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The "House" Metaphor as a Helpful Approach to Studying the Doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ – Ep. 16

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***The following is a transcript so it has not been edited for grammar and spelling.**

Transcription results:

It's time for The Biblical Prophecy Program. With your host, Alan Kurschner of Eschatos Ministries.

The "house" metaphor as a helpful approach to studying the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. Well, there are several ways or approaches to studying the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. One of the most popular ways is to study a particular passage in the bible or a book in the bible. Of course, that often happens to be the Book of Revelation in the vast majority of cases. Now, studying the Book of Revelation, in principle, I'm not against studying the Book of Revelation apart from other books in the bible. In fact, in the original historical context, the Book of Revelation was read by seven churches. It was studied or read as a self-contained body of literature - a book.

Although, one qualification to that is that most of those churches would have had already-- they are already would have been instructed with the tradition of Jesus' teachings especially the Olivet discourse that would have been handed down as a tradition to churches. Many of these churches in Asia Minor would have likely had copies of Paul's letters including the Thessalonian epistle. They would have had this background to the Book of Revelation. It wouldn't been completely disconnected. The theology wouldn't been disconnected from how they would have read the Book of Revelation. I understand there are a lot of small bible study groups out there as well as church-wide sponsored bible studies that are studying the Book of Revelation. That's good. I mean, that's to be encouraged obviously. We need more churches studying eschatology instead of ignoring the book.

But over the years, I've received feedback from a lot of people over what they've been studying, what their churches have been studying. A lot of them have been studying the Book of Revelation as a self-contained book. Some of them expressed that - people in the study groups and in the church and even some of the leaders of the bible studies - they've been confused. They've been confused on the structure of the Book of Revelation, the sequence. In other words, they've often got lost in the details. We know, the Book of Revelation has a lot of details. How do you relate the seals with the trumpet judgments or certain sections like Chapters 12-14 which I believe is essential to understand that those three chapters are parenthetical and goes back and unpacks the key events such the great tribulation and other events.

Again, in principle, I'm not against studying the Book of Revelation as a self-contained book in that fashion. However, I do want to suggest a more practical way of studying the Book of Revelation. We believe that the books of the bible have been progressively revealed by God to God's people - to his people. With of course, the Book of Revelation being the very last book that was written. I like to suggest that the best approach to studying the Book of Revelation or the doctrine of the second coming is what we call a biblical theological approach. For example, beginning in the Old Testament with say Daniel and giving us that a temporal framework. Then moving on to Jesus' teaching in the New Testament - in the gospels. Particularly, the Olivet discourse in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, all parallel accounts.

That's where Jesus gives us a concrete outline to the events surrounding the second coming of Christ.

Then moving on to both of the Thessalonian epistles where Paul gives further description of these second coming events. Then concluding with the Book of Revelation which fills in the details. I think it's a very common sense approach as well. It's theological, it's practical. As you're working through Jesus, and Paul, and the Book of Revelation, you can also be drawing from the Old Testament prophets. Not just Daniel, but other prophets such as Joel and Zephaniah when you talk about the day of the Lord as well.

These four main passages in Daniel, Olivet discourse, Paul's teachings, and Thessalonians, and the Book of Revelation, I think these are essential at least that you've got to study this to have a really competent study on the doctrine of the second coming. They all follow that progressive revelation. Again, culminating in the Book of Revelation. Back a few years ago I wrote an article on this very topic and I used a "house" metaphor - the "house" metaphor. I used it because I think it illustrates it very well of this approach to studying the second coming. I started with Daniel.

Now there's four Fs. There's the foundation, the framework, the facilities, and the furnishing. When you build a house. When you build a house, you start with the foundation, then you build the framework, and then you put in the facilities, and then the furnishing. These four passages correspond to this procedure of building a house. Daniel would be the first F, the foundation. Obviously, when you build a house, you don't begin with the furnishings, you begin with the foundation. Before anyone frames the house, wires, and decorates a house, there must obviously be a foundation. I framed houses in my early 20s so I know a lot about the importance of foundations. The foundation that I'm referring to is a temporal foundation. That is, there's a time reference, a temporal reference in which the events surrounding the second coming of Christ is going to happen within.

