

Hermeneutics Practice Passages – Epistles: Part 1

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

1 Corinthians 3:5-9

1 Corinthians 7:1-6

1 Corinthians 10:1-4

1 Corinthians 12:1-3

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Exercises Hermeneutics Week 4: Epistles Part 2

Separate the “cultural” and “permanent” part of each of the following passages and how we should interpret and apply them today:

Philemon 1:8-18

Titus 3:4-15

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

1 Corinthians 10:14-33

Philippians 3:1-12

Old Testament Narratives – Practice Questions

Determine the application to today of the following (moderately difficult) Bible passages:

Genesis 12:1-4

Exodus 4:1-9

2 Samuel 21:1-9

Esther 1:10-22

Hh

Jonah 1:1-17

Hermeneutics - Examples in Acts

For the following narratives in Acts work out :

a) Why was Luke writing this?

How does it fit with his story of how the gospel went from Jerusalem to Rome?

b) What did it mean to the original hearers? How was it influenced by time, place, culture etc?

c) Are there any abiding principle/s for the Church today?

d) How does the above principle fit in with other NT Scriptures?

Acts 1:4-8

Acts 2:16-21

Acts 5:1-11

Acts 8:9-23

Acts 12:6-17

Acts 18:1-11

Acts 28:23-31

Hermeneutics Exercises - The Gospels

Think paragraphs – and literacy units and devices (parables, sayings, dialogue, irony etc)

Think horizontally – what do the other gospels have to say

Think vertically - awareness of the cultural context both of Jesus, and of the gospel author

Think covenants – is Jesus speaking of the end of the Old Cov. or the introduction of the New Cov.?

Think eschatology – things present, things fading away, things being birthed, things yet to come

Think Kingdom of God - God's rule in human hearts, minds, churches cities, His will done on earth as it is in heaven, reconnecting heaven and earth, healing& miracles are evidence of, Jesus is KofG arrived

Think grace and holiness – not Law. Jesus introduces grace which perfects us in holiness over time

Think groups – what group is this teaching meant for? Jews under the Law? Residents of Jerusalem and Judea? Gentiles? Those who have died to the Law? Pharisees? Christian workers? Etc.

Matthew – to the Jews, Jesus as their King, Messiah and Lawgiver, genealogies, apologetic purpose

Mark – to the Romans, pragmatic, Jesus as Servant who seeks and saves the lost, redemptive purpose

Luke – to the Gentiles in the West, explains Jewish customs, Jesus as universal Savior, historical purpose

John – to the Greeks in the East, Jesus as the Word, Son of God, Socratic dialogues, theological purpose

Matthew 5:17,18 (hint compare with Galatians 3:8-26, why is this saying only in Matthew?)

Matthew 24:15-22

Mark 9:38-50

Luke 9:1,2

John 8:39-47

John 12:44-50

Hermeneutics Exercises - Parables

Jesus interprets three parables in Matthew 13 – that parable of the Sower (vv3-9, 18-23) and the parable of the Wheat and the Tares (vv. 24-30, 36-43) and the parable of the Dragnet (vv. 47-50). What is Jesus teaching His disciples about how to interpret parables?

Matthew 13:31-33

Matthew 13:44-46

Matthew 20:1-16

Matthew 21:33-41

Matthew 25:1-13

Mark 4:26-29

Luke 12:16-21

Luke 16:1-9

Luke 19:11-27

Hermeneutics Exercises – The Law

Read Fee & Stuart pages: 163-180 esp. pages 165-169

1. Exodus 30:11-16

2. Leviticus 19:17,18

3. Leviticus 19:23-25

4. Leviticus 24:10-23

5. Leviticus 25:1-7

6. Deuteronomy 6:1-9

7. Deuteronomy 7:12-16

8. Deuteronomy 14:3-21

9. Deuteronomy 14:22-29

10. Deuteronomy 15:7-11

Hermeneutics Exercises: The Prophets

- A) Foretelling or Forth-Telling
- B) Enforcing the Covenant
- C) Spokespersons for God
- D) Announcement of Blessings & Curses
- E) Moving Beyond Blessings & Curses
- F) Historical / Religious Context
- G) Fulfillment In That Day
- H) Multiple Applications
- I) Before the Exile /After The Exile
- J) Symbolic Language / Symbolic Actions / Prophetic Activities
- K) Apocalyptic
- L) Comparison w. Other Scriptures (especially of the same prophet / literary genre)
- M) Role of the Holy Spirit
- N) Foretelling of Christ & His Sufferings
- O) Relationship to the Sacrificial System & The Priesthood
- P) Relationship to the Kingship and those in power
- Q) Relationship to the poor and powerless
- R) Persecution of the prophets

Jeremiah 7:1-15

Isaiah 3:13-26

Habakkuk 2:6-8

Isaiah 7:14

Isaiah 53:1-12

Micah 6:6-8

Amos 3:1-8

Amos 9:11-15

Daniel 7:1-14

Hermeneutics Exercises: Psalms

Psalms are songs (musical poems) which are often grounded in real historical events or which recall real historical events. A 'new song' would be written when a new event occurred or a new aspect of god was revealed. They are written by powerful people, often in a courtly or priestly setting. Many are corporate psalms that speak for the whole of Israel. They use poetic devices such as meter, rhyme, alliteration, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, parallelism and so on. Different kinds of Psalms were written each with a different function in the life of worship: Wisdom, Praise & Thanksgiving, Enthronement, Historical Review of Salvation, Lament, Confession, Imprecatory Psalms, Celebration of the Law, Celebration & Affirmation of God's Works in General.

