

THE ESCHATOLOGY WARS
Brutal War Against Bible Prophecy
By David A. Lewis

As we approach the end of the age a brutal war against Bible prophecy is being waged on all fronts. We expected this. The New Testament warned of an onslaught against the message of our Lord's return: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts [desires], saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" Peter speaks of humanity's willful ignorance of the Lord's Second Coming!¹ The end time war is directed both against the message and the messenger of Bible prophecy.

FRONTAL ASSAULT

First of all there is a fierce frontal assault mounted by powerful enemies who take us far more seriously than do some of our own Evangelical allies in the eschatological wars.

Who is leading this brutal attack against the prophetic Word of God? First of all there are the atheists, New Agers, and secular humanists and liberal Christian theologians. They correctly perceive that the prophetic message is a threat to their goals and philosophies, and they will never cease to attack us. The Bible warns that the world will hate us.²

The names of our Bible prophecy teachers are maligned in the pages of both modernist Christian and secular books and periodicals. We are viewed as the scum of the intellectual pond. Our views are ridiculed and we are described as being promoters of doomsday. We are thought to be not only deluded, but dangerous. We are the scourge of all mankind. One of their slanderous accusations is that if there ever is a final war of annihilation it will be laid to our charge because we have warned of the Armageddon battle.

Grace Halsel wrote a book that makes a broadside attack against Evangelicals who preach on Bible prophecy and who relate to Israel. Prophecy and Politics - Militant Evangelists on the Road to Nuclear War³ takes a shot at almost every prominent Evangelical who teaches on Bible prophecy, from Billy Graham to Hal Lindsey, W. A. Criswell, Pat Robertson, Jimmy Swaggart, Oral Roberts, Richard De Haan, Chuck Smith, Douglas Krieger, John Walvoord, David A. Lewis, Jerry Faiwell, Tim Le Haye, Richard Heliman, Hilton Sutton, and many more. Halsel's premise is that Evangelicals promote a climate in which a final war of destruction could take place.

In one issue of Time Magazine in an article by Charles Krauthammer, the following denigrating words were found:

"David Koresh and his apocalyptic religious cult weird religious cults Ateret Hachohanim, a group of [Orthodox Jewish] believers so convinced of the imminence of the Messiah who will rebuild the Temple religious primitivism religious nuts [giving] endless prime time to crooked, hypocritical and otherwise deformed religiosity, the Waco wackos are getting more coverage in a week than religion does in a year loony speculations about the end of the world Bible-thumping psychopaths"⁴

It may be of interest to note that Krauthammer, while inveighing against religious apocalyptists, equally attacked secular doomsayers.

Henry Lincoln, Richard Leigh and Michael Baigent promote a bizarre theory that Jesus survived the cross and married Mary Magdalene. He fathered several children with Mary. After the natural death of Jesus, Mary took some of their children and went, along with some of the original Apostles, to the area of the world now known as France. Allegedly records have been kept for twenty centuries tracking the blood descendants of Jesus. These descendants, genetic bearers of the holy grail, the "Sang Raal," form a secretive organization called the Prieur'e de Sion, and believe that their leader Pierre Plantard de Saint Clair or his successor will preside over a new Roman Empire by the end of this decade. Around the year 2000 this will be extended to a global hegemony. To promote this concept the three authors have written two books. The first is Holy Blood, Holy Grail.⁵ The sequel, The Messianic Legacy,⁶ attacks Evangelical eschatologists, saying that the authors would rather see a human Messiah such as the Priure de Sion could produce than a Christ from heaven who would preside over Armageddon. See my book Prophecy 2000, chapter 5.⁷

New Age thinkers teach the second coming of a "Christ," variously identified as the Lord Maitreya, the Avitar or as one of the great ascended masters of the hierarchy of the universe. From Helena Petrovna Blavatsky⁸ to Robert Muller⁹ and Barbara Marx Hubbard,¹⁰ these writers specifically point out that the one coming is not the historic Jesus Christ of the Gospels. One prominent New Age author, Peter Lemesurier, has boldly outlined a detailed plan on how a staged second coming of a new Christ to the Mount of Olives could be engineered. This would end useless waste of psychic energy expended by Evangelicals anticipating the return of Jesus. In his book The Armageddon Script¹¹ he offers a detailed six point plan for a dramatized appearance of the New Christ. See my Smashing the Gates of Hell in the Last Days.¹²

While we are concerned with these frontal assaults we must realize that this is not our principle concern.

FRIENDS OF THE MESSAGE

In the final analysis the worst enemy of the prophetic word may turn out to be those who are enthusiastic friends of the message. While these allies love the message, they frequently venture into fantasy and fanaticism which robs Bible prophecy of its true nobility and purpose.

