

## The Second Coming-Mission Accomplished

by Kevin A. Beck

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Brothers Tom and Steve Kloske have released their first publication entitled, *The Second Coming: Mission Accomplished*. This volume contains 495 pages of text plus an additional five indexes, a glossary, and 76 pages of “authors consulted” and bibliography.

In *The Second Coming*, the Kloske brothers announce their adherence to fulfilled prophecy and place themselves squarely in the full preterist camp. Their book attempts to explain how and why they have reached this point in their studies. In this sense, it serves as a full preterist apologetic and an autobiographical testimony of their biblical journey.



This “coming out of the closet” takes courage on their part especially since they are members of the Church of Christ — a Christian denomination with its roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century American Restoration Movement.[\[1\]](#) Churches of Christ are locally autonomous and fiercely independent, but they wield conformity amongst their members and ministers through informal means, including peer pressure from leading congregations, church-affiliated universities, publishing houses, and well-known preachers. Within local congregations, individuals expressing divergent views instead of the accepted norm face the formal censure of “withdrawal of fellowship” and the more painful loss of friends and scorn from family.

The predominant eschatological stance in the Church of Christ is Amillennialism. So, the Kloskes’ decision to publish their views in contradistinction to the prevailing winds should be applauded.

Max King, the founder of Transmillennialism™, ministering in the Church of Christ throughout his career. His book, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, which he published in 1971 garnered extensive animosity in Church of Christ circles.[\[2\]](#) Max was denounced as a heretic, and anyone associated with Max was summarily dismissed as a “Kingite.”

Awareness and acceptance of Covenant Eschatology amongst members of the Church of Christ grew to a small but vocal minority. By 1989, the Parkman Road Church of Christ in Warren, Ohio hosted the first annual Covenant Eschatology Seminar, Max had published his second tome (*The Cross and the Parousia of Christ*), and *Living Presence Journal*[\[3\]](#) began its run.

In the interests of full disclosure, I have first-hand experience at facing the ill-treatment and ridicule that comes from holding to Covenant Eschatology in the midst of a people who believe that one must be an Amillennialist or face the wrath of God. So, I admire the Kloske brothers for announcing and holding fast to their beliefs. I offer them my fullest support in their spiritual voyage.

Also, the Kloskes deserve kudos for their spirit of truth seeking. They chronicle their original reluctance to broach the subjects of the “last days” and the Second Coming of Christ as fulfilled realities. However, their pressing desire to be honest with the Biblical text led them to conclude that the last days and the Olivet Discourse were issues related to the fulfillment “of the Jewish

Covenant”.[\[4\]](#)

Their personal apologetic and desire for truth encourages the reader “to explore all the different avenues of thought concerning the Second Coming of Jesus. Then based on the logical, consistent, and most reasonable thinking, select what you believe, always remembering that it may change as the evidence warrants.”[\[5\]](#)

Perhaps the most valuable asset in the book comes in Appendix 5. Here, the Kloskes offer sixteen questions to consider when studying eschatology. The questions serve as a tool for self-examination and for engaging in dialogue with others who are studying eschatology.

As strong as the book is for its courage and desire for truth, it does contain some weaknesses. First is the overabundance of quotations. The sheer number of them makes the book a choppy read. There is an additional dilemma related to the authors cited. Many of them have little engagement outside the Church of Christ fellowship which makes *The Second Coming* of little relevance to those unfamiliar with Church of Christ personalities. At the same time, the Kloskes cite renowned scholars such as N. T. Wright and Scot McKnight who are generally not read within the Church of Christ. So, the Kloskes’ reliance upon them carries little weight with their intended audience.

A second limitation in the book is that it enters the “full preterist vs. partial preterist” debate.[\[6\]](#) To those already engaged in the dispute, the Kloskes’ contribution neither furthers nor clarifies matters. And to those who may be considering fulfilled Covenant Eschatology, raising the specter of an intramural squabble only serves as a hindrance to accepting the fulfilled position. After all, who wants to join a battle already in progress?

