

Doctrine of Faith

I Believe...

Stanford E. Murrell

1. I believe that Jesus Christ is today, tomorrow and forever King of kings and Lord of lords.
 - *Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

2. I believe that Jesus Christ is today, tomorrow and forever presented as the King of His people embodied in the holy nation called the church.
 - *1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

3. I believe that Jesus Christ will one day return to earth in the same manner as He went away and in no other manner.
 - *Acts 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

4. I believe that Jesus Christ is coming the second time for all that believe.
 - *Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

Observation

It is my understanding that the Second Coming of Christ is not said in Scripture to be in stages or phases but is set forth as a single event. Therefore, any system of theology which advocates what is logically a third coming of Christ should be subject to serious examination since no historic creed of Christendom [that I am aware of] has ever indicated a literal coming of Christ distinct from Hebrews 9:28 and Acts 1:11 separated by seven years and going in an opposite direction. Jude 3 instructs the church to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Respect can be shown towards those who have come to embrace a third coming of Christ “for” His saint and then “with” His saints. However, my own concern would be to know if such a view is within the historic Christian faith and if so who taught it, when and where and beyond that is such a view simply and clearly set forth in Scripture.

I believe that when Jesus Christ returns the second time for all that believe it will be a glorious appearance so that it is neither secret nor silent but for all the world to see. Many saints will rise to greet the descending Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet [Gk. greet] the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

5. I believe that on the day Christ returns not everyone shall die. Some will be transformed as death is swallowed up in victory.

- *1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

6. I believe that when Jesus Christ returns openly the second time for all that believe He will establish His reign on earth over all men and nations in a more visible manner for the entire world to see.

- *1 Timothy 6: 14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.*

The details and duration of this coming “millennial” reign of Christ is subject to debate. Some believe that there will be death during the millennial. Some believe there will be the reinstatement of animal sacrifices. Some believe in multiple resurrections: at rapture, at the end of a tribulation period, at the end of the millennial reign and another resurrection after the “little season” following a thousand year reign. Some believe the reign of Christ will end to be followed by an outburst of satanic activity. In other words human history at the end of the millennial reign of Christ is no different than what it was prior to the Lord’s coming.

Personally, I must confess I do not find any of these details clearly found in the New Testament Scripture from which the Church should gather its eschatology. Nevertheless I am willing to look at any biblical evidence for multiple resurrections though I find appealing the simplicity of the words of Christ in John 5:28,

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

I am willing to look at any biblical evidence for more death after it has been swallowed up in victory, and I am willing to examine the arguments for the reinstatement of animal sacrifices though with Paul in Galatians 4:9-11 my first question would be, “How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? 10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. 11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”

7. I believe that when Christ returns and establishes a more visible expression of His reign on earth it will last forever and ever because there will be a new heaven and a new earth for the present heaven and earth shall be destroyed.
 - *2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.*

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A Personal Confession of Faith in Summary

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I believe that when Jesus Christ returns openly the second time for all that believe He will establish His reign on earth over all men and nations in a more visible manner for the entire world to see. There will be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.