

Unfolding the Revelation

What you have heard in the past and today of a future fulfillment and application of Bible Prophecy and the Revelation sounds very convincing, UNTIL you have the opportunity to hear "the rest of the story..."

The Seminars Unlimited promo for their **Unfolding the Revelation** seminar advertised 5 basic points which are common to most futurist interpretations. Space limitations allow for only a brief comment concerning each one. This flyer is a simple introduction to another view concerning the interpretation of Revelation's message and symbols. It is called *Preterism*, which means "past fulfilled".

1. How to Study the Bible.

This is always a good place to start. To understand the language, ideas, and references of the Bible, we have to index its language (linguistics) to find its meaning. This means that to accurately interpret Scripture (Hermeneutics) we need to index the following:

What happened, **when** - time of writing and occurrence, **where** - the social-political, religious place or environment, the **who** - the recipients of the message, the **how** - method or process of the events, the **why** - the reasons, motivations, meanings, and **in what way** or the style of communicating the events.

Some Helpful Keys to Understanding the Scriptures:

1. Our English Bibles are translations of the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament.
2. The Hebrew and Greek words translated as "earth" can also be correctly translated as "land" (or even as 'soil' or 'region')
3. Sometimes the Greek word from which we get the English word 'aeon' is poorly translated as 'world' but would be correctly translated as "an age" (#165 in *Strong's Greek Concordance*).

With a phrase like... ask yourself...

a generation	which generation
the world	whose world? Or is it age?
the earth	does it mean the land or the planet?
the end	the end of what?
the age	which age?
the end of the age	the end of which age?
the end of the world	should it be age instead of world?
the tribes of the earth	does earth really mean land here?
the people of the land	which land? which people?

(From: *What-to-Do-While-Waiting-for-the-Rapture Quiz Book*, A fun, easy, do-it-yourself course on the Return of Christ, by Albert R. Pigeon)

Futurists usually fail to index the most important key for interpreting the Revelation - the time constraints the Book itself places upon it's own interpretation as we shall see under the next point.

2. How to make sense of Bible Prophecy and understand Revelation's mysterious symbols"



Revelation's symbols can be easily interpreted by letting the Bible (especially when compared to Old Testament prophetic language) interpret itself. The reason so many people have been led astray with a futuristic interpretation of Revelation is they don't know the Old Testament. The "Revelation" was **revealing** to its first century readers in the language of the only "Scriptures" they were familiar with - the Old Testament

If we should interpret the Bible *LITERALLY* -- why don't we take the direct literal statements about "at hand," "soon," and "shortly" literally?

James Stuart Russell, *The Parousia* (1878), pg 386-387, asks: "Is it conceivable that an apostle would mock the suffering and persecuted Christians of his time with dark parables about distant ages? If this book were really intended to minister faith and comfort to the very persons to whom it was sent, it must unquestionably deal with matters in which they were practically and personally interested. And does not this very obvious consideration suggest the true key to the Apocalypse (Revelation)? *Must it not of necessity refer to matters of contemporary history* (of the 1st century)? The only tenable, the only reasonable, hypothesis is that it was intended to be understood by its original readers; but this is as much as to say that it must be occupied with the events and transactions of their own day, and these comprised within a comparatively brief space of time..."

"This is not a mere conjecture, it is certified by the express statements of the book. If there be one thing which more than any other is explicitly and repeatedly affirmed in the Apocalypse it is the **nearness** of the events which it predicts. This is stated, and reiterated again and again, in the beginning, the middle, and the end. We are warned that 'the time is **at hand** (Rev. 1:3); 'These things must **shortly** come to pass (Rev. 1:1; 22:6); 'Behold, I come **quickly** (Rev. 3:11, 22:7); 'Surely I come **quickly** (Rev. 22:7,12,20)' Yet, in the face of these express and oft-repeated declarations, most interpreters have felt at liberty to ignore the limitations of time altogether, and to roam at will over ages and centuries, regarding the book as a syllabus of church history, an almanac of political-church events for all Christendom to the end of time. This has been a fatal and inexcusable blunder. To neglect the obvious and clear definition of the time so constantly thrust on the attention of the reader by the book itself is to stumble on the very threshold."

