

A&P Bible Church | Weekly Study Zechariah 6

The book is one of consolation and hope, beginning with a call to repentance and concluding with prophecies concerning the return and reign of Christ.

Zechariah predicted more about Messiah than any other prophet except Isaiah. Prophecies concerning His first coming include Zech. 3:8; 9:9, 16; 11:11-13; 12:10; 13:1, 6; and prophecies to be fulfilled at His second coming include 6:12; 14:1-21.

Thank you to Yeshua Elohim Bible Church for their online Study Bible - visit www.yebc.net for more!

Throughout the week continue to look through the scriptures, think through the questions, and apply the Word to your life. Email any questions during the week to Brandon & Travis at ap.brandongarcia@gmail.com & ap.travisjohnson@gmail.com.

MONDAY**Zechariah 6 - Verse by Verse Commentary**
yebc.net

1 Once more I looked, and this time I saw four chariots emerging from between two mountains of bronze.

Zechariah recorded his eighth and final vision. He saw four chariots riding between two mountains of bronze. The two mountains are Mount Moriah and the Mount of Olives. Between these two mountains is the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The Valley of Jehoshaphat is where all of the Gentile nations who oppress Israel will be judged by God. Bronze was a symbol of judgment.

2 Harnessed to the first chariot were red horses, to the second black horses, 3 to the third white horses, and to the fourth spotted horses, all of them strong.

These four horses are not the four horses of the Apocalypse in Revelation 6. They are the angels who had earlier given a report to the Angel of the Lord. The Angel of the Lord was the pre-incarnate Christ.

4 Then I asked the angelic messenger who was speaking with me, "What are these, sir?"

Zechariah asked for the interpretation of the vision.

5 The messenger replied, "These are the four spirits of heaven that have been presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth.

The angel answered Zechariah's questions. These are the four angels who gave the Angel of the Lord the earlier report about the status of Gentiles. These angels are the ones in charge of the four Gentile powers who were mentioned in Daniel chapter 7.

6 The chariot with the black horses is going to the north country and the white ones are going after them, but the spotted ones are going to the south country.

These four angels were sent out to Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

7 All these strong ones are scattering; they have sought permission to go and walk about over the earth." The Lord had said, "Go! Walk about over the earth!" So they are doing so.

These four angels were sent out to perform a mission. They gave the report of their mission to the Lord Jesus Christ in His pre-incarnate form.

8 Then he cried out to me, "Look! The ones going to the northland have brought me peace about the northland."

God's messianic program is moving forward.

9 The word of the Lord came to me as follows:

After the eighth and final vision, Jehovah began to give prophetic messages to Zechariah.

10 "Choose some people from among the exiles, namely, Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, all of whom have come from Babylon, and when you have done so go to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah.

The angel asked Zechariah to assemble these three men at the home of Joshua. Joshua was the High Priest of Israel.

11 Then take some silver and gold to make a crown and set it on the head of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest.

Zechariah was to make a silver and gold crown and place it upon Joshua the High Priest. Levitical priests were not to serve in monarchy roles. Only those from the line of Judah could be appointed as king, and only if a prophet of God anointed them for office.

12 Then say to him, "The Lord who rules over all says, "Look—here is the man whose name is Branch, who will sprout up from his place and build the temple of the Lord.

Crowning the High Priest as king was the acting out of a future prophetic historical event which was to come. Just as the High Priest Joshua was crowned as king, so will Yeshua be crowned as king. The name Joshua is Hebrew for Yeshua, or Jesus. The Branch has already been announced as the Messiah of Israel. One of the attributes of the Branch was that He was to be deity. Now He is announced also to be human. The Branch (Jesus) will sprout up, meaning that He will be virgin born as a baby, but He will have to sprout (or grow) into a man. When He grows up, He will build the Millennial Kingdom Temple.

13 Indeed, he will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed in splendor, sitting as king on his throne. Moreover, there will be a priest with him on his throne and they will see eye to eye on everything.

The Branch will build the temple. He will be clothed in the Shekinah Glory, just as He was at His transfiguration. He will sit upon the throne of David and become king,

because He was born into the line of David. He will see eye-to-eye with Jehovah, meaning that They are both co-equal. They are both deity. Jesus will become a priest-king. He will be priest after the order of Melchizedek. He will be king from the line of David.

14 The crown will then be turned over to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen son of Zephaniah as a memorial in the temple of the Lord.

After Joshua is crowned temporarily in this prophetic and symbolic coronation, the crown will be turned over to these three men. They will place it in the temple as a memorial. This memorial will point to the future time period when King Jesus returns at His second coming and rules the world from Jerusalem.

