

The book of Revelation is one of the most difficult to interpret in the entire Bible and throughout history many have given it different meanings depending on the type of hermeneutics (principles of interpretation) they have used. In the early centuries of the church the most common interpretation was to think of the literal establishment of the kingdom on earth. Later on a spiritual interpretation developed and that of those who believed that the kingdom itself would be the church in its character of the victor.

First of all, we must ask ourselves, why should we be interested in reading and understanding this book?

For there is a blessing given by the Lord Himself for those who read and hear this letter and for those who practice what God commands in him

BLESSING 1

REVELATION 1

3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

BLESSING 2

REVELATION 14

13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me¹,
"Write: `Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from
now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from
their labors, and their works follow them."

BLESSING 3

REVELATION 16

15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who
watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and
they see his shame."

BLESSING 4

REVELATION 19

9 Then he said to me, "Write: `Blessed are those who are
called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said
to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

BLESSING 5

REVELATION 20

6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

BLESSING 6

REVELATION 22

7 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

BLESSING 7

REVELATION 22

14 Blessed are those who do His commandments¹, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

Next, we will look at the five most common forms of interpretation of this last book of Scripture

PRETERIST

A preterist is a person who believes that the end-times prophecies in the Bible have already happened. The word comes from a Latin root meaning "past".

This form of interpretation holds that John was describing the way of life of the first-century churches and not something about the future.

The people and events described by the visions must be sought in people or events of the time. Thus, the beast could be Nero or Diocletian who persecuted the church, and the catastrophes could refer to the fall of Jerusalem.

KEY VIEWS OF PRETERISM

Fulfillment Time:

Belief that biblical prophecies and the Book of Revelation were fulfilled in the first century AD, mostly during the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome in 70 AD.

Partial Preterism:

Belief that most end-time events (like the destruction of the temple) are past, but a few events like the physical return of Jesus and the final resurrection are still in the future.

Full Preterism:

Belief that all prophecies—including Christ's return, the resurrection, and judgment—have already been fulfilled in a spiritual way.

HISTORICAL

Unlike the previous one, historicists consider that the events described in REVELATION refer to events that happened chronologically throughout history.

For example, the first church (Ephesus) represented the first-century church, while Smyrna was the persecuted church.

The main disadvantage is that it is impossible to perfectly accommodate apocalyptic events in church history. Some Catholics who use this form of interpretation believe that the establishment of the kingdom began after the church became the official religion of the Roman Empire through Constantine.

Some Reformers, however, believed that the Catholic Church was apostate and identified it with the great harlot and the pope with the Antichrist.

FUTURIST

He tends to be more literalist in his interpretation than the rest and considers the words of the book of Revelation to refer in essence to future events. Most end-times events will occur during a specific, literal time period at the end of human history.

There are two basic forms of futurism, the first of which is the most common in today's evangelical world:

1. Dispensationalist premillennialism:

Premillennialism refers to the belief that Jesus is to come literally before the millennium to reign over the earth as described in REVELATION 20.

Dispensationalism refers to the belief that God has used different ways throughout history by which He has judged mankind, called dispensations (7 dispensations, give or take).

In this interpretation, everything described from chapter 4 would be something future and corresponding to the last seven years before the coming of Jesus.

1. Historical premillennialism:

They are also premillennialists but unlike the previous ones they consider the preterist value of the book, the

focus for the first recipients of the letter but also broadly describes the final events of human history.

CORE DEFINITIONS

Preterism:

Prophecies are history. Most or all end-times events occurred in the first century AD, specifically around the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Futurism:

Prophecies are future. Most end-times events will occur during a specific, literal time period at the end of human history.

The Book of Revelation:

Preterism: Written for the early church to comfort Christians suffering under Roman persecution. The "Beast" often represents the Roman Empire or Emperor Nero.

Futurism: Written for the final generation of humanity. The "Beast" or Antichrist is a future global political leader who has not yet appeared.

The Second Coming of Christ:

Preterism: Christ's return was a spiritual judgment on Israel in 70 AD, or (in partial preterism) a future physical event yet to happen.

Futurism: Christ's return is a literal, physical event that will happen visibly to the whole world in the future.

