

Christ's Second Coming: When? How?

- I. Jesus Christ has promised to come again. **MAT 24:30; ACT 1:11; HEB 9:28.**
- A. Various things such as resurrection, judgment, rewards, etc. are associated with His coming.
 - B. A correct understanding of the Second Coming should settle the heart. **JOH 14:1-3; 1TH 1:9-10.**
 - C. A denial of the Second Coming is an open door to hedonism. **1CO 15:32; 2PE 3:3-6.**
 - D. A corruption of the Second Coming can unsettle the heart (**2TH 2:1-2**) and misdirect thought and action.
 - 1. Example: The *time* of Christ's coming is not known (**MAR 13:32-37; 1TH 5:1-2**). Over the years some have presumed to know the time of Christ's coming, leading others astray and into disillusionment.
 - 2. Example: The *nature* of Christ's coming includes bodily resurrection (**1TH 4:14-18**). Denial of this can overthrow faith. **2TI 2:18.**
 - 3. Example: The *purpose* of Christ's coming is to *end* things on earth (**2PE 3:10; 1CO 15:23-24**). The notion that His coming is the *beginning* of another season on earth has been the basis for misdirected evangelical and political thought.
 - E. The keys to proper interpretation of all things pertaining to Christ's Second Coming are:
 - 1. the plain statements of Scripture by their words and grammar rule over the ambiguous or difficult statements of Scripture. Reference texts are not proof texts. **2PE 1:20.**
 - 2. the words of Christ and the apostles determine the proper interpretation of all prophetic utterances, including anything predicted by the O.T. **2PE 1:19; 1JO 4:6.**
- II. Among professing Christians, there are various schools of thought relative to the Second Coming and associated events. Here is a summary of some:
- A. Amillennialism (sometimes called *interadventual* millennialism, *present* millennialism or *realized* millennialism) affirms that Christ co-reigns with His saints in the church throughout the entire period between the First and Second Comings. His Second Coming will be personal for perfecting the salvation of His elect, for the destruction of the present heavens and earth, for universal judgement, and the creation of a new heavens and earth.
 - B. Preterism affirms that the Second Coming occurred spiritually/figuratively in 70 A.D. All prophecy about Christ's coming and future resurrection has been fulfilled. We have been in the new heavens and earth since then.
 - C. Postmillennialism affirms a personal return of Christ after a millennium of gospel domination of this world that produces maximum human peace and potential, a *golden age*. At the end of this millennium, Satan will be loosed to stir up trouble and Christ then returns in judgement. The resurrection occurs and the new heavens and earth created.
 - D. Historic Premillennialism affirms a present spiritual kingdom of Christ which ends in great apostasy and tribulation. Christ then personally returns to consummate His kingdom visibly, resurrect the righteous and establish a calendrical millennium: a *golden age* of world government on earth during which Satan is bound. Satan will be loosed at the end of the millennium to foment a massive rebellion which Christ will terminate in final judgment and a second resurrection. After this will be the creation of a new heavens and earth.
 - E. Dispensationalism is a relatively new form of premillennialism. It bears similarities with historic premillennialism but it affirms that Christ returns in two stages (invisible, then visible) to set up a *golden age* world government for a calendrical millennium on earth which will end with Satan's loosing and subsequent judgement. This system, though,

differs from historic premillennialism in many respects, having its own unique twists.

