

The Comings of Christmas

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Introduction

In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, C.S. Lewis' masterpiece of children's literature, Mr. Tumnus the faun lamented to Lucy about the land of Narnia: "Always winter and never Christmas, think of that!" Narnia, under the thumb of the White Witch, was cold, lifeless, and apparently with no hope. Winter in Narnia without Christmas meant bondage without deliverance, fear with no hope of joy. Without the birth of Christ, there would have been no Christmas and despair would have overwhelmed humanity. But because it did happen, 2,000 years ago, this new year, the ice of winter is thawing and the eternal spring of new life has breaking through. No wonder Paul in 2 Cor. 9:15 exclaimed: "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"

I. Christmas Celebrates Christ's First Coming

Why did He come?

A. To Reveal God (Jn. 1:18) - *we needed to know what God was like*. Since we could not go to Him in heaven to find out, He came to earth to show us. [**Ilo** - Ants in sugar jar, want them to stop, but can't communicate; will have to become ant to tell them]. *Incarinate* = "in flesh." What is God like? - Like Jesus: e.g., God is compassionate - Jesus wept (Jn. 11:35-36), cares about children - Jesus welcomed and blessed them (Matt. 18:1-2), and forgiving - Jesus forgave prostitutes and thieves (Lk. 7:40-50; 23:39-43).

B. To Redeem Man (1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:9) - *we needed to be free*. Since were in bondage to sin (Jn. 8:34), Jesus had to be subject to the same conditions of sinners even to the suffering of our death (Heb. 2:14). He had to exchange His righteousness for our unrighteousness (2Cor. 5:21).

C. To Rescue Men (Heb. 2:15) - *we needed to have victory*. Satan is the spiritual father of all men from birth (Jn. 8:44), and blinds them to the truth of God (2 Cor. 4:4). The whole world lies under his control (1 Jn. 5:19). But Jesus came to destroy his hold (1 Jn. 3:8), and to transfer believers to His own spiritual kingdom (Col. 1:13).

D. To Resurrect Men (1 Cor. 15:52-53) - *we needed to have hope*. We are made of the perishable dust of the earth; and so was Christ's body (1 Cor. 15:47). But no more! And as He is now, so we one day shall be (1 Jn. 3:2). I once saw a funeral home covered with Christmas lights. Initially, I thought it out of place, but actually they may be most appropriate there. Christmas reminds us that a cemetery is not end of human life, that there will be a resurrection after death - either to eternal reward or eternal punishment.

It was Christ's first coming that made possible such a resurrection, and His Second Coming that will bring it to pass.

II. Christmas Confirms Christ's Second Coming

The prophets presented the two comings of Jesus as one complete package. We should not be surprised that they did not divide these historic events, since only events subsequent to Jesus' birth were to explain how the divine plan has two parts. What may be surprising to us that the prophecies concerning the Second Coming are 100 to 1 for the first coming - 100 x as much! And if the prophets

had a pretty good batting average with the first coming - and they've got more swings with the second - how certain do you think they are of scoring a home run!?

A. The Two Comings in One Context

Heb. 9:26-28 - He came to be judged for men; He is coming to be the Judge of men (cf. Jn. 5:25-27).

Lk. 1:68-79 - He came to redeem His People (spiritually); He is coming to restore His People (nationally)

Isa. 9:6-7 - He is the Child that was given; the Son that was born; yet His shoulders are to bear the rule of the world.

Mic. 5:2-3 He will be born in little Bethlehem; but He will rule the world (after reuniting Israel).

B. The Timing of the Two Comings

Gal. 4:4 - came at proper time (universal language, all roads led to Rome, Messianic expectation at record level, Gentile dissatisfaction with their gods)

Acts 1:6-7; Matt. 24:36, 39b; Mk. 13:14-33 - coming at proper time (Tribulation persecution, universal deception, attack on Jerusalem - Zech. 12:2-3, 8-9; 14:1-5).

III. Christmas Controls the Christian's Conduct

What is this talk of the Christmas *spirit*? The only Spirit connected with Christmas that the Bible knows is the Holy Spirit Who He sent to control our lives. Our lives are tempted by our fleshly desires, our lustful eyes, and our pride of life (1 Jn. 2:16). This is especially so during the Christmas season when we are besieged by commercialism. We need to put on the full armor of God (Eph. 6:10-20), and walk by the Spirit so that we will not be forced by the flesh to fulfill its desires (Gal. 5:16, 25-26). This we need to do because the hour is late and the coming of Christ is near (Phil. 4:5; Rom. 13:11-14).

Conclusion

A certain family had a large grandfather clock that occupied a place of prominence in their home. Every chime of the clock could be heard from any room and every member of the house had learned to depend on the old clock to keep time for their daily schedules. Because of its age the clock eventually began to show small signs of wear; then, one night, as the family had settled down to bed, the wear turned into a serious defect. The clock began chiming, but did not stop on the appointed hour. The little girl in the family listened from her bed to the chimes - one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen ... and then ran to her parent's room and said excitedly: "Mama, Daddy, its later than its *ever been before!*" It is later than it has ever been before, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed (Rom. 13:11b), and conversely, judgment for those who have not come to Christ when He comes. If you have not yet come to Him for the salvation He freely offers to you, why not come this Christmas, even today - this moment - and receive the greatest Christmas gift - Christ Himself. Then, as you join in the celebration for His first coming, you will be prepared for His Second.