Irresponsible conjectures, date setting the rapture, escapism, an unhealthy doom mentality, identifying the Antichrist, fables, sheer speculation and failed predictions are specters that rise up to haunt us. Unfortunately, our critics claim that this kind of fanaticism is characteristic of all Bible prophecy. Nothing could be further from the truth.

How can one read the Book of Revelation and see more devil than God, more Antichrist than Jesus Christ? This is a total misappropriation of its true message. The Apocalypse is one grand, unified declaration of the ultimate victory of Jesus Christ over

all the powers of darkness! Prophecy is a victory message, a message of hope, faith, blessing, and motivation. It is a call to action, not to escapism. Our God is greater than Satan and all of his minions.

We need to council our followers "When you want a doomsday message watch the TV evening news or read your daily newspaper. They specialize The ancient Midianites were a source of trouble to the Israelites alternately warring against them and then tempting them to compromise with the pagan culture around them Similarly we have our problems with the modern Media-ites.

When you want a message of hope, turn to your Bible where we discover that we are "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"¹³

FORSAKERS OF THE MESSAGE A GREAT DANGER

It could be argued that the people who render the most damage to the end-time message are those who profess to believe it, but choose to ignore it. They say that the message is too controversial. It has suffered too many abuses. It is too complicated. There are differences of opinion. It is divisive. So the field is abandoned to others, only too eager to take advantage of our shortcomings.

On the other hand, the doctrine of salvation is controversial. Every doctrine is abused. The gospel itself is both simple and complicated. There are differences of opinion on everything the Bible teaches. Truth is always divisive inasmuch as some receive and others reject it.

A pastor told me, "I am too busy to study and preach on prophecy." Having been a pastor I can sympathize with this problem. But the difficulty must be overcome. Pastor, no one expects you to be an eschatological expert. Preach simple, powerful biblical messages on the end-times. Don't concern yourself with fantasies, date setting, or naming the Antichrist. Stick to the basics. Any of us who specialize in prophecy stand ready to help you with recommendations for basic textbooks and other helps We need to develop more outlines and tapes that we can pass around among ourselves. It is true that nature abhors a vacuum. Ignore prophecy and undesirable ideas will flow with a hellish energy into the minds of our people. Cults and theological deviants will have a hey day.

The late Dr. James Brown did not make prophecy his primary emphasis in his ministry. His career has been that of a seminary educator and pastor. When speaking to a group of clergy in the Indiana District of the Assemblies of God, Dr. Brown made the following startling statement: "The greatest danger facing the Assemblies of God is the abandonment of the preaching of eschatology."¹⁴ What do you think?

Setting the Date for Christ's Return Catastrophe of the 1990's

Barney Fuller, in his recently published book, Nations Without God, explains that Jesus was born in September of 5 BC. He calculates that the actual year 2000

concludes on September, 14, 1996 on the first day of the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah. He writes, "It is the author's belief that the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy will begin at that time and will conclude seven years later on the same Jewish new year in AD. 2003."¹⁵

From the time of the early church until now there have been hundreds, if not thousands, of date-setting or date-suggesting or date-hinting schemes. All date setting schemes historically have proven to be false prophecies.¹⁶ Perhaps date setters should ponder if they might possibly be numbered among the false teachers that Peter warned would be among us.¹⁷

My primary text in relation to dating the rapture, the one most date setters avoid, is found in Mark's Gospel where Jesus words are recorded; "But of that day and [that] hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."¹⁸ A year is time, a month is time, a week is time, a day is time and "YE KNOW NOT WHEN THE TIME IS."

In spite of this, Cohn Deal's book is titled, *The Day and Hour Jesus will Return*. Deal offers a multiple choice on the year of the rapture, suggesting several possible year dates, but he is quite sure the rapture will take place at 6 PM Jerusalem time.¹⁹

Jesus could come today! Otherwise we would only have to be watchful on Rosh Hashanah. Date-setting destroys the idea of the possible imminent return of Jesus. It is the unfaithful servant who says, "My Lord delayeth His coming."²⁰ Setting a future date always sets up a delay.

All date-setting and date-suggesting ideas have been wrong. This is not a new thing in the Church. It is an ancient, sick error that has always proven to be destructive. It has been recycled over and over with the same negative results.

In AD 999, as the end of the first millennium AD approached, a French monk named Markulf sounded a warning: "Mundi terminum ruinis crescentibus appropinquantem indicia certa manifestant"-- "Clear signs announce the end of the world; the ruins multiply."²¹

Richard Erdoes does not pose as a friend of our cause as he writes his book *A D 1000 -Living on the Brink of Apocalypse*. However his survey of the spiritual climate that prevailed as the world neared the end of that past Millennium is particularly valuable for our consideration as we approach AD 2000. Erdoes observes:

"Some were certain that the Second Coming of Christ would fall on the last day of the year 999, at the very stroke of midnight. Others were equally convinced that Armageddon would happen a little earlier, on the eve of the nativity when 'the Children of Light would join in battle with Gouge's army of hellish fiends.' Some fixed the date on the day of the summer or winter solstice in the thousandth year after our Lord's passion.