Determine:

- a) The historical occasion / cultural background if any
- b) The type of Psalm
- c) The function of the Psalm
- d) The structural elements of the Psalm
- e) The general meaning of the Psalm
- f) How we can (or cannot) apply that Psalm today

1. Psalm 1

2. Psalm 23

3. Psalm 37

4. Psalm 51

5. Psalm 72

6. Psalm 88

7. Psalm 109:6-20

8. Psalm 110

9. Psalm 119: 1-8

10. Psalm 147

Wisdom Literature Exercises

Interpret the following passages – type of literature, context, intent, who is speaking?, who is the target audience?, what is the message? How does the passage fit into the overall story? Is it of universal application, Season application or particular application?

job = a play, drama , dialogue, Socratic wisdom

Proverbs = collections of wisdom sayings

Ecclesiastes = a sermon, intro, main points, conclusion organized around hebel, vanity= number 37

Song of Songs = a song, lyrical wisdom, hyperbole

1. Job 3:1-26

2. Job 40:1-9

3. Proverbs 3:1-18

4. Proverbs 8:12-36

5. Proverbs 10:1-12

6. Proverbs 18:1-24

7. Proverbs 28:1-14

8. Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

9. Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

10. Ecclesiastes 10:1-20

Proverbs and Prosperity A Balanced Perspective

WHAT IS PROSPERITY?

Prosperity Is The Physical Manifestation Of The Blessing Of God.

Prosperity in the Old Testament is condition by a group of words in the SHLM family such as Shalom and Shalem - meaning peace and wholeness respectively. Those blessed by God experience Shalom and those whose minds are faithfully fixed on God receive double or perfect Shalom (Isaiah 26:3). However there is no Shalom for the wicked. (Isaiah 48:22, 57:21). Shalom is thus the physical manifestation of peace and wholeness that flows from the blessing of God upon the righteous.

The underlying picture of the SHLM word family is one of rural bliss like you find in a Constable landscape painting. The righteous man and his godly wife have seven strong sons and seven beautiful daughters, the sun is shining, the birds are singing, there is a bountiful harvest in the field, a warm fire burns in the hearth, the land is at peace, the family is respected, the poor are taken care of out of their bounty, there is joy and singing and gladness of heart, the commandments of God are kept and even taught to others, the blessing of God is felt in every part of their lives and "God is in Heaven and all's right with the world".

Prosperity is thus a comprehensive wholeness of life that radiates from the blessing of God to those who fear Him and abide in His commandments. Blessing and prosperity are first corporate before they are individual. It is in the blessing of God on the nation and the city that the individual finds blessing. Even the righteous man does not enjoy great prosperity when God is judging the nation as a whole. The classic example of this is Baruch, Jeremiah's servant in Jerusalem at the time of the Babylonian invasion. He longed for some prosperity but was told:

(Jer 45:2 NRSV) Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to you, O Baruch: You said, "Woe is me! The LORD has added sorrow to my pain; I am weary with my groaning, and I find no rest."... And you, do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them; for I am going to bring disaster upon all flesh, says the LORD; but I will give you your life as a prize of war in every place to which you may go." Baruch's "prosperity" was simply being allowed to live while others around him died of plague, famine and war. It was the prosperity of the escaping refugee who "makes it". Thus prosperity has a social component that can place severe limitations on individual prosperity. This will be a key factor when we come to examining prosperity in the urban context and how the social context of unjust trade can affect the prosperity of millions of people.

Because prosperity was seen as the physical manifestation of the blessing of God there is a very close and even absolute link in Scripture between righteousness and prosperity. Job's question to God was basically "I have been righteous, therefore it is not just that I should not be prospering, but instead be suffering". The times when the righteous suffered or the wicked prospered were major challenges to this world-view. Differences between the righteousness of an individual and their wealth were seen as anomalous. The prosperity of the wicked needed to be explained and a major source of personal grief. (Psalms 37, 69 and 73). This absolute linking of righteousness and prosperity persisted into the New Testament times. The disciples were astonished and cried out "who then can be saved?" (Matt19:23-25) when that the rich young ruler, who seemed to have so much of the blessing of God on his life, could not enter the Kingdom.

The Power To Make Wealth

It is God who gave Israel the power to generate wealth.

(Deuteronomy 8:18 NKJV) "And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who ***gives you power to get wealth.***"

Wealth does not drop from the sky. Wealth is generated by those who have the power to make wealth. God rarely directly gives people money. Rather He gives people the power to create wealth for themselves. As we shall see later "the power to get wealth" is given by God in a specific way that is - the righteous person receives wisdom from God then diligently and ethically implements this wisdom and it is this diligent wise and righteous implementation of wisdom and knowledge that generates wealth.

