

The A.D. 70 Doctrine

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False doctrines have assailed the church of our Lord through the centuries. Back in the first century, Paul said that such attacks would not always be external, but warned: “from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things” (Acts 20:30 ASV, and following verses ASV unless otherwise noted). Is the A.D. 70 doctrine false? This investigation will seek to let the evidence, both sacred and secular, provide the answer.

Some Important Terms

The first question for many reading this will be: What is the A.D. 70 doctrine? It is a belief system which concerns what are generally considered “end time” things. The Greek term *eschatos* (eoxatos; as in Mark 9:35) means “*extreme, last in time or in place*” (Thayer 253), and, the suffix *ology* relates to “the study of” something. Thus, the term *Eschatology* is used to describe “a branch of theology which treats of the doctrines concerning death, the condition of man after death, the end of the world period, resurrection, final judgment, and the final destiny of the good and the wicked” (McClintock and Strong 287).

The assignment before us, the “A.D. Doctrine,” is essentially a teaching which takes all eschatological events and claims they had complete fulfillment in the year A.D. seventy. The immediate response is for one to ask: “You mean all end time events like the second coming of Christ, the resurrection, the judgment, and the end of the world are all past – way in the PAST?!” Adherents to this doctrine would respond, “YES!” This of course requires *spiritualizing* these events, as we shall see later. Since they view all these things as having come to pass, or fully *realized*, then this novel approach is sometimes termed “realized eschatology.”

Max R. King is the man who began to publicize this teaching in the early 70’s. This doctrine is thus sometimes labeled the “Max King Doctrine” or “Kingism.” More recently, another term has surfaced within the movement’s literature – “Transmillennialism.” These folks even hold the trademark for this new word! Listen to their web site answer to the question: “How do you own the trademark on ‘Transmillennialism?’” “Folks have told us ‘nobody owns the terms of Premillennialism, Amillennialism and Postmillennialism.’ So how did you obtain a trademark on Transmillennial? The simple answer is, Because we invented the word!” (Tim King.)

Brief History

Let's take an overview of the movement. The movement's history spans approximately the past three decades. Max King served as preacher for the Parkman Road church of Christ in Warren, Ohio. "The preacher's meeting of April 22, 1971 was the initial exposure of this 'new view' and 'novel' approach to biblical prophecy and the study of final things to the majority of the preachers present. Both C.D. Beagle and Max R. King presented information on the subject of final things" (Varner 2). Max King particularly detailed his beliefs in his book: *The Spirit of Prophecy* (1971). His father-in-law, C.D. Beagle has also played a significant role in this movement, though more "behind the scenes." Since these views sounded different, ears began to perk up. As more details of the belief became known opposition mounted.

As this view became more widely known it precipitated the following debates. The Joe Taylor/Max King debate (July 1971). The Gus Nichols/Max King debate (July 1973). A written debate between Jim McGuiggan and Max King, covering four propositions, was produced (1975). Jack Hansen also engaged Bruce R. Webster in a written debate. "The debate resulted in brother Hansen repudiating the King theory" (Varner 7). A school sympathetic to this belief system was opened in January of 1977 called *Northeast Ohio Bible College*. The name was later changed to *Northeast Ohio Bible Institute*.

Charles E. Geiser began publishing a paper titled: *Studies in Bible Prophecy* in 1978. Max King's second large book was published in 1987: *The Cross and The Parousia of Christ*. The first *Covenant Eschatology Seminar* was held in 1989, which became an annual event promoting this doctrine. In 1990, the paper *The Living Presence* made its debut, with Max R. King serving as editor and assisted by staff writers William H. Bell, Jr., Marvin Jacobs, Don Preston, Jack C. Scott, Jr., and Terry Siverd. The writers made it clear in the paper's "Statement of Purpose," "...we believe that biblical prophecy is fulfilled..." (Living Presence 2). Ultimately, this movement has grown from being a faction within the body of Christ into an organization willing to fellowship denominationalism for the sake of spreading their world view. Tim King has taken the reigns, so to speak, from his father and has served since 1997 as president of *Presence Ministries International* (PMI). JoAnne Gerety relates concerning *Tim King and Presence Ministries*: "Our ministry has chosen to remain independent from any denominational group in order to produce a newsletter which will cross denominational lines...PMI is now transdenominational..." (Gerety).