The third and most glaring shortcoming in the book occurs on page 6. “In addition, it is virtually impossible to write about these present authors’ position without at least mentioning Max King.” And *mention* Max King is all that they do. The footnote attached to the page 6 quote contains a stunning admission, “Perhaps it is worth noting that neither one of the authors of this volume has read either one of King’s books: *The Spirit of Prophecy* or *The Cross and the Parousia of Christ* so as not to be unduly influenced by him.”

Writing a book about fulfilled Covenant Eschatology without reading Max King’s books is like writing a book about black holes without reading Stephen Hawking.[\[7\]](#)

While a handful of nineteenth century theologians espoused a fulfilled understanding of Biblical prophecy, Max King has set the pace and the theological agenda in regard to fulfilled Covenant Eschatology for over thirty years.[\[8\]](#) To lean on the scholarship of others while purposely ignoring the leading figure in the field is reckless.

Perhaps the Kloskes’ intentional oversight was a “prebttal” intended to ward off criticism from their Church of Christ detractors before they could strike. Their omission in reading Max King offers them the cover of plausible deniability. As one who intimately knows the inner workings of Church of Christ politics, I understand how one might desire to deflect the condemnation of being labeled a “Kingite.” However, a search for truth should lead one to explore all paths—especially one that is already well known. The Kloskes’ stated ignorance of Max King’s works undermines their admirable encouragement to others to “explore all the different avenues of

thought.” The brothers would be well served to take their own advice.

Nonetheless, if one desired to avert any potential criticism of being “unduly influenced” by Max King, a more effective strategy would be to read his works first and then announce, “This is where we disagree.” They approach their dissimilarities with “partial preterists” in precisely this manner in Appendix 2, “How far will you go?”<sup>[9]</sup>

Interestingly, the Kloskes declare differences with Max King. “[W]e admire King’s boldness for ‘standing-up’ for what he truly believed. Even though we still disagree with him about his understanding concerning 1 Corinthians 15, we appreciate his desire to do his *own exegesis*.”<sup>[10]</sup> One question comes to mind. How do they know they disagree with Max if they admittedly have not read him?

While shielding themselves from being “unduly influenced” by Max King, the Kloske brothers display little concern for the potential of excessive persuasion by other writers from all sorts of eschatological, ecclesiological, and theological bents.

This book boldly alerts the world of the presence of two diligent Bible students within the long line of other Church of Christ members who have come previously. Also, it encourages those who may be wrestling with their own fears of making their beliefs public to come forward. However, in the end, the absence of engaging the works of Max King leaves a gaping hole in this book. That combined with the absence of chapter headers, a Scripture or Subject Index, relegate this self-published book to the second-hand pile.

*The Second Coming: Mission Accomplished* costs \$24.95 plus & 5.00 shipping and handling. It is available from K & K Publishing, L.L.C., 12129 Fleetwood Pl., St. Louis MO, 63043. Phone: 314.291.3161. Email: tomstevkloske@yahoo.com

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<sup>[1]</sup> The Disciples of Christ and the Independent Christian Churches belong to the same historic family. See *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ in America* by Richard T. Hughes.

<sup>[2]</sup> For a complete survey of this episode, see *Give Me This Mountain: The Story of Presence Ministries* by Timothy R. King.

<sup>[3]</sup> It is now published as an e-journal and may be subscribed to through Presence Ministries at <http://www.presence.tv/journal>.

<sup>[4]</sup> Kloske & Kloske, p.31.

<sup>[5]</sup> Kloske & Kloske, pp. 35-36.

<sup>[6]</sup> See especially pages 219-220 and 503-508.

<sup>[7]</sup> Max King’s books are available from Presence Ministries at <http://www.presence.tv/>.

<sup>[8]</sup> He even coined the phrase “Covenant Eschatology.”

<sup>[9]</sup> Kloske & Kloske, p508-512. Underlining is in the original.

<sup>[10]</sup> Kloske & Kloske, p.8.