

OpenTheo

Introduction to the Book of Revelation



Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

In his exploration of the book of Revelation, Bible scholar Steve Gregg notes that the text comprises three genres: prophecy, epistle, and apocalypse. The book uses symbolic language to convey messages, and biblical numbers are often used symbolically to convey completeness or minority status. Interpreting the text requires understanding its historical and cultural context, and there are different approaches to its interpretation, including futurist, preterist, and idealist views. Regardless of the approach taken, Gregg stresses the importance of biblical context, language study, and symbolic interpretation in understanding the Book of Revelation.

Transcript

When I was putting together the schedule, I knew in my mind that when we would get to the Book of Revelation, I had one man that I wanted to come and share it with us. Steve Gregg is someone who I had heard about years before I physically met him. I had gotten a copy of his book, *The Four Views of Revelation*.

I read it in a Bible school that I was in, which is so enamored by the way his mind worked. To look at the Book of Revelation in such an unbiased view, to allow people to look at the different ways that people have looked at this book for so long. I thought, man, I always wanted to meet this guy, but often times when I was in Hawaii and he was there, our paths never completely met up, until finally I was running a school where I decided if in that school I wanted a whole week taught on the Book of Revelation.

So I called Steve and said, Steve, would you be willing to come out to Hawaii and just allow our class of young students to sit at your feet as you walk us through the Book of Revelation? And he did so, and I got to sit and learn from him for an entire week, and it was awesome. Steve has been known as a Bible scholar in his own making, in his own right. He's helped teach in Bible schools, create Bible schools, and currently has an online radio broadcast called *The Narrow Path*.

You can get it, and I think at some point we'll put a link up on the screen behind him so you can grab hold of it. He's got a, on his website for his show, he literally has his

teaching verse by verse through the entirety of Scripture. So you can find any book of the Bible you want, get that book, find that chapter, and you can hear Steve's thoughts on that chapter.

It's a great resource for you that maybe are looking for someone who doesn't have an agenda other than helping you learn the Word of God, instead of a lot of people who oftentimes have opinions that they want you to learn rather than what the Word actually says. But Steve has that resource. And so tonight's going to be a little bit different.

Steve's going to come, and I said, Steve, I just want you to come and firehose us with the Book of Revelation. So I don't know if you've ever tried to drink from a firehose, but it's very difficult, okay? So we're just going to kind of sit here and capture the water as it's flying past us, and capture what we can. But you're going to need to exercise your learning caps a little bit tonight.

Steve, I've asked to kind of go through, give us a picture of the whole book, historically, how it was written, who it was written to, then kind of look at the major views, the body of Christ, of how people have that view of that book, and then maybe even pick apart some traditional hot topics in the Book of Revelation. And he's going to do all that within an hour, okay? So, firehose, drinking from the firehose, okay? But I think my hope, and Steve's hope, and Craig's hope, and our hope for this night is that you'd be inspired that Jesus gave this revelation to the church so that you could read it and there's something for you in it today within your life. And I think Steve is the best person to sit under and learn from his perspective.

So will you welcome with me Steve Gregg? Well, this is my first time in this church, and I'm very impressed. Of course, as Matt said, we have become acquainted, but I also knew, but not very well, Chuck Smith, Jr., the founder of the church. I was at Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, and the Little Chapel from 1970 on for several years until he moved to Santa Cruz in 1975.

And I was an elder at Calvary Chapel up there. Now, when I say I was in Calvary Chapel and I'm teaching on the book of Revelation, you may assume that you know, therefore, what I'm going to say. Now, the truth is that over the years, as I studied the book of Revelation, especially as I was running my own Bible school in Oregon for 16 years, teaching through the whole Bible every nine months, I came to understand there were more views than the one I had been taught, and that some of them made some sense.

So, I finally, I started looking for a book about the book of Revelation, and I wanted one that showed me all the views together, and the pros and cons of all the views. And I looked for a book like that for 10 years, never found one, and so I had to write one, and I did. Back in 1997, it's called Revelation, Four Views of Parallel Commentary, where I read 50 commentaries on Revelation, about a dozen from each of the four views.

And that took time, but I became fairly conversant, as you might imagine, with the different views of Revelation. And I've never tried to cover this material in one hour before. So, we'll just see how well it goes.

First of all, this is my first time in this church. How many of you, is this the first time you've been in this church? Okay, so not very many. Most of you are here because of, probably, your attendance at the church.

I'm glad to have you and a chance to speak with you. Now, the PowerPoint I have, I don't usually use a PowerPoint, but this is to keep me moving, and to get me, you know, to keep me from rabbit trails. But I said that the Book of Revelation is the most difficult book in the Bible, and not everyone would agree with that statement.

Especially those who've only learned one view of the Book of Revelation. If they've only heard one view, they may feel like it's reasonably easy. In fact, I've heard many teachers on the radio say, There's nothing hard about the Book of Revelation, just take it for what it says.

Well, what does it say? That's the question. In many cases, they say, well, you just take it literally. Really, which part? The part about Jesus being a lamb with seven eyes and seven horns? Is that the part you take literally? Or the part about the beast who has seven heads and ten horns, and the seven heads represent seven kings and seven mountains? Is that literal? It doesn't sound very literal to me.

It sounds a little more difficult than I was sometimes led to believe. In fact, I taught the original view of Revelation that I learned first for many years. And now, I went through a period of time where, as I was learning more about Revelation, I thought, well, you know, I may never teach this book again, because I'm not confident about the view I have been teaching.

And I'm not sure what view to teach afterward. So when I wrote my book, Revelation Four Views, I didn't advocate any view. It's a 600-page commentary where the author does not mention what he believes.

Pretty unusual. But that's because it's got four columns under every passage in Revelation, each one summarizing about a dozen commentaries in each of the viewpoints. Now, tonight I'm only going to talk about three views of Revelation.

I just want to apologize for that. One of the views is not widely held anymore. In fact, hardly anyone holds it except the Seventh-day Adventists.

Though it used to be the almost universal view of the Reformers and of Protestants. It used to be called the Protestant view. But it's kind of fallen out of favor for good reasons.

And although I include it in my book, I'm not going to include it in my talk tonight, simply

because of the time limitations. But it's called the Historicist view. That's the view that Revelation covers all of church history.

