

Revelation - Lesson I

APPROACH & POSITION

“About the time of the end, a body of men will be raised up who will turn their attention to the prophecies and insist on their **literal interpretation in the midst of much clamor and opposition.**”

Sir Isaac Newton, 1693

I. APPROACH

A. LITERAL INTERPRETATION

1. The late Dr. David L. Cooper’s statement has become known as the *Golden Rule of Interpretation*: “When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense...take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, *literal meaning*, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages, axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise.”

2. Webster’s Dictionary defines: *Literal interpretation* - “involves an approach based on the actual words in their **ordinary meaning...not going beyond the facts.**”

3. Hermeneutics - the science of interpretation, esp. of the Scriptures. A branch of theology that deals with the principles of Biblical exegesis.

4. Exegesis – a **critical** explanation or interpretation of a text or a portion of a text, esp. of the Bible.

5. Eisegesis - an interpretation, esp. of Scripture, **that expresses the interpreter’s own ideas, bias, or the like, rather than the meaning of the text** (Isa 55:8-9).

B. LITERAL APPROACH

1. Jewish Scholars Insist on a Literal Interpretation and Approach to Scripture.

2. Pertinent Questions Applicable to a Literal Approach:

- a. To whom is the passage spoken ?
- b. To whom is it given ?
- c. When and where was it given ? (What is the historical setting ?)
- d. What are the provisions and time frame ?

C. JEWISH (HEBRAIC) INSIGHTS & UNDERSTANDING OF OUR FATHER’S WAYS

1. Bring Clarity to the Text:

Insights drawn from the Jewish writings may or may not be directly stated in the Biblical text, but are supported by cross referencing other passages or by explanation of the Hebraic teaching. (Example: Isaiah 26:2, 19-21 Rosh Hashanah passage)

2. Reveal Our Father’s Ways:

The Jewish teachings often give greater understanding of our Father’s ways and bring light to His times and seasons as seen in the following Hebraic insights:

- His Calendar,
- Covenants,
- Festivals,
- Prophecies,
- A natural before a spiritual,
- A first followed by a second,
- His way is prophetic. (Isa 42:9)
- What was is what will be. (Ecc 1:9; 3:15; 6:10)
- He uses Types and Shadows throughout Scripture.
- The Genesis record of Creation is the seedbed of our Father’s thoughts and ways. For example, in Creation the LORD took six days to complete His work and rested on the seventh. The seven days of Creation prophetically fore-shadow His timeline for the earth; a day is as 1000 years and 1000 years as a day (Ps 90:4; 2 Pt 3:8)). Man will rule the earth for 6000 years, then Messiah will come on the seventh day to initiate a 1000-year rest for the earth .

II. POSITION

A. FOUR POSITIONS CONCERNING TIMING AND FULFILLMENT OF REVELATION:

Dr. Charles Ryrie states, “Understanding when the events of Revelation take place marks the difference between the various schools of interpretation.”

1. **PRETERIST** is Latin meaning *past*. The Preterist sees Revelation as having been fulfilled.
2. **HISTORICAL** view sees Revelation as a panorama of the church from the days of John to the end of the age.
3. **IDEALIST** views the book not as an actual record of events but as the age-long struggle between good and evil.
4. **FUTURIST** sees chapters 4 to 22 as passages yet to be fulfilled. This position sees most of Revelation as future.

B. THREE POSITIONS CONCERNING THE NATURE AND TIMING OF THE MILLENNIUM:

1. **PREMILLENNIAL VIEW** teaches Christ/Messiah will return to Earth at His second coming to usher in a literal 1000-year earthly reign. This position states that the Millennium is yet to come.

2. **POSTMILLENNIAL VIEW** teaches the millennial kingdom is not a literal thousand years but a golden age the church will usher in by the preaching the gospel. The golden age will arrive gradually as the gospel spreads throughout the earth until the whole world is Christianized, after which time Christ/Messiah will return to Earth to usher in eternity after the Millennium, hence “postmillennial.”

3. **AMILLENNIAL (LATIN: A- “NO” MILLENNIALISM) VIEW** teaches there will be no future, literal, earthly, 1000-year reign of Christ but **the Kingdom is only spiritual in nature** and is presently fulfilled as Christ lives in the hearts of His people. Because Israel rejected Christ, **the church has replaced Israel** and is now inheriting the promises of Israel. Therefore, the millennium is being fulfilled symbolically by Christ’s reign over the church in this present age. This position is the mainstream Christian end-times theology.

