

The Importance of Understanding the Historical Events of AD 70

By [Ed Ferner](#)

A number of Christians who have studied the historical events of AD 70 have asked the question: Why is knowing what happened in AD 70 important to my Christian walk?

The author of this web site recalls the first time he personally shared these new concepts of the events of AD 70 with another Christian brother. The comment by this particular Christian brother was: If what you say is true, what is left for Christians? This paper will address these concerns. What follows are a series of insights that various Christians have given as to why the events of AD 70 are important to their Christian walk.

1. Salvation - There is no effect on the understanding of salvation. Under the New Covenant a person becomes a Christian and enters eternal life by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ!
2. Redefinition of "the blessed hope!" There currently exists in the church today an expectation (a hope) that Jesus will one day come back for His church. This belief finds its origin in the following verse:

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" ([Titus 2:13](#)).

When that statement was recorded in the Scriptures (likely in the Spring of AD 57), Christ's presence was still future as we have seen in [Learning Activity #34](#). After AD 70, the church should no longer be looking for the return of Christ as He is already here and living in His body, the church, of which He is the head. With this AD 70 understanding of the Scriptures, the blessed hope is redefined from a future hope to a present reality!

3. The [historic events of AD 70](#) give credibility to Jesus, the writers of the Scriptures and the Scriptures themselves because the imminency statements in the Bible do not have to be twisted and turned about in an attempt to make them believable. In the AD 70 fulfillment understanding the imminency statements can be accepted at face value with no games being played with them. The scriptures I refer to include the following:

a. *"When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes. "* ([Matt.10:23](#)). Jesus was clearly speaking to "the twelve" (see verse five) in this passage. They were to see Him come back in their lifetime!

b. *"Jesus said to him [the high priest], "Nevertheless I say to you [that I am the Christ the Son of God]: hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."* ([Matt.26:64](#)). Jesus said He would come back (His Parousia) in the clouds during the lifetime of the high priest!

c. *"Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."* ([Matt.16:28](#)). Jesus said that some of those who were standing before

Him when He made this statement would not die before they saw Jesus coming in His kingdom! Some Christians are still waiting today for the kingdom and the King to come because they do not understand the events of AD 70!

d. *"Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place"* ([Matt.24:34](#)).

e. *"Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation."* ([Matt.23:36](#)). Everything Jesus spoke of would take place in the generation of those who stood before Him as He spoke!

If we consider the statements above that were made by Christ, we must come to one of the following conclusions:

- (1) Jesus was confused about future events.
- (2) Jesus deliberately misled those He spoke to.
- (3) Jesus lied to those He spoke to.
- (4) Jesus told the truth and many in the church today are guilty of believing something about the Scriptures that is not true; namely, that He has not yet returned and set up His kingdom.

So influential are the previous passages that they caused the noted British philosopher, mathematician, and Nobel laureate Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) to publish a book entitled, *Why I Cannot Become a Christian*. Russell understood that Jesus' statements never took place as Jesus had said they would and no one in the church could tell him otherwise to clear up his misunderstanding.

Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965) a French Protestant clergyman, philosopher, musicologist, medical missionary, and Nobel laureate had the same problem with the statements Jesus had made. Schweitzer interpreted the life of Jesus in the light of Jesus' eschatological beliefs. Schweitzer's book, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, 1906, contains many of Schweitzers misled beliefs.

If these two learned men were so misled by their understanding of the statements of Jesus, we must ask ourselves how many more have been led astray from the truth of Christianity both in the past and in the present time because of a lack of understanding of the events of AD 70? When those who are respected in the church tell the world that the return of Christ is still future, they create a crisis of delay in the minds of the people keeping them from believing Christ at what He said about Himself as being true, therefore contributing to their denial of Christianity.

The biblical statements of imminency are not restricted to the words of Jesus alone. Other writers also portrayed imminency in their writing.

The Apostle Paul:

"Let your gentleness be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" ([Philip.4:5](#)).

Statements by James:

"You also be patient; esestablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand" ([James 5:8](#)).

"...behold, the judge [Christ] is standing at the door" ([James 5:9](#)).

If Jesus and the other writers of the Scriptures have made the preceding statements and those statements have not yet taken place (some 2,000 years later), then our belief in anything else that has

been said in the Scriptures is in jeopardy. We may be believing in a fairy tale. But as the author of this web site understands the Scriptures, Jesus and the other writers meant exactly what they have written and those things and expectations that they had did take place exactly as they had stated. The biblical record clearly indicates an expectation and hope in which those in the early church waited for their returning Lord. The early church was comforted by the assurance that their day of deliverance was at hand; the judge who was the deliverer from the persecution that was coming against them was already at the door; and in a very little while He who was to come was coming and that time would not be delayed. It is impossible for the author of this web site to believe that the confident expectation of those in the early church of an almost immediate deliverance from their persecution is still today considered to be in the future after more than twenty centuries of waiting!

