
The Messenger



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

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A Closer Look at the "AD 70 Theory" of Last Things

by Olan Hicks

Continuation

THE SCOPE OF OUR STUDY

This is not intended to be an exhaustive treatment of all the arguments offered on behalf of that theory. It would take a large book to analyze in detail each of the many avenues of thought which grow out of that basic concept, and it isn't needed. Getting tangled up in a lot of irrelevant argumentation about possible interpretations of certain prophecies would not clarify the central questions involved. Anyone can guess about fulfillments of any prophecy and likely there will be many varying opinions. But the issues at stake here are basic, relatively simple questions, on which we have explicit Bible statements with which to make comparisons.

The thing wrong with their arguments based on prophecies is not that the words in a given prophecy could not mean what they say they mean. Usually the application they make is one possible meaning, as far as the words in the text are concerned. But the fact that a certain meaning is one of several possible meanings does not prove that it is the right one. The answer to each of their arguments on prophecy is that their interpretation is in conflict with specific Bible statements to the contrary. No human theory about prophetic interpretation can be as reliable as the inspired statements of the Bible on the matter in question. What we need to do is go to the core of that teaching, look at its foundation stones, and see the picture it sets forth of "last things," and then compare these with Biblical facts. You could strive about words to no profit for an awful long time if you tried to dissect every prophecy they cite and argue the limits of its possibilities. To cut to the chase, so to speak, it is simply that any interpretation which directly contradicts express Bible statements is not within the realm of possibility. It fails the first test of any interpretation, the matter of overall Bible harmony.

A paper that used to be published among them carried this caption: "Resolved: The scriptures teach that 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, occurred with the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70."

Now, if by "the end of the world," they mean the end of the Jewish age, they are right. If by "the return of Christ," they mean the symbolic return in judgment upon Israel, they are right. If by "the resurrection" they mean that some individuals were resurrected, again they are right. But if they mean the end of the physical cosmos, the resurrection of all the dead, and the final judgment, they are wrong. If by

“the return of Jesus” they mean His triumphant return in glory to raise all the dead, judge the world, and reward His servants, they are guilty of an error that all eyes can observe for themselves. They are simply arguing with facts.

God made a covenant with Noah, the sign of which is the rainbow, that “While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease” (Gen. 8:22). We can all see that the rainbow has not ceased to appear in the sky. Therefore the earth still remains. When the time comes that God sees fit to discontinue it, He will stop hanging out the sign that says it is still here and intact. How can a Bible believer observe the rainbow in the sky and still say, “The world ended 1900 years ago.”

THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM

The symbolic “coming in judgment upon Jerusalem” is a long way from being the final and ultimate redemption God has in mind for His people. In that day He will “make all things new.” According to the AD 70 theory, that day has already occurred, the Holy city has come down, but things are still precisely as they were. Instead of there being “no more death nor sorrow nor crying and no more pain, for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4), we still have cancer, an AIDS epidemic, death for every one eventually, and crying, and none of these have passed away.

But they argue that these are destined to be only in a spiritual sense. But these are not spiritual ailments. No one ever got cancer of the spirit. No one gets AIDS in his spirit. If it is only the spirit that is exempt from these things then nothing has changed. It has always been that way on earth. But God said, “Behold I make all things new.” The truth is, as Paul said in I Cor. 15:50, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. This mortal must put on immortality and this corruptible must put on incorruption” (vs. 52-53). In Max King’s largest book he spends over 250 pages trying to explain away this entire chapter. When it takes that much “explaining” to support a theory, you know that theory has serious problems.

But their problem is not just with I Cor. 15, it is with the whole Bible. When you conclude that there is no general resurrection day to come, no such scene as that in which all the dead are raised to stand before the throne of God for judgment, no time to come when people will exist in spiritual form apart from all of the sorrows that plague earthly life, you have gotten completely out of touch with the whole Bible perspective. You can scarcely find a page anywhere in the Bible that does not disagree with you. You have a totally different concept than what is pictured there. If the apostle Paul were here I suspect he would say, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (I Cor. 15:19).

In fairness it should be said that they do believe that people are being taken to heaven in spiritual form as each one dies. I asked one of them about that one time and that is what he said. It is a little hard to see then, why they would deny the features John saw in Rev. 21. They say to me, “Don’t you believe in figurative language in the Bible?” Sure I do, but when the word “figurative” is used to deny the teaching of an entire chapter, such as Rev. 21 or I Cor. 15 that is too much “figurativism.”

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