

The Second Coming Was On Time..

A Legal Clarification of New Testament History

A judicial scrutiny of the Biblical record reveals a major error in Christian teaching which conceals the event of Christ's "Second Coming" having occurred immediately after the destruction of the Israelite/Judean nation in A.D. 70.

The sequence of warnings to the nation leading up to its destruction indicates the timing of Christ's "Second Coming", such also having been prophesied to occur at 'the time of the end'. The first of many 'end time' warnings was given by John the Baptist in A.D. 26, followed by his repeated indications of the then generation being the last before the nation's destruction, there being no linguistic allowance for such generation having continued over the centuries.

A.D. 26

John the Baptist sent to prepare people for the coming Messiah

The role of John the Baptist had been foretold some centuries prior in relation to a coming Messiah and day of judgment: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Yahweh: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Malachi 4:5-6). John fulfilled such prediction that there would arise a person who would "go...in the spirit and power of Elias (Greek for Elijah), to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children...(and) to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:1-17).

Consequently, "In those days (which immediately preceded Christ's work) came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea... For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias (Greek for Isaiah)" (Matthew 3:1,3). Also Christ later made it clear that the long known prophecy had been fulfilled: "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already...Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist" (chapter 17:11-13).

● The prophecy of a return appearance of ELIJAH was fulfilled by the appearance of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1; 17:10-13; Luke 1:15-17). His appointed role was to declare to the "children" and "fathers" of that generation the need for a radical change of mind and attitude so as to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17; or "kurios": Greek, "Yahweh": Hebrew). Another ancient prophet, Malachi, also foretold that this same "messenger" of God would "prepare the way" (chapter 3:1) for the Messiah "which is called Christ" (John 1:41; 4:25,26).

Although such prophecy was popularly taken to mean a pending national reunification under the Messiah as their king (John 12:13), no reunification occurred, with John the Baptist and Christ clearly dividing the populace from their Judaist leaders, to the point where the latter were termed a "generation of vipers" (chapters 3:7; 12:34). That is, although the many Israelites long scattered in different nations were promised forgiveness of sins and a gift of God's spirit from Christ for ever (Acts 2:38,39), their religious leaders, as foretold by an earlier prophet Isaiah, were guaranteed the opposite: they being "blinded" to the end time prophecies and obvious unfolding events (John 12:12,13,39,40). Coincident with such, the populace were urged to "Save (them)selves from this untoward generation" of Judaists and their supporters (Acts 2:40), who were destined for punishment in the "wrath to come" (Matthew 3:7).

Thus with such end time warnings from John and Christ commencing in A.D. 26 where 1) in John's presence Christ was first confirmed as being charged with God's Spirit (Matthew 3:11,13-16), 2) both John and Christ publically exposed the civil blindness of the ruling Judaists, and 3) the prophesied "wrath to come" had its only fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Judaist nation in A.D. 70, then no other generation of people than that of the first century Israelites can be the focus of such prophecies.

A.D. 26

John the Baptist's generation told to prepare for "the kingdom of heaven"

John the Baptist's first warning was immediately applicable to people of his time who were expecting the Messiah: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2).

Such warning was also witnessed by "many of the Pharisees and Sadducees (who had) come to his baptism, he (saying) unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (verse 7), so indicating such "vipers" were wasting their time there.

At that time also, and in the same spirit of John's warnings, Christ urged the same people to "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17), he adding that "The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:15). With there being no allowance for such time being extendable or in a later age repeated, the generation being addressed could only have been one of a normal lifespan, and not removable to the (distant) future.

- The KINGDOM OF HEAVEN describes a newly established institution independent from the physical realm of the Israelites or any other body of people on earth. Such kingdom, in its being "of heaven", is immediately associable with that foreseen by Daniel centuries prior, he envisioning Christ being situated in heaven and "given...dominion, and glory, and a kingdom" (Daniel 7:14), such kingdom later being declared by Christ as one "not of this world" (John 18:36).
[However most first century Israelites had been taught that their prophesied kingdom was to be a restoration of the present physical realm and reigned over by a new king David (Isaiah 2:2-4; Jeremiah 23:5; 30:9-10; Ezekiel 37:24-25). The expectation of a new earthly kingdom had been inculcated to the extent that Christ's disciples were unable to understand his teachings of a higher kingdom of heaven.
Even after some 3 years with him they queried "wilt (if/whether (Grk.)) thou at this time (or, during this generation) restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Christ avoided the question and gave a dismissive answer (verse 7), without any indication that a restoration of the nation would occur in future generations. Rather, Christ gave them a mission to fulfil in their own lifetime, that is, a mission to make known his supernatural kingdom to the people of that era (verse 8; Matthew 24:14; cf. John 3:3-5).]
- The term AT HAND specifically refers to the contemporary time, as distinct from a period beyond the lives of those being addressed, that is, such term being not extendable beyond that same generation (identified as that of John the Baptist who was aged about 31 in A.D. 26).
- The term GENERATION OF VIPERS refers to members of the two ruling Judaist sects of that time, with such strength of invective being a measure of their guile in teaching the scriptures to the nation.
- The term WRATH TO COME describes the prophesied "time of trouble" (Daniel 12:1) which would end with the dissolution of the Israelite/Judean nation.

A.D. 27

Religious leaders in AD 27 impervious to Christ's teaching of the kingdom of God

Representing a number of Judean leaders, Nicodemus sought to befriend Christ, reasoning to him that he must be from God. With no denial, Christ responded with a transcendent answer, that is, "Except a man be born again●, he cannot see the kingdom of God●" (John 3:3).

When Nicodemus began to mock him with two obviously banal questions, Christ elaborated on what he had just told him: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit●, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (verses 5-7). And in employing an analogy, Christ added: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit (verse 8). Such answer reversed Nicodemus' attitude (verse 9).

Following this, Christ in turn mocked Nicodemus for not believing in a well enough known spiritual kingdom of resurrected people as for example with, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (John 3:10).

- The term BORN AGAIN is primarily associated with a person's change of physical state on being resurrected, as told to Nicodemus, the totality of such change expressed in 1 Corinthians 15:50 as: "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (there obviously not being any indication of 'born again' resurrected persons living on earth). However later, with the apostles' working to make ready "a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17), people were instructed to behave as "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible" (1 Peter 1:23), that is, to behave not with an ordinary human being's conscience but with that coupled to God's spirit. And in this state, people are likened to "newborn babes" needing to naturally mature in such spirit (chapter 2:2).
- The phrase SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD denotes a supernatural visibility normally screened from human sight. However, such 'seeing' is reported as having been granted, albeit temporarily, to such as i) Moses (Exodus 33:18-23), ii) an ancient Israelite prophet, Elisha, and his servant (2 Kings 6:17) and iii) three of Christ's disciples (Matthew 17:1-5), such examples indicating that a wide-ranging supernatural realm coexists with physical reality.
- The term "BORN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT" in the context indicates a magnitude of human change was necessary before being able to perceive the kingdom of God. Additional to the commonly known baptism by water, Christ's followers would ultimately "all be changed, 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" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52), that is, "born again".

A.D. 27

A resurrection and judgment implied as happening to the Israelite/Judean nation in the first century

When Christ was pressed by religious leaders to provide a sign of his authority, he publicly denied them such sign (as would have been expected), berating them and their whole generation with: “An evil and adulterous generation● seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas...” (Matthew 12:39,40). His castigation of the contemporary generation continued with examples of the behaviour of ancient generations in similar circumstances: “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation●, and shall condemn it: because they (all) repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.” And: “The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation●, and shall condemn it: for she came...to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here” (verses 41-42). That is, rather than giving a ‘normal’ sign as sought, Christ implied that he himself was the only sign they would get, his reference to Jonah’s 3-day whale experience being a hidden allegory for his own resurrection.

- The term GENERATION refers to those of the Israelite/Judean nation who averaged 30 years old in A.D. 26 at the advent of John the Baptist, and who would reach their life expectancy in A.D. 70. That is, this same term is directed at such first century people and does not allow for an application to future generations.
- The term THIS GENERATION is here coupled to i) people of the ancient city of Nineveh in about 800 B.C., and ii) ‘the queen of the south’ (Sheba – concurrent with Solomon). Just as there is no ground to extend these two generations, likewise there is no ground to extend the generation then being addressed.
- The term RISE UP IN THE JUDGMENT equates to an approaching resurrection and judgment which would include the then contemporary generation. Such major event comprises,
 - 1) all of God’s chosen people (cf. Deuteronomy 10:15) from Adam and the patriarchs, through the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to the last generation of the Israelite/Judean nation, including Christ’s followers;
 - 2) all other guile-free Godly people up to that time (such as the repentant Ninevites), including those of Christ’s followers who were “Gentiles” (cf. Acts 13:47).

Christ’s Second Coming identified as involving an instant and invisible resurrection of certain people in the first century

On being “demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come”, Christ answered them instead, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation●”, and further clarifying his answer, he said, “And (when) they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning● (flashes from one part of the sky to the other), so shall also the Son of man be (come and gone) in his day” (Luke 17:20, 23-24). In indicating the then closeness of such event, Christ prophesied that it would occur in the lifetime of the people who would persecute him (9:22, 26-27), stating of himself: “But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation●” (17:25).

