

Revelation: Gotta Pick a View

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1. We may have had four different godly pastors, professors or parents that have each taught us a different view of Revelation. Consider the charitable thing to do.
2. The author of the book of Revelation is not a God of confusion (**1Cor.14:33**).
3. Two options: Either God cannot provide clear blessing as promised in Rev.1:3 or our pastors, professors and parents cannot proclaim the message of Revelation for our clear blessing?
4. One way to understand the book of Revelation is to study a summary of the four predominate views to find the one most consistent with the text.

Schools of Interpretation for the Book of Revelation
Futurist
Historicist
Spiritualist/Idealist/Cyclic/Eclecticist
Preterist

5. Consider the most obvious differences of these views in chapters 6-19 of Revelation.

An experience as a Futurist:

1. Futurists believe most of the events of Revelation have yet to happen—they are future.
2. This is the most prominent view of our day embraced by masses thanks to adherents like **Tim LaHaye** (*Left Behind* series), **Hal Lindsey** (*Late Great Planet Earth*), **C. I. Schofield** and **Charles Ryrie** who wrote study Bibles from this perspective, **J.N. Darby**, **Henry Morris**, **Jerry Falwell**, M. R. Dehaan, Dwight Pentecost, and John Walvoord.
3. Many futurists have maintained an emphasis on the imminent final return of Jesus Christ and have all been wrong.
4. The historical past verses in Revelation are in chapter 1; the present-day message is in chapters 2 and 3; and then the rest of the book (chapters 4-22) is insight into the future.

An experience as a Historicist:

1. Famous Reformers and churchmen of this view were **C. H. Spurgeon**, **Matthew Henry**, **John Wesley**, **Jonathan Edwards**, Adam Clarke, and Adam Barnes.
2. There is no popular present-day proponent of this view except in the writings of godly men difficult to ignore when preparing to preach or teach.

An experience as a Spiritualist:

1. Some of the authors writing on Revelation from this perspective are **Leon Morris, William Hendriksen, E. J. Young, Abraham Kuyper, Lewis Berkhof, Anthony A. Hoekema, Hermon Hoeksema, G. C. Berkouwer, Sam Storms and Dean Davis.**
2. The symbols in the book of Revelation are not referring to one concrete historical entity, whether a person, place, thing, or event. Rather, they are referring to a kind of historical event that all the saints will encounter again and again.
3. Some may suggest that an **Eclectic Approach** is new to the scene. I put them in the Spiritualists camp. Sorry. Important to the eclectic approach is that the original readers remain the primary audience (God speaks to them yet his message is still for us who are in their future). Two recent strong proponents of the eclectic view are **J.Scott Duvall** and **G. K. Beale.**

An experience as a Preterist:

1. Some of the notable scholars of this camp are **David Chilton, R. C. Sproul, Ken Gentry, Alfred Edersheim, Philip Schaff, Adam Clarke, J.B. Lightfoot, Jay Adams, Greg Bahnsen, Gary DeMar, J. Stuart Russell, and Ralph E. Bass, Jr.**
2. Heretical full preterists believe that all of scripture is governed by Matthew 24:34 and all biblical prophecies were fulfilled in AD 70. That is not the understanding of classical Preterism or what is now known as partial preterist, meaning only some biblical prophecies were fulfilled in AD 70 and there are more to be fulfilled like the final coming and judgment of Christ.
3. I respect, honor and love people in every camp but do not enjoy lacking unity with them on a significant book of the Bible. I think a revival of the partial- preterist view can solve that.
4. The term “preterist” comes from Latin for “gone by” meaning the main events in the book of Revelation were first century (within a generation of Christ) and have already happened. This view believes John was writing about things that would *soon* occur in his lifetime for the most part prior to AD 70. So, the main fulfillment of the book of prophecies has “gone by” just like the rest of the Bible.

APPLICATION:

1. Being too casual about our interpretation of God’s word is not appreciated by him. We have got to study scripture and get the interpretation correct (**2Tim.2:15**). I believe we need a revival of the theologically conservative, classic preterist view.
2. Our interpretations of the book of Revelation should not rely on our dreams or on the dreams of others (Jude 8). Just because someone has confident assertions, speculations or myths does not mean they correctly interpret the truth (**1Tim.1:3-7**). We are promised sufficient blessing from reading the book aloud (Rev.1:3). God has spoken to us in these last days through Christ’s word (Heb.1:1,2) and that is sufficient (2Tim.3:16,17).
3. The author of the book of Revelation is not a God of confusion (**1Cor.14:33**). The body of Christ is to be unified in doctrine (**John17:16-23**). Let us seek this unity and not settle for disunity.