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"The Desire of All Nations Shall Come."

– Hag. 2:7.

In the interpretation of prophecy, it is important that we should recognize the perspective principle on which it is based.

Several trees in the distance, in the same direction, appear near to each other, though quite a distance apart. The space between them becomes apparent only as you approach them. The eye of the prophet is permitted to see future events on the same principle, and though events may be centuries, or even millenniums, apart, unless there are prophetic periods given to locate them, it is impossible for us to determine how far apart they will be in fulfillment.

Isa. 9:6,7, relating to the birth, development, reign and final triumph of our Lord, is a clear case of the perspective. Though written nearly eight centuries before the birth of Christ, the present tense is used: "Unto us a child is born," &c., and though the fulfillment requires ages, the prophecy is but a few words, without even a hint of the long time required.

Another case in point, is the prophecy of the work of Messiah. Isa. 61:1,3. This work among other things both before and after is: "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, – and the day of vengeance of our God." Christ himself "rightly divided" this scripture, not reading the latter part, because it was not yet due, and of what he read, added: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Luke 4:21.

The day of vengeance was an age in the future when he spoke.

The coming of Christ is on the same principle foretold as if it were a single event. The phrases "First Advent" and "Second Advent" are not scriptural. And though we do not object to their use, and will use them by way of accommodation, we nevertheless believe that the

impression made is often anti-scriptural. Our aim is to remove misapprehensions as far as possible. We believe that the coming of Christ is properly one great and comprehensive manifestation; but that the process includes several lesser comings or manifestations as parts or stages of the whole. This fact was made the stone of stumbling to the Jew, and it probably will prove to be such to many Christians.

That the prophecies of Christ's glory and kingdom were not fulfilled when he came in the flesh, is true, and as that was what the Jew had in mind, he failed to see the sufferings of Christ (Isa. 53), and so he was rejected by them. It seems strange that any now should claim that in his incarnation and humiliation he came as "The Desire of all nations," in face of the fact that he did not come to any but one nation.

The limited commission: "Go not in the way of the Gentiles," found its sanction in Christ's own words: "For I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Will any one in the face of this say he came then to all nations? The first thing Christ did for the world was to die for them and that not until he had given up the nation to whom he was sent. He was not desired even by that nation. He was "as a root out of dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men," &c. No clearer pen picture could have been given, than Isa. 53, of the estimate his nation placed on him and the manner in which they treated him. "He came unto his own and his own received him not." "The foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." "We will not have this man to rule over us." "We have no king but Caesar." "Away with him; crucify him." These and many other facts prove conclusively that Christ in the flesh was not the Desire of any nation.

It is evident that the shaking of the nations and the overthrow of kingdoms referred to in our text and context are to precede his coming as the Desire of all Nations. Therefore Paul's reference to the language

and his location of it in the future in his day (Heb. 12:26-7), confirm our conclusion that this scripture was not fulfilled at what we familiarly call "The First Advent." Then will it be fulfilled when he appears the "Second time?" Perhaps nearly all would answer, "Certainly." But we are compelled to think differently. Heb. 9:29, is, we believe, the only place in the bible where the word second occurs in connection with Christ's coming. And certainly nothing in this makes it impossible that other comings should follow. Mark, we do not affirm that what is here called the second is not elsewhere referred to, but that when the coming is referred to, it does not always refer to the second. We wish to be distinctly understood as claiming that some of the prophecies of Christ's coming will be fulfilled after he has appeared the second time.

Our question is, Is he the Desire of all nations at the second appearing? If not, there will be another coming, for God's word will be fulfilled. Paul's statement is: "To them that look for him will he appear the second time." Do the nations look for him? Do they desire him? No. Not even the professed church desire his coming. They say they love him, but do not want him to come "in our day." They say they care not if he comes not for "ten thousand years," or even if he never comes, for they expect to die and go to him; but they DO NOT WANT TO GO? God has given us the love of life, and the instincts of men are often better than their theology. Brethren, you ought to know that you can not be with him till he comes. He said, "I will come again and receive you to myself." At his coming the dead in Christ rise and the living are changed and caught away to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Comforting words! 1 Thess. 4:13-18. These are doubtless in reference to his second coming, **[R60 : page 6]** because it is to them that look for him. There is a company who want him to come. The little flock, the chaste virgin espoused, want to see the Bridegroom. They love his appearing, and Paul says that all such, as well as himself, will receive a crown of righteousness

in that day. 2 Tim. 4:8. There is no promise that he will come to them that do not look for, or who do not love his appearing. And there is no promise that any mortal eye will see him at his second coming. Those to whom he then appears are to be changed, made like him, and shall see him as he is.

