

## “REVELATION: DOES IT DESCRIBE OUR DAYS?” SERIES

### #2: “Five Views of Revelation” (Part 2)

#### INTRO:

Last week I gave you an overview of three of the five major views of Revelation:

- Historic premillennialism;
- Dispensational premillennialism;
- Amillennialism.

This morning I want to give you an overview of the last two:

- Post-millennialism;
- Preterist.

Now, I don't mean to say that you have to buy in to one of these views. I'm just saying that these are the five views that Bible scholars have held and do hold. I'm not going to insist that you choose one. You can believe what you want to. While I am very confident of most biblical doctrine and teach it without compromise, this book of Revelation is a different matter. Next Sunday, I'll tell you what I believe. You'll have to decide for yourself.

So, the fourth view is:

#### ***POST-MILLENNIALISM.***

It's called “post” millennialism because it places the second coming of Christ after the millennial period.

“Postmillennialism is the belief that Christ returns after a period of time, but not necessarily a literal 1000 years. Those who hold this view do not interpret unfulfilled prophecy using a normal, literal method. They believe that Revelation 20:4-6 should not be taken literally. They believe that “1000 years” simply means “a long period of time.” Furthermore, the prefix “post-” in “postmillennialism” denotes the view that Christ will return after Christians (not Christ Himself) have established the kingdom on this earth.

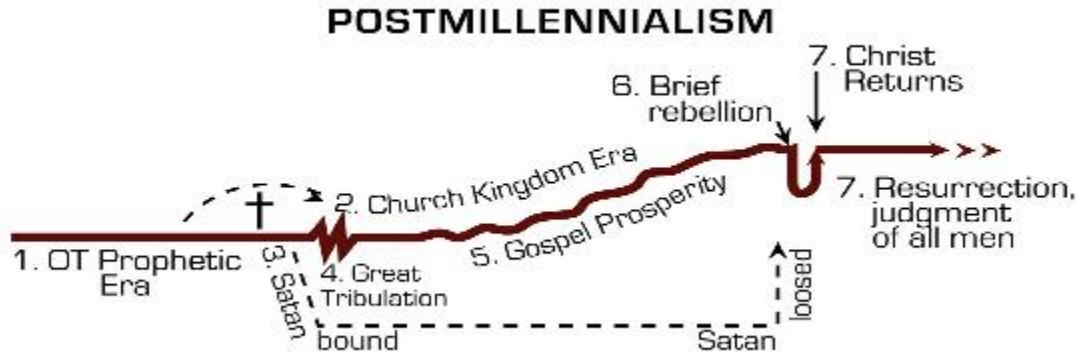
“Those who hold to postmillennialism believe that this world will become better and better—all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding—with the entire world eventually becoming “Christianized.” After this happens, Christ will return.

“Those who hold to postmillennialism use a non-literal method of interpreting unfulfilled prophecy, assigning their own meanings to words” (Got Questions Ministry).

First advanced in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, this was a popular view among evangelicals from 1870 to 1915, a period of history that saw progress and economic good times. But when World War I came along, post-millennialism pretty much died. It has been resurrected somewhat in recent times but doesn't have the support that the other views do.

You probably wouldn't recognize the names of those who hold this view. Most are long dead, and those today are few and far between.

Charted, post-millennialism looks like this:



The fifth view I want to present is called:

### ***PRETERISM.***

The term "preterism" comes from the Latin "praeter," meaning "past." It's applied to a view of Revelation that asserts that the events described are all in the past, that they occurred prior and up to 70 A.D.

In the words of one preterist:

"I believe that the Messiah, Yeshua (Jesus), will *not* return to earth nor will Christians face judgment as most believe. Christians are to live out their lives serving the Lord through His Word until death. At death, our bodies return to dust and at the same time, *immediately*, our spirit goes back face to face with the Lord in heaven forever. Christians will serve the Lord our spirit goes back face to face with the Lord in heaven forever. Christians will serve the Lord Yeshua until death and never see a second return of the Messiah to earth."

Preterists contend that John wrote Revelation between A.D. 62 and 63 – before the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, and the Jewish nation in A.D. 70. (Those who hold other views of Revelation believe John wrote it toward the end of the first century.) They further contend that the events described in chapters 6 through 21 occurred prior to and in A.D. 70. They also contend that the Scriptures describing the coming of Christ, such as 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15 and 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4 and others are actually describing the coming of Christ in A.D. 70 to destroy the Jewish nation, put an end to Judaism, and inaugurate the New Covenant. Needless to say, preterists are not looking for the return of Christ.