C. THREE THEOLOGICAL POSITIONS CONCERNING THE TIMING OF THE DEPARTURE (RAPTURE):

1. **PRE-TRIBULATION** – Pretribulationist believe that the Rapture (Departure) of the Church the Body Messiah will occur before the Tribulation begins on earth. That the church will not be present on earth when the judgments are poured out.

2. **MID-TRIBULATION** – Midtribulationist teach that believers will be caught up to heaven at the mid-point of the tribulation. Most midtribulationists believe that the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11 will signal the Rapture (Departure).

3. **POST-TRIBULATION** – This position teaches the Rapture of the Church will occur at the end of the Tribulation in conjunction with the second coming of Christ to earth. Believers will be transported to meet Christ in the air as He returns and will then escort Him back to earth.

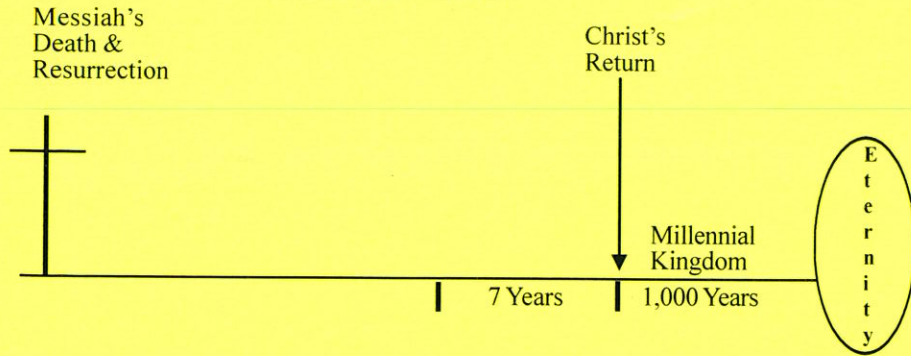
- (Webster defines Dispensation as, “a divinely appointed order or age: *the old Mosaic, or Jewish, dispensation; the new gospel, or Christian, dispensation.*”)
1. A broad overview of the Scriptures clearly reveals major *time segments* in our Father's program for man and the earth.
 - a. Dwight Pentecost states in his book, *Things to Come*, “Any individual who refers to the Scriptures as the Old and New Testaments bears witness to the fact that God has divided His program into *time segments*.”
 - b. Regarding these time periods, which some refer to as *Dispensations*, C. I. Scofield states, “It is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God.”
 - c. Lewis Sperry Chafer, author of *Systematic Theology I* writes, “The dispensational study of the Bible consists in the identification of certain well-defined time periods which are divinely indicated, together with the revealed purpose of God relative to each.”
 2. Biblical *Time Segments* from Genesis - Revelation:
 - a. When Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they came under judgment and were driven from the Garden of Eden. The LORD instituted the Adamic Covenant which began *a new time segment*.
 - b. After Adam and Eve's sin, man was to offer a blood sacrifice as an act of worship unto the LORD. From Adam to the days of Noah, sin and rebellion increased in the earth resulting in His judgment. The Flood brought *a new time segment* identified in the Noahic Covenant.
 - c. The LORD established His covenants with Abraham, a descendant of Noah's son Shem. To Abraham's descendants, known as Israel, the LORD revealed His ways through Moses, giving His laws, covenants, calendar and festivals. To Israel's prophets the LORD revealed His times and seasons and the promise of Israel's coming Messiah. When Israel rebelled against the LORD, they incurred His judgment. They lost the Kingdom and their land to be scattered among the nations in the Diaspora which began the *time segment* of the New Covenant.
 1. This new *time segment* began the *Age of Grace / Church Age* (Acts 2). While our Father picks a Jew / Gentile Bride for His Son, the *Law of Moses* and the *70th Week of Daniel* are held in abeyance. *For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.* John 1:17
 2. When *Messiah's Body / His Bride* is complete (known as the *Fullness of the Gentiles*), the Messiah will come for *His Bride / Body*, closing the *Church Age* (Rom 11:25). A new *time segment* called the *Tribulation / Birth Pains / Jacob's Trouble / Daniel's 70th Week* will begin. The *Law of Moses* (Mal 4:4-6) and the prophetic clock of *Daniel's 70th Week* (Dan 9:24-27) will begin ticking again for that one seven-year period which climaxes at the return of Israel's Messiah to restore the earth and the Kingdom to Israel.

