

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

JESUS OR THE ANTICHRIST?

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PART 1: WHO IS COMING FIRST?

There has been much confusion over the second coming of Jesus. We are warned in the Bible by Jesus that only God the Father knows the day and hour. **Matthew 24:36; Acts 1:6-7**

Jesus also told us that the great tribulation period must first be finished before He would come back. **Matthew 24:29-33**

THE APOSTLES WERE UNCLEAR

The apostles had been raised in Judaism and were of the mindset that the Messiah would come and restore the Kingdom of Israel and drive out any foreign powers which were occupying the land of Canaan.

It did not register with the Jews even though the prophet Isaiah had foretold some 700 years before that the future Messiah was going to be a suffering Messiah and pay for the sins of man. **Isaiah 53:1-12**

Some 200 years later God added some more information through the prophet Daniel, who clarified that the Messiah must be killed. **Daniel 9:25-26**

Not only was the Messiah going to die, but He would make the sacrifices to cease in the temple in Jerusalem and confirm the Abrahamic covenant with a new one. **Daniel 9:27**

Jesus was with his disciples for 40 days after the resurrection, but despite the clarifications given by Jesus, the apostles still had not understood that His kingdom was not of this world. **Acts 1:1-3; John 18:33-37**

Therefore, when Jesus talked to them about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they wanted to know when He was going to restore the Kingdom of Israel. **Acts 1:4-6**

They were told that it was not for them to know the time of future events but it was important for them to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. **verse 7-8**

Shortly after this teaching, Jesus ascended up into heaven and his disciples were told that He would return in the same way he had gone up. **verses 9-11**

UNDERSTANDING THE MISSION OF THE MESSIAH

It was not until after the day of Pentecost when the 120 followers of Jesus were baptized in the Holy Spirit that the apostles came to understand that Jesus had not come to rebuild the Kingdom of Israel but to save men from their sins and to give them eternal life. You won't find any more teaching about the Kingdom of Israel in the rest of the Book of Acts but of the saving power of Jesus and the absolute need for each person to be born again. **Acts 2:1-22, 37-43**



PREACHING THE RETURN OF JESUS

Some 19 years after Jesus' resurrection, the apostle Paul wrote the first epistle to the church in Thessalonica around 52 A.D. After having exhorted them to live a holy life, he told them that Jesus would come back again to the earth. **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

Paul realized that the Greek gentile believers in Christ had no understanding of the concept that Jesus was going to come back some day and gave them further instructions. **1 Thessalonians 5:1-12**

PAUL GIVES SOME MORE INFORMATION

Once Paul had written his first letter to the church in Thessalonica, it created a tremendous discussion among the Christians in the city that Jesus was coming back imminently. It must have created quite a stir because Paul referred to them as being "shaken." There are no historical records as to how quickly the second letter followed the first.

We must also keep in mind that the Book of Revelation did not exist at this time and it would be another 30 years before Jesus gave the great revelation to the apostle John. Also, Jerusalem had not been destroyed and the temple was still standing when Paul wrote his second letter. Here is the teaching that Paul set forth:

1. The second coming of Jesus is not going to take place until there is a general apostasy (leaving sound Bible doctrine) by Christians and the man of sin (Antichrist) be revealed. **2 Thessalonians 2:1-3**
2. The term of "Antichrist" was not yet introduced to the Christian community but Jesus had spoken about false Christ's. **Matthew 24:24**

Paul labeled this political ruler as "the man of sin," and "the son of perdition."

"Son of perdition" is only found in one more place of the New Testament and referred to Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus. **John 17:12.**

Luke records that Satan himself, not a demon, entered into Judas Iscariot and took possession of his body. **Luke 22:1-6**

Thus we can see that it was Satan, using the body and soul of Judas, who took the action of betraying Jesus. It is interesting Paul described this future person, who he called the "son of perdition," as being possessed with the Devil, which is what Jesus later told the apostle John. **2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:1-18**

3. Paul then went on to write there is a restraining power that is holding back the coming of this person. This restraining power is the Holy Spirit, because He is the only one that can convict men over their sins, draw them to salvation and cause them to be born again. **John 6:44, 65; 16:7-15**

It is the Holy Spirit that is the giver of all positive virtues and evil takes over once the Holy Spirit starts to hold back. **Galatians 5:16-25**

4. There will come a day when the Wicked person, the Son of Perdition will be allowed to come on the world scene but he will ultimately be destroyed by Jesus. **2 Thessalonians 2:8**
5. This man will be working through the power of Satan and will perform miracles, signs and lying wonders and large number of people will believe him and become his followers. **verse 9-10**
6. Since the people are flocking to the Devil's man, God will get angry, and as a judgment, He will send strong delusion to the people following this man so that they will be judged and damned to hell. **verses 11-12**

SUMMARY

It was only a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and Paul affirmed that the second coming of Jesus would not take place until the "son of perdition" had first come and established his rule on the earth.

Thus the term "**the imminent return of Jesus**" should be replaced with "**the imminent coming of the Wicked One.**"

After the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the term of "Antichrist" would not be used for a number of years and the understanding of a global world dictatorship would not be revealed to the Christian community until after 90 A.D., when Jesus gave the very detailed revelation to the apostle John.

The scenario of the end times is found in the Book of Revelation.

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?