

Asia Pacific Theological Conference

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Articles of Faith

“ Second Coming”

Peniperite Fakaua

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I. INTRODUCTION

The subject of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ had been and still is one of the beliefs among the Christians particularly those who come under Protestant convictions, which divides them especially on the when of its' occurrence.

Many charismatic Christians along with the world Adventists have been embarrassed by their sincere efforts in dealing with the When of the second coming of Christ. All over the world, there was a strong prediction for the end of the world at the close of the twentieth century. That was coupled with the second coming of Christ especially by the Charismatic Christians. I believe history repeats itself more often regarding this doctrine within the Christian Church.

It is noted with great interest on how simple mistakes are repeated in generations after generations and centuries after centuries.

Saying this refers to all kinds of mistakes in all aspects of life.

History of Nations and leaders and their style of leadership; the problems they caused and the results they always harvested.

Family life: how families have been destroyed by the same evil problem that is still destroying families today, and people continue to commit the same old mistake. This goes all the way down on individual level.

Coming back to the topic of the second coming, we find that the way people, individually and collectively have attempted to deal with this eschatological subject is no different. They never left the ***WHEN*** of this future event untouched. In fact that seemed to be the central focus of many of their efforts to explain them. Perhaps it is a clear implication of how the human nature always tends to be ahead of God's plans even from the very beginning of the creation.

Regarding mankind and his anxiety, History affirms the fact that many generations throughout hundreds of centuries have always failed in dealing with the when of the second coming of Jesus Christ since His ascension into heaven.

Therefore, I am not going to repeat the old mistake of history but mainly to present the biblical grounds of the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, and the possible sign for this event as in accordance with the Scriptural references.

II. SECOND COMING A BIBLICAL DOCTRINE

To answer this question, obviously leads us to present the sound biblical facts which also justifies why this doctrine should continue to be included in the sixteen articles of faith in the Church of the Nazarene.

First of all, Jesus Christ Himself more than once explicitly taught His disciples and every one who heard Him, that He is definitely coming back to this world the second time.

(a) Matthew 23:39 *“for I say unto you, you shall see me no more till you say ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’”* After Jesus said this to the multitudes and to His disciples, He went on and after a while as He sat on the Mount of

Olives, the disciples went to Him privately and asked Him to tell them when will these things be and will be the sign of His Coming and of the end of the age?

In response to their quest, He clarify that the answer to the when, is “*no one knows,, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*” (v. 36) But we do believe that Jesus Himself said I am in the Father and the Father in me. The words that I speak to you are not without my Father’s approval. (John 14:8-11) These words of Jesus should have been received and understood well by the believers but we know it was not the case. There was always someone or some group of men and women who always attempt to predict the **When**, but as usual, they were only out to meet and faced disappointment.

He said the “*Son of man is coming at the hour you do not expect.*” (24:44;) “*..... watch therefore for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.*” (25:13)

25:31 “*When the Son of Man come in His glory and all the Holy Angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.*”

This fact is also implied when Jesus according to the Gospel of John said, (14:1-3) “*And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to Myself.....*” c.f. Mark 13:26; Luke 12:40

These are the explicit teachings of Christ Himself about His Second Coming. No one else besides the Lord Himself could have said it and carry more credibility. His words are sufficient to silent the critics and bring conviction upon the unbelievers and skeptics about this certain New Testament doctrine.

There are even more evidences in the New Testament besides the very words of Christ Himself as recorded in the four Gospels.

The letters of the great Apostles of the Lord Himself also alluded to the truth of this eschatological event. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi (3:20) that “*For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly awaits for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*” “*For the Lord Himself will descend from*

heaven with a shout with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God... ” (1.Thess. 4:16)

“For you your-selves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night...” (1 Thess. 5:2) “...And may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote to Titus and reminded him of keeping up in the godly life and looking forward to the blessed hope and glorious appearance of our Great God our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

The Apostle Peter referred to the same event saying *“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.(2Peter 3:10)*

John the beloved, during his isolation on the Island of Patmos, heard the Lord Himself spoke forth saying: *“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega who is*

to come; Behold I am coming quickly, hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown; Surely I am coming quickly”

(Rev:1:8; 2:25; 22:7,12,20);

The writer of Hebrews again rings out the same truth to those who eagerly wait for Him to appear a second time, apart from the time when He appeared to deal with putting away the sting of death and the slavery of sin.

III. SIGNS OF THE SECOND COMING

Many readers are sidetracked by the mentioned of tales of wars, famines, persecutions, the fall away of many backsliders, the news of world calamities such as earthquakes, hurricanes and of course today we are aware of the climbing death tolls of aged people with heat waves. People are witnessing the evil of terrorists which the whole world has been overwhelmed by its activities and none of all of those evils are new, they have existed and have been around ever since sin defeated the first human pair Adam and Eve.

False prophets out to deceive the people of God is an ancient form of evil. But based on the very word of Jesus Christ, Matt 24:14 “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

We are to make sure that the gospel of the Kingdom is preached to every single human being alive in my time and yours. That will be a strong sign of the second coming of Jesus Christ. The good news of Jesus’ death and resurrection must be heard by every living soul. The death of the Son of God on the cross and His resurrection is the only hope of salvation for humankind.

Only God would know when the gospel reaches every soul, and that every soul had a fair opportunity whether it be one hour, one day or one year, that is absolutely in God’s sovereign rule and knowledge as according to His wisdom and grace.

The mention of such events which many interpreted as signs were warning lessons for believers always to be ready at all time. We who are working hard must keep at it to the end of our life.

Christians are never to be lazy but always get busy in preaching,

teaching and living as sons and daughters of the Kingdom of God.

Just as the Apostle Paul says Phil 1:21 “*For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain*”

We are to learn to live like the great Apostle Paul when he said Philip. 4:12 “I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

The great apostle Paul learned that he could do all things through Christ who strengthens him. This is also true of every believer of Jesus Christ even you and me.

IV. THE HOW OF HIS SECOND COMING

Sometimes those who deal with this subject of the second coming gets caught up with the details as if they have been dictated to them through a dream or in a vision.

The truth is also clearly given by Jesus Christ as well as those two men who showed up immediately after Christ's ascension to heaven.

Jesus will come in the glory of the King of Kings no longer as a lowly servant riding on a donkey, but now with the glory of Heaven and as the Almighty. Every male and female will hear and see the King's second coming.

Everyone will recognize then the King of Heaven, the King of glory is here. No one will question Him as the King like when he first came.

Jesus' Kingly office will then be seen clearly especially by the unbeliever or the world.

In Christ's first coming, only a handful of people recognized Him as the Anointed King but this second coming, it's every one including the dead. The sequence of things to take place after the second coming will be known by everyone at that time. There have been many articles written about the sequence of events to take place, but again that is another subject of approximations

and guessings.

It is believed that the second coming of Christ marks the beginning of the events for the eschatos period. These events are such as, the final judgment, and the rewarding ceremony for the sheep and the goats.

The Resurrection of the dead to life and the Final destination for both sides either to eternity with the King of Kings or to eternal damnation as their final abode.

V. CONCLUSION

It is quite unconceivable for any Christian to deny the strong biblical evidence of the doctrine of the second coming of Jesus Christ. I could understand the differences of opinions among Christians regarding the How and Signs of the event. But to refuse to believe in the reality of it would create great doubts on the hermeneutical approach of such individual or group.

During the sacrament of the Eucharist loudly echoes out the truth of this doctrine of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is one of the incentives for Christians when in times of trials and hardships in his life of struggle.