

2 CENTURIES OF HOPE – 1

Purpose: To gain a better understanding of what the Bible says about the second coming of Jesus. To provide a better understanding of various views of the prophecies of end time events to precede the 2nd coming and that announce that 2nd coming is at hand. To enable us to enter into a compassionate dialogue with Christians who hold differing views about end time prophecies and events.

Rock Solid Hope Defined

Rock -- Jesus

Solid – Based on Biblical Evidence

Hope – Certain Expectation

The Basis of Hope in the Second Coming

Malachi 4:1-3 (ESV) 1 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. 3 And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts.

Matthew 16:25-27 (ESV) 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

John 14:1-3 (ESV) 1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Titus 2: 11-13 (ESV) 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Learning from the Past

Le Roy Froom's 4 Volume Set The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers. 16 years.

3 Concerns

1. Truth is best seen in the rear view mirror.

John 14:28-29 (ESV) 28 You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe.

John 16:4 But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you. "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.

2. We must be open to progressive truth.

2 Peter 1:19-21 (NLT) 19 Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts. 20 Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, 21 or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

Daniel 8:26-27, 9:1-2, 20-23 26 The vision of the evenings and the mornings that has been told is true, but seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now." 27 And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king's business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it. 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. . . 20 While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the Lord my God for the holy hill of my God, 21 while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. 23 At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.

“(I was) slowly but irresistibly brought to the conclusion that prophecy has been progressively understood just as fast as history has fulfilled it, step by step, down through the passing centuries. And, further, that always at the time of fulfillment of each major epoch and event of prophecy there have been numerous men of eminence and godliness, widely scattered geographically, who have recognized that a fulfillment was taking place before their very eyes. They have sensed where they were on the timetable of prophecy and have left the record of that recognition. Such is the evidence.”
Froom, v. 1, p. 15

3. Deceptions came early

Galatians 1:6-9 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 not that

there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, 10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, 12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2 Peter 2:1-2 (ESV) 1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.

Revelation 2 and 3

A Brief Look at the Main Prophecies of Daniel and Revelation

Daniel 2, 7 and 8 set the tone for prophetic interpretation in the Bible (Pew Bible, p. 737ff)

Revelation 13 links the understanding of Revelation to Daniel (Pew Bibles p. 1035)

Early Church Fathers Teachings (1st Century to ca. 400 AD)

Prominent Voices

Josephus, ca 100 Jewish historian – Identified kingdoms, Hesitant on Stone (Messiah)

Justin Martyr, ca 165 First apologist. 2nd coming and stone, after the Antichrist, 2 resurrections bookend the millennium, 1000 years

Irenaeus, ca 202, bishop of Lyons, Identified Rome as 4th kingdom, connects toes and horns, connects Antichrist with Man of Sin and Beast and little horn, Resurrection of the Just at 2nd Coming and a general resurrection after the millennium, that will take place on the earth.

Tertullian, ca 240 most prolific writer, connects Babylon and Rome. Prophecy spans the 1st and 2nd Advent. 70 weeks fulfills 1st Advent.

Hippolytus, ca 236 Bishop of Rome. Comm. On Daniel Dan. 2 & 7 Parallel Antichrist rules while church in the wilderness. 666 tied to Rome. **Cites Antiochus Epiphanes as fulfilling Dan. 8:14 and 1st to separate the 70th week to end of world.**

Origen, ca 254 mystical. “Virtually all heresies that have blighted the Christian church can be traced to Origen.” Leroy Froom. Origen disconnected the 2nd Advent from the resurrection of the saints and spiritualized 2nd Coming to personal encounter.

Victorinus (303,304) Established the principle of repetition or recapitulation. 7 seals spans 1st & 2nd Advent, looked for a Roman Antichrist.

Council of Nicea, 325

Eusebius, ca 340 (early and later views) Father of Church History, Crucifixion in midst of 70th week.

Ambrose, 397, Abomination of Desolation was the armies of Rome around Jerusalem, Literal Advent, resurrection of the Body.

