

D. New Testament Concepts

The big New Testament concept is the fact that Jesus is coming again and bringing to completion all the works and economies of God. It is a dominant fact in all of the New Testament literature and one of the most carefully pronounced truths in all of the Bible. It is used as a message to cheer us, warn us, motivate us, etc. But in connection with that some other concepts are developed that accord a bit with the pattern seen in the Old Testament.

1. Passages highlighting the difficulties of the last times:

1 Timothy 4:1-3, 2 Timothy 3:1-5 (4:3), and 2 Peter 3:1-4)

These rather speak for themselves and show a declension in the world with regard to truth. It is one that affects the professed church as well and does not give a very optimistic cast to spiritual history.

2. Passages highlighting the triumphs of the Lord:

Revelation 19-20...a great time of peace and blessing is brought to fruition following a great trial and warfare.

1 Corinthians 15:24 (in context) Christ will be acknowledged as the universal ruler and all things are under His feet.

E. Combining our materials for a sequence of events:

In a very simplified form the picture of the "end times" is this:

The Messiah will come

The Messiah will be rejected

The Messiah will have a Gentile ministry

The Gentile ministry will be bothered with growing apostasy

A time of great trial will come to the earth

Israel will face enormous persecution

Messiah will come again, delivering His people

A Kingdom of glory will be set up

The eventual plans of God will be consummated.

There are many, many details behind and in this simple formula... many of which not all prophecy scholars agree upon. You will understand it in the frame of reference with which I have described myself at the onset of this hour. Let us say that the truth of the Lord's second coming as a fact is universally accepted in the Christian community but the details as to how, why, etc., are not well agreed upon and we do well to teach what we understand in a sense of charity and dependence on God. Of the particulare events included in this scheme... one needs another course although I will touch fleetingly on some of them before this discussion ends.

F. Some Great Questions on the End Times

1. What can we say of His coming again?

--it is promised