

THE THREE COMINGS OF JESUS

Today I'd like to talk about the 1st, 2nd and 3rd comings of Jesus our Saviour and King!

The whole story of the Bible centres on the comings of Jesus. Do you know the first place in the Bible His first coming is mentioned?

Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel."

Right from the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve sinned and broke their relationship with God – right from that early time, the coming of Jesus was needed as the only answer to this problem.

Genesis 3:15 is the earliest prophecy of a Saviour who would smash the power that sin and death hold over humans ("He will crush your head"). How? By the sacrificial death of the Saviour ("You will strike His heel"). Jesus accomplished this at His first coming.

John 1:29 "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John the Baptist recognised Him. He came as Saviour, and also as King:

Mark 1:14-15 ¹⁴ "After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," He said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Jesus, the King of the Kingdom, was walking among humans! And He began to establish His spiritual Kingdom at that time, in the hearts and minds of His believers. And then He returned to Heaven, promising that He would return in like manner as He went.

Acts 1:11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven."

But in the meantime, He also promised He would come again in a different way! And what's more, He would bring the Father with Him!

John 14:23 "Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

John 14:28-20 ¹⁸ "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."

The world won't see Him until His next return, generally called the second coming, but it could be called the third coming because He has already returned, to those who "see it" or understand. (V19)

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." He has come to us and lives in us now, through His Holy Spirit.

So you could say Jesus came 2,000 years ago; Jesus is coming, now, in the lives of believers; and Jesus will come again. Christ's coming is past, present and future.

The whole Bible revolves around the comings of Jesus Christ. The first coming is covered in the gospels (and elsewhere). The 2nd coming (now) is covered in the epistles and Acts (the way Jesus Christ is with His people now.) And the 3rd coming is talked of in a remarkable number of passages right throughout the Bible.

We can go right back to Genesis for the first prophecy of Christ's yet-future coming, which we will call the second coming, since that is the accepted terminology for it.

Genesis 49:10 "The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until He to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be His."

But Jude 14-15 shows us there was an even earlier prophecy of the 2nd coming than that of Jacob.

¹⁴ "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones ¹⁵ to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Let's look at just a few more Old Testament references to Christ's return.

Job 19:25 "I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand on the earth."

Isaiah 2:2-3 "In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.³ Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

Isaiah 9:6-7 ⁶ "For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the greatness of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over His kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this."

Daniel 7:13-14 ¹³ "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshipped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His Kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."

Zechariah 14:4-5 ⁴ "On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. ⁵ You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with Him."

What about the New Testament? There are 216 chapters in the New Testament, and the 2nd coming is mentioned 318 times! One in every 25 verses refers to it. Some entire chapters are given to it (Matthew 24, Matthew 25, Mark 13, Luke 21, 1 Corinthians 15) and there are even 3 whole books devoted to it (2 Thessalonians, Jude, Revelation). Every writer in the New Testament mentions it.

Matthew 24:30-31 ³⁰ “Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. ³¹ And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”

Luke 1:31-33 ³¹ “You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call Him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, ³³ and He will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; His kingdom will never end.”

1 Corinthians 11:26 “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.”

Every time we take the Lord’s Supper, we remember Christ’s comings (1st, 2nd and 3rd!)

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 ¹⁶ “For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”

Revelation 11:15 “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He will reign forever and ever.”

So it is clear that the whole Bible revolves around the 1st, 2nd and 3rd comings of Jesus Christ. And as Christians, our lives should revolve around those comings too.

The 1st coming is history now, but it is vitally important to us because that is when Jesus died for you and me, so that our sins could be forgiven and we can have salvation. It is impossible to overstate how important that is in our lives!

The 2nd coming is important to us too, because that means He has now come to us and lives in us, guiding and helping us in the path of salvation every day. It is impossible to overstate how important that is in our lives!

The 3rd coming (commonly known as the 2nd coming: the future return of Jesus Christ) is really important in our everyday lives right now too. How? Let’s consider 3 ways it is vital to us.

1. Matthew 24:42-44 ⁴² “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.”
It challenges and motivates us to watchfulness and prayer.

2. It encourages us to endure when we are going through trials and difficulties. It gives us hope.

Hebrews 10:32 “Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering.”

We do suffer trials, hard suffering.

Hebrews 10:35-37 ³⁵ “So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. ³⁶ You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised. ³⁷ For, “In just a little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay.”

We persevere because He is coming.

2 Timothy 2:12 “if we endure, we will also reign with Him. If we disown Him, He will also disown us;”

We endure because we will reign with Him.

3. It inspires us to godly, holy living.

Titus 2:11-13 ¹¹ “For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ”

2 Peter 3:10-14 ¹⁰ “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. ¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him.”

1 John 3:2-3 ² “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ All who have this hope in Him purify themselves, just as He is pure.”

2 Timothy 4:8 “Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.”

One version says “those who are eagerly looking forward to His appearing.”

What a wonderful hope we have – the knowledge and assurance that our Saviour Jesus Christ is going to come back to earth, to rescue the world from evil and destruction, and set up His glorious Kingdom that will reign forever. How badly the world needs this knowledge – it is our only hope!

Let's be sure we are ready to meet Him at His return.