Prosperity Flows To Those Who Fear God and Keep His Commandments

The relationship to God is primary as it is He who causes the blessings to flow and grants the power to make wealth. Shalom includes relational peace as well as financial prosperity for "he causes even their enemies to be at peace with them" (Proverbs 16:7). The prosperity of the righteous is stable and develops continually (Psalm 1) continuing even into old age when the normal power to make wealth has departed. (Psalm 92:12-14) and is a total prosperity unalloyed by evil. (Proverbs 10:22 NIV) "The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it." The life course or "paths" of God-fearing and the righteous are "made smooth" and directed by God (Proverbs 3:5,6 16:1-3) and the fear of the Lord and humility bring wealth and honour (Proverbs 22:4). The urban church should become the centre of economic renewal as the place where people find righteousness and the blessing of God to change their

circumstances. Introduction to the transforming power of Christ and right relationship to God is the very basis of Shalom. See also *Proverbs 3:5,6; 33; 4:22; 5:21; 10:6,7,11,16,17,22; 27; 11:16; 12:20,28; 13:21; 16:7; 22:4, 28:10; 29:18*

Prosperity Comes To Those Who Seek Wisdom and Understanding

It is said of Wisdom -“in her right hand are riches and honour”. Wisdom results in righteousness (tsedek) and peace (shalom). Wisdom is characterised by accepting instruction from God and from the righteous and by a readiness to be disciplined for one's good. Wisdom acts wisely in all aspects of life and the outcome is wealth, honour and a long life. The opposite is folly which is our own proud, stubborn and angry way of acting, independent of the wisdom of others or of God. The result of this folly is sin, trouble and turmoil. Wisdom comes from God but is not exclusively religious. The instruction of the Lord can include craftsmanship (Exodus 31:3-5), selection of the most appropriate technology (Isaiah 28:23-29) and Joseph's economic wisdom in rationing during the famine. (Genesis 41:29-38) was seen, even by Pharaoh as being from the Spirit of God. (Genesis 41:38). Wisdom comes at a human level through diligent inquiry and at a spiritual level through prayer so that great scientists such as Newton and Pascal were also men of prayer. In particular wisdom comes through the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:1,2; 28:23-29; 1 John 2:20,27; 1 Cor 2:9-16) and cannot be found in any earthly location like silver or gold can (Job 28). Wisdom and knowledge are vital to wealth creation especially as we enter an information economy. A patent, a technological edge, a better piece of software can be a powerful tool for wealth creation. Wisdom goes to those who seek her diligently and transformation of urban communities needs to involve assisting them in the search for the wisdom and knowledge they need to be able to create wealth. Other verses include: *Proverbs 3:1,2,6,13,16-18,22; 4:10,13,22,23,26; 8:18,32,34; 9:11; 11:14, 13:10,14; 14:30; 15:24; 16:20-22, 19:8; 20:15; 24:6.*

Prosperity Comes To Those Who Are Diligent

Wisdom needs implementation in order to produce wealth and prosperity. Proverbs 21:5 says “The plans of the diligent surely lead to abundance, but everyone who is hasty only comes to want.” Diligence takes wisdom and carefully and energetically implements it to bring about prosperity. Diligence and God’s blessing work together. Without diligence our blessings are not implemented and the person remains poor. God seems to believe in the saying “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” The main way God imparts the ability to prosper is by giving us the wisdom we need to succeed and encouraging us to work hard. It needs to be said that hard work and diligence on their own are insufficient. In the absence of God’s blessing hard work will

produce only frustration and vanity - see the section on curses and blessings.. Part of diligence is using "the ox" to multiply your effort – using the powerful technology of the day. Other verses include: *Proverbs 8:17, 10:4, 11:27, 12:24, 12:27, 13:4, 14:4; 21:5,*

Prosperity Comes Through Well Ordered Relationships And Appropriate Personal Boundaries.

As John Donne wrote "No man is an island, do not send to ask for whom the bells tolls, it tolls for thee. Proverbs is explicit in the kinds of relationships we are to develop, the kinds of relationships we are to avoid and the how these relationships should be ordered. Apart from the relationship with God, there are relationships of respect with "the King" representing government and with parents. Filial relationships include the brother and the neighbour and are to be carefully maintained. There are general social relationships such as with "the poor" who are to receive help and compassion. Among the most important relationships are family relationships with our wife/husband, children and parents which are to be ordered out of fear of God. They are to be characterised by a proper order and godly simplicity. Discipline, honour and respect are common themes in Proverbs. Our primary relationships are to be filled with teaching and the imparting of wisdom. Generosity and honesty are important qualities when dealing with brothers and neighbours. We also have relationships with the City and the wise and righteous person is a blessing to their society and is generally in turn honoured by it. Wise communication is seen as a key to good relationships. The economic impact of these relationships and the importance of appropriate boundaries is illustrated over and over gain from a person ruined because they angered the King or were enticed by a harlot . Other people had reduced power to make wealth because they employed a fool or sluggard to their cost. In particular relationships with the wicked, the violent or the immoral are likely to cause a severe loss of Shalom. Personal relationships in the family have great impact on the power to produce wealth -or in more modern terms a divorce is expensive! The good wife however is an economic asset. (Proverbs 31). Going surety for a friend is cautioned against and maintaining good boundaries is seen as a path to prosperity. The power to make wealth can be greatly increased if gracious speech, high quality work and faithful service brings the person to the attention of the King and others with the power to help (Proverbs 14:35, 16:13, 22:11,29).

