

Heretical Views on the Second Coming of Christ

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Introduction

The early Christians had the biblical impetus to expect Christ's return shortly after His First Advent. For instance, they asked, saying, "*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" (Acts 1:6). As Christianity began to apostatize through the proto-catholic influence of Gnosticism, its eschatology became more credulous in date-fixing, contrary to Scripture's affirmation that even the Son would not know: "*But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father*" (Mk. 13:32). Here are some of the efforts of apostate Christianity (and post-Christian culture) to date setting:

1. AD 1000—the thought of millennialism became prevalent within the RCC and focus was upon the outset of the second millennium.

2. AD 1666—with the bubonic plague and the great fire of London occurring, many in Western Europe thought this was the year of the Antichrist's appearing.

3. AD 1843-44—William Miller and his followers predicted that Christ would come sometime between 1843 and 1844, based on a faulty interpretation of Dan. 8:14.

4. AD 1914, 1918, 1920, 1925, 1941, 1975, 1994—Charles Russell and the Jehovah Witness cult predicted these various years.

5. AD 1984—many thought that "big brother" in Orson Well's book *1984* would bring the end of all things.

6. AD 1988—this year became a favorite among evangelical Christians who thought that the conclusion of the forty year generation (cf. Mt. 24:34) since the May 15, 1948 founding of Israel as a nation (cf. Isa. 66:7-8) would usher in the Tribulation preceded by the Rapture.

7. AD 2000¹—combining the Y2K phenomenon (all computer's internal clocks recalculated and causing international chaos)² with Hal Lindsay's conjecture that since Israel did not have her land until the 1967 War, the forty years generation prediction jumps to 2007, minus the seven year Tribulation, giving the Rapture in 2000.

8. AD 2012—the Hollywood movie *2012* popularized this date based on internet pseudo-science visualizing various catastrophes hitting and destroying the earth.

I. Pagan Views on the End of the World

¹One should observe that 2000 divided by 3 gives 666.6667, the Devil's number!

²Gary North predicted "The Millennium Bug will hit in 2000...we are facing a breakdown of civilization if the power grid goes down." Mark Hitchcock, *2012-The Bible and the End of the World* (Eugene OR: Harvest House Publ., 2009), p. 15.

A. Mayan³ Eschatology

1. Supposedly the “Long Count” calendar in classical Mayan literature (Dresden and Madrid codices) ends on December 21, 2012, ushering in cataclysmic events worldwide.

2. Mayan scholars correlated the Mesoamerican Long Count calendar to the modern western calendar and calculated that the Mayan 5125 year long cycle will culminate on Dec. 21, 2012, the winter solstice.

3. The Mayans kept three calendars, one celestial (solar), one ceremonial, and one cyclical (starting with the mythical creation date of 3114 BC). The 5125 cycle will end on 12.21.12, coinciding with cosmic alignments and bring destruction.⁴

B. New Age Eschatology

1. The New Age movement, popularized in the 1960’s, is really the Old Gnosticism of the Garden, based on Satan’s two lies of deification and deathlessness of man (Gen. 3:4-5). New Agers believe that mankind is evolving spiritually and will experience “planetary consciousness” and “global transformation.”

2. This metaphysical sentiment is expressed in John Jenkins’s musing, saying, “The ancient Maya understood something about the nature of the cosmos and the spiritual evolution of humanity that has gone unrecognized in our own worldview. The understanding involves our alignment with the center of the Galaxy, our cosmic center and source, and identifies A.D. 2012 as a time of tremendous transformation and opportunity for spiritual growth a transition from one World Age to another.”⁵

C. Pseudo-Science Eschatology

1. The Planet X Hypothesis—some theorize that the so-called 10th planet (2003UB313) or Nibiru, which cosmic “flyby” will wreak havoc on the sun and the entire solar system, will occur sometime in 2012.

2. The Magnetic Poles Reversal—Patrick Geryl, whose view was popularized by the ABC news interview, predicts that the magnetic poles of the sun will reverse affecting the earth’s poles, causing major earthquakes, volcanoes and tidal waves. He predicts in his book *How to Survive 2012* the following cataclysmic scenarios:

- a. All satellites will be destroyed by cosmic dust.
- b. Tremendous volcano activity will throw the earth into a nuclear winter.
- c. The USA and Europe will enter a new ice age.
- d. Sea transportation will cease because of mega tidal waves.
- e. Nuclear plants will be destroyed and release radioactive contamination.