There are only two alternatives possible: either those in the Bible were grossly deceived in their expectation of the return of Christ (the Parousia), or that event did take place, in accordance with their expectation and the Lord's prediction Himself. If we believe that the Parousia has not yet taken place, then those we have quoted from the Scriptures possessed a vain hope and lived in the belief of a delusion. If the Scriptures are in error in regard to the Parousia which was one of the most confident and cherished beliefs of the early church, how can we today place any confidence in any of the other issues to which the Scriptures speak?

4. The historic events of AD 70 place a greater emphasis than ever before on the biblical fact that "...*Christ lives in me...*" ([Gal.2:20](#)), because of His return and the indwelling of the Christian as well as the kingdom of God being now present in the Christian. If a future hope is a so-called rapture out of the things of the earth is taken away, the pie-in-the-sky hope is removed and people should be more inclined to see the truth of Christ in them (now) as their only hope of glory ([Col.1:27](#)).

5. The historic events of AD 70 permit us to better understand that we are living in a time when all things are summed up in Christ ([Eph.1:10](#)). We have been given the blessing appointed to Abraham's seed ([Gal.3:8](#)); we have God dwelling in His people ([Eph.4:6](#)); and the kingdom of God is on earth in the believer (Luke 17:21).

6. A delayed, postponed or unrealized eschatology of Christ's second coming is a sad commentary on the work and mission of Jesus of Nazareth!

7. [Proverbs 13:12](#), "*Hope deferred makes the heart sick: but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.*" Many in the church today are still waiting for a physical appearance of Christ who is the tree of life, but to those who have an understanding of the happenings of AD 70, the vision is clear and sweet! Proverbs 13:19, "*The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul...*"

8. If new Christians were taught the implications of the historic events of AD 70 there would be fewer Christians who would be misled by false teaching of man, not the least of which has been some which have encouraged Christians to sell their homes, leave employment behind and move to some specified location to await the rapture of the church and the second coming. Not all are guilty of such extremes, but each has contributed to confusion in the church by their statements.

AD 999 – In Europe, Christian expectations of the end of the world flooded the continent. Terrified masses feared that the 1,000 years spoken of in the book of Revelation had expired and that Christ was coming back to end it all. Signs were eagerly sought in the final months leading up to AD 1000 and it is said that activity in European monasteries nearly ground to a halt as AD 999 wound down.

1033 – When Christ did not appear in the manner expected, a new date was set using 1000 years from the Ascension which yielded a new date of 1033. This date was also a failure.

1100 – An Italian monk and noted Bible prophecy scholar by the name of Joachim of Fiore set the time interval of 1200–1260 for the end of the world.

1501 – Christopher Columbus declared that there were about one hundred fifty-five years remaining for all of mankind to convert to Christianity after which the world would end, *History of the End*, Rubinsky & Wiseman, Page 91.

1546 – Martin Luther made numerous statements that "the day of judgment [end of the world] is not far off...will not be absent three hundred years longer." Luther believed "all the signs which [he thought] were to precede the last days had already appeared."

1818 – William Miller, founder of the Millerite movement in the United States, made the prediction that Christ would come and the world would end sometime between the dates of March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844. This resulted in an end time movement which swept throughout the United States and caused much excitement. Miller later changed the date to October 22, 1844.

1835 – Joseph Smith, who founded The Church of Jesus Christ of the Later Day Saints (Mormonism), prophesied the coming of Christ as being near and that "fifty-six years should wind up the scene."

1835 – Archdeacon Browne of England is quoted in the book, *The Last Times*, by Joseph A. Seiss, D.D., as saying "Our lot has fallen under the solemn period emphatically designated in Daniel as the time of the end."

1836 – John Wesley wrote that "the time, times and a half a time" of Revelation 12:14 was 1058 and 1836, "when Christ should come." *The Prophecies Unveiled*, A.M. Morris, Page 361.

1859 – The Reverend Thomas Parker, a Massachusetts minister, stated that the 1,000 year millennium had started in 1859.

1874 – Jehovah's Witnesses, who claim to be the sole possessors of God's revealed truth, made a series of prophecies for the end of the world for the years 1874, 1878, 1881, 1910, 1914, 1925 and 1975.

1926 – Oswald Smith, a leading missionary statesman of his day, wrote in his book, *Is the Antichrist at Hand?* "the great tribulation, the arrival of the Roman Empire, the reign of the antichrist and the battle of Armageddon must take place before the year 1933.

1949 – Dr. Billy Graham is quoted in *The U. S. News and World Report*, as saying, "Two years and it's all going to be over."