- The term NOT WITH OBSERVATION refers to an event which is wholly not visible, wherever on earth a person may be.
- The term AS THE LIGHTNING indicates a sudden panoramic occurrence, that is, having flashed and expired “in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:52).
- The term THIS GENERATION makes no allowance for generations beyond the then contemporary generation which as a whole “rejected” Christ and was responsible for his being “slain” (Acts 2:22-23), that is, the term cannot be grammatically applied to people in the future.

A.D. 28

People of John the Baptist's generation alive at Christ's Second Coming

In about A.D. 28, Christ told his disciples "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming● in his kingdom●" (Matthew 16:28), which specifies that a portion of the generation of that time would be directly involved with his second coming.

However, Christ had just prophesied that he would judge and reward not a portion but "every man" according to his works (verse 27).

Although the mention of "every man" immediately links Christ's coming with mankind's 'final judgment' (as accounted in Revelation 20:12-13), such immediate meaning cannot stand since at the time of the 'final judgment', only "the dead" (verses 12-13 specifying such a group 4 times) are raised up, whereas at Christ's coming, the dead are joined by a number of the living (those prophesied to have been 'changed' from a mortal state).

Further, the event of mankind's final judgment occurs subsequent to the full destruction of earth (verse 11) whereas with Christ's second coming, the same is followed by mankind's continued existence, such period being readily associable in the Bible with "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24).

- The phrase **SHALL NOT TASTE OF DEATH, TILL THEY SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING...** denotes that some of the hearers would be still alive at that time (Matthew 16:28). However, since Christ had already declared that such coming would be "not with observation", then the 'SEEING' could not have occurred in a normal human state, that is, those disciples would be in a state to see Christ, having been supernaturally "CHANGED" to allow such (1 Corinthians 15:52). Thus Christ's words indicated not that some of those present would later die, but that something would happen to them before they could die, he having indicated that at the time of his return, "whosoever (still) liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:26), but would instead be "changed".

- Immediately prior to Christ's **COMING IN HIS KINGDOM** as envisioned by Daniel, an event occurred that was not visible from earth, Daniel having seen "one like (not an angel but the human-looking) Son of man" appearing in the "clouds of heaven" (these same clouds being not limited to earth visibility, but also existent in the supernatural realm) and coming "to the Ancient of days" (that is, to the Deity), "and there was given him (Christ) dominion, and glory, and a kingdom" (Daniel 7:13-14).

With Christ's coming being a supernatural event, people on earth, unless "changed" alive or raised from the dead, would not be able to perceive it, that is, only such resurrected people including those 'whosoever still liveth' could see the "Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory" and sending "his angels" to gather his followers world-wide (Mark 13:26-27).

The New Testament “end of the world” teachings identified as being limited to the late first century

A.D. 28

During the course of Christ’s teachings, he was asked “what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world●?” (Matthew 24:3). In response, Christ mentioned the appearance of many ‘false Christs’ (and their devotees) at a time of threatening wars, he adding “but the end is not yet” (verses 5-6). He further prophesied there would be an abandonment of Godliness among that generation despite his teachings being widely made known by the apostles; and only “then shall the end come” (verses 7-14).

In pictorialising that such end of the world would be later in their lifetime, Christ used a parable with a solely contemporary application: “Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand●. So likewise ye, when ye see these things (the mentioned final events) come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand...This generation (of John the Baptist’s) shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled●” (Luke 21:29-32).

Also in portraying such events Christ made it clear that this same ‘end of the world’ was not the destruction of earth, since not only would there be people left behind to carry on after his coming (as depicted in parables such as that of the ‘wise and foolish virgins’ – Matthew 25:1-13), but also many Israelites would live on to be scattered among all nations indefinitely (Luke 21:24).

- The term THE END OF THE WORLD immediately depicts to the English reader a yet future physical destruction of the planet. In the Bible, such term is linked to a judgment day in which “the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire” (Matthew 13:49-50).

Such is commonly equated with a final judgment of all the dead, when the wicked are cast into a “lake of fire” (Revelation 20:11-15).

But the term “the end of the world” as used by Christ’s disciples meant only one thing, that is, according to long-standing national prophecies, there would be a takeover of all nations by God in a war centred on Jerusalem, with such takeover having been described centuries earlier as Yahweh having “gather(ed) all nations against Jerusalem to battle” where he would “fight against those nations” and be “king over all the earth” (Zechariah 14:2,3,9) with Israel supreme (verses 14,21).

Thus it was only natural for the disciples to expect that Christ had come to “restore again the kingdom to Israel” (Acts 1:6).

However the “end” described by Christ was not identifiable as one where God would come to the nation’s rescue. Rather, Christ unambiguously described a full destruction of the nation and the scattering of its people throughout “all nations” for an era (Luke 21:24), such immediately indicating that “the end of the world” was not a final event with the earth totally destroyed, that is, such term did not mean ‘the end of the earth’ (with the Greek word for “world” meaning ‘era’ as distinct from the word for “earth”).

The natural Israelite assumption that God would soon “fight against those nations” (Zechariah 14:3) was made before Christ’s resurrection and the giving of his Spirit, that is, before the disciples came to understand that Christ came neither to rule on earth nor to destroy it but to reveal a new heavenly kingdom. That is, rather than setting up another kingdom on earth Christ would as he said “go and prepare a place for you”, and not long after “come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:3), he also adding that shortly God’s Spirit, “the Comforter...shall teach you all things...whatsoever I have said unto you” (verse 26).

- The term NOW NIGH AT HAND can only refer to that contemporary time and apply to an event or events expected to affect them.

- The phrase THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS AWAY TILL ALL BE FULFILLED necessarily refers to the generation first addressed by John the Baptist in A.D. 26, with some being still alive when “all” of Christ’s ‘end of the world’ prophecies were fulfilled, that is, especially concluding with his non-visible second coming.

A.D. 29

The sun and moon used as a specific reference to the status of supernatural/heavenly powers and their demise

Christ prophesied concerning the imminent destruction of Jerusalem that “Immediately after the tribulation of those days●”, the Judean/Israelite nation would cease to exist, that is, Christ used the symbolic terms “the sun (shall) be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens● shall be shaken” (Matthew 24:29). Such terminology was a repeat of an earlier indication of the fall of Judea; cf. Acts 2:16,20).

That is, such cosmic terms were used in Old Testament prophecies to depict a fall of earthly kingdoms, where in each instance, despite no visible cosmic catastrophe, the kingdom was irreversibly destroyed.

Christ used these same cosmic terms in prophesying a time of national “tribulation”, after which he would return (Matthew 24:29-30).

- THE TRIBULATION OF THOSE DAYS was an end ‘time of trouble’ forecast for the Judean/Israelite nation (Daniel 12:1), such eventuating in the first century scattering of the nation (verse 7b) as a once only event which occurred in “those days”, there being no allowance for a repeat of such national affairs at any stage in the future.
- The describing of an enormous astronomical catastrophe involving THE MOON...THE STARS...and THE HEAVENS is symbolic since such cosmic bodies’ ascribed behaviour contradicts the known laws of physics. The same astronomical descriptions are used in earlier Biblical passages to forecast exceptional earthly catastrophes, that is, the destruction of major kingdoms as occurred in Old Testament times, and later, Judea.
 - 1) The earliest prophecy using such cosmic terms was when the ancient kingdom of Judah was warned by prophets of an approaching full invasion (by the Babylonians), that is, the forecast of the destruction of Judah was declared in cosmic terms: “The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining” (Joel 2:10).
 - 2) The next occasion mentioned concerned the fall of Egypt, which would be destroyed by the same Babylonians, such destruction being declared similarly: “And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light” (Ezekiel 32:7).
 - 3) The following occasion concerned the fall of the Babylonian Empire, such being declared similarly: “For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine” (Isaiah 13:10).
 - 4) The next occasion concerned the destruction of the then notable Idumean nation, such being declared thus: “And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down” (Isaiah 34:4).
 - 5) The next occasion was reported in New Testament times and concerned the destruction of Judea at a time after Christ’s followers had been enlightened, such prophesied time being recognised by the apostle Peter in the words: “this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel”, who stated that God told him “it shall come to pass in the last days...I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh” (Acts 2:16-17), that is, “in those [last] days will I pour out my spirit” (Joel 2:29), with the terminating of such “days” being marked by Jerusalem’s destruction, the permanency of such being emphasised in the cosmic terms: “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood” (verse 31).

A.D. 29

Christ's Second Coming not a visible cosmic event

Christ was asked directly: “what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matthew 24:3). Before answering, he declared (among other things) that he would return not to some place on earth, but appear “in heaven”, that is not in the sky where people could see him but in the coexisting realm of heaven. Thus with his coming being “not with (ordinary) observation” (Luke 17:20), such appearance could only be seen with supernatural observation, and since such observability is possible only to those having been “changed” and capable of seeing the Kingdom of God, then the words “they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven● with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30), can only apply to resurrected people.

