

THE CHRIST EXPERIMENT

EXPERIMENT NO. 3 - AWAITING THE SECOND COMING

INTRODUCTION

Ever since Jesus Christ left the earth, nearly 2,000 years ago, his followers have been in expectation of his promised return. Practically every generation of Christians has believed that he would return in their day and bring with him massive destruction. But they were wrong. Even today, Christians engage in great speculation about the meanings of Bible prophecies thinking that they might be able to decipher ‘the day and the hour’ or at least the season of his return. And many of these speculators are convinced that we are due to receive him very soon – possibly this generation, along with unimaginable devastation!

They point to current events such as volatile weather anomalies, political, social and economic upheaval, diseases, poverty, violence, injustice, immorality, inequality, and disturbing elements in the world of entertainment. We cannot deny that these things exist, and that change must occur. But do these events require divine intervention – intervention so destructive that very few would survive the catastrophe?

Has God given up on man’s ability to learn from his mistakes and improve his own condition? Has God determined that his Son, Christ Jesus, must step in with unparalleled destruction as the only solution to man’s woes? We certainly believe that Jesus will again come to the earth, but does this wonderful event have to be accompanied by so much devastating destruction? We do not think so. We believe such expectations are primitive in understanding and premature in expectation. We believe that mainstream Christianity has gotten the Second Coming all wrong.

The failure to understand the Second Coming is a direct result of a failure to understand the First Coming. We believe that once Christianity understands the significance of the First Coming, many of their false expectations concerning the Second Coming will vanish.

BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATION

Early in the gospel accounts, Jesus explained the reason for his First Coming:

“Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed

me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." "Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." – **Luke 4:14-21 - New International Version**

These verses lay out the purpose of the First Coming, namely to proclaim good news, freedom, spiritual sight and "the year of the Lord's favor." He had come to liberate mankind from religious bondage and to bring in a new era, an era of God's favor.

During his ministry, he gave the right to become sons of God to all who received and believed him. (**John 1:12**) He released man from the obligation to venerate priests and religious leaders:

"But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. – **Matthew 23:8-12**

During his ministry, he built a fellowship of preachers and teachers of this good news, beginning with his 12 apostles (**Matthew 11:1**), then the 70 disciples/evangelizers (**Luke 10:1**), and then to all who desired to share in the ministry. Jesus commissioned them to go out and teach people of all nations the same good news he taught, further developing a nation of disciples who would, in turn, become preachers and teachers of that same good news. (**Matthew 28:19**) And at the time of the festival of Pentecost, about 50 days after Jesus' death, 120 apostles and disciples were gathered together, both men and women, who were filled with the Spirit of Truth and who began spreading Jesus' teachings to an international audience. (**Acts 1:15, 2:1-11**) Yes, it was Jesus' intention that his message of liberty and freedom be spread all over the world. He wanted the entire planet to know that they were all the free children of God with the opportunity to enjoy continued life after the physical body expires!

Jesus also explained that his First Coming would not bring peace initially, and would, in fact, cause divisions in households. (**Matthew 10:34-38**) He informed them that the message would be preached through difficult times of war, food shortages, and other calamities. He explained that many would be hated and even killed for carrying out his commission. But he also said that when the good news has been preached to all the world, then these catastrophes would end (**Matthew 24:3-14**), ushering in a new era of peace and enlightenment. Thus, we believe, his Second Coming would be the advent that would bring peace, not a sword.

We know that many Christians view these verses differently. They believe Jesus was telling his disciples that after they preach the good news to the whole world, the world would come to a catastrophic end. To us, that does not appear consistent with the character of Jesus who would be called "Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace." (**Isaiah 9:6**) His First Coming did not

bring peace. So if his Second Coming does not bring peace either, when does he live up to his name? And if his only method of bringing peace is destruction, his peace is founded, not on love or spirit, but on war.