IDEALIST OR SPIRITUAL

The idealist finds spiritual principles that operate in every historical moment of the church. Thus the beast would be nothing more than a representative of the dictatorial governments that are against and persecute the church, and the millennium could symbolize the spiritual rule of the church over evil.

This school avoids specifying the fulfillment of events and rather describes the struggle between the power of the enemy and how the kingdom of God wins.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO INTERPRET THE REVELATION?

As we mentioned at the beginning of the article, the difficulty lies in the type of hermeneutic one adopts from the beginning and from our previous concepts of the rest of Scripture. Part of the explanation for these multiple

ways of interpreting REVELATION lies in knowing how to distinguish between what is symbolic and literal, and what was said for John's time and what was foretold for the future.

Today the most accepted method of interpretation is the literal one that takes into account the historical context, grammar, literary form and theological aspect of the passage to interpret the passage literally as long as there are no indications of rhetorical elements such as metaphors, similes, symbols, etc.

LET'S ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FOLLOWING KEYS:

Consider the type of literature:

While it has almost all the forms of apocalyptic literature, it is called prophecy and revelation of God (Rev. 1:1,3), something hidden that is made known...

Consider the purpose: It is meant to exhort perseverance so that the churches may be overcomers

(Rev. 2:3)

Consider the times of fulfillment: The time is near (Rev. 1:3). John wrote down what he saw, what was, and what would be after those things (Rev. 1:19).

In REVELATION 4:1 the angel tells him that he will show him what will happen after the first things, what things were the first? the vision of Christ and his message to the seven churches of Asia.

PROPHETIC LITERATURE

It's for the people of those days.

They did NOT understand

1 PETER 1:10-12

10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,

11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us¹ they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the

gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things which angels desire to look into.

REVELATION 1

IN HIS PRESENT GLORY AND HIS FUTURE GLORY

1 The Revelation (the disclosure, uncovering, taking the lid off) of Jesus Christ, which God gave (THE FATHER GIVES THIS REVELATION) Him: JESUSCHRIST

PURPOSE: to show His servants-- things which must shortly take place.

And He sent (apostello: with a mission) and signified (to give a sign, to make known) it (REVELATION) by (through) His angel to His servant John,

JOHN 5

20 "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

JOHN 7

16 Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine (teaching) is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

JOHN 8

28 Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.

JOHN 17

8 "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

For what purpose:

To manifest (show, evidence to be proved) to his servants the things that must happen (become) soon (quickly)

DANIEL 2

44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

45 "Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold-- **the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.**"

REVELATION 22

6 Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy¹ prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

v. 1 And He sent and signified (sign, symbol) it by His angel to His servant John, (Rev. 1:1 NKJ)

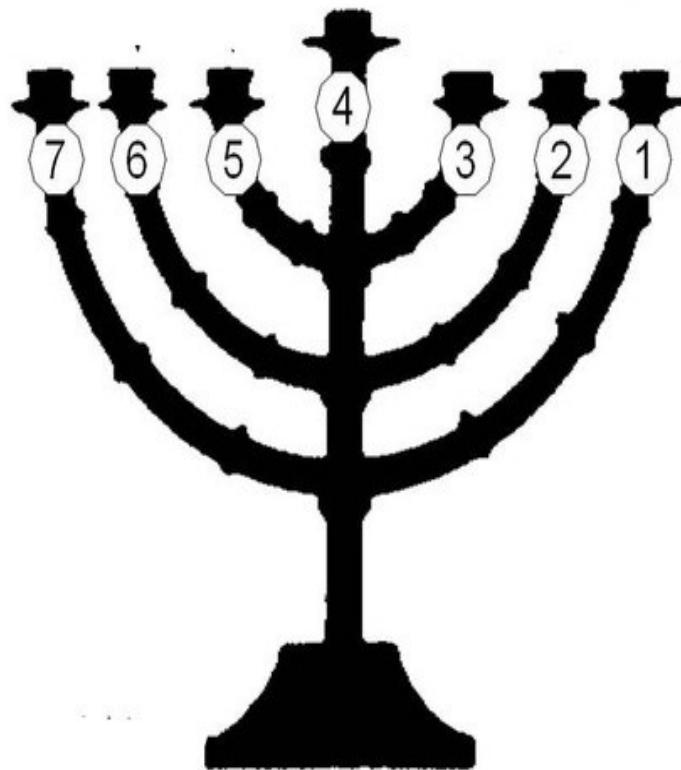
SYMBOL:

