

Overly Realized Eschatology (Is 'Death' the Savior?) Part 2

by Robert Wurtz II

Robert Wurtz II explores the dangers of overly realized eschatology and its implications on Christian doctrine and practice.

Scripture: Romans 8:23, 1 Corinthians 12:4, 1 Corinthians 15:51, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 1:13, 1 Timothy 5:23, 2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Peter 1:16

Topics: "Eschatology Studies", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Robert Wurtz II discusses how throughout history, man has often tried to manipulate God's timing and plans to fit their own understanding, particularly in the study of eschatology. The Reformation brought essential truths back to the Gospel, including sola fide and sola scriptura. Concepts like 'second blessing' and Baptism in the Holy Spirit evolved over time, leading to movements like Classical Pentecostalism and the emphasis on spiritual gifts. However, extreme interpretations of these doctrines have caused harm by overstepping God's promises and creating an overly realized eschatology, claiming perfection and prosperity in this life that is reserved for after the resurrection.

Transcript

When it comes to understanding what God is doing in the earth, man has always tried to have God do things as they see fit and in their own time. But in reality, God will do as He will and in His own timing. Eschatology is the study of "last things" or the end times. Since the Reformation many essential truths have been restored to the original Gospel. The Reformation brought sola fide and sola scriptura. The Anabaptists ("Rebaptizers") sects, though widely varied in beliefs, helped bring back baptism by immersion in harmony with the ritual immersions of the Jews. Wesley and others took Puritan ideas another step towards holiness and came up with the concept of a "second blessing." This was taken and (arguably) evolved into the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as is practiced in Classical Pentecostalism- and reintroduced spiritual gifts. This was taken up by the tent revivalists in the late 1940's and early 1950's as "healing in the atonement" was greatly emphasized. This evolved into the faith movement and the prosperity doctrines.

From Wesley until now there is an element within each of these camps (listed above) that take their doctrines to such extremes as to "go to seed on them." The doctrines themselves in balance have greatly edified the Church; but when taken to their extreme have caused great harm. What these 'extreme'

teachers do is OVERSTEP the timing of God's promises and begin to reach beyond the first resurrection and begin to pull those promises back into the pre-resurrection world. This is known as an OVERLY REALIZED ESCHATOLOGY. To be consistent in doing such things, all of the post-resurrection promises must be equally in effect with the other. But, how rare is it to find an entire sanctification, healing, prosperity, and restoration convert? Who among us believes a lamb can lie down with a lion and we are like Him as we see Him as he is? The fact is, we have the earnest of the Holy Spirit as a surity that these things will take place after the resurrection (Ephesians 1). And are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. To go the extra mile and suggest that a person may reach a level as to no longer be tempted to sin is to error greatly. The PREDISPOSITION to sin is gone because you are born again, but the potential to be tempted and yet be rejected is very great (adokimos). The flesh (NIV sin nature KJV 'flesh' GK sarx) makes temptation from within a grim reality and therefor makes it impossible to be as was Adam and Jesus in this life. Balancing that with a full fledged "pressing to the mark"; even though that goal may be beyond our reach is the DUTY and DESIRE of every TRUE believer.

On Christian Perfectionism

When Christians claim a perfection that will only exist post-resurrection, they are attempting to overly realize God's eschatology. Paul told Timothy to flee fornication and youthful lusts. He told the churches that if the people sow to the flesh they will reap corruption. This requires an understanding on our part that there is a sin nature to deal with (as the NIV translates sarx). No matter if you would call it humanness+ residual sin or the body of sin or any other name- the Greek word sarx certainly demonstrates in Galatians 5 that it is sinful and must not be sown to or we will perish. Paul got his own body in subjection lest he became a reprobate (adokimos). He withstood Peter for the sin of respect of persons. The list goes on and to no profit- but to dispell this myth of immaculate Christianity. What meaneth the multiplied warnings of scripture if man is either instantly immaculate from sin or gradually can become and maintain a continual state of immaculate perfection? I propose that the end to which this doctrine has been taken is somewhat different from Wesley.

As we scale the language barrier I will define what I have read as the ORIGINAL meaning of Entire Sanctification: "

Entire sanctification remains a part of our doctrinal heritage due largely to the enduring influence of the former Evangelical United Brethren Church. Article XI of the EUB Confession of Faith, now part of the United Methodist Book of Discipline (para. 62), includes the following statement:

Entire sanctification is a state of perfect love, righteousness and true holiness which every regenerate believer may obtain by being delivered from the power of sin, by loving God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and by loving one's neighbor as one's self. Through faith in Jesus Christ this gracious gift may be received in this life both gradually and instantaneously, and should be sought earnestly by every child of God.

This was the stated goal, but erupted into extreme views of holiness without love. Just as there are now-hyper Calvinists. Is immaculate perfection (as my family has believed for decades) required for salvation? Is it as a woman I met in 1995 at the Independence Manor Nursing Home who was a 70+ year old dear lady who had served God all her life said to me: "Son, I hope I'm saved." The woman later lost her mind!! Who was responsible for such teachings?! Preaching such teachings as to make the outward standards of mens holiness the focus of rather or not we are saved as opposed to the witness of the Spirit? I assure

you they will answer to God for it! Most preachers of such teaching backslide at a horrendous rate. And when you ask them what happened they will tell you "I couldn't live it." They took on that mentality "Preach it until you can live it" and strait backslid and destroyed much of their flock!

On The Guarantee of Healing in the Atonement

When a Christian claims that EVERYONE will be healed this side of eternity and that it is guaranteed in the atonement- they have an overly realized eschatology. Ironically those same people often wear glasses and have sickness, etc. Stories are told of some of these teachers being so adamant about their doctrine that when they get sick they have to go to Mexico for treatment. Does this mean that God does not heal? Of coarse God heals. My wife was personally healed of Conjestive Heart Failure that would have spelled her young death and left me with 6 children, one of which was newborn to raise as a single dad. My cousin Jay Monteer in his book T-11 was shot in the spine by a bow and arrow and was supposed to never walk again- because it hit the spinal chord. He was on Montel Williams show walking as a testimony to a REAL miracle. But does everyone get healed? NO! Not Paul's eyes. Not Timothy's stomach. As a matter of fact, Paul does not even tell Timothy he is praying for the sickness or for him to pray for it. He tells him to take his medecine. Paul left Trophimus at Miletum sick. God heals and sometime He does not. Some people have had enough faith to move mountains and have died sick. Elisha is a prime example.

On Guarantee of Prosperity

When a Christian claims the promises of God as if they were Gold mined from a motherload- they are in left field! Doctrines that teach health, wealth, and prosperity and go to seed on it end up as a reproach on Christ. What happens? They are trying to bring Heaven to earth. They have an overly realized eschatology (among other issues).

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