Since such supernatural event causes “all the tribes of the earth● (to) mourn”, they also must have been in a changed state to “see the Son of man coming...” (ibid., and cf. Revelation 1:7), that is, as people whose seeing had been changed to see the supernatural, such change occurring on their being raised from the dead, where ordinary physical impossibilities are no longer involved.

● The phrase COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN refers to the same clouds enhancing Christ's enthronement ceremony in heaven (Daniel 7:13-14), such being thus distinguished from an earthly observable event.

These same “clouds of heaven” associated with Christ's spectacular coming to earth would likewise be ‘not with observation’ by people of the world, but seen only by those either raised from the dead or changed.

[In a related example, one of Christ's disciples (whom the religious leaders were in the process of murdering), was accounted as seeing into heaven, that is, “he (Stephen), being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55).]

This same extra-visibility, in being directly applied to resurrected and changed people then alive would occur immediately after Christ had ‘descended from heaven’ and awakened the dead (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Accordingly, such applied to the “chief priests” of that generation (Mark 14:55) who would have died before his second coming and thus be among the resurrected, he having formerly declared to them, “ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Mark 14:60-62).

With no account of a panoramic spectacle being witnessed by the last generation of the Israelite/Judean nation, then Christ, who limited the time of his return expressly to that generation (Mark 13:30-31), was describing the event of his second coming as being visible only to those people who had been resurrected and changed. (Thus the Christian teaching that the term “this generation” was intended to apply to future generations expecting an ordinarily visible second coming stands as extra-Biblical.)

● ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH: Although this term in its context firstly appears to be describing the final judgment of all mankind and the end of all earthly activity, such is contrary to Christ's teachings that after his coming, with there being only a minimal selection of the living having been “taken” (Matthew 24:40), nations of people would continue on earth for another and indefinite era (as if nothing had happened), the fate of the Israelites being predetermined, “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the [still continuing] times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24).

With the resurrection being known to concern only a specialised selection of people, then “all the tribes” describes not all the earth's population but “many” representatives of them (Daniel 12:2), that is, all people from Adam and the patriarchs, through the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (including immigrants and the God-chosen people of other nations).

A.D. 29

The meaning of "the tribes of the earth" and of "they that have done good"

When Christ declared "the hour is coming, and now is●, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25) it was grammatically inescapable that such resurrection would soon occur, that is, within the lifetimes of the people there present. Further emphasizing this prophecy, he said "for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 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" (verses 28-29).

On close examination, it is found that although Christ mentioned two approaching resurrections, they comprised the one all-encompassing event of two separate bodies of people raised from being dead, such separateness being elsewhere depicted: "So shall it be at the end of the world (or 'era'): the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just" (Matthew 13:49).

Both bodies of people comprise those who died either before or during the then generation. With the first to be resurrected being identified as the "good", the remainder, that is, the "bad", comprises those referred to as "all the tribes of the earth" (Matthew 24:30) which by having ultimately rejected Christ, would now "mourn" (ibid.), they having been resurrected to a state in which they could "see" him coming (cf. Revelation 1:7).

Such dual resurrection had been anciently prophesied by Daniel who in writing solely to the Israelite peoples, forecast "a time of trouble" for the nation, yet adding: "at that time thy people (descendants of the captive Israelites with him) shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" at that time, "some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (12:1-2).

Thus Daniel's prophecy was corroborated by Christ who described such two resurrections of "good" and "bad" as being connected with the "time of trouble". Further, when Daniel indicated that not everyone but "many" would be resurrected at that time, so did Christ, he also indicating such a selection in certain contemporary parable type statements: "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left (and) Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left●". Concerning such a division, Christ emphasised an urgency for the people of that generation to "Watch...for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matthew 24:40-42).

Such advice indicates the event would occur suddenly and relatively soon (one can watch for only so long), there being no indication such event would be of historical duration. The brevity of such events from the earth's perspective is conveyed in Christ's parables of the "thief" whose appearance would be undetected (Matthew 24:43-44), and of the 'wise and foolish virgins' where only half of whom were prepared for the wedding circumstances of those times, the others were not so, and as a consequence, too late to be admitted (ch.25:1-12).

● THE HOUR IS COMING, AND NOW IS, denotes two time situations, firstly, the approach of something soon, and second, the presence of something already started, that is, Christ addressed a more immediate time using the words "and now is", which in its context necessarily implies at least a token resurrection would shortly occur, such words being unambiguously linked to the raising of Lazarus about a year later (John 11:43-44).

● ALL THAT ARE IN THE GRAVES...SHALL COME FORTH depicts an event relating to the then generation, that is, an event found not to involve the end total of all graves or people, but only all the first century "many that sleep in the dust of the earth" (Daniel 12:2). [Although mentioned in Matthew 27:52 and 53 that "many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his (Christ's) resurrection, and...appeared unto many", such two verses however, by interrupting and being variously inconsistent with the sequence of events in the surrounding narrative, and also being wholly absent from the other Biblical gospels, have been correctly discounted by scholars.]

Such "many" which were resurrected comprised (i) "they that have done good" (John 5:29), that is, those ultimately accounted righteous among the earliest patriarchs to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants, with accompanying "Gentiles"; and (ii) "they that have done evil" (ibid.), that is, those of the same lineage accounted as permanently ill-willed toward God. Each of these two groups of people are described by Christ, one as "sheep" and the other, "goats", together being made up of people to that time from "all nations" (Matthew 25:32).

The "sheep" mentioned in this instance match the character of the people depicted by Daniel as "those found written in the book" (Daniel 12:1), that is, such as "they that have done good" either according to Old Testament law, or by believing in Christ, all of such being the first people raised from the dead (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

The "goats" mentioned in this instance are a remainder of people who as necessarily implied by Daniel were "not found written in the book" (Daniel 12:1), that is, "they that have done evil", all of such being raised up in Christ's second mentioned group.

A third group is identified by the apostle Paul as those "which are alive and remain" (1 Thessalonians 4:17) they also forming part of those "found written in the book", and therefore also among Christ's "sheep".

● ONE SHALL BE TAKEN, AND THE OTHER LEFT again refers to two groups of people alive at the time of the resurrection, the first one identified as those "taken" from their present life, that is "changed" (1 Corinthians 5:21-22).

The second group is the remainder of the world's living population who were "left", and from whom today's populations have descended, that is, the second group comprised most people of the world who either in conscience or attitude had ultimately rejected Christ, in particular, the pre-warned Judean/Israelites who being still alive after the resurrection had not been "changed" but would be "led away captive into all nations" (Luke 21:24).

A.D. 30

All prophesied events leading to Christ's Second Coming fulfilled in the late first century

Christ was asked a number of times when the end of the world would occur. In each case he indicated as in Matthew 24:6 that "the end is not yet". However, he limited the time of such end to a number of identifiable events ending with a ceasing of national "tribulation" (verse 29), all occurring within the Israelite/Judean nation of those times, and repeatedly defined the people being addressed as "this generation". To emphasise that all events described would affect this same generation, he declared "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled●" (verse 34).

● THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS TILL ALL THESE THINGS BE FULFILLED refers to the limit set by a human lifespan, for example, the time covered by the term: 'this generation', as was often used by Christ to mean the then Israelite/Judean nation. In answering questions about the "end of the world" and "all the...things" leading up to it, Christ must also have been referring to the end of such generation, that is, when they would be naturally old and passing away. With no room left for a later "this generation" to be involved, he declared that before all of that generation had 'passed away' he would come again.

Christ's sentencing high priest (Caiaphas) told he would next see him as a sovereign in heaven

After his arrest and being harassed by the high priest Caiaphas to state outright that he was "the Son of God" (Matthew 26:63), "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said (it): nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye (yourself) see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven●" (verse 64).

Caiaphas went into histrionics and termed such as "blasphemy" (verse 65), his drive of malice being not based on a belief Christ would escape his upcoming death, but on being told he would personally see Christ sit with God in heaven.

● YE SHALL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN was declared to Caiaphas as a prophecy that he would personally witness Christ as a sovereign in heaven and consequently be judged there by him, that is, Christ would come not to earth but to the throne of God in heaven to judge the resurrected, Caiaphas being only one of such. Although these words immediately convey a spectacularly visible 'Second Coming' of Christ, a number of qualifications are found necessary for consistency with his other teachings on the subject, that is:

1) A visible coming in the sky would demand that Caiaphas be alive to see it, and that such an event on earth would have been well witnessed and recorded in the first century;

2) Historical records reveal Caiaphas held office from about A.D.18 to 36 (he being then deposed) and would most likely have died before or during the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Thus for Caiaphas to see Christ in heaven as prophesied, he would needs have been in a resurrected state together with the rest of Christ's enemies (or "goats");

3) The belief that the Second Coming is a still future visible event demands that for Caiaphas to be alive and humanly see Christ's return in the sky (as such belief requires), he would have to be brought alive from the first century to whenever Christ would return.

