

# First Coming & Second Coming

*R. Stanley*

Christmas is the most celebrated festival in traditional Christendom. It's about the First Coming of Christ. Undoubtedly this was an unique event in human history. The next most important event in God's prophetic Calendar would be the Second Coming of Christ. Among the four Gospels which describe the earthly life of Christ, only two of them, namely, Matthew and Luke, record the Birth of Christ. But the Second Coming of Christ is mentioned in detail in all the four Gospels. For example, see Mt 24,25; Mk 13; Lk 21; Jn 14:1-3. There's no direct reference to Christmas in Acts or the Epistles of the New Testament; but these books abound with references to Christ's Return. The number of prophecies in the Bible about His First Coming is a little over 100, whereas there are about 300 prophecies about His Second Coming. These factual observations are not to make Christmas any less significant, but to make us understand which is more important to think about at this period of history.

## **Carols**

Carol Rounds start as early as November! There's even competition as to which Carol Party visits Christian

homes first, because the early bird gets the worm! Carols are so sadly commercialised. Why wake up sleeping Christians to tell them that Christ is born? They know it for years. It's a meaningless exercise. If at all, you still want to go on Carol Rounds, tell the Christians that Christ is coming again, surely and soon, and urge them to get ready. Leave with them some sound literature on the Second Coming of Christ to get them ready. (My 20-page pamphlet, titled, *Are you Ready to Meet your God?* will be appropriate.) Greet the families with the word, *Maranatha* (= the Lord comes), as the early Christians did (1 Cor 16:22). Add this word of greeting in Christmas Cards also.

The first Carol Party was that of the Angels (Lk 2:9-14). The next was that of the Shepherds. They went everywhere heralding the Glad Tidings (v17). We can call these Shepherds as the first Evangelists. The Christmas Season is a wonderful opportunity to reach out to our non-Christian neighbours. I urge the Churches to take advantage of this festive Season. The religious India respects festivals. Only thing, don't carry your collection boxes while visiting non-Christian homes!

## **Angels**

Angels played a vital role in the Christmas story. The first angelic appearance was to Mary, and it was Angel Gabriel (Lk 1:26). Next it was to Joseph, and the Angel's name is not mentioned (Mt 1:20). The angels then appeared to the Shepherds (Lk 2:9-13). There were also subsequent angelic visits to Joseph (Mt 2:13,19). Angels ministered to Christ after He was fiercely tempted of the devil (Mt 4:11; Mk 1:13). An angel strengthened Him in the Garden of Gethsemane (Lk 22:43).

During the Second Coming of Christ the angels will again play a crucial role. At the end of the age the angels will function as the reapers to separate the children of God, the good seeds, from the children of the devil, the tares (Mt 13:37-40). The holy angels will be with the Son of Man when He sits on His Throne to separate the sheep and the goats on the basis of acts of charity (Mt 25:31-33). The mighty angels of the Lord shall be with Him when He comes from Heaven to punish those who obey not the Gospel (2 Thess 1:7,8). Read Revelation 7 to 18 to observe the dramatic role the angels play in executing God's judgment through the breaking of seals, blowing the trumpets, sending out plagues, and pouring out from the bowls of God's wrath.

Between the First Advent and the Second Advent of Christ, the angels of God function as "ministering spirits" to those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal salvation (Heb 1:14). They serve as our guardians (Psa 34:7), especially for our children (Mt 18:30). They guide us (Acts 8:26; 10:3-6,22), encourage us (Acts 27:23-25), and help us in critical situations (Mt 28:2; Mk 16:3-5; Acts 5:19). They rejoice in Heaven over the fruits of our evangelistic labours (Lk 15:10). They watch whether reverential order is maintained in our Church gatherings. Apostle Paul points this out in the context of headcovering by women (1 Cor 11:10). The Seraphim in Isaiah's vision covered their faces and feet while worshipping the Lord (Isa 6:1-3). The angels are witnesses against any partiality shown by the Church leadership (1 Tim 5:21). The angels at times visit us as strangers to test our hospitality (Heb 13:2; Gen 18:1-19:1; Job 31:32). They carry us to Heaven when we die (Lk 16:22). We join the innumerable

company of angels in the Heavenly Jerusalem in worshipping God Almighty (Heb 12:22; Rev 5:11). In spite of these glorious ministries of angels, we are warned against worshipping them in excitement (Col 2:18; Rev 19:10; 22:8,9). Actually we the Church will judge the fallen angels (1 Cor 6:3; 2 Pet 2:4). Thus angels are both a privilege and a challenge to us!