"In France and Lorraine wise men scoffed at the idea. They had it on good authority that the end would come when the Feast of the Annunciation fell on a Good Friday 'when darkness will cover the earth and the stars fell upon it.' Though people quarreled about the exact day and hour, they all agreed, in the words of Raoul Glaber, that 'Satan will soon be unleashed because the thousand years have been completed

"Many expected the Last Judgment to be held at Jerusalem, and, throughout the year 999, the number of pilgrims converging upon the Holy City were compared to an immense, desolating army. Often these pious wayfarers had sold their worldly possessions to finance their pilgrimage"

"In 968, the men of Emperor Otto I, marching against the Saracens of Calabria, panicked when an eclipse darkened the sky. They dove head first into empty wine barrels and supply chests or crawled underneath their carts. 'Fanatic preachers kept up the flame of terror. Every shooting star furnished occasion for a sermon, in which the sublimity of the approaching Judgment was the principal topic.'"²²

It is little wonder that the church ignored the message of Bible Prophecy for hundreds of years after the AD 1000 debacle. The same old dating game is being played out today, but in this day of global communication the results will be even more devastating. Perhaps governments will legally ban the preaching of Pre Millenarian prophecy. I sincerely believe that the abuse of prophecy is one of, if not the most serious theological problems facing the church today.

This madness must be refuted and hopefully stopped now, or all credibility in prophecy will be dead. No one will listen any more to the true, noble, and reliable message of Biblical prophecy.

THE DATING GAME

We firmly believe Jesus is coming back. Over 300 Bible prophecies pointed to the first coming of Jesus. They were all fulfilled. The New Testament has 257 references to the future, literal return of Jesus to this planet. These too, will be fulfilled!

No one can destroy the plan of God, but a lot is being done to erode people's confidence in Bible prophecy. In fact, more damage is done to the credibility of the message by the Bible's friends than by its enemies!

Let's take a brief look at the checkered history of the bewildering world of the date-setters.

Augustine suggested that the world would probably end in AD. 1000. From about 950 to 1000, wealthy landowners all over Europe were encouraged to deed their holdings to the church in exchange for pardon for their sins.

Early in the last century, Dr. R. C. Shimeall wrote a book predicting that the Millennium would come in 1868. In that same century, a converted Jew, Joseph Worif, began prophesying that Jesus would come to the Mount of Olives in 1847. Lady Hester Stanhope converted to his doctrine, moved to Palestine, and established residence on

the Mount of Olives. She kept two beautiful white Arabian horses in stables there. One was for Jesus to ride through the Golden Gate. Presumably, the other was for her to accompany Him.

In 1918, H. C. Williams wrote a volume entitled *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. In it he said, "AD. 1914 is the time limit set in the Scriptures for the concurrence of the war: that the war broke out and continues in all details as described, by the prophets is a complete fulfillment of the prophetic record."

In the same book, Williams predicted that 1934 would mark the downfall of the Gentile nations, and in 1972, the Millennium would begin.

In 1975, a widely circulated book by Dr. Charles R. Taylor, *Get All Excited, Jesus is Coming Soon*, proclaimed that probably the Rapture would take place on September 5 or 6, 1975.

Following the interpretations of Dr. Taylor, others began to preach the September 1975 date. One pastor even borrowed large sums of money, which he had no way of paying back, to invest in missions. In a tape recorded sermon, he explained that he had nothing to worry about since Jesus was sure to come back on September 5, 1975.

This is the stuff that spiritual tragedies are made of, for on September 7 the bubble burst. Only eternity will reveal the tragedies created by those playing the dating game.

Date-setters claiming Biblical authority can potentially play havoc with the credibility of the Second Coming concept in the minds of millions. When people are disappointed with date-setting failures, they are tempted to "throw out the baby with the bath water." The downfall is not being able to distinguish between the valid message of Christ's coming and the perversion of it as perpetrated by misguided teachers, opportunists, and the deluded.

Date-setting is not just an historic phenomenon. Not long ago, numerous books and periodicals were predicting that the Rapture must take place in 1988. This was based on an interpretation of Jesus' words in Matthew 24:34: "Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled."

They say a generation is forty years. Israel (the fig tree referred to in Matthew 24:32) became a nation in 1948. Therefore it can be calculated $1948 + 40 = 1988$. Eureka! The rapture must take place in 1988. One popular book listed 88 reasons why, another book offered 100 reasons for the 1988 date.