³The Maya Indians occupied eastern Mexico from about 1500 BC to AD 800. Their origin and demise are mysterious, as they were a fierce warrior group with vast buildings in their compounds.

⁴*Vide* Hitchcock, pp. 27-42, for a relatively easy to understand synopsis of the Mayan Apocalypse.

⁵John M. Jenkins, *Maya Cosmogogenesis 2012* (Rochester, VT: Bear & Company, n.d.), XXXV.

f. Electromagnetic storms will destroy all electrical communication and air travel.⁶

3. Global Warming—culminating this political agenda of Global Warming will be the peak surge of the eleven year cycle of sunspots in 2012, causing a mega solar storm which will initiate tidal waves to peak, and will “fry” all electrical systems.

D. Hollywood Eschatology

1. In a series of apocalyptic movies embracing all kinds of false theories about doomsday, Hollywood writers have impacted the Western world with pagan concepts about “Armageddon” in their “doom boom” agenda.

2. Some of the recent and popular movies include *Armageddon*, *I am Legend*, *The Road*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *Terminator Salvation*, and of course *2012*.

II. Pseudo-Christian Views on the Second Coming of Christ

A. Millerites

1. Named after the founder, William Miller (1782-1849), the movement gained popularity with Miller’s prediction that Christ would come back sometime between 1843 and 1844.

2. Miller identified with his Baptist roots after a short stint with deism, and began to study Scripture. During the years of 1818 and 1823 he developed his eschatological position based solely on Daniel’s prophecy, which states “*And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed*” (Dan. 8:14).

3. He interpreted the verse to teach that from the time of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (457 BC) as predicted in Ezra 1:2-3 (“*Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, [he is the God,] which is in Jerusalem*”), Christ would come back and purge the earth with fire 2300 years later.

4. Simple math shows that plus 2300 years minus 457 BC equals AD 1843. He and his followers, convinced by his preaching and his tract entitled “*Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ, about the Year 1844: Exhibited in a Course of Lectures,*” gave up their possessions and awaited for the Second Coming of Christ. Following the Great Disappointment, many Millerites went back to their former churches, although some devotees eventually ended up with Ellen G. White and the Seventh Day Adventists (1863).

5. Miller’s interpretation was flawed for several reasons:

⁶Patrick Geryl, *How to Survive 2012: Tactics and Survival Places for the Coming Pole Shift* (Kempton, IL: Adventures Unlimited Press, 2007), p. 67.

a. The Hebrew of Dan. 8:14 reads literally “*evenings and mornings*” (בִּקְרָב עֶרְבַּי וּבֹקֵרַי) rather than “years.” The duration would be 2300 days of evenings and mornings.

b. The *terminus a qua* (beginning point) would be from the mid-point of the Tribulation (“*transgression of desolation*” [cf. Dan. 9:27 and 12:11]) forward 2300 days, or going into the Millennium for 1040 days (2300 days – 1260 days = 1040 days) before the Millennial Temple is cleansed and ready for Jehovah worship.

B. Jehovah Witnesses

1. The Jehovah witnesses are a millenarian restorationist cult focused around the teachings of Charles Russell (1852-1916) and Joseph Rutherford (1869-1942).

2. These men taught that the world would enter into the last days in 1914, preparing the way for God to bring destruction upon the world system. All other religions and denominations are satanic, and when Satan attacks Jehovah Witnesses, the Great Tribulation will begin with the battle of Armageddon. To them, Jesus Christ reigns from heaven invisibly, and His *parousia* (“presence”) deals with duration and not an event. Their “failed predictions” are really not as such, but the result of progressive revelation concerning the finality.

3. Jeremiah 14:14 speaks about false prophets similar to the Jehovah Witnesses, saying, “*Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name (i.e. Jehovah Witnesses): I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.*”

C. Harold Camping

1. The founder of the Family Radio Program (1961), Harold Egbert Camping (1921-present), has gained a large following with his predictions of the Second Coming of Christ. He announced that the church age was over and only his predictions were valid.

2. He had predicted that Christ would come in May 21, 1988, and then again in his publication *1994?* he predicted the date of Sept. 6, 1994.

3. Finally, he predicted that the Rapture would occur on May 21, 2011 and the end of the world on October 21, 2011. Since his failed prophesy of May 21, 2011, he has suffered a stroke, but the Family Radio Program continues (retaining the donations of duped devotees), holding that Christ came back spiritually on May 21, 2011.