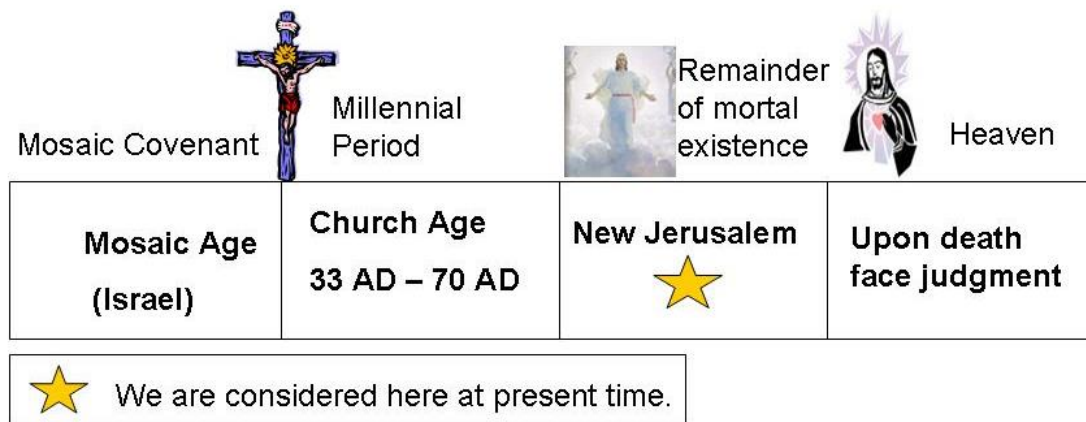
They point to Scripture passages such as Matthew 24:30, where Jesus said that some hearing him would not die before they saw His return. They point to John’s first verse that says he is writing concerning things “*which soon must take place.*” Scripture passages that speak of “*the day of the Lord,*” they say, are referring to A.D. 70, when God destroyed the nation of Israel. So, according to the preterists, the book of Revelation is not for us. It was written for the Jews and Christians of the era from A.D. 30 to A.D. 70.

Preterists who names you might recognize are Gary DeMar, Carl Adams, Gary Ashcroft, and Michael F. Blume.

There are those who are “partial” preterists, including R. C. Sproul, Glenn Peoples, Todd Dennis, and Adam Maarschalk. According to Wikipedia (2009):

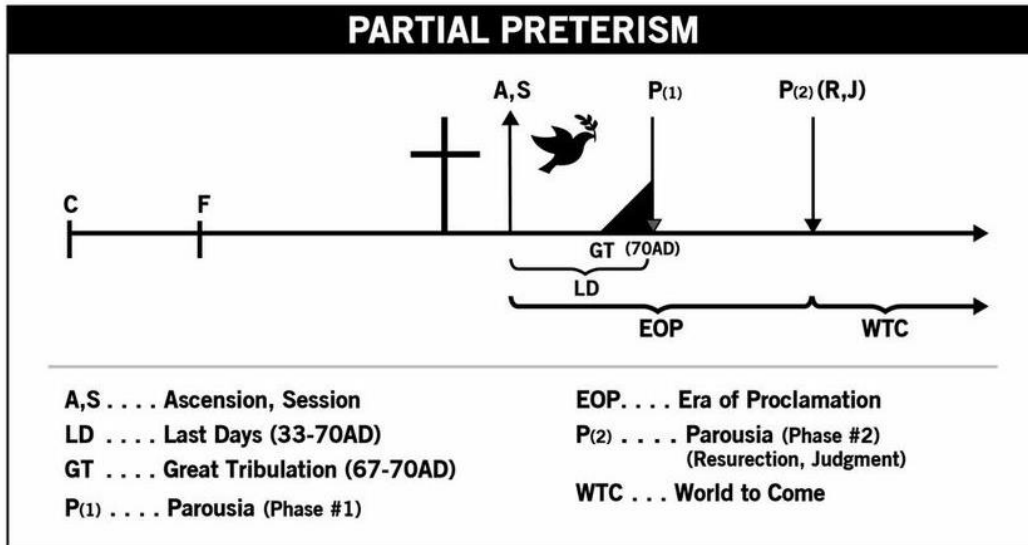
***Partial preterism** is a form of Christian eschatology that places the events of most of the Book of Revelation as occurring during the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D....yet still affirms an orthodox future bodily return of Christ to earth at an unknown day and hour. Partial preterism sees Matthew 24, Matthew 25:31-46, the Book of Daniel and most of the Book of Revelation (besides its last 2 or 3 chapters) as speaking about events no later than the first century AD, and about a coming of Christ in judgement, not the (second, final and bodily) coming of Christ and Last judgment. Most Partial Preterists also believe the term Last Days refers not to the last days of planet Earth or the last days of humankind, but rather to the last days of the Mosaic Covenant which God had exclusively with national Israel...*

Charted, preterism looks like this:



**Preterism**

Charted, partial preterism looks like this:



**CLOSING:**

I suggest that you take a copy of last Sunday’s message and today’s message home with you and look over the charts I’ve provided. Get a picture of the chronology of each view in your mind and refer to them as we continue in the series.

As you can see, there’s not an agreement as to what the book of Revelation is about or whether or not it applies to our time. Are you disappointed?

Some scholars and preachers teach a particular view with enthusiasm based on their belief that they have it all figured out to the extent that if you disagree with them, you’re wrong.

The most popular and most taught view today is the dispensational premillennialism view. It lends itself to a lot of sensationalism, as witnessed by the *Left Behind Series*. The idea of a secret and sudden rapture of Christians, resulting in driverless cars and trucks, pilotless airplanes, etc., is quite exciting. And trying to figure out who the antichrist is or what 666 means is quite entertaining.

Regardless of how you view John’s Revelation, there are reasons to study it beyond any one of the particular views of it:

- We need to understand that the old covenant and Judaism are caput.
- We need to understand the difference between good and evil and the constant battle between the two.
- We need the assurance that God is good, Satan is evil, and God and His people win in the end.
- We need the comfort from knowing what lies beyond this life.