

Tough Questions: You don't take the Bible literally, do you?

Revelation 1

April 18, 2010

Outline

*Do we have to read the Bible "literally"? We certainly interpret it with the awareness that there are various genres within the Bible and that the Bible uses images, metaphors and other literary devices – but we should definitely take the Bible (all of it) seriously.*

Why we need revelation from God (vv1, 19)

- "those that are" – reality interpreted from God's perspective
- "those that are to take place after this" – things only God can know

How God's revelation comes to us (vv1-2, 10, 19)

- God makes things known various ways – but in the case of the Bible, He appoints people to write down what they have seen or heard
- Credibility of the witness (v9)

What we do with God's revelation (v3)

1. Read it
2. "hear" it (wrestle with it to understand it)
3. keep what is written – we live it

questions for reflection this week

1. In the Bible God makes known things about the future – like what happens to us after we die (something we otherwise couldn't confidently know about). How does a knowledge of the afterlife influence the way we live in the present? The decisions we make? How we understand the events and circumstances of our lives? Our attitude towards people and things? How we spend our time?
2. We read in Revelation 1:3 that those who read and hear the words of this book have a blessing. What challenges are there for you in reading the Bible? What keeps you from reading it? What would help you to read it or understand it?
3. Revelation 1:5-6 reads "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom of priests to his God and Father". What difference does believing that make in how we read the Bible? How will we understand the various things we read in the Bible if we come to the Bible with other assumptions?