When I told people I was writing a book on the four views of Revelation, they said, okay, so there's the pre-trib, there's the mid-trib, there's the post-trib. What's the fourth view? Now, they didn't realize that the pre-trib, the mid-trib, and the post-trib are all one view. They're all part of the Futurist view, the view that Revelation's talking about, the end times and the future.

Or people would say, well, I know about pre-millennialism, I think there's something called post-millennialism, something called amillennialism. What's the fourth view? Now, those are not views of Revelation. Those are views of Revelation chapter 20 only.

The four views of Revelation are actually disagreements among scholars. All of them have been held by equally conservative, godly scholars. In fact, all of them were around before the one that I was first taught.

And each had their turn in being dominant in the church as a viewpoint. But one view holds that it's all about the future. That's what I was taught.

Then another view holds that it was pretty much all about the past. It was fulfilled in the past. Another is that it covers all of church history.

That's the one I mentioned earlier, which today most people don't hold. And I don't think it's got very much in its favor. And then there's another view that it's basically kind of about all times.

But I want to cover as quickly as I can some of the things that will help you approach the book of Revelation with at least objectivity. I won't tell you what it means because that's just not what I'm here to do. I'm here to, I hope, equip you to think about it clearly and study it carefully.

And we'll see how we do on that. Okay, so the first thing I want to get to, I want to make sure this is working. There we go.

The book of Revelation combines three very different genres of literature, which is one of the reasons it really is a hard book to understand. It's not really like any other book in the Bible. It's got resemblances to some other books in the Bible, but it's very different than any of the books in the Bible in significant ways.

And it is certainly different from any of the modern books that are written by Christians or non-Christians. It's got certain genres of scripture that aren't really used anymore by writers. And that makes it difficult for us because we have to kind of transport ourselves back to the mindset of the original readers to get some sense out of it.

On the one hand, it is a prophecy. Secondly, it is an epistle. And thirdly, it's an apocalypse.

Now you might say, what's an apocalypse? Well, we'll get to that. If you were raised Catholic, you might say, isn't that the name of the book? Isn't it called the apocalypse? It actually is. In the Greek, the name of the book is Apocalypse.

An apocalypse is simply an English form of that. But when I say it's an apocalypse, I'm referring to a certain genre of literature of which there are many other samples, some of them in the Bible, and many of them written by Jewish people between the Old and the New Testament, but are not biblical books. But we'll talk about each of these.

Let's talk first of all about the book of Revelation as a prophecy. It says in Revelation chapter 1 and verse 3, So we're not out of line and saying it's a book of prophecy. It calls itself that.

This is a book of prophecy. What do we know about prophecy in general? Well, for one thing, prophecy foretells future things, does it not? It has two features. We don't have a screen back there for me to watch.

Okay, so prophecy, among other things, foretells the future or predicts the future. Everybody knows that about prophecy. If you've studied Bible prophecy, you know there's a lot of predictions about things that had not yet occurred and were going to occur, that God had determined would He going to bring to pass.

But when you read the prophets of the Old Testament, you'll find that the majority of the material in them is not really prediction at all, but more preaching. It's more like rebukes and calls to repentance and things like that. Lists of the sins of the people and of God's displeasure with those things.

Sure, there's plenty of prediction in it, but there's also, in addition to foretelling future events, it foretells or speaks forth the mind of God concerning contemporary circumstances. Now, the book of Revelation has both of those features. It's got sections where it predicts things which it says must take place after these things, especially from chapter 4, verse 1 onward, where John hears a voice like a trumpet in heaven and says, come up here and I'll show you things which must take place after these things.

On the other hand, especially the first three chapters are not really predictive, but are more like the other aspect of the prophecy. The seven letters to the seven churches are the only letters in the Bible that are dictated by Jesus, and they're his message to the seven churches about what he thinks is going on, what he thinks about what's going on. He always says to them, I know your works, and then he tells whether he likes them or not.

And sometimes he says, I like this, but I don't like that. But the point is that the prophecy

of the book of Revelation both predicts future things and speaks forth the mind of God to the contemporary situation of the readers. That's what prophecies do.

That's what Isaiah did, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and all the prophets. The fact that the book of Revelation is a prophecy doesn't make it a unique book. There's other books of prophecy in the Bible.

It's the only one in the New Testament. We don't have any other books of prophecy in the New Testament, but we've got a lot of them in the Old Testament. Seventeen of them, in fact.

So it's not in this respect that it's a unique book in the Scripture, but in addition, it is an epistle. Now, there's lots of epistles in our Bible, especially in the New Testament, but they aren't prophecies. And there are a lot of prophet books in the Bible, but they're not epistles.

This is the only book in the Bible that's an epistle and a prophecy. Now, what do I mean when I say it's an epistle? Well, it begins like an epistle in Revelation 1-4. It says, John, to the seven churches which are in Asia.

Well, that's how an epistle starts. That's how Paul, and Peter, and James all start their epistles. They name themselves and address a group of people, usually churches.

And so this, too, is an epistle to seven churches. These seven churches were in the area that we now call Turkey. It was called Asia or Asia Minor in those days of the Roman Empire when this was written.

They were arranged in sort of a semicircular or a horseshoe shape. If you come to the church of Ephesus and move north, you come to the church of Smyrna and so forth. As you go up, you crest and then come back down south again.

You go through the churches in the very same order they're listed here. And so the letter was apparently sent to Ephesus first and was to be carried around. This is the normal postal route of the region.

And so this is an epistle to these seven churches. Now, we have another evidence of that because it ends the way epistles end. It ends with these words, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Amen. If you'll check out how Paul's epistles end, they almost always end with almost those exact words. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And so it begins like an epistle and it ends like an epistle. And it has addressees to whom it is actually written. This is important for us to know because we sometimes read the book of Revelation as if it was written to the 21st century.

To us or to the people living in the last days. Where in fact, none of the epistles in the Bible were written to people, strictly speaking, in the last days. There are two characteristics of epistles that we can observe.

One is that the primary relevance of any epistle is to their original readers. If the epistle doesn't make sense to the original readers, it's not a very good letter. John who wrote this was kind of the overseer of the churches of Asia.

Especially Ephesus, which was his home church at this particular time. He was the apostle John, by the way, the son of Zebedee. He and his brother James were among the twelve disciples.

