

*[Unpublished paper of Rev. David Scott Clark, n.d.]*

## Paper on Christ's Second Coming

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#### Preliminaries

1. This paper grew out of a former presentation of the subject and insufficient time and opportunity to give the theme the discussion that it deserved.
2. I want it understood in the outset that this paper is perfectly respectful to the speaker on the former occasion. I have no desire to cross swords or decapitate any man who loves the Lord Jesus and earnestly seeks to know and do his will.
3. Furthermore let us not approach this subject in the spirit of controversy. It is too sacred + solemn for that. The coming of our Lord – the consummation of every hope that is sacred and precious is worthy only of a reverent, humble, + prayerful study. If any man finds comfort, quickening, aspiration, and motives to purity + godliness in a belief in the imminent advent of our Lord and Saviour I am the last man in the world to abate an iota of it.
4. I am not an expert on this subject I have not studied it for 20 years as some of my brethren confess. I am only a novice, of the freshest kind seeking to arrive at the truth by an impartial discussion and a fair, careful, common-sense interpretation of the Scriptures.

#### I. Will Xt come to earth again?

I could furnish a dozen passages of Scripture to answer that question affirmatively: but it is not necessary. We are agreed there. It requires no discussion. Suffice it to say that the N.T. closes with the assurance, Behold I come quickly.

#### II. How will he come?

I think we are all practically agree here.

1. Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming is not death tho sometimes death may be figuratively spoken of as a coming of the Lord.
2. It is not the destruction of Jerusalem. No need to debate that.
3. The Scriptures may speak of the Day of the Lord, referring to some visitation of judgment or calamity on the earth or on some nations of the earth, but from all such punitive visitations the coming of the Lord stand out clearly and distinctly.
4. It is not a merely spiritual coming. There may be some such expressions but the great body of proof shows a real, literal coming, for,

(a) The 1<sup>st</sup> coming was a literal and visible coming so with the 2<sup>nd</sup> be. The Jews might as well have argued for a figurative 1<sup>st</sup> as well for a figurative 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

(b) It is distinctly said that it will be visible. Ye shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds, not hear about it, nor be taught about it, as a spiritual truth, but see.

(c) The accompanying things show it. It is to be in the clouds, with power and great glory; and attended by angels.

(d) The effects of that coming will be in part that the nations shall mourn; and wicked men shall call upon the rocks + hills to fall upon them + hide them from the face of the Lamb. All this implies visibility.

### III. When will he come?

It is in regard to the time and circumstances of Xts coming that diversity of view exists.

A. Here we are met with the view of the pre-millennialist. Premillennialism was strong in the early Xtn church. From Constantine till the Reformation it had scarcely an advocate. After the Reformation the doctrine revived and has numerous advocates since, some of them extremists tho no doc. is to be judged by its extremists. The general principles of this view are:

That Xt will introduce the millennium by his 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. That he will personally and visibly reign on earth and establish his earthly kingdom; having destroyed ????? That his saints will reign with him on earth. That there will be two resurrections—one of the saints for the kingdom of 1000 yrs; and one of the rest of the dead at the end of the world, for judgment. That 1000 yrs intervene between the coming of Xt and the end of the era whether literally 1000 or no, no matter that this kingdom is not the consummation of a process of development of the church under the preaching of the gospel and the ministry of the Spirit; but a special and extraordinary implantation of divine power and glory in the world.

Some of these positions we must now pass in review and inquire the grounds on which they rest, and ask whether they are justified by a fair and reasonable interpretation of the Scriptures remembering in the mean time that absolute certainty is not an eminent quality of this subject, either for or against.

1. It is a part of this view that the world will not be converted by the preaching of the gospel; but that it will grow worse and worse till the coming of Xt + that his coming will effect what the gospel failed to do.

Matt 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.

Matt 24:37. But as to the day of Noe were, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating + drinking + marrying + giving in marriage until the day that Noe entered into the ark and knew not until the flood came + took the all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

He ????? that Xt does not say the gospel shall be a witness only. A witness is not necessarily an abortive and fruitless witness. We are bidden to go + disciple all nations, make disciples of them, baptizing them in the name + c – baptizing would imply conversion.

