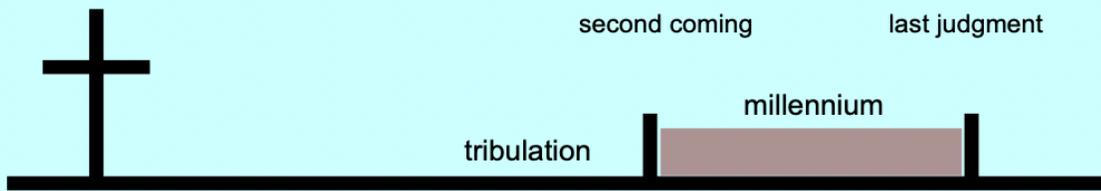


How To Study Revelation

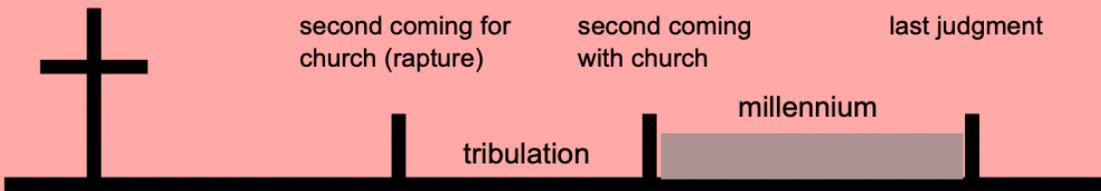
Week 2: The Different Approaches to Interpreting Revelation

The Limitations of Millennial Camps

- The most common vocabulary used to define interpretive approaches to Revelation is in terms of the Millennial Reign of Christ that precedes the final judgment (Rev 20:1-6).
- Millennialists view the whole interpretive work of revelation through the prophecies concerning the eschatological (end times theology) prophecies in Revelation 20.
- There are four primary camps to the Millennial method of understanding.
 - Post-tribulation Premillennialism
 - Believes that the 2nd coming of Christ occurs after the tribulation
 - Pre-tribulation (dispensational) Premillennialism
 - Believes that the second coming for the church, called the rapture, precedes a literal seven-year tribulation, followed by the second coming with the church ushering in a literal 1000-year reign.
 - Postmillennialism
 - Believes the history progresses through a figurative 1000-year reign and to a Golden Age in which much of the world has converted to Christianity preceding the second coming of Christ.
 - Amillennialism
 - Believe in a figurative millennial reign in which we are currently living. In the millennium, we simultaneously experience the victory of the Gospel and the suffering for the Gospel.



1. Post-tribulational Premillennialism



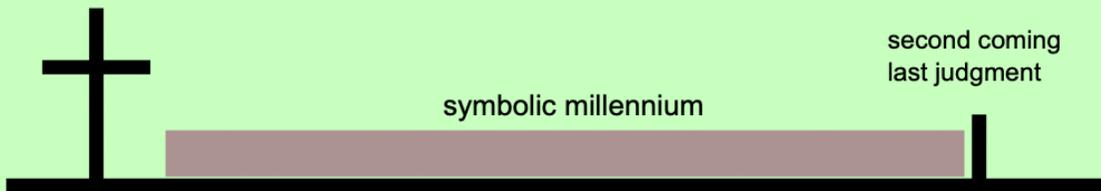
2. Pre-tribulational (dispensational) Premillennialism