1969 – Hal Lindsay, in his book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, stated that within one generation we would experience the end of the present world and the return of Christ. The dust cover of the book cautioned readers not to make plans beyond 1985.

1978 – Salem Kirban wrote in his book, *The Rise of the Antichrist*, "we are living in the age of the Antichrist! The world is on the threshold of catastrophe."

1978 – Chuck Smith, founder of Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California, wrote in his book, *End Times, A Report on Future Survival!*, "If I understand the Scripture correctly, Jesus taught us that the generation which sees the 'budding of the fig tree,' the birth of the nation Israel, will be the generation that sees the Lord's return. I believe that the generation of 1948 is the last generation. Since a

generation of judgment is forty years and the Tribulation period lasts seven years, I believe the Lord could come back for His Church any time before the Tribulation starts, which would mean anytime before 1981. (1948+40-7=1981). However, it is possible that Jesus is dating the beginning of the generation from 1967, when Jerusalem was again under Israeli control for the first time since 587 B.C. We don't know for sure which year actually marks the beginning of the last generation." NOTE: The later date would give us a date of 2000. The rear cover of his book stated, "What he (Smith) has to say is both startling and factual," and "learn how to prepare for the breath-taking events about to happen – in your lifetime!"

1982 – The book, *The Jupiter Effect*, received wide attention with its prediction that California would be rocked by major earthquakes due to the alignment of the planets. The author of this web site was visiting a church in Oroville, California, and heard a sermon delivered on the book along with a warning to the congregation that this could be the end times spoken of in the Bible! The truth is, the planets come into a relatively close alignment every twenty years and there is no danger to the earth from these alignments.

1988 – Edgar Whisenant predicted in his book, *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988*, that the rapture event would take place in that year.

1989 – Edgar Whisenant published another book, *89 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1989!*

1990 – Dallas Seminary president John Walvoord published a book, *Armageddon, Oil and the Middle East Crisis*, stating that a war by America with Iraq would lead to the final battle of Armageddon.

1993 – Harold Camping predicted in his book, *1994*, that the return of Christ and the end of the world would take place in September, 1994.

1994 – Jack Van Impe stated "everything is winding up with the next ten years" on his television broadcast of June 22, 1994. On February 5, 1997, Van Impe changed his timetable to "between 2001 and 2002.

1994 – Paul Crouch, during his Spring 94 Praise-A-Thon fundraiser on February 22, 1994, stated, "we are in the last moments of grace before the wrath of God is revealed. This is the wind up. The curtain is about to come down. We don't have much time left...If Jesus hasn't come back by the year 2000 AD, then we (referring to his guest speakers on the show and himself) have missed the Scriptures."

1999 – Numerous messages were delivered by Christians throughout the world that the coming in of the new year of 2000 would mark the end of all things. This was also accompanied by a threat of massive computer failures throughout the world that would lock-up banking and food distribution along with basic essential services. Scores of Christians purchased and stockpiled food, water, generators, etc. in preparation for this event which never materialized.

2003 – F. M. Riley, New Mexico, predicted "the Rapture would occur on or near the Passover in the Spring (April 16, 2003)."

2006 - Harry Walther by use of public road billboards and the web site satansrapture.com promotes the possible "Great Tribulation (of seven years) starting in 2006 AD and ending in 2013 AD. It is developed from many Bible Codes paralleled with Revelation and some very coincidental dates that will occur between 2006 and 2013 AD." The web site goes on to state, "...it is possible that Antichrist could be revealed on June 6, 2006 = 6/6/06 = 666 and time will soon tell." The web site then continues

by stating, "If not, a close scenario (above) will happen (possibly in 2011 - 2012 AD) and triggers The Coming of Antichrist and the Start of the Great Tribulation, the Biblical Apocalypse that lasts for seven years."

December 21, 2012 - We are told by some that the Myan calendars are said to reveal that the end of the world will take place on this day.

2012 - Using a chronology he has developed for the seven seals of Revelation, Jack Smith has established that in 2012AD the Second Coming of Christ will occur.

During all of the above statements and hype, if Christians had been aware of the historical events of AD 70 and how they affect biblical understanding they would never have been distracted and misled by the previously listed false alarms. The church needs to understand the historical events of AD 70 and to be able to apply these events in their study of the Bible!