In fact, they were among the three that were considered the inner circle with Jesus. But he was very possibly the last surviving apostle at the time this was written. We don't know.

But he was writing to people in churches whom he knew personally. To his home church, Ephesus, the first church addressed, was his home church. So it's clear that when you write a letter to a church that's full of your friends, that you're writing something that they're supposed to understand.

It's supposed to be relevant to them, as with all Paul's epistles. And Peter's and James' and all the epistles there are initially relevant to the original readers. But they also apply, but only secondarily, to later readers in similar circumstances.

When we read 1 Corinthians, for example, we realize that Paul is writing about real problems that existed at the time he wrote that in the church of Corinth. But we find a lot of the same problems exist in churches since that time, including our own time. And therefore, the things that Paul instructed them, or Peter and his epistles instructed the churches, primarily relate to their own situation.

And we're addressing a problem that they had to solve in their day. But, in fact, has secondary application, insofar as later readers may be in circumstances that are parallel to the circumstances of the original readers, but only secondarily. And that's an important thing to keep in mind when we're reading the book of Revelation, because we would expect, like all epistles, it would have some relevance to its readers, and only secondarily to others, like ourselves, at a later time.

Now, it's also a book that we would call an apocalypse. Now, this is a word you might not be familiar with. It's a word that comes from two Greek particles, *apah* and *kalupsis*, which means away, *apah* means away from, and *kalupsis* means cover.

So, to uncover, or to reveal, to unmask something, something that's there before it is unveiled, but no one sees it until it is unveiled, then you get to see that it's there. That's what the word *apocalypsis* means, and that is, in fact, the name of the book in the Greek

New Testament. But what is an apocalypse? Well, we know that Daniel bears a lot of resemblance to the book of Revelation, and so does Zechariah, in that both of these books, like the book of Revelation, consist of a series of visions.

In the case of Daniel, it's mostly visions and dreams, sometimes of Daniel himself, sometimes of Nebuchadnezzar, but they are nonetheless symbolic prophetic visions. When I say symbolic, well, let's face it. Nebuchadnezzar sees a statue with a gold head and a silver chest and a bronze belly and legs of iron and feet of iron and clay, and we're instructed to believe that the gold head represents Babylon, and the chest of silver, Media Persia, and so forth through the Grecian and the Roman empires.

And there's a stone, too, in that image that grows into a great mountain to fill the earth, and that's the kingdom of God, according to Daniel 2.44. So we recognize that the dreams and the visions in Daniel and also in Zechariah and in some other places, a few in Isaiah, a few in Ezekiel, are what we call apocalyptic in that they prophesy something or they reveal something in very symbolic terms, and sometimes the symbolism is a bit of a difficult thing for us. You know, we might not understand how apocalyptic imagery is used if there weren't quite a few other apocalyptic works written before Revelation, but after Malachi, that is, after the Old Testament, and before the New Testament was written. There's 400 years we call the intertestamental period.

In the intertestamental period, there were quite a few books that have survived. Scholars have them. You can buy them and read them in translations in English, preferably.

They're written in Greek by Jews during that period of time, and they wrote in this style called apocalyptic. Now, it's very perplexing to us because our modern authors don't write in that style, but we do have a very helpful key, in a way, to understanding apocalyptic literature in that the book of Esther, which is not an apocalyptic book. The book of Esther is obviously a historical narrative, pretty straightforward.

It's about as straightforward and secular a narrative as anything in the Bible. God's not even mentioned in the book. It's a true story about a woman who became queen and saved the Jews from extinction.

You may know the story. I hope you do. But what's interesting is that sometime long after Esther had been written and was part of the Bible, in the intertestamental period, somebody, enamored with this apocalyptic style of writing, decided to attach to the book of Esther a prologue and an epilogue, which are, in fact, written in the apocalyptic style of the time in which this man added them.

Now, these are not part of the original book. You'll find them in the Catholic Bible. The Catholic Bible has the apocryphal books, and it actually has these additions to Esther at the beginning and the end.

But the author is only pretending that he is Mordecai, Esther's uncle, in this. But he writes in an apocalyptic style that will sound to you, I imagine, very much like the book of Revelation. And it certainly sounds a lot like the book of Revelation to me.

Let me give you an example. I have a quote here. You may not be able to read this.

I made it as big as I could to get the whole quote in there. But this is the prologue to the book of Esther, written in apocalyptic style by some anonymous writer claiming to be Mordecai, saying he had a dream. And it's attached to the book of Esther at the beginning.

And it goes like this. Behold, noise and confusion, thunders and earthquake, tumult upon the earth. And behold, two great dragons came forward, both ready to fight.

And they roared terribly. And at their roaring, every nation prepared for war, to fight against the nation of the righteous. And behold, a day of darkness and gloom, tribulation and distress, affliction and great tumult upon the earth.

And the whole righteous nation was troubled. They feared the evils that threatened them and were ready to perish. Then they cried to God.

And from their cry, as though from a tiny spring, there came a great river with abundant water. Light came and the sun rose, and the lowly were exalted and consumed those who were held in honor. Now, do you recognize that story? I wouldn't.

It sounds like the end times or something. I mean, it sounds an awful lot like most of the features the book of Revelation has, actually. And most apocalyptic books have a lot of this kind of talk.

Now, what comes next is the book of Esther itself, just like we have in the Bible. And then after that, there is this epilogue written by the same author. And he says this, I remember the dream that I had concerning these matters, and none of them has failed to be fulfilled.

The tiny stream which became a river, and there was light and the sun and abundant water, the river is Esther, whom the king married and made queen. The two dragons are Haman and myself. The nations are those gathered to destroy the name of the Jews, and my nation, this is Israel, who cried out to God and were saved.

Now, do you recognize the story? Who would have gotten that from the original prologue he wrote? It's clear what this man, whoever he was, did, writing at a time when apocalyptic literature is extremely popular among the Jews. He retold the story of Esther in the apocalyptic style, and yet you would never have recognized it. This is the way apocalypses talk.

That's the way revelation talks. So it is at once a prophecy, it is an epistle, and it is an apocalypse. In that sense, it's probably the only book ever written that is all three of those things.