What Spawnd This Radical Hermeneutic?

When a new teaching arises within the body of Christ, with time, it often becomes apparent what precipitated the teaching. Take for example, the New Testament's teaching on marriage. As more couples became embroiled in sinful relationships some teachers came up with new views which made it "easier" for couples to become right with God. God's word had not changed, but false teachers changed the interpretation to require something less than true repentance.

As we study carefully the writings of the realized eschatologists, we find a common thread running throughout their writings. We find “time” references everywhere! There is nothing wrong with the study of any Bible theme. However, these folks were troubled by some verses which speak of some events being “at hand” (e.g. “But the end of all things is at hand...” 1 Peter 4:7). Their pitfall was to jump to unwarranted conclusions. Quotes from Edward E. Stevens will be sufficient representation of how they prematurely rule out possibilities. “There are numerous passages which teach that Jesus was to come again in the first century. What we traditionally call ‘The Second Coming’ of Christ happened then IN THAT GENERATION when Jerusalem was destroyed! These time statements cannot be taken another way without casting doubt upon the integrity of the NT” (Stevens 2, 3). Please note the false conclusion: “These time statements cannot be taken another way....” They can be taken another way! With sound exegesis they CAN be handled correctly and it keeps one from reinterpreting scores of New Testament passages; trying to force them all into a scheme of first century fulfillment.

They believe the inspiration of the New Testament is impugned if these “time” references are not applied to the first century generation. Stevens continued: “The liberals use the numerous N.T. statements about the IMMEDIATE return of Christ to prove that the N.T. writers were mistaken and therefore uninspired” (3). All the time references in the New Testament however, do not require first century fulfillment to retain their inspiration. Herein lies the reactionary fallacy of realized eschatology. In order to avoid an apparent difficulty they resort to an interpretive approach which requires all “final things” to be realized by A.D. 70 with the destruction of literal Jerusalem.

King and his associates are confused just as some in the first century were. “Some of the saints of the first century entertained erroneous views regarding the time and nature of the Lord’s return. To correct the impression that Christ would appear immediately portions of the Thessalonian letters were written. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:13; 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-7.)” (Woods 181, 182).

The Holy Spirit’s correction of this misimpression in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 is extremely relevant here. It addresses “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him” (2 Thessalonians 2:1; cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:17). This cannot properly be applied to A.D. 70 for the following reasons: (1) Though the Lord came figuratively in judgement in A.D. 70 there was no gathering of Christians unto Him. (2) Great departure would occur before this return of the Lord. II Thessalonians was written about A.D. 53, less than 20 years before the fall of Jerusalem. There is no dramatic “falling away” (v3) that occurred between A.D. 53 and 70 which will fit Paul’s description (vs. 3ff). This apostasy, along with “the lawless one,” would be totally defeated at His coming (v 8). Apostasy gained great momentum after the death of the apostles and continues till this very day. The apostasy has not been brought to naught, therefore, this coming of Jesus has not yet transpired. All time references in the New Testament cannot be applied to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Second Coming Of Christ

In Matthew 10:23 Jesus gave instructions to his disciples. Their evangelistic journeys would not touch all “cities of Israel, till the son of man be come.” J.W. McGarvey considered this to be speaking of “the providential coming to destroy the Jewish nationality” (92). Are we to conclude that brother McGarvey

would have held to the King doctrine?! Absolutely not! This verse is referring to a coming of Christ in judgement upon the Jewish system. But that does not prove that would be His *only* coming. Actually the Bible speaks of *two literal* comings of Christ and *several figurative* ones. We have just noted one figurative “coming” of Jesus in the Jerusalem destruction. Matthew 16:28 speaks figuratively of “the Son of man coming in his Kingdom” before some hearing him would die. Drawing from the parallel in Mark 9:1 we realize this “coming” was to be “the kingdom of God” coming “with power.” But the apostles would “receive power, when the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:8) came upon them. This had its fulfillment in Acts 2. Thus, Jesus did come figuratively on Pentecost to establish his kingdom.