D. FOCUS FOR LESSON 2:**1. Understanding Law and Grace****2. Three Groups of People Referenced in the Book of Revelation:**

- Israel, the Gentiles & the Church (ICor 10:32)

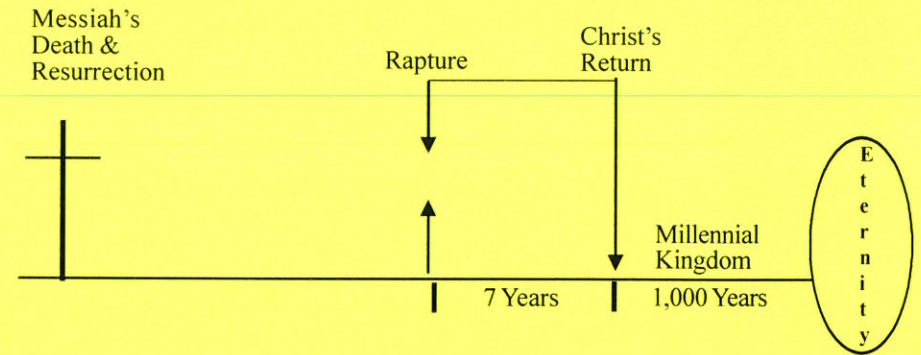
MILLENNIAL VIEWS

PREMILLENNIALISM

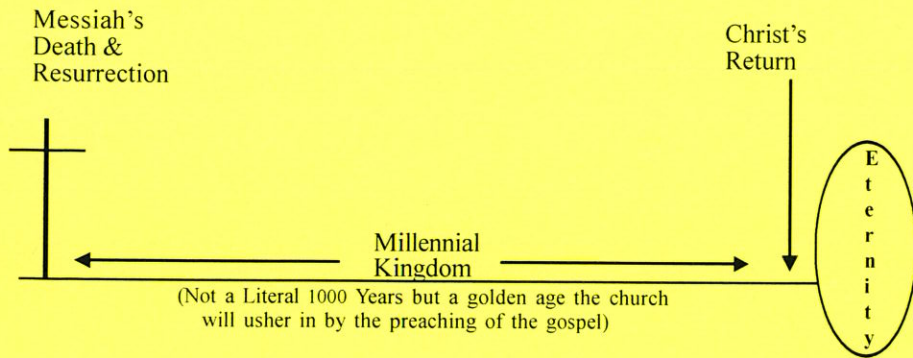


TRIBULATION VIEWS

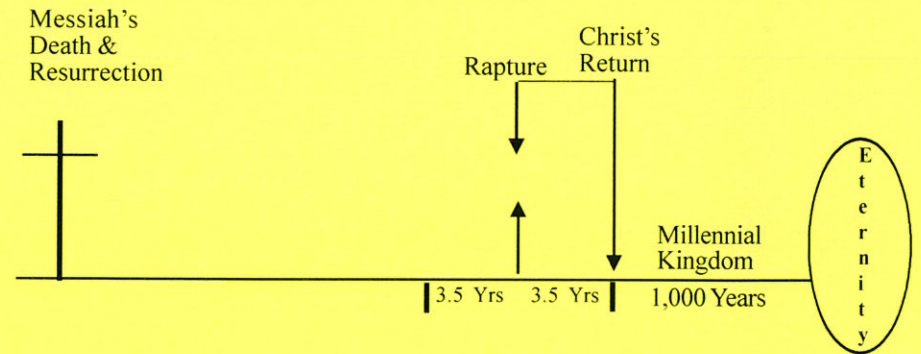
PRETRIBULATIONISM



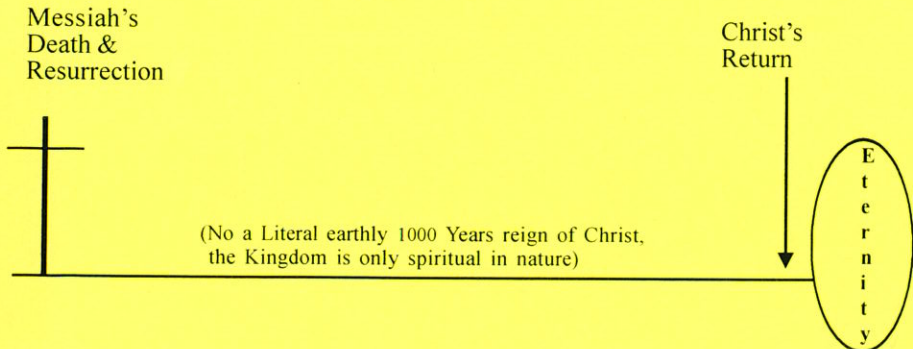
POSTMILLENNIALISM



MIDTRIBULATIONISM



AMILLENNIALISM



POSTTRIBULATIONISM

