

Road to Eternity 2: The Church Age

Q&A Clarification vs New topics

Rapture: Isn't rapture a concept introduced in the late 1800's? What about cremation?

Tribulation: How is time "running out" if people can be saved in the Tribulation Does the Holy Spirit have to leave for the Antichrist to be revealed? If so, how do people get saved in the tribulation?

Millennial Kingdom: Will the 'sheep' lose their salvation?

Attitude regarding non-essentials

In the Essentials: Unity

In the Non-Essentials: Liberty

In All Things: Grace!

What's your Hermeneutic? (Herman-who??)

Why the disagreement in eschatology?

1. Mystery: Can you figure out a movie from its trailer?
2. Interpretation: What's your hermeneutic? (Herman-who??)

Hermeneutic: Interpretation of language, whether written or spoken. Interpretation!

We use: A 'Normal' (or 'Plain Sense') interpretation – often called 'literal'

A 'Normal' hermeneutic uses a plain grammatical-historical sense except when the author is using figurative language or symbols such as poetry or illustration.

Golden Rule of Interpretation:

"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, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise." — *The Golden Rule of Interpretation*, D.L. Cooper

When the plain sense of Scripture,
makes common sense,
seek no other sense,
or you'll have nonsense.

Why this hermeneutic for 1st and 2nd Coming? A Consistent Hermeneutic

The Bible is composed of 66 books of literature with different genres:

- Historical
- Doctrinal
- Poetic
- Prophetic

- The prophetic literature yet to be fulfilled is often called “apocalyptic literature”
- Apocalypse: *‘apokalypsis’*: “reveal”. The Revelation = *Apokalypsis*
- A Normal hermeneutic uses a consistent interpretation for all of scripture (it doesn’t change for apocalyptic literature to a ‘spiritualized’ or ‘figurative’, or ‘allegorical’ interpretation)
- Justification for this hermeneutic: since prophecies of the first coming were fulfilled via a normal interpretation, it is consistent to assume a normal hermeneutic for His Second Coming.

1st Coming with a Normal vs Figurative interpretation:

Ps 22:8 Divided clothes: “dramatic metaphor that his earthly reputation, dignity or legacy would be torn apart by society and culture”

Ps 22:16 Pierced hands / feet: “poetic description of feeling trapped, emotionally broken, or deeply overwhelmed by fierce enemies”

Is 7:14 Born of a Virgin: “symbolic picture of ultimate moral purity and new beginning.

Zech 9:9 Riding a donkey into Jerusalem: “peaceful leader arriving to bring a new spiritual kingdom or attitude to his people Israel” Surely can’t be the mighty Messiah riding a pack animal!

2nd Coming Normal Interpretation method:

Zech 9:10 Figurative: Jesus will bring peace to our hearts and the church will spread in authority in ruling the world

Normal: Jesus will dismantle the military powers of the world, and rule over all of the physical earth bringing global peace

Zech 14 Jesus rules from Jerusalem - - we believe it is from Jerusalem, David’s Throne

Is 11:6-9 wolf and lamb lay down together, lion eats straw like an ox

Rev 20:1-7 1,000 year reign 6X

(This also answers the questions “Why do the Jews not believe Jesus is the Messiah?”)

Why is “Herman-who” important?

“Now we must frankly admit the literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies gives us just such a picture of an earthly reign of the Messiah as the premillennialist pictures.”

- Floyd Hamilton, *The Basis of the Millennial Faith*

“It is generally agreed that if the prophecies are taken literally, they do foretell a restoration of the nation of Israel in the land of Palestine, with the Jews having a prominent place in that kingdom and ruling over the other nations.”

- Loraine Boettner, *The Meaning of the Millennium*

- The primary conclusion of a normal hermeneutic is that God isn’t done with Israel, and He will establish a physical kingdom on the earth that He will rule from.
- The church does not supersede / replace / fulfill Israel’s covenantal promises.
- A resulting ‘anchor’ of End-time Prophecy becomes the Temple and Israel

Romans 11:1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!

The Church Age

Jesus is working through His Church!

