

Rules of this study

- we will only entertain questions applying to the material at hand
- we will not entertain questions dealing with the interpretations of others
- we can work through the material more consistently if we read ahead of time

Purpose for this particular study

biblical scholar Henry Barclay Swete, on the literary form of Revelation, noted:

"In form it is an epistle, containing apocalyptic prophecy; in spirit and inner purpose it is a pastoral"

- not about scholarly pursuits
- not to determine exactly when things described may take place
- from a pastoral perspective; how does this book help us build faith and strengthen our walk with God?

Interpretive approach

- Idealist - completely poetical, symbolic, and spiritual in nature. Does not actually predict anything
- Preterist - all of the events described herein occurred during the first century
- Historicist - prophecy fulfilled from the time of the apostles through approximately AD1200
- *Futurist - chapters 4-22 are prophecies of future events that will take place immediately before and after the second coming of Christ

Symbolisms

- Literal approach to the prophecies
- Figurative approach to the prophecies
- *Combination view

Rapture of the Church

- pre-tribulation (Left Behind)
- mid-tribulation (a season, two seasons, and a half a season)
- post-tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

Numbers

- Seven - God's number of completeness (7 days of creation) (7 seals, etc. = complete judgment)
- Ten - symbolizes man's rule over man (ten commandments are tools given to man to guide men)
- Twelve - symbolizes God's governance over man (twelve tribes, twelve apostles)

No Fear in the Prophecy

- throughout the tribulation Christians are protected
- tribulation is not about punishment but about wrath - anger at those who reject Him
- tribulation events are designed to put the fear of God into people - "scared straight"
- "God desires that all men would repent and come to Him"