But each of them give us some assistance, I suppose, knowing this, at least to make sense of it, or at least not to make nonsense out of it, which many people do who don't recognize the genre of the book. For example, many do not understand that the book is symbolic. I said that Revelation is the most difficult book in the Bible, but some people say, no, it's not difficult at all, you just take it for what it says.

But as I pointed out a moment ago, nobody does that. Nobody can do that. Jesus is not a lamb with seven eyes and seven horns.

That's a symbol for him. He's a human being. He's the son of God.

He's not an animal. Nobody expects the world to be ruled by an actual quadruped, an animal with a body like a leopard and feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion, with seven heads and ten horns. No one believes an animal like that is ever going to come out of the ocean and rule the world, and everyone's going to worship him.

If you believe that, I congratulate you. You're the most consistent interpreter of Revelation I've ever met in terms of taking it literally. When I was writing my commentary on Revelation, I read some of the commentaries by the men who claimed to be taking the most literal view of Revelation.

And one of them was Dr. Henry Morris, founder of the Creation Research Institute, and he wrote in his commentary that the four horses that occur when the first four seals are broken in chapter 6, that they are not real horses. They represent things. Because he said there are no horses in heaven.

And I agree. All you people who love horses, no offense. There's no sea in heaven either, and I know that's going to bother a lot of surfers too.

But, I mean, it's different there. We'll have different interests, I suppose. But I don't believe there are literal horses in heaven, but there are horsemen seen, you know, one of them is ridden by, a horse is ridden by death.

Now, death isn't a real person either. And Hades is following after. Well, that's not a real person either.

These two are both thrown into the lake of fire near the end. And, you know, death and Hades, they're not even humans. They're concepts.

Nonetheless, another writer criticized Dr. Henry Morris for saying there's no horses in heaven. He said, how do you know there's no horses in heaven? It says horses. So I think

sometimes prophecy teachers try to compete with each other to be the most literal interpreter.

But when it comes to apocalyptic literature, being the most literal interpreter isn't necessarily the most desirable thing. It's more important to say, what is the Holy Spirit trying to say through this book in the language of the people who received it to whom it was supposed to make some sense? And would make sense if they are, in fact, reading the popular literature of the time, which was apocalyptic. Again, not even just the popular literature.

The Old Testament has Daniel and Zechariah in books. Apocalyptic literature is not unknown previous to Revelation. And it was familiar to many.

It's symbolic. For example, people and nations and spiritual personages are depicted as animals, like Jesus as a lamb, the devil like a dragon. There's two beasts.

There's locusts out of the bottomless pit, which nobody believes are real locusts. But what are they? Well, that's one of the many things people have different opinions about, but they know they're not regular locusts. For one thing, it says in Proverbs, locusts have no king over them, but they all go in ranks.

But in Revelation 9, it says the locusts have a king over them, named Abaddon, the angel of the bottomless pit. So they're not regular locusts. Also, in Revelation, two women, one is a harlot and one's a bride, actually represent two cities, Babylon and New Jerusalem.

Mystery Babylon and New Jerusalem are depicted as women. In particular, the New Jerusalem is dressed like a bride, but it's a city that's 1,500 miles cubed. Imagine the tailor who had to fit that one out for a wedding dress, a cube-shaped dress.

But this is symbolic. And frankly, most people who do serious study in the book of Revelation, rather than sensational study, know that fairly well, it seems to me. There's also symbolic names given to people and places.

For example, a woman is called Jezebel. Now, her name probably isn't... The real person that was addressed is probably not really named Jezebel. I'm not sure what Christian parents would name their daughter Jezebel.

But if it is, it's a huge coincidence, because the woman who's doing... called Jezebel is doing in the church the very same thing that Jezebel did seven centuries before Christ in the northern kingdom of Israel. There's a parallel to her, but I don't think the real name is Jezebel. Likewise, we know for sure that the city where our Lord was crucified is not called Sodom or Egypt.

And yet in Revelation 11.8, it says the two witnesses' bodies lie in the streets of the city

where our Lord was crucified, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. No, that's the city of Jerusalem. It's not really called Sodom or really called Egypt, but in the book of Revelation, spiritually it is.

And of course, there's Babylon. Now, most people don't believe that Babylon in Revelation is the Babylon that's in Iraq. But some do.

Especially when Saddam Hussein became sexy in the news, a few new prophecy books emerged and sold in great numbers showing how Saddam Hussein is no doubt the Antichrist and he's going to rebuild Babylon, just like Revelation said he would. Well, before Iraq became prominent in the news, no prophecy teacher I ever heard believed that ancient Babylon was going to be the Babylon in Revelation. They all believed it was something else.

For a long time, Protestants thought it was the Roman Catholic Church. Christians in Europe thought it was New York City. And many dispensationalists in this area had thought it was perhaps the, you know, the common market nations in Europe or maybe just worldliness in general, the world system.

There are all kinds of ideas, but no one believed Babylon was literal Babylon in Iraq until along came Saddam Hussein. Then suddenly, several best-selling books arose and disappeared just as quickly when Saddam Hussein ceased to be in the news. You can buy those books for about \$10 a gross from a Christian book discount house right now.

Also, in Revelation, very commonly, there's frequent cosmic disruptions of various kinds. The sun darkened, stars falling to the ground, mountains being removed. By the way, all these images are found in the Old Testament connected with events like the fall of ancient Babylon, the fall of Edom, the fall of Egypt, to the Babylonians in Ezekiel 32.

It's Isaiah 13.10. When Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians, the sun was darkened, the moon didn't give us light, the stars fell to the ground. These are images that profit you symbolically, and Revelation does too. By the way, it happens numerous times.

It seems like the stars could only really fall to the ground once, and only one of them. How many stars could hit the earth? The earth is like a BB compared to a basketball. One basketball hitting a BB, you couldn't have a whole bunch of basketballs fall onto a BB.

It's figures of speech. It's commonplace in the prophets. I'm not saying these things, some of them, could literally happen, but what I'm saying is the apocalyptic imagery does not encourage us or certainly not require us to expect such things to happen in a strictly liberal sense.

Also in Revelation, numbers convey concepts rather than statistical units. For example, the number seven, very prominent in Revelation. Throughout the Old Testament, seven

is a number of perfection or completeness.

The seven eyes on the lamb suggest he sees all and knows all. The seven horns on the lamb suggest power, he's all-powerful. Basically to say the lamb has seven eyes and seven horns means he's omniscient and omnipotent.