What about *literal* comings of Jesus? Mr. King would say there is to be no future, bodily return of Christ. To deny Jesus’ *first* fleshly coming was one error of Gnosticism (1 John 4:2, 3). To deny Jesus’ *second* literal coming is the King error. Let’s examine the text of John 14:1-6 regarding the Lord’s leaving and returning. Jesus was clearly leaving, and was going to his “Father’s house” and they would ultimately be able to follow Jesus “unto the Father.” Jesus literally left them and returned to the Father (Acts 1:9; Hebrews 9:24). But Jesus promised: “I will come again and receive you to myself, that you also may be where I am: (John 14:3 McCord).

Can this verse possibly mean Jesus would come in A.D. 70 at Jerusalem’s fall and take disciples unto the Father? No! Jesus’ figurative coming in the destruction of Jerusalem did not take saints back to be with the Father, because they were fleeing “unto the mountains” (Matthew 24:16). Only a gross manipulation of this text could give it a first century fulfillment.

Another text which refers to a future return of Christ is Acts 1:9-11; the ascension scene. Even transmillennialists will admit that this speaks of Jesus bodily leaving the planet earth (I think?). Focus in upon the phrase “shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven” (v. 11). The Greek text has the identical words “in like manner” (ONTROTTON) in Acts 7:28 as here in Acts 1:11. There the question was posed to Moses: “Wouldest thou kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian yesterday?” The Hebrew man wondered if he would be slain *as* (in the same way) the Egyptian had been - literally killed. This Greek phrase equates things of the same variety. Therefore, whatever the nature of Jesus’ leaving, his return would be of the same type. If the Messiah’s leaving was a bodily, literal departure, then His return is promised, by angels, to be the same! This verse cannot be speaking of an A.D. 70 return. The messengers told those eyewitnesses, Jesus “will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven” (NASB). When this text was presented by brother McGuiggan, the reply was: “Yes, even *THIS SAME JESUS*’ of Acts 1:11 is the *VERY Jesus* that came in 70 A.D. He was *SEEN* (Matthew 24:30)” (McGuiggan-King Debate 89). King simply wants to say the same Jesus was “seen” both times and leave it at that! But the text gives us more than that! Max totally ignores the fact that the *way or manner* he was “seen” differs. The messengers said the leaving and coming would be in the same manner. Max has him “seen” twice, but in two different ways! Thus that cannot be the coming the angels foretold.

There is one verse in the New Testament which specifically uses the term “second” in connection with a coming of Christ. The verse is Hebrews 9:28: “If we understand the way He appeared the first time, we ought to be able to understand the manner in which He is going to appear the second time. So

the second appearing has to be of the same motif as the first appearing – that is, a literal one. There is no way that you can make Hebrews 9:28 refer to the destruction of Jerusalem” (Jackson, A.D. 70 31).

Another question which often comes to mind when one learns of this Doctrine is: Do these adherents still observe the Lord’s Supper? After all, it is to be a continuing proclamation of the Lord’s death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11:26b)! It is reasonable to conclude that such would no longer be done once He returns. To this Max responded: “But we do not hold that Christ’s coming in 70 A.D. *precludes a continual showing of His death*. . . . Paul said, ‘until the law, sin was in the world’ (Romans 5:13). Did sin cease with the giving of the law? Obviously not.” (McGuiggan-King debate 73). In Romans, the time frame under consideration is from Adam until the giving of the Law of Moses. Paul states: “until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law” (Romans 5:13). Where there is sin there is law! The presence of sin *after* the law had already been established (2:1-3;9), the point was being made that sin (and thus law) was also from the beginning until the law. But the Corinthian passage is telling only what will be done until Jesus comes. King’s argument is invalid. The time period for the Supper’s observance is specifically to be “till he come,” and to simply say it will continue beyond that time renders the phrase meaningless.