In urban ministry the building of empowered community and business relationships, access to government agencies and the restoration of primary family relationships all contribute to the power to generate wealth in the community. Teaching urban youth to maintain Christian boundaries and to avoid the violent street gangs and illicit sexual relationships is not just good health and morality - it is also good economics. While superficially attractive these gangs detract from the Shalom of the community

and severely limit the economic prospects there especially of their members. Learning to communicate appropriately with authority is a major skill to be imparted in urban ministry and there is much good biblical teaching on it. In many communities the ordering of relationships to some degree of functionality is in fact the primary economic task. While these relationships are dysfunctional all other economic efforts will be dissipated and Shalom will not eventuate. Other verses include: *Proverbs 1:10-15; 3:31; 3:28-32; 4:1; 5:1-11; 6:1-5, 20;10:1; 11:11,15,29;13:24; 14:21; 15:4,20; 16:7,21,28; 17:6,18, 19:9,13,18,26; 20:2,20; 21:9; 22:9,10; 22:6, 22-25; 23:13,15,22; 24:21,28; 25:6-9,18;26:18,19; 27:10,14; 28:7,20; 29:3,5,15,22-25; 30:17; 31:27.*

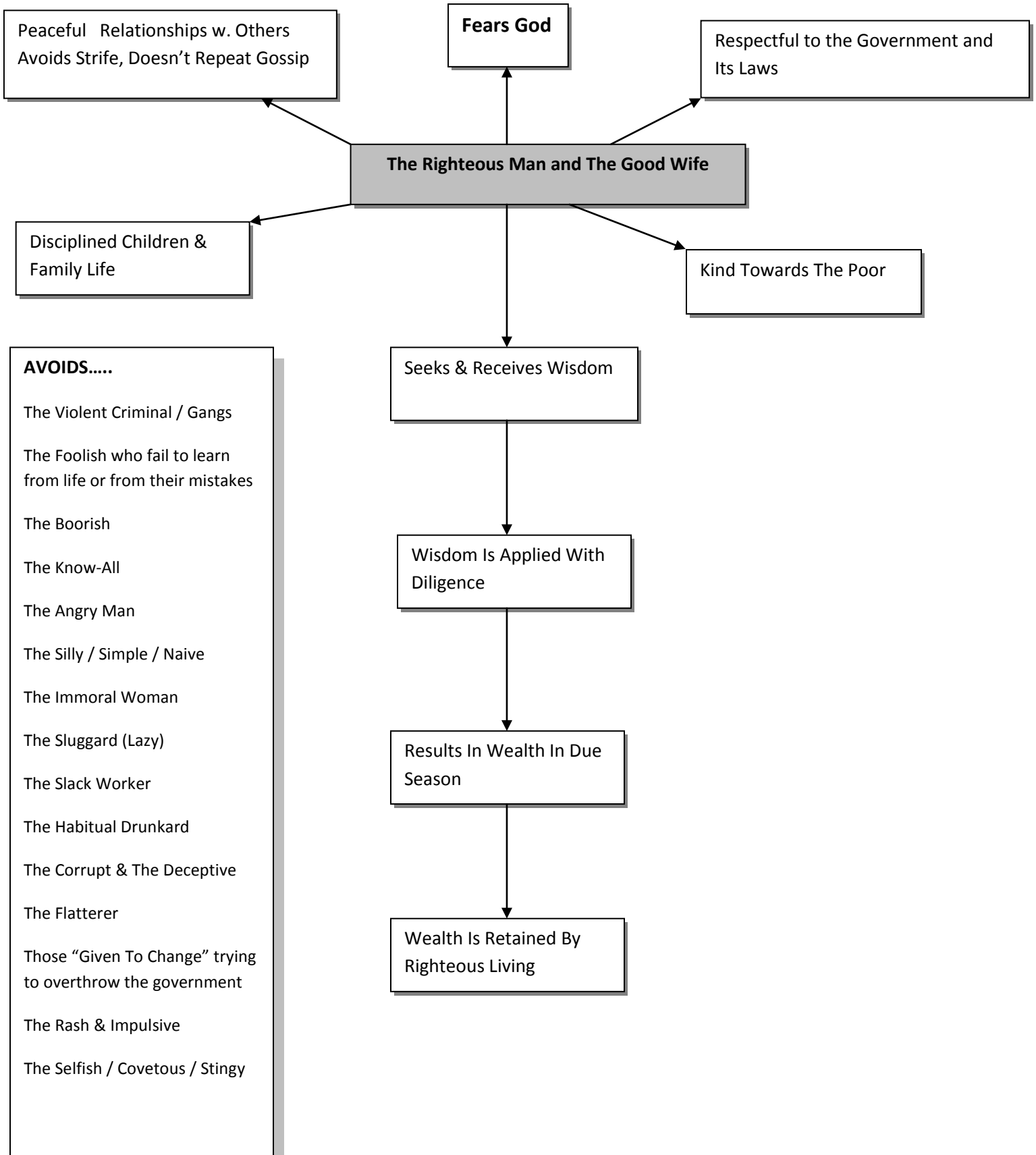
Prosperity Is Accumulated By Paying Attention To The Means of Production And By Cautious Expenditure