15 Then those who are far away will come and build the temple of the Lord so that you may know that the Lord who rules over all has sent me to you. This will all come to pass if you completely obey the voice of the Lord your God.” ’ ”

Those from far away are the Romans. King Herod will use Roman taxes to rebuild Zerubbabel's temple to an even more glorious state. Jesus will step into this temple and claim to be the Messiah.

Zechariah 6 Breakdown

Zechariah 6:1-8 (Eighth Vision: Four Chariots)

Summary: The two mountains might be Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives (v.1). The vision is of four chariots pulled by red, black, white, and gray horses (v.3). These are angels under God's control (v.5), who are going to judge the world (v.6). These seem similar to Revelation 6:1-8. They don't go out until they hear a command from God (v.7).

(6:1) These “two mountains” likely refer to Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives and the Kidron Valley in between.[28] It could also be the splitting of the Mount of Olives with a large valley in between (cf. Zech. 14:4).

The “four chariots” are four angels or “spirits” (v.5).

(6:2-3) These are very similar to the horses in Revelation 6:1-8. If this is the case, then each would symbolize aspects of judgment (e.g. warfare, disease, hunger, etc.).

(6:4-6) North would be Babylonia. South would be Egypt. These horses (“angels”) go out to judge the nations.

(6:7-8) This shows that the angels go at God’s command. He is ultimately in charge and sovereign.

Zechariah 6:9-15 (The Priest King)

Summary: The Jews collect precious metals to make a crown for the high priest (vv.9-10). This is strange because the Jews kept their “Church and State” separate. Here, they are blended together! A priest-king? A king-priest? This makes sense in view of Jesus Christ: the ultimate Priest-King. It is not a coincidence that this typology of Christ occurs chronologically after the judgment of the nations in verses 1-8. This is a strong messianic passage.

The Messiah is going to rebuild the Temple (v.13), but when? Since Zerubbabel rebuilt the second Temple, this must be referring to the third Temple (cf. Ezek. 40-48). People from across the whole world will help in its construction (v.14). This can’t refer to the second Temple.

Why (or *how*) can this be conditional on Israel’s obedience? (v.15)

(6:9-10) The returning exiles take up a collection for the Temple.

(6:11) Joshua is a priest, but he is crowned as a king. The historical Joshua never served as a king. Instead, they took the crown from his head and put it in the Temple to serve as a reminder for the future (v.14).

(Zech. 6:9-15) Is this prophetic of Jesus?

Joshua—the high priest—is a type of Christ, who would be the ultimate King-Priest. It's interesting that both Joshua and Jesus have a name which means “the Lord saves” (Mt. 1:21).[29]

(6:12) The term “Branch” became a common term for the Messiah. Barker writes, “The Aramaic Targum, the Jerusalem Talmud, and the Midrash all regard the verse as messianic.”[30] This builds further on what God promised earlier: “Behold, I am going to bring my servant the Branch” (Zech. 3:8).

The “Branch” will rebuild the Temple. Yet, we are already told that Zerubbabel would rebuild the Temple (Zech. 4:9-10). This must, therefore, refer to the third Temple in the messianic (millennial) kingdom (Ezek. 40-48).[31]

(6:13) Again, this figure will rule over “two offices.” The throne likely refers to the Davidic throne (2 Sam. 7:11-14). This fits well with the Messiah being a King-Priest in Psalm 110.

(6:14) They put the crown in the Temple to remind people of the Messianic hope in the future.

(6:15) The Gentiles will come to rebuild the Temple. “Those who are far off” refers to the Gentiles (cf. Zech. 2:11; 8:22; Isa. 2:2-4; 56:6-7; 60:1-7).

Resource:

<https://www.evidenceunseen.com/bible-difficulties-2/ot-difficulties/zephaniah-haggai-zechariah-malachi/introduction-to-zechariah/>

For additional studies this week, listen to Dr. J. Vernon McGee's Zechariah sermons/studies: https://www.blueletterbible.org/audio_video/popPlayer.cfm?id=7088&rel=mcgee_j_vernon/Zec

What were 5 points that stood out to you in this chapter? They can be observances, cross references, questions, etc...

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Feel free to post & share in the blog comments & our church group page!

TUESDAY

Question: "What is biblical hermeneutics?"

Answer: Biblical hermeneutics is the study of the principles and methods of interpreting the text of the Bible. Second Timothy 2:15 commands believers to be involved in hermeneutics: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who . . . correctly handles the word of truth." The purpose of biblical hermeneutics is to help us to know how to properly interpret, understand, and apply the Bible.