The End Of The World

The phrase, “end of the world,” is found six times in the English (ASV) Bible (Psalm 19:4; Matthew 13:39, 40, 49; 24:3; 28:20). The Greek term, rendered here “world” (AION), has a broad usage. It can refer to an “age.” The pertinent question is: Did this “end of the world” already occur or is it yet future? Two parables contain the expression under consideration. The first parable is found in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43. We are thrilled that we are given both the illustrative story and also the Lord’s personal explanation! Note some of the items, along with their counterparts: reapers = angels, good seed = sons of the kingdom, tares = sons of the evil one, the time of the harvest = the end of the world. Jesus plainly explained: “the harvest is the end of the world” (13:39). When the harvest time came the wheat was gathered into the barn. Now let’s plug in the meanings as given by Jesus. Sons of the kingdom, at the end of the world, will be gathered by angels, but the sons of the evil one will be destroyed. But, faithful sons of God had no gathering done by angels in A.D. 70. Especially consider how the wheat was gathered into the barn (v.30). Christians after the fall did not enjoy such safety, but persecution continued.

The second parable is found in Matthew 13:47-50. Here the kingdom is likened unto a drag-net cast into the sea. As the gospel is proclaimed the kingdom swells, though not all therein are truly righteous. Note that once the net is drawn upon the beach (the end of the world), entering the kingdom ends. If this were a parable about the end of the Jewish age, then entrance into the kingdom ended in A.D. 70. This parable depicts the final separation of good and evil from the church. Destruction of Judaism does not fit this parable at all.

The book of II Peter contains a text which foretells the passing away of the heavens. The question again arises as to the time of fulfillment. A booklet copied by the Parkman Road Church of Christ (Originally published by STAR Bible Publications, Inc.) is titled: *Second Peter Three, Jewish*

Calamity or Universal Climax? In this material Gerald Wright argues for a first century application of II Peter 3. In fairness to him, we include his following notation: “There are some extremists who seek to make the Jewish Calamity of AD 70 the ultimate end of the world, the ‘Second Coming’..., the resurrection and the judgment. Such a notion is utterly false!” (31).

First, it is commonly conceded that this is a general epistle. Likely, the original recipients of 2 Peter were the same as those who received 1 Peter, namely “the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia” (1 Peter 1:1). 2 Peter 3 tells that “the heavens shall pass away...and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (v. 10). The fact of this earth being temporary was to simulate these saints to give attention to things of lasting benefit; to holy living (v. 11). This admonition would make no sense if it pertained to the destruction of Jerusalem in the land of Palestine. How foolish it would be if Peter were saying in essence: Jerusalem, hundreds of miles away from you is to be destroyed, so you should live holy! However, if this world is to be destroyed, holy living and godliness ought to be our striving.

The text presents another problem for this novel approach. The global, literal flood of Noah’s day, which destroyed all the ungodly, is used as a type of another coming destruction. Types and comparisons require continuity between the two components. Furthermore, if details about the two are given they more clearly define what connects the two items. One broad point of similarity is *destruction*. More specific is *destruction of the ungodly*. Still further details define what is in view. The “world that then was, being overflowed with water” (3:6 The Planet was flooded) on the one hand, and “the heavens that now are, and the earth” (3:7 once again our planet) on the other. The global flood on the one hand and the destruction of one city on the other hand do not fit these particulars. Mr. Wright tried hard to make the two sound analogous: “The judgment in Noah’s day was a world-wide calamity; and the judgment upon Jerusalem was a world-wide event” (17). Yes there were far reaching repercussions after the fall of Judaism. But there is no hint in this context of some prophetic usage of “heavens and earth.” Rather, further information reveals “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (3:10). Making the “heavens and earth” mean the Judaistic system is certainly a twisting which this very Book warns against (2 Peter 3:16).

