

## Reflections on Views & Interpretive Principles for Eschatology

### Summary Reflections

*There are 3 positions that are considered within the bounds of Reformed Orthodoxy*

1. Historical premillennialism
2. Post-millennialism (even theonomic)
3. Amillennialism

*But does all of this matter? YES, but we need to keep our priorities straight!*

- We must not make the mistake of defining who is a Christian or a church based upon their view of the end-times
- However our view of the end times is indicative of how we view the scriptures
  - The dispensational view of the end times flows from an understanding of the scriptures that I would argue is in error.
  - Where you end up in revelation depends on where you start in Genesis.

### Interpretive Principles of Eschatology<sup>1</sup>

*Jesus and His church are the focal and terminating point of all prophecy*

- Jesus is the Temple
  - A. The OT present a picture of God dwelling with his people through the tabernacle and the temple.
    1. Here the glory cloud, the visible manifestation of the splendor of God would rest
    2. See: Exodus, 25:8,33:9,40:34, 2 Chronicles 5:7,14
  - B. John declares (John 1:14) that the Word became flesh and “tabernacled” among us.
  - C. Consider the glory Jesus manifested in the transfiguration (Matt. 17)
  - D. The temple was a divine space that served a purpose until Christ came and made the temple no longer necessary
  - E. Also note that the church as united with Christ is also the new temple.
    1. See Ephesians 2:21-22 and 1 Peter 2:1-5
- Jesus fulfills the Feasts
  - John 7:33-44 Jesus declares that he is the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles
  - The celebration climaxed with a water ritual symbolic of the provision of water during the wilderness wandering as well as the water that rained upon their present crops.
  - Jesus’ claim that anyone who believes in him, pictured as coming and drinking, would have perfect water flow from his heart indicates that Jesus believed he was the fulfillment of the OT.
  - He is saying that whoever comes to him doesn’t need to celebrate the feast anymore because he is the better water; better than the the water in the desert that spring from the rock (which Paul says is Christ)!
- Jesus is our Sabbath rest
  - Jesus declared that he was the Lord of the Sabbath, that is he is greater than the Sabbath.
  - He also said that those who come to him will be given rest
  - One scholar wrote, “If Jesus is a walking, living, breathing temple, he is also the walking, celebrating, victorious sabbath.”
  - While there is debate as to what degree we should observe the Lord’s Day and its connection with the sabbath but what we SHOULD agree on is that Jesus is the fulfillment and Lord of the Sabbath.
- Jesus is the True Vine

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<sup>1</sup> These principles come from Ch.1 of Sam Storms book *Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative* published by Mentor in 2013.

- In the OT Israel is referred to as a vine. See Hosea 10:1, Jeremiah 2:21,5:10,12:11; Ezekiel 15:1-8; 17:1-10; 19:10-14; Isaiah 27:2-6, Psalm 80:7-11
- In John 15:1-5 Jesus claims to be the true vine.
- Whereas Israelites would argue that they were vines planted in the vineyard or promised land, now Jesus says the only way to be a part of the true vine is to be engrafted into him.

### *The Meaning of "Forever"*

- What do we do with texts that promise Israel certain things "forever" like the land or the Aaronic priesthood or the kingship of the descendants of David?
- We would argue that all of these promises have come to the fulfillment in Christ
- Chris Wright wrote that for something to be declared "forever" meant that "these dimensions were permanent and guaranteed while Israel as a nation was the limit of God redemptive work."
- Yet once the national and territorial basis was transcended through the coming of the messiah and the inclusion of the Gentiles then the forever aspect of these promises resides in Christ.
- These things do exist forever, but not simply in the concrete terms in which they were first expressed, but in their consummate and transcendent expression when fulfilled and perpetuated eternally in Christ.

### *The Already, but Not Yet*

- We have covered this before so we will only summarize here
- There are 2 ages: the present evil age and the age to come
- Christ began the invasion of the "age to come" in his earthly ministry and he will consummate it when he returns
- We live in the overlap of the ages
- Sam Storms provides an short list of examples
  1. Salvation is now, but also future
  2. Justification is now but also future
  3. We have been adopted into God's family as his children but our adoption is also future
  4. We have been raised with Christ, but the resurrection is also yet future
  5. We have been glorified with Christ, but will be glorified
  6. We have been redeemed, but redemption is future
  7. Regenerate believers are a "new creation" while we yet await the NH and NE at the return of Jesus

### *Jesus is the inspired interpreter of the OT*

- Luke 24:25-27 Jesus says the OT is about him
- 1 Peter 1:10-12 says the same thing essentially
- This means that wherever we are at in the OT we must interpret it in light of Christ, his person and work. He is the lens through which we interpret the OT.

### *The relationship between the OT and NT: Shadows and Substance*

- We find in the OT events, persons and things that have a corresponding parallel in the NT
- The NT Paraael escalates and brings to fulfillment the thing that was introduced in the OT
  - Prophet, Priest, King, Israel → Jesus
  - Tabernacle/Temple → Heavenly Jerusalem with God's people as the temple
  - Promised Land → New Heavens and New Earth