

ISRAEL: Yesterday, Today, & Forever ***(A little History Lesson)***

A man named Origen who lived from AD 185-254 is the first prominent figure in the Church Age to promote interpreting the Scripture **spiritually or allegorically** rather than literally (normally).

Augustine lived from AD 354-430; and building on Origen, he was the first to **systematize** an allegorical interpretation of prophecy. This viewpoint became the prevailing view of the Roman Catholic Church and was also adopted by most of the Protestant Reformers.

Augustine's famous work ***"The City of God"*** set forth the idea that the CHURCH was the visible kingdom of God on earth.

While the Reformers largely broke with the Catholic Church over matters regarding salvation, they did not break with Catholic Church in matters of eschatology. Consequently, the whole of Protestantism largely went the way of interpreting prophecy allegorically instead of literally. This involves two great errors.

Two Great Errors!

1. The Church is seen as "spiritual Israel".
2. The Kingdom is seen as the Church. The assumption is that the Kingdom of God is now "spiritually" manifest in the context of the Church.

Allegorical interpretation led to the view that the promises God previously made to Israel are now applicable to the Church. This view says that the Church has replaced Israel and God is now done with Israel. This is wrong! The only way one can arrive at this conclusion is to not take the Scriptures literally for what they plainly say.

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise." –Dr. David L. Cooper (1886-1965)

Mr. Cooper's statement has been called "The Golden Rule" of Biblical Interpretation. It is often shortened to, "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, then seek no other sense, lest it result in nonsense."

Two Key Views

Covenant Theology: This view interprets redemptive history through the lens of two covenants: 1) a Covenant of Works that God made with Adam before the Fall and 2) the Covenant of Grace related to the elect. These "covenants" are not found stated in Scripture. Rather, they are assumptions. Covenant theology holds to ONE unified people of God through the ages. Covenant Theology holds that the Church has replaced Israel as "spiritual Israel". This involves a spiritualizing of the text!

Dispensationalism: This view makes a distinction between God's program for Israel and His program for the Church. The guiding principle for dispensationalism is a consistent, literal hermeneutic which consistently takes the Bible for what it plainly says.

1 Corinthians 10:32 (NKJV)

32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God,

Paul made a clear DISTINCTION between the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church. A consistent hermeneutic that rightly divides the Word maintains these distinctions.