Resurrection Of The Dead

Bothered by some time references, these Theorists have resorted to squeezing everything into a first century fulfillment. Their error is most glaring when we consider the shoe horning they do in an effort to get resurrection passages into A.D.70. The New Testament classes the doctrine “of resurrection of the dead” as a “first principles” matter (Hebrews 6:1,2). With the complexity and confusion of the *Realized* approach, it hardly would fit in that category. A new convert’s head would spin if they tried to grapple with the interpretation these folks claim is accurate.

As we have seen with “comings” of Christ, so also there are *literal* as well as *figurative* “resurrections” in Scripture. Consider some particulars about baptism. (1) A human body is literally submerged and brought up out of the water (Acts 8:38,39). (2) The believing person dies figuratively (to sin, Romans

6:2) and is raised to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). Thus, baptism is both a *literal raising* of a physical body from water and also a *spiritual raising* to newness of life.

The term *body* can be used literally (Luke 23:52 Joseph “asked for the body of Jesus”) and figuratively (1 Corinthians 12:27 “Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof.”). Our crucial discussion must address whether the Bible speaks of a future resurrection of human, physical bodies. One of the most heated controversies in first century Jewish society was the topic of the resurrection. Luke informs us that the Sadducees said, “there is no resurrection,” while the Pharisees did believe in the resurrection (Acts 23:8). When Jesus was confronted with a question regarding the resurrection, the questioners clearly had literal death in mind (Matthew 22:24 “If a man die, having no children...”). They were Sadducees who did not believe in a bodily resurrection. “But Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29). Jesus went on to affirm the truth of the resurrection (22:30-33). What kind of resurrection? One which would be the converse of a man literally dying!

Consider now the case of Lazarus of Bethany. His sister Martha was a believer in “the resurrection at the last day” (John 11:24). While mourning the literal loss of her brother, she did look forward to that being changed “at the last day.” Was she thinking her dead brother would be figuratively raised when Jerusalem would fall? No. She was thinking of his eventual literal resurrection, since he had just literally died! To demonstrate his power over the grave, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:39-44).

First Corinthians chapter fifteen is devoted to a discussion of the resurrection. This was prompted by a disturbance caused by some saying “there is no resurrection of the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:12). King denies this has any reference to physical bodies. Well, what does he see in this chapter? Resurrection is viewed as the “body” of Christ being raised from the hampering influence of old Judaism. From Pentecost (A.D.30) till Jerusalem’s fall (A.D.70) the church and Judaism limped along together, neither with full strength. Judaism was waning while the church was strengthening. With the final collapse of the Mosaic system, the church was “raised” – then the kingdom had arrived in full power! Does this view naturally flow from this chapter? Honesty would prompt a negative response.

First, we are faced with the fact that the gospel is based upon the literal raising of Christ from the dead (15:1-4). Next, this raising was actually witnessed by many (15:5-11). Any hint yet of Judaism or the body of Christ or some figurative application? Let’s continue. How can some deny the resurrection? (15:12). Good question! Paul will show what necessarily ensues if one denies the literal resurrection. If there is no resurrection then: (1) Christ was not raised, (2) preaching is vain, (3) the Corinthian belief is vain, (4) those named earlier (vs. 5-11) are false witnesses, (5) the Corinthians are still in their sins, (6) those who have died have perished, and (7) believers are to be pitied (15:13-19).

Next, comes a discussion of “firstfruits.” The first yields of spring were offered as an expression of gratitude and in anticipation of a greater harvest that would follow. So this analogy is applied to “Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ’s, at his coming” (1 Corinthians 15:23). Christ was raised from the dead. How? Literally he came forth from the tomb and was seen alive by many. What

will be the greater harvest? The raising of those belonging to Christ! Those that had “fallen asleep in Christ” (15:18) would not perish. Wanting us to believe the text flows with Christ being raised followed by (without hint) a discussion of the “body” of Christ being raised out of Judaism cannot be accepted. King can assert it, but the text cannot support it!