4. Being an engineer by training, Camping applied his interpretive math skills to the Bible and concluded that the Flood was 4990 BC. Furthermore, since the Lord said “*For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth...*” (Gen. 7:4), and since a day with the Lord is a thousand years (cf. II Pet. 3:8), then 7000 years added to 4990 BC equals AD 2011, and the 17th day and the second month (cf. Gen. 7:11) equals May 21.

- a. The date of 4990 BC for the Flood is speculative at best and based on no internal biblical evidence.
- b. The effort to apply II Pet. 3:8 to biblical chronology has as its fruit the history of failed prophecies.

III. Dispensational Fundamentalist's Errors Relating to the Rapture

A. "Seven Church Ages"

1. The Scofield Reference Bible (1909, 1917) became the Bible of fundamentalism, and its dispensationalism became attractive to many fundamental Baptists. The notes of this reference Bible, named after C. I. Scofield (1843-1921), promoted and popularized seven distinct dispensations or stewardships between Creation and Final Judgment.

2. Although the editors of the Scofield Reference Bible held to an imminent, pre-Tribulation Rapture, the notes seemed contradict this position.

3. C. I. Scofield held to a universal, invisible church/mystical body view that all Christians are in the "Church." Therefore, according to his notes, Rev. 1-3 refers to the history of this universal church. The notes on Rev. 1:20 state: "(4) prophetic, as disclosing **seven phases of the spiritual history of the church** from, say, A.D. 96 to the end. It is incredible that in a prophecy covering the church period, there should be no such foreview. These messages must contain that foreview if it is in the book at all, for the church does not appear after Rev. 3:22. Again, these messages by their very terms **go beyond the local assemblies** mentioned. Most conclusively of all, these messages **do present an exact foreview of the spiritual history of the church**, and in this precise order. Ephesus gives the general state at the date of the writing; Smyrna, the period of the great persecutions; Pergamos, the church settled down in the world, 'where Satan's throne is,' after the conversion of Constantine, say A.D. 316. Thyatira is the Papacy, developed out of the Pergamos state: Balaamism (worldliness) and Nicolaitanism (priestly assumption) having conquered. As Jezebel brought idolatry into Israel, so Romanism weds Christian doctrine to pagan ceremonies. Sardis is the Protestant Reformation, whose works were not 'fulfilled.' Philadelphia is whatever bears clear testimony to the Word and the Name in the time of self-satisfied profession represented by Laodicea."⁷

4. There are several serious problems with the "Seven Church Ages" view in Revelation 2-3.

⁷Cohen lists the seven ages and approximate ages: Ephesus (Apostolic church) AD 30-100; Smyrna (Persecuted church) AD 100-313; Pergamos (State church) AD 313-590; Thyatira (Papal church) AD 590-1517; Sardis (Reformed church) AD 1517-1790; Philadelphia (Missionary church) AD 1730-1900; Laodicea (Apostate church) AD 1900-present. Gary Cohen, *Understanding Revelation*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), pp. 53-54. LaHaye demurs, saying, "although this time-honored belief that Christ's message to the seven churches includes a prophecy of the seven stages of church history has never been unanimous, it is held by most premillennialists." Tim LaHaye, *Revelation Unveiled* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1999), p. 36.

a. Scofield holds to a Protestant and unbiblical view of church/body. In all contexts of the ecclesiological usage of ἐκκλησία and σῶμα, they refer to NT assemblies of immersed believers (cf. Eph. 1:22-23; I Cor. 12:27).

b. The “spiritual” history is primarily that of the Roman Catholic Church and the Catholic Reformers, hardly spiritual or NT.

c. The time element of “ages” undermines any imminent doctrine of the Second Coming for the first century believers, since Paul taught and believed they had the Blessed Hope (Tit. 2:13; I Thess. 4:17). Some try to counter by saying that the ages could have all occurred in the first century to maintain imminency, but then in what sense are they “ages”?

d. The so-called beginning and ending of the ages are speculative and non-uniform among the devotees of this subjective *eisegesis*.

e. The fallacious interpretations of Protestant theologians, who are not included in the audience to whom Revelation was written,⁸ are not worthy of exposition on the part of NT assembly members.