The most important law of biblical hermeneutics is that the Bible should be interpreted literally. We are to understand the Bible in its normal or plain meaning, unless the passage is obviously intended to be symbolic or if figures of speech are employed. The Bible says what it means and means what it says. For example, when Jesus speaks of having fed "the five thousand" in Mark 8:19, the law of hermeneutics says we should understand *five thousand* literally—there was a crowd of hungry people that numbered five thousand who were fed with real bread and fish by a miracle-working Savior. Any attempt to "spiritualize" the number or to deny a literal miracle is to do injustice to the text and ignore the purpose of language, which is to communicate. Some interpreters make the mistake of trying to read between the lines of Scripture to come up with esoteric meanings that are not truly in the text, as if every passage has a hidden spiritual truth that we should seek to decrypt. Biblical hermeneutics keeps us faithful to the intended meaning of Scripture and away from allegorizing Bible verses that should be understood literally.

A second crucial law of biblical hermeneutics is that passages must be interpreted historically, grammatically, and contextually. Interpreting a passage historically means we must seek to understand the culture, background, and situation that prompted the text. For example, in order to fully understand Jonah's flight in Jonah 1:1–3, we should research the history of the Assyrians as related to Israel. Interpreting a passage grammatically requires one to follow the rules of grammar and recognize the nuances of Hebrew and Greek. For example, when Paul writes of "our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" in Titus 2:13, the rules of grammar state that *God* and *Savior* are parallel terms and they are both in apposition to *Jesus Christ*—in other words, Paul clearly calls Jesus "our great God." Interpreting a passage contextually involves considering the context of a verse or passage when trying to determine the meaning. The context includes the verses immediately preceding and following, the chapter, the book, and, most broadly, the entire Bible. For example, many puzzling statements in Ecclesiastes become clearer when kept in context—the book of Ecclesiastes is written from the earthly perspective "under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:3). In fact, the phrase *under the sun* is repeated about thirty times in the book, establishing the context for all that is "vanity" in this world.

A third law of biblical hermeneutics is that Scripture is always the best interpreter of Scripture. For this reason, we always compare Scripture with Scripture when trying to

determine the meaning of a passage. For example, Isaiah's condemnation of Judah's desire to seek Egypt's help and their reliance on a strong cavalry (Isaiah 31:1) was motivated, in part, by God's explicit command that His people not go to Egypt to seek horses (Deuteronomy 17:16).

Some people avoid studying biblical hermeneutics because they mistakenly believe it will limit their ability to learn new truths from God's Word or stifle the Holy Spirit's illumination of Scripture. But their fears are unfounded. Biblical hermeneutics is all about finding the correct interpretation of the inspired text. The purpose of biblical hermeneutics is to protect us from misapplying Scripture or allowing bias to color our understanding of truth. God's Word is truth (John 17:17). We want to see the truth, know the truth, and live the truth as best we can, and that's why biblical hermeneutics is vital.

Resource: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Biblical-hermeneutics.html>

Question: "Is partial preterism biblical? What do partial preterists believe?"

Answer: Preterism is the eschatological view that the "end times" prophecies of the Bible have already been fulfilled. So, when we read what the Bible says about the tribulation, we are reading history. Preterism is divided into two camps: full (or consistent) preterism and partial preterism. Full preterism takes an extreme view that *all* prophecy in the Bible has been fulfilled in one way or another. Partial preterists take a more moderate approach, and many partial preterists consider full preterists to be guilty of heresy.

Those who hold to partial preterism believe that the prophecies in Daniel, Matthew 24, and Revelation (with the exception of the last two or three chapters) have already been fulfilled and were fulfilled no later than the first century AD. According to partial preterism, there is no rapture, and passages describing the tribulation and the Antichrist are actually referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the Roman emperor Titus. Partial preterists do believe in the return of Christ to earth and a future resurrection and judgment, but they do not teach a millennial kingdom or that Israel as a nation has a place in God's future plan. According to partial preterists, the Bible's references to "the last days" are speaking of the last days of the Old Jewish Covenant, not the last days of the earth itself.

In order for partial preterists to maintain their position, they insist that the book of Revelation was written early (before AD 70). They must also use an inconsistent hermeneutic when interpreting prophetic passages. According to the preterist view of the end times, chapters 6–18 of Revelation are highly symbolic, not describing any literal events. Since the destruction of Jerusalem did not involve the wholesale destruction of sea life (Revelation 16:3) or agonizing darkness (verse 10), these judgments are interpreted by

the preterist as purely allegorical. However, according to preterists, chapter 19 is to be understood literally—Jesus Christ will physically return. But chapter 20 is again interpreted allegorically by preterists, while chapters 21–22 are understood literally, at least in part, in that there will truly be a new heaven and new earth.