God says My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it. Whether every individual shall be converted or not is not the point; but whether the triumph of the gospel or the advent of Xt shall introduce the reign of righteousness. In Rom. 11. Paul tells us that the Jews shall be converted + brought into the Xtn church + it will be as life from the dead. A careful reading of this passage will show that this is not effected by the coming of Xt in person; but by the grace of God in the gospel of Xt (And whatever we make of book of Rev. 6 + 7 chaps).

Further, Xts reference to the time of Noah was not to prove that they would grow worse, but to show the suddenness + unexpectedness of his coming. That is the point there

2. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent Xt will reign personally on earth. Satan will be bound; + the saints will share in Xts glorious reign on earth.

Godbey, a somewhat enthusiastic pre-millennialist, appeals to the parable of the importunate widow. He

says that the unjust judge represents God. i.e. just at the point of his absoluteness. The widow represents the suffering church + the deliverance granted on her importunity is nothing else but the glory of the millennial church. Almost involuntarily a protest rises against such an interpretation of scripture whose meaning is plain and furnished beforehand; that men ought always to pray + not to faint; and warns us that our exegesis should not wait on our “eis-egesis.”

Luke 19:12 The parable of the pounds. A nobleman went into a far country to receive a k<sup>g</sup>m + to return. i.e. to receive kingship over that country from which he went. When he returns he rewards his faithful servants with rule over 10 + 5 cities respectively + slays his enemies who did not want him to rule over them.

The premillennialist uses this parable. As I understand him it is this. That Xt will return to the land wh. he left. That he will reign personally in spite of his foes over the k<sup>g</sup>m to which he returns; that his faithful servants will share his rule in being made rulers over cities or portions of that k<sup>g</sup>m.

If that is what Xt meant I bow to his authority. But the question is, whether the material framework of the parable furnishes the lesson designed to be taught or whether Xt was just illustrating + enforcing the duty + reward of faithfulness without special reference to a millennial k<sup>g</sup>m on earth, borrowing his framework from the customs of the times at the court of ??? (Rome?) + The Parable of the 10 virgins. Meyer says that usually the marriage of place at the house of the bridegroom. Here it is represented to be at the house of the bride. “The reason why the parable transfers the scene of the marriage to the house of the bride, is to be found in the nature of the thing to be illustrated inasmuch as, at the time of ??? advent Christ is to be understood as coming to the earth, and as setting up his kingdom here below and not in heaven.” With all our respect for Meyer as a commentator we feel that that is pressing the circumstantial of the parable too far. We do not think this parable has anything to do with the place where the millennial k<sup>g</sup>m is to be set up but with the broad and essential feature of preparation in the time when preparation can be made. However we must add, that Meyer's view of Xts coming is not confined to an eschatological coming, but a coming capable of repeated fulfillments.

Rev. 20: 1-4. “I saw an angel come down from heaven” he bound that old serpent, the Devil + Satan + shut him up in the bottomless pit 1000 yrs. “And I saw thrones and they sat on them, and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus xt. and they lived reigned with Xt 1000 years. Does this teach that J. Xt reigns during that 1000 years in bodily form on the earth? And that his saints being resurrected reign with him as visible earthly rulers?

Observe here that in this 20<sup>th</sup> Chap there is there is no mention of Xts coming to earth. There is mention of an angel that came down from heaven and buried Satan; but no mention of any descent of Xt. — unless you go back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Chap. and find it in the rider of the white horse. And there is force in that; for his description is similar to that of the Son of Man in Rev 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter. He is King of Kings and Lords of Lords + wears a vesture dipped in blood + he treadeth the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God—terms that are applied to J Xt. Yet this may represent the triumph of the gospel; for he is called the word of God and it is repeatedly said out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword.

Observe again in this 20<sup>th</sup> Chapter that the thrones on which these saints and martyrs sat are not said to be on earth; and in all probability the scene is laid in heaven. I believe that some premillennialists hold one view + some the other. It is not very clear how nor where these high-priests rule with Xt for the 1000 yrs, whether on earth or whether from heaven, or someplace over the earth. The requiring on earth is therefore not very clear. I will come back to this 20<sup>th</sup> chapter.