We also learn that the “last enemy that shall be abolished is death” (15:26). Dear reader, ask yourself the question: What death has been spoken of so far in context? Physical death, that’s right! We have examined enough of this chapter to realize that there is no contextual justification for inserting some Jewish system death and a raising of Christianity! We would be remiss if we did not point out that a denial of a bodily resurrection is dealt with severely here in 2 Timothy 2:16-18. May we have the courage and love to do likewise.

The Final Judgment

There is to be no future day when all mankind will stand before God in judgment. That false statement expresses the conviction of these folks. The phrase “the judgment” appears many times in holy writ. Some have a judgment upon a nation in view (e.g. Jeremiah 48:47). Others may refer to a judgment passed by a man or group of men (e.g. 1 Kings 3:28). But there are verses, which reveal a judgment where all appear before God. “The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it...” (Matthew 12:41). Note both the men of ancient Nineveh (long dead physically) and those of Jesus day would be at the same judgment – “the judgment” (not plural). “But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment, than for you” (Luke 10:14). “The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and shall condemn it...” (Luke 11:31). Note the queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1) would be “with” the men of that generation “in the judgment.” Can all these references be dismissed, or applied to some symbolic judgment late in the first century?!

Paul preached of “righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come...” (Acts 24:25) before Felix. This pointed preaching “terrified” Felix. Does it seem likely that Felix, a Roman governor, would be troubled to learn of a coming judgment upon Jews and that the Romans would be the victors? No, because he heard no such thing. He learned of his own accountability!

Paul’s earlier sermon in the city of Athens included information about this appointed day of judgment. God commands “men that they should all everywhere repent” (Acts 17:30). What is the reason given, as to why men everywhere, including those in Athens, should repent? Because “he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained...” (Acts 17:31). There is no way that word of a future (about 15 years later) Jewish calamity hundreds of miles away, would spur these Athenians to repent.

Another phrase to consider is “that day.” In some texts, it is used with particular significance. “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name...” (Matthew 7:22). Paul had made a deposit unto Jesus “against that day” (2 Timothy 1:12). Later in the same book he spoke of receiving the crown of righteousness “at that day;” a reception not available only to him, but “also to all them that have loved his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8).

When Was The New Testament Completed?

This question is of utmost importance in dealing with this rogue doctrine. Edward Stevens writes: "The book of Revelation, as well as all the other books of the New Testament, were written before the destruction of Jerusalem" (3). Their interpretive approach requires this to be true. If therefore, doubt can be cast upon this affirmation, then a shadow will hang over this teaching. "With the preterist group (among who is brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr.) who parallel it with Matthew 24 and say that it was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, the date becomes extremely vital – in fact, imperative because the whole interpretation depends upon the accuracy of establishing the date. Obviously if the book was fulfilled in A.D. 70 or thereabout, it had to be written earlier, and to be effective, several years earlier, perhaps as early as A.D. 58 and not later than A.D. 64. When the interpretation depends upon the date, the interpretation can never be more certain than the date itself – if the date is wrong, then, of necessity the interpretation is wrong." (Winters 14,15). Though brother Wallace held the early preterist view of Revelation, he did not consider the New Testament to teach the Lord's return as imminent (Wallace 230,231).

