

## "Seeing" Christ at His Coming (Parousia)

The following verse has caused considerable doubt in the minds of many Christians that Christ has already come back to earth.

1. Matthew 24:30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

These well-meaning Christians I speak of point to the verse above and conclude that Christ could not have come back as there is no biblical evidence to show that anyone has "...seen the Son of man coming in the clouds..." as this verse seems to demand.

To begin our study of this subject, let us first look at what Jesus Himself said to Caiaphas the high priest.

2. Matthew 26:64 Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

3. In the verse above, who did Jesus say would SEE the Son of man (Christ) "...coming in the clouds...?" Jesus uses the word "ye" which denotes Caiaphas, the high priest to whom He was speaking.

It is obvious from the biblical text that Caiaphas understood what Jesus had just said.

4. Matthew 26:63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

5. What was the question that Caiaphas had asked Jesus in the verse above? Caiaphas had asked Jesus if He was "the Son of God."

The answer that Jesus gave to Caiaphas was His formal proclamation that He was indeed the Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah! The answer that Jesus gave to Caiaphas is the reason Caiaphas took the following action and made the following statement.

6. Matthew 26:65 Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! 66 What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."

7. What was it that Caiaphas said and did in response to what Jesus had said? Caiaphas rent his clothes and said that Jesus had blasphemed.

Although an important aspect of the above sequence of verses is important in establishing Jesus' claim to His Messiahship (being the Son of God), my main point is that the wording of the scripture clearly indicates that Caiaphas and others living at that time would SEE Jesus come back as He would be "*coming on the clouds.*" But their SEEING was not to be a physical, bodily coming of Christ, but rather an apocalyptic coming! Jesus did not have to

be bodily present at the destruction of Jerusalem in order for His presence to be perceived.

Let us look at this understanding of "*coming*" and "*seeing*" that I have just introduced to you because my point is that Jesus did "*come*" in AD 70, but not in bodily or physical form!

8. Genesis 11:5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.

In the verse above, it states that "*...the Lord came down to see the city and the town* [of Babel], but it does not say that He was seen physically.

9. A question we should ask ourselves here is: How did He "*come down*" in the verse above? God "*came down*" and was seen in the judgment He brought upon the people by scattering them over the face of the earth (See Genesis 11:8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.)

10. Read Exodus 3:8. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites

In the verse above, it is recorded that the Lord came "*down to deliver*" but it does not say He was seen physically.

11. Here we must again ask the question, How did He "*come down*?" God "*came down*" and was "*seen*" by the judgments upon the land of Egypt until Pharaoh finally let the people go from the country and their enslavement.

12. Exodus 19:18 Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain<sup>[a]</sup> quaked greatly.

In the verse above, it is recorded that "*...the Lord descended upon it* [Mt. Sinai] *in fire*..." but it does not state that Moses saw Him physically.

13. Exodus 19:20 Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

In the verse above, it is recorded that "*...the Lord came down upon mount Sinai*..." but it does not state that Moses saw Him physically.

14. Exodus 34:5 Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

In the verse above, it is recorded that "*...the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him* [Moses] *there*..." but it does not say He was seen physically.

15. Psalm 18:9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down with darkness under His feet.

In the verse above, it is recorded that the Lord "...came down..." but it does not say He was seen physically.

16. Psalm 72:6 He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, like showers that water the earth.

In the verse above, it is recorded that "*He [God] shall come down like rain....*" This is a simile and the verse does not suggest that God was to come in visible or personal form.

17. Isaiah 64:3 When You did awesome things for which we did not look, you came down, the mountains shook at Your presence.

In the verse above, it is recorded that the Lord "...camest down..." but it does not say He was seen physically.

I have presented the scriptures above to illustrate the biblical fact that the "*coming of God*" or His appearance, (even His Parousia) does not require that He be seen bodily or in a physical manner. At Babel He scattered the people and in this action He had "*come down*," but He was not seen physically. In Egypt He delivered His people from the Egyptian slavery. He "*came down*" to accomplish this and can be "*seen*" in the deliverance of His people, but He was not seen bodily or in a physical manner.

So it is with our opening passages of Matthew 24:30 and 26:64. In the details of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 by the Roman armies, God "*came down*" [back] and His coming [Parousia] was in judgment on Israel and at the same time a blessing to His church as they were released from the persecution being brought against them by the Jewish system of religion which was severely antagonistic toward their belief in the Messiah.

Jesus had told Caiaphas and others that they would "...see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" and they DID! Not with their physical third dimension eyesight, but with the eyes of their understanding and their perception when the judgment fell upon Jerusalem. To "see" meant to recognize, to be aware of or to perceive. Seeing Jesus is not always accomplished in a physical manner. When Jesus spoke to His disciples about His leaving this earth He said, "*Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more: but ye see me...*" (John 14:19. Jesus was speaking to them about being in them at a later time which is the same as "seeing" Jesus! Jesus did come again later, and His presence was literally IN THEM, but it was not a physical seeing but a spiritual seeing.

In the same way, when the Son of man came in His kingdom the tribes of the land did "...see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30), however, it was not a physical person that they saw nor did they see Him with their physical eyes, but they did know that He had come (Parousia, presence)!