There are several flaws in this superficial reasoning.

First, the generation concept is not that firmly fixed in Scripture. I am not sure that Exodus with the forty-year generation, or the Book of Job with the thirty-five-year generation, or the statement that the days of man are "three score and ten" indicating a seventy-year generation are to be taken as precisely describing a generation. The word

generation is a general designation, not a technical term. The date-setters choose whichever one fits their scheme.

Secondly, why select 1948 for the year when the "fig tree," Israel, began to put forth its leaves? The text does not say when Israel becomes a nation. Perhaps the fig tree began to put forth leaves at the time of the first aliyah (return) of the Jews in the late 1800's? Why not the founding of modern Zionism by Theodore Herzl in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897? Why not the founding of Tel Aviv, the first all-Jewish city in modern times, established in 1909? All these points of time were pointed out by prophecy teachers as the beginning of the final generation.

Many believed that 1917 would be a likely year due to two major events: General Allenby's liberation of Jerusalem and Arthur James Balfour's famous November 2, 1917 Declaration that, "His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of the object ..." ²³

The Israeli capture of old Jerusalem in 1967 is considered by a number of authors as a possible beginning point for the last generation of this age.

May we suggest that it was not our Lord's intention in this passage to provide a means of fixing the time of His return since He immediately says that would be an impossibility. ²⁴

Thirdly, the Greek word translated "generation" is "genea" and does not necessarily mean a literal generation. W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words gives one possible translation of genea as "a race of people." ²⁵

Many scholars agree on that translation. If that is correct, then Jesus is simply declaring the indestructibility of the Jewish people. This may fit the context best. I believe the coming of Jesus is potentially imminent. He could come back today, but He may not.

I have believed in the return of Christ since I was ten years old. If you had asked me then if I thought I would grow to be a man of sixty three years of age, I would have said that it was not likely. After all, Jesus is coming soon.

I am still anticipating His coming. I will continue to proclaim His coming as imminent. But soon? I am not sure how you define that word soon, and the closer one gets to defining the word, the closer one is to being a date-setter.

It is better to live as if Jesus were coming today and yet prepare for the future as if He were not coming for a long time. Then you are ready for time and eternity.

A friend once asked the great evangelist Dwight L. Moody, "Mr. Moody, if you knew Jesus was coming back at six o'clock this evening, what would you do today?" I am sure the questioner was surprised at Moody's answer for he said, "If I knew Jesus was coming back this evening at six o'clock, this afternoon I would plant apple trees."

That is a beautiful answer. Perhaps Moody borrowed the illustration from Luther. I do not know.

If you knew Jesus was coming back tonight, what would you do today? If there is something you would feel compelled to rush out and do, then you had better do it now, for Jesus might come back tonight! On the other hand, if you are daily living your life in His will, then you would not have to change one thing you are planning to do!

God designed His revelation to us so that we are always living on the edge of eternity, and yet always planning for our future here. Suppose He had revealed the very date of the rapture of the Church 1,900 years ago? I wonder if the Church would even be in existence now. It is good to live in anticipation, but also to realize that we do not know when the trumpet will sound. Go ahead and make your five year and twenty-five year plans. If the Lord comes before you complete your venture, so be it. We won't mind the interruption in the least!

The moment you set a date for the coming, you upset this "divine balance," creating havoc and distrust in the body of Christ. Date-setting is a sin and should be denounced from every pulpit!

I appeal to our educators and pastors; if you ignore the subject of prophecy or accept some of the modern reinterpretations of prophecy, you have solved nothing. Only by diligent study of and declaration of the Word of God in this realm will you bring real hope and good works with stability to your students. Ignore prophecy, and the fanatics and distorters will have a field day. Nature abhors a vacuum. If you create a spiritual vacuum by ignoring the prophetic Word, false teachers will supply something to fill that void.

Jesus said, "Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is that faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed [happy] is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing."²⁶

We are not undertaking a mere intellectual exercise here. This dating game is dangerous.

In 1832 William Miller first preached, "And so, brethren, it has been revealed to me that the world is coming to an end. Repent, repent, I say, for you have but eleven years to be washed clean in the blood of the Lamb. In mighty fire and terror the world will end in 1843."

As 1843 approached, anticipation turned into a kind of madness. People abandoned homes, farms, material possessions, and even children to gather in homes, praying as they waited for the last trump.

In Westford, Massachusetts, about five hundred people gathered wearing white robes to wait for the Coming. When the midnight hour of December 31, 1842, arrived, an old town drunk, known as Crazy Amos, blew a trumpet outside the fine old

mansion where the people were gathered. Pandemonium broke loose, and several were seriously injured in the stampede. Outside, they found not Jesus, but a bleary-eyed, laughing old drunkard.

