

Truth Triumphant
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Interpretive Approaches to the Book of the Revelation

I. The Preterist View

- A. The Approach: This interpretive study of the book of Revelation understands the events described as what happened in the time of the author and the writing of the book. It is seen as referring to the Jewish invasion by Rome and written to encourage faithfulness during intense persecution. Basically it addresses the conflict of the early church with Judaism and Paganism and the triumph of the church.
- B. The Assessment:
 - 1. It is seen as referring to the events of the first century.
 - 2. It understands the return of Christ to be spiritual in nature rather than physical.
 - 3. It recognizes the information of the book to be descriptive rather than predictive.
 - 4. It is unable to accurately identify the details of the book with the events of the first century.
 - 5. It utilizes inconsistent hermeneutics (allegorical and spiritualizing) rather than a normative (literal) approach to interpretation.

II. The Idealist View

- A. The Approach: This interpretive study of the book of Revelation understands this book to be one great allegory. It is seen as the conflict between good and evil with the ultimate triumph of good. This approach is also known as a Spiritual or Allegorical approach to the study of Revelation.
- B. The Assessment:
 - 1. It is seen as not referring to any specific event or events in history.
 - 2. It does not understand any chronology of the events depicted within the book.
 - 3. It recognizes the information of the book to be spiritual or symbolic in nature.
 - 4. It utilizes subjective non-literal hermeneutics rather than a normative (literal) approach to interpretation.

III. The Historicist View

- A. The Approach: This interpretive study of the book of Revelation understands the events of this book to be a symbolic representative of total church history. It is represented by various interpretations since it utilizes subjective methods of interpretation.
- B. The Assessment:
 - 1. It is seen as referring to the events of the whole church age.
 - 2. It is basically understood according to the events contemporaneous with the time of the interpreter.
 - 3. It recognizes the events of this book to represent civil and ecclesiastic history.
 - 4. It tends to breed uncertainty and confusion since the interpretation of this book is dependent upon the ingenuity of the interpreter rather than genuine exegesis.
 - 5. It utilizes subjective non-literal hermeneutics rather than a normative (literal) approach to interpretation.

Page 2 – Interpretive Approaches to the Book of Revelation – Sahl

IV. The Futurist View

- A. The Approach: This interpretive study of the book of Revelation understands this book to be an accurate description of the events from the time of the early church to the establishment of the promised kingdom.

- B. The Assessment:
 - 1. It is seen as referring to the events of the culmination of the present age into the eternal kingdom of the Lord.
 - 2. It focuses upon the events of Daniel's 70th unit of 7 (Great Tribulation) and the fulfillment of the promises that the Lord has made to His people.
 - 3. It provides encouragement to God's people during the trials of life knowing the faithfulness of God to fulfill His promises and to deliver the church from the coming judgment.
 - 4. It utilizes the consistent normative hermeneutic approach to the interpretation of this book.