

Things to Come #1 Introduction

I. Introduction

A. "The Glasses We Will Wear"

Hermeneutics: the principles of biblical exegesis or interpretation

1. Literal Vs. Allegorical Vs. Preterist

Literal: The grammatical-historical method that treats each word in its normal, ordinary, customary usage. (Pentecost, p. 9)

Allegorical: Not literal, looking for the "more spiritual and more profound sense." (Pentecost, p.4) The authority shifts from the text to the interpreter.

Preterist: "A symbolic presentation of the conflicts of the early church, making it a symbolic history of the early church rather than a prophetic revelation in the future." (Walvoord, p. 519)

Note: An example might understand the 7 churches (chapters 2-3) as a historical overview of the history of Christendom.

2. Premillennialism : Jesus will return before the millennium

Amillennialism : Christ's return is an ideal or spiritual return. It may have already begun with His earthly ministry

Postmillennialism : Jesus will return after the millennium

Premillennialism: The second return has two aspects to it. Jesus will meet us in the air (I Thess. 4:16-18) before the beginning of the tribulation (Pretribulationism). He will return again by stomping His foot on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4)

Using these "glasses," chapters 4-18 deals with future events, chapter 19 describes the literal second coming, chapter 20 describes the future literal 1000 year reign of Christ on earth and chapters 21-22 deal with the eternal state.

B. "The Language we will speak"

1. The use of symbols: this study will assume that the numbers have both a literal sense and a figurative sense.

For example: Numbers (3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 666, 1000 etc.)

7 carries the concept of completion. There are 7 churches, 7 lampstands, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls etc.

2. The use of names: One entity might have several names/titles.

For example: Satan-great dragon, old serpent, the devil, the beast, and the false prophet

3. Interpreting figurative language:
 - a) Watch for the writer's own explanation.
 - b) Compare scripture with scripture. Remember, that the interpretation cannot be contrary to other precepts called out in other passages of scripture.

"When the plain sense of scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense. Therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context ...indicates otherwise." (Pentecost, p. 42)

C. "The Tools We Will Use."

1. Prophecies from other parts of scripture

Examples:

In the Pentateuch: Gen. 3:15 (first mention of salvation)

In the books of history: I Samuel 2:35-36 (the promise of a future high priest)

In the books of poetry: Psalm 22 (the suffering Savior)

In Isaiah 53: (the suffering Savior)

In Jeremiah 30: (the restoration of Israel)

In Ezekiel 37: (the restoration of Israel)

In Daniel 7/9: (times of the Gentiles and Israel's future)

In the Minor Prophets: Joel 3/Amos 9/Micah 4/Zephaniah 3/Zechariah 10 (Israel's restoration)

Remember: prophecies sometimes have more than one fulfillment. (The Law of Double Reference)

2. Covenants (Affects the way one sees the role of Israel in prophecy)

Covenants can be conditional (II Chronicles 7:14)

Covenants can be unconditional. Example: The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:2-3)

Covenants can be personal and national. Example: The Abrahamic Covenant (Abraham got a son, all the families of the earth got a blessing)

Covenants are literal and eternal. They can affect something right then, and then can exist for all eternity. Example: Genesis 17:7

II. The Prologue 1:1-3

- A. This book is not a mystery...it is a revelation. God isn't hiding truth; He is revealing it.

A word about angels:

They are created (Ps. 148:2,5), ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14), stronger than men (but not omnipotent-Ps. 103:20), smarter than men (but not omniscient-Matt. 24:36), can take on the appearance of men (Heb. 13:2), have classifications (cherubim, seraphim, Michael, Gabriel), and they serve as messengers for God.

- B. It also outlines things concealed or partially revealed in other parts of scripture. This book amplifies truths hinted at in the Old Testament (278 of its 404 verses allude to OT prophecies).
- C. This book was meant for believers. It is hard for unbelievers to understand. (I Cor. 2:14)
- D. Revelation primarily reveals the majesty and glory of Jesus Christ.
- E. John is the messenger of the revelation

1. A word about John:

One of the sons of Zebedee that Jesus called into spiritual service (Matt. 4). He was one of the prominent disciples (Peter, James and John) and the friend that Jesus asked to care for His mother (John 19) He wrote the gospel that bears his name as well as the epistles I, II, and III John.

2. A word about the island of Patmos (1:9)

John was likely exiled to the island in around 96 AD during the reign of Domitian. Small Greek isles were often used to house prisoners. Patmos is only around 7 miles long (about 13 miles square miles). It is a volcanic island with no trees and little vegetation.

III. So What?

The book of Revelation delivers seven separate blessings for believers:

Blessed are those who die in the Lord (14:13), blessed is anyone who has kept watch... (16:15), blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast (19:9), blessed are those who share in the first resurrection (20:6) and blessed are those who will have washed their robes clean... (22:14)

But there is a special blessing for those who just read this book (Rev. 1:3 and 22:10).

So read (study) it!