Seven means completeness. There are seven churches addressed, although there were actually at least ten churches in the region that we know about in the Bible. Only seven are addressed, representing no doubt the whole church in some respects.

John sees a book sealed with seven seals. They have to be broken. When the seventh seal is broken, then there's angels with seven trumpets they have to sound.

Later on, there's more angels with seven bowls of wrath that have to be poured out. And less obviously, there are other things like seven beatitudes scattered throughout the book and many other sevens woven in. There's seven thunders that sound their voice in chapter 10.

Seven, seven, seven, seven. Now, in apocalyptic literature, seven represents perfection. It may or may not be referring to a literal seven of something or another.

It could be that the seven churches simply represent the whole church, although of course those seven did receive the letter, but they were standing in for the whole church worldwide perhaps because seven has that kind of function. There's plenty of places in the Old Testament where that's true. Also, one-third is a frequent symbol in the book of Revelation.

You find it also in Zechariah and other places, Ezekiel chapter 5. One-third just means a significant minority. It doesn't have to be statistically one-third. It doesn't have to be exactly one-third.

It's a significant minority because why? Well, a third is less than half, so it's a minority. It's the largest whole fraction less than half, so it's a significant minority. So if you read that a third of the people die, well, a significant minority of the people die.

It may be close to a literal third. I mean, I'm not saying it can't be. I'm saying we need to recognize that the Bible uses these numbers that way.

The number 12 is also significant and multiples of it like 144,000. By the way, that's the number of illegal aliens that were caught crossing the border in the month of May, 144,000. I thought, hmm, sounds like prophecy being fulfilled.

Also, a thousand years. Some wish for this to be a literal thousand years. Some are not insisting upon it.

It could be or not. It depends on what it is speaking about. But a thousand is a very

common symbolic number in the Bible representing a large indeterminate number.

The Bible says God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Really? Only a thousand? He keeps covenant to a thousand generations. Only a thousand? A day in your courts is better than a thousand.

A day to the Lord is like a thousand years. A thousand years is like a day. A thousand years in your sight are as but yesterday when it is past.

And like a watch in the night, it says in Psalm 90 in verse 4. Again and again, the Old Testament uses the number thousand simply to mean a large number of indeterminate amount. And we have that in the New Testament used that way. In 2 Peter, we have it in the Old Testament.

It's an established thing in the Bible that a thousand years means a long time, where a thousand is just a big number. In contrast to this, in chapter 2 in verse 10 of Revelation, the church of Smyrna is told they'll have tribulation for ten days. Now, some of my teachers who said that they were taking the Bible literally said that the ten days represent ten emperors who persecuted the church in the second and third century.

Well, maybe it does mean that, but if so, it's not literally ten days. I think more commentators believe that ten days simply means... He says you'll be in prison and have tribulation for ten days. That's long enough to be uncomfortable, but not unbearable.

It's a persecution that's significant, but not unbearable in that particular case. Now, we need to talk about the date in the historical setting, and there's two main opinions about this. The most popular today is what we call the late date, but in previous centuries, there were times when the earlier date was favored by Christian scholars.

It is still debated, and you might say, well, who cares? Well, it may have something to do with what the book of Revelation is talking about because the author says repeatedly that what he's going to tell you about is something that's going to happen shortly. The time is at hand, he said, and so depends on when he wrote it. Now, the early date theory is that he wrote it during the reign of Nero, and Nero reigned from 54 to 68 A.D. He committed suicide in 68 A.D., and then there's a later date that is thought, considerably later, like 25 years later.

Some believe, in fact, most today believe it was written in the reign of Domitian. Where'd it go? It's supposed to stay. Stay.

There we go. Just have to speak with authority. Okay, so, Domitian reigned over the Roman Empire from 81 to 96.

There are references, apparently, to the emperor. At least many people believe there are references in Revelation to the current emperor, and there is definitely debate over this.

Some believe the early date still has the most evidence in its favor.

Some believe the later date. I have a preference myself. It doesn't concern you to know what my view is at this point simply because I have too little time to go in to defend it.

My book, I have a long section about the early date and the arguments for it and against it, and the late date and the arguments for and against it. I still don't take a position in the book, though I do personally. Okay? Now, let's talk about the prevailing interpretive approaches.

Now, in this slide, I made the mistake of saying four interpretive approaches. The reason is because I abbreviated this slideshow from a longer one that had all four. I'm only going to go through three.

So, it's going to misrepresent what I'm saying here by saying four interpretive approaches. Here's the three that really are still on the field right now. I mean, evangelical Christians, conservative Bible-believing Christians who totally believe in the inerrancy of Scripture are in all three of these camps.

Now, you might have only heard of one of them, but it's good to hear something else once in a while. It may be that if you hear them all, you'll still believe the one you heard before. But the Bible says in Proverbs, He that is first in his own cause seems right until his neighbor comes and examines him.

Good observation. And so, I had only heard one view, and it helped me to have a neighbor or two or ten in the commentaries I read examine or cross-examine what I was assuming. Okay, what are the three views I want to talk about today? One is, of course, the futurist view, and that is the view that most of the book of Revelation has yet to be fulfilled in the future.

Mostly everything after chapter three is still going to be fulfilled in the future. A second view is called the preterist view, and that's the opposite view. Preter is Latin for past.

So, just like the futurist view holds that Revelation is mostly to be fulfilled in the future, the pastist view, the preterist view, holds that it's mostly going to be fulfilled or was fulfilled in the past. And most preterists, though not all, believe that the fulfillment was primarily in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. There are some who believe that the fall of Rome is also seen in the book of Revelation, but that would still be in the past.

So, those would be different views of the preterist variety. And then, of course, there is the third view, which is the idealist. I didn't mean for that to happen there.

There we go. The idealist view is that it's about Christian truths, not particularly time-sensitive truths, and that they are principles that are always true, theological truths about God, about God's purposes, about Jesus, about his victory over Satan, and so forth.

That these are truths that are depicted in symbolic visions, which do not correspond with exact events either in the past or the future necessarily, but may be applicable at all times as spiritual truths through which God operates in the world.

Now, this may seem, I don't know which one seems strangest to you. Some might find that one to be the strangest. It was a strange one to me when I first heard it.

