caught up together with those who have been raised to meet the Lord in the air. This teaching is found in I Thessalonians 4:14-18.

After having discussed this point, the Apostle Paul continued his theme in the fifth chapter of this Epistle by saying, "but concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." From the connection we can see that Paul associated the doctrine of the Lord's coming and the rapture of the church with that of the day of the Lord. But does he imply that the church will go into any part or through the Tribulation? This question is answered, to my satisfaction at least, in I Thessalonians 5:9 which reads as follows:

For God appointed us not unto wrath,
but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Here Paul presented the case both negatively and positively. The Lord did not appoint His people unto wrath, *i.e.*, to experience the wrath of which He was speaking. On the contrary, He promised exemption for them by delivering them from it, not allowing them to enter that period. When these words are taken at their face value, it is immediately apparent that here is a definite

promise that the Lord will not allow His church to enter the Tribulation but rather will take her out of the world before His judgments begin to fall upon the earth.

But what of the revelation of the Lord? When God's purging judgments shall have exterminated the wicked from the earth, the Lord will burst through the heavens with radiance of glory and will appear upon the earth. At that time every eye shall see Him — even those who pierced Him, and they shall mourn because of Him.

As intimated in the Old Testament, when He comes thus in power and glory, He will appear to the remnant of Israel and will deliver it from the oppressors.

When one reads the signs of the times and studies the present chaotic world conditions in every realm — political, economic, social, religious — he is forced to the conclusion that we are living in ominous times and that a righteous God cannot long withhold His judgments from the earth.

To you, my friend, let me appeal that you accept the Lord Jesus of Nazareth as your own personal Savior and Messiah.