B. “Rapture of the Church”

1. Again, the Scofield Reference Bible teaches the “Rapture of the Church,” for instance, in notes for I Thes. 4:17 for “caught up,” saying, “Not church saints only, but all bodies of the saved, of whatever dispensation, are included in the first resurrection. See I Cor. 15:52, as here described, but it is peculiarly the ‘**blessed hope**’ of the Church.”

2. Pre-Tribulation Rapturist LaHaye expands on this faulty teaching, saying with regard to Rev. 4:1, “Inasmuch as John was the last remaining apostle and **a member of the universal Church**, his elevation to heaven is a picture of **the Rapture of the Church** just before the Tribulation begins.” *Revelation Unveiled*, p. 99.

3. Again, Clarence Larkin, in his highly illustrated book, *The Book of Revelation—A Study of the Last Prophetic Book of Holy Scripture*, repeatedly refers to the Rapture of the Church (p. 37 *et al*).

4. Significant errors of this expression and sentiment are as follows:

a. Although the expression is extremely popular, it never occurs in I Thessalonians 4, or anywhere in the whole Bible. It is a man-made theological term which must be examined for biblical certitude. “Rapture” comes from the Latin for “to catch away” and is a good theological term for this event. However, “church” does not mean all Christians or all saints. Ecclesologically, ἐκκλησία refers exclusively to baptized church members (e.g., I Cor. 1:2).

b. Paul’s expression is “*the dead in Christ shall arise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together...*” (I Thes. 4:16-17). The event is the catching up (Rapture) of those in Christ. The expression “*in Christ*” is a

⁸Non-baptized, non-NT church member Christians cannot possibly understand the Ἀποκάλυψις fully, since they “are reading someone else’s mail.”

NT soteriological expression referring to those who are regenerated (cf. Jn. 14:20 with Ezk. 36:25-27 and Jer. 31:31 ff.).

c. The Rapture is not the catching away of Baptists only (i.e., Baptist Bride), nor is it the catching away of OT saints, since they anticipated Tribulation then Resurrection (cf. Dan. 12:1-2).

C. “Signs for the Rapture”

1. Israel became a nation in 1948.

a. George Konig, along with many others, gives the common argument for the fulfillment of Isaiah 66:7-8, saying, “In Isaiah 66:7-8, the prophet foreshadowed the re-birth of Israel, which happened ‘in one day.’ The woman giving birth before going into labor represent Israel. This accurately describes what happened on May 14, 1948 - when the Jews declared independence for Israel as a united and sovereign nation for the first time in 2,900 years. During that same day, the United States issued a statement recognizing Israel's sovereignty. And, only hours beforehand, a United Nations mandate expired, ending British control of the land. During a 24-hour span of time, foreign control of the land of Israel had formally ceased, and Israel had declared its independence, and its independence was acknowledged by other nations. Modern Israel was literally was born in a single day. Isaiah said the birth would take place before there would be labor pains. And that too is precisely what happened. A movement called Zionism began in the 1800s to encourage Jews worldwide to move to Israel, which at that time was called Palestine. Within hours of the declaration of independence in 1948, Israel was attacked by the surrounding countries of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. When reading Isaiah 66:7-8, keep in mind that Israel's status as a sovereign nation was established and reaffirmed during the course of a single day, and that it was born of a movement called Zionism, and that its declaration of independence was not the result of a war but rather the cause of one.” *About Bible Prophecy.*” www.therefinersfire.org/israel.

b. What Isaiah 66:7-8 says: *“Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.”*

1) Before Israel’s travail (Tribulation) the Lord Jesus Christ was born (First Advent before Second Advent).

2) Naturally, women travail and then bear children. Whatever Isaiah predicted would be supernatural!

3) As soon as Zion (Israel) travailed (endured Tribulation), she would bring forth her children (plural), causing a nation to be born at once (at the start of the Millennium). Sequence: man child, travail, children—land/sons born in one day (Messiah, Tribulation, Millennial nation born). This fulfillment is after the Tribulation and at the start up of the Millennium, not during the Church Age (cf. Rom. 11:25-27).⁹

4) Other such “supporting” passages as Zeph. 2:1-2 and Ezk. 37:4-14 refer to the Lord’s dealing with Israel during the Tribulation, not during the Church Age!¹⁰

