

~Jewish claims against Jesus~

The unbelieving Jews of today *rightly understand* the time line statements of Jesus to mean that He would return within the first century, before some of His disciples had died. Because they believe He didn't return, they reject Him as a false prophet.

*The following questions are posed, **and answered**, by a Jewish critic against the teachings and veracity of Jesus Christ!*

Question by Jewish critic: What does "this generation" mean in the verse, "Truly I say to you this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" (Matthew 24:32, Mark 13:30, Luke 21:32)?

Answer by Jewish critic: Mark's Jesus, after listing all the tribulations that the world must endure before he returns a second time (Mark 13:3-29, see also Matthew 24:3-33) exclaims: "Truly I say to you this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" (Mark 13:30, Matthew 24:34, Luke 21:32).

Jesus was directing this remark specifically to his contemporary generation and not to some unknown future generation. Jesus, addressing his disciples "privately" (Mark 13:3, Matthew 24:3) listed what was going to happen before his return. He then added, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you and you shall be hated of all nations for my names sake" (Matthew 24:9). Concerning this, Mark's version adds, "he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved" (Mark 13:13). Thus, it appears from this last remark that at least some of the disciples would survive and be present to witness the second coming and the end of time.

According to Mark and Matthew, Jesus expected the tribulation period to occur before the last of his generation died out. Thus, a limit is given within which the prophecies are to be fulfilled. It should be noted that these "tribulations" were not fulfilled in the events of the years 66-73 C.E., the period of the First Jewish-Roman War. Jesus' own statement shows that the culmination of the "tribulation period" was to see the parousia, the second coming of Jesus (Mark 13:26; Matthew 24:3, 30), which certainly **did not occur** during the war nor subsequently.

Question: How does the passage of time effect the Christian claim of a "second coming of Christ"?

Answer: Time makes the Christian doctrine of a "second coming of Christ" lose all credibility. If Jesus promised to come back shortly and the disciples expected so strongly to see Jesus return and establish the kingdom of God and neither event occurred, for what can the church still hope? In essence, Christian theological speculations on the "second coming of Christ" represent nothing more than the systematization of a mistake. No amount of Christian theological acrobatics will ever solve the problems engendered by the historical reality that a promised imminent fulfillment made two thousand years ago did not occur as expected by the New Testament. Simply stated, **Jesus is never coming back, not then, not now, not ever.**

Question: Didn't the delay in Jesus' second coming give further opportunity for people to be "saved" by believing in him?

Answer: Citing 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord...is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" some Christian commentators offer the excuse that the delay in Jesus' second coming was granted to give further opportunity for people to be saved. However, this evades the issue of how soon Jesus was supposed to return. In the passages promising a speedy return of Jesus within the lifetime of his contemporaries there is no discussion of God's patience in awaiting the sinners repentance. What is discussed is the time period designated by the New Testament authors for the arrival of the second coming. Let no one be confused as to when the New Testament predicted the appointed time of the second coming. *All of the New Testament citations concerning the timing of the second coming promise an imminent return in human terms.* This is delineated by its taking place while certain of Jesus' contemporaries were still alive, coupled with the occurrence in that generation of a period of tribulation just prior to the return. *The second epistle of Peter is a late attempt to explain away the obvious fact that the second coming did not arrive at its appointed time.*

Question: When speaking of Jesus' second coming, what does Paul mean by the word "shortly" in Romans 16:20 or the author of Revelation 22:10, 12, 20 by "the time is near" and "I am coming quickly"?

Answer: To understand what is meant let us look at Hebrews 10:37: "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." This verse is derived in part from the Septuagint's rendering of Habbakuk 2:3.

