

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ: An Alternate View

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Introduction

Daniel lived in Babylon between 605-529 BC (Daniel 1:1, 21). In 538 BC, the archangel Gabriel gave Daniel the prophecy of the seventy sets of seven (seventy heptads) for the Jews and Jerusalem (Daniel 9:1, 24-27). The last set of seven, the 70th week, deals with the second coming of Jesus Christ. This article focuses on Daniel's 70th week which is the last seven years.

Most prophecy scholars document four rapture models of different timings in the premillennial view¹. All models subscribe to the two-staged return of Jesus Christ: the rapture² in the sky and the second coming on a white horse to end the rebellion under the Antichrist³. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 defines "coming" as the future return of Christ: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by *the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and by *our gathering together unto him*, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that *the day of Christ* is at hand." "Coming" in Greek is *parousia*, which means "the future visible return from heaven of Jesus, to raise the dead, hold the last judgment, and set up formally and gloriously the kingdom of God". In these verses, the Apostle Paul boldly anchors and begins the second coming

¹ Some examples are John F. Walvoord (17-19, 93-95), Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice (106-110), Chuck Missler (134-135), and Jacob J. Prasch (15-22).

² Rapture is the Latin rendering of the Greek word, *harpazo*, which is translated as "caught up", meaning "to snatch out or away" in English (2 Thessalonians 4:17).

³ The "antichrist" is the popular translation of the Greek word, *antichristos*, which means "the adversary of the Messiah" (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7).

of Jesus Christ at the gathering together unto Him in the day of Christ. At this gathering, Christ's first appearance will be in the clouds⁴, distinguished in purpose from His last appearance on a white horse⁵, which will close the last seven years.

In a different analysis, Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum interprets the second coming as the military Campaign of Armageddon of eight chronological stages with Christ coming in stage six (309-357). These stages, with Fruchtenbaum's selected citations of Revelation in parentheses, are:

1. Assembling of the Antichrist and his armies in Megiddo (Revelation 16:12-16)
2. Destruction of Babylon (Revelation 18:1-24)
3. Fall of Jerusalem to gentile nations
4. Gathering of the armies of Antichrist at Bozrah
5. National regeneration of Israel
6. Second coming of the Messiah beginning in Bozrah (Revelation 19:1-18)
7. Battle of the end in the valley of Jehoshaphat in Jerusalem
8. Victory ascent upon the Mount of Olives (Revelation 16:17-21).

Fruchtenbaum recognises the importance of Revelation in sequencing the chronology of the scattered prophecies in the Old Testament (10-11). This is no easy task as evident in his military chronology that stages 6 and 8 have Revelation 19

⁴ The first appearance of Jesus Christ in the clouds is the promise (John 14:1-4) to collect His elect—the dead and living in Christ—so that God can pour out His wrath to begin judgment (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 5:9).

⁵ In Revelation 19:13-21, Jesus Christ will appear on the white horse with His armies against the Antichrist, False Prophet, kings and armies of the world. The punishment of Antichrist in the lake of fire will end the last seven years (Revelation 19:20).

before 16, while stages 3-5 and 7 do not have Revelation citations. Furthermore, the appearance of Jesus Christ on Mount Zion in Revelation 14:1 is excluded. Revelation arranges the Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets and Seven Vials in ordinal numbers from first to seventh (Revelation 6-19). In addition, the Seven Vials are nested within the Seventh Trumpet (Revelation 16:1), and the Seven Trumpets are nested within the Seventh Seal (Revelation 8:1-2). Therefore, the appearances of Jesus Christ must also follow the chronological narrative of Revelation.

This article upholds Revelation as the chronological template to interpret Old Testament scriptures by the pre-exilic, exilic and post-exilic prophets. An alternate view of the second coming proposes three consecutive appearances of Jesus Christ in contrast to the orthodox, two-staged appearance. Attention is focused on the appearance of Christ on Mount Zion and His mission.

Condition for Christ's Appearance in Jerusalem

In Daniel's seventy heptads, central to the Jews and Jerusalem is the Messiah, Jesus Christ (Daniel 9:24-27). In His first coming, Jesus Christ alluded to the condition for His return for the Jews:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matthew 23:37-39)

The double mention of Jerusalem prophesies her two desolations for killing of the "prophets, wise men and scribes"

from “Abel to Zechariah” (Matthew 23:34-35). History recorded the first desolation in AD 70 by the Romans. The second desolation is still future and will involve gentile nations.

In the last seven years, “the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two [42] months” (Revelation 11:2). It is during the second desolation that the remnant Israel will “acknowledge their offence... in their affliction they will seek me early” (Hosea 5:15) and “call on my name” i.e. the Messiah⁶ (Zechariah 13:8-9). On meeting the condition, Christ will hear them and return to Jerusalem.

Context for Christ’s Appearance in Jerusalem

Revelation 11-13 sets up the context for Jesus Christ to return to Jerusalem in Revelation 14. While Jerusalem is under gentile occupation, the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet will begin Christ’s reign over the earth (Revelation 11:15, 17). Next, the Ark of the Covenant will appear in the temple in heaven (Revelation 11:19). Pierce M. Matheney describes the Ark as the “central symbol of God’s presence with the people of Israel” (98). Indeed the next scene recounts Emmanuel, “God with us”, Christ’s birth title (Matthew 1:23). Jesus Christ, the child, was born of Israel, the woman (Revelation 12:1-6). Satan, the dragon, and his cohort of fallen angels, the stars, tried but failed to destroy Jesus who has ascended to heaven in glory. Undeterred, Satan and his angels turned to heaven and waged war against Michael and his angels, who defeated and expelled them to earth (Revelation 12:7-12). On earth, Satan is preparing the greatest persecution of Israel in the last seven years (Revelation 12:13-17). But “two wings of a great eagle” will fly Israel into her place in the wilderness where she is protected and nourished for 3.5 years (Revelation 12:14). “Eagle’s wings” recalls God’s protection and nourishment during the exodus: “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians,

⁶ See Zechariah 12-13 for the full context.

and how *I bare you on eagles' wings*, and brought you unto myself" (Exodus 19:4).

