HERMENEUTICS: A GUIDE FOR PERPLEXED BIBLE READERS

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Categories: Reviews, Theology

In my normal, un-opinionated way, I reckon that every English speaking Christian should have read Fee and Stuart's wonderful book How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth. It really is an excellent non-technical, but academically excellent guide to how to get the best out of reading the Bible.

However, if you can't wait for Amazon to deliver the copy of the book (which you have just ordered) you might want to take a look at this wonderful post on Ben Witherington's blog. Actually, even if you know every word of Fee and Stuart (and other books on the subject of Biblical interpretation) you should read Ben's post. It is absolutely superb and deserves a wide reading. Here are a few excerpts to give you a feel for what he is saying.

> *The Book of Revelation was written probably around A.D. 90 in the first instance for the seven churches in Asia mentioned in Rev. 2-3 to strengthen them and help them get through a rough time of persecution, prosecution, and even execution in the last decade or so of the first century when the evil Emperor Domitian was persecuting Christians. The whole book was written to them in the first place, and it was all meant to have meaning for them.*
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> *None of Revelation was written in the first place for 21rst century Christians. Thus when the book talks about an evil empire, and a beastly ruler named 666, and about flying things with scorpion-like tails, it is not in the first instance referring to some modern world dominator, or the European Union, or to Blackhawk helicopters! Those first Christians in the first century could never have understood those texts to refer to such things, because of course such things did not exist in the first century A.D.*
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> *Let me insist once moreâ€"â€˜what the text meant for them, is still what it means todayâ€™. John was referring to the Roman Empire and Emperor and speaking hyperbolically about plagues of insects, something all too familiar to that world.*

Great stuff!