### **Family**

Mary and Joseph provided a healthy family atmosphere for Jesus as He grew from babyhood to boyhood and then to manhood. Mary's godly values are seen in the entire Christmas story. Even when she could not understand the angelic proclamation that she would conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit, she accepted it with all humility and faith in God's Word: "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word!" (Lk 1:38). She had the virtue of meditating things in her heart and not speaking out hastily (Lk 2:19,51). She valued the fellowship of senior children of God. It is said that she went to meet Elizabeth "with haste" immediately after the angel departed from her (Lk 1:39,40). As an elderly person, Elizabeth would have taught Mary several valuable lessons on family life including child-rearing (Tit 2:4,5). The Song of Mary, known as *Magnificat*, is pregnant with spiritual truths (Lk 1:46-55). In spite of her full term of pregnancy, she travelled with her husband Joseph for census registration in obedience to the civil law (Lk 2:1-6).

Joseph was no less spiritual than Mary. Legally speaking, he could have broken the engagement because she became pregnant before marriage (Dt 24:1). That would be a public shame for her (Mt 1:19). What a

considerate man he was! The Bible calls him “an upright man!” On his own he decided not to have intimacy with her till she delivered the divine Baby (v25). A classic example of self-control, the last but not the least in the list of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:23).

Both Mary and Joseph were strict adherents to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures (Lk 2:22,27,39,42). It’s obvious that they spent lot of time with Jesus, in His early years, teaching Him the Scriptures. His knowledge of the Scriptures at the age of twelve “surprised” the teachers in the Temple (Lk 2:46,47). In spite of His unusual knowledge and wisdom, He was “obedient” to His parents (v51). He never lost His respect for them. Even while in agony on the Cross, He made provision for His widowed (?) mother (Jn 19:25-27).

Here comes the message for the parents and children living in the endtime. The only one of the 10 Commandments with a “promise” is the fifth one: “Honour your father and your mother, that your days be long” (Ex 20:12). Apostle Paul points this out in Ephesians 6:1-3. The Old Testament ends with word, “curse” — Mal 4:5,6, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a **curse**.” See how seriously God looks at the parents-children conflicts! Jesus sternly rebuked those who in His times had diluted this 5th Commandment by offering substitutes (Mk 7:9-13). As foretold by Paul, the last days will be characterised by “disobedience to parents” (2 Tim 3:1,2; Rom 1:30). Even after all things will be made subject to Christ at the end, He Himself will be subject to His Father (1 Cor 15:24-28).

During His First Coming, Jesus performed His first sign miracle in a wedding party. So many Christian marriages are conducted during the Christmas Season! The greatest marriage of all time will be the marriage of the Lamb (Rev 19:7). The Church will be His Bride (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-27,32). Now is the time of preparation for her. Jesus sanctifies her now through His Word, and beautifies her with the fruit of His Spirit (Gal 5:22,23). For this He uses His servants (Eph 4:11-13). At His Coming, she will be given “clean and bright fine linen” (Rev 19:8). This attire will be “exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten it” (Mk 9:3; Rev 3:4,5). With this picture in mind, husbands should “love” their wives, and wives should “respect” their husbands (Eph 5:32,33). In Heaven, the spouses will not be as husbands and wives, but be like angels (Mt 22:30).

### **Baptism**

We have no record in the four Gospels about the life of Jesus between his age of 12 and 30 (Lk 3:23). This 18-year period is covered by one statement: Lk 2:52, “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.” A balanced growth: Intellectual, Physical, Spiritual and Social. Obviously He worked with His dad in his carpentry shop (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3). His public ministry began with His baptism (Mt 3:13). He came all the way from Nazareth of Galilee to Bethany beyond Jordan, travelling about 70 miles, to be baptized by John the Baptist (Mk 1:9; Jn 1:28).