The Book of Revelation provides us this foundation especially Daniel 9:24-27 and Chapters 10-12 as well give additional information on this. The archangel Gabriel revealed to Daniel that God would take a chunk of history, 490 years of human history to fulfill redemptive purposes. We learned that it's the last seven years that is the most significant, a time when key eschatological events will unfold in proximity to the second coming. This seven-year period is still yet to happen. If this temporal foundation is not laid, then the interpretive house of eschatology is not going to be sturdy for the framing and the other aspects of the house. A perfect example is that the time frame of three and a half years is mentioned frequently in the Book of Revelation.

Well, if one dives right into the Book of Revelation without this background knowledge in Daniel, they'll often going to be confused of, "Hey, where did this time frame come from? What's the context of it?" But if you begin with Daniel, then you're going to situate this temporal framework for later study when you go into the Book of Revelation. We see this shaky foundation from preterism and historicism which denies a future seven-year period and even many post tribulationists deny the futurism of the seven years. Consequently, their eschatological houses - again, to use this metaphor of a house - their houses do not pass the building codes so to speak. They have cracks in their foundation.

The first F is the foundation. The second F is the framework. Once you get the foundation, once the foundation is laid, then the framework of the house can be built. That's the walls, the floors, the roof, windows, doors. This framework is found in Jesus' teaching in the Olivet discourse which is likened to, again, the next stage of this house building. In the Olivet discourse includes Matthew 24 and 25 in the parallel accounts, and Mark 13 and Luke 21, and even the account in Luke 17. Jesus describes what's going to happen before the midpoint of the seven-year period and what happens after it. His emphasis is on what begins at the midpoint and after it - and that is the second half - describing the Antichrist's great tribulation that will begin at the midpoint.

Then at some time during the second half, it's going to be cut short with the coming of Christ to gather his people which is followed by his judgement upon the wicked. This is followed by then Jesus gives many exhortations to be spiritually watchful for his return. Jesus provides this framework that's going to make the house more sturdy. You have the foundation. You have the framework. Then after you have the framework built, then you can put in the facilities of a house. When the framework is in place,

the next stage of house building are the facilities such as heating, air conditioning, electrical wiring, plumbing, et cetera.

This third key eschatological biblical prophetic passages found in looking at Paul's Thessalonian epistles - 1 and 2 Thessalonians. What Paul does is, he draws actually from Jesus' teachings in the Olivet discourse, but he develops them giving more information, providing these "facilities" such as describing more the depiction of the resurrection, rapture, more in-depth actions of the Antichrist, and different aspects of the day of the Lord. If we have a proper understanding of Paul's teaching, the house codes can be approved. Then what? People can move into the house. Because once you have the foundation, the framework up, and the facilities, now it's time to move into the house and what? Guess what? Furnish the house. That's the fourth F, furnish.

You have, again, you have the foundation, framework, facilities, and finally, the furnishing. Again, you don't begin building a house by the furnishing. That's kind of getting ahead of yourself. It's the last aspect of building a house. You're ready to move in to the house and begin what? Decorating it. The furnishing. Decorating it, furniture, pictures, oven, refrigerator, paintings, carpet, window treatments. Well, similarly, the Book of Revelation provides the furnishing to our understanding of the second coming. We have a context. What's the context? The context is a built house. We have a built house. Now, we can place these details in the Book of Revelation within this whole doctrine of the second coming of Christ.

This is why we see so many odd interpretations of the Book of Revelation. Because they have a defective foundation, they have a defective framework, and they have a defective or they may not even have the facilities in the house. I think this is a wise approach to this procedure - in my opinion - of studying the second coming of Christ. Again, beginning back in Daniel, working through Jesus' and Paul's teachings. Before, before you get in to a systematic study of the Book of Revelation, you're going to really have a lot of framework in context when you approach the Book of Revelation and you're going to appreciate these details much more, and they're going to fall in place better. You may not understand every aspect of the Book of Revelation, but a lot of these events and details are going to make more sense if you have this background.

In fact, when I wrote my book *Antichrist Before the Day of the Lord*, I took this approach. I have three sections in my book. The Antichrist's Great Tribulations is part one. The second part is the Rapture. The third part is the Day of the Lord's Wrath. Each of these sections, I took this progressive approach and traced these major bible prophecy passages on the second coming in that order. I think it's been very helpful for people. Listen, if you decide to study the doctrine of the second coming or the Book of Revelation, I hope you will take this approach because I think it would be more helpful to see the richness, the richness of the progressive revealing through these key passages in the bible, and of course culminating in the last book of the bible - Revelation.