A.D. 30

Christ's first century Second Coming was not the prediction of a 'false prophet'

With no evidence of a visible Second Coming in the first century, nor any sustainable ground for a Christian postponement of it to a later century, and with regard to Christ's own prophecies concerning his return as were addressed to his disciples at that time, such return must have occurred as he said, that is, such could not have occurred in terms of a global visible event, since the only alternative is that Christ was a 'false prophet', which is not legally sustainable on the evidence.

[Also, the Islamic Koran depicts Christ as being not just one of the senior prophets of scripture (Koran 2:136 – Al-Hilali & Khan translation), but one revered as “the Messiah...the son of Maryam [Mary], held in honour in this world and in the Hereafter, and (when resurrected) will be one of those who are near to Allah” (3:45). And with the Koran acknowledging that Christ's teachings superseded the (Israelite) scriptures with “the (New Testament) gospel” (5:46), such inherent integrity and ‘nearness to Allah’ acts to prevent Christ being understood in the Koran as a ‘false prophet’. Since such magnitude of honour given to him in the Koran cannot be lessened to allow his having been a false prophet at any time, then Christ can only have been a ‘true prophet’ when declaring his Second Coming would occur in that first century generation (the Koran resting significantly on the history of the scriptures). However, while parts of the Koran well present Christ as a true prophet, since it is specifically taught in other places he was not actually put to death nor resurrected (3:55; 4:157), then with such paramount prophecy of his being dismissed as an error, the Koran thus also holds Christ to be a false prophet.]

The apostle John indicated as still living at Christ's Second Coming

When Peter was told he would not die a natural death (John 21:18-19), he, seeing John nearby, attempted to challenge Christ's statement about his death by questioning John's life expectancy (verses 20-21). Christ dismissed Peter's challenge with: “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” (John 21:22). Thus concerning his prophecy about John, Christ implied that he would likely not only be alive after Peter's death, but would be alive at the Second Coming. Despite many misinterpreting Christ's words as indicating John had become immortal, he himself knew Christ did not mean such (verses 23-24).

- IF I WILL THAT HE TARRY TILL I COME is Christ's statement concerning the disciple John, such conveying it was likely he would not die before Christ's second coming. Since no Biblical passage indicates John would live on to an abnormally long age, his death would have naturally occurred in the first century. That is, with any 'TARRYING' not extending beyond a normal lifespan, and the same 'tarrying' being grammatically connected to Christ's coming, then his coming must have occurred in John's lifetime and thus in the first century.

Christ's commission to the apostles completed on time

Following his resurrection Christ commissioned his disciples to publicise his teachings of the coming "kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 25:1, etc.), giving them a commandment to "preach the gospel to every (attentive) creature" (Mark 16:15).

However the disciples imagined the gospel focussed on a renewed earthly kingdom of ancient Israel, even to later specifically asking Christ "wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

Christ dismissed their mistake and instead told them what they would accomplish: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons...But ye shall receive power...and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (verses 7-8).

● **PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE** was a commandment of Christ to his apostles after his resurrection (in A.D. 30). Although at first implying an absurd and impossible task to the apostles, they would have naturally understood such commandment in the practical terms of i) promoting over a wide geographic area and ii) people knowledgeable of or receptive to Israelite prophecy.

[Some 30 years after this commandment it was observed by Paul that the news of Christ's coming kingdom had been publicised throughout the known world, he posing the question, "Have they not heard (the gospel)?" and answering "Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth...and the ends of the world" (Romans 10:18). Again, by A.D. 66, such gospel of the kingdom was considered as being known to "every creature" (Colossians 1:23), the grammar of the narrative, regardless of re-interpretations, leaving no further part of Christ's commission to be completed.]

● The words **AT THIS TIME RESTORE AGAIN THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL** encapsulate the general speculation that Christ would be their new king David over a restored (pre-Judaism) ancient Israel (such old covenant concept soon to be understood by the disciples as being superseded by Christ's heavenly kingdom (Acts 1:8)

● **UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH** is not intended as a geographical but rather, a population reference to remote parts of it, that is, to all nations in the known world of the first century. By A.D. 60 the apostle Paul wrote that the extent of such publicising was fulfilled, that is, that "the preaching of Jesus Christ...now is made manifest...(and) made known to all nations" (Romans 16:25-26).

A.D. 30

The Second Coming of Christ set to replace the prophesied Israelite takeover of all nations

An ancient prophecy of the end time period depicts God (Yahweh) standing “upon the mount of Olives●” before causing cataclysmic changes in the earth (Zechariah 14:4-5). Such event is commonly mis-linked to Christ’s last appearance to the disciples when both he and they had assembled on the same “mount called Olivet” (Acts 1:12), and in view of all, “he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight” (verse 9).

After he had entered into the cloud, “two men...in white apparel” (verse 10), also watching nearby, saw the disciples looking upwards expecting to glimpse him again. The two visitors did not empathise with the disciples but reminded them of Christ’s teaching that there was no point looking for him to reappear on earth because his return would be ‘not with observation’ (that is, not with any visible spectacle associated with either mount Olivet or anywhere else on earth).

Accordingly the disciples were also told that Christ would come in the same manner as they saw him taken up, that is, not with ceremony, but quietly and supernaturally in a cloud not dissimilar to that associated with his transfiguration (cf. Acts 1:9; Matthew 17:5).

Thus “in like manner●” Christ would come back in an ‘heavenly’ cloud, though not as a conquering monarch with the noise of “the day of battle” (Zechariah 14:3), but quietly as a ‘thief in the night’, that is, without attracting attention on earth. Since the clouds at Christ’s transfiguration and ascension were unaccompanied by a tumult, and Christ’s second coming was declared to be in like manner (that is, with no military battle), then Christ’s second coming cannot be the tumultuous ‘clouds in the sky’ event long taught by Christian scholars. That is, since no widespread spectacular event in the sky was reported to have occurred during the first century, then as accords with New Testament prophecies, Christ must needs have fulfilled his promise and quietly returned to that generation (as a ‘thief in the night’) within the allotted time.

- The MOUNT OF OLIVES (also called Olivet) is commonly associated with a visibly gigantic destruction at the second coming of Christ and the initiation of a new kingdom on earth, thus supposedly fulfilling Old Testament prophecies of a restored kingdom of Israel centred in Jerusalem. While on the mount the disciples asked Christ “wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6), that is, they having been educated to expect such new earthly kingdom under a new David (Isaiah 2:2-4; Jeremiah 23:5; 30:9-10; Ezekiel 37:24-25; etc.).

Yet although such kingdom was also prophesied to occupy a “new heavens and a new earth” (Isaiah 65:17), it was also mentioned as embracing daily “labour” (cf. verses 18-25) and the need for Levitical sacrificing mediators (ch.66:20-23). And concerning such militarily restored kingdom, Christ stated he was not a military conqueror of “this world” (John 18:36), he revealing a spiritual kingdom to which access was invited (chapter 3:5,16; 14:2-3). That is, the Old Testament prophecies of a restored kingdom on earth had now become superseded by the prophecies of “an heavenly” kingdom (Hebrews 11:16), Christ promising such a “new heavens and a new earth” (2 Peter 3:13) as would render the Old Testament sacrificing priests and central temple irreversibly redundant (Revelation 21:22).

With no alternative allowance for these prophecies to have been intended for another Israelite nation in the future, then with God “finding fault” in such system (Hebrews 8:8), the old prophecies were superseded by those of a “better” or “new covenant” (verse 6; chapter 12:24).

That is, “He taketh away the first” covenant (chapter 10:9) which came to include from the time of Moses a visible sacrificial process of a type “which decayeth and...is ready to vanish away” (8:13), the first being necessarily disempowered “that he may establish the second” (10:9).

From the moment of Christ’s spiritual elevation at his resurrection, he at that time having just “(been) made perfect” and reinstated as “a priest for ever” (5:5-6), there no longer remained a necessity for the Israelites to use the temple and sacrificial system to ensure the providence of God (10:9-12,19), that is, one was now able through friendship with Christ, to “come unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (12:22).

- IN LIKE MANNER compares the procedure of Christ’s ascending to the cloud, with a prophesied “he shall so come” (Acts 1:9,11) which would have no associated military spectacle, such event being one occurring “not with observation”. Thus the prophesied manner and form of Christ’s second coming is opposite to that of the Old Testament prophecies of a restored nation, that is, all having been superseded by the non-nationalistic “new covenant” instigated by Christ.

Although by the time of Christ’s ascending into a cloud, the disciples had enough knowledge to follow his teachings, they had not yet “receive(d) power”, so they were not ready to embark on Christ’s commission to them (1:8), that is, not until the hidden meanings behind Christ’s teachings were made clear to them (John 14:26).

The "last days" of New Testament times ended at the fall of Jerusalem

The first occasion of a public address by an apostle was at about 9am in Jerusalem on Sunday 28th May/8th Sivan A.D.30 (the 'day of Pentecost'), such being the beginning of their commission to make Christ's teachings known. The audience consisted of a "multitude (which) came together" by word of mouth, being resident and visiting Israelites from "every nation" (Acts 2:5-6). At such address, "they were all amazed" when "every man heard them speak in his own language" (verses 6-7).

