

2 CENTURIES OF HOPE – 2

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 other Christians who hold differing views about end time prophecies, events and the 2nd Coming of Jesus.

Review

Rock Solid Hope Defined

Rock -- Jesus
Solid – Based on Biblical Evidence
Hope – Certain Expectation

The Basis of Hope in the Second Coming --

Hebrews 9:27-28 (ESV) 27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

James 5:7-8 7 Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. 8 You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

Learning from the Past

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

Not final, but helpful. Not conclusive, but informative. Bible itself.

3 Concerns

1. Prophecy is best seen in the rear view mirror.
2. We must be open to progressive truth.
3. Deceptions and false teachings appeared early

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.
PowerPoint chart from NIV study Bible.
Revelation 13 links the understanding of Revelation to Daniel

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

Prominent Voices

Key Teachings – 10

Summary, followed the historicist view of interpreting scripture.

Tonight – Finish the history of the teachings of the church. Broad strokes.

Early Medieval Church (ca 400 AD to mid 1200)

Key Voices

Augustine d. 430, Bishop of Hippo – He adopted a modified mystical or spiritual approach to scripture. He viewed scripture as largely allegorical in nature. He divided time into 7 ages of the world. He taught that the church is the kingdom of God. He also taught that the Bible is to be interpreted in the light of church orthodoxy. The church is the stone that shatters all earthly kingdoms, until it fills the whole earth. Therefore, the New Jerusalem is the church. He taught that the 1st resurrection is the resurrection of dead souls from sin to eternal life. 2nd resurrection occurs at the end of time. He taught the millennium as being the span of time between the 1st and 2nd advent of Christ. During this time the devil is bound by the church and the abyss is the countless multitude of the wicked who war against the church. He taught that the beast is the ungodly world. He taught that Rome is the mystical Babylon, but that it is doing God's bidding in that it conquers and claims the world, just as Babylon did, at God's command. He believed Jerome was correct in teaching that Daniel's 70th week defined the time when Christ would come and suffer.

Venerable Bede (d. 735), British monk. – Bede followed much of the teachings of Augustine in his views on prophecy and end time events. He taught a modified historicist position on the 7 churches, seals and trumpets. He enthusiastically endorsed Augustine's 7 ages of the world.

Bernard of Clairvaux, (d. 1153). He was an advocate of holiness and devout faith in the face of a growing scholastic approach to faith in the church. He taught there were three advents: the coming *to* me, the coming *in* men and the coming *for* men. He did not focus on prophetic themes or the 2nd Coming. He taught that the resurrection of the body would take place at the second advent and that his coming would be a literal one. He charged that the anti-pope, or false pope, was the Antichrist Beast. He taught that those involved in the corruption that was invading the hierarchy of the church were slaves of the Antichrist. He believed the 2nd Coming to be imminent.

Thomas Aquinas, (d. 1274). The father of Catholic theology. He held the historical view of the 4 empires. He continued much of the teachings of Augustine regarding last things.

Joachim of Floris, (d. 1202) Most noted expounder of prophecy of the Middle Ages. He divided history in the ages of the Father, Son and Spirit. The age of the Father as up to the time of Christ. The age of the Son extended from Christ's birth and included church era. The age of the Spirit, Joachim believed, was just around the corner. At this time the full revelation of spiritual things would become a reality. This view reinstated a historicist approach to prophecy. He took Jerome's position on the images of Daniel, and stated that the kingdom of iron and clay would be the final kingdom and that the stone is the 2nd coming of Christ. He refutes Antiochus as the little horn, but does not identify it. He taught that the 7 seals and 7 trumpets span the Christian era. He applied the year day principle to all the longer time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

Arnold of Villanova, (d. 1292) He applied the year-day principle to the 2300 evenings and mornings. He believed it began at the time of Daniel and stretched to the 2nd Coming. He believed the Antichrist would appear in the 14th century.

Key Teachings

1. The Millennium begins at the coming of Christ and ends at the 2nd Coming.
2. The stone of Daniel 2, the kingdom of God, is the church.
3. End time events are spiritualized, thus placing them in the background.

4. Small roots of Preterism and futurism in teachings.
5. Toward the end there were glimpses of views that foreshadowed the reformation.