Also, we have the story of the flood in Noah's day as told in the Bible, where God caused a global destruction. There, destruction was the solution, but that destruction did not bring about better conditions or lasting peace. Within a few generations, man was back on the scene with his old ways, old attitudes, and old prejudices.

Further, the main stream Christian view is not consistent with God's promise to Noah:

“Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.”
– *Genesis 8:21*

Neither is it consistent with Jesus' promise that the unparalleled destruction that Jerusalem was to experience would never be equaled again. (*Matthew 24:21*) If there was to be global catastrophe in the manner Christianity expects, then it would greatly overshadow the destruction of Jerusalem, and would thus label Jesus as a false prophet. And, of course, we know that the destruction of Jerusalem did not bring lasting peace. Within a few generations, the Jews began rebuilding their system of worship based on the same practices and rituals that caused their desolation in 70 C.E. Clearly, destruction does not bring lasting peace.

Finally, it does not seem logical that spreading good news from our Creator would be followed by worldwide destruction. If it did, then the good news would have utterly failed.

On the contrary, we know first hand that the good news as taught by Jesus is a monumental success! It positively changes the lives of those who accept the message in a way that no other message can. To us, it is far more likely that the true good news is the method or the vehicle that saves our world, not the precursor that leads to its destruction.

Nevertheless, as we mentioned in **Experiment No. 1**, Jesus' revolutionary message of liberty was subverted, subdued and nearly extinguished. His disciples largely failed in their commission and the 'true good news' slumbered. This slumbering is, in our opinion, the reason for the delay in the Second Coming. Christianity has not completed its commission, and until it does, Jesus' Second Coming will be delayed. Perhaps this is why 'no man can know the day or the hour' – because it depends not on a clock or a calendar, but on the occurrence of a particular event, namely the preaching of the good news to the entire inhabited earth.

Today, Jesus' message of liberty and freedom is poorly understood and not widespread in spite of the great number of those who profess to be followers of Jesus. Christians today want peace now, instant peace! Instant gratification! But they are not willing to put in the work to achieve it. They choose instead to sit on their hands and wait for God to do all the work. They have become part of the problem, rather than part of the solution.

Yes, Christianity has a great deal more work to do in 'getting our house in order' before we are worthy of entertaining such an honorable guest for a second time! But by spreading his

true message of liberty and freedom, we can pave the way for such a glorious ‘return visit.’ Only then can we expect a Second Coming of a victorious Christ ‘with power and great glory,’ to a world that was won, not by military might, but by the word and the spirit of God. [*Zechariah 4:6; John 1:1*]

THE HYPOTHESIS AND PREDICTION

Based on the above, we wonder what would happen to the world if Christianity completed the commission given them by Christ Jesus? What if, instead of being a fellowship of believers, Christianity became a fellowship of the children of God who carry Jesus’ message of liberty and freedom to the ends of the earth?

It is estimated that, in the United States, about 78% of the population profess to be Christians. We predict that if 78% of Americans lived their lives as the children of God according to the true good news, many of the conditions that purport to be ‘signs of the end’ would disappear. This same effect would occur in all other nations who likewise conducted themselves as the children sons of God in imitation of Jesus. The vast majority who would be ‘doing good to one another’ would greatly overshadow the minority who are seeking to ruin the earth. Under those circumstances, the meek would indeed inherit the earth, as Jesus promised. (*Matthew 5:5*)

Thus, we hypothesize that people of all nations, backgrounds, religions, and ideologies would be drawn to Jesus’ true message. They would be profoundly effected, and they would finally begin to ‘learn war no more,’ thus paving the way for peace on earth and good will toward all men.

THE EXPERIMENT

In light of the above, we ask our readers to share their thoughts about the above Observation and Hypothesis by responding to questions such as:

1. Did we get it wrong? Is our observation incorrect? If so, what part?
2. If Christianity understood the First Coming in the way we present above, what effect would it have on the world, if any?
3. If Christianity viewed the Second Coming in the way we present above, what effect would it have on the world, if any?

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