FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

ESCHATOLOGY

The Doctrine of Last Things

He Who Was, and Who Is, and Who Is to Come

UNIT 1: PROLEGOMENA — WHY ESCHATOLOGY MATTERS

Lessons 1–3: Setting the Foundation for the Doctrine of Last Things

Lesson 2

HERMENEUTICS AND ESCHATOLOGY

How You Read Determines What You See

The Interpretive Principles That Shape Eschatological Conclusions

"The interpreter who does not understand genre has already misread the text before he has begun to exegete it."

Key Texts: Luke 24:25–27, 44–47; Acts 2:14–36; Hebrews 1:1–2; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 1 Peter 1:10–12

> *"Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."*
>
> **Titus 2:13, NASB 1995**

Dr. Joshua Nichols

Pastor, Theologian, Author

faithfultotheword.com

Introduction

No question in eschatology is more foundational than this: how should we read the texts that bear upon the last things? The answer to that question determines, with remarkable consistency, every subsequent conclusion a student of eschatology will reach. Two interpreters may read the same passages in Revelation, Daniel, Matthew 24, and 1 Thessalonians, and arrive at eschatological positions that are worlds apart, not because one is dishonest and the other faithful, but because they are operating with fundamentally different assumptions about how prophetic and apocalyptic texts are to be interpreted. Hermeneutics is not a preliminary question to be settled before the real work begins. It is the ongoing, ever-present question that governs every exegetical decision from first to last.

Lesson 1 established the foundations of eschatological study: its definition, its Christological center, its pastoral urgency, and its governing "already / not yet" framework. This lesson builds directly upon that foundation by examining the hermeneutical principles without which no eschatological study can proceed with integrity. We will examine the foundational question of how prophetic and apocalyptic literature is to be read, address the meaning of "literal" interpretation and its frequent misapplication in eschatological debate, explore the grammatical-historical method as it applies to predictive prophecy and apocalyptic genre, and then make the case, on both exegetical and theological grounds, that the New Testament's own interpretation of Old Testament prophecy is the hermeneutical key to Christian eschatology. The lesson closes with a consideration of how our theological framework (specifically, Progressive Covenantalism) shapes our reading of the prophetic and apocalyptic texts, and with a warning against the ever-present temptation of system-driven exegesis.

The governing texts for this lesson are drawn from the passages in which the New Testament most explicitly models its own approach to Old Testament prophecy: Luke 24:25–27, 44–47 (the risen Christ's hermeneutical tutorial on the road to Emmaus and in the upper room), Acts 2:14–36 (Peter's Pentecost sermon as a case study in apostolic hermeneutics), Hebrews 1:1–2 (the summary of the progressive and climactic character of divine revelation), 2 Corinthians 1:20 (the Pauline thesis that all God's promises are "yes" in Christ), and 1 Peter 1:10–12 (the prophets' own Spirit-directed searching of their eschatological predictions). In each of these passages, the apostolic church demonstrates the hermeneutical instinct that must govern our approach to every eschatological text: all Scripture moves toward Christ, and the fulfillment of all biblical promise is found in Him.

A word of honest acknowledgment is appropriate here. Hermeneutics is a subject that can feel abstract and technical, a discussion of methods and principles rather than of persons and promises. But the stakes of good biblical interpretation are never merely academic. The question of how we read prophetic Scripture is ultimately the question of whether we will understand what God has actually said about the future of His Son, His people, and His creation. Bad hermeneutics produces bad eschatology. Bad eschatology produces a distorted hope, a misshapen discipleship, and a church that is ill-equipped to meet the challenges of the present age with the resources God has actually provided. Good hermeneutics, by contrast, opens the prophetic and apocalyptic texts in all their glory and sets the eschatological hope of the church upon the most secure of all foundations: the faithful word of the God who cannot lie, interpreted by the apostles He appointed to speak in His name.

I. THE FOUNDATIONAL HERMENEUTICAL QUESTION

How Should Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature Be Interpreted?

A. Why Hermeneutics Is the Hinge of Eschatology

It is no exaggeration to say that the hermeneutical question is the hinge upon which the entire eschatological debate turns. Consider the positions available in the contemporary evangelical landscape: dispensational premillennialism, historic premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism. Each of these positions claims to be grounded in Scripture. Each of them reads the same canonical texts. And yet they arrive at conclusions that are, in some cases, diametrically opposed, on questions as fundamental as the nature and timing of Christ's return, the meaning of the resurrection of the dead, the identity of Israel in biblical prophecy, and the shape of the eternal state. What accounts for such divergence among those who share a commitment to biblical authority? The answer, in nearly every case, is hermeneutics, the principles and assumptions brought to the text before a single verse is read.

This is not to suggest that hermeneutics is merely a matter of preference or that no approach is superior to another. Some hermeneutical approaches are more consistent with the actual character of biblical literature; some are more faithful to the way the New Testament itself handles the Old Testament; some are more attentive to the literary genres in which Scripture is written; and some are more resistant to the imposition of preconceived systems upon the text. The claim of this series is that the grammatical-historical method, properly applied, with full attention to genre, canonical context, and the apostolic hermeneutic, is the most faithful approach to eschatological interpretation. But that claim cannot be assumed; it must be demonstrated. And it must be demonstrated first from the way the New Testament itself reads the prophetic inheritance of the Old.

There is also a deeply pastoral dimension to this hermeneutical discussion. The congregation that has been taught to read prophetic texts through the lens of dispensational chart-and-timeline hermeneutics will hear Revelation very differently from the congregation that has been taught to read it as Jewish-Christian apocalyptic literature addressed to suffering churches in the Roman Empire. The congregation that has been taught that every Old Testament promise to Israel must be literally fulfilled in a geo-political nation-state will read Romans 9–11 and Galatians 3–4 very differently from the congregation that has learned to read those texts through the lens of Progressive Covenantal Biblical Theology. These are not merely academic distinctions. They shape the way God's people understand their identity, their mission, their hope, and their relationship to the promises of Scripture. Hermeneutics, in the most profound sense, is a pastoral discipline.

