

What Is Realized Eschatology? #1

Introduction. In 1971, Max King, an institutional preacher, published a book titled *The Spirit Of Prophecy*, which has also been called the "A.D. 70 doctrine." Although this doctrine had its origins among institutional brethren, conservative brethren have also been affected by it. Mr. King has written extensively on the subject, including the book *The Cross and the Parousia of Christ* which was published in 1987.

Realized eschatology has few disciples, but those who do believe the doctrine are very vocal and insistent. In conservative congregations where it has gained a foothold, it has led to division and ruin.

One of the difficulties in answering this error is to figure out where to start! The doctrine focuses on "eschatology" or the doctrine of the end of the world, but King goes a step further -- to him it is "realized eschatology," meaning that everything prophesied before has now been accomplished. This doctrine leads to a shift in perspective that requires a completely new way of looking at the scriptures concerning the Lord's second coming and the resurrection.

I. **What Is Realized Eschatology?**

- A. The most basic tenant of realized eschatology is that Christ's second coming occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. He will not come again. King wrote, "There is no scriptural basis for extending the second coming of Christ beyond the fall of Judaism" (SOP, p. 105).
- B. With the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, all prophecy was fulfilled and there is nothing more to be fulfilled.
 1. "Prophecy found its complete fulfillment in the second coming of Christ, and now may be regarded as closed and consummated" (SOP, p. 65).
 2. "The fall of Judaism (and its far-reaching consequences) is, therefore a major subject of the Bible. The greater portion of prophecy found its fulfillment in that event, including also the types and shadows of the law. It was the coming of Christ in glory that closely following his coming in suffering (1 Peter 1:11), when all things written by the prophets were fulfilled (Luke 21:22; Acts 3:21). It corresponded to the perfection of prophecy saints (1 Corinthians 13:10) when they reached adulthood in Christ, receiving their adoption, redemption, and inheritance. The eternal kingdom was possessed (Hebrews 12:28) and the new heavens and earth inherited (Matthew 5:5; Revelation 21:1, 7)" (SOP, p. 239).
- C. The cross was the "beginning of the end of first covenant," but the end of that covenant did not occur until A.D. 70.

1. "As already mentioned, we do not disagree that the 'New Covenant' began at the cross. However, I believe that there is biblical evidence which demonstrates clearly that the 'Mosaic age' and 'Old Covenant' continued through the cross even into post-cross time and existed 'concurrently' in post-cross time with the 'New Covenant' until A.D. 70 (to the end of the age, Matthew 24:2-3). And during this period of time, Old Testament Judaism was still a veritable 'religion' and 'the Jews' were still 'under the law' because the 'Old Covenant' was still in effect" (Vanwyngaarden).
 2. "When the writer of Hebrews wrote ... the consummation of the old aeon has not yet taken place. The Old Covenant age was 'ready to vanish away'" (CPC, p. 223).
 3. "The phrase 'is ready to vanish away' was, from the writer's point of view, an anticipation of the imminent, age-consummating coming of Christ" (CPC, p. 426).
 - a) The 40 years between the cross and destruction of Jerusalem was the "eschaton."
 - b) It was also called the last days of Jewish period. "The last days [Acts 2:17; 2 Timothy 3:1; Hebrews 1:2; James 5:3; 2 Peter 3:3], therefore, never apply to the Christian age, but always to the closing period of the Jewish age, which ran from Pentecost to the fall of Jerusalem" (SOP, p. 79).
- D. The kingdom of God was not fully established until A.D. 70. "We are in the eternal kingdom of Christ, and instead of being in the last days we are in eternal days, world without end (Ephesians 3:21)" (SOP, p. 81).
- E. There will be no "bodily" resurrection -- the "resurrection" promised was the resurrection of Christianity out of the decay of Judaism.
1. Marc Gibson wrote, "The resurrection is not to be taken in a literal sense, but must be understood in a spiritual sense. It has nothing to do with a 'resurrection' of a physical body at some future time. The physical body is discarded forever at death, and an individual receives a spiritual body in which he will dwell immediately and eternally in heaven. This spiritual body is a 'new creation' so no physical body is resurrected from a grave."
 2. Max King, commenting on 1 Corinthians 15, wrote, "Next, Paul answers questions concerning how the dead are raised and with what body they come forth. The primary application deals with the development and rise of the Christian system itself, with a secondary application belonging to believers and their state within the system. The natural body that was sown (vs. 44) answers to the flesh or carnal system of Judaism in which existed prophecies, types, and patterns from which came the spiritual body designed of God ... The natural body receiving its death blow at the cross and

