

What Is Realized Eschatology? #2

Introduction. This morning, we started examining the "A.D. 70 Doctrine" taught by Max King and advocated by several brethren through the years. This is one of the most unusual and complex doctrines to be spread among our brethren in recent times. To put it mildly, it is a revisionist view of prophecy which substantially alters the teaching of multiple passages in the New Testament.

The Bible teaches Christians to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). We are to seek a spiritual maturity that will enable us to have our "senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14), because there are false doctrines and false teachers that continually trouble the people of God.

I. **What Are The Ramifications Of Realized Eschatology?**

- A. It forces one definition onto words and phrases.
 1. King makes the "coming of Christ" equal to His second coming (Matthew 10:23; 24:3-4). However, the New Testament speaks of several "comings" of Christ.
 - a) As a human (Luke 19:10).
 - b) In salvation (John 14:2-3).
 - c) In His kingdom (Matthew 16:28).
 - d) With power (Mark 9:1).
 - e) In discipline (Revelation 2:5).
 - f) In fellowship (Revelation 3:20).
 - g) In the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:29-31).
 - h) In universal judgment (Matthew 16:27).
 2. Furthermore, King demands that *mello*, which occurs in passages like Matthew 16:27, Acts 17:31, and 2 Timothy 4:1, means "about to occur," indicating imminence.
 - a) "Paul told the Athenians to repent and turn to Christ because he was going to judge the world. But when? How soon would that judgment day come? Many feel that there is nothing in the text to indicate time, whether near or afar, but to this we can hardly agree. Most Greek interlinears will furnish this reading 'because he set a day in which he is about to judge the habitable world in righteousness, by a man whom he appointed' (Acts 17:31)."
 - b) "This word *mello* ... signifies, not only intention of purpose but also nearness of action, meaning at the point of, or ready to do what has been stated. Had Paul meant to teach judgment of 2,000 or more years' future, he certainly would not have used *mello* in any tense, especially in the present tense. Therefore the

judgment of the habitable world was about to take place in Paul's day ..."

- c) Does *mello* always carry the meaning of "about to occur"? Thayer defined it, "... to be on the point of doing, or suffering something ... to intend, have in mind, think so ... of those things which will come to pass by fixed necessity or divine appointment ... in general, what is sure to happen."

(1) Christ from Adam was "him that was to come" (Romans 5:14). If King's interpretation is true, Christ was "about to come" in Adam's lifetime!

(2) The text in Acts 17:31 is properly translated. *Mello* does not signify there that the judgment is about to happen, but that it is certain to happen.

B. It demands that all the books of the New Testament be written prior to A.D. 70, which is an unprovable assumption.

1. If any New Testament book was written after A.D. 70 and had a promise of something future, King's argument fails.
2. At least six books are thought by many to have been written after A.D. 70: the five letters of John and Jude. They place Christ's second coming in the future (John 14:2-3; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Revelation 22:20).
3. Almon Williams said, "Let us get to our point about the A.D. 70 doctrine's pre-A.D. 70 dates for all New Testament books. Can this thesis be proven beyond a reasonable doubt? I, although I am a joint-believer in this view and would not ordinarily, in any other context, like to admit it so freely, do now most unhesitatingly say, 'No!' and frankly confess my view here to be nothing but an opinion. In other words, so long as any proponent of some New Testament books' post-A.D. 70 origin can present arguments which are as persuasive or even nearly so as those of the pre-A.D. 70 advocate, the latter has not gotten close to proving his view beyond a reasonable shadow of doubt ... In conclusion, to argue for the pre-A.D. 70 date of all New Testament books as a personally satisfying opinion is one thing, but to argue for such as an absolute necessity to uphold one's basic belief about the New Covenant and the only true meaning of divine truth is, to say the least, quite another thing. In short, it is an opinion -- pure and simple!"

C. It denies a literal coming of Christ. Yet these following verses show Christ's second coming to be visible and literal.

1. Come with clouds, as He went away (Acts 1:11).
2. Every eye shall see Him (Revelation 1:7).
3. Become like Christ when He comes, we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).

4. All the dead will be raised (John 5:28).
 5. Heavens and the earth to pass away (2 Peter 3:10).
- D. It makes forgiveness not possible until A.D. 70. King wrote, "When would ungodliness be turned away from Jacob, or their sins be taken away? When Christ, the deliverer, came out of Zion. When did Christ come out of Zion? Not at his first coming, but his second coming" (SOP, p. 63).
- E. It makes the Lord's supper non-essential.
1. According to King, prior to A.D. 70 the kingdom was not fully established; prior to that date, it was the kingdom of Christ; after that event, it was the kingdom of God, the eternal kingdom of 2 Peter 1. But Matthew 26:29 says that the Lord's supper would be in the Father's kingdom, and that was observed prior to A.D. 70!
 2. We are to partake the supper "till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). If He has come already in A.D. 70, there is no need now for Christians to partake of the supper (Hebrews 12:22-28).
- F. It requires two simultaneous priesthoods -- one from the Old Covenant and one from the New Covenant (Hebrews 7:11-14).
- G. It makes Jewish Christians guilty of spiritual adultery from A.D. 30 to A.D. 70 (Romans 7:1-4).
- H. It makes Jesus guilty of "double-talk" in His exchange with the Sadducees because we should be now in the world to come and a part of the "new heavens and new earth" (Matthew 22:23-33; Luke 20:27-38; 2 Peter 3:13).
- I. It perverts scripture to "prove" the doctrine.
1. Galatians 4:21-31: "Isaac was a grown man before he inherited ... He did not receive the inheritance the day he was born ... neither did the church receive its inheritance the day it had its beginning ... One world ended (destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70), and another began ... I stand here tonight because that's the meaning of the allegory."
 2. Hebrews 8:13: "The phrase 'is ready to vanish away' was, from the writer's point of view, an anticipation of the imminent, age-consuming coming of Christ" (CPC, 426).
 3. 1 Corinthians 15:44: "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).
4. 2 Peter 3:7: "Thus, the world reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men (2 Peter 3:7) was the Jewish world ... Fiery judgment was going to fall on Judaism. Jesus said, 'I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled' (Luke 12:49). The fire of 2 Peter 3:10 is no more literal than the fire of Luke 12:49."

II. ***Why Does This Doctrine Matter?***

- A. The A.D. 70 doctrine is similar to the error of which Paul warned Timothy (2 Timothy 2:17-18). This "overthrew" the faith of some, and it will do the same to us. Keith Roland, an advocate of this doctrine, maintains that it should have no bearing on fellowship, as it has nothing to do with "... your salvation, your worship of God, or the work of the church. Therefore in the spirit of Romans 14 we can agree to disagree."
- B. We adamantly disagree with his conclusion, and strongly urge that brethren should guard and avoid the leaven of Max King and his adherents. Along with this, we also need to rejoice in the true comfort of passages like 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, and look forward to that great coming day of judgment (2 Timothy 4:1).

Conclusion. The attempt to assign to A.D. 70 every end-time event (including the final coming of Christ, bodily resurrection, and the judgment) cannot be supported by the scriptures. You are probably wondering how someone could believe this, but this is a good example of the ability of the false teacher to deceive (cf. Ephesians 4:14).

After this examination, what can one say? No one, without King's help, would have ever guessed that inspired writers were trying to get such a message across. Sadly, this is not a harmless, private conviction that can be held without hurting oneself and others, but a terrible theory of error which engulfs the soul of men in destructive heresy.