Historians record a darker side of the debacle. Following disappointment upon disappointment and a continual readjusting of the dates, some lost their minds. The asylum at Worcester, Massachusetts, became so overcrowded that a large hail had to be appropriated to house the deranged.

In New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, Maine, and parts of Pennsylvania, the lunacy rate is said to have increased three hundred percent in 1843-1844 as a result of the date-setting.

People who were usually rational went everywhere in flowing white robes, ready for ascension. Suicides became common in the face of disappointment.

When it was all over, the disillusioned faithful went back to try to pick up the pieces of the lives they had abandoned. Some become atheists. In late September 1988 a man wrote to me asking to be removed from our mailing list, even though we had refuted the Whisenant error well in advance of Sept. 11. Our former reader said that he was so disappointed he wanted nothing more to do with prophecy.

Modern date-setters are getting ready to rerun a tragedy of that magnitude, or worse. As world crises mount, people will find the date setters' schemes alluring as a psychological escapism.

A book publisher once told me, "If you want to write a best seller in the field of prophecy, name the Antichrist and set a date." There is something sinister behind that suggestion!

Newsweek for September 16, 1974, carried an article entitled, "The Doomsday Effect." It said that in 1982, all nine planets of our solar system will be in conjunction—that is in a straight line in relation to the sun and all on one side of the sun. The combined gravitational pull may cause great storms on the sun. These storms could alter wind directions on earth, and this in turn could slow the speed of earth's rotation and trigger the worst earthquakes the world has ever known. I wrote several articles refuting the idea. I commented on it over national TV and on our monthly cassette service, the Audio Prophecy Digest.

A number of Bible teachers had used this conjunction as a basis for suggesting that the world would be in the Tribulation by 1982, but we could not accept it. Our conservative approach turned out to be right.

A periodical out of Florida calculated that the Rapture would take place soon and that the Millennium would begin by 1979.

In 1992 Harold Camping sent out a message in books, papers and by his Family Radio worldwide outreach. The message was that the day of grace would end on September 6, 1994 and later in the month Jesus would return and preside over the end

of the world. I joined with Robert Sungenis and Scott Temple in writing a refutation of the Camping error.²⁷

Two thousand! It has an almost magical appeal! I recently heard a minister declare: "A day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day with the Lord. There were seven days of creation. It has now been six 'days' or six thousand years from creation (or will be about A. D. 2000, according to Usher's chronology). That leaves one day of a thousand years, the Millennium, so the end has to come by the year 2000."

Let us consider a possibility. If Jesus does not come before the year 2000, the date setters will have a heyday as 2000 approaches. It will be like a fever. The epidemic has already started. It will sell pamphlets and books by the millions, but if Jesus does not come back by the end of 2000, it is hard to imagine any credibility being left for the Bible prophecy message, unless we begin a strong program right now to offset the heresy of date setting.

Ignoring it will not make it go away. Only by preaching the true and dignified message of the Lord's return and by strongly denouncing date setting can we hope to maintain confidence in the Bible message of Jesus' return.

Pastors, evangelists, and teachers, please do not ignore the prophecy message because it is too complicated, or because it has been abused by fanatics. Preach the Word. Only truth, strongly declared, overcomes terror and error.

In 1977 I wrote the following, "I hope Jesus comes back before AD 2000. I am ready for Him to come right now, but if we are still here in AD. 2001, the Bible prophecy message will be just as valid as it is today. The question is, will anyone be listening?"²⁸

Prior to Edgar Whisenant's failed date setting attempt which claimed that the rapture would take place on either Sept. 11, 12 or 13, 1988 we wrote in July: "Jesus may come back today. He could come back on September 10. He could come back on September 14, or any other day, at any time. He definitely will not come back on September 11, 12, or 13, 1988, 'For in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.'" Be patient. I am totally confident. Are you? Will you let the facts speak for themselves on September 14, 1988? Will you be so gullible as to wait for the next date-setting scheme? Or will you cast away your faith, incapable of discerning truth from error? It is not God, but man that fails. All date-setting systems fail and disappoint people.

"If we do not effectively speak out now, here are results to watch for from now until Jesus comes:

1. People will ignore prophecy. Credibility will be lost.
2. Many will abandon the faith.
3. The New Kingdomists and Dominionists will use these failures to promote their errors in the Church.
4. The secular world will scoff and attack ever more vehemently.
5. The stage will be set for the New Age false Christ.
6. People could commit suicide, after dating systems fail, especially in 2000.

7. This and other factors may cause the government to step in and make preaching of premillennial prophecy and the Rapture illegal. It can happen here.