2. Technology

a. Television, the Internet, the UPC Bar Code, etc.—David Reagan expresses the popular idea that the Rapture could not occur until after the invention of the TV, saying with respect to Rev. 11:8-9, “We are further told that their dead bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem for 3.5 days and that all the people of the world will look upon them. How could that be? Prior to 1957 that prophecy was not understandable in natural terms. There was just no way that all the people of the world could look upon two dead bodies in the streets of Jerusalem. All that changed on October 4, 1957 when the Russians sent up the first Sputnik satellite. Today, 30 years later, our planet (*sic*) has many man-made satellites circling it, making possible all sorts of instantaneous communication. When those two prophets lie dead in the streets of Jerusalem, all someone will have to do is point a TV camera at them, send the signal up to a satellite, and all the world will be able to look upon them. Once again, modern technology has made an ancient prophecy understandable for the first time.” www.raptureforums.com/signs/modern.cfm

b. Since the First and Second Beasts will have satanic power, they could supernaturally produce some sort of “hologram” for the world to view (Rev. 13:4, 13-14). After all, Satan is “*the prince of the power of the air*” (Eph. 2:3).

c. To argue that the Rapture could not occur until the modern inventions of TV, the Internet, or the UPC Bar Code,¹¹ undermines the imminent Return of

⁹Paul alluded to the promise of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31 ff.) which will be fulfilled at the outset of the Millennium.

¹⁰Bible Commentators of all eschatological stripes before 1948 did not interpret these passages as the requirement for Israel to become a nation prior to the Rapture. Many dispensational, Pre-Trib., Rapture prophecy “experts” simply read back into these OT prophecies, after the fact, the alleged fulfillment of “signs” for the Rapture—a fallacious interpretative practice.

¹¹The interpretation of the Universal Product Code marks is most revealing in that the three numbers '666' are the key working numbers for every designed Universal Product Code. Every group of Universal Product Code marks has in it three unidentified numbers. All three of these numbers are 6, making the use of the numbers '666' the key to using this identifying marking system. . . There is no deviation. Every Universal Product Code has three unidentified marks whose number equivalent '6'

Christ, which imminency doctrine and blessed hope was a legitimate promise for the first century saints (I Thes. 4:17).

d. By the time the four horsemen of Rev. 6:1-8 ride over the earth, killing one fourth of the world's population, all infrastructure of the world will be destroyed, including all electrical communication systems and the world will turn extremely primitive. The mega earthquake of Rev. 6:12-14 will exacerbate this primitiveness.

3. World Wide Travel

a. H. A. Ironside suggests that the fulfillment of Dan. 12:4 occurs in modern day travel, saying, "Could anything more aptly set forth the chief characteristics of these last days? Men seem to have a perfect mania for traveling from place to place; and human inventions of all kinds are pressed into service to accelerate and make comfortable those who run to and fro." H. A. Ironside, *Lectures On Daniel the Prophet* (Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux Brothers, 1911), 233-34.

b. The Lord Jesus Christ taught that the *Book of Daniel* would be the source for eschatological knowledge during the Tribulation as many would seek this book and its knowledge (Mt. 24:15).

4. World Wide earthquakes

a. Hal Lindsey posits about earthquakes and Christ's prophecy in Mt. 24:7, saying, "Newsweek magazine recently asked the question: "Are Earthquakes Getting Worse?" Opinions vary, but one thing is certain. Jesus said that two of the 'signs' of the last days would be 'great earthquakes in various places' and 'fearful sights.' **A 'sign' is something that can be seen or heard. At no point in history have we been able to 'see and hear' like we can today.** Because of the advent of television, satellites, and the internet, we are able to see and hear 'fearful sights' virtually as they happen. No more reading about them in the newspaper several weeks after they occurred. Today, we are always 'on the scene.' And in the last few years, we've been 'on the scene' of great earthquakes all over the world -- from the United States to the Indian Ocean to Iran to China to Italy to Haiti to Chile to Japan, and the list goes on." The Hal Lindsey Report, 3/5/2010, www.hallindsey.com/the-hal-lindsey-report-352010.

b. This prophecy of the Saviour referred to the events such as wars, famines, and earthquakes occurring during the Tribulation (Mt. 24:6-8, 15), as the parallel passage of Rev. 6:1 ff. affirms.

