

Hermeneutical Approaches to Revelation

The **futurist** approach understands everything from Rev. 4:1 forward to be a prophecy of things that are to occur just before the 2nd Coming of Christ. In other words, all of these prophesied events are still in the future from the perspective of the 21st century.

The **historicist** approach understands Revelation to be a prophecy of church history from the first advent until the 2nd Coming of Christ.

The **symbolic** approach maintains that Revelation does not contain prophecies of specific historical events. Instead, it uses symbols to express timeless principles concerning the conflict between good and evil.

The **preterist** approach to Revelation maintains that most (or all) of the prophecies in the book of Revelation were fulfilled fulfilled at or around the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. In other words, their fulfillment is past from the perspective of the twenty-first century. Radical Preterism maintains all prophecies including Christ's 2nd coming have been fulfilled. Partial Preterism still looks forward to a 2nd coming.

The **eclectic** approach utilizes the **preterist**, **symbolic**, and **futurist** methods in such a way that the strengths of each are maximized and the weaknesses minimized.

Millennialism

Dispensational Premillennialism is the belief that Christ will literally reign on the earth for 1,000 years at his 2nd coming. The doctrine is called premillennialism because it views the current age as prior to Christ's kingdom. Premillennialism is largely based upon a literal interpretation of Rev. 20 which describes Christ's coming to the earth and subsequent reign at the end of an apocalyptic period of tribulation. Premillennialism maintains there are 3 comings of Christ with the 2nd being the rapture (1Thess. 4:16-17) before, or during, the 7 year tribulation and a 3rd coming at the beginning of the millennium. It views the millennium as a time of fulfillment for the prophetic hope of Israel based on a particular interpretation of Rom. 9-11.

Historic premillennialism, or **post-tribulational premillennialism**, teaches that the second coming of Jesus Christ will occur prior to a thousand-year reign of the saints, but subsequent to the tribulation.

Amillennialism is named for its denial of a future, thousand-year, physical reign of Jesus Christ on the earth. The amillennial view holds that the number of years in Rev. 20 is a symbolic number, not a literal description; that the millennium has already begun and is identical with the church age; and that while Christ's reign is spiritual in nature during the millennium, at the end of the church age, Christ will return in final judgment and establish permanent physical reign.

Postmillennialism is an interpretation of Rev. 20 which sees Christ's 2nd coming as occurring after the Millennium, a Golden Age or era of Christian prosperity and dominance.