

The Book of Revelation

Week 3 – Approaches to Revelation

August 28, 2024

Introduction

Goals

1. To encourage believers with the basic theme and structure of Revelation.
2. To help you understand the meaning and significance of the book's broad contours and specific texts.
3. To equip you to read the Bible more faithfully and humbly.
4. To stir your worship of God, appreciation for His Word, and longing for the consummation of all things in Christ.
5. To challenge our zeal (or lack of it) for evangelizing those around us.

Questions

- *Would the first readers have understood this book as Hebrew Apocalyptic Literature? Yes, because it fits into a well-established genre even at that time.*

Four Approaches to Interpretation

1. **Preterism**
2. **Historicism**
3. **Futurism**
4. **Idealism**

Millennial Views (Revelation 20:1-6)

1. Premillennialism

- *Historical premillennialism*
- *Dispensational premillennialism*

2. Postmillennialism

3. Amillennialism

Hermeneutics (Another Sidebar)

- Our first task is *exegesis* – “The careful, systematic study of Scripture to discover the original, intended meaning.”
- Our second task is *hermeneutics* – In the broadest sense it refers to the whole process of interpretation (that includes exegesis) or the ‘principles people use to understand what something means, to comprehend what a message is endeavoring to communicate.’

Grammatical-Historical Hermeneutic

- Every passage has *a* meaning grounded in the author’s original intent & discoverable by determining the meaning of the words, sentences, & paragraphs according to their plain meaning and interpreting them in light of their context.
- The ‘grammatical’ component means we must dig into each word/phrase/sentence to observe what the author intended to communicate.
- The ‘historical’ component means we must grasp the setting/context of the book to understand it rightly. “Every text has a context.”
 - Literary Context
 - Historical Context
 - Cultural Context
 - Geographic Context
- Observation – Interpretation – Application

Biblical Theology And Hermeneutics

- Scripture is progressive.
- Scripture is a unified whole.

Two More Aspects Characteristics

- Redemptive-Historical/Epochal

- Canonical

A Four-Part Hermeneutic

5. Grammatical
6. Historical
7. Epochal
8. Canonical

Competing Biblical-Theological Systems

1. Dispensationalism

History

Basic Definition

- Dispensationalism refers to a theological system that sees the distinctions between the dispensations as the key factor in understanding the Bible's unfolding plotline.

Primary Hermeneutical Principles

- The history of redemption can be divided into dispensations or distinct periods in which God worked in different ways. Classic Dispensationalism saw 7 of them.
 9. Innocence
 10. Conscience
 11. Human Government
 12. Promise
 5. Law
 6. Grace
 7. Millennial Kingdom of Christ
- There is a sharp distinction between Israel and the Church.
- They tend toward a more literal interpretation of prophecy, including apocalyptic prophecy.

- They are strongly futuristic in their approach to interpreting Revelation and are thus, premillennial.

Differences within the Streams

Common Threads in ALL forms of Dispensationalism

2. Covenant Theology

History

Basic Definition

- 'Covenant theology views the covenants as more than a theme or concept of Scripture, but as the Bible's own 'architectonic structure of biblical faith and practice. It is not simply the concept of the covenant, but the concrete existence of God's covenantal dealings in our history that provides the context within which we recognize the unity of Scripture amid its remarkable variety' and make theological conclusions. Michael Horton, *God of Promise*.

3 Covenants

- *Covenant of Redemption*

- *Covenant of Works*

- *Covenant of Grace*

Essential *Continuity* between the Covenants