

## METHODS OF INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION:

Most Biblical scholars accept that there are basically 4 distinct identifiable methods of interpreting the book of Revelation: These viewpoints are elaborated on in the book, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* by George Eldon Ladd. A brief overview is included *Revelation: Four Views*. Although simplified here, there are “arms and legs” attached to these viewpoints that sometimes keep a “crisp” definition from emerging. Please remember as you study that there is overlap, convergence, variance in definitions of terms and paths of study.

### **PRETERIST:**

In its most general sense, a preterist is one who believes that most of the prophecies of the Apocalypse have been fulfilled in the past. For example, in the preterist view, Imperial Rome was the beast of chapter 13

### **HISTORICIST:**

Also sometimes referred to as a presentist, considers the events of Revelation now in the process of fulfillment. This method views the Revelation as a symbolic prophecy of the entire history of the church down to the return of Christ.

### **FUTURIST:**

The futurist believes that the bulk of the book of Revelation refers to events to come. This view has taken two forms; one more general or moderate than the other. The latter form of this view is also known as dispensationalism. This view distinguishes between Israel and the church and the nations.

### **IDEALIST:**

Also called the spiritual approach, the idealist views Revelation as a great drama involving transcendent truths. This method sees only a symbolic portrayal of the spiritual cosmic conflict between the Kingdom of God and the powers of satanic evil. For example, the beast represents satanic evil wherever it breaks out to oppress the church.

The best label, probably, for what we are studying is Apostolic Premillennial Futurist Viewpoint.

Apostolic refers to the miraculous power and indwelling Holy Spirit as evidenced in the first century apostolic church.

Premillennial refers to the events of the bulk of the book of Revelation happening just prior to the 1000-year or millennium reign.

Futurist means that the events of Revelation reach their fulfillment in the last years of planet earth, the early birth pains and full birth pains of the tribulation.

Scholars who endorse other views point out that this viewpoint limits the book of Revelation to being applicable only to the last generation. However, the truths and promises apply to any believer throughout history and is a great encouragement to stand strong. Persecution, in some form, has always been present and has always manifested toward fervent righteousness, regardless of the time or place.