

Introduction

Why do we study the Bible?

To learn about Jesus and have eternal life: John 5:39–40

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

Why is the book of Revelation so special?

Promises a special blessing to those who reads, hears and heeds it (Rev. 1:3)

Has a divinely inspired outline (Rev. 1:19)

It ties together the whole redemptive plan of God

The promise to Eve (and to Mary) is fulfilled

The curse pronounced in Genesis, lifted in Revelation

Eden lost in Genesis, restored in Revelation

Heaven and earth created in Genesis, replaced in Revelation

Access to the Tree of Life is lost in Genesis, restored in Revelation

Satan tempts in Genesis, Satan is judged in Revelation

What is your hermeneutic perspective and why is it important?

How many of you have taken Mike Day's *Going Deep in the Word* class?

Allegory vs. Literal

Beginning as early as the third century, Christian hermeneutics began to split into two primary schools: Alexandria and Antioch. The Alexandrian Biblical interpretations stressed allegorical readings, frequently at the expense of the texts' literal meaning. The Antiochene school stressed instead the more literal and historical meaning of the text

How you interpret the Bible makes a big difference

Augustine argued that the Millennium would not be a literal reign of Christ on earth for 1000 years but a reigning of the church in His name (amillennialism)

The amillennial point of view was adopted by many of the reformers, including John Calvin and heavily influenced the Protestant denominational churches

Many wonderful scholars today still take an allegorical view of the scriptures

The Role of the Church

Identify of the Church

The role of the church depends upon what it is

It is the Body of Christ

It is the Bride of Christ

A man should love his wife (bride) as his own body (Eph 5:28)

Greek name for the church ("the called out ones")

Ekklesia (Mt. 16:18, 18:17, throughout Acts, first in 2:47)

A gathering of citizens called out from their homes

Separate from Israel

Different Origins and different destinies

Church was born on the day of Pentecost and will matriculate at the Rapture

Israel began with the promise to Abraham, was born as a nation in Egypt and reigns with Christ on earth for 1000 years

Promises to Church are heavenly and those to Israel are earthly

He who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than the greatest man of the Old Covenant, John (Mt. 11:11)

Practical Questions

What do you think the purpose of the church is today?

Where did you get that idea?

Are there any questions you currently have regarding the Church's role in the world?

What does the world think about our role?

What do we know about the 7 letters?

They were written to 7 real churches

They have a very regular structure – but the differences are intriguing

They have several apparent levels of meaning

Local, pragmatic level

Each church had specific issues

Every church can see itself in all the letters

Personal application – every believer is called to hear what the Spirit says to the churches

This is interesting because I have used these letters in ministry opportunities

Church at Philadelphia – The Pleasing Church

A dear sister was discouraged and we were praying for her when I noticed that one of the words that we got was for a door to be opened that no one could shut (Rev. 3:8) and I noticed that there were 4 or 5 references from that letter that we had all spoken to her without direct knowledge. When we read the whole letter to her she broke down crying.

Church at Ephesus – The Rigorous Church that Lost Its First Love

Another dear sister had been working in prison ministry since her teenage years. She had fallen away from it and now people were asking her to get back into it because she had been so successful. I had her read the Letter to the Church at Ephesus and she broke down crying.

Church at Laodicea – The Worldly, Lukewarm Church

I've read this to different people several times who believed in God but weren't committed. I've never seen one person turn from their indifference.

Prophetic history of the Church (The Body of Christ)

This can be helpful in understanding the role of the Church in the end times.

We'll study more about this later.

"7" is the number for completeness in the Bible

This appears to be a complete discussion of issues in the church

We will discuss how these lessons can be applied to our own church

The purpose of the church

Draw people to the Lord

Give them a haven to work together

Salt and Light

Be the kingdom of heaven on earth and to expand it on earth

Bring children too

Where did you get those ideas

Jesus on the kingdom

It's within you

The great commission

Is the kingdom of god the same as the church

Is the k of heaven the same as the k of God