No one denies that Revelation contains amazing and sometimes confusing visions. No one denies that Revelation describes many things figuratively—that's the nature of apocalyptic literature. However, to arbitrarily deny the literal nature of select portions of Revelation is to destroy the basis of interpreting *any* of the book literally. If the plagues, witnesses, beast, false prophet, millennial kingdom, etc., are all allegorical, then on what basis do we claim that the second coming of Christ and the new earth are literal? That is the failure of preterism—it leaves the interpretation of Revelation to the opinions of the interpreter.

Those who hold to partial preterism also do not read Matthew 24 in a literal sense. Christ spoke of the destruction of the temple (Matthew 24:2). But much of what He described did *not* occur in AD 70. Christ speaks of that future time as one of “great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24:21–22). Surely, this cannot be applied to the events of AD 70. There have been worse times in the history of the world since then.

The Lord also says, “Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:29–30). In order for the events of these two verses to have already occurred, Jesus Christ must have returned bodily in AD 70—but He did not. The partial preterist believes that these verses do not refer to a bodily return of Christ but to an appearing of His judgment. However, this is not what a normal, literal reading of the text would lead anyone to believe. It is the “Son of Man” whom people see, not just His judgment.

Partial preterists also appeal to Matthew 24:34 where Jesus speaks of “this generation.” They say that Christ was referring to those living at the time He spoke the words recorded in that chapter; thus, the tribulation had to occur within about 40 years of His statement. However, we believe that Jesus was not referring to the people of His day but to the generation who would witness the events recorded in Matthew 24:15–31. That future generation will witness all of the swiftly moving events of the last days, including Christ's bodily return (verses 29–30).

The partial preterist viewpoint leads to a belief in amillennialism (or post-millennialism) and is associated with covenant theology. Of course, it rejects dispensationalism. But its main problem is its inconsistent hermeneutic and its allegorizing of many biblical prophecies

that are better understood literally. While partial preterism is within the scope of orthodoxy, it is not the majority view among Christians today.

Resource: <https://www.gotquestions.org/partial-preterism.html>

Also Read: <https://israelmyglory.org/article/the-trouble-with-preterism/>

Question: "What biblical prophecies were fulfilled in AD 70?"

Answer: Much of importance happened in Israel in AD 70, and many link the events of that time to prophecies in the Bible. In studying this subject, it's good to remember that prophecy does not describe the future in the same way that history describes the past. That's why there are varied interpretations of biblical prophecy. Predictions dealing with the end times, a category known as eschatology, are of particular interest to many people. Within modern Christianity, most of these discussions are less about *which* events are predicted than *when* the events will happen. The most common point of reference for these opinions is the significant year of AD 70, when the Romans destroyed the Jewish temple.

Virtually all Christian interpretations of biblical prophecy agree that several prophecies were fulfilled in or before AD 70. Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple (Luke 21:6; Matthew 24:2) and, some would argue, the Jewish genocide at the hands of Rome (Luke 23:27-31). Historically, these events align extremely well with Jesus' statements. There is broad agreement within most Christian interpretations that these prophecies were literally fulfilled in AD 70.

There is debate over whether additional prophecies, such as those found in Daniel chapter 9, Matthew chapters 24 and 25, and Revelation chapters 6–18, were also fulfilled in AD 70 or if they are yet to come. Partial preterism and full preterism hold that most, if not all, of the prophetic events in the Bible were completed by the end of the first century, mostly prior to AD 70. Dispensationalism holds that only the temple destruction and possibly the genocide were actually fulfilled in AD 70 and that the rest of the prophecies will have a future fulfillment during the tribulation.

In terms of historical evidence, there is little to make a definitive case one way or the other. The events of AD 70 can be made to fit certain prophetic claims, depending on one's perspective. Of course, if one is willing to apply a high enough degree of symbolic interpretation, any prophecy can be made to conform to almost any event. It should be noted, however, that most non-dispensational interpretations require the book of

Revelation to have been written prior to AD 70, something that general scholarship does not support.

The most serious difficulties in claiming all the prophecies were fulfilled in AD 70 are theological. In particular, preterism requires scriptural passages to be interpreted with a chaotic blend of extremely literal and extremely figurative language. One would have to interpret words, verses, and phrases that appear in the same discourse, or even the same paragraph, with a different literal-figurative assumption.

The most reasonable interpretation is that the genocide and destruction of the temple were prophecies fulfilled in AD 70, and that the other events described in Daniel, Matthew, and Revelation are yet to occur. They are truly end-times predictions.

Resource: <https://www.gotquestions.org/AD-70.html>

WEDNESDAY

Basic Considerations in Interpreting Prophecy

The wide diversity in the interpretation of prophecy alerts anyone who approaches this field of biblical exegesis that there are also widely differing principles of interpretation. How can it be that reputable scholars who agree on many basic Christian doctrines interpret the prophetic portions of Scripture with such differing results? How can this be explained?