"Behold he cometh with clouds and every eye shall see him," is a sample of passages often quoted against our position. But this is one of the evidences of our position. The nature of events prove that the "coming with clouds" is not the second coming. He will come in all his glory, and in his kingdom, but not until after the saints are with him. When he thus appears to the world, to men in the flesh, to "every eye," the saints are with him. This is represented by a beautiful picture of the grand manifestation, on the mount of transfiguration. Moses and Elias appear with him in glory. Brethren, do not confound this grand event with a previous one of his coming to raise the dead. Three comes after two, just as certainly as two comes after one. The same truth is stated by Paul. "When he shall appear we also shall appear with him in glory." What is true of the Head is true of the Body. It is called "the manifestation of the sons of God." Rom. 8:19.

The church's hope is the "redemption [R60 : page 7] of our body," verse 23, and is reached at the second appearing; but the world's hope is in the "manifestation of the Sons," – the Head and Body complete, – the promised "Seed" whose work it is to crush the Serpent and bless all nations.

God made the creature subject to vanity but in hope. Ver. 20. And it is declared that the groaning creation "itself also (as well as the church who had the first fruits of the spirit) shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Ver. 21.

It is claimed by some that this manifestation is but a later stage of the "Second Advent" than his coming for his saints. To this idea we

would not object so much, for the order of events being admitted, would prevent the blinding effect of the popular view of expecting him to come for them and come with them and do a dozen other things "in a moment" as it were, and without any order. But we are convinced that as his coming in the flesh was to the fleshly house of Israel, and only those knew it who were in the light. So his second coming is to the church, "to them that look for him" and the world will know nothing about it until it is past. That the second advent has its different stages and covers a considerable period of time, as well as the first advent we fully believe. Just as surely as the High Priests coming out was a work of time and had its stages, so surely our High Priest will fulfill them for not a jot or tittle can pass unfulfilled. The first step in type was to leave the most holy, then he tarried in the holy place to cleanse it before coming to the people, and when he had done all, it was to them that waited for him he came. This too is the very subject under consideration by Paul when he says: "As – and so ...to them that look for him will he appear the second time." His coming does not always refer to coming from Heaven, but is a manifestation, or it may be taking or coming into a new position or relationship.

As a babe he came at his birth. He had come, but he had not come fully, i.e. all the steps had not been taken. So John preached "before his coming." Acts 13:24. John says, "there cometh one after me" and again "that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." John 1:31. So Jesus was manifested as the Christ i.e. Anointed, by being anointed with water and that which it represented – the Holy Spirit.

He then entered on the harvest work, but not until three and one-half years later did he fulfill the prophecy, "Behold thy King cometh." First the birth, then the anointing, and last the manifestation as their King; but these were none of them coming from heaven. His return from heaven is a coming, but every coming is not a return, at the

second, any more than at the first. That Christ will have come as a king – i.e., have entered upon the office of king – even before the living church are translated, is evident from the parable of the King inspecting the guests before the marriage. "And when he had returned, having received the kingdom," &c. Luke 19:15. Then follow the inspection of all the servants and the reward of the faithful. The President must be inaugurated in his office before he can properly appoint his Cabinet; So Christ has his official honor conferred before he can share it with others. And be it remembered that his saints are in office as ruling princes, before the kingdoms are cast down. The Kingdom of God is set up before the kingdoms of earth fall, for it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms. Dan. 2:44. "This honor have all the saints." (Ps. 149.) This overthrow of the kingdoms by the strong hand of judgment, is what will break the proud spirit of the nations: "For when his judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Isa. 26:9. Together with these judgments the everlasting gospel will be preached: "Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come." Rev. 14: "And all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest." 15:4.

Thus the great change will be wrought, the proud spirit broken, men feel their weakness, and the "Desire of all nations will come." The Royal Seed, both head and body, having been exalted – Christ first, to prepare a place in the Father's house of many mansions; then the saints, gone to be with him in the house prepared: then will the Lord behold the earth, looking down from the height of his sanctuary, and hearing the groaning of the prisoner, deliverance will come. "When the people are gathered together and the kingdoms to serve the Lord." Ps. 102:19-22. Thus in due time, though it has not been at any time in the past, Christ will be the consolation of all nations.

J. H. P.

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Loss and Gain.

We lose this month one of our special contributors. Bro. A. D. Jones felt a strong desire for some time to give more of his time to preaching the glad tidings. He started out this month, going wherever the Lord may open the way. God will bless him in his endeavor to bless others. May he be used to the glory of our Lord.

Our brother has other [business] calls upon whatever spare time he may have, and asks to be excused as a regular correspondent; so what is the people's gain is the WATCH TOWER'S loss. We hope, however, for occasional brief articles from his pen.

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A Request.

Can you spare an October copy of ZION'S WATCH TOWER? The edition is entirely exhausted, and if you have a copy for which you have no further use, it would be thankfully received at this office. We are short about fifty copies for new subscribers, &c.