The apostles explained the phenomenon to the audience as "that which was spoken by the prophet Joel", that is, "it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out...my Spirit" (Acts 2:16-18). That is, with such a concurrent multilingual understanding being physically impossible under natural conditions, only a spiritual phenomenon was capable of producing the miraculous. Accordingly, the apostles observed at that time in A.D. 30, that an ancient prophecy was being fulfilled.

Also, the prophecy by Joel warned of an apparent national upheaval and major earth disturbances (Acts 2:19). However, another part of the prophecy incongruently presents an event which is immediately challenged by the laws of physics, that is, an apparent astronomical catastrophe involving the sun and moon (verse 20). With the Bible mentioning such cosmic disturbances a number of times, it is found in each instance however that such symbolise national catastrophic events, not in the cosmos, but on earth, that is, representing destructions of leading kingdoms in Old Testament times.

When such terminology was publicly readdressed on the day of Pentecost, the people familiar with the scriptures and the fall of kingdoms would likely have known its meaning, that is, that the days of the Judean nation were numbered and that it would suffer the same fate. Thus Peter naturally advised all to separate themselves from the teachings of their religious leaders who were hostile to Christ, that is, to "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (verse 40).

- Sunday 28th May/8th Sivan A.D.30, being retrospectively extended from the present day calendar observance (based on the Calendar Act 1750 and common law evidence and argument).

- IN THE LAST DAYS in this context prophetically identifies an end time last generation of Israelite people. This same 'generation' began in A.D. 26 from the time John the Baptist fulfilled an ancient prophecy and began his administration (Luke 3:3-6).

Such "last days" spanned 44 years to the A.D. 70 destruction of the Israelite nation, at which time, and in marked contrast to the largely peaceful apostolic days, civil unrest magnified into "trouble, such as never was since there was a nation" (Daniel 12:1), this same national destruction being symbolised by Joel as "wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke" (Joel 2:30).

A.D. 50

Christ's commission to the apostles more than half completed

Soon after his resurrection, Christ commissioned his disciples to spread his teachings, with some 20 years later, two other disciples being added to spread the same teachings to nations and peoples other than the Israelites. These same two, Paul and Barnabas, were commissioned to complete the work in their lifetime, that is, "the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:46-47), and to reveal the power of God's Spirit (14:3).

With such being completed by A.D. 70, no further 'apostleship' (let alone one having an accompanying power) is supportable by the Biblical record, and thus no ground exists for a later Christian appointment of 'apostolic successors'.

- THE ENDS OF THE EARTH first appears to include the remotest regions of earth, however when used in a colloquial context, such denotes not hidden jungle tribes or the like, but people of the remote nations of the then civilised world who were sufficiently educated to comprehend a constitutional change in the Israelite nation.

Although such enterprise at first appears overly extensive, such was statistically within the capability of 12-14 (competent) administrators and various helpers over some 35 years.

Further, such workers were provided with continuing miracle-performing power such as became widely known and thus fully spread within the allotted time (with no recorded demonstration or indication of established power after those days).

The personage of king David and the old covenant now superseded by the personage of Christ and a new covenant

Over some seven years from c. A.D. 45, the apostles Paul and Barnabas were assigned to teach the "Gentiles" in Syria etc. (Acts 13:47) of the kingdom of God. A brief interruption occurred however, when "certain men" (ex-Pharisees) came from Judea to impose old covenant observances on them (15:1), such dispute causing the two to return to Jerusalem in about A.D. 50, where the apostles advised them to continue teaching as before, avoiding such disputes and promotions of Judaist requirements (Acts 15:7-11).

Confirming such advice, Christ's brother James (cf. Galatians 1:19 - he becoming the firstborn after Christ and thus also lawful heir to David's throne - Matthew 21:5,9) closed the dispute by citing the ancient prophecy of Amos (c. 780 B.C.) that God would "build again the tabernacle of David...and...set it up" so that all, including the "Gentiles", "might seek after the Lord (Yahweh)" (Acts 15:13-21).

With such 'raised tabernacle' prophecy of Amos as conveyed by James being contemporary with a 'new covenant' time of relative peace, and well before any end time war was feared, such contemporary peace stands as distinct from the 'old covenant' prophecies of a 'raised' king David being permanently established after a spectacular deliverance from war (Jeremiah 30:3,7,9; cf. Isaiah 61:4-9).

Also the advent of a new covenant period did not detract from other old covenant prophecies that the Israelite/Judean nation would soon be fully involved in a great war (cf. Daniel 12:1). What had changed was the 'old covenant' expectation that Yahweh would then physically deliver and prosper the nation. That is, since such prophecy of a 'raised' king David was confined to 'old covenant' materiality (Zechariah 13:1; 14:9,16,21), which was to "vanish away" (Hebrews 8:13), it no longer applied under the supernaturally based 'new covenant'. Thus in prophetic terms, and in accord with his lineage, Christ was the successor to David's kingly authority.

- The term TABERNACLE OF DAVID is firstly mentioned by Amos (chapter 9:11-12), and in this case is intended to convey the 'seat' of David's authority. With such being now cited by Christ's brother James, himself being in the line of the house of David, the reference to a tabernacle was not relevant to a common temporary tent-dwelling habitation but a long established sovereign authority over the contemporary "twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" as James collectively addressed the nation (James 1:1).

Such 'setting up the tabernacle of David' was for a conditional period (coinciding with the apostles' commission) and did not contradict Christ's teachings which revealed that rather than prosper, the nation of Israel would soon be destroyed, most being either killed or "led away captive" by the armies of the "Gentiles" (Luke 21:24), which was part of the history of the first century A.D.

Unlike the old covenant prophecies in which a 'tabernacle raising' would precede a new kingdom of Israel under a new king David, in the new covenant environment, such 'tabernacle raising' preceded the coming of Christ's kingdom in the first century.

Accordingly when the apostles were fulfilling their commission from Christ, such involved the news or 'gospel' that the prophecies of a revived Davidic rule had been reapplied to a 'new covenant' environment, that is, replaced by the prophecies of Christ as the genealogical "son of David" (Matthew 21:5,9), who was expected to return after the apostles' work was completed, James advising all of the contemporary twelve tribes of the imminence of Christ's coming: "Be patient therefore, brethren....for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:8).

A.D. 50

Christ's followers in foreign nations included in the first century resurrection

The apostles continued Christ's teaching that he did not come to restore a physical kingdom of Israel as was commonly expected, but to initiate a supernaturally based kingdom of God. However, during the apostolic era humans could not fully enter the supernatural kingdom of God because of being in a "flesh and blood" or "corrupted" state (1 Corinthians 15:50), but were required to live anew as if "Being born again, not of corruptible (human) seed, but of incorruptible (Godly seed)" (1 Peter 1:23), that is, until Christ's coming again and the resurrection to a supernatural state.

Such event was described by Paul in the terms: "we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (verses 51-52).

Since Christ's followers in Greece had been reared largely in a culture of superstition, they received independent assurance that not only would "the dead in Christ...rise" but that such people would be the "first" to be raised, with those "which are alive and remain" being immediately afterward changed and supernaturally "caught up together with them in the clouds (of heaven) to meet the Lord in the (heavenly) air" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

- With such transformation occurring **IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE** and "not with observation" (Luke 17:20), there was no spectacle or display of power on earth. No evidence suggests any change in the events on earth occurred other than an effect on certain individuals after learning they had missed what they had been waiting for, as in the parable of 'the foolish virgins' (Matthew 25:3).

- In the context, the words **WE WHICH ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN** could only have applied to first century followers of Christ who would experience an instant transformation from the corporeal to supernatural, and would, "in like manner" as Christ at his ascension (Acts 1:9-11), be "caught up...in the clouds" (to be no longer visible on earth), being transformed to exist "in the air", that is, in the supernatural realm (not the air attached to the earth) to meet "the dead in Christ" already there.

The “day of Christ” indicated as not occurring before the death of Nero in A.D. 68

A.D. 54

With Christ’s followers in the A.D. 50s expecting their “gathering together unto him●” (2 Thessalonians 2:1), Paul warned against the rumours that “the day of Christ●” (verse 2) was very close: “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away (from being faithful) first●” (verse 3). Also at this time a prophecy of an entity called “that man of sin” was made. Such “man” would be manifested as one “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God●, shewing himself that he is God” (verse 4).

Such words describe not the time of a future undefined temple at an undefined location, but a then present situation on earth involving intensely pagan ceremonies (participation in which being expected of citizens throughout the Roman Empire and against which Israelites were warned - cf. verse 15).

With the Roman emperor then being Nero, whose albeit popular but satanic rulership (verse 9) identifies him as “that man of sin”, some of Christ’s followers were still wrongly expecting Christ to soon come and destroy him (verses 2-5).

