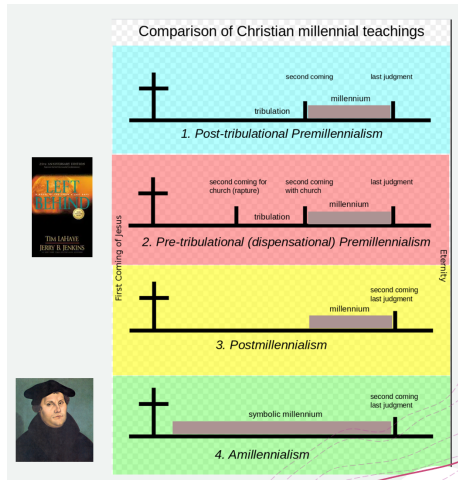


End Time Prophecy Part 3: What Lutherans Believe

Amillennial Interpretation of End Time Prophecy

Lutherans in a Dispensationalist World



Last week we discussed Dispensationalism as a popular belief system regarding the end times. This week we look at the more traditional Lutheran Interpretation.

Luther's Day:

- Reformation was a radical departure from the Catholic Church
- Led to other radical belief systems
- Many of these groups held "millennialist" views that were not based in Scripture
- Used to justify violent actions, demonstrations, or doctrinal changes that were not scripturally sound
- Luther resisted these factions
- Even in Luther's time there were false doctrines circulating
- He saw connections between Revelation prophecies, and the corrupt world

Amillennial View: Foundations of Interpretation

- In accordance with apocalyptic literature
- Not necessarily a literal interpretation of scripture
- Scripture contains symbolic references-NOT a literal timeline

We don't know the precise time and place of Christ's return-only God knows that!

We CAN and SHOULD be aware of the scriptures regarding the second coming of Jesus

Jesus spoke of the end of the age. We CANNOT predict when Jesus will return. We CAN however interpret the signs that foreshadow His coming.

Mat 24:36 "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only."

There will be signs (and there are now signs) that the end times are coming- Jesus told us this: Mat 24:32-33 "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. (33) So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates.

Antichrist

- Mentioned in Scripture-but NOT in Revelation
- Only John's letters use this term-mentioned in the context of combating false beliefs like Gnosticism
- We need to be mindful of the meaning of the term and its proper usage as it relates to prophesy
- The "Last Days" existed from the time of John to the Judgement Day
- The spirit of the antichrist influences behavior today and leads people to deny Christ
- Scriptures also teach that there is one climactic "Anti-Christ"
- Will come immediately before Christ returns
- Will lead a rebellion against Christ and His people
- Not yet active as he has been held in check
- When the Gospel has been preached to all nations the man of lawlessness will be revealed and loosed upon the world.

Millennium

- The Millennium (1000 years) is symbolic language for the Church Age.
- Satan is "bound" during the Church Age. The binding restricts but does not eliminate Satan's persecution of the church until the very end of the Church Age when he is "loosed" for a short time.
- The Millennium as we understand it is happening NOW-the Church age
- Contrary to the Dispensational point of view, we believe that all those in Christ reign with Him NOW

Satan Bound; Satan Loosed

- When Satan is loosed in Revelation, he is free to war against God's people by deceiving the nations
- So the "binding" means that during the millennium he cannot deceive the nations as he did in the Old Testament times

Israel/Jerusalem

- The Old Testament speaks of prophecies mentioning Israel during the end times.
- Dispensationalists interpret this to mean a literal reconstruction of the Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem where a Mosque now stands, and that Christ will reign from that place on earth, and the Jewish nation will rule with Christ, and the Gentiles will be recipients of these blessings

This is figurative, not literal, meaning God's Reign speaks of God's Grace given to ALL people, not just a select few. Scripture tells us the following:

Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews"

"The New Testament has been written as the ultimate norm for the fulfillment and interpretation of Israel's prophecies. A Christian would deny his Christian faith and Lord if he reads the Old Testament as a closed entity, as the full and final message of God for Jews irrespective of the cross and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah, and apart from the New Testament explanation of the Hebrew writings. "

-Hans LaRondelle, The Israel of God in Prophecy

Christ's Return

- Christ's Second Coming will be Glorious and evident to all!
- It will not be in phases or only evident to a "chosen few."
- There will be no opportunity to "wait and see what happens"
- Unbelievers beware!

How Can We Be Ready?

- Stay in the Word daily
- Know the signs of His coming
- Be aware that we are living in the "times of the signs."
- Beware of false teaching
- Trust in the Lord

In Summary

- End Time Prophecy is written in imagery, not literal depictions
- The traditional (and Lutheran) interpretation of end time prophecy is much less complicated than the Dispensational View
- Lutherans interpret end time prophecy through the lens of Scripture, not current events
- Christ's return will be a single glorious event that cannot be misinterpreted
- The "Millennium" is happening now as the Gospel is spread to all nations-not a literal 1000 years
- Rather than an Earthly Kingdom separate from the Gentiles, Christ will reign over all
- The term "antichrist" can have several meanings, not necessarily a political figure to come
- Old Testament prophecy cannot be interpreted separate from Jesus!
- We CANNOT predict the time of Jesus' Return
- We CAN be aware of the signs he gave us

References For Parts 2 and 3 of the Prophecy Series:

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