"Most scholars believe that John wrote the Revelation...during the reign of the emperor Domitian (A.D. 81-96). Ancient testimony (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Victorinus, Eusebius, etc.) is virtually unanimous in this conviction" (Jackson, Revelation 1,2). Brother Winters offered a number of reasons which convinced him the Revelation was penned around A.D. 96. Consider a couple. "The early date hardly allows enough time for the churches in Asia to have had the experience and reach the state of decadence ascribed to them in Revelation" (15). The congregation of Ephesus had left their "first love" and had "fallen" and needed to "repent" (Revelation 2:1-5) when the Revelation was penned. "Paul had given his farewell address to the elders of this church around A.D. 60, and there is no hint of the Nicolaitans, or of the church's lack of love." (Winters 15). A farewell to these elders in about A.D. 60 and the conditions cited in Revelation, being written about A.D. 58-64 does not seem likely. Also, "Irenaeus says, 'It [the Revelation] was seen so very long time ago, but almost in our own generation, at the close of Domitian's reign.' While tradition cannot always be relied upon, this belief was held almost universally during the second and third centuries. With such a widespread belief among those closest to the time of writing, this becomes a weighty argument, one that cannot be set aside lightly." (Winters 16).

Guy N. Woods, after considering the available data, concluded the Books of 1,2, and 3 John were likely written about A.D. 90 (Woods 207,334). An honest seeker, will perform personal study, and will, with the weight of evidence, likely come to very similar conclusions. Even if earlier dates are considered more likely – getting all of them before A.D. 70 is quite a task! If one finds this to be the case, they could not consistently hold to the A.D. 70 theory.

When Was This View Lost?

If we were to grant, for argument sake, that Max King and others in agreement are interpreting the Bible correctly, then a valid question is: When was this view lost? The claim in being made that the inspired writers of the New Testament Books all gave emphasis to the final Jewish calamity. If this is so, then when did the saints go astray and begin believing such notions as that the Lord would

literally return, and raise all the dead, and destroy this planet, and judge all men of all time, and then separate them into heaven and into hell? How ancient are these beliefs? To answer these questions, we shall go as close to the first century as possible in search of quotes. A multitude of quotes can be found. These early statements will indicate whether men still looked to the future or to the past for Bible fulfillment. The following quotes are taken from *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*: “But be ready, for you do not know the hour in which our Lord comes. *Didache* (c.80-140, E)”; “He speaks of the day of His appearing, when He will come and redeem us, each one according to his works. *Second Clement* (c. 150)”; “Believing in Him, we may be saved in His second glorious advent. *Justin Martyr* (c. 160, E)”; “All the prophets announced His two advents. . . . In the second one, He will come on the clouds, bringing on the day which burns as a furnace, *Iraeneus* (c. 180, E/W).” (Bercot 606).

Brother Varner supplied a whole list of similar quotations and concluded by saying: “All of the above quotes. . . clearly show that the early post-apostolic authors looked to a *future judgment and judgment day of all mankind* rather than a judgment occurring in the *past* as King advocates” (92). Can it be that those living so near the close of the first century, did not even know that all these crucial Bible doctrines were not to be taken literally?! The truth of the matter is, these quotes show clearly that key “end time” events had not yet occurred. And these men did not seek to change their interpretation of scripture because the Lord had not come right away.

How Serious Is This?

The Holy Spirit saw fit to devote, what is for us, an entire chapter to refuting the Corinthian faction which was saying: “there is no resurrection of the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:12). Note particularly that those voicing this error were “among” the number in Corinth (15:12). Another false doctrine was likened unto the spread of gangrene. The particular cancer spreaders were exposed, by name, along with their error. “[O]f whom is Hymanaeus and Philetus; men who concerning the truth have erred, saying the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some” (2 Timothy 2:17,18). One cannot help but notice the application to what we have just discussed.

What about the A.D. 70 doctrine? “Whole congregations of the Lord’s people are being swayed to this view, while other churches are being rent asunder over it.” (Steve Lloyd, Jackson, A.D. 70 *forward*). Jesus said: “Causes of stumbling must come, but woe to him through whom they come. It were better for him if a millstone were tied around his neck and that he should be thrown into the sea, rather than causing one of these little ones to stumble” (Luke 17:1,2 McCord). Both views herein discussed cannot be right. Who deserves the millstone?

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