

# BOOK OF REVELATION

## MADE EASY





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# FOUR WAYS TO UNDERSTAND REVELATION

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Revelation is an exciting book of the Bible, where Jesus Christ is front and center as victor and King, offering hope and encouragement to Christians facing persecution. Yet with its apocalyptic visions and serious subject matter, it's often a misunderstood book of the Bible. Seeing the different approaches to Revelation, held by Christians throughout the centuries, will help bring understanding and insight.

## **What are the four views of Revelation?**

Both the Old and New Testaments reveal God as Lord over history. Christians of all eras have believed that Jesus will return a second time, but not all Christians have agreed that Revelation is about the second coming. Whether the visions in Revelation have been, are being, or have yet to be fulfilled is a matter of debate, but the spirit of the last chapter, calling on Jesus to come quickly, is something all Christians can agree upon—“Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20).



## SUMMARY OF THE FOUR VIEWS OF REVELATION

FUTURIST	HISTORICIST
Revelation is a prophecy that is mostly about the end of the world.	The book of Revelation is prophecy about church history from the time of John to the end of the world.
IDEALIST	PRETERIST
Revelation is a non-historical and non-prophetic drama about spiritual realities.	The book of Revelation is prophecy that was mostly fulfilled in the first century AD.

### ***Futurist View***

According to the futurist view, all or nearly all the events in Revelation are yet to occur. Revelation is mostly a road map for the future—a prophecy about the end of the world and the years that come immediately before the end. Dispensational premillennialists as well as some historical premillennialists interpret Revelation in this way (see pgs. 71–72).

### ***Historicist View***

The historicist view claims that Revelation is prophecy about church history from the time of John to the end of the world. Revelation is like a history textbook for the

past, present, and future. Historicists view the events in Revelation as symbolic descriptions of historical events throughout church history. Some futurists also understand the seven churches in a historic manner, treating each church as descriptive of a particular era of church history.

### ***Idealist View***

Idealists see Revelation as a non-historical and non-prophetic drama about spiritual realities. They believe it's a parable for all times and places and that the images, visions, and dreams are expressions of struggles between good and evil throughout time. This view seems to have started with ancient theologians in Alexandria, Egypt, who frequently spiritualized biblical texts. This view also has followers today.

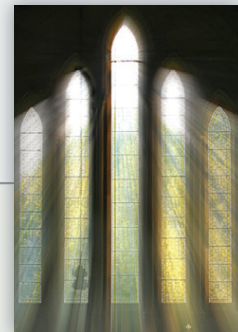
### ***Preterist View***

Preterists understand the book of Revelation as a prophecy that was mostly fulfilled in the first century. To preterists, Revelation is like an ancient newspaper. Partial preterists view most of Revelation as prophecy fulfilled in the first century, though the final chapters describe future events that will occur at the end of time. Full Preterists think that the return of Jesus described in Revelation 19 was spiritual and occurred in AD 70. Preterists are typically amillennialists or postmillennialists, though some historical premillennialists might fit in this category (see pgs. 71–73).



## COMPARING VIEWS ON REVELATION

	REVELATION 1:1 “soon”; 1:3 “near”; 1:19 “what is” (See also 22:6, 7, 12, 20)	REVELATION 2:1–3:22 The Seven Churches of Asia Minor
FUTURIST	These words refer to the whole of the “last days” or to the quickness with which Jesus will return.	The prophecy begins with the seven churches, which were actual churches in John’s day and may also symbolize the types of churches present in the last days.
HISTORICIST	The prophecy began to be fulfilled close to the author’s lifetime.	The prophecy begins with the seven actual churches in John’s day and proceeds through history from there.
IDEALIST	Christ is always at hand, near and quick to save his people.	The book begins with the seven churches, which symbolize tendencies in the church that can occur in every age.
PRETERIST	<i>Near</i> and <i>soon</i> are taken literally.	The prophecy begins with the seven actual churches of Asia Minor. It then focuses on the land of Israel before AD 70.



FOUR WAYS TO UNDERSTAND REVELATION

	REVELATION 4:1-3 God on His Throne	REVELATION 5:1-4 The Scroll
	God gives John a vision from his throne of the events which are to take place “after these things.”	The scroll could be the title deed to the earth or God’s prophetic message in Revelation or God’s eternal will and testament.
	God is about to outline his rule over history: the first part of that history is revealed under the vision of the seven seals.	The scroll is the coming history of the church as God reveals it and is Lord over it.
	God gives John the heavenly viewpoint of the important truths about his power over all things and his care for the church.	The scroll is God’s will and testament, revealing his salvation plan for all time.
	The setting is God’s courtroom in the heavenly temple. The Judge on his throne is about to hold court.	The scroll is God’s bill of divorce against unfaithful Israel, or it is God’s eternal will and testament.





