

THE FORENSIC FILES:
RE-EXAMINING THE SECOND
COMING

by Brian L. Martin

From: Forensic Files - Doctrine Division
To: Him who has ears to hear
Re: The Second Coming

The following is a preliminary investigation to ascertain the merit of reopening the case of the timing and nature of the Second Coming of Christ.

Scope:

Due to new research in the field of eschatology, and advances in hermeneutics and exegesis, there is a call by a growing sect of Christianity (known as Preterists) for the re-examination of the evidence concerning the Second Coming of Christ. The past ruling—that the Second Coming has not yet occurred (the Futurist position)—is being called into question by this research, which postulates that the Second Coming did in fact occur around AD 70 (the Preterist position).

This preliminary report will focus on the following key areas:

- The imminency passages
- Apocalyptic language
- Spiritual fulfillment of prophecy (vs. literal physical fulfillment)
- The nature of the kingdom (a feature closely associated with the Second Coming)
- The nature of the coming of the Lord

Item #1: The Imminency Passages:

The first item of our investigation will be the teaching of the New Testament, as regarding the timing of the Second Coming. Preterists maintain that Christ and the apostles taught that He would return within *their* generation. The Preterists call the following New Testament witnesses. These witnesses are asked: *when did you believe and/or teach that the Second Coming, the last days and consummation of the age, was to take place?* (keep in mind that they were addressing the generation of ca. AD 30-70):

John the Baptist: *“The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”* (Matt 3:2)
“Who warned you to flee from the wrath about to come?” (Matt 3:7)
“The axe is already laid at the root of the trees.” (Matt 3:10)
“His winnowing fork is in His hand.” (Matt 3:12)

Peter: *“This is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall be in **the last days**. . . .’”* (Acts 2:16-17)
“He . . . has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.” (1 Pet 1:20)
“They shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”
(1 Pet 4:5)
“The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.” (1 Pet 4:7)

Paul: *“There is (Greek = about to be) a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”* (Acts 24:15)
“I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us.” (Rom 8:18)

“It is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand.”

(Rom 13:11-12)

“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.” (Rom 16:20)

“The time has been shortened.” (1 Cor 7:29)

“The form of this world is passing away.” (1 Cor 7:31)

“Now these things . . . were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” (1 Cor 10:11)

“We shall not all fall sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.” (1 Cor 15:51-52)

“ . . . things which are a shadow of what is about to come.” (Col 2:16-17)

“ . . . we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord We who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds You, brethren, are not in darkness, that the Day should overtake you like a thief.” (1 Thess 4:15,17; 5:4)

“I charge you . . . that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Tim 6:14)

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is about to judge the living and the dead” (2 Tim 4:1)

The author of Hebrews: *“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son.”*

(Heb 1:1-2)

“When He said, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.” (Heb 8:13)

“ . . . as you see the Day drawing near.” (Heb 10:25)

“For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay.”

(Heb 10:37)

James: *“You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”* (Jms 5:8)

John the beloved: *“The darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.”*

(1 Jn 2:8)

“The world is passing away, and its desires.” (1 Jn 2:17)

“It is the last hour.” (1 Jn 2:18)

“Even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour.” (1 Jn 2:18; Compare Matt 24:23-34)

“This is that of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.” (1 Jn 4:3; Compare 2 Thess 2:7)

Jude: *“But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying **to you**, ‘In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.’ These are the ones who cause divisions”* (Jude 1:17-19)

The Lord Jesus Christ, during His earthly ministry: *“The Son of Man is about to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds. There are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”* (Matt 16:27-28; cf. Mk 9:1; Lk 9:27)

*“When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers? . . . He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons. . . .Therefore **I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.**” . . . When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, **they understood that He was speaking about them.** (Matt 21:40-41,43,45)*

“This generation will not pass away until all these things take place.” (Matt 24:34)

“From now on, you [Caiaphas, the chief priests, the scribes, the elders, the whole Sanhedrin] shall be seeing the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” (Matt 26:64; Mk 14:62; Lk 22:69)

“The kingdom of God is at hand.” (Mk 1:15)

The Lord Jesus Christ, in His revelation to John: *“. . . to show to His bond-servants, the things which must shortly take place.” (Rev 1:1)*

“The time is near.” (Rev 1:3)

“Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.” (Rev 2:25)

“I also will keep you from the hour of testing which is about to come upon the whole world.” (Rev 3:10)

“I am coming quickly.” (Rev 3:11)

“Behold, I am coming quickly.” (Rev 22:7)

“Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.” (Rev 22:10; Compare Dan 8:26)

“Behold, I am coming quickly.” (Rev 22:12)

“Yes, I am coming quickly.” (Rev 22:20)

Do the Futurists have a *scriptural* precedent for refuting the Preterist interpretation that these passages mean that Christ was expected to return within the generation which witnessed His earthly ministry? (“keep in mind that we must look at what the Scriptures say, not what tradition says, or even what our own comfort levels want to hear”—Anonymous Pastor)

No: There is no scriptural precedent for interpreting these passages as meaning other than what they say.