Prereformation and Reformation Era (13th Century to 16th Century)

Key Voices of the Reformation

John Wyclif, (1324-1384) – He is referred to as the Morning Star of the Reformation. He was a scholar at Oxford, received his Doctor of Theology at a time when few had obtained one. He began as a loyal Catholic and had no intentions of leaving the church. His study led to questions and he was confronted by Pope Gregory XI. Just prior to a hearing with the pope, in 1378, the pope died. Two popes were elected to succeed him, Clement VII and Urban VI. There was an ugly schism that developed, with each claiming to be Pope, each claiming the other to be the Antichrist and each pulling out all the stops to destroy one another. This was the last straw for Wyclif, and he withdrew his support of the church and the Papacy. He taught the 4 prophetic empires of Daniel. He also taught that the 10 horns were the 10 temporal rulers of his day and the papal system to be the Antichrist. He applied the Year-Day principle to all prophetic time.

John Huss, (1369-1415) – Priest in Prague. He read the writings of Wyclif and became a devoted follower of his teachings. He translated them and spread them all over Prague and beyond. He held the same views as Wyclif regarding last day events.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) and **Melanchthon** (1497-1560) Melanchthon was Luther's disciple and his teachings on the 2nd Coming mirrored Luther's. They were basically historicists, applying the 4 world empires to Daniel 2 and Daniel 7. They taught the papacy was the little horn and the Antichrist. They looked for the resurrection to occur at the Advent.

Thomas Cranmer, (1489-1556), **John Calvin**, (1509-1564), **John Knox**, (1505-1572)

Key Teachings

While there were a variety of interpretations in some of the details of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, the reformers all believed in a literal 2nd Coming of Christ. They all taught the 4 prophetic empires of Daniel. They all taught the papacy had become the Antichrist. They all held a historicist view of prophecy.

The CounterReformation (Council of Trent 1445-1563)

“To the ‘reformers’ the Apocalypse (Revelation) was in inexhaustible quarry where to dig for invectives that they might hurl them against the Roman hierarchy. The seven hills of Rome, the scarlet robes of the cardinals and the unfortunate abuses of the papal court made the application easy and tempting.”
The Catholic Encyclopedia, v. 1, p. 598

Key Voices

Francisco Ribera, (1537-1591), Jesuit Priest. “In order to remove the Catholic Church from consideration as the antichrist power, Ribera proposed that the first few chapters of the Apocalypse applied to ancient pagan Rome, and the rest he limited to a yet future period of 3 1/2 literal years, immediately prior to the second coming. During that time, the Roman Catholic Church would have fallen away from the pope into apostasy. Then, he proposed, the antichrist, a single individual, would:

- Persecute and blaspheme the saints of God.
- Rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.
- Abolish the Christian religion.
- Deny Jesus Christ.

Be received by the Jews.
Pretend to be God.
Kill the two witnesses of God.
Conquer the world.

“So, according to Ribera, the 1260 days and 42 months and 3 1/2 times of prophecy were not 1260 years, but a literal 3 1/2 years, and therefore none of the book of Revelation had any application to the middle ages or the papacy, but to the future, to a period immediately prior to the second coming, hence the name Futurism.”
Wikipedia, Ribera

Robert Bellarmine, (1542-1621) – The strongest proponent and writer of the Counter Reformation. He attacked the reformation by:

He benefited from Luther’s questions regarding the canonicity of Revelation.
He denied the year-day principle (Common opinion of the ancients)
He exploited some of the variations of interpretation between the reformers
He assigned prophetic symbols to either the past or the future.

Luis de Alcazar, (1554-1613), Jesuit Priest of Seville. He devoted himself to the study of philosophy and Scripture. His main work, published posthumously, was entitled, “Investigating the Hidden Sense of the Apocalypse. In short, he instituted the preterist view of scripture. He applied Revelation 1-11 to the past rejection of the Jews and the desolation of Jerusalem by pagan Rome in 70 AD. He then applied Revelation 12-19 to the overthrow of Roman paganism and the conversion of the empire to the church. Revelation 20-22 he applied to the future. He applied Revelation 20 to the final persecution of by the Antichrist and the day of judgment, chapters 21-22 he referred to the New Jerusalem and the triumphant state of the Roman Church.

The Catholic historian and writer, G.S Hitchcock admits that Ribera began the Futurist school that explains Revelation as something to take place in the future and that Alcazar founded the Preterist School that explains Revelation by the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the fall of pagan Rome in 410 AD.

From the 17th Century to Present

The Protestant/Catholic Polemic

The Enlightenment

Three Schools, Many Campuses, ie., Historicists, Preterists, Futurists