

~Critics and Scoffers~

Scoffers

* Bertrand Russell --

Well-known atheist, Bertrand Russell, in his book, **Why I Am Not A Christian**, discredits the inspiration of the New Testament by saying:

"I am concerned with Christ as He appears in the Gospel narrative as it stands, and there one does find some things that do not seem to be very wise. For one thing, He certainly thought that His second coming would occur in clouds of glory before the death of all the people who were living at the time. There are a great many texts that prove it...where it is quite clear that He believed that His coming would happen during the lifetime of many then living. That was the belief of His earlier followers, and it was the basis of a good deal of His moral teaching."

* Albert Schweitzer --

In his book, **The Quest of the Historical Jesus**, Schweitzer summarized it this way:

"The whole history of Christianity down to the present day... is based on the delay of the Parousia, the non-occurrence of the Parousia, the abandonment of eschatology, the process and completion of the 'de-eschatologizing' of religion which has been connected therewith."

* Jewish Critics --

Jewish critics contend Jesus didn't complete the entire mission of the Messiah, though many admit He fulfilled some of it. That's why, in their opinion, He's definitely not the Messiah. Or, that's why He's only the Messiah for the Gentiles. This is the Jews' primary excuse for rejecting Jesus and belittling Christianity.

* Muslim Critics --

Most Muslims acknowledge Jesus as a prophet, but seek to discredit His Deity and destroy the credibility of Christianity by pointing out alleged errors and inconsistencies contained in the Bible concerning His **non-return**. They recognize the logical implications of the Bible's **time statements** as having a direct bearing on the Messianic and divine claims of Christ. But Jesus and the apostles must have lied about His imminent return and other eschatological matters, they argue. Or, if Jesus sincerely prophesied His time-restricted return and it has not been fulfilled, then He is a false prophet. The net result is to crumble the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible and open the door for the acceptance of the Koran and Islam.

* Jewish Scoffers --

In the New Testament, Jewish scoffers pointed to the continuation of everything [the Temple, city and priesthood] as evidence Jesus didn't come back as He promised. No visible changes were evident.

Consequently, there appeared to be no substance to the law-free Gospel the early Christians were preaching. These scoffers doubted the sureness of Christ's promise, viewed Christianity as a perversion of Israel's future and mockingly asked, "Where is this coming He promised?" (2 Pet.3:3-4; Jude 16-19). Peter speaks quite negatively of these scoffers and their concept of a "delay." Back then, that delay was only about thirty-some years. The current, 21-centuries-long-and-continuing delay now makes those

original scoffers look pretty good, doesn't it? Then hasn't history proven the scoffers were right?

*** Complicity in the Christian Camp --**

Many of today's traditionalists, in essence, have aligned themselves with the 1st-century scoffers. They've become unwilling accomplices of all the above critics. A definite, similar conclusion exists -- Jesus hasn't returned as and when He promised. The standard Christian answer has been to insist Jesus will come again [return], someday, and finish the job. But this proves the critics' point: Jesus was incorrect in His time-restricted predictions and cannot be the Messiah.

Futurists, whether they recognize it or not, are perpetuating the myth of the 'non-fulfillment' of the prophecies of Jesus regarding His second coming. This is most serious and puts the credibility of our Lord and Savior in doubt!