What was the need for Jesus to be baptized? He had no sin to confess like those who were baptized by John (Mt 3:6). He had no sin to repent of like the audience of

Peter (Acts 2:38). Yes, if there's one person in the world who need not be baptized, it was Jesus. Then why, oh why, did He want to be baptized? Just to OBEY His Father! It was His Father who had sent John to baptize people (Jn 1:33a). The Father God was so pleased with the obedience of His Son that He immediately opened the heavens and declared, "This is my BELOVED Son in whom I am well PLEASED" (Mt 3:16,17). Next time the Father so declared on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt 17:5). From beginning to end the life of Jesus was one of obedience to the Father. "He was obedient unto death" (Phil 2:8). Just as by Adam's disobedience we were made sinners, by Christ's obedience we are made righteous (Rom 5:19).

Just as the Father commanded John to baptize the repentant, Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize the believers (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16). The defect in our evangelistic messages is that we don't connect obedience to faith in the Gospel. There are simply too many New Testament passages which connect these two (Acts 6:7; Rom 1:5; 16:26; 1 Pet 1:2; 2:7). Eternal salvation is promised to those who "obey" God (Heb 5:9). God's people are called the "children of obedience," and others the "children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2; 5:6; Col 3:6). At the Second Coming of Christ, the fires of judgment will fall on those who do not "obey" the Gospel (2 Thess 1:7,8). I have observed that the response from people is overwhelming whenever water baptism is presented as "a mark of obedience!" Faith without obedience is dead! Dear friend, don't delay, get baptized right now (Acts 22:16).

While talking about judgment on the disobedient, Apostle Peter refers to water baptism as an example (1

Pet 3:20-22). Because Jesus obeyed His Father implicitly all through His life, all knees will bow before Him at His Second Coming (Phil 2:8-11). The obedient will reign with Him (Rev 3:20,21).

### **Satan**

Following His baptism, "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Mt 4:1). He was tempted like us in all points, but He never once yielded to temptations (Heb 4:15). The devil was after Christ from the cradle to the Cross (Lk 4:13), but the conflict intensified when He began His ministry. He encountered demonic spirits when He ministered to people (Mt 8:28-34; 9:32-34; 12:22; 15:21-28; Mk 1:23-28; 9:14-29; Lk 13:10-17). Referring to His First Coming, Apostle John wrote, "The Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8).

It is to be noted that Christ was manifested to destroy only the "works" of the devil, and not to destroy the "devil" himself (1 Jn 3:8). Even on the Cross, Jesus did not "destroy" the devil, but only "disarmed" the powers of darkness (Col 2:15). If He had destroyed the devil, where is the question of spiritual warfare today? (Eph 6:12). The devil is as active today as ever. He entices people (Acts 5:3); blinds people (2 Cor 4:4); hinders God's servants (2 Cor 12:7; 1 Thess 2:18); roams about to devour people (1 Pet 5:8); keeps unbelievers under his power (Acts 26:18); tempts believers (1 Cor 7:5); keeps folks in disobedience (Eph 2:2); teaches false doctrines through his agents (1 Tim 4:1); deceives and traps believers (2 Tim 2:26); keeps the world under his sway (1 Jn 5:19); and deceives Christians as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:2,3,13-15).

During His First Coming Jesus rebuked the devil and cast out the evil spirits. But He never once “cursed” him or “bound” him. He taught His disciples to simply pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Mt 6:13). The Bible clearly teaches us what all we can do to the devil today: Resist him (Js 4:7); Cast him out (Mt 10:1,8); Refuse to give him place (Eph 4:27); Be vigilant against him (1 Pet 5:8). We are not to “bind” him today; that will be done by an angel with a great chain during the Millennium (Rev 20:1-3). We are not to “banish” him today; only after Millennium, Satan will be cast into the bottomless pit (Rev 20:7,10). We are not to “burn” him today; this will be done by Christ at His Coming (2 Thess 2:8). We are not to “blaspheme” or curse him; even Michael or the other angels dare not do it (2 Pet 2:10b,11; Jude 8-10). Do not cross Biblical boundaries. Some preachers are guilty of the unscriptural practice of “binding” Satan; and the people are misled. At crucifixion, the old serpent bruised the “heel” of Jesus; but in His Second Coming, Jesus will bruise its “head” (Gen 3:15b). That’s why Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, “The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet SHORTLY” (Rom 16:20). By the word “shortly,” the Apostle meant the Second Coming of Christ because the early Christians lived with the every-moment expectation of the Return of their Lord!

