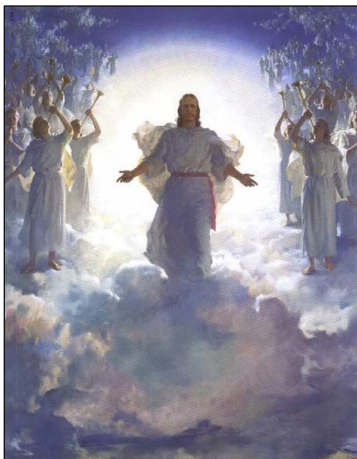


The Second Coming

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For Christians, the second coming of Jesus Christ is the most anticipated of all human events. This future event generates a host of questions with few answers. The scriptures reveal a period of great triumph and intense activity leading up to the final judgment.

The Thousand Year Reign of Jesus Christ

Christian doctrine teaches that the second coming of Jesus Christ will usher in a period known as the millennium. Taken from the Latin word mille (a thousand) and annum (year), the millennium reign of Jesus Christ will be one thousand years of peace, joy, and love preceded by the first resurrection, and followed by the second resurrection and final judgment.

We read from the Book of Revelation (chapter 20, verses 2 to 7) that there will be a thousand year period after the second coming of Christ: "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands;

and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."

The 10th Article of Faith confirms that during the millennium "Christ will reign personally upon the earth..." the prophet Joseph Smith taught that Jesus would not likely live on the earth during the millennium, but rather appear as necessary to help govern (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 268).

The First Resurrection at the Second Coming

At the second coming of Christ, the spirits in paradise will be resurrected and take part in the millennium. Those living righteously upon the earth at the time of the second coming will "be changed in the twinkling of an eye from mortality to immortality" (3 Nephi 28:8). Those taking part will be righteous people who have lived lives worthy of the opportunity and will gain entrance into the terrestrial or celestial kingdom (second and highest level of heaven, respectively) following the final judgment. Brigham Young taught that there will be members of various religions and sects taking part in the millennium, all of whom will retain their moral agency (Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., Latter-day Prophets Speak, 261–62.).

Human Activities during the Millennium

During the millennium there will be both missionary work and temple work being done on the earth. Missionary work will involve teaching the gospel to those on earth who lack the understanding of the fullness of truth. Temple work will involve participating in the ordinances of salvation and exaltation including baptisms, endowments, marriages, and sealings (see the section on temples). There will be no disease or death (D&C 63:51; D&C 101:29–31). In the midst of these important spiritual activities will be much of life as we know it today (see Isaiah 65:21), except everything will be done and be governed on the principles of righteousness (see Discourses of Brigham Young, 115).

A Renewed, Peaceful Earth at the Second Coming

As stated in the 10th Article of Faith, the earth will be renewed and it will resemble the Garden of Eden during the time of Adam and Eve. All land masses will be joined together as one continent (D&C 133:23–24). The prophet Ezekiel wrote "...This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden..." (Ezek. 36:35).

There will be universal peace during the millennium, as Satan will be bound during the thousand years and will have no power over the children of God (Rev. 20:2-3, D&C 101:28). There will be no wars on the earth and harmony will reign throughout the land. The prophet Isaiah had a vision of this period when he wrote, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4). Likewise the animal kingdom will be at peace (Isaiah 11:6–7).

The Government at the Second Coming

There will be no separation of Church and state, as Christ will lead both the Church and the government as the religious and political leader. The government will be firmly established on principles of righteousness, with liberty and freedom for all people, with a capital in America and another in Jerusalem (Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 3:66–72).

More Gospel truth Revealed at the Second Coming

The millennium will also be a time when many gospel truths that are not known today will be revealed to the entire world: "Yea, verily I say unto you, in that day when the Lord shall come, he shall reveal all things— Things which have passed, and hidden things which no man knew, things of the earth, by which it was made, and the purpose and the end thereof— Things most precious, things that are above, and things that are beneath, things that are in the earth, and upon the earth, and in heaven" (D&C 101:32–34).

The Last Conflict before the Final Judgment

At the end of the millennium, before the final judgment, there will be one final conflict that will engulf the entire earth as a final test. The Book of Revelation outlines this struggle in which Satan is set free for a short season (Rev.

20:7-8). Satan will gather his armies, while Michael will gather his, for one final battle for the souls of men. At this time there will be some who will exercise their moral agency contrary to the commandments of God. Following this final conflict, Satan and his followers will be cast out from among the children of God forever. This will be immediately followed by the final judgment and entrance into one of the three kingdoms.

Conclusion

The scriptures call the second coming the "great and dreadful day of the Lord" because it will be wonderful for some, and dreadful for others. Those who take part in the millennial reign of Christ will be blessed to experience a truly righteous world where Satan will have no power and truth will cover the whole earth. One can only imagine the joy that will be on earth at that time.

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