The wise person pays attention to their ability to create wealth by 'knowing well the condition of their flocks" (Proverbs 27:23) and even making sure their fields are producing well before building their house. (Proverbs 24:27). Making sure you have the power to make wealth is a high priority for the person who lives wisely. The sluggard pays little attention to his fields and means of production so his poverty "comes as an armed man" and despoils him. (Proverbs 24:30ff) The love of small luxuries and pleasures can fritter away wealth on a barely noticeable daily basis and prevent the accumulation of a powerful capital base. (Proverbs 21:17) Wealth can be squandered - especially by loose living (Proverbs 21:20, 29:3). Injustice can destroy the potential of the poor to create wealth and structural reform may be necessary to enable the poor to use their means of production efficiently. (Proverbs 13:23 NKJV) "Much food is in the fallow ground of the poor, And for lack of justice there is waste." Paying attention to one's ability to create wealth can be as simple as making sure that you are in a good job and that your skills are up to date or it may be as complex as running a major business. The urban worker needs to be able to help people find and retain jobs and help them see the things they can constructively do to make wealth. Wealth creation has to gradually become a higher priority than expending money on pleasures. Budgeting skills will help some to control expenditure. The urban minister should be prepared to demonstrate the economic consequences of fast food, smoking, the excessive consumption of alcohol and the cost of nightclubs, drugs and prostitution. One of the spiritual consequences of the Wesleyan revival was precisely this - the poor gained the ability to earn money, to save money and to control expenditure on alcohol. This is credited with staving off an economically-based revolution in England similar to the French revolution.

Prosperity Is Retained By Righteous Living

(Proverbs 13:22-23 NKJV) "A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, But the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous." Inter-generational wealth is based on righteous living and inherited blessing while the wealth of the wicked is transitory at best, in fact the wealth of the wicked is stored up for the righteous.(Proverbs 13:11,22). Habitual righteousness and wisdom protect the possessor from the foolish acts that destroy wealth such as giving into the temptation to be involved in a shady business deal. Furthermore righteousness brings God's favour and the three-fold blessing of fruitfulness, multiplication and authority discussed earlier. The wealth of the righteous grows steadily and is still with them in old age while the wealth of the wicked has "taken wings" and flown away. (Proverbs 23:5). By making wealth a secondary concern to obeying God the wise and righteous person actually ends up better off. Any study of wealthy families in Europe will show this to be true time and time again.

The Prosperity Diagram



Interpreting The Book of Revelation

A. The book as apocalypse: An apocalypse is a very specific kind of literature with no modern equivalent. While there is only one OT apocalyptic book (Daniel) and one NT book that demonstrates some features of this type (Revelation), it was a common form of writing in the two centuries before and after the birth of Christ. There are several distinct features of apocalyptic writing.

1) **It arises out of a historical context of great turmoil, persecution, and oppression.** The prophets looked forward to God balancing the scales of justice within history; apocalyptic has given up on history and has become so pessimistic of change that it can only see God acting by bringing a radical end to history, destroying all evil, and beginning again with a new world.

2) **It is carefully crafted literature.** It was not spoken (like prophetic sermons), but was composed. That means it exhibits certain features of normal writing, such as structure, form, flow of thought, creative use of language, etc.

3) **It is presented in the form of visions, dreams, and other worldly journeys.** Several features intend to communicate a sense of mystery, the revealing of secrets long hidden in the mists of the past. Therefore, most apocalyptic writing is written under the name of a long dead person of some reputation (Abraham, Moses, Enoch) who is instructed to keep the book for the "latter days," which, of course, would be the time the book was actually being written. Also, there is often a guide to reveal the secrets or mysteries.

4) **Its images and symbols are forms of fantasy rather than reality, and its language is cryptic, metaphorical, and highly symbolic.** These symbols are not drawn from our modern world, but from the language, experience, and cultural "pool" of the ancient world. The assumptions that underlie those symbols are likewise not those of a modern scientific world view of the 21st century Western world, but those of the Ancient Near East of 2,000 years ago. Strange multiheaded beasts, weird creatures, dragons, and odd combinations of normal images (locusts with scorpion's tails and human heads) are common ways of writing. It purposely presents a world that does not exist except as a means of communication.

5) **It is a highly stylized and schematized way of writing.** There are neat packages of time and event, all moving in a very ordered way. Sequences of numbers, people, or events are common. Numbers, especially, take on symbolic value, even to the point of ciphering (certain numbers standing for certain letters of the alphabet). There are frequent uses of certain numbers, such as 3, 7, and 12 (and multiples, such as 144,000).

6) **However, simply because a writing exhibits some of the features of an apocalypse does not necessarily mean that its *message or theology* must conform to that genre.** That would be to ignore both the dynamic of inspiration (God's word) and the creativity of the author/community of faith (in human words). While the book of Revelation is obviously modeled in some ways on the classic form of apocalyptic writings, the message of the book implies something far different than "traditional" apocalyptic writings.

B. The book as prophecy: Because the Book of Revelation is written in John's own name, it is related to OT prophecy, perhaps more closely than it is to apocalyptic. But it is not prophecy in the popular (and incorrect) modern sense of "predicting the future." OT prophecy was overwhelmingly concerned with speaking God's message to people of the prophet's own time, interpreting God's will for them in light of then current historical events. The prophets were primarily "covenant mediators," calling the people to be faithful to God in the midst of the ups and downs of history.

1) In this sense, **Revelation is a message, not for the far future, but for the first century Church** whose very existence was being threatened by persecution from both Romans and Jews. But as a message to the first century church, since we accept it as Scripture, it is also a "word" of God to the church today.

2) This relation to OT prophecy also underscores the fact that **the Book of Revelation is related to a particular time in history, to a particular set of circumstances, and to particular people.** This does not mean it is irrelevant for us today; it just means we cannot make it address the issues we want it to address directly, without first understanding something about what it meant to the early church.

III. Interpreting the Book

Several principles need to guide any study of the Book of Revelation.