B. The Literary Landscape of Biblical Prophecy

Biblical prophecy is not a monolithic genre. It encompasses several distinct literary forms, each with its own conventions, expectations, and interpretive challenges. Narrative prophecy describes future events in relatively straightforward historical terms (e.g., the prophetic narratives of Isaiah 36–39). Oracular prophecy employs the elevated, poetic, and often highly figurative language of the classical prophets (e.g., the oracles of Amos, Micah, and Isaiah). Apocalyptic prophecy, represented supremely by Daniel and Revelation, is the most distinctive and the most frequently misread of the prophetic genres: it employs vivid symbolic imagery, numerology, cosmic imagery (sun and moon darkened, stars falling), throne-room visions, and a recapitulatory structure in which the

same period of time is revisited from multiple angles. Each of these genres must be read according to its own conventions, or the reader will inevitably import a foreign interpretive framework that distorts rather than discloses the text's meaning.

The failure to attend to genre is, without question, the single most common source of eschatological error. When a reader approaches the book of Revelation as though it were a detailed historical chronicle of future events, treating every symbolic number as a literal quantity, every cosmic image as a literal astronomical event, every beast as a specific identifiable individual, they are reading a work of Jewish-Christian apocalyptic as though it were a prophetic version of the Wall Street Journal. The genre does not support such a reading. Jewish apocalyptic literature was written in the context of suffering and persecution, employing a rich vocabulary of symbolic imagery drawn from the Old Testament, precisely in order to speak of present realities and future hope in terms that would be understood by the initiated community while remaining opaque to hostile outsiders. To read it without sensitivity to these conventions is to misread it at the most fundamental level.

This does not mean, however, that apocalyptic literature is merely a code to be deciphered or that its imagery is entirely arbitrary. The symbols of Revelation are rooted in the Old Testament, in the prophetic imagery of Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, and Zechariah, and they carry the semantic freight of those texts into the new covenant context. A reader steeped in the Old Testament will recognize the four living creatures of Revelation 4 from Ezekiel 1. They will hear in the harlot Babylon the echoes of the prophetic oracles against historical Babylon and Tyre. They will see in the new Jerusalem of Revelation 21–22 the fulfillment of the eschatological temple-city vision of Ezekiel 40–48. Apocalyptic literature rewards careful, intertextually attentive reading. It resists only one approach: the approach that abandons the Old Testament context and imposes a modern Western literalism upon ancient Near Eastern symbolic imagery.

II. THE MEANING OF "LITERAL" INTERPRETATION

Reclaiming the Sensus Literalis from Its Distortion

A. What Literal Interpretation Actually Means

No term in the eschatological debate is more frequently invoked and less carefully defined than "literal." Dispensational theologians argue for a consistently "literal" interpretation of prophecy, meaning that every prophetic statement should be understood to predict exactly what it says, without the spiritualizing or allegorizing that they attribute to amillennial and postmillennial interpretation. Amillennialists, in turn, are accused of abandoning the "plain meaning" of the text in favor of a spiritualized reading that dissolves the promises of God into vague generalities. The charge has rhetorical force, but it rests upon a profound misunderstanding of what the classical tradition of biblical interpretation has always meant by the sensus literalis, the literal sense.

The sensus literalis, as the Reformers employed the term and as sound hermeneutics still employs it today, is not the sense that ignores figure, metaphor, symbol, and genre. It is the sense the author intended in the genre he employed. When the psalmist writes that the mountains skipped like rams at the exodus (Psalm 114:4), the literal sense of the text, the sense intended by the author in the genre employed, is the poetic celebration of God's sovereign power over creation at the moment of Israel's deliverance. The literal sense does not require that geological events matching this description occurred during the Exodus. When Isaiah writes that the mountains

and hills will break forth into shouts of joy and the trees of the field will clap their hands (Isaiah 55:12), the literal sense is not a botanical prediction but an exuberant declaration of the joy that will attend the return of the exiles from Babylon, understood as a new exodus. Literalism, in the proper sense, is not the wooden imposition of a prosaic reading upon inherently figurative language. It is the disciplined effort to understand what the text meant in the context and genre in which it was written.

The irony of the dispensational appeal to "literal" interpretation is that it is, in fact, selectively applied. No dispensationalist reads Psalm 91:4, "He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge", and concludes that God is literally a bird with feathers. No one reads Revelation 5:6, "A Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes", and pictures a literal seven-horned sheep. Every reader recognizes that these texts are figurative. The question is not whether figurative language exists in prophetic and apocalyptic Scripture, it manifestly does, but which passages are figurative and which are not, and how we determine the difference. The answer lies not in a blanket commitment to "literalism" but in the careful application of the grammatical-historical method, with full attention to genre, context, and the interpretive guidance provided by the New Testament itself.

B. *The Grammatical-Historical Method Applied to Prophecy*

The grammatical-historical method, when applied to prophetic and apocalyptic texts, asks a series of questions that together establish the meaning of the text as the original author intended it and the original audience would have received it. What is the historical context in which this prophecy was given? What is the literary genre of this text, and what are the conventions of that genre? What is the grammatical structure and the lexical range of the key terms? What is the Old Testament background that the prophet is drawing upon? And, crucially for New Testament eschatology, how do the apostolic writers, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, interpret and apply this text? Each of these questions contributes to a reading of the text that is both historically grounded and theologically faithful.

The historical context of Old Testament prophecy is especially important, because prophetic utterances are almost never given in a historical vacuum. Isaiah's servant songs are addressed to a community facing the Babylonian exile and its aftermath. Daniel's visions are addressed to a community under the oppression of pagan empire. The book of Revelation is addressed to seven specific churches in the Roman province of Asia, facing specific pressures of persecution and compromise under the imperial cult of Domitian's reign. When we read these texts without attending to their historical context, we inevitably read them as though they were written directly to us, as contemporary dispatches from a prophetic correspondent, rather than as historically situated communications that have been preserved for our instruction (1 Corinthians 10:11; Romans 15:4). The result is an anachronistic reading that imports our contemporary concerns into the ancient text.