The Futurists will now present the passages that indicate that the Second Coming would not occur within the first Church generation, but in the distant future to them.

Peter: *But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2 Pet 3:9)*

This is the only passage presented for the Futurist position.

Do Preterists have *scriptural* precedent to indicate that this verse does *not* mean that the Second Coming is thousands of years away?

Yes: The previous testimony of Peter clearly demonstrates that he believed they were in the last days (Acts 2:17), and the end of all things was at hand (1 Pet 4:7). The next several verses of this passage continue in this vein:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works

*will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought **you** to be in holy conduct and godliness, **looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God**, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise **we** are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since **you** look for these things . . .*

Preterists believe that Peter was not teaching the Second Coming was thousands of years away, but that God views time differently than man does. Although Peter's generation had to wait what seemed a long time (about forty years) for the Second Coming, to God it was only a blink of an eye.

Some futurists do counter the "imminency" passages with the following so-called "delay" passages:

*Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, "**My master is delaying his coming,**" and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt 24:44-51)*

*Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while **the bridegroom was delayed**, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: "Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!" Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." But the wise answered, saying, "No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves." And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But he answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you." Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. (Matt 25:1-13)*

*For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. **After a long time the lord of those servants came** and settled accounts with them. (Matt 25:14-19)*

But the delay is not one of millennia, or even centuries, but rather in each parable the expected arrival—though delayed—happens within the lifetime of those awaiting it:

*. . . the master of that servant **will come** on a day when **he** is not looking for him . . .*

*And while **they** went to buy, **the bridegroom came** . . .*

*After a long time the **lord of those servants came** and settled accounts with **them**.*

The point of the parables was to teach the listeners to expect the return of the Son of Man, not within a few months or even years, but certainly within the lifetime of some of those listening, which is the interpretation the preterists are espousing.

Item #2: Apocalyptic Language:

Preterists argue that the language of the Olivet discourse and Revelation should be taken figuratively, keeping in line with the precedent established in the Old Testament, and that it speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Futurists argue that the language is to be taken literally wherever possible.

Is there *scriptural* precedent for interpreting the language of the Olivet discourse and Revelation as figurative (symbolic) of judgment upon Jerusalem and/or Israel?

Yes:

*The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.
“Lift up a banner on the high mountain,
Raise your voice to them;
Wave your hand, that they may enter the gates of the nobles.
I have commanded My sanctified ones;
I have also called My mighty ones for My anger;
Those who rejoice in My exaltation.”
The noise of a multitude in the mountains,
Like that of many people!
A tumultuous noise of **the kingdoms of nations gathered together!**
The LORD of hosts musters
The army for battle.
They come from a far country,
From the end of heaven;
The LORD and His weapons of indignation,
To destroy the whole land.
Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand!
It will come as destruction from the Almighty.
Therefore all hands will be limp,
Every man’s heart will melt,
And they will be afraid.
Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them;
They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth;
They will be amazed at one another;
Their faces will be like flames.
Behold, the day of the LORD comes,
Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger,
To lay the land desolate;
And He will destroy its sinners from it.
For the stars of heaven and their constellations
Will not give their light;*

***The sun will be darkened in its going forth,
And the moon will not cause its light to shine.
“I will punish the world for its evil,
And the wicked for their iniquity;
I will halt the arrogance of the proud,
And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.
I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold,
A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir.
Therefore I will shake the heavens,
And the earth will move out of her place,
In the wrath of the LORD of hosts
And in the day of His fierce anger.
It shall be as the hunted gazelle,
And as a sheep that no man takes up;
Every man will turn to his own people,
And everyone will flee to his own land.
Everyone who is found will be thrust through,
And everyone who is captured will fall by the sword.
Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; Their houses will be
plundered
And their wives ravished.
“Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them,
Who will not regard silver;
And as for gold, they will not delight in it.
Also their bows will dash the young men to pieces,
And they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb;
Their eye will not spare children.
And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
The beauty of the Chaldeans’ pride,
Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.
It will never be inhabited,
Nor will it be settled from generation to generation;
Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there,
Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there.
But wild beasts of the desert will lie there,
And their houses will be full of owls;
Ostriches will dwell there,
And wild goats will caper there.
The hyenas will howl in their citadels,
And jackals in their pleasant palaces.
Her time is near to come,
And her days will not be prolonged.”***
(Isa 13; concerning judgment on Babylon.)

***All the host of heaven shall be dissolved,
And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll;
All their host shall fall down
As the leaf falls from the vine,
And as fruit falling from a fig tree.***
(Isa 34:4; concerning the destruction of Idumea.)

