

Wednesday, December 24, 2014

## **ADVENT? THE REAL COMING OF CHRIST**

Mark 13:5 Jesus [said] to them, "See that no one leads you astray. 6 Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. 21 ... if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. 22 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders ... 23 But be on guard... 24 " in those days, after [the great] tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. cf Rev 1:7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. There are those who teach that the Second Coming happened in 70AD or, at least, in the past. This is "Preterism". I do not believe that is Scriptural. I accept what Mark records that Jesus said on the subject [above] on its face value. These days it is very common especially during Advent, to hear that Jesus' Second Coming is entirely spiritual and now, not future, not physical, not visible to everyone. That teaching, too is not Scriptural. The entire prophecy is totally spiritualized. The truth is that Jesus is in Heaven, seated on a Throne. He is engaged in what happens on earth, ie- His Spirit is. In that sense, only, we may say Jesus has come and is here, working among us. Great. But that is not the Bible Doctrine of the Second Coming, which is "coming" is personal, bodily and physical, future but imminent, even as our Resurrection shall be, at that time.

Posted by Cal in Bible Topics at 11:42

Saturday, December 20, 2014

## **WHICH CHRISTMAS? WHAT IS ADVENT MEANT FOR?**

A long time ago I came to terms with the reality that there are two Christmases. The dominant one is the secular Christmas and the other is the Christian celebration of the Incarnation, the Birth of Jesus, Son of God. Traditionally, the Birth of Jesus is followed by the Twelve Days of Christmas, concluding with Epiphany, which is when the Wise Men arrive [actually 2 years after the birth day].

Advent is the 4 weeks prior to December 25. This ancient Catholic observance has been increasingly common among Protestants, including Evangelicals, but I wonder if they understand what it is for. Traditionally, it is intended to be like Lent. According to most of the traditional songs sung and the Scripture read during Advent, worshipers are looking forward to and preparing for the personal, physical Second Coming of Christ which every eye shall see when it actually happens (Rev 1:1f) It is a time for introspection, self-examination of how we are living. If we really believe this Event shall happen, how would we prepare? Are you ready for to meet Jesus if He were to appear in the sky today? 1 John 3:2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears ... we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

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Peter 3:11 Since all these things [shall happen] what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

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Cor 6:16-7:1 For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will [at the Second Coming] make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Therefore... be separate from [ungodly, immoral people], says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing;... 1 Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 11:02

Friday, December 12. 2014

## **DID GOD USE TORTURE?**

The new movie "Exodus: Gods and Kings" reportedly does very effective work portraying the plagues God sent to inflict Pharaoh and the Egyptians to persuade them to "let my People go". Was this an example of the use of torture by God? How about His use of great painful afflictions on the world detailed in the Book of Revelation to persuade sinners to repent? Is this also torture"?

Posted by Cal in Bible Topics at 10:30

## **DEFINING "TORTURE"**

The most widely accepted definition of torture internationally is that set out by Article 1 of the United Nations Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT):

"... 'torture' means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions."

From this definition, it can be said that torture is the intentional infliction of severe mental or physical pain or suffering by or with the consent of the state authorities for a specific purpose.

<http://www.irct.org/what-is-torture/defining-torture.aspx>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:14

## **LET PEOPLE BREATHE**

This is a thought-provoking response to recent reports of violence and torture

<http://www.churchandculture.org/>

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 09:25

Tuesday, December 2. 2014

## **HANDS UP-DON'T SHOOT! REALLY?**

"Though it has never been confirmed with visual evidence, that image – of Brown with his hands in the air - has gone viral as a symbol of injustice. Protesters across the country marching in the streets chanting, "Hands up. Don't shoot," and "I've got my hands on my head, please don't shoot me dead." Placards have circulated depicting two hands, palms out, as well as hands-raised T-shirts.

"An Associated Press review of thousands of pages of grand jury documents reveals numerous examples of statements made during the shooting investigation that were inconsistent, fabricated or provably wrong. For one, the autopsies ultimately showed Brown was not struck by any bullets in his back."

[http://news.yahoo.com/did-michael-brown-really-hands-shot-172812909.html;\\_ylt=AwrBEiJNJ35UygcADSHQtDMD](http://news.yahoo.com/did-michael-brown-really-hands-shot-172812909.html;_ylt=AwrBEiJNJ35UygcADSHQtDMD)

All of this is a cautionary tale. We see what we want to see, again and again, in all kinds of events. We do the same thing in reading Scripture. This is very humbling and should make us very cautious about making quick judgments. We do not have to be agnostic, but we must not rush to judgment about anything.

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 16:09

## **AMERICA, VIOLENT AMERICA**

"[B]oth Michael Brown and Darren Wilson are the products of our society—American society. Our country was birthed out of armed and violent rebellion. We used brutality to subjugate slaves and drive Native Americans from the lands that they had lived upon for millennia. Now, over two centuries later, we suffer more violent deaths than any other wealthy nation in the world. We have experienced more school shootings than 36 other countries combined. We have been continuously at war for 14 years. We glorify violence in nearly every form of media that we consume, from video games to movies, from television to music. Violence has so permeated our culture that there is not a single young American who has not been taught to believe that most any problem can and should be solved by throwing a punch, or else pulling a piece.

"Yes, Ferguson is about racism and inequality and crime. But these conditions and sins exist in every person and every nation in the world. What sets our nation apart from others is how frequently we resort to violence in response to racism and inequality and crime. We use violence to perpetrate crime and to protest inequality, and violence to police crime and to end protest. So our problem is not just racism. It is that racism and violence continuously reinforce and exacerbate one another, making healing and progress an impossibility."

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/peter-chin/2014/november/america-beautiful-america-violent.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:33

## **IS RELIGION THE MAJOR CAUSE OF CONFLICT IN THE WORLD?**

"There are many other socio-economic characteristics that have more significant explanatory power in understanding why conflict and peace occurs than religion does. ... there is a consistent relationship between factors such as corruption, political terror, gender and economic inequality and political instability which determine peace ... these factors are globally more significant determinants in driving violence and conflict in society than the presence of religious belief."

There is much data to substantiate this claim in this very helpful Report

<http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Peace-and-Religion-Report.pdf>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:24