The grammatical analysis of prophetic texts requires particular attention to the Hebrew and Greek verbal system, which often encodes the prophet's temporal perspective in ways that are not immediately apparent in English translation. The Hebrew prophetic perfect, for example, expresses future events with such certainty that they are described in the past tense, a grammatical feature that has led some readers to misidentify prophecies of future events as historical descriptions of past ones. The Greek aorist and perfect tenses carry their own semantic weight in the eschatological passages of the New Testament. And the use of temporal indicators, "in the last days," "at the end of the age," "soon," "quickly", requires careful lexical analysis rather than the simple assumption that

these phrases mean what a modern English reader might expect them to mean. Good eschatological exegesis is, at every point, good philological and grammatical work.

III. THE NEW TESTAMENT'S INTERPRETATION OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

The Apostolic Hermeneutic as the Key to Christian Eschatology

A. Christ as the Hermeneutical Key: Luke 24 and the Emmaus Road

The single most important hermeneutical event in the history of biblical interpretation takes place on the road to Emmaus and in the upper room on the evening of the resurrection. In Luke 24:25–27, the risen Christ rebukes the discouraged disciples: "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory? Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." And again in verses 44–47: "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He "opened their minds to understand the Scriptures."

The hermeneutical significance of this passage cannot be overstated. The risen Christ declares that the entire Old Testament, Law, Prophets, and Psalms, the full three-part division of the Hebrew canon, is about Him. Not merely that certain individual passages predict events in His life, but that the whole of Scripture has its meaning, its coherence, and its fulfillment in His person and work. This is not an allegorizing move that evacuates the Old Testament of historical meaning, it is a Christological claim about the direction and goal of the entire redemptive-historical narrative. The Old Testament is not a collection of proof-texts awaiting literal fulfillment in a future political kingdom; it is a unified prophetic witness to the suffering, glory, and kingdom of the Messiah, whose identity has now been disclosed in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and risen.

The implication for eschatology is decisive. If the risen Christ is the hermeneutical key to all of Scripture, if all of the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms find their meaning in Him, then the eschatological promises of the Old Testament must be read Christologically. The land promise is not waiting for fulfillment in a geo-political nation-state; it finds its fulfillment in Christ, the true heir of Abraham (Galatians 3:16), and will reach its cosmic completion in the new creation (Romans 4:13). The temple promise is not waiting for a rebuilt structure in Jerusalem; it finds its fulfillment in Christ, in whom the fullness of deity dwells bodily (Colossians 2:9), and in the church as His dwelling place (Ephesians 2:19–22). The Davidic throne promise is not waiting for a future earthly reign; it has been fulfilled in Christ's resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:29–36). These are not spiritualizations, they are the interpretive conclusions that follow inevitably from the risen Christ's own hermeneutical declaration on the Emmaus road.

B. The Apostolic Hermeneutic in Acts 2: Peter's Pentecost Sermon

The clearest single example of apostolic eschatological hermeneutics in the New Testament is Peter's sermon at Pentecost in Acts 2:14–36. Here Peter interprets two major Old Testament texts, Joel 2:28–32 and Psalm 16:8–11 combined with Psalm 110:1, in ways that are decisive for how we read all subsequent eschatological prophecy.

Both the method and the conclusions of Peter's sermon stand as a model for Christian eschatological interpretation.

Peter's use of Joel 2 is particularly instructive. Joel had prophesied that "in the last days" God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, and that signs of cosmic upheaval would accompany the great and glorious day of the Lord. Peter stands before the Jerusalem crowd and declares, without qualification or apology: "This is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel." He does not say, "This is a partial fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, with the main fulfillment coming in a future millennium." He says, "This is what Joel said." The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is the fulfillment of Joel's eschatological promise. The "last days" are not a period yet to come, they have already arrived. This is the consistent apostolic position: the resurrection and ascension of Christ have inaugurated the eschatological age, and the church of Pentecost is already living in the fulfillment of the Old Testament's eschatological promises.

Peter's use of Psalm 16 is equally telling. He quotes David's words, "You will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay", and interprets them not as a first-person statement about David's own confidence in God's protection, but as a prophecy of the resurrection of Christ. The exegetical logic is explicit: "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ" (Acts 2:29–31). David did not merely speak of his own experience; he spoke prophetically of his greater Son. This is typological-prophetic interpretation, the recognition that Old Testament figures, events, and institutions carry a forward-pointing significance that is fulfilled in Christ. It is the hermeneutical method the apostles learned from the risen Christ Himself, and it is the method that must govern our reading of every Old Testament text that bears upon eschatology.

IV. TYPOLOGY AND FULFILLMENT

How Old Testament Patterns Find Their Completion in Christ and the New Covenant

A. The Structure and Logic of Biblical Typology

Typology is the interpretive recognition that certain Old Testament persons, events, institutions, and structures function as God-ordained anticipations, types, of the greater realities that are revealed in Jesus Christ and the new covenant. A type is not a mere analogy or a superficial resemblance; it is an intentional, divinely designed correspondence between a historical reality in Israel's experience and its eschatological counterpart in Christ. Adam is a type of Christ (Romans 5:14). The Passover lamb is a type of Christ (1 Corinthians 5:7). The tabernacle and temple are types of Christ and the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 9:1–10:18). The priesthood of Aaron is a type of Christ's eternal high priesthood (Hebrews 5–7). The land of Canaan is a type of the eschatological rest that remains for the people of God (Hebrews 4:1–11). In each case, the type is historically real and genuinely significant, but it is also genuinely incomplete, pointing beyond itself to the antitype that alone gives it its full meaning.

The recognition of typology is not an imposition upon the Old Testament from outside; it is grounded in the Old Testament's own forward-looking structure. The prophets themselves understood that their promises pointed to a fulfillment that transcended anything the immediate historical situation could produce. Isaiah's servant songs

describe a figure whose mission, to be a light to the nations, to bear the iniquities of the many, to see the travail of his soul and be satisfied, exceeds anything that could be predicated of Israel as a nation or of any individual within Israel's history. Jeremiah's new covenant promise (Jeremiah 31:31–34) predicts a covenant that will surpass the Mosaic covenant in the internalization of the law and the universal knowledge of God, a promise so radical that even Jeremiah could not have fully understood its eschatological scope. The prophets were, as Peter says, "serving not themselves, but you", speaking of things they themselves searched and inquired about, but whose fullness awaited the revelation of the Spirit in the apostolic age (1 Peter 1:10–12).

