

How to Interpret Apocalyptic Literature
November 24, 2024 PM

Five Suggestions for Reading Eschatology

1. Read it with humility.
2. Seek to understand how the original hearers would have interpreted it.
3. Don't try to make a strict chronological roadmap of future events.
4. Take Revelation seriously, but not *always* literally.
5. Focus on the main idea and don't press all the details.

Interpretive Approaches to Revelation

1. Preterist
 - a. Revelation is fulfilled in the 1st century, but we still await the 2nd coming.
2. Idealist – Symbolic
 - a. Depiction of the ongoing battle between good and evil.
3. Historicist
 - a. Revelation is a preview of church history from the 1st century onward towards Christ's return.
4. Futurist
 - a. Revelation is seen as being fulfilled entirely in the future. Very little, if any, had to do with the 1st century.
5. Modified Futurist (My view)
 - a. Eclectic view – There is something positive in all the views.

4 Views of the End Times

1. Amillennialist
2. Post-Millennialism
3. Dispensational Pre-Millennialism
4. Historic Pre-Millennialism

What the Bible Tells Us About the Future (taken from *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible* by Robert L. Plummer)

Things About the Future on Which Most Agree

1. Jesus will come again in visible, bodily form to consummate his eternal kingdom.
 - a. Scripture
 - i. Acts 1:11, 1 John 3:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Matthew 24:27-44
 - b. Response? Be ready
 - a. Matthew 24:42, 25:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, Revelation 16:15
2. The return of Jesus will reveal true believers.
 - a. There will be many false professors who claim to be Christians but really are not.
 - i. Matthew 7:21-23, 2 Peter 2:1-3
3. Between the time of Jesus' first and second coming, there will be a period of political, spiritual, and environmental turmoil.
 - a. Matthew 24:4-44, Mark 13:5-37, Luke 21:8-36
 - b. Signs include: political instability, religious deceivers, wars, famines, earthquakes, and persecution of Jesus' followers
 - c. There will be an anti-Christ, a man of lawlessness.
4. One day, all persons will be resurrected and judged and will enter into an eternal, unchangeable state of glory or damnation.

Things About the Future on Which Many Disagree

1. The Rapture :: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17
2. The Book of Revelation (See section on interpretive approaches)
3. The Millennium (See section on 4 views of the End Times)
4. The Nation of Israel