

Having the End in Sight Part 4

Quick Note on Hermeneutics (how to study- interpret-apply Scripture)

“The Bible is at the same time both divine and human, it is the Word of God given in human words in history...it speaks to all humankind, in every age and culture so we must listen and obey. But because God chose to speak His word through human words in history, every book in the Bible also has historical particularity; each document is conditioned by the language, time, and culture in which it was originally written.” Fee and Stuart, How to Read the Bible for All its Worth

“The aim of good interpretation is simple: to get at the ‘plain meaning of the text’ = the author’s intended meaning...However, we invariably bring to the text all that we are, with all our experiences, culture, and prior understandings of words and ideas. Sometimes what we bring to the text leads us astray, or else causes us to read all kinds of foreign ideas into the text.” How to Read Bible for All its Worth

"None of us interprets the biblical text in a vacuum. Those who say they interpret the Bible without bringing any (pre-conceived assumptions) to the text are mistaken; they are simply unaware of the views they hold. We are challenged to examine the Scriptures to see what is really so (Acts 17:11). We want to be faithful to understand and proclaim the whole plan of God (Acts 20:27) and grappling with the different views will sharpen us all to be more faithful." Schreiner quoted Beale, NT Biblical Theology

Christian Belief

“In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, charity. In all things, Jesus Christ.”

we can confidently know the core essentials of our faith:

- God is eternal loving Creator: all-powerful, knowing, present, good triune being
- Bible is God’s Word: inspired, inerrant, authoritative
- Humanity is God’s image male and female now in sinful rebellion
- Jesus Christ is God incarnate, crucified Savior, risen-returning Lord
- Salvation is by Faith alone in Christ from God’s Judgment i.e. penalty, power, presence of sin

we can amicably agree to disagree on non-essentials of doctrine:

Creation views
divine sovereignty and human responsibility
modes of baptism
spiritual gifts, role of women
church governance, worship styles
end times views

Revelation 20. The Millennial Text

⁴I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ⁵(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. ⁷When the thousand years are

over, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. ⁹ They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Three Reading Lenses for Eschatology:

American Dispensationalism: The Prescription Lens Popularized

God has two distinct people/programs: national Israel/ spiritual Church
A literalist interpretation of OT prophecy and Revelation
Church is raptured before a literal 7-year Tribulation
God uses the Tribulation to bring Israel to faith in Jesus as Messiah
Jesus returns at end of 7 years to destroy Antichrist and establish 1000-year reign
During the literal 1000-year rule, God fulfills OT prophecy to Israel
At end of 1000 year reign, Satan loosed for final rebellion
God's great white throne Judgment and then a new heavens and earth

History **A New Kid in Town** **1800's**

Critique **why Dispensationalism got Left Behind:**

-Old Covenant Israel as priority over the New Covenant Church

Luke 22:20 "After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you."

Does Scripture support the view that God has two covenant people: Israel and the Church, and that He has promises to fulfill for national Israel apart from the spiritual Church?

-The Return of Christ and Believers Rapture is Same Event

1Thess 4:14-17 "For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. ¹⁵ We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout...First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷ Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever."

Does Scripture support the view that Jesus has two returns: a secret return to rapture Christians just prior to a 7-year tribulation and then a glorious public return as King after those 7 years? How would His return then be unexpected?

Historic Premillennialism: The Earliest Lens the Church Used

Jesus Christ and His New Covenant People/Church fulfill OT prophecy to Israel (Acts 2-4)
The return of Jesus and rapture of believers are same event
Great Tribulation and Antichrist is period of time prior to Christ's return
The Church goes through Tribulation, God turns Jewish hearts to Christ

Jesus returns to establish the Kingdom of God on earth literal or figurative 1000 years
God judges the living and the dead, casts Satan, all who rejected Jesus into fire lake/hell
God creates a new heaven and earth

History

The Didache	125 AD
Shepherd of Hermas	150 AD
Justin Martyr	150 AD
Irenaeus	170 AD

Critique What about Jesus teaching on His return:

-all people will face the one final Judgment

Mt 13:40-43 "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

-an immediate Judgment for eternal reward or punishment

Mt 25:31-36 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Amillennialism: The Primary Lens of Biblical Scholarship

The NT has interpretive priority over the OT (NT explains OT)
No future 1000-year earthly reign, Christ now reigns on earth in Church
The Church age between Resurrection and Return of Jesus is Kingdom of God
Revelation 20 is a symbolic description of the church age not futuristic
The Church is the new Israel, OT promises and blessings are fulfilled in Christ (Acts 2)
The Church age is in the end times tribulation with many antichrists until a final one
Christ's return will simultaneously accomplish many things mentioned in Scripture:
 The Church meets Jesus in the air,
 Jesus vanquishes the evil forces antichrist, Satan, death,
 the resurrection of all unbelievers to final judgment
 the creation of new heaven and earth for God's people

All End Times Events are Bundled @The Return of Christ

History

Critique Does the amil view rightly interpret the difficult passages of Scripture regarding the return of Christ as in Revelation 20?

So What?