For eschatology, the typological structure of the Old Testament is of immense significance. If the land of Canaan is a type, a genuine but provisional anticipation of the eschatological inheritance, then its fulfillment is not a geo-political nation-state but the new creation, the world that Christ the true heir of Abraham will inherit and share with all who are in Him (Romans 4:13; Hebrews 11:10, 16). If the temple is a type, then its fulfillment is not a rebuilt structure in Jerusalem but the dwelling of God with man that has been inaugurated in Christ (John 2:19–21) and will reach its completion in the new Jerusalem, the city in which there is no temple "for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (Revelation 21:22). If the Davidic kingship is a type, then its fulfillment is not an earthly throne in a millennial Jerusalem but the exaltation of the Son of David to the right hand of the Father, where He reigns now and will reign forever and ever (Acts 2:33–36; Revelation 11:15). Typology, followed consistently, produces a profoundly Christocentric and eschatologically coherent reading of the entire biblical canon.

B. *The "Yes" of God in Christ: 2 Corinthians 1:20 and the Fulfillment of All Promises*

The Pauline thesis of 2 Corinthians 1:20 provides the systematic theological framework within which all biblical typology and prophecy must be understood: "For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us." This is a comprehensive and unqualified claim. Every promise of God, not some promises, not the non-Israel-related promises, not only the spiritual promises, finds its "yes" in Jesus Christ. The promises are not bypassed or cancelled; they are fulfilled. And they are fulfilled in the one Person who is both the true Israel (Matthew 2:15; Hosea 11:1), the true Son (Matthew 3:17), the true Servant, and the true King, in whom all the threads of the Old Testament's promissory structure are gathered and confirmed.

The implications of this Pauline principle for eschatological interpretation are far-reaching. It means that we should not expect to find major Old Testament eschatological promises that remain to be fulfilled in a way that bypasses or is structurally independent of Jesus Christ. It means that the prophetic vision of a restored Israel, a rebuilt temple, and a renewed land, if these are genuine promises of God, must find their "yes" in Christ, and therefore their fulfillment must be understood in relation to what Christ has accomplished and will accomplish. The question is not whether the promises will be fulfilled, they will be, because God cannot lie, but in what form, through what means, and in what Person they receive their "yes." And the consistent apostolic answer is: in Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday and today and forever, and in whom the entire eschatological inheritance of the people of God is secured, guaranteed, and being progressively realized until its full disclosure at His appearing.

This principle also guards against a common eschatological error: the assumption that unfulfilled Old Testament predictions automatically require a future literal fulfillment in terms of the original historical imagery. A promise of the restoration of the temple, for example, may find its "yes" in the dwelling of God with man in the new Jerusalem, a fulfillment that is far greater than the original imagery suggested, but which is nonetheless the

genuine fulfillment the original promise was designed to anticipate. The "yes" of God in Christ is not a lesser fulfillment but a greater one, not a spiritualized diminishment of the original promise but its eschatological intensification and completion. This is precisely what Hebrews argues throughout: the new covenant realities in Christ are not inferior to the old covenant types but superior to them, as the substance is superior to the shadow and the body is superior to its outline.

V. THE ALREADY / NOT YET AND THE TWO-STAGE FULFILLMENT

How New Testament Eschatology Operates Within a Two-Act Structure

A. The Two-Stage Pattern in Apostolic Hermeneutics

One of the most important insights of modern biblical theology, associated especially with Geerhardus Vos, Herman Ridderbos, and Oscar Cullmann, is the recognition that New Testament eschatology operates within a two-stage fulfillment framework. The first coming of Christ inaugurates the fulfillment of Old Testament promise; the second coming consummates it. This two-stage pattern is not imposed upon the New Testament from outside, it is derived from careful attention to the apostolic handling of Old Testament texts. When Peter at Pentecost cites Joel 2 and says "this is that," he is making a first-stage fulfillment claim. When Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 describes the resurrection of the dead at the return of Christ as the final event in the sequence that begins with Christ's own resurrection, he is describing the second-stage consummation. Between these two stages, the church lives in the tension of the already and the not yet.

This two-stage framework has profound implications for how we read Old Testament prophecy. Many Old Testament prophetic texts are susceptible to what scholars call "prophetic foreshortening", the tendency of the prophets to see the near and distant horizons of fulfillment blended together in a single vision, without the temporal gap between them being clearly visible from the prophetic vantage point. Isaiah 61:1–2, for example, announces both "the favorable year of the Lord" and "the day of vengeance of our God" in a single breath. When Jesus reads this passage in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:18–21), He stops mid-verse: "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." He announces the fulfillment of the first stage, the favorable year, but does not read the second stage, the day of vengeance, because that awaits the second coming. The two stages that appear blended in Isaiah's prophecy are separated by the entire inter-advent period. This interpretive insight is essential for reading the Olivet Discourse, the Thessalonian correspondence, and the book of Revelation.

The two-stage fulfillment model also clarifies what is at stake in the millennial debate. Dispensationalism, in essence, inserts a third stage, an intermediate earthly kingdom between the second coming and the eternal state, into a New Testament eschatological structure that knows only two stages: the present age and the age to come. The amillennial and postmillennial positions, by contrast, work within the New Testament's two-stage framework, differing only over when and how the kingdom is consummated. The exegetical question that must be answered is whether Revelation 20 requires a third stage, an intermediate earthly millennium between the parousia and the new creation, that the rest of the New Testament does not appear to anticipate. That question will be addressed in detail in Unit 4 (Lessons 10–14). For now, it is sufficient to note that the hermeneutical question and the

millennial question are inseparable: how one reads Revelation 20 is determined in large measure by one's understanding of the two-stage eschatological structure the rest of the New Testament presents.

