

New Testament Explored: Revelation

Week 6: Questions and Answers

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(1) How did the church get the theological tiers for ranking issues in Christianity?

(2) How does the “lens approach” to Revelation interpret the numbers scattered throughout the book (e.g., 144,000 in 7:1-8)?

(a) Code approach – an actual number of people, a remnant of ethnic Israelites who come to believe in Christ during the tribulation.

(b) Lens approach, version A – an emphatic figure based on Rom 11:24-26 that declares that all ethnic Israel will be saved at Christ’s second coming.

(c) Lens approach, version B – the complete number of God’s people.

(3) Does the fact that Revelation speaks primarily about the world today and not merely the “end times” change how we should understand the return of Christ, especially 1 Thessalonians 4?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: ¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

(4) How can we use Revelation and the lens it gives us to navigate through the world today?

(5) Does God deal differently with Israel than the rest of the nations, or an ethnic Jew than a gentile?

The story told by Dispensational Theology

Summary: Biblical history develops with discontinuity through different administrative periods. While these periods do progress, they also do not dissolve from one into the next. The older are not absorbed into the newer.

Abraham = ethnic and national Israel

Gen 12:1-3: ¹ Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

The story told by Covenant Theology

Summary: Biblical history develops continuously through different administrative periods. Not only do these periods progress, but they do so in an ever-developing way; the former completing and building upon the other, especially from the old covenant to the new covenant. The newer absorbs the older.

Abraham = the promise of the New Adam, to be fulfilled by Christ.

1 Peter 2:9-11a: ⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles....

Galatians 3:21-29: ²¹ Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! ... the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