### **Power**

Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary when the “power of the Highest” overshadowed her (Lk 1:35). When He came out of the waters of baptism, the Holy Spirit came upon Him like a dove (Mt 3:16). The ministry He began after His 40 days of fasting was one of power.

Historian Luke states, “Then Jesus returned (from the wilderness) in the power of the Spirit” (Lk 4:14). Luke summarises His ministry in Acts 10:38, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him!”

His preaching was with power and authority (Lk 4:18,19,32). As He was teaching, “the power of the Lord was present to heal people” (Lk 5:17). Those who witnessed His works “glorified God who had given such power to men” (Mt 9:8). He gave power to His disciples to cast out unclean spirits and to heal all kinds of sicknesses and diseases (Mt 9:1). Even when He died, there was an unusual power manifestation. The veil of the Temple was torn from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were split; many graves were opened (Mt 27:50-52). The power of God manifested in His resurrection was unique (Eph 1:19,20). God who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up by His power (1 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 4:14; 1 Thess 4:14). That’s why the one pursuit in the life of Paul was to know Christ and the “power of His resurrection” (Phil 3:10).

If the power of God was manifested so much in the First Coming of Christ, how much more will it be during His Second Coming! Hear the very words of Christ: Mt 24:30, “All the tribes of the earth will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Mt 26:64; Mk 14:62; Lk 21:27). There would be a loud voice saying in Heaven, “Now the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, because the accuser of our brothers has been cast down!” (Rev 12:10). Hallelujah!

Living between the two Advents, we can experience the same power in our life and ministry today. “God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power” (2 Tim 1:7). After the Ascension of Christ there was the “former rain” of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33; Eph 4:8); before the Second Coming of Christ we can expect the “latter rain” of the Holy Spirit (Hos 6:3; Joel 2:23; Acts 2:17-21). Our programmes and projects without the power of God are meaningless. The Bible warns us about a Christianity that’s void of power (2 Tim 3:5). Wait before God again and again, and be endued with the “power from on High” (Lk 24:49; Isa 40:31). There can be no substitute for the power of God.

### **Suffering**

The Christmas message was heralded to the Shepherds as “good tidings of great joy” (Lk 2:10). But on the 8th day after His birth, a heartbreaking statement was made to Mary: Lk 2:34,35, “This child is destined ... for a sign which will be spoken against; yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also.” How would a mother feel at such a statement in the benediction from a priest? The life of Jesus was one of suffering from the beginning to the end—

- He was not privileged to be born in the comfort of a Home or a Hospital, but a cattleshed, not even a lodge (Lk 2:7).
- His virgin birth was indirectly attacked (Jn 8:41).
- He often lived without the comfort of a home (Mt 8:19,20).
- In some houses, He was not shown even the basic gesture of hospitality (Lk 7:36-46).

- As a travelling Preacher, and without regular meals, He often became hungry. When He filled His hungry stomach, He was called a “glutton” (Mt 11:19).
- The Jews said, “You have a demon” (Jn 8:48). His own people said, “He is out of His mind” (Mk 3:21).
- He was rejected by His own countrymen and relatives (Mk 6:3,4).
- He suffered loneliness. When He wanted His disciples most, they failed Him (Mt 26:38,40).
- Even His burial was in a borrowed tomb (Mt 27:57-60).

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews put these all together as “the things which He suffered” (Heb 5:8). His sufferings reached their zenith at the Cross as prophetically portrayed in Isaiah 53.