Differing Views of the Bible

One of the most obvious reasons for difference in interpretation in prophecy is that scholars do not all regard the Bible as having the same authority and accuracy. Liberal theologians tend to regard the Bible as a human instrument written by fallible men, and therefore conclude that the Scriptures are not infallible. It is understandable that liberals have no clear conclusions about the future. Some question the validity of prediction itself on the grounds that no one knows the future. Others accept the premise that prophecy is in some cases true and in other cases not true. This leaves the interpreter with the difficult question of sorting out the true from the false. Generally, there is little scholarly discussion of prophecy among those who are clearly liberal in their approach to the Bible.

Among conservatives who regard the Bible as authoritative in prophecy as in history, a more serious attempt is made to try to determine what the Bible actually reveals. Here the diversity is not based on the premise that the Bible in some respects is untrue; instead, the difficulty arises in various schools of interpretation.

Major Schools of Interpretation

Most Bible scholars recognize at least three major approaches to prophecy, all dealing primarily with the doctrine of the millennium. The most ancient view, that of the church of the first few centuries, was what is known today as premillennialism or chiliasm. Premillenarians assert that the second coming of Christ will precede a millennium or a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. Chiliasm is another word (derived from the Greek χίλιος "one thousand") which affirms the same doctrine. Most impartial interpreters of the history of doctrine agree that premillennialism was the doctrine of the early church. Adherents of this view hold that Christ taught that His second coming would be followed by His kingdom on earth, as indicated in such passages as Matthew 20:20-23; Luke 1:32-33, 22:29-30 ; Acts 1:6-7. In the first two centuries of the church there seems to have been an absence of any controversy on this point.

Premillenarians cite many early adherents of their interpretation, such as Papias, who was acquainted with the Apostle John and many others such as Aristio, John the Presbyter, and a number of the twelve apostles including Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, and

Matthew. G. N. H. Peters also lists in the first two centuries premillenarians such as Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp. It was not until the close of the second century and the beginning of the third century that specific opposition to this view seems to have arisen. In the second and third centuries, however, many other premillenarians surfaced in their writings, including Cyprian (200-258), Commodian (200-270), Nepos (230-280), Coracion (230-280), Victorinus (240-303), Methodius (250-311), and Lactantius (240-330). While the premillennial views of some of these have been challenged, it is unquestionably true that Nepos was an ardent defender of premillennialism in North Africa and he was joined by Commodian. Even opponents of premillennialism concede that there was a broad premillennial teaching in the first three centuries.

A second prominent approach to prophecy is the view which has been called amillennialism since the nineteenth century. It is basically a nonmillennial view, which teaches that there will be no literal millennium after the second advent of Christ. While amillenarians tend to avoid identification of any adherents of their view, they usually find the first strong advocacy of amillennialism in the school of theology at Alexandria, Egypt, with the first adherents appearing about A.D. 190. A few writers claim that amillennialism existed earlier. Landis, for example, tries to trace amillennialism back to Christ and the apostles. Most amillenarians, however, claim that it had its beginning in the second and third centuries. And yet even careful scholars like Berkhof tend to slur over the facts by claiming that amillennialism was prominent in both the second and the third centuries, when actually it was practically all in the third century except for the last ten years of the second century.

Early amillenarians include Gaius, whose writings come from the third century, and Clement of Alexandria, a teacher in the school at Alexandria, from 193 to 220. Clement's disciple Origen (185-254) and Dionysius (190-265) led the opposition to premillennialism in the third century.

Amillenarians usually concede that the basic approach of the Alexandrian school was to take Scripture, especially prophecy, in a nonliteral sense. They regarded the entire Bible as one great allegory in which the real meaning is hidden behind the actual statements of Scripture. They attempted to combine the idealism of Plato with Scripture which was only possible if Scripture were interpreted in a nonliteral sense.

Amillenarians admit that the school at Alexandria was heretical inasmuch as they challenged almost all the principal doctrines of the Christian faith. For instance, W. H. Rutgers, an amillenarian, wrote the following concerning Clement of Alexandria.

Clement, engrossed and charmed by Greek philosophy, applied this erroneous, allegorical method to Holy Writ. It was a one-sided emphasis: opposed to the real, the visible, phenomenal, spacial and temporal. A platonic idealistic philosophy could not countenance carnalistic, sensualistic conceptions of the future as that advanced by Chiliasm. It shook the

very foundation on which Chiliasm rested. Robertson observed that “it loosed its [Chiliasm’s] sheet-anchor—naive literalism in the interpretation of Scripture.”

