

Some Wonderful Truths (and a few not-so-wonderful errors, too) Concerning the First Coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Errors and Deceptions of Dispensational Teachings, by Dale Crowley Jr.—Part 9

Every Old Testament prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah was fulfilled in the birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, the Messiah. ("Saviour" means "Jesus." "Messiah" means "Christ.") Most of my readers have seen long lists of those Old Testament prophecies and their New Testament fulfillments.

This truth—the truth of fulfilled prophecy—has certain profound implications which, I am sorry to say, have escaped our 19th and 20th century dispensational "theologians."

First, foremost, and fundamentally, it means that godly Old Testament believers who were living when our Lord was born understood those Old Testament prophecies, and that they believed that the newborn Baby was the very fulfillment of those prophecies. To put it another way, those "transition period" believers who knew and understood Old Testament doctrine *did not believe that the newborn Baby had come to establish a physical and secular Jewish kingdom, over which He would reign from Jerusalem.*

The second implication of the truth of fulfilled Old Testament messianic prophecies is this: Today's dispensationalist teachers and believers are in agreement with those "transition period" unbelievers who harbored false hopes for a messiah who would establish himself as a physical, secular king over a physical, secular Israel. (Now they say, "His plan was rejected, so he will return to reinstate his kingship and kingdom.")

So this second terrible implication of false dispensational teaching is that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament *did not* come as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), to die on the cross and shed his blood for our sins.

So it is clear that today's dispensationalists are on the same side as New Testament era unbelievers. *They teach that He had another purpose which was thwarted by the rejection of ungodly Israelites and Jews.*

What a travesty this strange dispensational system of biblical interpretation is!

The True Hope of Spiritual Believers

There are clear truths revealed

about the hope of true believers in the early chapters of the Gospel narrative. . . truths that are not at all what the dispensationalists would have us believe.

Joseph and Mary

Joseph and Mary were devout students and believers of the Old Testament. They were expecting a spiritual Saviour and Messiah. The angel said to Joseph, "... thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21) The angel Gabriel described the coming Messiah in detail: "... and thou shalt call his name JESUS [SAVIOUR]. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever and ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:31-33) Neither Joseph nor Mary, nor the Gospel writers ever doubted that those promises were fulfilled.

Zacharias and Elisabeth

Zacharias and Elisabeth were expecting a spiritual Saviour and Messiah. The angel of the Lord promised Zacharias concerning his son John, "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:16,17) On the occasion of Mary's visit to Elisabeth, Elisabeth said, "... there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." (Luke 1:45) There was never any indication that either Zacharias or Elisabeth was disappointed that the promises to them that their son would be a major participant in God's plan of salvation had been broken.

In his prophecy following the birth of John, Zacharias expressed a spiritual hope in very spiritual terms, such as "redeemed his people," "horn of salvation," "be saved," "mercy," "holy covenant," "being delivered," "knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins," "tender mercy of God," "light to them that sit in darkness," and "the way of peace." Zacharias definitely was not looking for a physical, secular Jewish kingdom!

The Shepherds

The shepherds were given to believe that a spiritual Saviour had come. They believed the angel's announcement of spiritual salvation, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall

be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11) Notice the words "to all people." It definitely was not a Jewish kingdom that God the Father had in mind.

Simeon and Anna

The "just and devout" man and eighty-eight year old widow woman who met the holy family in the temple eight days after Jesus' birth were not looking for a king over a physical, secular Israel. These two devout, godly descendants of Israel met the family and declared that the holy Infant was the promised One of the Old Testament.

Simeon was "just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel." *Then he took him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all the people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.* (Luke 2:25-32)

Anna the eighty-eight year old prophetess *coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.* (Luke 2:38)

These two good, godly descendants of Israel were being true to their Old Testament heritage. They recognized Jehovah God's expression of love, grace, and salvation in the newborn Christ. They definitely were not looking for a physical secular Jewish kingdom.

John the Baptist

John the Baptist quoted the prophet Isaiah when he announced the *salvation of God* in the person of Jesus Christ. *All flesh shall see the salvation of God.* (Luke 3:6) *All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.* (Isaiah 52:10) John the Baptist had a proper understanding of Old Testament scriptures and prophecies. He definitely was not looking for a physical, secular king over a physical, secular Israel.

Our Lord Identified Himself as a Spiritual Saviour and Messiah

Jesus Himself preached to the Jews of His day that the Old Testament scriptures *are they which testify of me.* (John 5:39) He said further, *For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me.* (John 5:46) In other words, those who did

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not accept Him were not even good Jews, because they had already turned their backs on the writings of Moses! So the Jews who were looking for a physical, secular king to rule over a physical, secular Israel did not understand the plan of God as revealed in the Old Testament, just like today's dispensationalists!