*“When I put out your light,
I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark;
I will cover the sun with a cloud,
And the moon shall not give her light.
All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you,
And bring darkness upon your land,”*
Says the Lord GOD. (Ezek 32:7-8; concerning the destruction of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.)

*The earth quakes before them,
The heavens tremble;
The sun and moon grow dark,
And the stars diminish their brightness.
The sun and moon will grow dark,
And the stars will diminish their brightness.
The LORD also will roar from Zion,
And utter His voice from Jerusalem;
The heavens and earth will shake;
But the LORD will be a shelter for His people,
And the strength of the children of Israel. (Joel 2:10; 3:15-16; The Lord, concerning the
judgment of His enemies.)*

*“And it shall come to pass in that day,” says the Lord GOD, “That I will make the sun
go down at noon,
And I will darken the earth in broad daylight” (Amos 8:9; The Lord, concerning
judgment against the house of Jacob.)*

*Then David spoke to the LORD the words of this song, on the day when the LORD had
delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. And he said:*

*“The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;
The God of my strength, in whom I will trust;
My shield and the horn of my salvation,
My stronghold and my refuge;
My Savior, You save me from violence.
I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised;
So shall I be saved from my enemies.
When the waves of death surrounded me,
The floods of ungodliness made me afraid.
The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me;
The snares of death confronted me.
In my distress I called upon the LORD,
And cried out to my God;
He heard my voice from His temple,
And my cry entered His ears.
Then the earth shook and trembled;
The foundations of heaven quaked and were shaken,
Because He was angry.
Smoke went up from His nostrils,
And devouring fire from His mouth;
Coals were kindled by it.
He bowed the heavens also, and came down
With darkness under His feet.*

*He rode upon a cherub, and flew;
And He was seen upon the wings of the wind.
He made darkness canopies around Him,
Dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.
From the brightness before Him
Coals of fire were kindled.
The LORD thundered from heaven,
And the Most High uttered His voice.
He sent out arrows and scattered them;
Lightning bolts, and He vanquished them.
Then the channels of the sea were seen,
The foundations of the world were uncovered,
At the rebuke of the LORD,
At the blast of the breath of His nostrils.
He sent from above, He took me,
He drew me out of many waters.
He delivered me from my strong enemy,
From those who hated me;*

For they were too strong for me.” (2 Sam 22:1-18; David’s description of the Lord delivering him from his enemies and the hand of King Saul.) See also Ps 68:7-9; 144:5-6; Hab 3; Micah 1:3-4

Is there *scriptural* precedent indicating that the hearers/readers of the Olivet discourse and Revelation—as opposed to interpreting these messages the same way as they had similar passages from the Old Testament—were to now interpret them as literally as possible?

No: No scriptural evidence was provided that would indicate a change in the centuries old figurative understanding of Jewish apocalyptic language.

Item #3: Spiritual Fulfillment of Prophecy:

Preterists maintain that eschatological prophecy has been interpreted too literally, resulting in an errant definition of the Second Coming and the Kingdom of God. Is there a scriptural precedent for interpreting eschatological prophecy in a more “spiritual”, or symbolic way?

Yes: Jesus proclaimed that John the Baptist fulfilled the eschatological prophecies of Elijah, in a spiritual manner. John functioned in the spirit of Elijah. The associated details of those prophecies—valleys brought up, mountains brought down, crooked paths made straight, etc.—did not see literal fulfillments. Rather, they are fulfilled in a spiritual sense by the Gospel of grace replacing the Law.

Jesus also taught that although the Kingdom was at hand, it was not of this world. (John 18:36)

The author of Hebrews taught the fulfillment of the new covenant of Jeremiah 33:31-34 was not with physical Israel, but with the Church via the gospel. (Heb 8)

But now He [Christ] has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their

fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. (Heb 8:6-13)

Seeing that there is a scriptural precedent for a more "spiritual" interpretation of prophecy, is there any scriptural indication that these are only isolated instances, or that other specific passages are to be interpreted more literally?

No: It is noteworthy that after Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was given, Who was to teach of the things to come, none of the New Testament authors speak of a future physical kingdom, nor of a future age (or Millennium) beyond the everlasting age of the Gospel, in which the typical "literal" fulfillments of prophecy are realized.

Item #4: The Nature of the Kingdom:

Preterists maintain that the Old Testament passages which appear to speak of a future, restored nation of Israel, are in fact fulfilled spiritually by the Church:

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?"

Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." (John 18:36-37)

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20-21)

"But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you." (Matt 12:28)

. . . for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Rom 14:17)

For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power. (1 Cor 4:20)

Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. (1 Cor 15:50)

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col 1:13)

The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. (2 Tim 4:18)

For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched . . . But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken (Heb 12:18, 22-24, 28)

But you [the Church] are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Pet 2:9)

Seeing that there is a precedent in the New Testament of interpreting the kingdom as being spiritual in nature, are there any New Testament passages that teach about a coming physical kingdom?

