

HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

Week 3/JROC – Why Are There Differing Views?

January 14, 2024

OT Expectation – the OT clearly teaches salvation and restoration of the nation of Israel in an earthly physical kingdom of God under the Messiah Jesus with land and physical blessings for Israel as the basis for bringing blessings to the nations – the GENTILES (Gen. 12:3; Gen. 18:18).

Two differing views:

My question in introducing these 2 differing views is “How do the NT and the OT connect? How does the NT understand the OT? Is the Bible one story?”

View #1: NT Literal Fulfillment of the OT Expectation:

- With the coming of Jesus, the expectation of the OT is literally maintained. What was prophesied in the OT – word for word – read in the plain sense of the word – WILL OCCUR!
 - And so, the coming of Jesus means the literal fulfillment of the OT expectations. Since there are two physical comings of Jesus, certain OT promises are fulfilled with Jesus’ first coming (Luke 4:16-19). The promises that will be fulfilled at the second coming of Jesus include many of the national and physical promises to Israel, along with creation’s restoration (Isa. 11; Isa. 65:17-25).

View #2: NT Reinterpretation/Transcending (Surpassing) Fulfillment of the OT Expectation:

- With the coming of Jesus, the expectation of the OT is fulfilled in Jesus as He absorbs, transcends, surpasses, alters the trajectory (God’s plan/path) of the OT expectations!
- Jesus and the Church are the true Israel and national, physical, and land promises are fulfilled spiritually in Jesus and/or the Church, NOT the nation of Israel.

George Eldon Ladd has stated that he and others like him “...form their theology from the explicit teaching of the NT and not from the OT. They confess that they cannot be sure how the OT prophecies of the end are to be fulfilled for the first coming of Christ was accomplished in terms not foreseen by a literal interpretation of the OT and there are unavoidable indications that the OT promises to Israel are fulfilled in the Christian church.” “Historic Premillennialism” in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views* (InterVarsity Press, 1977), p. 27.

Ladd also states that “The OT must be interpreted by the NT. ...it is quite possible that the prophecies addressed originally to literal Israel describing physical blessings have their fulfillment exclusively in the spiritual blessings enjoyed in the church. It is also possible that the OT expectation of a kingdom on earth could be reinterpreted by the NT altogether of blessings in the spiritual realm.” “Revelation 20 and the Millennium,” *Review and Expositor* 57 (1960), p. 167.

Louis Berkhof stated that Jesus “enlarged and transformed and spiritualized the kingdom,” Louis Berkhof, *The Kingdom of God*, p. 13.

NT Wright has stated, “Jesus spent His whole ministry redefining what the kingdom meant. He refused to give up the symbolic language of the kingdom, but filled it with such a new content that, as we have seen, he powerfully subverted Jewish expectations.” N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, p. 471.

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God authored the OT. We read the OT with “authorial intent” – with God’s intent – that is how we are to read Scripture! Jesus is God the Son! Was GOD not adamant in what He proclaimed in the Hebrew Scriptures?

Here’s another quote...

G.K. Beale believes in a change, alteration, revision from the OT to the NT! Beale writes, “The NT storyline will be a transformation of the OT storyline.” Beale teaches that the kingdom will be unlike what the OT writers predicted. “Perhaps one of the most striking features of Jesus’ kingdom is that it appears not to be the kind of kingdom prophesied in the OT and expected by Judaism.” Judaism?? What’s his definition of Judaism? Beale is teaching a HUGE shift!

G.K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*, p. 6.

How do believers get to the first view?

How do believers get to the second view?

Why is “How we are understanding the Bible” important?

We understand God’s character from the whole Scripture.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, God makes promises to Israel as He unfolds His plan of redemption.

In the Hebrew Scriptures we read of God’s delivering upon His promises...to the people to whom He made the promises!!!!

Rom. 11:29 – *The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.* God is NOT going to take His promises back...from the people to whom He has made these promises!

To whom did God promise the land? How do we know?

Eze. 35:3-11

Eze. 36:17-28

It is important to understand the Bible because the Bible is inerrant (without error): Verbal – to every word. Plenary – Scripture is fully authoritative – in ALL parts of the Scripture.

II Tim. 3:16 – *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*

There are those who are teaching “Fulfillment Theology” and not taking into account the specific OT prophecies that promise Jesus’ Second Coming.

Ladd stated, They confess that they cannot be sure how the OT prophecies of the end are to be fulfilled for the first coming of Christ was accomplished in terms **not foreseen by a literal interpretation of the OT** (???????) and there are unavoidable indications that the OT promises

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to Israel are fulfilled in the Christian church. Read Micah 5:2; Isa. 35:4-6; Psa. 22; Isa. 53; Psa. 16:10!!!!!! These prophecies re: Jesus’ first coming were fulfilled literally plus 100+ others!

How is “fulfillment” explained today by some Bible teachers, Pastors, theologians? “Fulfillment” speaks of the sum total of ALL that the law and Prophets anticipated: God's Kingdom now inaugurated by God's King. Jesus fulfils the law and the prophets by inaugurating the Kingdom of God to which they pointed. Inaugurating: to begin, to start, to launch, to institute. HAS THIS OCCURRED? NO!

Jesus is NOW our great High Priest Who FOREVER intercedes for us as He is currently seated at the right hand of God (Psa. 110:1; Acts 2:32-34; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 1:3; Heb. 12:2; I Pet. 3:22)