

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

AD 70 Doctrine

By J. T. Smith

It is listed with several designations – AD 70 doctrine, Realized Eschatology, and the Max King Theory (so named because Max King of Warren, Ohio is the father of it). His views are set forth in two books, *The Spirit of Prophecy* (1971) and *The Cross and The Parousia of Christ* (1987). When I heard about it a number of years ago I dismissed it as being so far-fetched that no one in their right mind would deem it worthy of serious consideration. Yet, it has become a major concern among brethren.

The doctrine, “in a nutshell” is that when the destruction of Jerusalem took place in AD 70, all Bible prophecy was fulfilled including: the second coming of Christ; the resurrection of the dead; the judgment day; and the end of the world! If this theory doesn’t make sense to you, it is because these common biblical terms have been *redefined* by King as he presents his theory. For example:

1. The “kingdom of Christ” was not fully set up until AD 70.
2. The “second coming” has nothing to do with a literal returning of Christ in the future, but a spiritual invisible coming in AD 70.
3. The “resurrection” does not involve the physical body; instead it refers to a resurrection of the Christian system (the church) from the persecution inflicted by the Jews between AD 30-70.
4. The “end of the world” is not the passing of the earth, according to the theory, but is a reference to the dissolving of the Jewish world.
5. The “judgment day” is not a time in the future when all will give account to God for the deeds done in the body; instead it is the destruction of Jerusalem.

Definition of Words. The words Realized Eschatology are used to describe this theory. The word *realized* means, “to make real or fulfill” (*The American Heritage Dictionary*). Therefore things which have already occurred are realized. The word *eschatology* means, “A belief or a doctrine concerning the ultimate or final things, such as death, the destiny of humanity, the Second Coming, or the Last Judgment” (Ibid). Thus, the doctrine of *Realized Eschatology* is the concept that all things in the Bible that we generally consider to be things that are “yet to come to pass” have *already happened*.

The Kingdom Of Christ. Max King teaches that the kingdom of Christ was not fully set up until AD 70. King says “it did not come in *glory* and *power* until AD 70.” The two words *glory* and *power* are the key words in this theory. These concede that the kingdom of our Lord came into existence on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the death of Christ, but *not in its glory; not in its power*. It was not complete on Pentecost. It did not receive its *glory* and *power* until God destroyed Jerusalem, the Jewish Temple, and all that it entailed, in AD 70.

First of all let’s consider the fact that the kingdom and the church are composed of the same people (Jn. 3:3-5; cf. Acts 2:38, 41, 47). Paul said, “*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen*” (Eph. 3:20-21). Notice that both “*power*” and “*glory*” are mentioned as being in the church before AD 70.

Second, if the kingdom did not come in glory and power until AD 70, then the King of this kingdom had no power until AD 70. However, Jesus said after His death, burial, and resurrection, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18). Jesus was, “declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4). But again, “and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the”

church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:19-23). All authority was His – when? Notice verse 20, **“when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.”** This was before AD 70. The kingdom came with power and glory on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ.

The Second Coming Of Christ. Is it yet future, or has it already passed (AD 70)? Paul told Titus, **“Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”** (Titus 2:13). But according to this theory we need look no longer. It has already happened.

First, consider there are many times in the Scriptures that the “coming” of Christ is used in a figurative, symbolic, or spiritual sense – not a literal one. The first coming was literal when Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. This was prophesied in the Old Testament. **“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people”** (Gen. 49:10). **“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,”** which is translated, **“God with us”** (Matt. 1:23). There is only one passage that specifically says that Christ will come a “second time.” **“So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation”** (Heb. 9:28). The question is when will (did?) this “second time” take place? Those who advocate Realized Eschatology say the *second* appearance of the Lord as stated in Hebrews 9:28 is figurative. Since it is almost impossible to discuss the second coming of Christ without discussing the resurrection (and since King believes both took place in AD 70) I am going to include the resurrection in this segment.

Who (or What) Is To Be Raised? When King and his followers speak of the resurrection of the body, they are not talking about the physical body of man. They are speaking about a spiritual body, the church. The theory is that the Lord’s church (the Body) had been suppressed until AD 70 by the Law of Moses and its followers. At the time of the destruction of Jerusalem the church was released from that suppression and in a figurative sense was “raised up.” Therefore, we are told, the resurrection in the New Testament has reference to this figurative resurrection.

In 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Paul affirms that the facts of the gospel (the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus) must be believed. Paul then continues by showing that the resurrection of Jesus guarantees our resurrection. He says, **“And if Christ is not risen... Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished”** (1 Cor. 15:17-18). Notice Paul did not say that if Christ is not risen then the church has perished. He said **“those”** (individuals) who have fallen asleep (died) have perished. Paul affirms, **“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”** (1 Cor. 15:20). Notice he did not say “that (the church) which has fallen asleep,” but **“of those who have fallen asleep.”**

But again, **“But someone will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?”** (1 Cor. 15:35). Observe that Paul did not say “with what body does it (church) come?” He said, **“with what body do they come?”** He replies, **“So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.”** (1 Cor. 15:42). **Question: Was the church sown in corruption that it might be raised in incorruption? I think not!**

And again, **“It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body”** (1 Cor. 15:44). Was the church sown a natural body and raised a spiritual one? **“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality”** (1 Cor. 15:51-53). Was the church corruptible before AD 70?

Concerning the resurrection, Jesus said, **“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation”** (Jn. 5:28-29). Who is coming forth? **“All who are in the graves”** (plural) – not “the church that is in the grave.” Friends, one does not need to have the brain of a rocket scientist to be able to see the utter foolishness of King’s theory. That being the case, someone might say, “Why spend time refuting it.” Well actually, King and his followers are like those we read about in 2 Timothy 2:16-18, **“But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.”** Obviously this same thing is happening today. Many other passages could be given, but I believe the above are sufficient.— **Fifth Street East church of Christ Bulletin**, February 12, 2017. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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