- beginning then to wax old and decay (Hebrews 8:13), became a nursery or seed-body for the germination, growth, and development of the spiritual body by means of the gospel ... Thus, out of the decay of Judaism arose the spiritual body of Christianity that became fully developed or resurrected by the end-time. Hence, this is the primary meaning of Paul's statement, 'It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body'" (SOP, pp. 199-200).
- F. Thus, according to realized eschatology, the followings events happened in A.D. 70.
1. Second coming of Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:23).
 2. Resurrection of the dead (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:23).
 3. Judgment day (cf. 2 Peter 3:10).
 4. Establishment of the New Covenant (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:25).
 5. Completeness in Christ (cf. Colossians 2:10).
 6. Kingdom fully established (cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:5).
 7. Reception of the eternal inheritance (cf. Ephesians 1:11).
- G. Wayne Jackson wrote, "If the foregoing theory seems to make no sense at all, it is because the novice does not understand how these common biblical terms have been redefined to fit the King theory. The 'second coming' does not denote a literal return of Christ in the future, but a spiritual, invisible coming in A.D. 70. 'Resurrection' hasn't anything to do with the human body; rather, it refers to a resurrection of the Christian system from the persecution inflicted by the Jews between A.D. 30 and 70. The 'judgment day' is not a time when all men will give account to God; it is the destruction of Judaism. And the 'end of the world' is not the passing of the earth; it supposedly is a reference to the dissolution of the Jewish world."

II. ***What Is The Purpose Of Realized Eschatology?***

- A. Max King's website (www.presence.tv) states that their goal is the "four paths of transformation."
1. Covenantal Transformation. This is called "the source of all transformation" and refers to the doctrine developed by Max King.
 2. Personal Transformation. "By learning who we are, what we are, and what capabilities we have, we change from passive spectators to active creators of our lives and the world around us. Life doesn't happen to us; it happens from us."
 3. Organizational Transformation. By transforming yourself, you can combine with others, and transform a congregation. This explains the militancy behind those who advocate this position.
 4. Societal Transformation. "Societal transformation on a grand scale yields both a transformed humanity and a transformed universe."

- The doctrine leads its adherents to transform a man to make him a positive force in his community. Tim King said, "Unlike traditional dogma, Transmillennialism[®] sees Christ's millennial reign in its first-century context, from the Old to the New Covenant, bringing about the transformation of the ages. It sees the thrust of the Bible's speaking about how heaven comes to earth, not primarily about how one gets to heaven." So the ultimate goal of the doctrine is to produce a more perfect society, not save someone's soul.
- B. Several congregations have succumbed to this "transformation" by dividing, causing souls to be lost. Not everyone may subscribe to King's desire for "transformation." There are probably many people who simply love to hear something new (cf. Acts 17:21)!
 - C. To be an advocate of a lofty new doctrine is very appealing to the pride of man (Proverbs 16:18; 29:23). King saw himself as the author of a new paradigm that would yield a "transformed humanity and a transformed universe."
 - 1. Many false teachers arrogantly claim that they and a few others know something that the rest of us poor souls do not.
 - 2. Because they are initiates, we are bound by tradition and blind to their superior discernment (cf. 2 Peter 2:10-12). Max King was very critical of "the sectarian obsession with institutional self-preservation that stifles the search for truth."

Conclusion. A good illustration of the ease of deception is the "dark sucker" theory which is easily found on the Internet.

For years, it has been believed that electric bulbs emit light, but recent information has proven otherwise. Electric bulbs do not emit light; they suck darkness. In this room, there is much less dark right next to the Dark-Sucker than there is elsewhere. A candle is a primitive Dark-Sucker. A new candle has a white wick. You can see that after the first use, the wick turns black, representing all the dark that has been sucked into it. There are also portable Dark-Suckers. In these, the bulbs can't handle all the dark by themselves and must be aided by a Dark Storage Unit. When the Dark Storage Unit is full, it must be either emptied or replaced before the portable Dark-Sucker can operate again. Also, dark is heavier than light. If you were to swim just below the surface of a lake, you would see a lot of light. If you were to slowly swim deeper and deeper, you would notice it getting darker and darker. When you get really deep, you would be in total darkness. This is because the heavier dark sinks to the bottom of the lake and the lighter light floats at the top. This is why it is called light.

We know this is a joke, but it does illustrate an important principle. It is possible to take a clearly established truth and redefine the terms --

giving it plausibility, at least on the surface. The same has occurred with "realized eschatology."