The Apostles Were Well Taught in the Meaning of Old Testament Prophecies

The Apostle Peter would disagree with today's dispensationalists. Following the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate, Peter cited Old Testament prophecies *five times*, and *not once* did he teach a physical, secular king over a physical, secular Jewish kingdom. This sermon proves beyond any doubt that our Lord had instructed His disciples in the true, spiritual purpose of His coming.

But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled . . . God hath spoken by the mouth of all holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren . . . every soul which shall not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after . . . Ye are the children of the prophets . . . in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. (Acts 3:18-25)

The Apostle Peter clearly was not preaching that the Israelite and Jewish descendants of Abraham would enjoy a physical, secular kingdom ruled over by a physical, secular messiah. Today's dispensationalists would sharply disagree with Peter.

Stephen

After quoting extensively from the Old Testament, Stephen the martyr accused the council scholars of unbelief and rebellion against the teachings of the Old Testament. He argued that their refusal of Jesus Christ was consistent with their refusal of the truths of the Old Testament. Stephen did not accuse them of rejecting a physical, secular king over Israel, but of rejecting the Saviour of sinners. He affirmed that God's temple was a spiritual temple: *Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet. (Acts 7:48)*

Stephen accused the theologians and scholars of his day of rejecting—not a physical, secular, temporal king—but of "the Just One." *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the*

Holy Ghost; as your fathers did so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers. (Acts 7:51-52)

The Jerusalem Council

One of the favorite chapters of the dispensationalists to overlook is Acts 15. In this pivotal chapter the Apostles of our Lord, meeting in Jerusalem, did indeed agree that the prophets prophesied a spiritual Saviour for the whole world, and a spiritual King sitting on a spiritual throne ruling over a spiritual kingdom! *And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. (Acts 15:15-17)*

Paul

The Apostle Paul preached the Gospel of this spiritual kingdom from the beginning to the end of his ministry, and he proclaimed our Lord Jesus Christ as the "King eternal." (1 Tim. 1:17) Not one time did Paul even so much as hint that our Lord Jesus Christ came to establish a physical, secular kingdom, that he failed in His mission, or that He decided to postpone it to establish it at a later date.

A great portion of the ministry of Paul was devoted to proving that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah.

He argued constantly that the Jews of his day had misunderstood and rebelled against the plain teachings of the Old Testament scriptures, and as a result were blinded to the love and grace of God revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ. And Paul found that the descendants of Israel whom he could most readily win to Christ were those who feared God and believed the Old Testament. In Antioch, for example, those in the synagogue who believed his sermon on the many links between the Old Testament and the life, death, and resurrection of Christ were saved, while those who did not believe remained rebellious, *because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day. (Acts 13:27) Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who,*

speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. (Acts 13:43)

To this day, a Jew or descendant of Israel who is true to his Old Testament heritage will come to Jesus Christ. But those, like today's dispensationalists, who held false, unscriptural hopes for a physical, secular king who would reign over a physical, secular Israel, did not believe.

The Songwriters Were Theologically Correct

We all love the beautiful music that speaks of the coming and birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Many of the songs refer to the newborn Messiah as Saviour and King. The songwriters had their theology right. Here are but a few examples:

"Twas the birthday of a King."

"Joy to the world, the Lord is Come; let earth receive her King."

"Hark the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King."

"Peace on earth, goodwill to men, from heaven's all gracious King."

"Silent night, holy night . . . Alleluja to our King."

"For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King."

"Praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth."

"Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, Gold I bring to crown Him again, King forever, ceasing never, Over us all to reign."

"Born a Child, and yet a King, Born to reign in us forever, now Thy gracious kingdom bring."

"Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn King."

"Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King."

"The King of kings salvation brings, Let loving hearts enthrone Him. This, this is Christ the King."

"He surely could have it, 'cause He was the King."

Dispensationalist Temerity

Many, many more songs and hymns of our Christian faith make reference to our Lord Jesus Christ as King, His spiritual kingdom, and the spiritual purpose of His coming. He is King and His kingdom has been established.

What temerity the dispensationalists possess to dispute the prophets, the angels, the faith of Joseph, Mary, Zacharias, Elisabeth, the shepherds, Simeon, Anna, John the Baptist, our Lord Himself, His Apostles, Stephen, Paul, and hundreds of songwriters through the centuries concerning the spiritual purpose of our Lord's First Coming!