The Book of Revelation speaks of Christ’s Return in power and glory. The theme of this Book is in 1:7, “Behold, He is coming with clouds!” But have you ever noticed that Christ is called the “Lamb of God” at least 26 times in the Book of Revelation? Why so? The Crown is because of the Cross! The glory is because of the sufferings! The same Lamb of God is now the Lion of Judah (Rev 5:5; Gen 49:9,10). He who rode on a donkey now rides on a white horse (Rev 19:11). He who was mocked as the “King of the Jews” with a crown of thorns now wears a crown of gold as the “King of kings and Lord of lords!” (Mt 27:29,37; Rev 14:4; 19:16). Pilate put a reed in His right hand; the Father has now seated Him on His right hand and given Him a scepter and a sickle (Mt 27:29; Heb 1:8; Rev 14:14). In His First Coming, Kings and Rulers plotted against Him (Psa 2:10-12; Acts 4:25-27); in His Second Coming, His anger

will be kindled against the Rulers and Commanders who disobeyed Him (Rev 6:15-17).

I warn you of an erroneous teaching that goes around in Christendom. It's this: "Because Christ suffered for us, we don't need to suffer!" Nothing else can be so far from the truth. Rom 8:17, "If indeed we suffer with Christ, we will also be glorified together." 2 Tim 2:12, "If we endure (suffering), we shall also reign with Him." Apostle Paul superscribes it as, "This is a faithful saying" (v11a). Referring to physical sufferings, Paul says, "Our light affliction, which is but for moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor 4:17). Passing through "many" tribulations in life, we will stand in white robes before the Throne of God serving Him joyfully forever (Jn 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rev 7:13-17). When Christ rides on a white horse, we shall also follow Him on white horses (Rev 19:11,14). We also will be given crowns: Crown of Life (Js 1:12; Rev 2:10), Crown of Righteousness (2 Tim 4:8), Crown of Joy (1 Thess 2:19; Phil 4:1), and Crown of Glory (1 Pet 5:4; Heb 2:9). In His teachings, Jesus often said, "Great will be your reward in Heaven" (Mt 5:12; 10:41; Lk 6:23,35). In His First Coming, Jesus gave us responsibilities; in the Second Coming He gives us rewards (Rev 22:12).

### **Jerusalem**

The City of Jerusalem had close association with the earthly life of Jesus. Though He was born in Bethlehem, He was dedicated in the Temple in Jerusalem (Lk 2:22-38). His dialogue at the age of twelve with the teachers of the Law was in Jerusalem (Lk 2:41-49). His third temptation was in Jerusalem (Lk 4:9-12). He often taught in the Temple in Jerusalem (Jn 5,7,8; 18:20; Lk

22:53). But He had to lament over the City, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Mt 23:37; Lk 13:34). Finally He "wept" over the City, and said, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes ... Your enemies will close you on every side because you did not know the time of your visitation" (Lk 19:41-44). Jesus was crucified outside the City of Jerusalem (Heb 13:12). "Calvary" in Latin or "Golgotha" in Hebrew-Aramic was a place outside the walls of Jerusalem (Mt 27:32,33; Mk 15:22; Lk 23:33; Jn 19:16,17).

Jerusalem is supposed to be a City of Peace, but it has become a city of conflicts. We are called to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Psa 122:6). As the New Testament Christians, we are to pray for peace everywhere. While announcing the Birth of Christ to the Shepherds, the angelic host sang, "Peace on earth!" (Lk 2:14). Writing to Timothy, Apostle Paul exhorted that prayers be made for "all men" that we may lead a quiet and "peaceable" life (1 Tim 2:1,2).

A word about the "Holy Land Tours," so called, will be appropriate here. According to the teaching of the New Testament, God does not "sanctify" any place today, be it a city or a mountain or a building (Jn 4:21-24). He indwells only people (1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16). He sanctifies only people (Heb 13:12). No pilgrimage is even hinted anywhere in the Epistles written to the Churches. We are already on a pilgrimage in this world (1 Pet 2:11). We are to desire a better, that is, a heavenly country

(Heb 11:13-15). We are not called to walk “where” Jesus walked, but “as” He walked (1 Jn 2:6). We are not to know Christ “according to the flesh” (2 Cor 5:16). Just like commercial advertisers in media make you feel miserable if you don’t buy their products, Christian TV and Magazines make Christians feel that they lose something in life if they do not visit the land of Israel at least once in their lifetime. They say that you can understand the Bible better if you visit Israel once. I would say that using a *Bible Dictionary* regularly will be far more helpful than such trips in understanding the background in which the Bible was written. The *IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 2 volumes, is also excellent.