Isn't it clear that these events described in the Revelation were to be read and understood by the 1st century readers? They were commanded to be revealed and understood, not obscured for thousands of years, because they described events that were "**at hand**" (imminent to whom it was written to). This is made clear in plain simple language in the beginning, middle and end of the Revelation as previously shown.



"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must **SHORTLY BE DONE.**"

"And he said unto me, **Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.**" (Rev. 22:6,10)

3. How to face the future with greater confidence knowing the real reasons behind the increased drugs, crime, disease, and natural disasters

The real reason for all of these problems listed above is **SIN**. Deut. 28 describes the "prophetic" consequences of sin in the land. These events come about because WE have allowed it. We caused it by our own sins and by our irresponsibility in not holding our leaders accountable for their sins. Trying to use prophecy to absolve us of our responsibility for the curses upon our land today is not only a sin, but is simply an appeal to carnal man's desire to be free of sin without repentance.

4. How current political, economic and religious movements can impact you and your family

These are valid concerns. Again, these things are easy to figure out by comparing them with the Biblical "Way." The Bible addresses every area of life - political, economic, and religious. It is simple to correct these things if they negatively impact our lives by working to bring back biblical models in all these areas of life.

Preparing for the future is both wise and noble. But do it from the perspective of a responsibility to God, our families, and our neighbors. Sin is the origin of the many ills that have come upon our land. Repentance **from** our way of doing things and a **turning to** God's way of doing things is the "key" to healing our land.

"And My people who are called by My name (Christians) humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2 Chron. 7:14)

5. Understand Revelation's messages so you and your family can be prepared for end-times and the second coming of Jesus.

Hundreds of people have predicted the return of Christ and the end of the world for hundreds of years. What one thing do they all have in common? They have all been wrong.

Something to consider: "When one surveys the wreckage of hundreds of apocalyptic schedules advanced through Jewish and Christian history, it seems unlikely that the new scheme will work out any differently than the last one -- unless it encourages us to bring a human form of global Armageddon upon ourselves." (Robert Jewett, "Coming to Terms with the Doom Boom," *Quarterly Review*, 4:3 (1984), 17.)

Quote from **Last Days Madness**, by Gary DeMar: "Preaching about the imminent end of the world has long been used by religious groups as a way of pleading with the lost to commit themselves to Jesus Christ. Such a motivating device can backfire on even the most well-intentioned evangelist. What happens if a listener shouts out, "**Preachers like you have been telling us for decades that the world is coming to an end. Why should we believe you now?**" By crying wolf and being wrong each time, the church is perceived as unreliable and its doctrines capricious. Skeptics of the Christian faith are likely to conclude that since these self-proclaimed prophets were wrong on the timing of Jesus' return when they seemed so certain (particularly of the nearness of the Rapture, the rise of Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, and Armageddon), then maybe they are wrong on other issues which they teach with equal certainty. "In addition, if one is positive that there is not much time left before the world falls apart, then why spend time fixing what is destined to break? Or, as some have put it, "Why polish brass on a sinking ship?" For numerous modern-day prophets, it's April 14, 1912 and Titanic Earth has hit an iceberg, and she's sinking fast. "

Understanding Revelation will not only give us a correct historical time-frame concerning the "second coming of Jesus", but it will also give us the courage and the hope that we have been truly set free and redeemed by the **FINISHED** work of Jesus the Christ, so we might delight in our labors **today** to magnify His Kingdom in the world **now**. We do this because He is reigning and blesses those who practice righteousness **now** out of love, not fear.

For further study contact the International Preterist Association for a list of preterist resources:

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