In spite of the fact that the major thrust of amillennialism in the second and third centuries was provided by those who were heretics, Rutgers offers the questionable proof that amillennialism was the prevailing view in the second century simply because many of the church fathers never discussed the issue at all. On the basis of this, and without citing those definitely committed to amillennialism, Rutgers states, “Chiliasm found no favor with the best of the Apostolic Fathers, nor does it find support in the unknown writer of the Epistle to Diognetus.”

While it is true that many early church fathers simply do not discuss the millennial question, the fact that specific adherents to premillennialism can be cited makes the almost complete silence of any advocates of amillennialism until A.D. 190 most significant. While there is dispute as to whether Barnabas, an early church father, is amillennial or premillennial, even those in the amillennial camp usually do not claim Barnabas. Up until A.D. 190, no clear adherent to amillennialism can be found. This fact is in stark contrast to the fact that many held to the premillennial point of view.

For this reason, most amillenarians trace their view to Augustine (354-430), the famous bishop of Hippo in North Africa. Augustine was the father of amillennialism because he discarded the allegorical system of interpretation of the Bible as a whole as advanced by the school at Alexandria in favor of limiting allegorical interpretation to prophetic Scriptures only. He held that other Scriptures should be interpreted in their natural, grammatical, historical sense. With Augustine began general acceptance of the modern approach of recognizing the basic and normal interpretation of Scripture as literal and grammatical (as held by the Protestant Reformers such as Calvin and Luther) but at the same time holding that prophecy is a special case requiring nonliteral interpretation. It is this difference with premillennialism which is the basic problem in the continued discussion between premillenarians and amillenarians.

The third broad view of prophetic interpretation is postmillennialism. It holds that Christ will return at the end of the millennium. Postmillenarians hold that the “millennium,” such as it is, must be fulfilled before the second coming of Christ, and in this, amillennialism and postmillennialism agree. The difference between the two schools is the more optimistic approach of postmillennialism which regards the gospel as being increasingly triumphant until the world is at least Christianized, and this victory is climaxed by the second coming of Christ and the immediate introduction to the eternal state. While some leaders throughout the history of the church, such as Joachim of Floris, a twelfth-century Roman Catholic, held views close to postmillennialism, most postmillenarians trace their view to Daniel Whitby (1638-1725). While some amillenarians tend to emphasize the earlier postmillennialism, A. H. Strong, a postmillenarian, states clearly, “Our own interpretation of Revelation 20:1-10, was first given, for substance, by Whitby.”

Postmillennialism related to the optimism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and coincided with the general hope of a better world. While largely discarded now, it was a prevailing view among many conservative theologians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, of which Charles Hodge is an example.

The Needed Return to Basic Hermeneutics

For students of prophecy seeking to weigh the relative cogency of premillennialism, amillennialism, and postmillennialism, the first requirement is a clear view of ordinary rules of interpretation as normally advanced in hermeneutics. Adherents of all views of prophecy tend at times to forget that basic rules for exegesis have been established in the history of the church at least by conservative scholars, and one is not free to disregard them in favor of establishing his own particular interpretation. Conservative scholars tend for the most part to agree on these basic principles, which include the following:

1. Words are to be understood in their normal, natural sense unless there is firm evidence in the context that the word is used in some other sense.
2. Each statement of Scripture should be interpreted in its context. This usually means that a word should be interpreted in its immediate context, although sometimes usage in other passages is also relevant. A common fallacy, however, is to read into a passage something that is found elsewhere in the Bible instead of allowing the immediate context to have primary weight.
3. A text of Scripture must always be seen in its historical and cultural contexts, and the intended meaning of the author is important. Conservative scholars, however, recognize that the Bible is not only a work by human authors, but is also inspired by the Holy Spirit, and in some cases even the human author did not understand entirely what he was writing.
4. Scripture should be interpreted in the light of grammatical considerations including such important matters as tense and emphasis. Bethlehem, pinpointed in Micah 5:2 about seven hundred years before the birth of Christ. He was to be the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15) who would have victory over Satan. His lineage is described in the Old Testament as extending through Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and then through Boaz, Obed, Jesse, and David. All of this is pointed out in the genealogies of the New Testament (cf. Matt 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38). The Old Testament abounds with prophetic details about Jesus as prophet, priest, and king (Deut 18:15-18; 1 Sam 2:35; Ps 110:4; cf. Gen 49:10; 2 Sam 7:12-16; Zech 6:13; Heb 5:6). Isaiah 9:6-7 summarizes His birth, person, and deity. All these prophecies have been literally fulfilled. Even His death on the cross is anticipated in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, and His resurrection is predicted in Psalm 16:10. In all these cases the prophetic Scriptures have been fulfilled historically in a literal way.