However, they were reminded by Paul that Christ’s coming would only occur after such “man of sin” had been widely popularised, and further, that such man would not be killed by Christ on earth or in the sky but in the supernatural realm to where the resurrected are judged and sentenced, but Nero, as “the son of perdition (that is, ‘damnation’ or ‘Hell’ - verse 3), and promoting himself as ‘God Supreme’ (verse 4) as many believed, would be conveyed directly to Hell.

- GATHERING TOGETHER UNTO HIM applied to a physical gathering of those addressed, with no grammatical allowance for a postponement of the event beyond the first century.

- In c. A.D. 54, Paul warned the Gentile Greeks to ignore rumours that THE DAY OF CHRIST was the next event to occur, declaring that such day would not occur before the death of an insidious political ruler, identified as “that man of sin”, a figure flagrantly repugnant to Godliness. During the first century such man was identifiable as the Roman emperor, Nero, who not only required the populace to worship him as God, but presented himself as above all gods, while at the same time popularising sub-animal activities for the empire.

- The phrase A FALLING AWAY FIRST refers to many in the various assemblies of Christ’s followers no longer willing to act on what they had learned, that is, despite their already receiving visits and a warnings from the apostles that “there shall come in the last days scoffers...saying, Where is the promise of his coming?” (2 Peter 3:3-4).

- The TEMPLE in the phrase, HE AS GOD SITTETH IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD, did not mean the Israelite temple, as there was never a ruling ‘seat’ where one could “SIT(TETH)” in the temple at Jerusalem. However a ruling seat existed at Rome in which deified emperors ‘sat’. Additionally, the receivers of Paul’s words were not in Jerusalem but some 1000 miles away in Greece, the temple personages at Jerusalem being of no concern to the Greek gentiles. Thus Paul warned not of a paganisation of the Jerusalem temple either then or in the future, but of events familiar to everyday Greeks and Romans.

A.D. 60

The Israelite nation's destruction (or "the end of all things") still some years away

In about A.D. 60 the apostle Peter wrote to Christ's "scattered" followers in regions north of Jerusalem (1 Peter 1:1) stating that "the end of all things is at hand●" (chapter 4:7), such "end" referring to the same "end" which the disciples mentioned when they asked Christ, "what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3).

Christ told them (among other things) that once his teachings had been declared "unto all nations...then shall the end come" (verse 14).

That is, with the apostles having almost completed their commission given some 30 years prior, Peter could announce to Christ's scattered followers that the prophesied "end of the world" was at hand.

- THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND is equivalent to Christ's declaration that the Israelite nation in Judea would soon be destroyed beyond restoration.

Contrary to the 'old covenant' expectations of a restored kingdom of Israel, the only remaining part of such nation was to be obliterated because it rejected the 'new covenant' as taught by Christ.

And Peter also in c. A.D. 60 gave the same warning to those far from Jerusalem and whose lives were not materially affected by Judean events.

That is, despite there being relative safety for the assemblies in Roman controlled countries, all were warned to be "sober" and to "watch" with an open awareness for Christ's imminent coming (1 Peter 4:7).

A.D. 64

Christ's coming occurs not during the "last days" but at their end

In about A.D. 64, Paul named the then contemporary times as "these last days●" (Hebrews 1:2), he also conveying that although Christ's coming was said to be imminent, it was still "yet a little while●" off (10:37).

But many of the people in those times had slackened to become "dull of hearing" (chapter 5:11-12), it thus being necessary to impress on them the need to maintain "the assembling of ourselves together...as ye see the day approaching" (10:25) for "he that shall come will come, and will not tarry●" (verse 37).

- THESE LAST DAYS refers to the end of prophesied Israelite history and thus defines the last generation of its people.

- YET A LITTLE WHILE defines a short remaining period within a contemporary period, with there being no grammatical allowance for a 'little while' at another time.

- The term WILL NOT TARRY is a response to impress upon anxious people who needed re-teaching that Christ's coming would not occur beyond that generation. Thus such coming cannot be equated with any people later than the first century Israelite/Judean nation.

The prophesied last / latter times identifies the last years of the apostolic era

In about A.D. 65 the disciple Jude wrote an open letter to Christ's followers reminding them of the critical dangers of "the last time●" which had already begun (Jude 18), especially with the Judaists provoking Roman anger.

Jude added that the apostles had warned there would be "mockers (of Christ's teachings) in the last time" (Jude 17-18), that is, especially in the final years of the Judean nation, such being referred to by Paul as "the last days●" (2 Timothy 3:1).

Also in about A.D. 65, Paul indicated that "the latter times" (1 Timothy 4:1) would necessarily include the end of the apostolic era, and would be marked by the behaviour of influential people having not only wholly debased themselves, both spiritually and physically, but expecting all others to follow suit (verses 2-4).

Additionally, irrational hostility was directed against those who expected Christ's coming in those times, that is, despite the continuing presence of the apostles and their teachings of Christ's second coming etc., some people were "saying that the resurrection is past already●" (2 Timothy 2:18).

- The variety of terms referring to a **LAST TIME** denotes either the period before Christ's second coming or a yet future time ending with mankind's judgment day. However since such terms are consistently directed to the first century Israelites in Judea, they cannot be describing mankind's final judgment day. Such day has no preceding period of "last days" in which to warn of earth's approaching destruction, but such event occurs suddenly and loudly, despite an appearance of "all things continu(ing) as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:4).

Following such occasion, no-one is left on earth to be taken captive by the Romans, unlike that which occurred after the time of Christ's second coming in the "last days", such being exactly opposite to "the day of the Lord" which without forewarning occurs "with a great noise" (verse 10).

- Paul impressed Timothy at this time that since "in the **LAST DAYS** perilous times shall come", with "men of corrupt minds" infiltrating the assemblies (2 Timothy 3:1,8), he should avoid such people and "do the work of an evangelist/teacher" (2 Timothy 4:5). Additionally, Paul instructed Timothy that he should make known "the things thou hast heard (from)...me...to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2:2), such instruction concerning fellow workers conveying no authority to appoint apostles, they having fully completed their commission.

- Rumours that **THE RESURRECTION IS PAST ALREADY** were based on a malicious presumption that there were events in those "last times" to indicate a resurrection had occurred without their knowing it.

The time of the Second Coming and that of “the day of the Lord” are distinctly different

When earlier in A.D. 60 the apostle Peter warned “the end of all things is at hand” (1 Peter 4:7), he was referring to the approaching end of the Israelite nation in Judea (ibid.). And some six years later in about A.D. 66, he also referred to a “day of judgment and perdition (eternal punishment) of ungodly men” which was accompanied by a destruction of earth by fire (2 Peter 3:7), an event readily distinguishable from the invisible non-destructive second coming.

The distinction between such events is indicated by Peter mentioning in the one case a quiet event on earth, when “the day of the Lord● will come as a thief in the night” with the unseen thief’s exit leaving life to go on, and in the other case, a cosmically loud event of the annihilation of earth “in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise” (verse 10), leaving no organic life to go on.

Some 12 years earlier, the same distinction was made by Paul mentioning on the one hand an invisible earthly inaudible non-destructive event initiated in heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:16), and on the other, a visible cosmically loud event involving the planet earth’s fiery destruction (chapter 5:2-3).

Alternatively, Paul writes, “ye...are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief”, but “watch and be sober” and “edify one another” (5:4-6,11), he thus referring to the inaudible and invisible event of the Second Coming soon to occur (verse 23). ● That is, Paul was not warning of an imminent destruction of earth threatening Christ’s followers, but relayed a parable to remind them that catastrophes (of whatever size) occur suddenly.

Similarly, Peter did not predict an imminent total destruction to occur at that particular time, but nevertheless mentioned “scoffers” of a purported coming event (2 Peter 3:3-4) to be not unlike those in the days of Noah before the flood (Matthew 24:37-39).

Thus although each of the writings of Peter and Paul on such events appears to self-conflict, that is, a mentioning of 1) an invisible very quiet occurrence on earth incongruently connected to a very loud one, and 2) ‘life continuing as usual’ co-existing with ‘no earth to live on’, each conveys the same occurrence of ‘suddenness’, that is, whether a sudden quiet ‘coming and going’, or a sudden loud ‘destruction of everything’.

● The term, DAY OF THE LORD (THE DAY OF YAHWEH – Hebrew) in each of its 25 usages in the Old Testament is associated with destruction on earth of nations and peoples by Yahweh.

The same term (in Greek) appears twice in the New Testament, once by Paul (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3) and once by Peter (2 Peter 3:10), each referring to a sudden destruction of the earth at some future time.

Also, two other similar terms appear in the New Testament: (i) “the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14); and (ii) the term, “the day of Christ” (Philippians 1:10; 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:2).

In this context neither of these occasions concerns a destruction of earth, but rather an encouragement to Christ’s assemblies of the mid-first century A.D. to be ready for his sudden ‘coming and going’ (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18).

