

Were the Apostles False Prophets?

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Jesus made several references to the approximate time of his Second Coming, the Resurrection, the Rapture, the Judgment and the arrival of the Kingdom of God:

Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for *the kingdom of heaven is near.*” (Matt. 4:17, NIV throughout)

...the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. I tell you the truth, *some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.* (Matt. 16:27-28)

In response to questions regarding signs that would precede the destruction of the Jewish Temple (Mark 13:1-4), Jesus predicted the complete fulfillment of the Olivet Prophecy within his generation:

...when *you* see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. I tell you the truth, *this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.* (Mark 13:29-30)

The Temple was destroyed in AD 70. “These things” (v. 30) that were to be fulfilled in Christ’s generation included the preaching of the gospel to all nations (v. 10), “the abomination that causes desolation” (v. 14), “the Son of Man coming in clouds” (v. 26) and the gathering of the elect (v. 27).

The Resurrection, the Rapture and the arrival of the Kingdom of God were to coincide with the destruction of the Temple:

When these things *begin* to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because *your redemption is drawing near.* (Luke 21:28); Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that *the kingdom of God is near.* (v. 31)

In Revelation, Jesus promised his persecuted brethren that he would be coming “soon”:

The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must *soon* take place.” (Rev. 22:6); Behold, *I am coming soon!* (Rev. 22:7); Behold, *I am coming soon!* My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. (Rev. 22:12); He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, *I am coming soon.*” (Rev. 22:20)

The Apostles’ Interpretation

All the New Testament authors, including the apostles, believed that they were living in “the last days” and taught that Christ’s predictions would be fulfilled during their lifetimes:

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in *these last days* he has spoken to us by his Son (Heb. 1:1-2)

...now he has appeared once for all at the *end of the ages* (Heb. 9:26)

He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in *these last times* for your sake. (1Pet. 1:20)

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings *for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.* (1Cor. 10:11)

...Christ, who gave himself for our sins *to rescue us from the present evil age* (Gal. 1:3-4)

...wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead — Jesus, *who rescues us from the coming wrath.* (1Thess. 1:10)

...this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, *even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.* (1John 2:18)

The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber...*The night is nearly over; the day is almost here* (Rom. 13:11-12)

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

Do not look for a wife...What I mean, brothers, is that *the time is short...this world in its present form is passing away.* (1Cor. 7:27-31)

According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that *we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord,* will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep...*we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air* (1Thess. 4:15-17)

We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed (1Cor. 15:51)

...let us encourage one another — and all the more as *you* see the Day approaching. (Heb. 10:25)

...in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay." (Heb. 10:37)

Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon *you*...You have hoarded wealth in the *last days.* (Jas. 5:1-3)

...be patient and stand firm, because *the Lord's coming is near...The Judge is standing at the door!* (Jas. 5:8-9)

The end of all things is near (1Pet. 4:7)

The Apostolic Interpretation Cannot Be Wrong

...the Holy Spirit...will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26)

...he will guide you into *all truth*...he will tell you *what is yet to come.* (John 16:13)

...even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!...*I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.* (Gal. 1:8,12)

Therefore, the Second Coming and all related events must have occurred in the first century. Those taking any other position dare to presume that they understand the timing of these events better than the divinely inspired apostles of Jesus Christ and fail to consider the following:

1. The apostles were eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus;
2. They were personally trained by Jesus;
3. They were promised divine revelation regarding "what is yet to come";
4. They recorded their teachings in divinely inspired Scripture.

To suggest that the apostles were wrong implies one or more of the following:

1. The Holy Spirit failed to tell the apostles “what is yet to come” or;
2. The apostles misunderstood the Holy Spirit’s inspiration;
3. The Bible is seriously wrong in numerous places;
4. Jesus was misleading the apostles or;
5. Jesus was wrong too.

If the apostles were wrong, Jewish people have no option but to reject their gospel. For Jews, anyone making predictions in the name of God must be judged by the Torah:

A prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say...must be put to death. You may say to yourselves, “How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?” If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him. (Deut. 18:20-22)

This test would condemn Jesus and his apostles to death. “God’s household” was “built on the foundation of...holy apostles” with Jesus Christ as “the chief cornerstone” (Eph. 2:19-20; 3:5). The “failure” theory presents a church founded by a band of classic false prophets. If Jesus, his “holy apostles,” the Holy Spirit and Holy Scripture all failed so miserably in the first century, why trust these sources regarding a future fulfillment — or for salvation?

This is what the LORD says...I am the LORD...who foils the signs of false prophets...who carries out the words of his servants and fulfills the predictions of his messengers (Isa. 44:24-26)

Jeremiah said that a prophet “will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD *only if his prediction comes true*” (Jer. 28:9).

There is only one acceptable conclusion: the apostles were right. Otherwise, they were false prophets worthy of execution and we Christians are wasting our time studying their unreliable predictions in the supposed “inerrant” or “infallible” Word of God. All Scripture referring to end-time events must relate to the Jewish War with Rome during the period AD 66-70 which culminated in the destruction of the Temple and the end of animal sacrifices. The promised Second Coming, Resurrection, Rapture and Judgment must have occurred during that period. All difficult prophetic passages must be interpreted based on this premise.

Objection: You have applied the words “this generation” in Mark 13:30 to the generation in which Jesus and the apostles lived. Most modern prophecy teachers interpret that differently.

Answer: All modern interpretations are irrelevant. The only interpretation worthy of consideration is the one taught in Holy Scripture by “God’s holy apostles.” Without exception, the apostles understood Christ’s teachings to mean that his return and all related events would occur within their lifetimes: their generation. **The Holy Spirit inspired this interpretation!** Those who presume to suggest that the apostles were mistaken deny the work of the Holy Spirit and according to Jesus and Paul could be in danger of eternal condemnation (Mark 3:28-29; Gal. 1:8,12).

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