Since millions of Christians unfortunately, accepted the date-setters' errors God definitely avoided those dates. While many had questions about what I wrote the answers were apparent on September 14."²⁹

ON AUGUST 12, 1988-WE SENT OUT A SERIOUS CALL FOR PRAYER AND FASTING

On August 12, 1988, we sent out a serious call for prayer and fasting. "We are in a real danger zone. We must be alert. There are many powerful enemies outside the Church and some enemy infiltrators, posing as spiritual leaders, inside the Church. The last thing we need is craziness in our own ranks.

"We know the date-setters think of themselves as friends of the prophetic message. We do not view them as enemies. We do not question that they are sincere brothers and sisters in the Lord."

On that basis, I appealed: "Please, dear friends, if Jesus has not come by September 14, do not abandon your faith. Please do not commit suicide." This applies to all future date-setting schemes.

"Think now of how you can constructively help rehabilitate those who have been deceived. Date-setters should begin with public repentance and a public affirmation that they will never again have anything to do with date-setting (or suggesting). This is the least we expect of them. This is the only way that any degree of credibility will be maintained.

"Above all, don't tell us that your system just needs adjustment. Too many have tried that trick in the past. When the date fails they say, 'Oh, I made a slight miscalculation, the correct date is'

"Dear Christians, we must fast and pray September 11-14. Most urgently, the 14th. This will be a dark day for many sincere people if the Lord has not come.

"A lot of people have quit their jobs to spread this false message. A church in Joplin, Missouri has stopped holding services, so they can go door to door with Mr. Whisenant's literature. Many have given away their homes, money, and other possessions. They will feel abandoned by the Lord on the 14th. They will feel like utter fools for being so gullible. Some will turn in anger on those who have misled them.

"Do not condemn these people, but fast and pray for their spiritual preservation. Satan will be attacking them with doubt and guilt as never before. The perpetrators will be tempted to concoct schemes to get themselves off the hook with their followers. Some will change the game plan and start writing articles and books identifying the Antichrist. Many will think it is only a money making scheme to sell sensational books and take in huge donations. I do not believe this is true in most cases,. I cannot not judge this, it is in God's hands."

Here are a few contemporary date setting schemes. Some authors are firm on the date(s), some "probable," some multiple choice. The future dates listed represent only a small fraction of the schemes now being promoted:

1975 September 6 Rapture Dr. Charles R. Taylor³⁰
1979 Rapture Eldon D. Purvis³¹
1980 April 1 Rapture Elijah Two³²
1980 Rapture Mikkel Dahl³³
1980 Antichrist Sets up Kingdom Emil Gaverluk³⁴
1988 Sept. 11, Sept. 13 Rapture Edgar C. Whisenant³⁵
1988 September 12 Rapture Rick Henry Hall³⁶
About 6:pm Jerusalem Time
1989 October 1 Rapture Joseph R. Civelli³⁷
1992 October Rapture Bang-Ik Ha³⁸
1992 October 28 Rapture COC Mission³⁹
1994 September Second Coming Harold Camping⁴⁰
1996 September 14 70th Week Begins. Barney Fuller⁴¹
1996 Millennium Begins C. G. Ozanne⁴²
1996 November 2 Rapture James McCutchan⁴³
1997 October 16 Millennium Begins Joseph R. Civelli⁴⁴
1998 May 31 Rapture I (first rapture) M.J. Agee⁴⁵
1998 November Armageddon Ends Robert Bartel⁴⁶
2000 Rapture Clarence Larkin⁴⁷
2000 March Rapture Marvin Byers⁴⁸
2000 October 9 Armageddon E. Berkeley Hammond⁴⁹
2000 October 19 Rapture James McCutchan⁵⁰
2001 Rapture David Webber / N.W. Hutchings⁵¹
2002 October 7 Rapture Colen Deal⁵²
6:00pm Jerusalem Time
2003 September 27 Second Coming James McCutchan⁵³
2007 September 13 Second Coming James McCutchan⁵⁴
2007 September 13 Millennium Begins M. J. Agee⁵⁵
2008 April 21 Armageddon Begins M. J. Agee⁵⁶

A MANIFESTO Against Date Setting

The Scripture clearly says that no man can know the day or hour of the Lord's coming, and in Mark 13:33 we read, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is," thus indicating that date-setting serves no good purpose. And date-setting of the rapture or Second Coming has historically always proven to be false prophecy which is damaging to the cause of Christ.

We are living in the last days and nothing must be allowed to detract from the nobility and power of the message of end-time Bible prophecy.

Therefore we, the undersigned, hereby respectfully demand that all date-setting and date-suggesting cease immediately. Let abstinence from this type of speculation prevail until the Lord comes.

