

Books in Review:

Jesus, Paul and the End of the World

by Ben Witherington III

This book, published by Inter-Varsity Press, is a very detailed analysis and comparison of the teachings of Jesus and Paul about the subjects of the kingdom of God, the second coming of Christ and the relationship between Israel and the Church. It is a thoroughly researched book and contains a tremendous amount of useful information - both in the text itself as well as in the footnotes. It is also enjoyable reading - *but*, it is written in a *very* scholarly format. I quote excerpts:

What is most striking in the teaching of Jesus and Paul is how they envision the ultimate future as happening in this world, not in heaven ... We have found absolutely no justification in the teaching of either Paul or Jesus for the notion that there will be two Second Comings of Christ - one invisible and one visible. The language about the rapture in I Thess. 4:17 does indeed speak of a meeting of

Christ in the air, but the parousia imagery in the context strongly suggests that thereafter both Christ and believers return to earth. ... For Paul the ekklesia, which can also be called the Israel of God, is the legitimate development of Israel, but at the same time Paul can still speak of an "Israel according to the flesh," a non-Christian Israel for which God yet has plans. This means that Paul does not simply equate the term church and the term Israel without qualification ... For Paul, the Israel of God made up of Jew and Gentile united in Christ is the true or legitimate development of Israel in the present, but non-Christian Jews are not broken off from the true people of God forever ... God is not finished with Israel yet [pp. 230, 226-228].

Anyone looking for a detailed analysis of the concepts and terminology relating to the subjects above would be hard pressed to find a better book than this. I highly recommend it - especially in light of the "end-times" speculation that abounds today.

[[Click here](#) for a link to this book on Amazon.com]