
The Messenger



"... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:15

A Weekly Publication of the Christians Meeting at
2291 Highway Z, Wentzville, Missouri
westlakechurchofchrist.org

Dedicated to the Proclamation of the Truth in the Spirit of Love (Ephesians 4:15)

Volume 13, Issue 20

Evangelist and Editor:
Dempsey Collins

May 20, 2012

Listen to PROVE ALL THINGS on 730 AM WKRE, Sunday mornings from 8:15 to 8:30

A Closer Look at the "AD 70 Theory" of Last Things *by Olan Hicks*

The first time a preacher friend said to me that the world had ended back in AD 70, I said, "Wait a minute! I am looking out the window and it is still out there! What do you mean, it ended?" He then explained that he did not mean the literal earth, the grass, trees, rocks, and dirt. He meant the Jewish age had ended, or "world," as some translations have it in Matthew 24.

To that I had no objection. It was my understanding that we all believe that "the end" referred to in Matthew 24:14 was the end of Judaism, destruction of Jerusalem, especially the temple, in AD 70.

When the same brother said to me that the second coming of Christ had occurred at the same time, I asked, "Have you seen Him?" Again he said "no" and explained that it was not the literal Jesus in the flesh who had returned, but that He had come in a symbolic sense, visiting Jerusalem with destruction. Again I said I did not disagree with that. I wondered why this theory was being set forth as a radical change, something very different to what we had always believed. I wondered why it was being met with hostility by several brethren. I soon found out.

HERE IS THE PROBLEM

I learned that not only do they say this particular "end" came (of the Jewish age) and that a symbolic "coming of Christ" occurred in that event, they also say this was the final "end," the last coming of the Lord that is to be. Jesus is never to actually return physically! That is the part that is a radical change, different to what has been a standard belief among us. Some advocates of that theory charge that because it is different to what we have always believed, we are "formatted" against it and reject it for that reason, that we have been taught to apply the prophecies differently. ("Freedom's Ring" - July, 1998, Cecil Hook. Pg. 5). That begs the question. I can tell you exactly why I reject it, because it contradicts all of the explicit inspired statements to the contrary in the New Testament. To me that seems like a pretty good reason. This part of it is alarming because so many Bible passages graphically describe a day God has appointed in which Jesus will descend with a shout, the heavens and earth will pass away and be replaced with a new heaven and earth, the dead will be raised, and all men will be judged, not just the Jewish nation. This theory says that will not happen in actuality. The reasons why they say that are interesting and we need to look at them.

MY OWN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF THE THEORY

In 1982 I preached at Warren, Ohio in a weekend meeting. Max King, the chief introducer of the AD 70 theory, was serving as an elder there. He and the preacher, Terry Siverd, wanted me to consider their theory and they tried to explain it to me as much as time permitted. But it was a busy schedule and we had but little time. So I grasped as much of it as I could and promised to study it more later. They gave me a considerable amount of

material, books, etc. and I agreed to reserve any decision about it until I could be reasonably sure that I was understanding what was being said. I wanted to do that because I feel strongly that drawing hasty conclusions about any brother is very wrong.

It took a long time, actually several years, to get the studying done, as fully as I wanted to, because I was very busy with things I felt were more demanding. But over a period of several years I did spend a lot of time working through it. Later, on a trip to Arkansas, Max graciously came by my home and gave me a copy of his largest book, "The Cross and the Parousia of Christ." It is a book of 759 pages plus bibliography and index. He also continued to send me his monthly publication, "The Living Presence," and Ed Stevens, also of that group, has continued to send me his publication, "Kingdom Council." A couple of other friends who accepted that theory also sent me materials they wrote. So, as you see, they supplied me with much resource material on the subject. These are friends who have been courteous to me. This composition is not intended to be an ugly expose against them nor anyone who holds that theory. I believe they are sincere people. But I also believe they are mistaken in some ways that can have serious consequences.

I tried to be as objective as I could and I studied patiently. But the farther I went in study of it the more I became convinced that serious mistakes lie at the base of it. Here are five of them. 1. The hermeneutic they employ is not sound. 2. There seems to be a strong pre-disposition toward the theory, a lack of objectivity. They do a lot of what I call "reaching." 3. Their argumentation is often inconsistent. 4. They draw conclusions and hold them even though they contradict explicit Bible statements. 5. Many of their basic premises are purely theoretical, with absolutely no scripture statement to confirm them. I will give specific examples of this shortly, but first let's be sure we understand a couple of things.

Mark this down: They do start with scripture statements. As we have already said, the first part of what they say is correct. They read it in the text of Matthew 24. Jesus did say a "coming" of some kind would occur within that generation of time. But from there they quickly go astray and take a quantum leap into what Jesus did not say, namely that this was the only "coming" there would be. The speculation gets worse as they continue to theorize and branch out. By placing arbitrary interpretations on certain prophecies in Daniel and Revelation, they build a huge pyramid of error, starting with an untenable misuse of Matthew 24.

Advocates of this theory agree that the "coming" in AD 70 was "a symbolic coming in judgment upon Israel," not a literal coming of the Lord in person. The scripture supports that. But scripture also declares another fact, that "The hour is coming in which all who are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth. . ." (John 5:28-29). To say that this was fulfilled when a few people were raised at the time of the crucifixion, or perhaps a few were raised later in connection with the destruction of the temple, is to dispute what the Lord said. It is an observable fact that "ALL" the dead did not come forth at that time. All people of the world were not judged at that time. To say there is no such "day" coming when all the dead will come forth, no such day as God has appointed in which He will judge the world in righteousness, is to advance a premise which challenges the integrity of Jesus in John 5:28-29, of Paul in Acts 17:31, and many others such as I Thess. 4:16-17 and Rev. 21:2-5.

The reader needs to understand going in that this is the part of the theory that is disputed. That an "end" occurred in AD 70 is not disputed and that a "coming" of Christ occurred in a symbolic sense is not questioned. But the idea that this was the "end" and the "coming" referred to in all the promises about the Lord's second coming, that it was the only end and second coming that will occur, flies in the face of a host of explicit Bible statements to the contrary. Cecil Hook wrote that ". . . all the prophecies concerning the coming of Christ have been fulfilled. . ." (Ibid, pg. 5). Can this be justified in the text? Advocates of this theory claim that it is the real teaching of the Bible over all, that the scriptures I refer to as explicit statements to the contrary have been misunderstood. Is there any substance to that?

to be continued

NOTES & NEWS:

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16