In view of these fulfilled prophecies it seems reasonable to conclude that yet unfulfilled prophecies will have the same literal fulfillment, especially when they are couched in terms that make sense literally.

In general, conservative expositors have agreed on the literal interpretation of Scripture when it comes to broad doctrines such as the deity of Christ, the humanity of Christ, His life on earth, His death, His resurrection, and His second coming. They agree that there is a literal heaven and a literal hell. In discussion of prophetic interpretation, it soon becomes evident that the crux of the matter is whether there is a future, literal millennial reign of Christ on earth. It is here where conservative scholars differ, going in general in three directions: premillennialism, amillennialism, or postmillennialism.

Further Definition of the Interpretive Problem

Although it is generally agreed that amillennialism sprang from the theology of Augustine and that postmillennialism derived from it, it is quite clear in current discussion that the problem is more than a general rule that prophecy should be interpreted in an allegorical or nonliteral sense. As has been pointed out, as a matter of fact, both amillenarians and postmillenarians often interpret prophecy in a very literal way. What, then, is the real point of distinction?

The abundant literature in the field supports the concept that the major problem is the doctrine of the millennium or a thousand-year reign of Christ. If the millennium precedes the second coming of Christ as amillenarians and postmillenarians contend, it is also clear that many of the precise predictions related to the millennium cannot be clearly fulfilled. The present world is not under the political direction of Jesus Christ, and evil as such is not being immediately judged by God as it will be in the millennial kingdom.

By contrast the premillennial view anticipates a second coming of Christ followed by His thousand-year reign on earth. This is the historic interpretation held by the early church fathers and which has continued in contemporary premillennialism.

Current discussion on the subject, however, has tended to blur some of these time-honored distinctions. For instance, Arthur H. Lewis denies that he is amillennial but at the same time he prefers not to be known as premillennial or postmillennial. Lewis holds that the millennium must be before the second coming because there is sin in the millennium and for him there can be no sin on earth after the second coming of Christ. His problem is in his premise that the millennial kingdom is perfect. This, of course, is contradicted by many Old Testament passages which he ignores.

Others have followed the lead of Lewis by claiming to be historic premillennialists and then proceeding to describe the millennium as something which precedes the second coming of

Christ. Often the problem arises because they are forced in their denominations or schools to agree to a premillennial statement.

Gilbert Bilezikian, professor of biblical studies at Wheaton College, is typical of those who blur the distinctions on the doctrine of the millennium. While affirming agreement with the premillennial position of Wheaton College, he nevertheless adopts what is normally called amillennialism. He writes, "Peter, reading about God's oath to David to set one of his descendants upon his throne (Psalm 132:11), interpreted the promised messianic rule as having been fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ and his exaltation in heaven (Acts 2:30-31)."⁸ This view is obviously not historical premillennialism, for it allows for no literal thousand year reign of Christ after His second coming. This he makes clear later in the same article, when he states that "the essential features accompanying the second coming of Christ" are "the general resurrection, the universal judgment, and the inauguration of the reunion of the redeemed in eternity." He further adds insult to injury by accusing those who differ with him as being guilty of "shoddy exegesis consisting of facile scissors-and-paste patchworks of fragments of biblical texts," which he claims is motivated by their desire to reap monetary gain. He discards the testimony of a millennial reign in Revelation 20 because it is found in one of "relatively unclear passages where figurative and symbolic motifs are present (such as the thousand years' rule of Revelation 20)." What can be said of this type of "premillennial" interpretation? Actually this approach brings confusion rather than clarity to the subject. Any system that says the millennium is fulfilled before the second advent and also teaches that the eternal state begins at the second advent cannot accurately be labeled premillennialism. It would be far better for a scholarly discussion of the problem to accept the time-honored terms rather than attempt to redefine prophetic interpretation in a way that does not correspond to the historic handling of the problem.

It is clear that the major problem in the interpretation of prophecy is the doctrine of the millennium. Along with this is the corresponding difficulty of whether many Old Testament prophecies relating to Israel will be fulfilled before or after the second coming of Christ. The doctrine of a future millennium following Christ's second advent is inevitably related to the question as to whether promises given to Israel will have a literal fulfillment. Accordingly in other articles in this series special attention will be addressed to these issues which have been characteristic of the discussion for many generations but which have also been evident in recent literature.

Resource: <https://bible.org/seriespage/1-basic-considerations-interpreting-prophecy>

The Historical Context of Premillennialism :

<https://bible.org/seriespage/10-historical-context-premillennialism>

Postmillennialism : <https://bible.org/seriespage/2-postmillennialism>

THURSDAY

Question: "What is dispensationalism and is it biblical?"

