

END TIMES – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

HOW TO STUDY THE END TIMES

I. WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE OF ESCHATOLOGY?

- A. Eschatology is the study of the _____ times, the events that lead to and describe the consummation of God's plan for the world and mankind.
- B. Eschatology involves the study of many passages of the Scriptures but focuses on the books of Revelation and _____.

II. HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THE REVELATION?

A. How others have approached Revelation.

1. **Preterist** – " _____ " – Preterists believe all (or at least most) events described in the Revelation occurred during the period at the end and immediately after the life of John the Apostle. Most of those events lead to the fall of _____ in 70 A.D., although some preterists believe the latter chapters of the book describe the fall of the Roman Empire. The book was written in "code" and was only understood by the church. Everything in the book is therefore symbolic of what was happening in the lives of Christians in the late first century.

Problems with this understanding:

- a. Does not treat the book in the way it was described by our Lord.

Revelation 1:19 NKJV Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

The only possible antecedent of "after this" are the things concerning the _____ which follow immediately in chapters 2 & 3. But if the preterists are correct, and the events described from Revelation 4 on are picturing the fall of Jerusalem, then the events do not take place after the things described in chapters 2 & 3 but simultaneous to those events.

- b. This view requires that the date for the writing of the Revelation be prior to _____ A.D. Both internal and external evidence indicates that this is not the case. Most scholars place the writing of Revelation around _____ A.D.
- c. In my opinion, this view does not treat the _____ described in the Revelation seriously. For instance,

Revelation 6:8 NKJV So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

The preterist says that this describes the death of the Jews as Jerusalem is being assaulted in 70 A.D. However, there is no sense in which a fourth of the earth died. Not even a fourth of those under the control of the Roman Empire died. Not even a fourth of the _____ died.

- d. The only way to equate the severe judgments of Revelation with the events around the fall of Jerusalem or even the fall of the Roman Empire is to relegate the judgments to the realm of allegory and to admit that the biblical prophecy was overstated and _____. The fact of the matter is that the world has never in any place or any time witnessed the kind of extensive judgments described in the book of Revelation. Yet our Lord said that the period of the tribulation would be exactly that, a time _____ than anyone has ever seen or experienced.

Matthew 24:21 NKJV For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

- e. The fall of Jerusalem was horrific indeed. But it did not measure up to the cataclysms described in Revelation where seas turn to blood, men are tormented by _____ insects, and are burned by a raging sun, to mention only a few.

- 2. Historical** – Historicists believe that Revelation is a panorama of _____ and _____ history. The Seal, Trumpet & Bowl judgments are spread out over 2,000 years of history. The events described in Revelation are symbolic descriptions of events in church history, some past, some present, some future. The historicist position avoids the first two weaknesses of the preterists (a & b above) but retains the rest and adds one.

Problems:

- a. Although the historicists have more to choose from when trying to equate the prophecy of Revelation with historical events which have already occurred, the problem is that no events of history to date are of the _____ of most of the prophecies of the book. For instance, consider the first trumpet judgment:

Revelation 8:7 NKJV The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

Historicists often identify this prophecy “with the _____ conflicts between the Western Roman Empire and the hordes of Goths and

Vandals under Alaric.” However, if their assessment is correct, what can we conclude except that the biblical description is _____? The barbarian attacks were not accompanied by hail and blood thrown to the earth. And although the invaders did scorch the earth in many places where they attacked, a third of the trees were not burned up, even in the Roman Empire; and all the green grass was not burned up either.

- b. The new problem that plagues the historicist is _____ with fellow historicists. While admittedly there is variation of interpretation in any one of these systems of interpretation, the lack of agreement among historicists is overwhelming. While many historicists see the barbaric invasions referenced in the first trumpet, another sees this to be an allusion to a storm of _____ that fell upon the church. The trees and grass destroyed represent the church’s clergy and laity respectively. The reason for such wide ranging disagreement is that the assignment of the prophecies of Revelation to historical events is unbelievably _____. When the prophecy must be allegorized before it can be equated with a historical event, then it can be made to mean almost anything.
- c. In evaluating the validity of this approach to interpreting the prophecy of Revelation, it is helpful to ask, “Is this the way we see Old Testament prophecy fulfilled?” Did the prophets make bold statements that were then declared to be fulfilled by allegorizing them or toning them down to fit what actually happened? _____ The prophets predicted the virgin birth in Bethlehem, the flight to Egypt, the slaughter of the children, Jesus’ childhood in Nazareth, His betrayal for 30 pieces of silver, and on and on. These very specific prophecies were fulfilled in exact _____ without need for allegorizing or synthesizing. We should expect the prophecy of Revelation to be of no less quality.
- 3. Symbolic** – This view has many names: idealist, _____, allegorical, dramatic, history of philosophy school. Symbolic interpreters do not believe that the prophecies of Revelation will be fulfilled in _____ events. The things described in the judgments are not really going to happen as described in the book. They believe that these prophecies are symbolic of the continuing struggle between good & evil, between Christ and Satan. These prophecies are given to us to teach _____ truths that are depicted throughout history and are true in any age. See a sample of this interpretation of the first trumpet judgment.