No: The Old Testament passages which are interpreted literally by both the Jews and Futurist Christians, are interpreted spiritually by the inspired authors of the New Testament. As noted above, after Pentecost there is no teaching of a future physical kingdom.

Item #5: The Nature of the Coming of the Lord:

Preterists assert that since the language describing the events associated with the Second Coming and the nature of the kingdom have been misinterpreted, the nature of the Second Coming of the Lord should be interpreted in line with Old Testament precedent. They hold that the New Testament teaches that He will come in the clouds (Mk 14: 61-62; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thess 4:17; Rev 1:7, 14:14), which is how God is seen as coming to rescue His people and judge His enemies in the Old Testament.

Is there a scriptural precedent regarding the coming of the Lord in the clouds to rescue His people and judge His enemies?

Yes:

*Then the earth shook and trembled;
The foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken,
Because He was angry.
Smoke went up from His nostrils,
And devouring fire from His mouth;
Coals were kindled by it.
He bowed the heavens also, and came down
With darkness under His feet.
And He rode upon a cherub, and flew;
He flew upon the wings of the wind.
He made darkness His secret place;
**His canopy around Him was dark waters
And thick clouds of the skies.**
From the brightness before Him,*

His thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire. The LORD thundered from heaven,
And the Most High uttered His voice,
Hailstones and coals of fire.
He sent out His arrows and scattered the foe, Lightnings in abundance, and He vanquished them. Then the channels of the sea were seen,
The foundations of the world were uncovered
At Your rebuke, O LORD,
At the blast of the breath of Your nostrils. (Ps 18:7-15)

*He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters,
Who makes the clouds His chariot,
Who walks on the wings of the wind*(Ps 104:3)

*The burden against Egypt.
Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud,
And will come into Egypt;
The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence,
And the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst.* (Isa 19:1)

*Blow the trumpet in Zion,
And sound an alarm in My holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble;
For the day of the LORD is coming,
For it is at hand:
A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains.*
(Joel 2:1-2)

*God is jealous, and the LORD avenges;
The LORD avenges and is furious.
The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries,
And He reserves wrath for His enemies;
The LORD is slow to anger and great in power,
And will not at all acquit the wicked.
The LORD has His way
In the whirlwind and in the storm,
And the clouds are the dust of His feet.* (Nah 1:2-3)

*The great day of the LORD is near;
It is near and hastens quickly.
The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter;
There the mighty men shall cry out.
That day is a day of wrath,
A day of trouble and distress,
A day of devastation and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness*(Zeph 1:14-15)

Is there New Testament evidence to refute this connection of “coming in the clouds”, and to ascribe a more literal meaning to the Second Coming of the Lord?

The nature of the Lord's Second Coming is too complex to adequately address in a preliminary report. However, the following observations are offered:

- The similarity of the passages of Jesus' Second Coming in the clouds with Old Testament cloud-comings cannot be denied.
- The predisposition to interpret the Second Coming as more than a "cloud-coming in judgment" is inextricably wrapped up in the more literal interpretations of apocalyptic language and the nature of the kingdom. If these are removed, so is much of the support for a more "physical" interpretation of the Second Coming.

Summary:

1. The Preterists have ample scriptural support for the return of Christ within the generation of Christ and the disciples. The Futurists have no scriptural support for a delay of millenniums.
2. The Preterists have ample scriptural support showing that the Olivet discourse and Revelation continue in the established genre of apocalyptic language. The Futurists have no evidence that either the Olivet discourse, or Revelation, are to be interpreted in a manner over and against the established precedent. Lacking such evidence, the listeners and readers of Jesus and John would have interpreted these messages in the same manner that Jews had for centuries interpreted such language.
3. The Preterists can provide scriptural evidence for interpretation of prophecy that favors a more "spiritual" disposition. While Futurists still argue for their literal interpretations, they cannot refute the evidence presented by Preterists.
4. While the Scriptures regarding the nature of the kingdom are sometimes ambiguous, those that are clearly understood overwhelmingly favor a spiritual kingdom, as opposed to a physical kingdom realized in a restored nation of Israel.
5. The nature of the Second Coming is not as easily distinguished as the above points. However, the predominance of evidence for the preceding (4) points places the burden of proof upon the Futurists to demonstrate that their interpretation is to be preferred.

Conclusion:

It is the recommendation of this committee that the case of the Second Coming be reopened for further investigation. Although the Futurist position has tradition and popularity on its side, our preliminary examination of the evidence shows the majority of *scriptural* precedent to favor the Preterist view. Upon concluding this report, our initial response is to ask, "Why don't more people accept this view?"

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