A. "The primary meaning of the Revelation, or at least the anchor point of any meaning, is what John intended it to mean, which in turn must also have been something his readers could have understood it to mean." (Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for all It's Worth*. . ., p. 209)

B. "Any keys to interpreting the Revelation must be intrinsic to the text of the Revelation itself or otherwise available to the original recipients from their own historical context." Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for all It's Worth*., p. 209)

C. The rich and varied cultural context of the ancient world must be the frame of reference for interpreting the names and symbols of the book, but also with a sensitivity to how creatively they are used in the book.

D. The visions and symbols should not be pressed into allegory in which every detail has some meaning; most often the meaning is in the entire vision and its impact rather than every detail.

E. Apocalypses (or writings modeled after them) do not intend to give a detailed chronological map of the future; the message is much more historically conditioned, and much more theologically oriented. Rather than a map of the future, it is an encouragement for the present.

Views of the Time Frame of the Book of Revelation

Dennis Bratcher

The different approaches that various people or groups use to understand the Book of Revelation (called "interpretive horizons") are generally grouped under four major categories, with some subgroups (see [The Kingdom of God: Various Interpretations](#)):

1. Futurist: A Blueprint of the End Times

The book predicts events which will accompany the end of the world. Chapters 1-3 generally are seen to refer to the events of the interpreters' own time, and the rest of the book is future. Present history is analyzed to find in it clues that the end is imminent, or already beginning to take place. Usually this is done by combining references from various parts of the Bible to construct an interpretation of the present. This was the position held during the first centuries of the church, and was revived with the Adventist and Dispensationalist movements of the 19th century.

2. Historicist: The Road Map of World History

The book basically deals with all of human history. The meaning of the symbols are to be found in the events of history. Some hold that the book deals more with the period prior to the present, some see it as unfolding in the present, and some emphasize the future more. All of the book is a symbolic account of the whole scope of world history, with the "beast" identified with various historical figures or peoples, from the Saracens, to Mohammed, to the Pope, to Adolph Hitler. This view arose in the Middle Ages, and was adopted by most of the Reformers in the 16th century, including Martin Luther who popularized the idea that the "beast" was the Roman Catholic Pope. In turn, Catholic theologians were convinced that Luther was the "beast."

2a. Church Historical: The History of the Church

This is a modification of the previous position, and sees the book as only dealing with events associated with the church; it is an account of the church through history. This was the view adopted by many Protestants following the Reformation.

3. Preterist: The First Century Church

The book is a symbolic account of the first century church's struggle with Roman persecution. The symbols are drawn from ancient texts as well as contemporary culture to dramatize the plight of the church and to encourage its members in the face of troubled times. The "beast" is usually identified with the Empire of Rome, or a particular Roman emperor. While the book does deal with the future, in this view it is focused largely in the first century, and extrapolates and projects the first century experience of the church into the future. This view gained prominence in the 17th and 18th century as more knowledge of the history of the early church, as well as other apocalyptic writings from the period, came to light.

4. Idealist: Eternal Principles

The book, while rooted in the social and historical setting of the first century church, contains a message that transcends that setting. It illustrates, in the struggles of the early church, abiding spiritual principles that are applicable to all of human experience throughout history. The symbols can refer to specific people or events in that time, *e.g.*, the emperor Nero, but they also become symbols for a larger reality tied to common human experience. The "beast" symbolizes Nero, while Nero symbolizes the lack of control we experience in our lives, as well as those who exercise power over us in destructive ways.

4a. Theological: An Incarnated Message

This is a modified combination of the last two above. The book is basically a symbolic account of the early church, but rather than simply containing eternal principles, it is a confession from the first century church about God and how he enables His people to deal with hard times. The emphasis is on a holistic reading of the book to see the dual message of promise and hope for an oppressed people, as well as the final failure of any human institution that takes the place of God in the world.

Other Principles (John Edmiston)

1. Scripture interprets Scripture – so use Daniel, Ezekiel, Matthew chapters 24 & 25, 1 & 2 Thessalonians etc when interpreting Revelation.
2. Work from that which is clear first, in order to understand that which is unclear. (e.g. the two resurrections of Revelation 20) No interpretation can contradict clear, well known theological truth such as the Trinity, salvation by grace etc.
3. Focus on the big lessons first and don't get bogged down in trivia: The heavenly glory and centrality of Christ Jesus, the glory of the church, God's love for His saints, the power of prayer, the presence of angels, the effectiveness of our testimony, the heavenly goal is redemption of the nations, God's hatred of mankind's sinful rebellion and unjust systems, holiness, consecration, eternal priorities, faithfulness under pressure, carrying out our duties as faithful servants, God will return and bring justice, our suffering is not in vain, don't enter into worldly alliances, don't take the mark of the Beast.
4. Do not assume chronological order unless it says so. Use phrases such as 'and then' to determine chronological order e.g 'this gospel of the Kingdom must first be preached as witness to all nations **and then** the end shall come' (Matthew 24:14). Then put the pieces together as a chronological jigsaw. If as Paul writes, "we who are alive and remain shall not go before those who are asleep" (1 Thessalonians 4:15) then the Rapture cannot precede the Resurrection.
5. Don't just hunt for a particular event (such as the Rapture) but rather look for the entire overall picture and let the event emerge out of it.
6. Determine what is literal and what is figurative. Understand what the figurative language meant in NT times. Also what it means in terms of biblical symbolism e.g. horn = leader, beast = nation or empire, water of life = Holy Spirit etc.
7. If you don't know what a vision or figurative element means and it is not found in biblical references, then try the Jewish or Greek literature of the first century.