9. There are also a number of "attitudinal" or "how we view things" that change to a more positive understanding when we see the implications of the historical events of AD 70. Some of these are as follows:

a. Many Christians are so busy looking up (for the return of Christ) that they have neglected to look around themselves and how they can be reflecting the light and salt of Christ within them to a confused world.

b. A person who believes he will be rescued (raptured) before judgment comes (even though that judgment already came in AD 70), has no great interest in the continuation, preservation or improvement of what currently exists. I am not here suggesting that all Christians must become ecology monsters, but I am suggesting that we should be good stewards of the planet we live on.

c. Those who understand the significance of the events of AD 70 report that over time they see a significant change in how and for what they pray for, how they interrelate with other Christians and what the content of their conversation consists of.

d. If things are going to get worse, why do anything about it now! Who wants to polish the brass on a sinking ship?

e. If our real victory is somewhere in the future, then we will never express to the world now what true Christianity consists of.

f. Living life here on earth with the view that the end of the world is at hand and the world is becoming worse and worse until the end arrives is a very depressing way to spend our time here on earth. Finding time to "...*think on these things...*" ([Philip.4:8](#)) when your focus is looking for a second coming is very difficult if at all possible.

g. Our world view is changed. We view things in a more position manner than other Christians.

10. It has been the experience of the author of this web site that Christian understanding of the Scriptures has consisted of a constant change in the depth of biblical truth as I have continued on my Christian journey. I conclude that my earlier biblical understandings either consisted of believing man-made lies about the Scriptures or lesser truths about them. If a greater truth exists and is available, why continue to believe in a lesser truth?

11. We can now understand the Bible without having to create "fairy tales" to explain passages that never made sense before. In addition, we finally can understand the books of Daniel and Revelation. A Christian recently told me that since she came to understand the significance of AD 70 she can now explain the Scriptures to others for the first time in her life!

12. For the Jewish people, the church has the greatest evangelistic tools available to bring them to realize that their Messiah (Christ) has already come. Their own scriptures, [Daniel 9:25–27](#) clearly show that their Messiah comes BEFORE their city, Jerusalem, is destroyed! Since Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70, then their Messiah must have already come!

13. Many Christians live a very pessimistic existence here on earth in the belief that better things lie ahead of them when they die. The facts are we Christians have it all right now (in the spiritual fourth dimensional realm) and that will continue when we die. The Antichrist has already come and gone, the tribulation is over. Satan has been disposed of and we have little to "worry" about beyond the misuse of our free will in this life on earth.

14. Christians are insisting that Christ come back physically and sit physically on a physical throne of David to rule the physical world from Jerusalem. When the events of AD 70 are understood we then see from the Scriptures that Christ has already returned, is on His throne and is ruling His kingdom (which is within the believer, His body, the church).

15. God lives within the believer, His presence in us is why we already have eternal life, and when we die physically we will slip from the third dimension and be fully into the fourth dimension for eternity with Him. We do not have to hope for these things as we already possess them!

16. Some people think that if the Second Advent is past, then we Christians are being deprived of our share in the promises of the Bible. This kind of thinking is based on a misconception of the facts. Fulfilled prophecy is NOT worthless! The past gives us a greater revelation of God and human beings which have deep eternal significance. These things reveal God who in His severity toward sin, His compassion toward the sinner, and His mercy toward the believer, are important facets for us to apprehend.

17. God never intended for the history of the future to be anticlimactic. With a fulfilled eschatological understanding of the Scriptures and some awareness of the events of AD 70, we can have an ever increasing relationship and knowledge of His presence as well as His sovereignty over ALL things!

18. It is not realized (fulfilled) eschatology, but the theory of unrealized eschatology, that clouds the gospel hope to the discrediting of the completeness of the New and everlasting covenant.

19. Christianity is not a religion of the future, except in the sense that what man now has in Christ is full and complete and everlasting on into the future!

20. Not recognizing the power of Christianity for today is the source of eschatological chaos in Christendom.

21. Every generation sees signs that it is the last generation. Christianity has been turned into a last day religion, a religion of good and bad news. The good news is that Christ came to bring salvation to the world; the bad news is that He will shortly return to destroy the world!

22. A fulfilled hope is not a destroyed hope!

23. Some say that if Bible eschatology is fulfilled, what is left for us to now live? I am convinced that

God did not intend for the New Covenant church to walk around with a view that the balance of history is anticlimactic. God's intent is for us to continue in an ever deepening relationship with and in Him while walking in His presence and witnessing His sovereignty in ALL THINGS!

24. One Christian we know who has come into a fulfilled eschatological understanding of the Scriptures has testified that for the first time in her life she understands the Scriptures AND is able to explain the Scriptures to others! Suddenly the Bible is making sense!

25. "For it was by God's own hand that the ancient system of worship was abolished and obliterated; and the obliteration thereof was for reasons so closely connected with the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ, that to reestablish it again [as so many in the church today believe] would be to do dishonor to the work and its results." Philip Mauro, *[The Hope of Israel: What Is It?](#)* pp.114–116.

26. Believers will never comprehend the truths of the New Covenant unless they understand the significance of the AD 70 happenings.

If you, the reader of this material, have additional items that could be added to the list above, please contact me through electronic mail with your suggestions for evaluation. Our email address is ChristEternal@hotmail.com