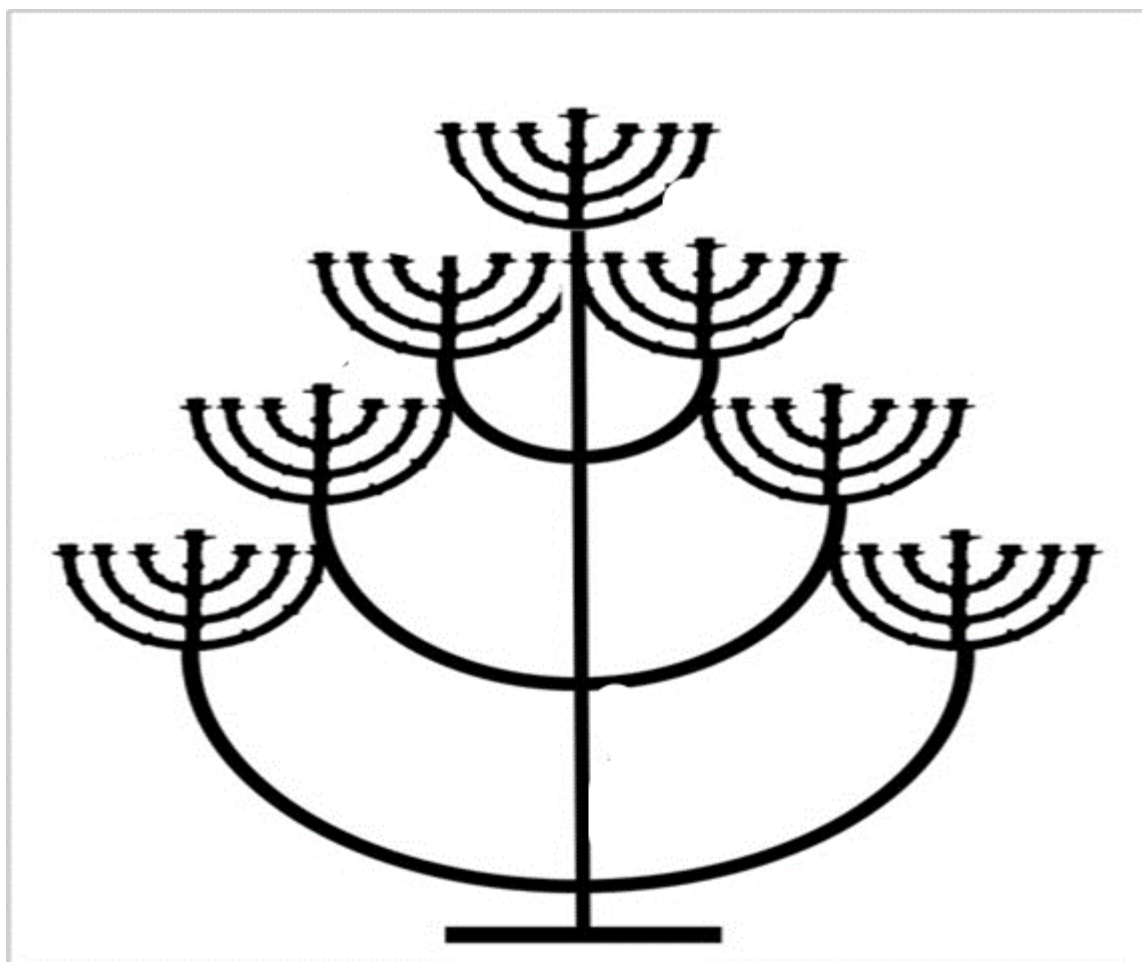
LAMPSTAND with 7 arms

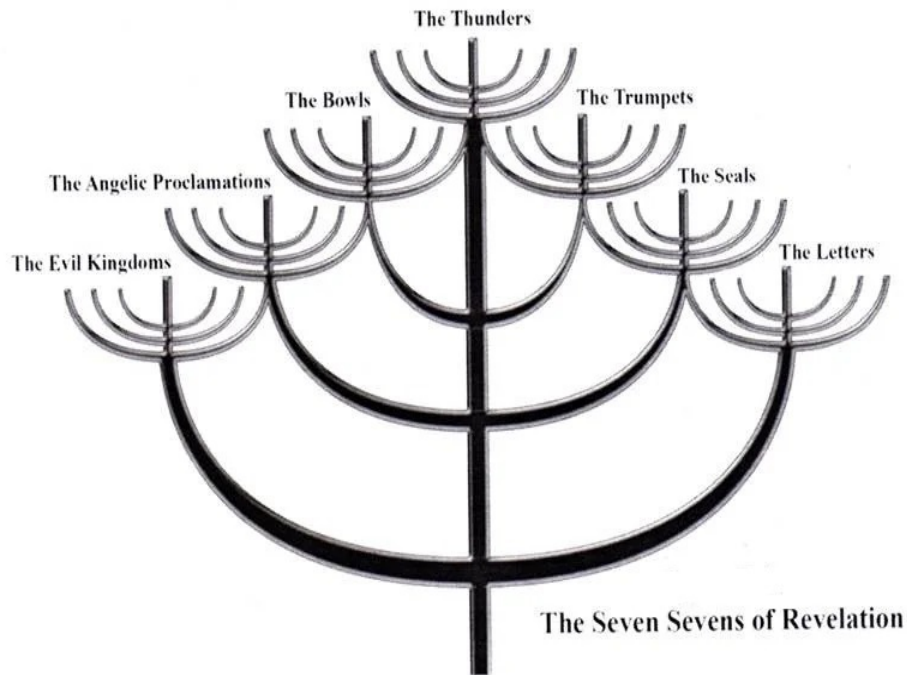
1. Seven letters
2. Seven Seals
3. Seven Trumpets
4. Seven Thunders
5. Seven Bowls

6. Seven Angelic Proclamations

7. Seven Evil Kingdoms







2 who bore witness to the word (LOGOS) of God, and to the testimony (evidence) of Jesus Christ, to all things that he (JOHN, THE BELOVED) saw.

Other Symbols

The seven stars (1:16) represent seven angels (1:20).

The seven candlesticks (1:13) represent seven churches (1:20).

The hidden manna (2:17) speaks of Christ in glory (cf. Exodus 16:33-34; Heb. 9:4).

The morning star (2:28) refers to Christ returning before dawn, suggesting the ecstasy of the church before the establishment of the Kingdom (cf. Rev. 22:16; 2 Peter 1:19).

The key of David (3:7) represents the power to open and close doors (Isaiah 22:22).

The seven lamps of fire represent the Spirit of God seven (4:5).

Living creatures (4:7) portray the attributes of God.

The seven eyes represent the Spirit of God (5:6).

The fragrances of the golden bowls symbolize the prayers of the saints (5:8).

The four horses and their riders (6:1ff.) represent successive events in the unfolding tribulation.

The fallen star (9:1) is the angel of the abyss, probably Satan (9:11).

Many references are made to Jerusalem—the great city (11:8), Sodom, and Egypt (11:8), which contrast with the new Jerusalem, the heavenly city.

The stars of heaven (12:4) refer to fallen angels (12:9).

The woman and child (12:1-2) seem to represent Israel and Christ (12:5-6).

Satan is described as the great dragon, the old serpent, and the devil (12:9; 20:2).

The hour, times, and half time (12:14) are the same as 1,260 days (12:6).

The beast out of the sea (13:1-10) is the future ruler of the world and its empire.

The beast of the earth (13:11-17) is the false prophet (19:20).

The harlot (17:1) described as the great city (17:18), as Babylon the great (17:5), as the one who sits on seven hills (17:9), is generally interpreted as apostate Christendom.

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The ten horns (17:12) are ten kings associated with the beast (13:1; 17:3, 7, 8, 11-13, 1&-17).

The Lamb is Lord of lords and King of kings (17:14).

Fine linen is a symbol of the righteous works of the saints (19:8).

The rider on the white horse (19:11-16, 19) is clearly identified as Christ, the king of kings.

The lake of fire is described as the second death (20:14).

Jesus Christ is the root and seed of David (22:16).