## HISTORICAL PREMILLENNIALISM

<b>Will Jesus return physically?</b>	Yes
<b>When will Jesus return?</b>	After tribulation; before the millennium
<b>Do the rapture and second coming of Christ occur at the same time?</b>	Yes
<b>Will there be a great tribulation?</b>	Yes
<b>Will Christians suffer during the tribulation?</b>	Yes, Christians will go through the tribulation and endure suffering and persecution for the cause of Christ.
<b>Will there be a literal 1,000-year millennium?</b>	Yes, after the tribulation, Christ will return and reign for 1,000 years.
<b>Who is saved?</b>	Christians only
<b>Is the modern state of Israel relevant to the prophecies in Revelation?</b>	No
<b>When was this view most held?</b>	The earliest view of the end times, emerging at the end of the first century



## DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM

<b>Will Jesus return physically?</b>	Yes
<b>When will Jesus return?</b>	After a 7-year tribulation; before the millennium
<b>Do the rapture and second coming of Christ occur at the same time?</b>	No; they are events separated by either 7 years (pre-tribulation rapture) or 3½ years (mid-tribulation rapture).
<b>Will there be a great tribulation?</b>	Yes
<b>Will Christians suffer during the tribulation?</b>	Christians are raptured either before the tribulation (pre-tribulation rapture) or 3½ years into the tribulation (mid-tribulation rapture).
<b>Will there be a literal 1,000-year millennium?</b>	Yes; after the 7-year tribulation, Christ will return and reign for 1,000 years.
<b>Who is saved?</b>	Christians only
<b>Is the modern state of Israel relevant to the prophecies in Revelation?</b>	Yes
<b>When was this view most held?</b>	Became popular about 1860. Has increased in popularity.

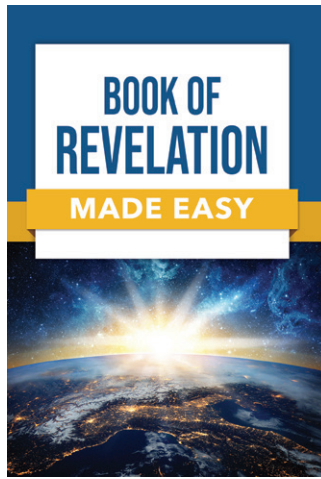


## AMILLENNIALISM

<b>Will Jesus return physically?</b>	Yes
<b>When will Jesus return?</b>	Anytime; a detailed time frame is not important.
<b>Do the rapture and second coming of Christ occur at the same time?</b>	Yes
<b>Will there be a great tribulation?</b>	The tribulation occurs any time Christians are persecuted or wars and disasters occur.
<b>Will Christians suffer during the tribulation?</b>	Yes, Christians will suffer and endure persecution until Jesus returns; persecution will increase in the end.
<b>Will there be a literal 1,000-year millennium?</b>	No, the millennium refers to the reign of Christ in the hearts of his believers.
<b>Who is saved?</b>	Christians only
<b>Is the modern state of Israel relevant to the prophecies in Revelation?</b>	No
<b>When was this view most held?</b>	Popular in AD 400. Continues to be accepted today.

## POSTMILLENNIALISM

<b>Will Jesus return physically?</b>	Yes
<b>When will Jesus return?</b>	After the millennium
<b>Do the rapture and second coming of Christ occur at the same time?</b>	Yes
<b>Will there be a great tribulation?</b>	Tribulation is either the first-century Jewish-Roman War or the ongoing conflict between good and evil before the millennium.
<b>Will Christians suffer during the tribulation?</b>	Yes, Christians are called to share the gospel, and tribulation will occur when that gospel is opposed.
<b>Will there be a literal 1,000-year millennium?</b>	No, the millennium refers to a period of peace when the gospel reaches all people.
<b>Who is saved?</b>	Christians only
<b>Is the modern state of Israel relevant to the prophecies in Revelation?</b>	No
<b>When was this view most held?</b>	May have been popular as early as AD 300. Less popular today.



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Tribulations, trumpets, angels, and dragons—all these aspects of Revelation might seem exciting, frightening, or even confusing. You know the Book of Revelation is important to study, but you don't always know where to start. There's a reason it's considered one of the most difficult books to understand! Whether you're learning on your own or leading a Bible study, you can relax; Rose's *Book of Revelation Made Easy* is here to help! Enjoy having clear overviews and practical applications in easy-to-follow charts, illustrations, and summaries that cover the various viewpoints on Revelation.

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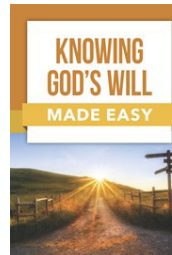


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