Chrysostom, 407, Constantinople, Antichrist to appear in every church, system

Jerome, 420, Commentary on Daniel—opposed that Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled Dan 8. Saw breakup of Rome fulfilling prophecies, opposed Origen’s spiritualizing, believed he was living between the period between the legs and feet of Daniel 2, Christ the stone, AntiChrist would come after destruction of Rome and setting up divisions, Line of history is antichrist-Judgment, Second Coming. He was amillennial., Year day principle,

Key Teachings

1. The 4 world powers of Daniel 2 and 7 are Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome
2. The 10 toes of Daniel 2 and 10 horns of Daniel 7 are linked together and represent a division of the 4th world power, Rome. The breakup of Rome was seen as a fulfillment at the very time it occurred and afterwards.
3. It was generally recognized that the Antichrist would emerge sometime after the fall of the Roman Empire.
4. The judgment, the Second Advent and the establishment of the kingdom of God would take place at the end of the age.
5. The little horn of Dan. 7 was associated with the Antichrist, who would come after the break up of Rome.
6. It was the consensus of opinion that pagan Rome hindered or restrained the appearance of the Antichrist, who was synonymous with the man of sin, the mystery of iniquity and the Son of Perdition.
7. The 70 weeks were understood as 490 years lasting from the time of Persia until the Messiah, and pertained particularly to the Jews.
8. All other time prophecies were taken as literal days.
9. The second coming will be a glorious, literal event. The resurrection of the dead will take place at that time.
10. There was an evident, concerted emphasis on the progressive current fulfillment of prophecy. The Antichrist would sometime appear after the fall of Rome and his reign would be terminated by the second coming of Christ who would then establish His kingdom.

Note: The study and teaching of Revelation was not a key part of this time period. It was still gaining acceptance as part of the canon. ca 400 AD W, 700 AD E

GLOSSARY

Eschatology – the doctrine or teaching of last day events including end time prophecies, God’s work of judgment, the second coming, the millennium, hell, heaven and eternal life.

Dispensationalism– A dividing of world history into seven ages, or dispensations – time periods in each of which it is held that God deals differently with each age or dispensation depending upon the covenant of that age. This teaching regards the “church age” or Christian era as a “gap” in prophecy, as an age of pure grace between the Jewish dispensation of law and a future one in which the Jews will again be seen as God’s chosen people and will rule the nations under the Mosaic code.

Biblical Interpretation

Literalism or Fundamentalism - is used by most conservative Christians today. The essence of this approach focuses upon the author's intent as the primary meaning of the text. While literalism recognizes the literary aspects of scripture and the historical and cultural contexts, it gives primary emphasis to the actual words or literal sense of the passage. Therefore, in prophetic passages, absolute literal fulfillment is expected.

Verbalism or Thought - It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.

Schools of Prophetic Interpretation

Historicist - treats the eschatological prophecies of Daniel and Revelation as finding literal earthly fulfillment through the history of the church age and especially in relation to the struggle between the true church and apostasy.

Preterism - holds that some or all of the biblical prophecies concerning the Last Days or End Times refer to events that already happened in the first century after Christ's birth. They teach that this is true because of its claims that Israel was supplanted by the Christian church at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Futurism - places the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Book of Revelation and the Book of Daniel and the Olivet discourse and The Sheep and the Goats generally in the future as literal, physical, apocalyptic and global. This is closely aligned with dispensationalism.

Idealism – treats prophecy as an allegory to teach spiritual lessons that will lead Christians to more ideal, authentic faith.

Views of the Second Coming and the Tribulation

Pasttribulationism – A teaching held by preterists. They believe that the tribulation occurred in AD 70 with the fall and destruction of Jerusalem. Partial Preterists believe that there will be a second coming, a resurrection of the dead and the granting of eternal life in a new heaven and new earth for the redeemed and the condemnation and punishment of hell for the lost. Full Preterists believe that the second coming has already taken place in AD 70 and that the judgment is ongoing and takes effect upon the death of each individual.

Pretribulationism – A view that teaches that a secret rapture of the church will occur prior to a brief and intense period of tribulation that will last from 3 ½ to 7 years on earth and be led by a single anti-Christ. Those who hold to a futurist view of scripture and are also dispensationalist largely hold this view.

Prewrathtribulationism - A teaching that the church remains on earth during the first 3 ½ years of tribulation. They are protected by God and then are raptured after 3 ½ years, at which time the bowls of God's wrath are poured out on the earth.

Posttribulationism – A view that teaches that Christians will go through the tribulation.

The Millenium

Amillennialism – teaches that the 1000 years of Bible prophecy is merely a figurative expression referring either to the spiritual reign of Christ's kingdom in this age or to no specific time period at all.

Premillennialism – The teaching that the second coming precedes the 1000 years of Bible prophecy

Postmillennialism – The teaching that the second coming of Jesus is after the 1000 year period of Bible prophecy.