B. Hebrews 1:1–2 and the Climactic Character of Apostolic Revelation

The opening verses of the letter to the Hebrews provide one of the New Testament's most succinct and theologically dense statements of hermeneutical principle: "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." In these two verses, the author of Hebrews establishes an eschatological contrast between the old covenant mode of revelation and the new: the prophets spoke in fragmentary and varied ways; the Son speaks as the full, final, and climactic word of God. The old covenant revelation was genuine and authoritative, but it was also incomplete, pointing forward to a fullness of disclosure that has now arrived in the incarnate Son.

The phrase "in these last days" is particularly significant for hermeneutics. It establishes that the apostolic age is itself an eschatological age, the age of fulfillment, the time of the final word. This means that the apostolic interpretation of Old Testament prophecy is not merely one valid reading among many; it is the divinely authorized, Spirit-inspired interpretation that discloses what the prophets themselves were pointing toward. When we read the Old Testament through the hermeneutical lens provided by the apostles, we are not imposing a foreign reading upon an autonomous text; we are following the interpretive guidance of the very Spirit who inspired the original prophecies and who has now, in the last days, disclosed their meaning in the person of the Son. This is why the New Testament's handling of Old Testament prophecy is not optional for Christian hermeneutics, it is normative.

The practical consequence for eschatology is this: when the apostolic writers apply Old Testament eschatological prophecies to the church, to Christ's present reign, or to the new creation, they are not allegorizing or spiritualizing, they are fulfilling the interpretive mandate given to them by the one through whom all things were made and in whom all things will be consummated. The amillennial reading of Revelation 20 as a description of the present age is not, therefore, a retreat from biblical literalism. It is the consistent application of the apostolic hermeneutic to the final book of the canon. And it is a reading that stands squarely within the mainstream of the church's interpretive tradition, from Origen and Augustine through the Reformers and the confessional tradition they bequeathed to us.

VI. PROGRESSIVE COVENANTALISM AND ESCHATOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

How Our Theological Framework Shapes Our Reading of Prophetic Texts

A. The Covenantal Framework as an Interpretive Grid

Every interpreter of Scripture brings a theological framework to the text. The question is not whether we have such a framework, every reader does, but whether our framework is itself derived from and accountable to Scripture, and whether it is the most adequate framework for making sense of the biblical data as a whole. The framework employed in this series is Progressive Covenantal Biblical Theology: the recognition that the biblical

covenants, the covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and ultimately the new covenant in Christ, form a unified, progressively unfolding redemptive-historical narrative that finds its fulfillment and climax in Jesus Christ and the new covenant age He has inaugurated.

This framework differs from classical covenant theology in several important respects. It does not posit a covenant of works and a covenant of grace as the two organizing categories that encompass all of redemptive history, nor does it read the covenant of grace as a single administrative entity of which the Mosaic and new covenants are simply different administrations. Instead, it reads each biblical covenant as a distinct, historically situated expression of God's redemptive purpose, each one advancing and deepening the promise while also introducing new dimensions of obligation and expectation. The continuities and discontinuities between the covenants are read from the canonical text itself, with particular attention to how the New Testament's own fulfillment language defines the relationship between old and new.

It also differs from dispensationalism, which reads the covenants as organizing a series of distinct, sequential economies in which God relates to different peoples, primarily Israel and the church, according to different principles. On the dispensational reading, the church is not the fulfillment of Israel's covenantal promises but a parenthetical entity inserted between two phases of God's program with Israel. The new covenant is understood to be made with Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 31:31) and will be fully operative only in a future millennial age. The church participates in only the spiritual blessings of the new covenant, while Israel awaits the political and territorial dimensions of its fulfillment. Progressive Covenantalism rejects this bifurcation as exegetically unjustified, arguing instead that the new covenant is the eschatological covenant that fulfills and supersedes all the previous covenants, and that the church, composed of believing Jews and Gentiles alike, is the eschatological community in which the new covenant finds its primary realization.

B. *The Warning Against System-Driven Exegesis*

Perhaps the most important word of caution that must be issued in a lesson on hermeneutics is the warning against system-driven exegesis: the tendency to approach every biblical text with a predetermined eschatological system already in place, and to interpret every ambiguous passage in the light of that system rather than allowing the passages themselves to challenge and correct it. This is the besetting hermeneutical sin of eschatological interpretation, and it afflicts interpreters of every eschatological persuasion, including those who consider themselves most committed to the plain meaning of Scripture.

The history of interpretation offers numerous illustrations of this tendency. A dispensational interpreter, committed to a literal future fulfillment of the land promise to Israel, will read Galatians 3:16, "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'And to your seed,' that is, Christ", and will insist that Paul's argument here applies only to the Abrahamic promise of the blessing of the nations, not to the land promise, which must still be literally fulfilled. The amillennialist, committed to the corporate fulfillment of all covenant promises in Christ and the church, must resist the equally real temptation to read every reference to Israel in Romans 9–11 as referring to the church, without attending carefully to Paul's own insistence that "God has not rejected His people" (Romans 11:1–2). Both temptations represent the intrusion of a prior system into what should be fresh, careful exegetical work.

The remedy is not the impossible goal of a system-free reading, no such thing exists, and the pretense of one is itself a hermeneutical distortion. The remedy is hermeneutical humility and methodological self-awareness: the

willingness to name the framework one brings, to hold it provisionally under the authority of Scripture, and to be genuinely open to having one's conclusions revised by careful engagement with the text. In practice, this means that eschatological interpretation must begin with exegesis, with patient, detailed, historically informed engagement with the individual texts, and only then move to the synthesis of those exegetical conclusions into a systematic eschatological framework. The text is the judge of the system; the system is not the judge of the text. This commitment, consistently honored, is the most important safeguard against the distortions that have made the history of eschatological interpretation such a cautionary tale.

VII. 1 PETER 1:10–12 AND THE PROPHETS' OWN HERMENEUTICAL SITUATION

What the Prophets Did Not Know, and What We Now Do

A. The Prophets' Searching and Inquiring

One of the most remarkable passages in the New Testament for eschatological hermeneutics is 1 Peter 1:10–12: "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look." This passage establishes several hermeneutical principles of the first importance.