Revelation 13 sums up the zenith of evil instituted by the two diehard servants of Satan: the Antichrist, the first beast and the False Prophet, the second beast. Both of them will exploit Satan's power to rule the world for 42 months (Revelation 13:5) and enforce all to worship the Antichrist (Revelation 13:8, 12-15). Implicit in Revelation 13:15 will be his image, the abomination of desolation, "standing in the holy place" in Jerusalem, marking the middle of the last seven years⁷. Such great persecution necessitates the protection of remnant Israel for 3.5 years and underpins Christ's return for His people.

Case for Christ's Appearance on Mount Zion

The Apostle John saw Jesus Christ standing on Mount Zion:

And I looked, and, lo, *a Lamb stood on the mount Sion*, and *with him an hundred forty and four thousand*, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. *These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*. These were redeemed from among men, being the

⁷ The middle of the last seven years is when the Antichrist will stop the sacrifices and offerings (Daniel 9:27) by erecting his image in the holy place in Jerusalem (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14).

firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. (Revelation
14:1-4)

Mount Zion, writes James Newell, is the City of David, the fortified hill between the Kedron and Tyropean valleys in Jerusalem (1442). The 144,000⁸ will accompany and follow Christ wherever He goes although the exact mission is only hinted in Revelation 11-13. As the 144,000 are Jews, this article deduces that their mission with Christ is about protecting and nourishing the remnant Israel in their escape from Jerusalem to the wilderness. Evidence for the deliverance of remnant Israel is echoed by Joel 2:32: “And it shall come to pass, that *whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.*” Amos 1:2 affirms that “The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem”.

Several Old Testament prophecies substantiate additional appearances of the Lord in Jerusalem, Edom and Bozrah. Zechariah 14:1-5 writes: Christ will stand “upon the Mount of Olives” and split the mount so that the elect of God can escape. Psalm 108:10-13 reveals the leading of Christ to Edom: “Who will bring me into the strong city? *who will lead me into Edom? Wilt not thou, O God, who hast cast us off? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts? Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man*”. Micah 2:12 prophesies Christ in Bozrah of Edom: “I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; *I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men*”. In protecting the remnant, Christ will fight off the enemies as Isaiah 34:6 claims “the LORD will have a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in Edom”. Later, Isaiah 63:1-6 presents additional evidence: “the garment of the Lord will be stained in the blood

⁸ The 144,000 are redeemed Jews from the 12 tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:3-4).

of the winepress”. While John reveals Christ’s appearance on Mount Zion, the prophets supplement more sightings of Him in Jerusalem and surroundings over an undetermined period of time.

Conclusion

The second coming is the unveiling of Jesus Christ in sequential appearances: first in the clouds, next on Mount Zion, and last on a white horse in the last seven years (Fig. 1). The first appearance will translate His saints out in the sky from the wrath of God. The next appearance on Mount Zion is timed just after the middle of the last seven years to answer the call of remnant Israel. Finally after the Seventh Vial, Christ’s last appearance on a white horse will complete the destruction of the rest of the rebellion, ending the last seven years.

In Revelation 11-13, the unfolding evil against Israel necessitates Christ’s appearance on Mount Zion, accompanied by 144,000 Jews, to protect and nourish the remnant Israel from fleeing Jerusalem to hiding in the wilderness. The prophets substantiate this mission with several more appearances in Jerusalem, Edom and Bozrah. The current orthodox model of Christ coming on the Mount of Olives at the end of the last seven years cannot protect and nourish the remnant for 3.5 years. Ascertaining the Old Testament appearances of Christ in the chronology of Revelation requires further due diligence in studying the second coming.

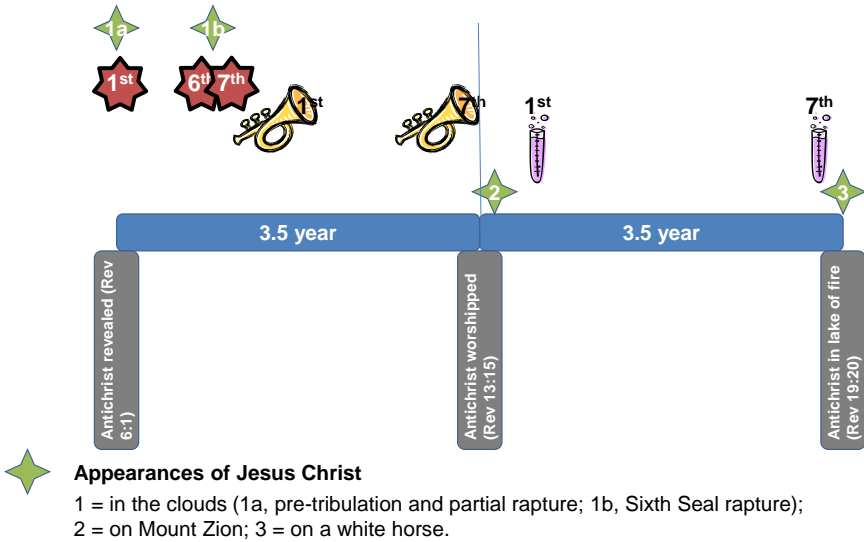


Fig. 1. The consecutive appearances of Jesus Christ in the second coming are approximated in the chronology of Revelation.

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