- III. As touching world government of a carnal, political nature, Jesus Christ repulsed the notion.
- A. He rejected it when Satan offered it to Him. **MAT 4:8-10.**
 - B. He hid from intentions to make Him an earthly king. **JOH 6:15.**
 - C. He spoke of the kingdom of God in contra-political terms. **LUK 17:20-21.**
 - D. He said His kingdom was not of this world. **JOH 18:36.**
 - E. He left us with a warning that all such world government attempts are of Satan. **REV 17:10-11.**
 1. Rome was the sixth world government, preceded by Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece.
 2. In the days of the Roman Empire, God smashed the world government system apart by His own kingdom. **DAN 2:44.**
 3. Ironically, premillennialism (particularly dispensational premillennialism) affirms that the eighth satanic kingdom is its messianic world government.
 - a. It affirms that Satan will set up an Antichrist world government (which would be # 7).
 - b. It then affirms that a messiah will overthrow that system and set up his own world government (which would be # 8).
 - c. Many Christians (who should be the foremost opponents of political world government) are, wittingly or unwittingly, providing the spiritual and political grease to skid the eighth into place.
- IV. Here is a summary of dispensational *eschatology* (the department of theological science concerned with ‘the four last things: death, judgement, heaven, and hell’):
- A. There are seven arbitrary *dispensations* (“a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God” [*Scofield Reference Bible*]). They are often distinguished as: innocency, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace, and the kingdom.
 - B. The true promised seed whom God told Abraham should spring from him and be blessed above others to receive the Abrahamic promises are natural Israel.
 - C. The Church is not the true Israel nor does the Christian inherit “distinctive Jewish promises” of a land, king and kingdom.
 1. The gospel of grace and the gospel of the kingdom are not the same.
 2. The gospel of grace pertains to the church.
 3. The gospel of the kingdom pertains to natural/national Israel and was discontinued after the Jewish rejection of Messiah.
 4. The gospel of the kingdom therefore anticipates a future Jewish messianic reign.
 - D. Natural Israel awaits its greatest exaltation as God's earthly people.
 - E. National Israel has never yet possessed the whole land of Palestine according to the Abrahamic covenant. Thus, those promises await fulfilment in a future kingdom-age.
 1. O.T. promises of Israel repossessing the land are relegated to the future kingdom age.
 2. The restoration of Judah and Jerusalem following the Babylonian captivity are not to be construed as the fulfilment of the restoration promises.
 - F. The kingdom prophesied by John and Jesus as being “at hand” was postponed until a future time.
 - G. The Church is a mystery dispensation which is only parenthetical and typical of God's true kingdom yet to appear. The church age is an interruption of prophecy, not a fulfilment of

- it.
- H. The throne of David is presently unoccupied and will not be occupied until Christ returns in glory to reign on the earth.
 - 1. Christ is not the King of the church, but the Head of the church.
 - 2. Christ is (the coming) King of the Jews.
 - I. Christ returns in two stages: the Rapture (an invisible approach), and years later the Revelation (a visible approach).
 - J. Christ will return to secretly rapture the Church out of the world, and return again seven years later to establish the Millennial kingdom. This is known as the *pre-tribulation rapture*.
 - 1. After the rapture a Jewish remnant will take the place of the church as God's agent on earth for the conversion of Israel and the Gentiles.
 - 2. Between those events, the Jewish temple will be rebuilt and animal sacrifices will be restored under a covenant that natural Israel will make with Antichrist.
 - 3. Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel halfway through the seven years and great tribulation ensues. This is the tribulation prophesied by Daniel, Jeremiah and Christ (Olivet Discourse) and is the "...time of Jacob's trouble..." (**JER 30:7**).
 - 4. Christ returns with the raptured saints, resurrects the tribulation period martyrs, the battle of Armageddon occurs, the nations judged, Antichrist destroyed, Satan bound, Israel restored to Palestine fully and the Millennial Kingdom commences.
 - K. With the establishment of the Jewish Millennial Kingdom, the temple will (again) be rebuilt and animal sacrifices made. Christ shall personally rule from the Davidic throne in earthly Jerusalem over all nations. Humanity will enjoy its *golden age*.
 - L. At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be loosed to deceive a huge confederacy of nations to overthrow the kingdom.
 - 1. Christ will quash the rebellion.
 - 2. The wicked dead will be resurrected.
 - 3. The judgment of the wicked men and angels, and their destruction with the devil in the lake of fire ends earth history.
 - 4. The new heavens and new earth begin.