First, the prophets themselves did not fully understand the eschatological content of their own prophecies. They "made careful searches and inquiries", the Greek verbs suggest diligent, systematic investigation, "seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating." They knew they were speaking of the Messiah and of eschatological realities beyond their own historical horizon, but they did not have access to the full disclosure that would be provided only in the apostolic proclamation of the gospel. This is a remarkable hermeneutical admission: the prophets were not the ultimate interpreters of their own prophecies. The ultimate interpreter is the Spirit who inspired them, who has now, in the apostolic age, disclosed what the prophets were pointing toward.

Second, the content of the prophetic testimony was "the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." This is Peter's summary of the entire eschatological arc of Old Testament prophecy: suffering followed by glory, cross followed by resurrection, humiliation followed by exaltation. This pattern, which is exactly the pattern the risen Christ identifies on the Emmaus road ("Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?", Luke 24:26), is the hermeneutical key to understanding the Old Testament's eschatological witness. Every prophetic text that speaks of the Messiah's redemptive work must be read within this two-stage framework: suffering and glory, first coming and second coming, inauguration and consummation.

B. The Hermeneutical Privilege of the New Covenant Age

Third, and perhaps most striking of all, Peter declares that the prophets "were not serving themselves, but you", the recipients of his letter, who are the eschatological people of God living in the age of fulfillment. The prophets

looked forward to a salvation that we now possess. The angels long to look into realities that we now experience through faith in the preached gospel. This establishes the extraordinary hermeneutical privilege of the new covenant community: we read the Old Testament from the vantage point of fulfillment, with access to the interpretive disclosure that the apostolic proclamation provides. We stand on the far side of the event, the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, that the prophets could only dimly anticipate.

This privilege carries with it a corresponding responsibility. To read the Old Testament's eschatological promises as though we were still on the near side of the Christ-event, as though the fulfillment had not yet come, the Spirit had not yet been poured out, and the apostolic interpretation of the prophets had not yet been given, is to misuse the hermeneutical position that God's grace has granted us. We are not prophets who must search and inquire into the future; we are the eschatological community that stands in the fulfillment toward which the prophets strained. This does not mean that nothing remains to be consummated, the second coming, the resurrection, the final judgment, and the new creation are all still future. But it does mean that our reading of the Old Testament's eschatological promises must be governed by the apostolic disclosure of their fulfillment in Christ, not by a set of hermeneutical assumptions that bypasses that disclosure in favor of a return to pre-Christian expectation.

This lesson has covered much hermeneutical ground, and it is worth pausing at the close to name what has been established and what it demands. We have established that the hermeneutical question is the hinge of eschatology; that the sensus literalis requires attention to genre; that the grammatical-historical method, properly applied, takes the apostolic hermeneutic as normative; that biblical typology and the Pauline "yes" of God in Christ govern the reading of all Old Testament promise; that a two-stage fulfillment framework reflects the New Testament's own eschatological structure; that Progressive Covenantal Biblical Theology provides the most exegetically coherent framework for synthesizing these insights; and that the warning against system-driven exegesis applies to every interpreter without exception. What all of this demands is not less engagement with the prophetic and apocalyptic texts, but deeper, more careful, more canonically attentive, and more hermeneutically self-aware engagement with them. We read the prophets now as people who stand in the light of their fulfillment, and that light, far from diminishing the riches of the prophetic word, illuminates them as they have never before been illuminated.

> *"These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."*
>
> **Luke 24:44, NASB 1995**

Theological Terms and Definitions

Hermeneutics	From the Greek hermeneuein (to interpret): the science and art of biblical interpretation, the principles and methods by which the meaning of a text is determined. In eschatology, hermeneutics is the foundational discipline, since the eschatological conclusions one reaches depend directly on the interpretive principles one employs.
Sensus Literalis	Latin for "the literal sense", in classical and Reformation usage, the sense the author intended in the genre he employed. The sensus literalis does not preclude figurative language; poetry, metaphor, and symbol all have a literal sense, namely, the sense the author intended by those figures.
Grammatical-Historical Method	The primary method of Protestant exegesis: interpreting a text by attending to (1) the grammatical structure and lexical range of its language and (2) the historical context in which it was produced, in order to determine the meaning the original author intended for the original audience.
Apocalyptic Literature	A distinct biblical literary genre, found primarily in Daniel and Revelation, characterized by rich symbolic imagery, numerical symbolism, cosmic imagery, throne-room visions, the conflict between divine and demonic powers, and a recapitulatory structure. Apocalyptic literature was produced in contexts of persecution and is addressed to suffering communities, employing symbolism drawn from the Old Testament canon.
Typology	The interpretive recognition that certain Old Testament persons (Adam, Melchizedek, Moses, David), events (the Exodus, the conquest, the exile), and institutions (the tabernacle, the Aaronic priesthood, the Passover) are God-designed anticipations (types) of greater realities revealed in Jesus Christ (the antitype). Typology is grounded in historical correspondence and divine intentionality.
Prophetic Foreshortening	The tendency of the Old Testament prophets to see near and distant fulfillments blended together in a single prophetic vision, without the temporal gap between them being clearly visible from the prophetic vantage point. The interpreter must attend to the New Testament's disclosure of how near and far horizons are related.
Progressive Covenantalism	A biblical-theological framework that reads the succession of biblical covenants (Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New) as a progressively unfolding, Christocentric redemptive-historical narrative. The new covenant in Christ is the eschatological covenant that fulfills and supersedes all previous covenants.
Apostolic Hermeneutic	The interpretive approach modeled by the apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in their reading of Old Testament Scripture, specifically, the Christocentric, typological, and fulfillment-oriented approach demonstrated in texts such as Acts 2:14–36, Luke 24:25–47, and Hebrews 1–10. The apostolic hermeneutic is normative for Christian interpretation.
System-Driven Exegesis	The hermeneutical error of reading individual biblical texts primarily through the lens of a preconceived theological or eschatological system, such that the system controls the exegesis rather than the exegesis informing and correcting the system. A constant danger in eschatological interpretation, this error afflicts interpreters of every eschatological persuasion.
Two-Stage Fulfillment	The eschatological structure, derived from the apostolic interpretation of Old Testament prophecy, by which many Old Testament promises receive a first-stage fulfillment in the first coming of Christ (inauguration) and await their second-stage consummation at the second

	coming of Christ. This framework governs the "already / not yet" tension of New Testament eschatology.