Answer: A dispensation is a way of ordering things—an administration, a system, or a management. In theology, a dispensation is the divine administration of a period of time; each dispensation is a divinely appointed age. Dispensationalism is a theological system that recognizes these ages ordained by God to order the affairs of the world. Dispensationalism has two primary distinctives: 1) a consistently literal interpretation of Scripture, especially Bible prophecy, and 2) a view of the uniqueness of Israel as separate from the Church in God's program. Classical dispensationalism identifies seven dispensations in God's plan for humanity.

Dispensationalists hold to a literal interpretation of the Bible as the best hermeneutic. The literal interpretation gives each word the meaning it would commonly have in everyday usage. Allowances are made for symbols, figures of speech, and types, of course. It is understood that even symbols and figurative sayings have literal meanings behind them. So, for example, when the Bible speaks of "a thousand years" in Revelation 20, dispensationalists interpret it as a literal period of 1,000 years (the dispensation of the Kingdom), since there is no compelling reason to interpret it otherwise.

There are at least two reasons why literalism is the best way to view Scripture. First, philosophically, the purpose of language itself requires that we interpret words literally. Language was given by God for the purpose of being able to communicate. Words are vessels of meaning. The second reason is biblical. Every prophecy about Jesus Christ in the Old Testament was fulfilled literally. Jesus' birth, ministry, death, and resurrection all occurred exactly as the Old Testament predicted. The prophecies were literal. There is no non-literal fulfillment of messianic prophecies in the New Testament. This argues strongly for the literal method. If a literal interpretation is not used in studying the Scriptures, there is no objective standard by which to understand the Bible. Each person would be able to interpret the Bible as he saw fit. Biblical interpretation would devolve into "what this passage says to me" instead of "the Bible says." Sadly, this is already the case in much of what is called Bible study today.

Dispensational theology teaches that there are two distinct peoples of God: Israel and the Church. Dispensationalists believe that salvation has always been by grace through faith alone—in God in the Old Testament and specifically in God the Son in the New Testament. Dispensationalists hold that the Church has not replaced Israel in God's program and that the Old Testament promises to Israel have not been transferred to the Church. Dispensationalism teaches that the promises God made to Israel in the Old Testament (for land, many descendants, and blessings) will be ultimately fulfilled in the 1000-year period spoken of in Revelation 20. Dispensationalists believe that, just as God is in this age

focusing His attention on the Church, He will again in the future focus His attention on Israel (see Romans 9–11 and Daniel 9:24).

Dispensationalists understand the Bible to be organized into seven dispensations: Innocence (Genesis 1:1–3:7), Conscience (Genesis 3:8–8:22), Human Government (Genesis 9:1–11:32), Promise (Genesis 12:1–Exodus 19:25), Law (Exodus 20:1–Acts 2:4), Grace (Acts 2:4–Revelation 20:3), and the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:4–6). Again, these dispensations are not paths to salvation, but manners in which God relates to man. Each dispensation includes a recognizable pattern of how God worked with people living in the dispensation. That pattern is 1) a responsibility, 2) a failure, 3) a judgment, and 4) grace to move on.

Dispensationalism, as a system, results in a premillennial interpretation of Christ's second coming and usually a pretribulational interpretation of the rapture. To summarize, dispensationalism is a theological system that emphasizes the literal interpretation of Bible prophecy, recognizes a distinction between Israel and the Church, and organizes the Bible into different dispensations or administrations.

Resource: <https://www.gotquestions.org/dispensationalism.html>

Video homework:

Dispensationalism (Animated) : <https://youtu.be/Pd4phd3eNes>

Dispensationalism Vs. Covenant Theology : <https://youtu.be/Q5E1FA5kCFk>

FRIDAY

Today you'll have 7 inks to go through. There is study material to read through- but also pictures and charts to go with it to help us all grasp this important message of Zechariah 6. Of course- reach out to Pastors Brandon & Travis if you have any questions!

The Temple Of Ezekiel: <http://www.templemount.org/ezektmp.html>

On Christ's Name, The Branch:

https://biblehub.com/sermons/auth/robe/on_christ's_name_the_branch.htm

Is the Jezreel Valley the Stage for the Final Battle?:

<https://blog.logos.com/is-the-jezreel-valley-the-stage-for-the-final-battle/>

Armageddon – Where The World Is Headed:

<https://www.facebook.com/1477341989194197/photos/a.1576886935906368/2630514170543634/?type=3>

Land Below Sea Level: <https://geology.com/below-sea-level/>

What are the seventy weeks of Daniel?: <https://www.gotquestions.org/seventy-weeks.html>

Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy:

<https://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/proph/chtice.pdf>