8. The number seven is used 30 times in the book of Revelation – seven churches, seven spirits, seven stars, seven lamp-stands, seven lamps before the throne, seven seals, seven horns of the Lamb, seven eyes of the Lamb, seven angels with seven trumpets, seven thunders, seven thousand names of men slain in the earthquake of Rev 11:3, a dragon with seven heads, ten horns and seven crowns on his heads, a beast out of the sea with seven heads and ten horns, seven angels with seven last plagues, seven golden vials (bowls) full of the wrath of God, the harlot sitting on a beast with seven heads and ten horns, the seven mountains on which the woman sits, seven kings,
9. Other significant numbers include 3, 4, 12, three and a half, 10, 666, 1000, 1260, 12,000 – this is known as *gematria* and involves using Greek and Hebrew letters (which were also numbers) to point to the meanings of words.
10. See <http://www.biblestudy.org/bibleref/meaning-of-numbers-in-bible/introduction.html>
http://www.biblewheel.com/GR/GR_Database.asp?bnum=40&cnum=3&vnum=1
11. Use the obvious intent of the passage: warning, exhortation to repentance, statement of events, heavenly vision, worship, theological statement, chronological, exhortation etc. Construct the theology from the theological passages the history from the historical / events passages, the chronology from the chronological passages etc.
12. Analyze according to the sections: letters to the seven churches, throne room, visions, judgments, new heaven and earth etc.
13. Revelation is multi-layered. Some sections are theological ideals, some are for first-century churches, some are clearly future prophecies, some are symbols of eternal realities. However it is clear that there is a progression towards a historical climax that will occur on earth. It is not merely an ideal or a revelation about Christ. It does concern itself with the ‘things which are to come’ (Revelation 1;1, 4:1)
14. Some chapters e.g Revelation 14 summarize the territory ahead and cover large periods of time e.g the two harvests the first of the saints and the other of those who will suffer wrath.
15. The Seventh trumpet and the Bowl judgments seem to occur almost simultaneously.
16. Revelation was written after 70 AD which negates the Preterist view. Many events (such as a man of lawlessness sitting in a rebuilt Jewish temple) have not occurred so this does not fulfill the Historicist view. The Idealist view is far removed from the way the Bible deals with prophecy normally – as seeking a literal fulfillment. So we end up with a Futurist view.
17. Within the Futurist view we have Premillennial, Postmillennial, and Amillennial views concerning the thousand year reign of Christ. Within the Pre-millennial view we have pre-tribulational rapture, mid-tribulational rapture, pre-wrath rapture and post-tribulational rapture. Most evangelicals agree that a Futurist Pre-Millennial view is correct but there is some debate over where the rapture occurs. ***This should never be a contentious or divisive issue.***
18. Making identifications and predictions based on Revelation has discredited many a ministry. We should be exceedingly cautious before identifying any political figure with the Anti-Christ. He ‘will be revealed’ (2 Thessalonians 2:3-10) so we will not have to guess! Setting dates and timelines has been equally disastrous.

Approximate Timeline

(This time-line is an approximate timeline from the Futurist Pre-Millennial perspective and would find reasonable agreement among many evangelicals. It is the best that I can do with the biblical data without producing too tangled a picture. It is not meant to be 'the final word'. Feel free to disagree with it.)

Church Age

1. Spirit of lawlessness which is already at work (2 Thessalonians 2:7, 1 John 2:18)
2. Wars and rumors of wars, false Christs, false doctrines, many antichrists, initial persecution of the Church, 'you will be hated for my name's sake' (Matthew 24:1-14)
3. Church age corresponding to the seven churches (Revelation chapters 1-3)
4. Evangelism of that nations completed (Matthew 24:14)
5. Heavenly celebration of the success of this evangelism (Revelation 4 & 5)

Rise of Israel

6. Michael and his angels defeat the Devil and his angels (Revelation 12)
7. The rise of Israel, the fig-tree bears its shoots, (Matthew 24:32) dwells in peace and prosperity Ezekiel 38:8-12)
8. Jews come to Christ (Ezekiel 37, Zechariah 12)
9. Gog and Magog, Israel defeats Islamic world (Ezekiel 38,39)
10. Temple constructed (Ezekiel 40-48, 2 Thessalonians 2:4,)
11. The evangelism of the world is now complete. (Romans 9-11, Revelation 14:15,16)

The First Three And A Half Years Of The Tribulation

12. "Him who restrains" is removed, lawlessness is allowed to prosper (2 Thessalonians 2:7,8)
13. Satan incarnates as the anti-Christ, is full of wrath makes war against the saints (Revelation 13)
14. Anti-Christ is revealed arises and sits in the Temple proclaiming himself to be god (2 Thessalonians 2:3-10)
15. Construction of the image of the beast which appears to be alive and a false prophet that serves it. (Revelation 13)
16. False signs and wonders, great apostasy, love of many grows cold (Matthew 24:12, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10)
17. Rise of a Babylonian style new world order characterized by ruthless trade practices. It will be based out of Rome or out of the old Roman Empire. He harlot=Rome (Revelation 17 & 18)