But, we'll talk about each of these, okay? So, let's talk about the futurist view first. This is the one that most of us know best. I want to give you a summary of this view.

First of all, it supposes that the first three chapters apply to the present age, that is, present at John's time. Not our age, but the age of John. And some would say to our time as well, because there are some who think that the seven letters of the seven churches actually do correspond to different eras throughout the church age in which we're living.

This can be given an elaborate expression. I do talk about that in my book. By the way, I don't sell my books, so I don't have any with me.

You probably, after I keep saying my book, you expect me to have a table in the back of my lovely wife selling them. No, we don't sell books. You have to get it somewhere else if you want to get it.

But the thing is that the futurist view can hold that the first three chapters, which really contain the seven letters of the seven churches, are not necessarily about the end of the world. But when you get past them, then you're getting into that kind of material. Chapter four begins to present visions related to the future.

It begins with God telling John, Come up here, and I will show you things that must take place after these things, clearly future things. Then you have the seals and the trumpets, the beasts and the bulls, etc. They are all related to future events, generally applied to a seven-year tribulation period.

And while I don't care to talk necessarily about different theories of the tribulation, I just point out something that may surprise you. Revelation never mentions a seven-year tribulation period. It does mention tribulation.

In Revelation 7.14, he sees a multitude of people coming up into heaven, and he's asked who they are. He said, I don't know. And the angel or the elder says, These are those who are coming up out of the great tribulation.

So certainly you've got great tribulation in Revelation. The length of the tribulation is never stated, neither in Revelation, nor in the Olivet Discourse, nor in any other place in the Bible. I understand.

I taught differently myself. It's when you go looking for it that it surprises you. Chapter

19 describes the second coming of Christ on a white horse with the armies of heaven.

Chapter 20 describes a future millennium that will occur after Jesus returns. He'll set up a thousand-year reign on earth, the millennial reign. And that's not really the end, because at the end of that time, Satan is loosed from his prison, goes out, deceives the world, and then Satan himself and his confederates are destroyed, and you've got, in chapters 21 and 22, a description of the new creation, which follows the millennium.

So we'll have Jesus come back in chapter 19, we've got a millennium in chapter 20, and then after the millennium, there's the new heavens and the new earth, which is really the eternal state. That's the futurist view of the book of Revelation. Now, what are the arguments mainly favorable toward this view? Well, probably the most impressive argument for the futurist view is that the things in Revelation have never literally happened in the past.

And since it's a genuine prophecy from Jesus Christ, they must happen, I guess, in the future. Now, of course, the functional word here is literally. It's true.

There's never been a time when 100-pound hailstones literally pelted the earth. There's never been a time when the whole sea turned to blood and all the fish died. There's never been a time like that.

There's never been a time when locusts came out of a bottomless pit having tails like scorpions and faces like men and hair like women and breastplates of bronze and so forth. There's never been any literal stuff like that happen. So since it has not literally happened, and since the prophecy must be true, it must going to happen in the future.

Although what's interesting is that many times people say, it didn't happen literally in the past, so it will happen in the future, and that's the argument. They often don't really believe it's going to happen literally in the future either, as we'll find. They often think that things represent other things.

So no one really takes it completely literally, but certainly our propensity as Western thinkers to read any kind of piece of literature, especially if we're not very familiar with ancient literature of this type, is to just say, well, I tend to take it literally and it must not have happened yet because I think I would have known. I think historians would have noticed if these things happened. That's one of the strongest, perhaps the strongest argument for the future's view.

Another that many people have always found to be a strong reason for believing it is that you can harmonize it with current events. This leads to what we sometimes call newspaper exegesis. Futurist commentators on Revelation have been harmonizing Revelation with current events for hundreds of years.

My father, I was raised in a Christian home. My father had a huge library of Christian

books. I picked a book out once written by William S. McBurney, Sr., who is a well-known dispensational prophecy teacher and pastor also.

I was interested in it. I read this many years ago. He wrote the book before World War II but after World War I. Now, before World War II, there was no United Nations, but after World War I and until World War II, there was something called the League of Nations instead.

In this book, I was reading about Revelation 13 and how there'd be a ten-nation confederacy led by Satan and so forth, by the Antichrist. He said in the book, this ten-nation confederacy is in fact the League of Nations, which is in Europe right now. Remember, he wrote this before World War II.

He says, now I know some of you are going to say, that doesn't make sense because there's 13 nations in the League of Nations. He said, that's how tricky the devil is. He doesn't want us to recognize it as the ten-nation confederacy.

Now, see, I've been teaching the Bible for 49 years now, going on 50. That doesn't make me an expert, but it means I've seen stuff and I've read stuff and I've seen almost every decade, somebody comes up with some new thing that's in the news and says, that corresponds with what Revelation is saying. And they've been doing that for hundreds of years.

You remember, if you've been around as long as I have, when the mark of the beast was going to be a laser tattoo? Oh, that's old tech. The sexy thing now is chips, chips, computer chips. They didn't have those back then in 1970, but now they're going to put chips under their hands, we're told.

Why? Well, because you can find news stories about, they're putting chips in animals, for example, and in some people. So that must be what it's about. Well, maybe.

Maybe it is. But really, to understand the Bible, we need to exegete it based on its own terms and the terms of the rest of the Bible, not on the basis of what's in the newspaper. Because the news changes, and some of it's fake news.

And therefore, newspaper exegesis is the most flimsy kind of exegesis. Exegesis should be based on context, the biblical context, the media context, language study, and of course historical context. And that's often not done.

But in fact, people have been able to find all kinds of parallels between the book of Revelation and things in their own current times. In fact, I do have a radio show I'm on every weekday for an hour. It's a call-in Bible Q&A kind of program.

I've been doing it for 22 years, every weekday for an hour, on several stations, about 22 stations across the country, as well as on the Internet. But I get all kinds of calls, and

sometimes a friend of mine in Missouri takes one of the calls from my program and puts it with a slideshow. He kind of adds graphics.

I wanted to show you a brief one. This is not very long, but this is an actual call that I received on my show relevant to what I've been talking about here. And we'll see how this goes.

Welcome to the Narrow Path. Hi, thank you. I think it was your program the other day.

