

## 4 Approaches to Revelation<sup>1</sup>

### PRETERIST

- *What they believe:* This view contends that most or all the events described in the book of Revelation have occurred in the 1st century.
- *An Important Distinction:* There are 2 kinds of preterists
  1. Full preterists: they believe that the 2nd coming of Christ occurred in A.D. 70 along with the resurrection and the final judgment.
  2. Partial preterists: they believe that events of A.D. 70 fulfill the prophecies of the Olivet Discourse and the Book of Revelation, but the general resurrection and the final judgment have not yet occurred.
- View of the millennium most commonly associated with this approach: Postmillennialism
- *Why this view is helpful:* Preterists helpfully emphasize the relevance of revelation to its original audience and warn us from removing the book from its historical context

### FUTURIST

- *What they believe:* This view centers its theological beliefs around national Israel and believes that most prophecies have a literal fulfillment in the future after the church has been removed from the earth.
- This view interprets Revelation in a linear and literal fashion
- This is the most widely held view among evangelicals today particularly in America.
- View of the millennium most commonly associated with this approach: Premillennialism
- *Why this view is helpful:* The futurist position reminds us of the suddenness of Christ's future coming and that we should be ready and look to that day when he returns with great anticipation.

### HISTORICIST

- *What they believe:* This view contends that Revelation is symbolic prophecy of church history from the 1st century to the end of the age.
- This view tends to look at the past and line it up with the events spoken of in Revelation.
- This position lost ground and is not widely held anymore as it gave way to the futurist approach.
- View of the millennium most commonly associated with this approach: Postmillennialism/ Amillennialism
- *Why this view is helpful:* This position reminds us of Christ's active involvement in the church in every age. He is Sovereignly present in the the church at all times even when we struggle to see it.

### IDEALIST

- *What they believe:* This view contends that Revelation primarily depicts ideas, principles and theological conceptions and is therefore always relevant to the church.<sup>2</sup>
- As with all the others this contains within it a fairly broad range of views.
- The reformed use of the view contends that Revelation depicts the course of history between the first and second coming of Christ.
  - Each section of Revelation comes from a different perspective and each intensified before the end thus it is called *progressive parallelism*
- View of the millennium most commonly associated with this approach: Amillennialism
- *Why this view is helpful:* This position reminds us that Revelation is for the church in every age. We are intimately connected to the churches to whom this letter was originally written and this letter is relevant to us today.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a summary of information gathered from Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism* (Chs. 2-3), Charles Hill, Unpublished Lectures and Vern poythress *The Returning King* (Introduction).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.