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Answering The Religious Errors Of Our Family, Friends, and Neighbors
“The Second Coming Of Christ, Including The Establishment Of The
Eternal Kingdom, The Day Of Judgment, The End Of The World, And The
Resurrection Of The Dead All Occurred In 70 A.D.!”
Lesson 33

INTRO:

- A. This is one of the most strange and bizarre doctrines I have heard of.
 - 1. It makes me wonder how anyone professing to know the Bible could come up with such ideas.
- B. For over 50 years it has divided God’s people.
 - 1. Some, who have embraced it, have left to find their place among liberal churches or denominations.
 - 2. In other places, churches have been split.
- C. This teaching can be traced back to the 17th century to Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613).
 - 1. The more ‘modern’ seeds were sown by James Stuart Russell (1816-1895) a Congregational minister, in his work entitled “The Parousia: A Careful Look at the New Testament Doctrine of the Lord’s Second Coming” (1878).
 - 2. Among brethren it was first preached by Max R. King in a lectureship at the Brookwood Way church of Christ, Mansfield, OH in the summer of 1970.
 - a. In April 1971 King and his father-in-law, C.D. Beagle introduced it in a preacher’s meeting at Cuyahoga Falls, OH.
 - b. King popularized this movement and in publishing his first book “**The Spirit of Prophecy**” (1971) he set forth the concepts of “the 70 AD Doctrine.”
 - c. King added a 2nd book to his “70 AD Doctrine” in 1987 called “**The Cross and the Parousia of Christ.**”
 - 3. In more recent years, the name has underwent a change to “Realized Eschatology.”
 - a. “Eschatology” - “last things, the end of the world (resurrection, judgment;...) and the eternal destinies of mankind” (**International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**, James Orr, II:972).
 - b. ”Realized” - accomplishment. Hence, Realized Eschatology is a doctrine of completed last things.

I. WHAT IS ‘REALIZED ESCHATOLOGY’/A.D. 70 DOCTRINE?

- A. The end times were realized and accomplished in 70 A.D. at the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - 1. King wrote, “The fall of Judaism (and its far reaching consequences) is, therefore, a major subject of the Bible” (**The Spirit of Prophecy**, Max R. King, p. 239).

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- B The second coming of Christ occurred at 70 A.D., at which time every spiritual blessing was perfected and made available to the world.
- C. All prophecy of end-time events was fulfilled in 70 A.D., and to look beyond that date for the personal coming of Christ and the bodily resurrection of mankind followed by a judgment, is without Biblical authority.
 - 1. Here is a sampling of this basic viewpoint of the doctrine from King's **The Spirit of Prophecy**:
 - a. "There is no scriptural basis for extending the second coming of Christ beyond the fall of Judaism." - p. 105
 - b. "...the end of the Jewish world was the second coming of Christ." - p. 81
 - c. "Prophecy found its complete fulfillment in the second coming of Christ, and now may be regarded as closed and consummated." - p. 65

II. DID JESUS COME IN THE FIRST CENTURY FOLLOWING HIS ASCENSION?

- A. There is evidence in God's word that Jesus did indeed come in some aspect in the first century.
 - 1. He came in His kingdom (**Mt. 16:28**) with power; on the day of Pentecost. (**Acts 1:4-5,8; 2:1-4,33**).
 - 2. Jesus described the sending of the Helper/Comforter (the Holy Spirit) in **John 14:18** "...I come unto you."
 - a. Is this a bodily coming of Jesus? Not bodily, but representatively, through the Holy Spirit whom He would send (**Jn. 15:26**).
 - 3. In **Matthew 24:29-30**, Jesus taught that during that generation (**24:34**) "*they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*"
 - a. The context of Matthew 24 tells us how they would see Him.
 - b. The context of the chapter is the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - c. Unquestionably, Jesus did not appear bodily in 70 A.D. when Jerusalem fell.
 - d. Instead, **Matthew 24:30** speaks of His presence in Jerusalem's judgment.
 - 1) He authorized it, and brought it to pass.
 - e. Yes, Jesus came in judgment in 70 A.D., but it was not His bodily return!
 - 1) Similar language is used to describe His coming in judgment against the powers persecuting the saints in **Rev. 1:7**. (Rev. 19:11-21).