I was listening to, about Revelation, about, was it yours? There's 200 million troops, and they were saying, well, how would they feed a number of mountain troops? Yeah. It was actually a caller that brought that up. It was on my show, yeah.

Well, I've always loved reading Revelation, and I feel like I understand it. And I've heard you say several times, I think, that sometimes you think some things are like a picture of something, and some things aren't, and it's hard to tell. To me, it's not hard to tell.

To me, it's very obvious. Anyway, it says right in there, the horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this. Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur.

The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire and smoke and sulfur. A third of mankind was killed by a plague of the fire and smoke. Well, I just, they're tanks.

I mean, they didn't have tanks back in those days. So, he couldn't say they're tanks. Then he had gas engines.

And, to me, it's so plain. Why are we back now? They had about 300 cars of food. So, a horse with a rider that has a head like a lion, and a tail like a snake, is obviously a tank.

Well, he saw a big thing that looked on top of a tank, and the tail, you know, they've got where the fire comes out, where the rockets come out. Well, I mean, what he saw, he described it as a horse because people didn't ride any machines. They rode animals.

Well, but they had chariots. I would think, see, tanks don't have legs. Tanks have wheels, and chariots have wheels and carts.

You'd think he would say, I saw chariots. Well, he didn't. Yeah, I know.

He didn't. But, to me, it's not horses. Horses don't have fire coming out of their mouths and all that kind of stuff.

Well, I agree with you. I agree with you that this is not literally talking about horses with fire coming out of their mouths. Okay, that's all.

Okay, well, thanks for your call. Let me just follow up on this. The guy who called me

about that yesterday, whose name is Steve, he sent me an email to follow up, and he was just talking about this.

By the way, it would be just as big a problem if there were 200 million tanks. First of all, I don't know how many tanks America has in their entire armed forces. I would imagine it numbers in the thousands, but not in the millions.

But even if it was a million, I doubt it. But if it was a million, where are you going to get 200 million? And where are you going to get the fuel for those? Frankly, I think you have a bigger problem if they're tanks than if they're horses, because a horse only eats 30 pounds of food a day. A tank, the fuel for that thing would be, you'd have to have a tank truck carrying the fuel for that to go from China to Israel.

That's a long way to drive a tank, and they'd probably get about five miles to the gallon of diesel fuel. I don't really know. But the point is, the guy who called me about that actually followed up with an email, and he said, let me just read what he said.

He said one more horse would eat 30 pounds of food a day. That's 200 million horses by 30 pounds is 6 billion pounds a day. Now, frankly, I think if it was tanks, you'd have to have more than that quantity of fuel, because a horse eats less than a tank does.

This army would require 6 billion pounds of food a day, which is 3 million tons, which would require 30,000 50-foot, 100-ton capacity boxcars. The train that would bring the food for one day for these horses would have to be a train 284 miles long every day bringing the food for these horses. I think that's not very realistic.

Now, let's say they're tanks. We've still got the same issues. We've still got the fuel needed for them and so forth.

There's some interesting stuff here. It said if they traveled by train from the heart of China 3,000 miles away and 12 horse and rider combos were loaded into these 50-foot boxcars, approximately 16.7 million train cars would be needed, by the way, if you're going to transport tanks on a train, you're not going to put 16.7 tanks in a boxcar. You're going to put one tank on a flat car, so you're going to need 200 million train cars to carry 200 million tanks if they're going to go by train.

You don't have that many train cars. He said that the line of them would just circle the globe several times. I don't have time to get into all this, but the point is it's nice to suggest they're tanks, but it doesn't solve the problem.

I personally don't think they're tanks, but in any case, if they are, you've got the same kind of problem that the caller was raising, and that is that the fuel for that many horses would be impossible to transport. It'd be even harder to transport enough fuel for tanks. And where are we going to get 200 million tanks? I don't know what the total number of tanks in the world is, but I'm guessing it's under one million, and there'd have to be

some pretty massive production.

And why would anyone send 200 million tanks against Israel? You could just send a missile, you know, one missile. Why would you transport 200 million tanks? You'd have to manufacture 199 million more than there already exists just to invade this little tiny country, which you couldn't even fit the tanks in the country. They wouldn't fit there.

So to my mind, the number, 200 million, is symbolic, frankly. That's what I'm thinking. And I don't think it's referring to tanks either, but that's certainly, I've heard other people suggest that these are tanks and that the locusts are helicopters and so forth.

That's been a popular view since the days of Hal Lindsey, and maybe before that time too. I appreciate your input, though. I appreciate your calling.

All right. Well, that was an actual phone call on my show. One of my favorites.

Another argument in favor of the futurist view is, if it's not correct, why would so many great teachers believe it is? That was one of the things I wrestled with for a long time, and I began to see other views out there that I'd not have even heard. I thought, well, then why wouldn't all my teachers be aware of these other views? Why would they believe this view? But I had to realize that if I had been born in Europe, any time between 600 A.D. and 1,600 A.D. or 1,500 A.D., I would have been a Roman Catholic, and all the teachers I knew would be Roman Catholics. If someone had said, but John Hus is saying something different over here, or Martin Luther is saying something different, or Tyndale is saying something different, I think, well, they can't be right, because why would all my teachers think this other thing? Because there are prevailing vogues in Bible interpretation, and right now, the futurist view is definitely the reigning paradigm, and it may be true.

It is certainly on the field. It's one of the possible views. A second view I mentioned is the preterist view, which holds essentially that the book is either entirely or mostly fulfilled in the past.

Now, the first time I heard this view, it didn't make much sense to me, of course, because I was still hanging on pretty closely to a more literal kind of approach to the book of Revelation. I thought, well, these things never happened in the past. Come on, give me a break.

Well, let me tell you what the summary of this view is. First of all, as I mentioned, preter is a Latin word meaning past. Now, some people are full preterists, and some are partial preterists.

A full preterist believes that every prophecy in the Bible was fulfilled in the past. To my mind, that's a heresy. I don't think there's any place for that view in Orthodox Christianity, in my opinion, because that teaches that the second coming of Christ, the

resurrection, the new heaven and earth, they already came in 70 A.D. Did you notice? I didn't, and no one else did either living at that time.

Polycarp was born around 70 A.D. and lived to be 86, and he didn't seem to be aware that a rapture had taken place in the church in that year and that the world ended and Jesus came. To me, full preterism just doesn't make sense. I debated one of the leading full preterists in Denver some years ago, so I know what they say, and it just doesn't make sense.

