

# Approaches to the Interpretation of Revelation

As we've discussed before, there are four major methods that have been used to interpret the Book of Revelation. In my opinion, 3 fail to account for many Scriptures which are outside of this book. Those three are also very subjective in their interpretation, often leading to conflicting conclusions. Only the Futurist interpretation gives room for the Scriptures outside of Revelation to fit into a future scheme which doesn't use subjective interpretation to interpret the words.

## **Preterist (Done)**

- All was fulfilled in John's lifetime or shortly thereafter.
- Revelation is seen as an epistle of comfort for the times.
- First presented by Jesuit Priest Alcasar in response to the Historicists who claimed that the pope was the Antichrist.

## **Historicist (Happening)**

- Seen as a history of Western Europe's future unfolding from the First Advent to the Second Advent of Christ.
- Each commentator identifies events that vary and usually terminate at or near his day.
- Started with Joachim (a Roman Catholic Scholar), became big in Reformation and post-Reformation interpretation (Wycliff, Luther, Calvin, Sir Isaac Newton, Wesley, etc.)

## **Allegorist (Symbolic)**

- Sees the book as an allegory of the struggle between good vs evil or of the Devil vs God.
- Sees the book as presenting the ideal rather than being prophetic.
- This method started with Augustine and Jerome, rejecting the literalness of Scriptures and often equivocating and using subjective opinion to define words.
- This method is still in use today in many Reformed Churches with slight variations.

## **Futurist (Coming)**

- This book deals primarily (with the exception of the first three chapters) with the events that surround the Second Advent of Christ.
- The return of Jesus remains immanent in this view for the last 2000 years.