3 The third point in the premillennialist position is The Resurrections, two resurrections. When Xt comes in person and binds Satan, he ushers in the millennium, then all the righteous dead are resurrected and they live + reign with Xt 1000 yrs whether on earth, or in heaven or over the earth is a matter of some obscurity. But the rest of the dead are not resurrected till the end of the world period, when they are resurrected for judgment. What is the proof of this position? I Thess 4:16 “The dead in Xt shall rise first.” But this is not first in respect to the other dead; but first in respect to the change of the living + before the ascent to meet the Lord in the air. It is not quite fair to quote these words to prove 2 resurrections 1000 yrs or more apart when the antithesis is not between two classes of dead but between the dead + living.

Dan 12:2 Many that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, + some to shame + everlasting contempt.

Whatever you may make of the “many” whether many means all or not, it is still true that some of the many awoke to reward, + some of the many to shame + contempt. The sight of two resurrections is not visible here.

Phil 3:11 If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Εξανάστασιν εκ νεκρον. The force of εκ with the genitive is, out from the midst of something. Hence it is argued that Paul expects a resurrection out from among the other dead, leaving them behind; and here expresses his belief in the two resurrections.

The philological expression has its force; and if the doctrine is clearly established from other sources, this expression would fit in to the scheme with little difficulty; and yet a sound interpretation must always look farther than a mere grammatical construction.

On this point I remark, there are two other places in the N.T. where the εκ νεκρον is used: I Pet 1:3. He blessed for the lively hope begotten by the resurrection of Xt from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible + undefiled + that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. Now the matter of rejoining was not that Xt left many in the graves when he arose, but that he arose to die no more not that they should rise 1000 yrs or more before others; but an inheritance in heaven so much better than as Jews they had ever known. As Jews they may have believed in a Jewish chiliasm, for the ultimate root of millenerianism the popular notions of the Messiah current among the Jews of a glorious earthly reign, but as Xtns they had come to a bright hope of inheritance in heaven. Resurrection means out from the dead, into glorious life. The other example of εκ νεκρον is Acts 4:2. As they spoke unto the people, the priests, captain of the temple, and Sadducees came upon them being grieved that they taught thro Jesus, εκ νεκρον, the resurrection from the dead. Now what these Sadducees were grieved about was not that they taught that some would be resurrected sooner than others; but that they taught any resurrection at all. This point of these citations is this: that εκ νεκρον is used where the idea of two resurrections is utterly foreign to the context. Marvin Vincent say that “resurrection of the dead (without εκ) denotes the general resurrection of the dead, bad + good, but resurrection from the dead (εκ νεκρον), signifies resurrection unto life.” point to the thing to be attained.

Here in Phil 3. Paul is emphasizing conformity to Xt. He has conformed to his scheme of righteousness. He is conformed to his sufferings, he will be conformed to his death; and hopes to be conformed to his resurrection life.

Rev XX I come back again to Revelation XX. We have touched on it as to Xts personal reign. Now what has it to say as to the two resurrections. “I saw the souls of martyrs + saints and they lived +

reigned with Xt 1000 yrs. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the 1000 yrs were finished.

This is the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection, on such the 2<sup>nd</sup> death hath no power.

This passage is the ground of the premillennial idea. And it is difficult to explain from any other standpoint. It gives the premillennialists the basis for his argument, and the post-millennialist his chief difficulty.

The premillennialist puts the parts together thus:

The rider of the white horse in Chapter 19 is J. Xt. His coming forth with his armies is the premillennial advent. Anti Xt. is destroyed by his coming. Satan bound 1000 yrs. Saints resurrected + reign with Xt 1000 yrs. Satan loosed + the ch. persecuted. The persecutors destroyed + Satan cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, there another resurrection + the judgment of the wicked. (remembering that there is no general judgment in this plan) then the casting into hell of the wicked, which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> death; after that follows a vision of a new heaven and a new earth.

The post-millennialist looks on the same passage. He sees in the rider of the white horse the triumph of Jesus Xt. Not in personal rule on earth, but in the spiritual development of his kingdom; the battles are not literal battles; but spiritual; by the sword of his mouth.

The binding of Satan is the millennium after the triumph of Xts cause in earth.

The resurrection mentioned here is the chief difficulty. Shedd says the word is used in its topical sense for regeneration; which has this added force that regeneration + not resurrection is what saves from the 2<sup>nd</sup> death. Others make the resurrection to be a spiritual and political revival and exaltation of those classes who under the say of the anti Xt were deprived of their rights and influence.

This is a difficulty here and the pre-millennialist is entitled to the benefit of the doubt.