That is, some 30 years after Christ had ascended to heaven to “prepare a place” for his disciples, he would “come again and receive (them) unto (himself)” (John 14:1-3). Also, all of Christ’s followers were taught that he “himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump(et) of God”, and then raise up “the dead in Christ” and those “which are alive and remain” (1 Thessalonians 4:16), with all of such activity completed “in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

● However with these events being inseparable from the environment of heaven, and with New Testament teachings depicting that Christ would return as a ‘silent thief (taking a short time) coming and going in the night’, such “day of the Lord” would be neither seen nor heard by even the most perceptive persons on earth, that is, such being significantly different from the later visibly sudden, loud, fire-destructive “day of the Lord” or “day of God” (not necessarily a short occasion) which Peter coupled to the final judgment of the rest of humanity (2 Peter 3:7,etc.).

“Antichrist” — a popular wrong teaching of ‘the last time’

At the end of the apostolic era, that is, “the last time” (1 John 2:18), the apostle John warned against a then popular teaching that Christ was not the human Messiah because being God, he cannot die, so the death and resurrection of Christ was more or less theatrical. In denying Christ was a human being, such teaching identifies the emergent “spirit of antichrist” (1 John 4:3), with its promoters having supposedly elevated their beliefs to consider that Christ’s Godly status could not be connected with corrupt human beings because it would irreversibly humiliate him. Such belief however, on the pretence of being more Godly, wholly denies Christ’s sacrificial objective, the physics of which required him to die.

John added that the increasing popularity of such teachings indicated that the contemporary period was “the last time” now being lived in, that is: “ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (1 John 2:18; 2 John 7).

These same “antichrists” as identified by John in “the last time” were people who had ‘fallen away’ from Christ’s assemblies (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:3), that is, those who had gone “out from us” (1 John 2:19). Such people were denounced by Jude “in the last time” as “mockers” and “ungodly”, after “separat(ing) themselves” from the various assemblies (Jude 19).

Similarly, in the years prior to such, the apostle Paul wrote of people who had become demonic and malicious in “the latter times” (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

- THE LAST TIME conveys having neared the end of civil life in the Israelite/Judean nation.

- ANTICHRIST was a term for a sect based person who claimed Christ to be so completely Godly he could at no time have been a human, such theology being later called ‘docetism’, from a Greek word meaning ‘to seem’, antichrists holding that Christ only seemed to have flesh.

John declared such body of antichrists was becoming more prevalent, that is, it existed “EVEN NOW”, he referring to its early days before such falsity had widely spread.

Although Christian theologians generally hold the ‘last time’ warned of by John to be some 20 uneventful years after the fall of Jerusalem, such theologically devised ‘last time’ is incompatible with all other mentions of a ‘last time’ describing the period leading to A.D. 70. Nor are there any recorded events to which it could be connected. However with John’s writings being contemporary with the other apostles’ writings, the antichrist movement described by him must have begun before A.D. 70.

Centuries later in the emerging Islamic period, another form of ‘antichrist-ism’ was promoted, that is, through a belief that Christ was not crucified but only that “the resemblance of ‘Iesa (Jesus) was put over another man (and they killed that man)” (Koran 4:157 – Al-Hilali & Khan translation), Christ therefore being depicted in such new Islamic religion as being not actually resurrected (a conception first advanced in the first century – Matthew 28:11-15), that is, that Christ lived on to die a natural death, and like everyone else, waits for the Islamic “Day of Resurrection” (Koran 3:55). Although this Islamic based ‘antichrist’ teaching differs from that of the first century (which held that Christ was not a mortal human), both dismiss the legally justifiable accounts of Christ’s bodily death and resurrection.

Christ's followers advised circa A.D. 70 he was coming "shortly"

A.D. 70

The apostle John recognised he was witnessing the 'last time' when he compiled "The Book of Revelation", that is, "to shew unto (God's) servants (in several assemblies) things which must shortly come to pass" (chapter 1:1). The content which followed revealed an urgency to "keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (verse 3; 22:10).

These same servants in their assemblies were all contemporary and thus received the same warnings of imminent events and people's repugnantly ungodly behaviour (e.g., chapter 2:9,14,20). Similarly, these assemblies were not separated by historical periods, but received the same message of urgency, that is, as expressed in the instruction by Christ that "I come quickly" (chapter 22:7,12) and to "hold fast till I come" (2:25). Thus Christ's advice to his followers denoted an all-inclusive contemporary personal urgency, not repeatable in any later period of history.

- **THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS** refers to prophesied events within the same time frame as the 'last time' of the Israelite/Judean nation.

- **THE TIME IS AT HAND** concerns an immediacy only to the then generation, and is grammatically inapplicable to future generations.

- **I COME QUICKLY** relates only to the generation of that time and indicates an imminent arrival which would be witnessed by them. Consequently such promise cannot apply to a future generation.

- **HOLD FAST TILL I COME** conveys an urgency to be in readiness to depart without notice, that is, not merely holding fast until death (which allows for a distant future second coming), but being in 'standby' mode.

Tribulation of the "last time" then followed by Christ's Second Coming

The calendrical 'last days' of the Israelite nation ended on 1st September, A.D. 70 when the Romans had completed their 3 year razing invasion of Judea, in effect rendering impossible both a reconstituting of the same Judean nation, and another national "time of trouble" (Daniel 12:1) at any time later in history.

After the fall of Jerusalem, or specifically, "in those days, after that tribulation" (Mark 13:24), Christ's second coming was prophesied to occur (verse 26), but the day and hour in which such would occur was not given, being expected to happen 'in the twinkling of an eye' any day soon. Being an event occurring 'not with observation', no eyewitness account could be expected. Also the heightened activity in Judea at that time would dwarf any disappearance of people in that land, such expectedly going either unnoticed or unrecorded (especially when no civil infrastructure remained).

The same necessarily applies to God's people who lived outside Judea, and who, whether or not "taken" from everyday workplace situations (Matthew 24:40-41) would have been classified by the authorities as 'missing persons' along with others.

Post A.D. 70

Overview of matters before and after Christ's Second Coming

1.

It can be reasonably determined from the scriptural narrative that from the birth of Christ to the end of the last days of the Israelite nation, several attempts were made by the devil to defeat him:

1) The attempt to kill Christ immediately was described in the prophetic terms: "the dragon (a symbol for the serpent/Devil/Satan) stood before the woman" (a symbol for the carrier of the "seed" (Genesis 3:15) who would overcome him - 1 John 3:8), such "dragon" intending "to devour her child as soon as it was born" (Revelation 12:4). The woman nevertheless "brought forth a man child (and reared him to "rule all nations")" (verse 5), the devil failing in such endeavour despite having a measure of heavenly power;

2) The next attempt was in trying to lure Christ from his arrangement with God and join the devil instead (Matthew 4:3-11);

3) The next attempt was to lure as many as possible of Christ's followers away from "endur(ing) to the end" (Matthew 24:13), the devil attempting to seduce even "the very elect" of them across such time with "false Christs, and false prophets", and "great signs and wonders" (verse 24), all aimed at terminally diverting their higher affections;

4) The next attempt by the devil was to assault Christ's mind into abandoning his mission by imposing on him "the power of darkness" such as would manifest itself as overwhelmingly intense fear, the same being to such extent as caused Christ to pray earnestly that God would annul his mission to be sacrificially killed, that is, "If thou be willing, remove this cup from me". With God being not so willing, an angel was sent, "strengthening him" to enable him to pray "more earnestly", that is, to endure a higher measure of "agony" (Luke 22:41-44,53);

5) The next attempt was to take over Christ's position (the devil still having access to heaven), which was manifested by the devil and "his angels" starting a "war in heaven" (Revelation 12:7). However unlike earthly wars, this 'war in heaven' was completed in one fight (verses 7b-8). Having "prevailed not", the devil was "cast out into the earth, and his angels...with him" (verse 9). And finding there remained only "a short time" for attempts to defeat Christ, he exercised "great wrath" (verse 12) to "devour" the faith of as many as possible (1 Peter 5:8).

Post A.D. 70

2.

However, the devil was unable to prevent the (dead and living) body of Christ's followers being "saved" (Matthew 24:13) and resurrected to "everlasting life" (chapter 19:28-29), such followers being comprised not only of Israelite Judeans but even non-Israelites and part-believers (including those of other nations who had equal status to Israelites (Acts 11:18b; Galatians 3:14; 2 Timothy 1:11), all of which demonstrating their faith by having the "testimony of Jesus Christ" (cf. Revelation 1:2).

Although the disciples complained about part-believers using his name, Christ made known that his testimony was not entirely limited to the disciples, it being acceptable for such to be promoted even by part-followers of Christ to the extent where some in those times performed miracles in his name (cf. Mark 9:38-40).

Later Paul referred to Christ's followers as having "the testimony of Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:6), he also later encouraging his helper Timothy to keep "the testimony of our Lord" (2 Timothy 1:8).

Thus in the "perilous times" experienced before the completion of Christ's work (2 Timothy 3:1), the devil caused many of Christ's disciples, and others who promoted Christ's testimony, to be persecuted and/or killed (Revelation 2:10,13).

