

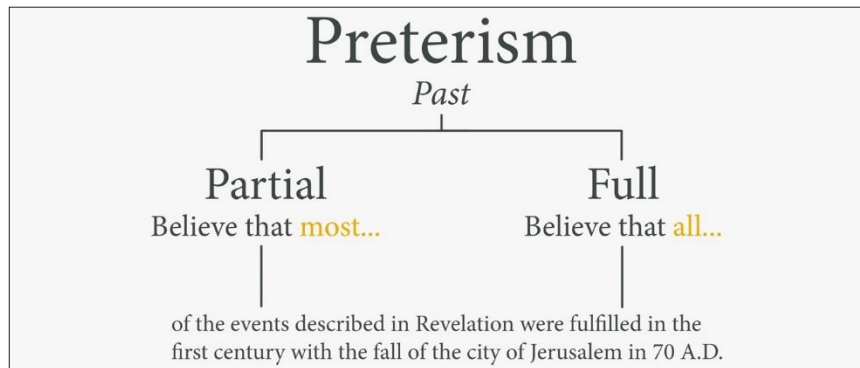
Introduction To Revelation – Background/Methods Of Interpretation:

1. Background Of Revelation:

- The author is the Apostle John. There are those who reject this view, but it is the historic evangelical thinking about the authorship of Revelation.
- Time of writing – Between 85-100 A.D., I lean towards 95-100 A.D.
- Where did he write from – The island of Patmos, where John had been exiled by the Roman Emperor Domitian, who died in 96 A.D.
- Purpose – To reveal events that will take place immediately before, during, and following the rapture of the church and the Second Coming of Christ.

2. Methods Of Interpretation:

A. Preterist View: There are two thoughts behind Preterism: Partial preterists believe that most of the events in Revelation were fulfilled in the first century with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Full preterists believe all the events in Revelation were fulfilled in the first century with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.



- This view appeared in 1614 and was promoted by a Jesuit named Alcaras.
- All prophecies found in Revelation have been fulfilled.
- The resurrection of dead believers has already taken place. This is a spiritual resurrection as people come to know the Lord.
- Revelation is only a symbolic description of the historical circumstances of the first century church. The beast in Revelation 13, for example, is Imperial Rome and the priesthood.
- The Second Coming of Christ has already taken place. Jesus came (through the Romans) to destroy the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
- Chapters 5-11 describe the church's victory over Judaism; chapters 12-19 the church's victory over Rome and paganism; chapters 20-22 the ultimate victory of the church. Chapters 4-22 represent John's own day.
- The persecutions we read of Revelation are seen in Nero and Domitian, and the entire book is fulfilled by 312 A.D. We are beyond the millennium, and we are, some holding this view, living in the new heaven and new earth.

- Some in the partial preterist camp believe there will be a literal second coming and a future, literal resurrection, and a final judgment.
- This view has gained a following for various reasons. Some futurists don't know what they believe and why. It is against the status quo.
- This view reads into the text and does not allow the text to speak for itself. It is not a view of the early church.

B. Historical View: This view sees Revelation as continuous history from the time of the Apostles (the early church) to the Second Coming of Christ.

- Popularized by Joachim, a Roman Catholic theologian.
- Revelation shows the continuing struggles (symbolically) of the church against evil.
- According to this view, we are living somewhere in the account of Revelation.
- Some of the Reformers saw the events of Revelation being fulfilled in their time. They saw the pope as the antichrist. The seals are the break-up of the Roman Empire, the Reformation, and the struggle with the Papacy.
- Locusts from the pit are a picture of the Mohammedan (Islamic) invasions.
- This view lacks a consistent interpretive method.

C. Idealist View: Nothing in the Book of Revelation is real. The book is interpreted allegorically. It is fictional as a book, not literal, nor historical.

- This view believes Revelation is timeless and depicts a battle between the church and the world, good and evil, God and the devil. throughout church history. All this, however interpreted, is being fulfilled in the present church age.
- By allegories, it points out spiritual lessons, mostly for encouragement.
- Those who hold this view focus on the ethical and spiritual truth of Revelation, and there is no predictive prophecy. Judgment day, they would say, comes when a moral issue is decided.
- This is a widely held view by scholars today.
- One of the problems with this view is that we are given an example of how to interpret the symbols of Revelation: every symbol should have a concrete reference. Because this view does not do this, it fails to measure up to the example of interpretation given in Revelation 1.

D. Futurist View: This view sees much of Revelation as future, describing events prior to the return of Christ (Revelation 4-19) along with other important future prophetic truths still to happen.

- This view gives concrete meaning to the symbols of Revelation. They are not necessarily easy to explain but there is an explanation.
- The early church held this view.
- The beast of Rev. 13 and 17 is the antichrist.
- There are four great ages seen in Revelation.

- Revelation follows a timeline, describing events that will take place as laid out in the timeline below.
- Some people do not accept the futurist view because it does not see Revelation as having any fulfillment immediately at the time John wrote. They also do not see Revelation as relevant to the period it was written in.
- In God's timetable, periods of time are relative. The things noted in Revelation will come to pass, as will other portions of Scripture that speak to the future.
- The phrase in Rev. 1:3, "soon take place" describes things that will happen "suddenly." In eschatology (study of end times), this is descriptive of things that are happening imminently without any intervening time. As John Walvoord states, "Once the end-time events begin, they will occur in rapid succession (cf. Luke 18:8; Acts 12:7; Acts 22:18; Acts 25:4; Romans 16:20)."
- This is the view that we will be using as we go through Revelation. It is how I interpret Revelation. Others in this camp include John Walvoord, H.A. Ironside, Arno Gaebelin, Homer Kent, and many other scholars, including Chuck Swindoll and John MacArthur.

