

KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

THINGS THAT MUST TAKE PLACE

A Commentary on Revelation Chapters 4-22

Kessinger, Tony

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BOOK REVIEW

A comprehensive study of the book of Revelation, one of the Bible's most impenetrable texts.

Kessinger (*The Devil Is in the Details*, 2010), a minister, returns to a biblical subject with which he's very familiar. Having previously written about the first three chapters of the book of Revelation, he completes his study in this latest volume by writing about chapters 4 through 22. The book of Revelation's apocalyptic subject matter, combined with a heavy reliance on symbolism, allusion and intertextuality, makes it one of the more urgent yet elusive books of the Bible. Kessinger attempts to break through the mysteries of the text by offering readers an exhaustively researched and argued exploration. Each chapter of his book corresponds to a chapter of the original text, but Kessinger's goal is not to dissect each individual verse. Instead, he organizes his writing according to the major events, figures and meanings that readers will encounter as they navigate the book of Revelation. Kessinger's agenda is ultimately to argue for the metaphysical inevitability of Revelation, concluding that as abstract and metaphorical as the text may seem, it offers a clear warning to readers: "This book is written in obedience to the leading of God and in the hope that those who read it will 'hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written in it.'" His text straddles a line between academic and accessible, being primarily targeted toward scholars and church officials, but it's never so dense that it will deflect more casual readers. Each chapter ends with a brief section educating readers on how the text applies directly to the lives of Christians, and Kessinger displays an admirable ability to make these ideas relevant to the faithful. Even lay readers might find Kessinger's explorations of biblical symbolism and the historical evolution of Christian imperatives to be of interest. At times, his text could use more organizational focus, but the majority of readers will nevertheless be able to find what they are looking for without much hassle. On the whole, Kessinger's book makes a valuable, and surely debatable, contribution to the mountain of biblical scholarship.

A necessary read for students of the Bible and a surprisingly interesting book for everyone else.