



Prophecy of Messiah's Physical Birth, Gen 3:15; Difference between "Imminent" & "Immediate"; Principles on Mediator, Hypostatic Union, & the Body of Christ

- (16) Therefore the Seed spoken of in Genesis 3:15 would be such a personality. By definition this Messiah would be a mediator who could represent both parties:

Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Dictionary*. 3d ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 708:

Mediation. The following features of doctrine are of chief importance: (1) The necessity for mediation arises from the holiness [integrity] of God and the sinfulness of man. (2) Christ is the only mediator. (3) In Christ are found the necessary qualifications for this work. (1) He is the God-man. It was essential that the mediator be divine; otherwise he could not be the perfect revelation of God to men, nor be the source of spiritual and eternal life to believers, nor control all events for the final consummation of his kingdom. It was necessary that he should also be human; otherwise he could not have died to redeem us, nor stood as our representative before God's law, nor partaken in human experiences, nor be united with us in common nature. (2) He was without sin. As under the law the sacrifice laid upon the altar must be without blemish, so the "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world" must himself be free from sin, otherwise his sacrifice would not have been acceptable; he could not have access to God, nor be the source of holy life for his people.

17. These requirements for mediator mean that the Messiah must possess simultaneously the nature of God and the nature of man. This is called the hypostatic union:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *Christian Integrity*. 2d ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1997), 179-80:

The term "hypostatic" is derived from the Greek **ὑπόστασις** (*hypostasis*), "essence, substance." Jesus Christ is "the exact image of [God's] *hypostasis* or divine essence" (Hebrews 1:3); He is God. Christ unites in Himself the essence of God and the essence of man, forming a new *hypostasis* or essence, the hypostatic union, the God-Man. (p. 179)

The hypostatic union is the complete Person of Christ, His two natures combined in one Person. As stated in theological phraseology:

In the person of the incarnate Christ are two natures inseparably united but without mixture or loss of separate identities, without loss or transfer of properties or attributes, the union being both personal and eternal. (p. 180)

18. Consequently we can see that in order for the salvation of the human race to occur this Messiah-Mediator must enter into human history by means of childbirth.
19. It became immediately obvious to Lucifer that if this hypostatic union was allowed to occur and if His substitutionary sacrifice should be successful that he would suffer a strategic loss in the appeal trial.
20. Therefore, Lucifer began a campaign to destroy the line of Christ, by carrying out a sequence of assaults on the lines of Adam, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, and his progeny which we have examined in great detail.
21. From our present study we have come to recognize a peripheral campaign directed toward the remainder of the human race designed to diminish the pool of candidates for selection to human life.



22. If Lucifer could mount a campaign that would effectively diminish, deemphasize, or even destroy the divine institutions then to that degree he would be able to prevent, at best, or delay, at worst, the birth of the Messiah-Mediator.
23. One of his most effective instruments in the Old Testament was anti-Semitism but it failed to prevent the Incarnation, the cross, and the resurrection.
24. Now that we are in post-cross history, Lucifer is confronted with a new dilemma: No longer are Jews his only adversary. Every person born becomes a candidate for membership in the Body of Christ.
25. Those who are selected have human life. Those who have human life have free will. Those who have free will are candidates for evangelism. Those who believe in Christ are elected. Those who are elected are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ and become members of the royal family of God.
26. Once the royal family of God is completed, the Church is resurrected as the Body of Christ to become the Bride of Christ.
27. It is during the Church Age that the Body of Christ is formed on earth. When the body of Christ is completed, then the rapture will occur.
28. Since there is no prophecy in the Church Age except for this terminal event then the rapture stands imminent.
29. It could occur at any time since no one knows the day or the hour. The Rapture will occur when the last member of the body of Christ is saved.
30. It is important that we clearly define the difference between imminent and immediate.

Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "imminent":

Of an event: Impending threateningly, hanging over one's head; ready to befall or overtake one.

Oxford, s.v. "immediate & immediately":

Taking effect without delay or lapse of time; Done at once; instant; with nothing intervening in time, space, order, or succession; next.

31. That which is considered *immediate* is expected to occur at once, instantly, without delay, or lapse of time.
32. That which is considered *imminent* is considered an impending threat, ready to befall someone, but the exact timing of its occurrence is not known.
33. In order to consider the rapture as an *immediate* event requires there to be some sign, historical trend, or fulfilled prophecy that signals its occurrence.
34. Biblical passages that offer historical downtrends as harbingers for national discipline, such as 2 Timothy 3:1-7, or passages that reveal events prophetic of the Second Advent, such as Matthew 24, are often misapplied to the rapture.



35. This mistake causes certain theologians to assert that apostasy in the land means that the rapture is immediately upon us. Others maintain that the establishment of the nation Israel in 1948 is a clear sign the rapture is immediate.
36. However, there is absolutely no passage in the New Testament that reveals any prophecy regarding the Church Age, except for its beginning and its end. Therefore there is no prophecy to be fulfilled before the rapture *may* occur.
37. This means the rapture could occur at any moment, but this was as true in the first century as it is today and one cannot logically conclude that an event that has been impending for over 19-hundred years is *immediate*.
38. The best word to describe the place of the rapture on God's timetable is *imminency*. Imminency means impending, or threatening to occur but it does not necessarily mean immediately.
39. There is reason to believe that some things are going to occur immediately while others are imminent. For example, if at the two-minute warning of Super Bowl XXXVIII, Team A has a two-score lead, has control of the ball with first down, and its opponent has no times-out, then Team A's victory is imminent. Once the clock runs down to :00 then possession of the Vince Lombardi Trophy becomes immediate.
40. The day the rapture does occur it will be both imminent and immediate, but until then it must be considered imminent but not necessarily immediate.
41. What distinguishes the difference is God's plan for the Church Age and the circumstances in that plan which must be fulfilled before the rapture may occur.
42. I contend that there is a specific event that must occur before the rapture may occur. This event is not revealed by prophecy but may be discerned by a doctrinal rationale.
43. Once I explain it, you will be no more informed about when the rapture will occur than you are now but you will understand the meaning of imminency and why it is not necessarily immediate.
44. In order to develop this rationale we must consider some principles from the doctrine of the Body of Christ.

Principles from the Doctrine of the Body of Christ

I. Definition and Description:

1. The phrase "Body of Christ" is used to describe all those who believe in Christ for salvation during the Church Age.
2. Those who believe are called the *elect*. Those who are elected are the ones who, after having heard the gospel, respond with faith alone to its message of salvation.
3. The presentation of the gospel is referred to as "the call" and may be thought of as a divine invitation to eternal life.



4. God knew in eternity past each person who would use his free will to believe in Christ. Our ability to understand this form of divine perception requires us to take the simultaneous acts of God in eternity past and separate them into their component parts.
5. *Omniscience* is the knowledge possessed by God pertaining to all the events related to human history with emphasis on the thoughts, decisions, and actions of the entire human race.
6. Omniscience is also able to distinguish what actually occurs in human history from those things that potentially could occur but do not.
7. In order to illustrate, imagine that what God discerns will actually occur in human history is fed into a computer. The stored facts are called the *Divine Decrees*.