5. Plans for Rebuilding the Temple

a. The web site "Rapture Signs: Signs of the Coming Rapture of the Church" www.rapturesigns.com adds to eschatological confusion, saying, "In the

encoding it with the code number '666'. " (Bob Fraley, *The Last Days in America* (Palestine, OH: Christian Life Services, 1984), p. 225, 228).

end times, the Jewish temple, which was once located in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount, will be rebuilt. **We do not know if this will come before or after the Rapture of the Church**, but it's clear that the Bible says the temple will be in use in the time of the Tribulation.”

b. Although many prophecy preachers espouse that the Jews' desire to rebuild the Temple, along with the building stones, etc., are signs for the Rapture, they indeed are not.

c. Since AD 70, the Jews have had a growing interest to rebuild their beloved Temple, but this is no sign of the Rapture.¹²

6. Computer Chip

a. The Jeremiah Project states: “Modern technology has created a brave new electronic world without borders. With modern computer technology, satellites, GPS, biometric and smart card technology, people can now be tracked within 3 feet anywhere in the world. Advances in digital technology have made it possible now to engineer an identification system capable of monitoring virtually every human transaction. Indeed, Antichrist's world government is not only believable but may have actually arrived.” www.jeremiahproject.com

b. Again, Satan has the supernatural power to “tattoo” the forehead or wrists of his followers, in a similar imitative fashion as the marking angels of Ezk. 9:4 ff. Satan has not been, and will not be, limited to human technology to accomplish his purposes.

IV. A Summary of Biblical Eschatology

A. The Lord Jesus Christ taught eschatology to His Apostles (cf. Mt. 24:1-24) based on Daniel's Seventy Heptads (cf. Dan. 9:24-27).¹³

B. He made the Mid-Point of the Tribulation the linchpin to understanding eschatology (cf. Mt. 24:15).

C. Daniel taught that two events would have to occur between the first 69 heptads and the last heptad: 1) the cutting off of the Messiah (crucifixion) and 2) the destruction of the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary (Temple). This temporal parenthesis is roughly the local church age dispensation (*vide* Dan. 9:25-27).

D. The Lord Jesus added an additional requirement that would have to occur before His Second Advent—the death of Peter (cf. Jn. 21:18-19).

E. These three events would have to occur before the Coming of Christ (i.e., the Rapture): 1) the Crucifixion of the Saviour, 2) the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and 3) the death of Peter. All three occurred in the first century and in the lifetime of the generation of Christ's First Advent. Therefore, for both the Apostle John and the Apostle Paul,

¹²Cf. Thomas Ice and Randall Price, *Ready to Rebuild* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publ., 1992), for an excellent history of the Jewish effort to rebuild their Temple.

¹³“**Seventy weeks** (שִׁבְעִים שָׁבָעִים) are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city...”

the imminent Second Coming Rapture could have occurred in their lifetime. Christ had been crucified, the destruction of Jerusalem/the Temple was imminent in the 60's, as was Peter's death. Nothing else had to be fulfilled once these events occurred.

F. Although the Lord Jesus knew about the Rapture doctrine and event, He did not teach it (however see Jn. 14:3), but allowed Paul to reveal its progressive truth (cf. I Thes. 4:15-18).¹⁴

G. All of the other OT prophecies were either fulfilled in His First Advent, or will be fulfilled during the Tribulation or the Millennium. None will be fulfilled during the mystery period of the local church dispensation with the exception of the aforementioned three.

H. A case in point is the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the coming of the LORD's Servant, saying, "*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn*" (Isa. 61:1-2). The Lord Jesus interpreted Isaiah's prophecy by understanding that Isa. 61:1-2a referred to His First Coming, and Isa. 61:2b ("*the day of vengeance*" [vide Isa. 63:4]) referred apparently to the Tribulation in His Second Coming.

I. The Apostle Paul was privileged to reveal the details about the Rapture, which teaching he termed "*a mystery*," saying, "*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*" (I Cor. 15:51-52; cf. I Thes. 4:13-18). (See **Eschatology Chart**)

Conclusion

Whereas Bible believers may evaluate and reject the speculations of pagan and pseudo-Christian eschatology, it behooves all Christians to have a biblical understanding on and practical application of the Second Coming of Christ. Did not John exhort, saying, "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, **when he shall appear**, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that **hath this hope in him purifieth himself**, even as he is pure*" (I Jn. 3:2-3)?

¹⁴The taking away in Mt 24:37-41 refers to those taken away to judgment during "the judgment of Israel" (Ezk. 20:32-38) and "the judgment of the nations" (Mt. 25:31-46). It does not refer to the Rapture, but to that of which Zechariah predicted, saying, "*And it shall come to pass, that every one that is **left** of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles*" (Zech. 14:16).

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