THE FOUR BASIC APPROACHES TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The Preterist viewpoint is based upon the belief by some that it was written during the persecution of Nero, and the entire vision pertains to the persecution and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Others see the second half of the book pertaining to the fall of Rome. In any event, it was all fulfilled in the early centuries of the Christian era. However, many see the final chapters as describing the second coming of Christ.

The Historicist Approach to the book of Revelation. "Those who teach this view believe that God revealed the entire church age in advance through the symbolic visions of the Apocalypse. The *historicist* approach is able to align specific historic events with certain details in Revelation. A unique characteristic of this line of interpretation is its advocacy of what is called the 'year-for-a-day principle'"; i.e., forty-two months equals 1,260 years. Another concept of the historicist view is that the papacy represents the great antichrist of Revelation.

The Spiritual Approach to the book of Revelation. Those espousing this viewpoint do not look for specific fulfillment of the prophecies of Revelation in a natural sense. They believe that the prophecies represent the great themes of triumph of good over evil, the vindication of martyrs and the sovereignty of God without reference to specific historical events.

The Futurist (Dispensationalists) school of thought considers that all the prophecies after Chapters Four and Five relate to events that will take place in a relatively short period of time (the great tribulation) just prior to the return of Christ. The *futurist* tends to look at almost all aspects of the vision as being literal in nature. Unlike the other schools of thought, the *futurist* approach cannot be tested on the basis of historical fact since, from their perspective, the things predicted by John have yet to take place. They will not be embarrassed by any predictions they have wrongly made for they expect to be raptured before that time.