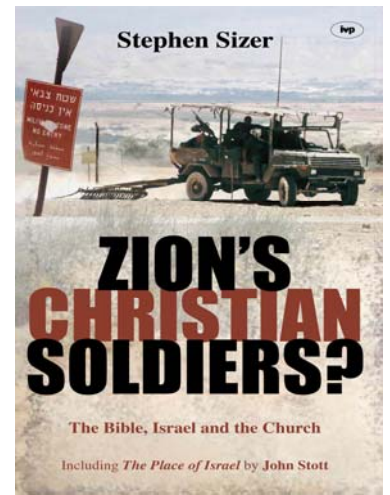


ZION'S CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

Seminar 1: The Bible Tells Them So: Is it possible to read the Bible too literally?

“You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me.”
(John 5:39)



1. Important presuppositions when reading the Bible

We must read the Bible literally

We must read the Bible contextually

- Who was the writer?
- To whom is it being written?
- What kind of literature is it?
- What is the cultural and historical context?
- What is the meaning of the text (our only access to the author's intention)?
- How was the text interpreted by those who first received it?
- Why was the author saying/writing it?

We must read the Bible progressively

2. Interpreting prophetic and apocalyptic scripture

3. Some common mistakes made by ultra-literalists

Transient Literalism: What did the Apostle John actually see?

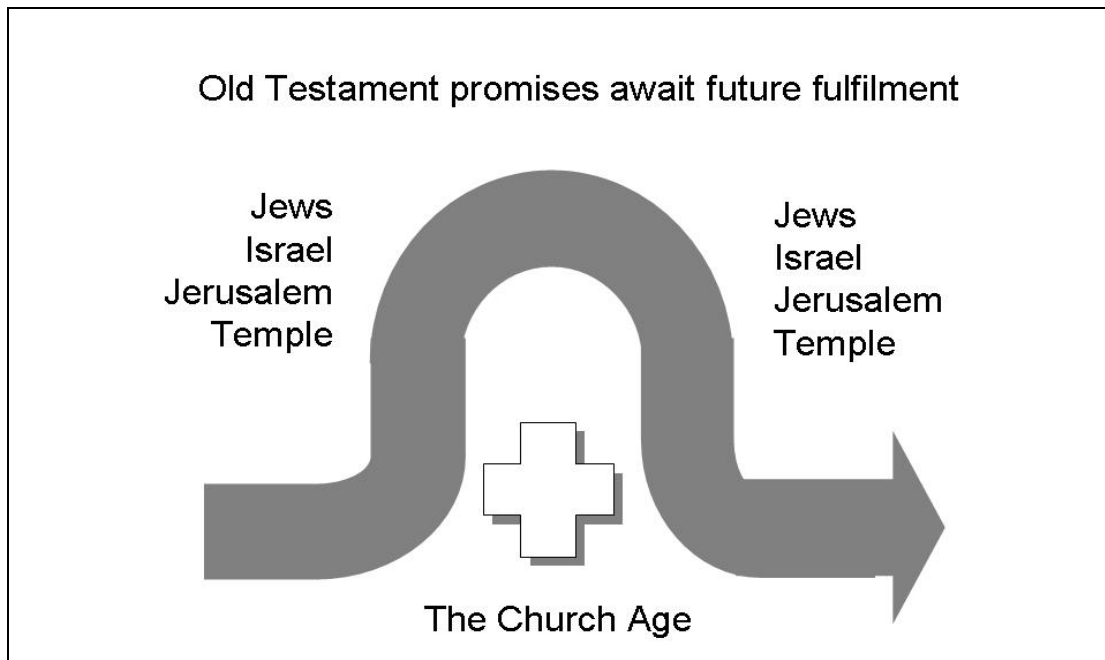
Speculative Literalism: Revealing or veiling the Apocalypse?

Contradictory literalism: Are the 200 million Chinese troops or demons?

Enhanced Literalism: Are Gog and Magog really Russia?

Arbitrary Literalism: But isn't America mentioned in the Bible?

Answering the Ultra-Literalists



Summary Points

1. We must interpret the Bible literally, contextually and progressively.
2. We must see how the New Testament helps to interpret the Old Testament.
3. We must take special care when interpreting prophecy and the apocalyptic scriptures.
4. We must avoid the temptation to allow contemporary events to determine our interpretation.
5. The ultimate question of any passage is this – how does it relate to God's purposes fully and finally revealed in Jesus?

Passages to Review

John 5:24-40; Colossians 2:8-19; 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5; Hebrews 1:1-14; Hebrews 4:1-13; Hebrews 10:1-25

Questions for Further Study

1. What are my presuppositions as I read the Bible?
2. Which books or writers have influenced or shaped them?
3. How was the coming of Jesus the fulfilment or postponement of the promises made to Israel?
4. How is Jesus central to the Bible message?
5. In what ways is the Old Testament a 'shadow' of the New Testament?
6. Which aspects of the Old Covenant are now 'obsolete' for Christians?