The Second Three and a Half Years

18. Babylonian order ruled by the Anti-Christ imposes a 666 (stigma) mark in order to buy and sell (Revelation 13)
19. Persecution of the Church, particularly of the (now Christian) Jews. Harlot is drunk with the blood of the saints. (Revelation 17 & 18)
20. First six Seal Judgments (Revelation 6)
21. Sealing of the servants of God by the angels. (Revelation 7)
22. Seventh seal, silence in heaven, prayers, incense, spiritual warfare
23. The first six Trumpet judgments , partial judgments, one –third killed (Revelation 8 & 9,11), those who are sealed by God are spared.
24. Two prophets arise who pronounce judgments and call for repentance, they are killed in Jerusalem and rise after three and a half days. (Revelation 11)
25. A great earthquake in Jerusalem (Revelation 11:13)

The Final Judgments - Quick Succession

26. The seventh and Last Trumpet (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, Revelation 11:15-19) First Resurrection (Revelation 20:5,6), Christ begins to reign, the judgment of the dead.
27. Those Christian who are left alive meet Christ in the air as He comes back to judge the earth (1 Thessalonians 4:17)
28. Bowl judgments – final wrath of God (Revelation 16)
29. Babylon is judged (Revelation 17 & 18)
30. Christ returns with a heavenly army of His saints and defeats the Devil in a vast battle on earth (Revelation 19)
31. Beast and false prophet cast into the lake of fire along w. those who received the mark (Revelation 19:20)

The Millennium

32. Satan bound for 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-3)
33. The marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9)
34. Christians reign and rule with Christ on Earth for 1000 years (Revelation 20:4)

Final Things

35. Satan released (Revelation 20:7)
36. Armageddon, armies of Satan devoured by fire from Heaven (Revelation 20:8,9)
37. Satan confined to the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:10)
38. Second Resurrection, Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15)
39. Elements consumed with fire (2 Peter 3:12, Revelation 21:1)
40. New Heavens and New Earth, New Jerusalem comes down out of Heaven (Revelation 21,22)

Hermeneutics Practice Passages – Revelation

1. Revelation 1:17-20

2. Revelation 3:14-22

3. Revelation 6:1-8

4. Revelation 8:1-5

5. Revelation 10:5-7

6. Revelation 12:7-17

7. Revelation 13:12-18

8. Revelation 14:14-20

9. Revelation 16:1-21

10. Revelation 19:1-9

Hermeneutics Take Home Exam

Due in the final week of class

1. Give a definition of Hermeneutics?
2. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in inspiring the Scriptures?
3. What was the main original language of the Old Testament?
4. What was the main original language of the New Testament?
5. What is a literal translation?
6. What is a dynamic translation?
7. What sort of translations should we use for serious bible study?

8. What is meant when we talk about the 'historical context' of a bible passage? (p.59)

9. What is an epistle? (p. 56,57)

10. Why do we have to 'think paragraphs' when reading the epistles?

11. What is meant when we talk about the 'literary context' of a bible passage? (p. 64)

12. How do we deal with the difference between first-century culture, and our culture, when we interpret the epistles?

13. What is the basic rule of hermeneutics when interpreting the epistles (p.74)

14. What is the rule of hermeneutics when interpreting the epistles (p.75)

15. *List* each of the seven principles of understanding cultural concerns in the epistles (p. 80-86) and *briefly explain* each of them

16. What are the three levels of Old Testament narrative (p. 91)

17. What is the importance of understanding the plot/story and its various scenes? (p. 94,96)

18. What is 'dialogue' and how is it used? (p.96)

19. List at least 4 points of caution we should note when understanding OT narratives? (p. 103-106)

20. List at least five principles for interpreting OT narratives (p106)

21. What was Luke's purpose in writing Acts (p. 112-114)

22. What are the three principles of historical narrative listed on page 121?

23. What are the three principles for interpreting Acts found on page 123?

24. What is a gospel? What are the 'synoptic gospels'?

25. Why is historical context so important in understanding the gospels?

26. What is the Kingdom of God?

27. How is the Kingdom of God essential to understanding the gospels?

28. What is a parable? Why did Jesus tell parables?

29. How do we 'get the point' of a parable?

30. What is the point of the parable of the sower (the four soils)?

31. List the six principles concerning the Christian and the OT Law (p. 165-169)

32. Do Christians have to observe the Jewish Sabbath?

33. What is apodictic law? P. 170 and casuistic law (p173)

34. What was the function of prophecy in Israel (p. 184-189)

35. List the various forms of prophetic speech (. 194-199)

36. What are 'orthodoxy and orthopraxy' (p.204) and why does this matter when interpreting the prophets?

37. Interpret Micah 6:6-8

38. What are the various types of Psalms (. 212-215)

39. What is the structure of Psalm 138 (p. 218)

40. What is an 'imprecatory psalm"? How should we interpret them? (p. 220-222)

41. What are the three basic benefits of the Psalms (p. 222-223)

42. What is 'wisdom literature'? Which books are generally called books of wisdom?

43. What is 'prudential wisdom' and how is it found in Proverbs? (p.231)

44. What precautions must we take when interpreting Proverbs? (p. 232-235)

45. List the four hermeneutical principles for Proverbs (p.235-241)

46. Interpret Proverbs 6:6-10 and note the kinds of imagery being used

47. What kind of literature is Job? How should we interpret it? (p. 241-242)

48. What kind of literature is Ecclesiastes? How should we interpret it? (p. 242-244)

49. What is the 'law of first use' in the Bible?

50. How does 'Scripture interpret Scripture'?