We absolutely must stop this type of activity or there will be few who will take the message of prophecy seriously. If Jesus does not return by or during the year 2000, we envision that by 2001 the message of Bible prophecy will be scorned, attacked, and possibly outlawed by legal means, thus giving the New Age movement a clear field for the introduction of their occult humanist messiah.

This manifesto has been signed by hundreds of church leaders, denominational officers, pastors, evangelists, seminary professors, teachers, etc. If you want your name added to the list please write David A. Lewis, P.O. Box 11115, Springfield, MO 65808.

¹ 2 Peter 3:1-18.

² Matthew 10:22; Matthew 24:9; Luke 6:22; Luke 21:17; John 7:7; John 15:18; John 15:19; John 16:2; John 16:33; John 17:14; Romans 8:7; Titus 3:12; James 4:4.

³ Grace Halsel, *Prophecy and Politics, Militant Evangelists on the Road to Nuclear War* (Westport, Connecticut, 1986) p. 200.

⁴ Charles Krauthammer, *Time Magazine - Apocalypse With and Without God* (New York: Time Inc., Mar. 22, 1993), p. 82.

⁵ Henry Lincoln, Richard Leigh and Michael Baigent, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1982).

⁶ Henry Lincoln, Richard Leigh and Michael Baigent, *The Messianic Legacy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1987).

⁷ David Allen Lewis, *Prophecy 2000* (Green Forest, Arkansas: New Leaf Press, 7 Ed. 1995), p.61-70.

⁸ Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy, An Abridgment* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1972).

⁹ Robert Muller, *New Genesis: Shaping a Global Spirituality* (New York, Doubleday, 1984).

¹⁰ Barbara Marx Hubbard, *The Revelation* (Novato, CA: Nataraj Publishing, 2 Ed. 1995), p.192-193.

¹¹ Peter Lemesurier, *The Armageddon Script* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1981), p. 231.

¹² David Allen Lewis, *Smashing the Gates of Hell in the Last Days* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 1987), p.57-68.

¹³ Titus 2:11-14.

¹⁴ James Brown, Tape recorded message.

¹⁵ Barney Fuller, *Nations Without God*. (Lafayette, LA; Huntington House Publishers, 1995), p. 17,18.

¹⁶ I would like to clarify that God has total knowledge of all dates of future events. He has revealed dates for various past events in Israel's history. This paper concerns itself only with the timing of the rapture. We are aware that after the rapture, people will be able to know the day of the Second Coming, but not before the rapture. After the rapture one could calculate that 1260 days after a Western leader signs a

seven year covenant with Israel, the Temple will be abominated. From that day, one could count off another 1260 days and know the exact day that Jesus will stand on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

¹⁷ 2 Peter 2:1.

¹⁸ Mark 13:32,33.

¹⁹ Cohn Deal, *The Day and Hour Jesus will Return*, (Rutherford College, NC: Cohn Hoyle Deal, 1988). p. 135. Here are a few examples: "According to the prophetic Scriptures, the rapture and the appearance of the false Messiah (antichrist), will transpire at or near the same time period. Interesting enough, an ancient Jewish Rabbi, called Rabbi Joshua, taught long ago that Messiah will come to redeem Israel in the month of Tishri (September or October)." p. 126.

"For instance, the feast of trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) will occur in 1989 on Saturday, the thirteenth of September; in 1990 on Thursday, the twentieth of September; in 1991 on Monday, the ninth of September; in 1992 on Monday, the twenty-eighth of September; in 1993 on Thursday the sixteenth of September; in 1994 on Tuesday the sixth of September; in 1995 on Monday the twenty-fifth of September; in 2002 on Saturday the seventh of September; etc." p.128, 129.

What time of day will this occur? The Jewish day, unlike our day, starts at sundown (around 6:00 P.M.) and ends the following evening at sundown.

The first of these trumpets is blown at the beginning of the day on Rosh Hashanah. This occurs at sunset, approximately 6:00 P.M., Jerusalem time. Some feel this will be the hour,

"However, this particular trumpet is only the first of a series of ninety trumpets to be blown on Rosh Hashanah. The trumpets are blown all during the day of this festival, culminating near the end of the day with the Great Teki ah, just prior to 6:00pm the following evening. Since the last trumpet of this series was blown approximately twenty-four hours later, near the end of the day, I strongly suspect this will be the one to coincide with, 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and with the trump of God...' This is the Great Teki ah!" p.135

²⁰ Matthew 24:48; Luke 12:45.

²¹ Stefan Kanfer, *Time Magazine; Millennial Megababble* (Time Inc., Jan. 8, 1990) P. 72.

²² Richard Erdoes, *AD 1000 Living on the Brink of Apocalypse* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), p.2,3.

