



ISSUE

22.24

June 14, 2020

Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF
THE OL-
SEN PARK
CHURCH OF
CHRIST

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon

Ryan Ferguson

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Justin Smiley

Kevin Wise

Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

The AD 70 Doctrine

By Don McClain

The AD 70 Doctrine is a systematic view of the “end times” that embraces Full Preterism. The term “Preterism” comes from the Latin *praeter*, meaning *past*. Full Preterism deems all biblical prophecies as past or already fulfilled. This doctrine is also known as—“Realized Eschatology” (C. H. Dodd in the 1930s), “Covenant Eschatology” (Max King in the 1980s), and “Transmillennialism” (Tim King in the 2000s).

What Is the AD 70 Doctrine?

The doctrine asserts that the second and final coming of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment, all occurred in AD 70, nearly 2,000 years ago. They believe and teach that, in correlation with these events, the eternal kingdom was established in all its power and glory, the body of Christ was actually redeemed, saints were forgiven, death was conquered (i.e., spiritual death), the end of the world occurred (the Jewish dispensation ended), the Law of Moses was brought to its end, the New Covenant was completed, and the hope of the new heavens and new earth was fully realized.

Some of this sounds very odd to many of us, and we may be tempted quickly to dismiss it, thinking it is either inconsequential or unbelievable. However, Full Preterism is growing, even among churches of Christ. Therefore, we need to be aware of its teachings and its devastating consequences.

General Refutation of the AD 70 Doctrine

The AD 70 Doctrine asserts that Jesus came for the second and final time when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70. This was indeed a historical event to which some of the Old Testament prophets pointed (Dan. 9:26-27), and Jesus Himself fore-

told (Matt. 24:1-35; Mark 13:1-31; Luke 21:5-33). AD 70 advocates seldom miss an opportunity to force a passage referring to a coming of the Lord into this one historical event.

Nevertheless, the Bible teaches Jesus will come again in our future—visibly, audibly, personally, and bodily (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 1:7-10). Luke’s description of Jesus’s ascension in Acts 1:9-11 is a straightforward historical narrative with emphasis on the presence of eyewitnesses. As the Lord ascended out of their *sight*, the disciples were literally “looking at Him” (v. 9) The angel said, “This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have *watched Him go into heaven*” (v. 11, emphasis mine).

Paul describes Jesus’s future return in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, where he

says, “The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God.” Also, in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, Paul affirms, “You who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels”

Full Preterists assert that the above descriptions of Jesus’s future coming are all “figurative” and should not be taken literally. Did the apostles “figuratively” see Jesus ascend? Would those who were “alive” and remain” when Jesus “figuratively” descended “figuratively” meet Him in the air to “figuratively” be with Him forever? How would the destruction of Jerusalem provide comfort for Christians suffering in Thessalonica? Would the “figurative” punishment of their persecutors provide them actual relief or just “figurative” relief?

The argument that “this is figurative language” simply does not work because of the context of these passages.

Full Preterists also deny any future personal, bodily resurrection. They assert that “the resurrection” of John 5:28-29, 1 Corinthians 15, and Philipians 3:10, 21, etc., occurred in AD 70.

As with any false doctrine, terms must be redefined, and their applications changed. To sustain this doctrine, they are forced to define “resurrection” as being (1) purely spiritual or (2) only figurative such as in Ezekiel 37 or Colossians 2:13. They fail to recognize that figurative language is rooted in known reality. For the Scriptures to use the concept of resurrection figuratively, there must be a basic understanding of its literal reality (cf. Acts 24:15-21; 26:6-8).

AD 70 proponents exercise extreme mental gymnastics when it comes to 1 Corinthians 15. They assert Paul is speaking of a “corporate” raising of “Old Testament saints” and the “gathering” of the pre-AD 70 “divided church” (Jews & Gentiles) into one body.



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Adherents are forced to conclude that (1) the death under consideration is spiritual and cannot be physical, (2) Jesus's resurrection ("firstfruits"), and the resurrection in the text (the harvest), are different in kind, (3) Christians were not made spiritually alive until AD 70, and (4) the church was "corruptible, perishable, and mortal" before AD 70.

The denial of a personal bodily resurrection of the believer logically results in the denial of Jesus's resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12-19). To teach the resurrection of 1 Corinthians 15 as being different in kind than Jesus's resurrection destroys Paul's firstfruits analogy, (1 Cor. 15:20, 23). If baptized believers were to be made spiritually alive in AD 70, they must have been spiritually dead before AD 70. Was Paul spiritually dead when he wrote the epistle? The truth is, Christians were alive spiritually in Christ before AD 70, not merely in a proleptic sense (cf. Rom. 6:3-6; Eph. 1:3-16; Col. 2:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:17; etc.). The pre-AD 70 church was indeed washed, purified, made alive, enjoying every spiritual blessing in Christ that anyone could enjoy while on this side of eternity. They were complete in Him (Eph. 1:3-16; Col. 2:9-10).

Consequences of the AD 70 Doctrine

This false teaching leads to further error. Whenever one holds to an erroneous view of a particular biblical doctrine, by necessity, other teachings of Scripture must also be changed to support and defend it. To quote Edward E. Stevens, an AD 70 proponent: "Indeed, the preterist view does 'change our views on a lot of things.' It has implications for many doctrines . . . Do we completely grasp the full impact of the preterist worldview upon all other biblical doctrines besides eschatology (i.e., ecclesiology, soteriology, sacramentology, et al.)?" ("Doctrinal Implications of Preterist Eschatology").

Error does not exist in a vacuum! One cannot alter one aspect of truth and not alter others. Just think of the effects this teaching has on the application of biblical teaching today. Why partake of the Lord's Supper? Why be baptized? Why assemble with the saints? Is there any biblical instruction applicable today?

More problems: How could there be concurrent covenants, concurrent priesthoods, and concurrent sacrificial systems? If Christians could not be forgiven of their sins before AD 70, was the sacrifice of Christ insufficient?

Since AD 70 advocates affirm that hope has been realized and we already have our eternal inheritance, what do we have to look forward to or anticipate? If spiritual death has been finally and fully destroyed, how can a Christian sin today? For that matter, how can *anyone* sin or be separated from God? Max King followed this doctrine to its logical end and embraced universalism.

Conclusion

Paul marked Hymenaeus and Philetus as false teachers because they "strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2:16-18). Their heresy was not just a matter of timing, as the Preterists insist, (they were only off about three years). No, their error also involved the nature of the resurrection and negated the faith and hope of those who were thus deceived. Full Preterism still makes shipwreck of the faith! Do not be deceived.

Bibliography

Stevens, Edward E. "Doctrinal Implications of Preterist Eschatology: Introduction to the Series." *Kingdom Counsel* (newsletter) Sept.-Oct., 1991. Bradford, PA: International Preterist Association.



Olsen Park Church of Christ

WILL JESUS REALLY COME AGAIN?

DEBATE

on the AD 70 Doctrine



Holger Neubauer



Bruce Reeves

July 20, 21, 23, 24, 2020
7:00 P.M.

PROPOSITIONS:

Resolved: The Scriptures teach that Jesus of Nazareth will come again in the future to raise both the wicked and righteous for eternal judgment.

Affirm: Bruce Reeves

Deny: Holger Neubauer

Resolved: The Scriptures teach that Jesus of Nazareth returned the second and final time in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Affirm: Holger Neubauer

Deny: Bruce Reeves

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