

I've been talking about how the book of Revelation has been interpreted by modern conservative Christians. Isn't it telling us what will happen in our own near future?? Here is how I will address the issue, in short, in my book on Revelation, assuming that I go ahead with the project and Armageddon doesn't happen first.

In Contrast: Scholars and the Book of Revelation

Not only are these futuristic readings of Revelation contrary to the history of Christian interpretation, they stand radically at odds with how critical scholars read the book of Revelation, and insist it ought to be read.

As often pointed out, every single interpreter who has argued that the "signs of the times" reveal the end is coming soon - probably next month - have been shown demonstrably and incontrovertibly to be wrong. But just as significantly, the specific interpretations of these modern manifestations of these signs are almost always demonstrably flawed. I give just one example from the book of Revelation, an interpretation famously pronounced by Hal Lindsey. In Revelation chapter 9 the author describes a horrible disaster involving a plague of "locusts" that emerge from the smoke of the bottomless pit, wreaking havoc and misery among the people of earth.

The seer describes the appearance of these dread creatures as follows:

On their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; they had scales like iron breastplates, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. They have tails like scorpions, with stingers, and in their tails is their power to harm people. . . . (Rev 9:7-10)

According to Lindsey's futuristic interpretation, the prophet John could not have understood exactly what he was seeing, since he was a first-century observer who was witnessing a 20th (or now, 21st) century phenomenon. So he did the best he could, explaining his vision in terms he and his readers could understand.

The "locusts" he saw were actually modern attack helicopters flying through the smoke of battle. For the first-century seer ...

If you want to see how he interprets the passage, and how critical scholars have shown he's dead wrong, you will need to belong to the blog. Better join soon. The end is near!

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