²³ Richard Erdoes, *AD 1000 Living on the Brink of Apocalypse* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), p.2,3.

²⁴ Matthew. 24:36.

²⁵ W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: Royal Publishers, Inc. ND), p. 34, + genos/nation p. 774. Also see Strong's Gr. #1074.

²⁶ Matthew. 24: 42-46.

²⁷ Robert Sungenis, Scott Temple and David Allen Lewis, *Shock Wave 2000! The Harold Camping 1994 Debacle* (Green Forest AR: New Leaf Press,1994).

²⁸ David Allen Lewis, *The Pentecostal Evangel, The Dating Game* (Springfield, MO : The Assemblies of God, March 20, 1977) p. 6.

²⁹ David Allen Lewis, *Prophecy Intelligence Digest* (Springfield MO: David A. Lewis Ministries Inc., 1988), Vol. 6 #3.

³⁰ Dr. Charles R. Taylor, *Get All Excited, Jesus is Coming Soon*, (Redondo Beach, CA: Today in Bible Prophecy, Inc., 1974), p. 93.

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- ³¹ Eldon D. Purvis, *A Revelation of God's Plan-From Bible Prophecy* (Ft. Lauderdale, FL: New Beginnings, 1974), Vol. 4 #6, p.1.
- ³² Elijah Two, *The End of Time-The Messiah Comes*, (C.M.I. Publications, 1975). p.192.
- ³³ Mikkel Dahi, *The Midnight Cry*, (Fulton MO: Shepherdsfield Community Church),p. 23.
- ³⁴ Emil Gaverluk, *God's Timetable For The Next Seven Years*, (Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1976), p. 11,20.
- ³⁵ Edgar Whisenant, *The Rapture Rosh Hashanah 1988 and 88 Reasons Why* (Little Rock, AR: Edgar C. Whisenant, 1988), p. 11-29.
- ³⁶ R. Henry Hall, *End Times Newsletter* (Las Vegas, NV: Spirit of Prophecy Evangelical Ministries, 1988), Vol. 3 Issue 11, p.3.
- ³⁷ Joseph R. Civelli, *The Messiah's Return* (Pensacola FL: Essay by J.R.C., 1987), P. 37.
- ³⁸ Bang - 1k Ha, *Rapture! In Oct. 1992, Jesus is Coming Again*, Tract
- ³⁹ Advertisement *USA Today* (Arlington, VA: Gannet News, Thursday, October 15, 1992), p. 9A.
- ⁴⁰ Harold Camping, *1994?* (New York, NY: Vantage Press, 1992).
- ⁴¹ Barney Fuller, *Nations Without God*. (Lafayette, LA; Huntington House Publishers, 1995), p. 17,18.
- ⁴² C.G. Ozanne, *The First 7000 Years* (Jericho, NY: Exposition Press, 1970) p. 160ff.
- ⁴³ James McCutchan, *Christians Can Know* (Houston TX: James McCutchan, 1988), P. 12. McCutchen says there is only one day of each year when the rapture can take place. Seven years later on Tishri I (Rosh Hashanah) the Second Coming takes place. In his work he presents a chart of all possible dates from 1988 to 2007. We have listed only the dates for 1996-2003 and 2000 - 2007.
- ⁴⁴ James McCutchan, *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- ⁴⁵ M.J. Agee, *Exit 2007 The Secret of Secrets Revealed* (Yorba Linda, CA: Archer Press, 1992), p. 259ff.
- ⁴⁶ Robert M. Bartell, "Jesus is Coming Again Soon (Arlington, VA: Essay by R.M.B.), p.1.
- ⁴⁷ Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, (Philadelphia, PA: FoxChase 1918), p. 16. Cited by Margaret Riedel in *The Blessed Hope and The Glorious Appearing*.
- ⁴⁸ Marvin Byers, *The Final Victory: The Year 2000* (Shippensburg, PA: Companion Press, 1991), P. 293.
- ⁴⁹ E. Berkeley Hammond, *The Scriptural Prediction of Eschatological Dates* (Huntsville, AL: Essay by E. B. H. 1992), p. 16.
- ⁵⁰ James McCutchan, *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- ⁵¹ David Webber and N. W. Hutchings, *Will Christ Come by 2001?* (Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1978). p. 15,16.
- ⁵² Cohn Deal, *The Day and Hour Jesus will Return*, (Rutherford College, NC: Cohn Hoyle Deal, 1988). p. 126.
- ⁵³ James McCutchan, *Ibid.*, p.12

⁵⁴ James McCutchan, *Ibid.*, p.12

⁵⁵ M. J. Agee, *Ibid.*, p. 259.

⁵⁶ M. J. Agee, *Ibid.*, p. 261.