

The Hermeneutics of Eschatology

Should we ‘take the Bible literally?’

The Importance of 1 Peter 1:10-12 and Luke 24:44-47

“...according to the New Testament, the Old Testament as a whole points to Christ, and that its parts teach about various things, the coming Christ being one of those things. But of course a part of a book only takes on its full meaning in relation to the whole. Even in the New Testament, not every single verse refers directly to Christ, but the New Testament as a whole has meaning only in relation to him. The person of Christ lies at the heart of both testaments, even when they are discussing something else.” – *Let the Reader Understand*, McCartney and Clayton

Seven Foundational Principles for Interpreting Eschatology (cf. Sam Storms)

NB: These foundational principles are all interrelated and overlap to some degree.

1. Jesus Christ and his Church are the focal and terminating point of all prophecy.
2. Whereas the Old Testament saw the consummation of God’s redemptive purposes in one act, the NT authors portray it as coming in two phases or acts.
3. The New Testament serves, as it were, as “the ‘lexicon’ of the Old Testament’s eschatological expectation.” (Donald Garlington, “Reigning with Christ: Revelation 20:1-6 and the Question of the Millennium,” in *Reformation and Revival Journal*, 6:2 1997, 56).
4. Both the New Testament and history have proven, events are often separated by significant intervals of time. This has often been called prophetic foreshortening.
5. The unfolding fulfilment of God’s promises thus may be seen in terms of what Geerhardus Vos called a “binary configuration” (“The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit,” 93-94).
6. “Prophecy can only depict the future in terms which make sense to its present. It clothes the purpose of God in the hopes and fears of its contemporaries” (Richard Bauckham).
7. Any and every prophetic utterance must be interpreted in the light of the entire canon, with the understanding that the New Testament provides decisive hermeneutical guidance for the interpretation of Old Testament utterances and expectations.

Source List

McPhail, <http://www.reformedtheology.ca/endtimes.htm>

Storms, <http://www.samstorms.com/all-articles/keyword/eschatology>

Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*

McCartney and Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand*

Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*

Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*

Bauckham, *The Theology of Revelation*

Errors and Retractions:

- The reference to Amos 9 being one of the most important passages for dispensationalism is from the Scofield reference Bible and not Charles Ryrie.
- The critique of dispensational hermeneutics at the end of the class is harsh, but true. Progressive dispensationalists, however, would agree with much of what is articulated in this class.