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4. None of these "comings" of the Lord prevent a future coming of Christ in bodily form at the end of time!
- B. The A.D. 70 doctrine would make every mention of “*the coming of the Lord*” or “*the day of the Lord*” mean the same event, regardless of its context.
- C. The same phrase can have different meanings.
 1. For example, take the expression “*laid hands upon*”.
 - a. In Acts 4:3, it means to arrest.
 - b. In Acts 13:3, it means to commend.
 - c. In Luke 13:13, it means to heal.
 - d. In Acts 8:17 and 19:6, it means to impart spiritual gifts.
 2. To give one meaning to this phrase every time it is used would result in absurdity!
 3. Yet, this is exactly what the A.D. 70 doctrine does with “*the coming of the Lord*” and “*the day of the Lord*.”
- D. The problem with limiting the coming of the Lord to 70 A.D. can be seen by at least three passages in the New Testament:
 1. **Acts 1:9-11**
 - a. In what way did Jesus go into heaven?
 - 1) Jesus ascended into heaven actually and personally, in His resurrected body (**Lk. 24:39** “*Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.*”).
 - b. In Acts 1:9-11, five words are used which show actual sight was involved on this occasion.
 - 1) His apostles “*watched*” as Jesus was taken up (v. 9).
 - 2) A cloud received Jesus “*out of their sight*” (v. 9).
 - 3) The apostles were “*looking stedfastly into heaven*” when two men in white apparel appeared to them (v. 10).
 - 4) These messengers asked the apostles, “*Why do you stand gazing up into heaven?*” (v. 11).
 - 5) And finally, the apostles were assured that Jesus would return in like manner as they had “*saw him*” go into heaven (v. 11).
 - c. The apostles actually saw Jesus' bodily ascension.
 - 1) This is the manner in which He will return (**1 Thess. 4:16-17**).

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- d. Jesus did not come in bodily form nor was He personally seen in the events of the coming of the kingdom (Mt. 16:28; Jn. 14:18) and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (Mt. 24:30), or in the defeat of the persecuting powers of saints in Revelation 1:7.
 - e. Christ's personal, bodily return is yet future!
2. **2 Peter 3:5-7, 10-11,**
- By His word, God created and then destroyed the world with water.
- a. By that same word of God, the heavens and earth which now exist are reserved for fire, awaiting the day of judgment against ungodliness. (2 Pet. 3:5-7, 11)
 - b. The A.D. 70 advocates try to make the heavens and earth (v. 7, 10), which shall meet a fiery end, the Jewish system (as do the Jehovah's Witnesses).
 - 1) But, this is not so!
 - c. The world which was overflowed with water is now reserved for fire.
 - 1) This fiery judgment shall occur on "*the day of the Lord*" (v. 10), at His "*coming*" (v. 4).
 - d. Was the world of Noah's time actually flooded?
 - 1) Then the world which now exists shall actually be destroyed with fire!
 - e. If this verse had been fulfilled in 70 A.D., none of us would be here!
3. 1 Corinthians 15 teaches a future, bodily resurrection from the dead.
- a. While the A.D. 70 doctrine says the resurrection is past already (having occurred in 70 A.D.), this passage clearly denies that claim.
 - b. To the Realized Eschatologist, the primary meaning of 1 Corinthians 15 is symbolical: the resurrection of Christianity out of Judaism, not the resurrection of mankind at the second coming of Jesus Christ.
 - 1) "Next (1 Cor. 15:35-44 - erh), 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 (verse 44) answers to the fleshly or carnal system of Judaism in which existed

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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 (Heb. 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'" (**The Spirit of Prophecy**, King, pp. 199-200).

- 2) The definitions and applications that King assumes in that quotation alone show the nature of this doctrine!
 - a) The Scriptures are twisted to say what has already been decided, namely, that Christianity arose out of Judaism, an event which we are told was completed in 70 A.D.!
 - b) I cannot think of a better example of **2 Peter 3:15-17**)
- c. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul answers the teaching by some "*that there is no resurrection of the dead*" (v. 12).
 - 1) He does so by first establishing the truthfulness of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ (vs. 1-11).
 - 2) Then, he presents the consequences of denying the resurrection of the dead (vs. 12-34).
 - 3) Next, he answers possible objections to a bodily resurrection (vs. 35-50).
 - 4) Finally, he praises the victory over death God gives us in Christ through the resurrection (vs. 51-58).
- d. The very thing defined in this chapter is denied by the A.D. 70 doctrine, namely, a future, bodily resurrection!
- e. To understand this to be the main point of the chapter, consider **vs. 20-23**.
 - 1) The bodily resurrection of all mankind is said to be based upon the bodily resurrection of Christ!
 - 2) The resurrected Christ is the firstfruits of the dead (vs. 20, 23).

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- a) The offering of firstfruits under the law of Moses was the choicest and earliest ripe crop (Num. 18:12; Ex. 23:16, 19), indicating that all the crop which followed belonged to God (Deut. 26:2-11).
- b) Also, we should note that the crop which followed was of the same kind or type as its firstfruits.
- 3) In like manner, the resurrection of Christ from the dead is an assurance and guarantee that all who die shall be raised.
 - a) And, we are assured that our resurrection will be the same kind as His.
- f. As surely as bodily death comes to all because of Adam's sin (Gen. 3:19), a bodily resurrection will come to all because of Christ's bodily resurrection (vs. 21-22).
- g. This reveals His power and preeminence over death (**Jn. 5:28-29; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:18**).
- h. Thus, Paul defends the doctrine of bodily resurrection from the dead upon the basis of Christ's bodily resurrection.

CONCLUSION:

- A. The attempt to assign to 70 A.D. every end-time event (including the final coming of Christ, bodily resurrection and the judgment) cannot be supported by Scripture.
- B. It is completely refuted by Acts 1:9-11; 2 Peter 3:1-11; and 1 Corinthians 15.