

QUESTION: Why did the Jews misunderstand the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah by thinking the battle of Armageddon would happen when He came?

ANSWER: Many times, God gave the prophecies of the Messiah's first coming and second coming TOGETHER, so it APPEARED that these two events would happen at the same time. Jesus Himself, and the Holy Spirit through the apostle Peter in Acts, show us where the division comes. The Jews refusal to accept Jesus as their Messiah **blinded them** to receiving any FURTHER TRUTH or understanding of the Old Testament prophecies. They had CLOSED THEIR MINDS to the truth, and did not accept God's own explanation of those prophecies.

- **Isaiah 61:1-2** "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has **anointed Me** to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God...." "Messiah" and "Christ" both mean "**anointed one**".
- **Luke 4:17-21** "And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has **anointed Me** to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, '**Today this scripture is FULFILLED** in your HEARING.'"

Jesus ended His reading of this prophecy about Himself in Isaiah after the words "proclaim the FAVORABLE year (the YEAR of GRACE) of the Lord." **He STOPPED reading BEFORE** "the DAY of VENGEANCE of our God." The only part of this prophecy that was fulfilled in Jesus' first coming was the part UP UNTIL "the day of vengeance." THE DAY OF VENGEANCE will be some time in the future, during the Great Tribulation and the battle of Armageddon, when God pours out His wrath and anger (JUDGMENT) against sin and rebellious mankind on the earth. God's AGE OF GRACE has continued for nearly two thousand years, simply because it IS God's grace. He could bring His judgment upon the earth at any time, but He is merciful and gracious, and is allowing time for MANY people to be saved.

- **Read Joel 2:28-32 & 3:1-16** "And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh (mankind); and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions." (Verse 32) "And it will come about that **whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered (saved)**" (Joel 3:1-2) "For behold, IN THOSE DAYS and AT THAT TIME, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations, and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then **I will enter into judgment** with them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have divided up My land." (Verses 12-14) "Let the nations be aroused and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For **the DAY OF THE LORD** is near in the valley of decision (God's verdict)." (For more on the battle of Armageddon, see Revelation 16:12-19; Rev. 19:11-21; Zechariah 12:1-11 & Zech. 14:1-9)
- **Read Acts 2:16-21** "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass **in the last days**, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your

old men shall dream dreams." (Verse 21) "And it shall come to pass that **whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, **STOPS quoting this prophecy from Joel** BEFORE the part about the "valley of Jehoshaphat" * where He will "enter into JUDGMENT with them there" and "valley of Jehoshaphat" where "I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations" and "multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." The first part of this prophecy in Joel was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, when Peter was speaking (and continues to be fulfilled today), but the rest of the prophecy CONCERNING JUDGMENT will be fulfilled in the future.

In both the Isaiah 61 and Joel 2 & 3 prophecies, God Himself tells us where the division is. Because the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah, they have refused to recognize God's own statement regarding the timing of these events. Those who were SINCERE SEEKERS of God, whose HEARTS were right with God, DID recognize and accept Jesus as their Messiah (see Luke 2:25-38, Simeon and Anna). Over two hundred prophecies concerning the Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus' first coming, and only those whose HEARTS WERE HARDENED could have failed to recognize Him. Jesus' own disciples were confused about WHAT Jesus would do and WHEN, until AFTER the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost.

- **Acts 1:6-7** "Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, 'Lord, will You AT THIS TIME restore the kingdom to Israel?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.'"

Another thing that confuses people is the difference between the terms "the LAST DAYS" and "the DAY of the LORD." We are IN "the last days" now, and have been since Jesus went back to heaven, but we are not yet in "the day of the Lord." The DAY OF THE LORD is the Second Coming of Jesus to JUDGE the EARTH (the same as "the day of vengeance" above).

* - The name Jehoshaphat means "God judges" (YHWH judges). It is the same as the valley of Armageddon.