

AD 70 Doctrine (Hyper Preterisim, Realized Eschatology)

2-16-14

In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica because of their concerns about the day of the Lord's return. Specifically, they had been told that the Lord had returned, and they had missed His return. (2 Thessalonians 2:2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.). Paul reminded them that this day would come after a great falling away. As unusual as it is to think, some are still teaching this today.

In the New Testament, there are primarily three major prophecies. One is Jerusalem would be destroyed (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21). This occurred in AD 70 when the Romans came and destroyed the city and the Temple. The Second is of a great falling away; this occurred in the first century, and is a reoccurring event. Finally, there is the prophecy of Jesus' return, which is usually alluded to as a "thief in the night"; there are no signs or warnings that we might know when it will occur.

The word used to describe prophecy as being fulfilled is "*Preterist*" (from the Latin "*praeteritus*"; "gone by", "past"). *Preterism* is the idea that most prophetic events are already passed. Those who teach premillennialism believe that many other prophecies (such as the kingdom and temple prophecies of Daniel and Ezekiel) are yet to be fulfilled. However, the New Testament indicated Jesus fulfilled all Old Testament prophecies. As well, prophecies such as those in Revelation and Matthew 24 are primarily about events that were to happen in the first century (Revelation 1:1 "(A revelation of) *things which must shortly take place*"; Matthew 24:34 "*this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place*"). By accepting this as truth, we are often identified as preterists, which is not an incorrect term if it is understood merely to accept the Scriptures at face value.

However, in recent times this ancient false doctrine of the final coming of Jesus already having come has been reintroduced. It is sometimes called Hyper or full preterism, or the AD 70 doctrine (those who teach it prefer "Realized Eschatology". This doctrine states that: when the end of the Jewish age occurred, this was the final "end," the last coming. IN their teaching, no other prophecy remains to be fulfilled, and Jesus is never to actually return physically. It means that all prophecy was fulfilled on AD 70, and the resurrection is symbolic/spiritual, not physical. Jesus will not be returning again; there is no single Day of Judgment, instead we are judged at the moment we die. Some add to this by saying that there was a physical resurrection in AD 70, but only Israel received a resurrection.

Is this doctrine a Matter of Salvation? It leads to the refusal to partake of Communion, which is a matter of salvation (I Corinthians 11:27-29), since we partake of communion until the Lord returns. It leads to a rejection of elders/church authority, which is a matter of salvation (Hebrews 13:17), since they see that authority as only being present until the Lord's return. Finally, since we are baptized into the resurrection of Christ, with the hope of the same (Romans 6:3), it undermines the purpose of Baptism. It is most certainly a matter of salvation.

Let us take a moment to consider the doctrine. Is it possible that the Resurrection is symbolic? Not according to 1 Corinthians 15:12-15. Is it the case that Christ may not return again to earth? Not according to Acts 1:9-11. Is it possible there is no Judgment Day? Not according to Matthew 25:31-32. Did only Israel receive resurrection? No, since they have the same hope as we do (Acts 15:11).

The Evil of Hyper-Preterism is that it denies a physical destruction of earth (II Peter 3:5-12). Remember that those who deny this are “scoffers” condemned by God. It denies the resurrection, a 1st principle according to Hebrews 6:1-2. We know that those who reject the first principles are lost (Revelation 2:1-6). Finally, denying the resurrection destroys faith. Paul said this plainly in 2 Timothy 2:18. Those who destroy faith are condemned.

Too, we need to consider that there is zero testimony by early writers after the first century that there had been a resurrection or change in hope. Polycarp said (c. 150 AD):

“(Jesus) cometh as judge of quick and dead; whose blood God will require of them that are disobedient to him. Now he that raised Him from the dead will raise us also”

He also said:

“Whosoever shall pervert the words of the Lord to his own lust and say there is neither resurrection nor judgment, that man is the first born of Satan.”

Jude (may have) told Domitian, 90AD:

Jesus would come at the end of the world, when in glory He would judge the quick and dead and give to everyone according to his works...

According to the Bible, we have one hope as Christians. That hoped is clearly identified as a physical resurrection from the dead. That resurrection is proven in the fact that Jesus physically resurrected from the dead.

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all,