Practical Application

A. *For the Mind: What Must We Believe?*

We must believe that hermeneutics is not a neutral or incidental discipline, it is the fundamental exercise of stewardship over the Word of God. The interpreter who does not think carefully about how to read prophetic and apocalyptic texts will inevitably import assumptions into them that distort their meaning. The commitment to the grammatical-historical method, with attention to genre and canonical context, is not an academic formality, it is an act of fidelity to the God who communicated His revelation in particular literary forms and historical contexts for good reasons.

We must believe that the risen Christ is the hermeneutical key to all of Scripture. The Emmaus road declaration, "All things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled", is not merely a christological claim about certain messianic texts. It is a comprehensive hermeneutical principle that governs the reading of the entire Old Testament canon. Any eschatological interpretation that bypasses the Christological center, that reads Old Testament promises as awaiting fulfillment in categories that are structurally independent of Jesus Christ, has departed from the interpretive mandate the risen Christ Himself established on Easter Sunday.

We must believe that the apostolic interpretation of Old Testament prophecy is not merely one valid reading among many but the divinely authorized, Spirit-inspired disclosure of what the prophets were pointing toward. To set aside the apostolic hermeneutic in favor of a pre-Christian literalism, reading the land promises, the temple promises, and the throne promises as awaiting fulfillment in earthly, geo-political, institutional terms, is to claim a hermeneutical vantage point that is actually inferior to the one God has granted to the new covenant community through the gift of the Holy Spirit and the apostolic proclamation.

B. *For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?*

We should feel a profound gratitude for the hermeneutical privilege that is ours as new covenant believers. Peter says that the prophets were "serving not themselves, but you", that they strained toward a fulfillment they could not fully see, in order to bequeath to us the eschatological treasure of their prophetic witness. We stand on the far side of the incarnation, the cross, the resurrection, and Pentecost. We read Isaiah knowing who the Servant is. We read Daniel knowing that the Son of Man is Jesus of Nazareth, risen and exalted. We read Zechariah knowing that the pierced one who will be mourned is the same Jesus whose hands and feet bore the wounds of the nails. This is an immense gift, and it calls for a corresponding gratitude, not scholarly pride, but the humble thankfulness of those who received a treasure they did not earn.

We should also feel a deep love for the whole of Scripture as a unified, Christocentric revelation. The temptation of narrow eschatological speculation is, in part, a failure of love for the whole Bible, a preference for the novel, the sensational, and the systematically satisfying over the patient, canonical, historically attentive reading that opens every part of the canon as a chapter in the one great story of redemption. The person who loves the whole Bible, who reads Leviticus and finds Christ in the offerings, who reads Ezekiel and finds Christ in the throne-vision, who reads Daniel and finds Christ in the Son of Man, is the person who is best equipped to read Revelation with understanding and Revelation 20 with patience. A love for Scripture that is truly Christological is the best hermeneutical preparation for eschatology.

We should desire to be students of both Testaments in their full canonical depth. Eschatological literacy requires Old Testament literacy. The reader who does not know Isaiah 40–66, Ezekiel 36–48, Daniel 7–12, and Zechariah 9–14 will be largely unable to read Revelation with comprehension, because Revelation is, in large measure, a mosaic of Old Testament prophetic imagery applied to the eschatological situation of the new covenant community. The desire to understand the last things well is, therefore, the desire to know all of Scripture well, and that is a desire that the Spirit is pleased to honor and to deepen.

C. *For the Hands: What Must We Do?*

- Read Luke 24:13–48 in full this week. Identify every interpretive principle the risen Christ employs in His handling of Old Testament Scripture with the Emmaus disciples and the assembled apostles. What does He say the Old Testament is about? What does He say was "necessary"? How does He open their minds to understand the Scriptures? Write down your observations and bring them to the next class session.
- Read Acts 2:14–36 carefully, noting every Old Testament text Peter cites, how he reads each one, and what conclusion he draws. Pay particular attention to his method: does he read the texts in their original historical context? Does he attend to genre? What hermeneutical move makes it possible for him to apply Psalm 16 to the resurrection of Christ? How does his reading model the apostolic hermeneutic described in this lesson?
- Choose one Old Testament eschatological promise, the land promise (Genesis 12:1–3; 15:18–21), the temple promise (Ezekiel 40–48), or the Davidic throne promise (2 Samuel 7:12–16), and trace it through the New Testament. Where does the New Testament say this promise is fulfilled? In what Person? In what community? In what eschatological form? This exercise is the heart of Progressive Covenantal Biblical Theology in practice.
- Examine your own current eschatological convictions and ask: where did I get these? From careful exegesis of the relevant texts? From a theological tradition I inherited? From popular eschatological literature? From this series? Write a brief honest account of the sources of your current eschatological framework, and identify one assumption you hold that you have not yet subjected to careful exegetical testing.
- Memorize 2 Corinthians 1:20 this week: "For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us." Carry this verse as a hermeneutical compass. When you encounter an Old Testament eschatological promise, ask: how does this promise find its "yes" in Jesus Christ? Let that question govern your reading.

Key Texts: *Luke 24:25–27, 44–47; Acts 2:14–36; Hebrews 1:1–2; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 1 Peter 1:10–12*

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- Before this lesson, how did you think about the word "literal" in the context of biblical interpretation? Did you assume that "literal" meant "non-figurative"? Has this lesson changed or nuanced your understanding of what the sensus literalis actually means?

Observation Questions (What Do the Texts Say?)