First Coming of Jesus

Eternity



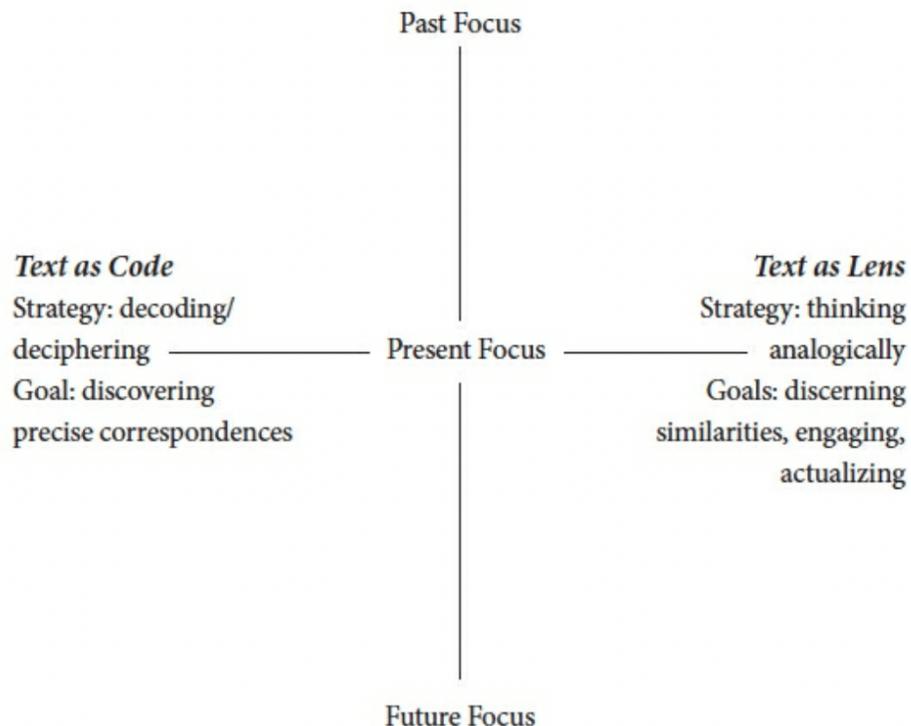
3. Postmillennialism



4. Amillennialism

The Graph

- Two Interpretive Spectrums
 - Judith Kovacs and Christopher Rowland's research found that there are two spectrums on which most all interpretations of Revelation occur.
 - Application
 - Code - Focus on details that correlate with specific events, places, or dates.
 - Lens - Focuses on applying meaning in a contemporary context.
 - Time
 - Does the interpretation have application for the Past, Present, or Future?



Gorman, Michael J. Reading Revelation Responsibly: Uncivil Worship and Witness: Following the Lamb into the New Creation (p. 93). Cascade Books, an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Five Primary Interpretive Approaches (Michael Gorman)

- Predictive (Futurist)
 - Primary Interpretive Approach
 - The events depicted in Revelation will be fulfilled in the near future.
 - This has been a popular interpretive method since the 2nd and 3rd centuries.
 - Dispensationalism
 - Dispensationalists view Church History as seven sections of times called Dispensations where God works differently in different dispensations.
 - Dispensationalism emphasizes a literal translation of revelation, a pre-tribulation rapture of the Church, a special blessing for geopolitical Israel that is separate from the Church.
 - Believes that the Church is currently in a position of waiting for the Rapture.
 - Developed in the 1830s by Anglican Priest John Nelson Darby and was popularized in America by C.I. Scofield and his study Bible, and Dallas Theological Seminary
 - Popularized in culture through the *Late Great Planet Earth* and *Left Behind* Series.
 - Limitations and Shortcomings
 - “History is littered with failed attempts to use Revelation to predict history” - David Barr.
 - Futurists are often criticized for ignoring the original audience.
 - Dispensationalism has only been an established theology for 200 years and has seen several significant changes over that time frame.
 - Notable Futurists
 - Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Joachim of Fiore, Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, John MacArthur, Martin Luther King Jr.
 - There have also been unfavorable historical figures who ascribed to this, including Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Vladimir Putin.
- Preterist (Historic)
 - Primary Interpretive Approach
 - Revelation is strictly a document for its own time.

- The reader should decode the book for its meaning to the original audience, not as future predictive.
 - Limitations and Shortcomings
 - Partially developed as a response to Futurists
 - This is primarily done in academic settings and not within the Church.
 - The interpretive method does not require an affirmation of faith.
- Idealist (Poetic, Theopoetic)
 - Primary Interpretive Approach
 - This approach contends that Revelation uses mythical and poetic language to express great truths about God, evil, and history and examines Revelation for allegorical truths that are spiritually applicable and timeless.
 - It does not rule out the historical context but rejects the decoding approaches of Preterists and Futurists.
 - Searches for the spiritual components of Revelation.
 - Limitations and Shortcomings
 - This approach was developed in reaction to abuses of futurists' predictions and shortcomings of preterist application.
 - Notable Idealists
 - Origen, Augustine, Paul Minear, Eugene Peterson, Richard Hays
- Theopolitical (Historic)
 - Primary Interpretive Approach
 - Revelation depicts a timeless or cyclical view of the Church focusing on opposition to the empirical powers of humankind.
 - The beast (Rev 17) could represent many empires, including Babylon, Rome, Ottoman, Russian, Nazis, etc.
 - Christians and the Church live in opposition to the oppressive powers in a broken world.
 - Limitations and Shortcomings
 - There can be a lack of spiritual application in the Idealist and Futurist interpretive approaches.
 - Notable Theopolitical Interpreters
 - Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards,

George Whitefield, Charles Finney, C. H. Spurgeon, Martin Luther King Jr.

- Pastoral Prophetic
 - Primary Interpretive Approach
 - Revelation is primarily a document of Christian formation. It is designed to call the church to faithfulness in the face of inevitable conflict with hostile powers.
 - The approach combines the Idealist and the geopolitical interpretive approaches.
 - Notable Pastoral Prophetic
 - Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Spurgeon, Charles Talbot.