During such adverse times, Peter advised people to watch more keenly and be prepared to bear up against persecution, he mentioning firstly those happy for being "reproached for the name of Christ" (1 Peter 4:14), and secondly, those unhappy for being mistaken for a "Christian" assembly member (verse 16), the end result being that all are seen to have "the testimony of Jesus Christ", and that in "every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached" (Philippians 1:18), such as has continued ever since.

Therefore with the devil being unable to prevent the body of Christ's followers overcoming him (Revelation 12:11), he was limited to attacking those who had not overcome him and were not ready for Christ's second coming, like the 'foolish virgins' of the parable (Matthew 25:1-12), that is, with the body of Christ's followers no longer present on earth, the devil "was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which (despite their slackness)...have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17).

Since the late first century, people of the nations visited by the apostles continued to promote Christ's testimony, they all later becoming identified as "Christians", such nomination being in existence some time before the disciples themselves were thus called (Acts 11:26). However no formal title was employed by the body of Christ's followers.

The only resemblance to a title of Christ was that of either the Hebrew word "messiah" (meaning 'anointed liberator' or the like), or the Greek "christos" (meaning 'covered over' or 'anointed' (as with kings etc.)), the Greek word subsequently being Christianised to become the capitalised surname Christ (with a changed pronunciation of the vowel from a short i as in 'bit' to a long i as in 'bite').

3.

Post A.D. 70

However the specific word “Christian” (the suffix ‘ian’ denoting ‘follower of’) is not seen in copies of the scriptures until the 4th century (contemporary with the Roman Empire becoming Christian). That is, although “Christian” appears in modern translations of the Bible, the different meaning Greek word “chrēstian” (sometimes written chriestian) was always used in the original texts, having a different main vowel ē (“eta”), with its last appearance being in an accepted manuscript (“81”) of the 11th century.

Unlike the title “Christian”, the word “chrēstian” was derived from the common Greek word chrēstos, meaning ‘good’ (having the same range of meanings as ‘good’ in English, and extending to such as the apostle Paul writing of “the chrēstos (goodness) of God” (Greek - Romans 2:4), and Peter’s writing “the Lord is chrēstos (gracious)” (Greek - 1 Peter 2:3), the same not conveying any element of covering or anointing.

As with the early promoters of Christ’s testimony other than the disciples (Mark 9:38-40), the later ‘Chrēstians’ had “the testimony of Jesus (the) christos” (Greek - Revelation 12:17). That is, in post-apostolic times scholarly Chrēstians appeared who, although lacking the uniformity of the body of Christ’s followers and the spiritual leadership of the apostles, were nevertheless revered as Chrēstian “fathers” by their followers, they promoting the same “testimony of Jesus Christ” as did God’s “servants” before the second coming (Revelation 1:1-2). [Regardless of other considerations, the later adoption of “Christian” was calculated to create an upgrade in personal status from a doer/follower of good to one having formal allegiance to a revered person.]

In the following centuries, copies of the Biblical texts were handed down through generations of Chrēstians/Christians, the Biblical core teachings having fully retained their virtue despite textual corruptions and interpolated religious elements. With many nations over the centuries having adopted such core teachings (as with the statutory use of the Bible in legal matters, various coronation ceremonies, etc.), such nations are constitutionally linked with “the testimony of Jesus Christ”. Consequently these same nations have providentially benefitted by recognition of the sovereignty of God (as determinable from the relative prosperity and higher standard of living of Christian-based Western society). Accordingly, the decline in the recognition of the Deity by Western nations in modern atheistic times has been coincident with the widely observed decline of peace, order and good government, and significantly deteriorated standards of health and temperance.

Notwithstanding the long acknowledged social benefit of Christianity (despite its history of internal divisions and religious persecutions), the central expectation of ‘The Second Coming of Christ’ remains unfulfilled. That is, while Christ’s return has generally been expected for many centuries, the pertinent Biblical evidence has been consistently ignored, with scholars and theologians having given insufficient consideration to the material evidence of a first century fulfilment, there being no ground for any future alternative.

ADDENDUM: *The Christian “millennium”*

1.

The Christian religion at large has long held that a period of 1,000 years or millennium was prophesied to occur in which the world would be at peace.

Such millennium is derived from a Biblical passage which repeats the term “a thousand years” in six consecutive verses (Revelation 20:2-7). Such period immediately relates to a teaching that the devil would be restrained from any activity while Christ and his followers reign over the world from Jerusalem, where following the same millennium, the devil is released for a final sifting of humanity. These consecutive verses denote events immediately prior to the account in Revelation of an instant resurrection of all mankind to the ‘day of judgment’ (verses 11-15).

Although theologians held that such 1,000 year long period was not intended to be an exact time but just a lengthy period, no agreement exists among scholars as to whether such began in past A.D. centuries, or is yet future. However, wherever such period is positioned, material conflict occurs:

- 1) From the first century A.D. to the modern day, no material evidence has been revealed or published from which a date for the start or finish of “a thousand years” in the past centuries may be confirmed. That is, no historical events have been known which could indicate anything like the devil being restrained from any activity, nor is there evidence indicating a 1,000 year period in which Christ and his resurrected followers have ruled the world, thus dismissing any occurrence of a past millennium;
- 2) Concerning a future millennium, since Christ’s resurrected followers had been promised nothing like working on the earth for a 1,000 years but rather to live forever in their own ‘place prepared for them’ in heaven (John 14:2-3), such 1,000 years on earth presents a further incongruity. That is, rather than residing in heaven as promised by Christ, in a number of passages of Revelation, Christ’s resurrected followers are indicated to become during that time, as expressed in Old Testament terms, “kings and priests...(who) reign (not from heaven, but) on the earth” (Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6b; cp. Isaiah 61:6-9).

Thus at his resurrection, since Christ removed the need for a priesthood institution, he left no room for his followers to later leave their promised “heavenly country” (Hebrews 11:16) to rule over and “repair” the earth (Isaiah 61:4) and become mediators between humans and God (verse 6). With Christ’s sacrifice having removed the need for such mediators, a future millennium cannot be substantiated by Old Testament prophecies. Further, although such prophecies indicate that a restored Davidic kingdom would occur in a “new heavens and a new earth” (Isaiah 65:17-25; 66:20-23), since the fulfilment of such Old Testament prophecies of worldly restoration were superseded by Christ’s prophecies of imminent supernatural restoration, the (later) teaching of a 1,000 year priesthood on earth is not only incongruous with but also opposed to “the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:2), and thus forms no legitimate part of it.



ADDENDUM: *The Christian "millennium"*

2.

Rather than Christ coming only the once in the first century, that is, supposedly to restore an old covenant kingdom functioning in a new heavens and earth, he came a second time and took numerous individuals back with him to heaven (John 14:2-3).

Since they were promised they would live forever in "an heavenly...city" (Hebrews 11:16), in which "no temple" exists nor any need for mediation (Revelation 21:22-27), such constituted the promised "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13). Concerning "the heavens and the earth, which are now" having been "kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment" of all mankind (verse 7), the timing of such remains unknown, with Peter advising that there is no way to calculate it (verse 8).

Accordingly, a removal of the 9 verses which depict a millennium on earth ruled by priests (Revelation 20:1-9) instantly removes an inexplicable 1,000 year suspension before those resurrected could live in heaven and enjoy their gift of eternal life. Consequently, such removal enables a natural flow between the remaining parts (from the last verse of chapter 19 directly to 20:10).

Further, the extraction of these same first verses of chapter 20 removes other incongruities, that is, i) the initial ("first") resurrection mentioned (20:4-5) is limited to only slain Christians (in marked contrast to Christ's teachings that many people since ancient times would be resurrected); this same "blessed" group then not going to live for ever in heaven as promised, but delayed by working for a 1,000 year period on earth, that is, as anachronistic kings and priests in a superseded Old Testament regimen (chapter 5:10; 20:4b and 6b), and ii) Christ is presented not as the prophesied eternal sovereign but as an ultimately unsuccessful ruler for only 1,000 years, and over not a peaceful world but one inherently hostile; that is, Christ is portrayed as ruling the world from Jerusalem but ending up as under siege by the world's armies, to the extraordinary extent of his requiring power from heaven to end matters, his rule thus being militarily inadequate; such presenting Christ as if not having sufficient Godly power to prevent a worldwide rebellion (chapter 20:9).

Thus sufficient internal evidence exists to excise the conflicting millennium passage as a post-apostolic insertion, albeit critically relied on by most of Christianity over the ages, and to dismiss such earthly priesthood invention as alien to the Revelation narrative.

An explicit warning against adding to or removing parts of the "prophecy of this book" appears at the end of Revelation (22:18-19). And this warning must automatically extend to a number of prophecies which investigative scholars and others have determined as unfulfillable, and hence not part of the original text, such type of editorial insertions being long recognised as Judaist-influenced commentaries made after the apostolic era. Such an explicit warning can only be legitimate where no ambiguity is apparent (like that of the commandments given to Moses – Deuteronomy 4:2). Thus, such warning cannot apply to the ambiguous texts of Revelation, since it would expressly prevent the restorative work the book is known to require.