Revelation 8:7 NKJV The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

A symbolic interpreter says, “These trumpets of judgment... indicate series of happenings, that is, calamities that will occur again and again throughout this

dispensation. They do not symbolize single and separate events, but they refer to woes that may be seen any day of the year in any part of the globe.”

We might ask, “When was one single time we saw this happen? Any day? Anywhere? Really?”

Problems:

- a. Denies stated intention of the Rev. 1:19, that the Lord is telling John what will take place after this. It also denies that Revelation is _____, which is not limited to but includes the foretelling of the future by declaring certain events before they happen.
 - b. Seeing the entire book as a collection of symbols of _____ messages makes the book entirely subjective, and consequently it loses all meaning beyond a general encouragement that God is victorious over evil.
- 4. Futurist** – The futurist sees everything in Revelation from chapter 4 on as prophecy of what will take place in the future. The futurist sees Revelation as offering a picture of what is going to happen to the earth during and following the _____ spoken of by our Lord. It reveals a rapture of the church, seven years of tribulation, the rise and fall of the antichrist, the second coming of Christ, the Millennial Kingdom, and the new _____. Futurists adhere to a literal interpretation of the text. When the text says “fire fell from heaven,” the futurist believes that fire is going to fall from heaven. While the futurist admits that imagery and symbolic language are used in the book, in most places Revelation itself explains the symbol and does not leave it to the subjective speculation of every reader. In other cases, symbol is explained by prior biblical reference. But in every case, symbol reveals real events, persons, and places.

Problem:

The primary criticism against a futurist interpretation is that futurism was most fully developed as a view of Revelation by a Jesuit in _____ in an effort to defend the papacy from the attack of the historicists who said the beast of Revelation was the Pope or the Catholic Church. However, this criticism ignores the fact that the very _____ commentary of Revelation, found from the writings of believers in the early church, takes a futurist approach to the Revelation. The same is true of most of the church fathers before _____ A.D: Papias (c. 130), Justin, Irenaeus, and Tertullian. This observation does not settle the issue theologically, but futurists enjoy the benefit of identifying their view as the most similar to the earliest Christian commentators.

B. How are we going to treat the book of Revelation in this study?

1. Straight forward.

2. _____ (does not mean there is no symbolic language. A literal interpretation means that the events, people, places described are real events, people, and places.)
3. _____

C. Why are we going to treat Revelation this way?

1. Because it matches the declaration of intent of the book, and it gives credit to the integrity of the Holy Spirit in **Revelation 1:19** **Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.**
2. This approach is _____ with rest of Scripture. Daniel and many portions of other prophets are a mystery without Revelation. Many sayings of Jesus - such as Mt. 24 & 25 refer to events described in the Revelation.
3. This is the _____ way to approach the book. Virtually any believer who picked up the book of Revelation to read it for the first time without being instructed concerning the way he should understand it, would read it in this way.

Revelation is not an easy book to study.

III. HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES OF UNDERSTANDING REVELATION AND THE END TIMES?

A. By straight forward approach.

B. By studying Revelation in the _____ and with the background of all the other Scriptures. It is not by coincidence that Revelation is the final book of the Bible. A person makes a mistake trying to study the Revelation if he has not already seriously studied all of the rest of Scripture, Old and New Testaments.

C. By remembering some principles of Bible Study.

1. The Scripture is _____; it does not contradict itself.
2. Every portion of Scripture is perfect, but every portion is not _____.
 - a. One passage tells one thing.
 - b. Another passage tells us another.

For instance, consider the prophecies of Jesus birth:

- 1) from Galilee

- 2) born in Bethlehem
 - 3) _____ would indicate birth of a king
 - 4) visit of the magi
 - 5) flight to Egypt
- c. But each of these details come from different passages, different prophets.
3. Therefore, as we study, every detail may not be laid out like a picture on a scroll.
 4. We will find the full picture assembles more like a _____ whose pieces fit perfectly together.

IV. WHAT WILL WE GAIN?

- A. We can understand what God is going to do in _____ and beyond it.**
- B. We can understand what is going to happen in the Rapture, Tribulation, Second Coming, Millennial Kingdom, New Heaven and New Earth.**
- C. We can _____ others and help them prepare for the days that are coming.**
- D. We will be blessed.**

Revelation 1:3 NKJV *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*

For those who wish to dig a little deeper concerning the Futurist Interpretation, I recommend the following article on the Bible Study tools website.

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/revelation/introduction/futurist-interpretation.html>