Dear friend, don’t feel unfortunate if you cannot afford a visit to Israel. You don’t need to “go” to the “Old” Jerusalem; but the “New” Jerusalem will “come” to us (Rev 21:2,3). The New Jerusalem that’s “above” is the “mother of us all” (Gal 4:26). Apostle Paul, being a Hebrew of Hebrews, wrote, “He is not a Jew who is one outwardly... but he is a Jew who is one inwardly” (Rom 2:28,29). We and only those who are washed by the blood of Christ, are the “children of promise as Isaac was” (Gal 4:28).

Do not invest in building projects in Israel launched by popular preachers and evangelists, whatever may be the stated purpose! Beware of the “God-told-me” heresy! You can pray for Israel or Indonesia from India itself (Jer 23:23). It’s not the place wherefrom we pray that matters, but the Person to whom we pray. Heaven did not approve the proposal of Peter to erect shrines on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mk 9:5-8). The oft-repeated statement of Apostle John in the Book of

Revelation is, “I saw...” Only once he says, “I did NOT see!” That’s Rev 21:22, “But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple!” Can the message be clearer?

During Christmastime, we spend lot of money and time in decorating our Church buildings. But as individual believers, and the Church as a whole, we are the Temple of the Living God (1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19-22). Let’s give priority to beautify ourselves with practical holiness and righteousness (Psa 29:2; 96:9). This is what will make us ready for the Marriage of the Lamb of God (Rev 19:7,8).

### **Finished!**

The first angelic announcement to Joseph about the birth of Christ was, “She will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name, Jesus, for He will **save** His people from their sins” (Mt 1:21). On the Cross, Jesus declared, “It’s finished” (Jn 19:30). That is, He finished the work of redemption by satisfying the demands of a holy God (Heb 9:14; 10:12-14). We got saved when we believed on His substitutionary death and His resurrection (Rom 10:9,10). The good work God has begun in us will reach its completion on the Day of Jesus Christ, that is, His Return (Phil 1:6). That’s why we say, “Now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed” (Rom 13:11).

The First Coming and the Second Coming of Christ are contrasted beautifully in Heb 9:28, “Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation!” Salvation has to be understood in three tenses: Salvation past, Salvation present, and

Salvation future. Salvation past is deliverance from the “penalty” of sin through the sacrificial death of Christ. Salvation present is deliverance from the “power” of sin through the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Salvation future is deliverance from the very “presence” of sin at the Second Coming of Christ when we shall become exactly like Him (1 Jn 3:2), and be ushered into a place free from temptation and sin (Rev 21:27). The third stage will also include the total “redemption of our bodies” so there would be “no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain” (Rom 8:23; Rev 21:4). This complete salvation is what’s meant by the loud voice in Heaven, “Now salvation of our God and of His Christ has come” (Rev 12:10). He who came to the earth as the PROPHET (Dt 18:17,18; Acts 3:22,23; 7:37), and who today intercedes for us in Heaven as the High PRIEST (Heb 7:24-27), shall return as the KING of kings (2 Tim 4:1; Rev 17:14; 19:16). The anointed triple ministry of Christ is thus fulfilled.

In the Book of Revelation, Christ often presents Himself as, “the Alpha and the Omega” (Rev 1:8,17; 2:8; 21:6; 22:13). Yes, He is not only the Author of our faith, but also its Finisher (Heb 12:2). In the First Coming, Christ became the Author of our faith; in the Second Coming He will be its Finisher! On the Cross He said, “It’s finished!” Finally from the Throne He would say, “It’s done!” (Rev 21:5,6). The words “soon ... quickly ... suddenly” appear in the Book of Revelation so many times (Rev 1:1,3; 2:16; 3:11; 11:14; 22:6,7,10,12,20). During His First Coming, Jesus called us saying, “Come unto Me!” Having responded to it, let’s now say, “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev 22:20). □

## Jesus’ Footsteps

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