- Read Luke 24:25–27 and 44–47. What specific claim does the risen Christ make about the relationship between the Old Testament Scriptures and Himself? What categories of Scripture does He name (v. 44)? What does He say was "necessary" (v. 26)? What does He do with the disciples' minds (v. 45), and what does that imply about their prior state of understanding?
- Read Acts 2:14–36. Identify the two Old Testament texts Peter cites (Joel 2 and Psalm 16). How does Peter establish that Psalm 16 is a prophecy of Christ's resurrection rather than a statement about David himself? What logical steps does his argument take? What does his handling of these texts reveal about how the apostles understood the relationship between Davidic typology and Messianic fulfillment?
- Read Hebrews 1:1–2. What contrast does the author draw between the old covenant mode of revelation ("in the prophets") and the new covenant mode ("in His Son")? What does the phrase "in these last days" tell us about the author's understanding of the eschatological character of the apostolic age?
- Read 2 Corinthians 1:20. What is the scope of Paul's claim about the promises of God? What does it mean that "in Him they are yes"? What does Paul mean by "through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us"? How does this verse function as a hermeneutical principle for reading Old Testament eschatological promises?
- Read 1 Peter 1:10–12. What did the prophets not know? What were they searching for? Who was inspiring their prophecies, according to Peter? What does it mean that they were "serving not themselves, but you"? What does this passage tell us about the interpretive relationship between the two Testaments?

Interpretation Questions (What Does It Mean?)

- The lesson argues that the sensus literalis is not the same as "non-figurative interpretation." Do you find this distinction convincing? How would you explain it to someone who insists that a "literal" reading of prophecy requires treating every prophetic image as a direct description of a future historical event?
- What is prophetic foreshortening, and why does it matter for eschatological interpretation? Can you identify a specific Old Testament prophetic text that appears to blend near and distant fulfillments, and explain how the New Testament's handling of it clarifies the relationship between the two?
- The lesson argues that the apostolic hermeneutic, the Christocentric, typological, fulfillment-oriented reading of the Old Testament modeled in Luke 24 and Acts 2, is normative for Christian interpretation, not merely one valid reading among many. Do you agree? What are the implications of this claim for the interpretation of Old Testament eschatological promises about the land, the temple, and the throne?
- What is the difference between Progressive Covenantalism and dispensationalism in their approach to the Old Testament covenantal promises? What are the exegetical arguments for the Progressive Covenantal reading? Where do you find those arguments most compelling, and where do you find them most in need of further development?

- How does the warning against system-driven exegesis apply to the reader of this series? What prior eschatological assumptions are you bringing to this study, and how will you ensure that those assumptions remain accountable to the exegetical work of the individual texts?

Application Questions (What Does It Demand of Us?)

- Given what this lesson has established about the apostolic hermeneutic, what would change in your reading of Old Testament prophetic texts if you were to apply consistently the principle that Christ is the fulfillment of all the promises of God? Name one specific Old Testament passage you have previously interpreted in a way that this lesson calls into question.
- How should a congregation be equipped hermeneutically to engage the popular eschatological literature they encounter, the novels, the prophecy charts, the sensationalist commentaries on current events? What specific hermeneutical tools from this lesson would most help them evaluate such material critically?
- The lesson establishes that new covenant believers have a hermeneutical privilege, they stand on the far side of the fulfillment the prophets anticipated. How should this awareness shape our posture toward the Old Testament Scriptures? Should it produce arrogance, gratitude, or something else?
- As we move through this series, the hermeneutical principles of this lesson will be applied concretely to specific texts: Revelation 20, Matthew 24, 1 Thessalonians 4, and others. What specific questions do you most hope those exegetical discussions will address? Name them, and commit to holding them patiently through the series rather than demanding premature resolution.

Prayer Focus

Begin this prayer time by reading Luke 24:45 aloud: "Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." Pause after it. This is the prayer beneath all eschatological study: Lord, open our minds. We do not come to Your Word as neutral interpreters. We come with assumptions, preferences, and prior commitments. We come having been shaped by traditions and systems and popular literature. Open our minds. Give us the hermeneutical humility to follow the text where it leads, and the hermeneutical courage to revise what we thought we knew when the exegesis demands it. We are not the masters of Your Word, we are its students, and our deepest need is not more information but more illumination.

Pray for those in the congregation who have been shaped by eschatological systems that have not been subjected to careful hermeneutical scrutiny, those who have grown up with dispensational charts and left-behind novels and prophetic newscasters, and who have never been invited to examine those frameworks by the light of the apostolic hermeneutic. Pray that this study would be a gentle but thorough reformation of their eschatological imagination, not a deconstruction of their faith, but a deepening of it, as the promises of God are seen to find their "yes" in Jesus Christ rather than in geo-political events or prophetic timetables.

Pray for a love of the whole Bible, for the Old Testament in all its prophetic richness, for the patient reading of Isaiah and Ezekiel and Daniel and Zechariah that alone equips us to read Revelation with understanding. Pray that Crosspoint Fellowship would be a congregation marked by canonical breadth and exegetical depth, a people who love all of Scripture, who read it in its full literary and historical context, and who are therefore equipped to distinguish the Word of God from the words of those who merely claim to represent it. Pray for teachers, pastors, and students of Scripture who will do the patient, unglamorous, Spirit-dependent work of exegesis that the faithful interpretation of prophecy requires.

Pray for those for whom hermeneutical discussions feel abstract and disconnected from the living reality of faith. Ask God to grant them the insight that hermeneutics is, at its heart, a love language, the discipline by which we honor the One who spoke, by attending carefully to how He spoke, in what genre, in what context, to what community, for what purpose. To read Scripture carelessly is not merely an intellectual failure; it is a failure of love toward the God who communicated. To read it well is an act of worship.

Close by praying 2 Corinthians 1:20 back to God: "Father, all Your promises are yes in Christ Jesus. As we study the prophetic Word, anchor every text we read in that truth. Let us not search for the fulfillment of Your promises in the newspapers or the geopolitical crises of our day, but in the face of Your Son, in whom all things are summed up, in whom all things are consummated, in whom all things find their yes. Teach us to read as those who stand in the light of His resurrection, looking forward to the light of His return. For His glory and our joy, world without end. Amen."

> *"For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us."*
> **2 Corinthians 1:20, NASB 1995**

Key Texts: *Luke 24:25–27, 44–47; Acts 2:14–36; Hebrews 1:1–2; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 1 Peter 1:10–12*

Soli Deo Gloria

To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Dr. Joshua Nichols

josh@faithfultotheword.com | faithfultotheword.com