And finally at the end of the chapter, the description of the judgement has terms comprehensive enough to indicate a general judgment, preceded by a general resurrection. Thus the post-millennialist read the chapter.

Three general remarks. 1. The bulk of the book of Rev. is concerned with the pouring out of judgment. Xt has a punitive as well as a saving mission. 2<sup>nd</sup>. The extreme symbolism of the whole book warns us against a too literal interpretation of its parts. 3. We must guard against our own predilections and ask what does God mean to reveal?

B. I want now to consider briefly the position + grounds of the postmillennial view.

It is just as positive in teaching the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Xt as the other view. Xt will come again. It conceives three things likely to precede: namely, the triumph of the gospel in the world, the conversion of the Jews, and the destruction of the anti-Xt. It conceives of three things accompanying the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent: namely the general resurrection; the general judgment; and the end of the world.

1. As to the resurrection.

Jn. 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone that seeth the Son + believeth on him may have everlasting life and I will raise him up at the last day.

Believers are therefore raised up at the last day; + the word 'raised up' is the word for resurrection.

Jn. 6:54 Whoso eateth my flesh + drinketh my blood hath eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day.

Jn. 11:23+4. Xt said they brother shall rise again. Martha said: I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection of the last day. Wescott +Hort define εσχάτος as “the most remote,” “the last.”

Jn 5:28-29, the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation. Here the word is all not “many” much less “some” and implies a general resurrection, tho not absolutely necessitating it.

1 Cor. 15:51 We shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed. The bodies of the resurrected change shall be incorruptible, glorious, powerful, + spiritual. I thin what Paul says of that boy is decisive against an early habitation of the resurrected saints. So is the statement: “Then we which are alive + remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

II Pet 3:10 “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.” Remember that is how Xt described his coming as a thief in the night, “in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; he earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up,”—thus identifying the coming of the Lord with the end of the world period.

Two remarks as to the resurrection:

The expressions “resurrection of the just,” “the dead in Xt” are not I think indicative of a separate resurrection, but are employed because the chief interest of the early church in the question center in the Xtns who had fallen asleep. Their hopes and anxieties were awakened on their behalf and not specially for the others.

2. With our present knowledge, dogmatism as to the length of the resurrection period is out of the question. A general resurrection may not be confined to 1 day or 1 week or 1 year.

2. As to the judgment.

II Thess 1:7, 8 When the Lord J. Xt. shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God + obey not the gospel of our Lord J. Xt. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord + from the glory of his power. Xt's coming is not only the signal of resurrection but of final judgment.

Matt 13. The tares are the children of the wicked one; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As the tares are gathered and burned, so shall it be in the end of this world. The angels gather out of his kingdom all them who do iniquity.

The wicked are cast into the fire; the righteous shine in glory. In the end of the world, αἰών age, says some one. To be sure κόσμος would not be proper. The world age has an end but not the κόσμος. What end is meant, is shown by the final destiny accorded to both the righteous and the wicked.

The wheat and tares grow together till the end of the world at which time a final separation is made.

So also in the parable of the draw-net. "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just and shall cast them into the furnace of fire.

Matt 25:31 ff "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

We are confidently told that this is not the general judgment; but a judgment preceding the millennium in which some nations are punished, and some rewarded with millennial honors.

Such an interpretation, no one would ever have dreamed of without a theory to support. It is not derived nor derivable from the text.

Nations we are told as nations have no existence in the future world. That is very true. Nations as corporate governments have no existence there; but that is not the sense in which the word is used here. Jn. says "the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations, not of corporate government; but of nations in the sense of multitudes of people.

That this is a judgment of individuals is shown from the grounds of judgment. Do nations as nations visit the sick? And enter the prisons and minister to the prisoner? The sentence too shows that same thing. These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal. Is that a sentence on nations, or upon individuals? Those we are on the right hand are the righteous definitely called so, and those on the left hand are the cursed.

The closing verse with its "everlasting punishment" and "life eternal" as the two issues that ensue, point very definitely to the final trial of all there concerned. When Xt comes in his glory with his holy angels then is the general and final judgment. Such I think is the evident sense of this passage.

Symbolize Res. with Xts coming + Res. with last day  
therefore 2<sup>nd</sup> coming at last day  
so with judgment