Revelation 1 Jesus is among (tending) 7 golden lampstands (v20 – the seven churches)

What Jesus says to the 7 Churches of Revelation 2-3

- Historical: What Jesus said to these actual churches and their issues
- Ecclesial: The timeless message that Jesus says to the church as a whole
- Prophetic: Jesus provides a prophetic panorama of successive eras in the Church Age
 - Note: I'm not supporting this view, but points of it are plausible to speculative

Church	Definition	Age	~Years	Possible Event
Ephesus	Desired / Purposed	Apostolic Church	33-100	Pentecost
Smyrna	Myrrh / bitterness	Persecuted Church	100-313	Domitian's Reign
Pergamum	Great Marriage	Roman Empire	313-476	Constantine's Reign
Thyatira	Odor of affliction	Roman Catholic	476-1517	Fall of Rome
Sardis	Remnant	Reformation Church	1517-1648	Luther's 95 Theses
Philadelphia	Brotherly Love	Missionary Church	1648-1900	Peace of Westphalia
Laodicea	Rights of the People	Lukewarm Church	1900-Rapture	Textual Criticism

Ephesus 2:1-7 Apostolic Church

- “persevered and endured” – work of the Apostles and early church to spread the gospel in the midst of persecution and hardship
- “put to the test those who call themselves apostles” – battle against false teachers before the canon of scripture

Smyrna 2:8-11 Persecuted Church

- “tribulation and poverty but you are rich” – intense persecution but growth of rich “spiritual life in Christ
- “faithful until death” – Christian martyrdom

Pergamum 2:12-2:17 Roman Empire Church

- “dwell with Satan's throne” – the church is now part of the state religion
- “teaching of Balaam” – pagan customs and practices are compromising the church
- “doctrine of Nicolaitans” – beginning of the rise of the clergy who ‘conquer the laity’.

Thyatira 2:18-2:28 Roman Catholic Church

- Jezebel – corrupt religious authority and the rise of Mary worship
- “sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols” – accommodation of pagan practices as sacraments

- “cast her into a sickbed”, “kill her children with pestilence and all the churches will know” – the Black Plague of 1346-1353

Sardis 3:1-6 Reformation Church

- “Wake up” – the protestant reformation
- “you are alive but dead” – Creeds but no deeds
- “strengthen what remains” – recovering biblical doctrine from corruption

Philadelphia 3:7-13 Missionary Church

- “little strength but you keep my word” – small but faithful missionary movements
- “set before you an open door” – missionary opportunities open
- “kept my command to persevere” – missionary efforts despite hardship and opposition

Laodicea 3:14-22 Lukewarm Church

- “you are lukewarm” – spiritual compromise and comfort over taking up our cross
- “rich and in need of nothing” – material prosperity is more important than Christianity
- “I stand at the door and knock” – churches move away from the gospel, doctrine and Jesus

Signs of the End of the Church Age

The Church: apostasy and weak doctrine

2 Tim 4:3-4 not endure sound doctrine, want their ears tickled, accumulate teachers for their own desires, turn away from the truth and turn to myths

2 Thess 2:3, 1 Tim 4:1-3 the falling away, paying attention to deceitful spirits / demons, seared conscience, forbid marriage, advocate abstaining from foods

Culture - difficult times, moral deterioration, increasing lawlessness

2 Tim 3:1-5 lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God

James 5:3-6 storing up of treasures, not paying the laborer fairly, living luxuriously in wanton pleasure, will condemn and put to death the righteous

Olivet Discourse

Matt 24:7-8, Luke 21:10-11 World War, famines, earthquakes, plagues, terrors and great signs from heavens. Described as “birth pangs”

Israel

Is 66:8-9 becomes a nation in one day – May 14, 1948

Matt 24:32-34 Parable of the Fig Tree – if Israel, that generation (100 years) will see “all these things take place”

Ez 20:34, 37:13 regathers into their land, valley of dry bones has life again – Jerusalem reclaimed June 7, 1967; current population: 10.3 million people
Zech 12:2-3 Jerusalem becomes a global focus point
Ez 40, Rev 11:1-2 Third Temple

World

Dan 2:41-43, 7:23-25, Rev 11:9-10, 13:1, 8, 16-7 17:12-3

- 10 Kings in the Tribulation
- Increasing movement toward multinational political structures
- Less individual national sovereignty – centralized government authority
- Global commerce (currency?) capable of centralized control
- Global calls for 'One purpose' with political consolidation and economic control
- A system capable of identifying individuals and regulating them
- Global communication with worldwide visibility
- Global religion and allegiance

Ezekiel 38-39, Ps 83 International coalitions against Israel

- Gog and Magog: Iran / Russia and other nations wage war against Israel

Why look for signs and what should be our heart posture?

Is 46:8-10

Luke 21:28 Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

Rev 22:17 The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

Rev 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!