The early Christian church was a community living in daily expectation of the return of Jesus. The author of the Book of Hebrews expressed his agreement with this expectation. In Hebrews 10:37 he is solely concerned with the immediate future and his expectation that Jesus will return shortly: "For yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." In this verse the author of Hebrews teaches, in accordance with the other New Testament authors, that Jesus would be returning in what was then the near future as time is reckoned in human terms. He utilizes some of Habbakuk's wording to convey his own message. In the Book of Habbakuk, God informs the prophet that even when the wicked temporarily flourish one should be patient and wait, for faith in God will be vindicated. God promises that the vindication will come in its appointed time, not before, nor after. It is to come in God's own time. This fits well into the scheme of history addressed by the psalmist's words that "a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night" (Psalm 90:4). For his part, however, the author of Hebrews indicates in his choice of the words "for yet a little while" a specific time period in which to expect the arrival of the second coming. The expectation of Paul and the other New Testament authors was for the speedy arrival of the second coming in their generation. The use of "for yet a little while," "shortly," "the time is near," and "I am coming quickly" point to *the utter failure of the predictions that Jesus was coming a second time to do what he did not accomplish the first time.*

Question: How can we be sure that Jesus' promises to return are false prophecy?

Answer: Jesus, it is claimed, prophesied that certain unspecified individuals would not die until they would see either "the Son of Man coming in his kingdom" (Matthew 16:28), or "see the kingdom of God after it has come with power" (Mark 9:1), or see the "kingdom of God" (Luke 9:27).

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"he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved" (Mark 13:13). Thus, it appears from this last remark that at least some of the disciples would survive and be present to witness the second coming and the end time.

The Synoptic Gospels, while in basic agreement on the wording of the first part of their respective verses, differ on the wording of the second part. Mark 9:1 is the most informative. It reads in the full literal verse: "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death at all until they see the kingdom of God having come [that is, after it has come] with power." Apparently, the early Christian community was convinced of the imminent return of Jesus, as the Messiah, and the inauguration of the kingdom of God. ***It never happened.***

Matthew's Jesus makes an explicit statement as to his expectation of returning within the lifetime of many of his contemporaries. He declares, "But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next: for truly I say to you, you shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, until [heos, that is, "up to the time"] the Son of Man comes" (Matthew 10:23). From this verse we see that Matthew's Jesus promised to return before the apostles visited all the cities of Israel. Jesus commissions the twelve apostles to be missionaries to the Jewish people. The author of Matthew comments, "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying 'Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans do not enter. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matthew 10:5-7). Here Jesus commands the twelve apostles to proclaim it exclusively to the Jewish people. Jesus then tells the apostles that "the Son of Man" is scheduled to arrive before they accomplish the visitation of all "the cities of Israel." This is the third time the immediacy declaration "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" is used in the Gospel of Matthew. The first time was by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:2). Then, Jesus used it as his opening proclamation (Matthew 4:17). The imminent coming of the Son of Man to usher in the kingdom of heaven is expressed as being "at hand." "Is at hand," is one word, engiken. It has the meaning of "near," in relation to either place or time.

The forthcoming return of Jesus, the Son of Man, is to come rapidly as promised. ***This never occurred.*** Moreover, fulfillment of Matthew 10:23 would have had to occur, at the latest, by the time the last of the original band of apostles died. That event has long since past. Indeed, all of Jesus' contemporaries are dead (Mark 9:1) and ***his promise remains unfulfilled. Jesus is simply never returning. Jews for Judaism--Gerald Sigal,***

Well, folks, there you have it! A Jewish question and answer section that tells us why the Jews of today do not accept Jesus as the promised Messiah. He, in their thought, was a false prophet. Futurist Christians are propogating this myth by speaking of a 'yet future' coming of the Lord, when He rightly told us when He would return--in the 1st century! At least, this critic is correct in understanding the promises of Jesus were for the 1st century disciples. WHY CAN'T FUTURISTS believe it???

Futurist Commentaries

One 'futurist' commentary states: "*The earliest Christians apparently expected Jesus to return almost immediately. At his ascension to heaven, his disciples asked, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?'*" (Acts 1:6). ***They grossly underestimated how much time would pass before Jesus' return.***

Can we really believe this?? Some Christian commentaries sound exactly the same as the Jewish critics!

Were the early Christians--Paul, Peter, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and even the Lord Himself, wrong about the timing of the second coming or were they right and it did take place? After all, it was Jesus' teachings that the Apostles promulgated.

If they were wrong, then we can forget what else they had to say, because their writings could not be inspired. If they were right, then a whole lot of people have been prophesying and speculating for many years in error!

I think the only way to counter the foolishness that has gone on for the last century is to believe that the second coming happened, exactly as Jesus and His apostles said and look, instead, to the NATURE of the second coming.