Now, a partial preterist is someone who believes that some or part of Bible prophecy has been fulfilled in the past. In that sense, all Christians are partial preterists because we all believe that some 300 prophecies about the Messiah were fulfilled in the past when Jesus was here, right? So we are preterists about those prophecies, and you can read the Old Testament about the fall of Babylon, the fall of Edom, the fall of Moab, the fall of the Philistines, all of which are extinct peoples now, and we say, well, those were fulfilled in the past, so we're preterists about that. But a partial preterist is usually called a partial preterist because although all Christians believe some prophecies fulfilled in the past, a partial preterist believes that most or all of Revelation was fulfilled in the past, and the Olivet Discourse, those are the two controversial things.

And therefore, that's where the friction comes between, for example, the futurist view of Revelation. Some believe it was fulfilled in the past. Full preterists believe the whole book is about the war of the Jews from 66 to 70 A.D. Partial preterists believe most of the book is, that there are some things in it that are really about the future Second Coming of Christ.

They believe that Revelation is an expansion on the Olivet Discourse. By the Olivet Discourse, we mean that sermon that Jesus gave on the Mount of Olives in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 and Luke 21, where his disciples asked him when the temple would be destroyed. He actually made a prediction.

They were looking at the temple. He says, not one of these stones will be left standing on another that will not be thrown down. And they said, when will this be, and what sign will there be that this is about to happen? And he gave the discourse.

Well, of course, it happened in A.D. 70, and it's interesting that Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record that discourse, but John does not. Some people think, some preterists think, that's because John had already written the book of Revelation, and that was his version, his expansion on it. Certainly, most scholars, regardless of what view they take of Revelation, think that the Olivet Discourse and Revelation are sharing subject matter, that they are talking about the same thing, though some take them both preteristically, some take them both futuristically.

And then, of course, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish system is what's in view

here. The new creation, in many cases, they believe, represents the new covenant coming, as opposed to the old covenant being destroyed in the destruction of Jerusalem. That's how preterists usually view things.

Now, what arguments are there for preterism? We talked about arguments for futurism. What are the arguments for preterism? Well, one of them is, it seems to best fit the time passages that are actually in the book of Revelation, like Revelation 1.1, which says, The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to show his servants things which must shortly take place. And that's actually 1.3, I skipped a slide there.

But, okay, I just read you 1.1, now I'll read you 1.3. Can't get the slide to go backward. Blessed is he who reads, and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written in it, for the time is near. So the first three verses of Revelation tell us that these are things that must shortly take place, and that the time was near.

Now, this was not written yesterday, this was written 2,000 years ago. And, therefore, preterists say, well, it sounds like he's talking about something that was going to happen soon. A really interesting, similar statement.

He says, he said to me, this is chapter 2210, he said to me, Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. The reason that's particularly interesting is that Daniel was told the opposite. In Daniel 12, he was told to seal up the book, because it was not going to be fulfilled any time soon.

He said it was sealed up until the time of the end, and then it'll be open, it'll be understood, knowledge will increase, and so forth. But, instead of telling him to seal up the book, he specifically told, Don't seal it up, because the time is at hand. So, the opposite of what Daniel was told.

Daniel's prophecies would not be soon fulfilled, John's would, apparently, as that would seem to be saying. So, the preterist view claims that these time statements probably fit better with the preterist than the futurist view. Secondly, the preterist view makes the beast out to be somebody recognizable to the readers.

Now, why would that be important? Because in Revelation 13, when it's talking about the beast, it says, Here is wisdom, let him who has understanding, calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, his number is 666. Well, he expects his readers in the first century to be able to calculate and understand who the beast is? That would seemingly mean that it would be somebody contemporary. And, most preterists believe it's a reference to Nero, who they felt the beast.

But, we won't get into that in detail. But, that's one of the arguments for preterism. It does make the beast identifiable to the readers, as John said he should be, if you're wise and can calculate the number.

Also, Revelation does bear a strong resemblance to the Olivet Discourse, as anyone knows who's read both. It agrees impressively with history as described by Josephus. Now, Josephus was a Jewish historian who actually was at that war and wrote an extensive history.

And, so many of the things in the book of Revelation, the preterists point to in Josephus. See, it did happen. You didn't think it did, but it did.

But, they have to take it symbolically, of course. But, then everybody does that at points. And, of course, the preterists view would make the prophecy relevant to the original readers, which is pretty much what you would like an epistle to be.

Now, there are arguments against the preterist view. One is the argument that the view stands or falls on the pre-70 AD date of writing. If it was written during the reign of Domitian, this view can't be true.

Because, Domitian was a quarter of a century after the fall of Jerusalem. And, no one's going to write a book predicting something that happened 25 years ago. So, this view stands or falls with the early date of writing.

And, most scholars today do not believe the early date of writing is the right date. Though, many of the past scholars did believe that. That's still a debate going on.

Also, critics claim that this view originated with a Jesuit named Luis de Alcazar in the 16th century. That's not exactly true. I have some quotes I won't go through with you because of the time.

We're out of time. But, basically, I have some quotes from church fathers and early commentaries on Revelation in the 6th century that take this view. Take the preterist view, actually.

So, it's an ancient view. Okay, what about the idealist view? Very quickly, we can go through this quickly. Basically, the idea is the great themes of the sovereignty of God, spiritual warfare, the triumph of good over evil, of Christ over Satan.

And, the vindication of the martyrs after they've died in heaven. They're vindicated in heaven. That these are universal truths.

They're true throughout the entire church history. And, they're depicted graphically in these symbolic visions to encourage the church. And, makes it relevant to Christians of all times.

The idealist view, I won't go over the details completely. But, basically, it is the view that the book is in seven acts. Each act has seven scenes.

And, basically, they represent things that happen or are true throughout the history of

the church, throughout the whole church age. This does have some appeal in that it makes it relevant to Christians of all times, including the original readers and including us and all Christians. Because, these truths are true all the time.

But, there is a very serious drawback, I believe, to this particular view. This is the big problem with the view. Though, the view can be applied alongside any of the other views.

Taken by itself, it fails to identify the things which must shortly take place, which Revelation speaks about. In other words, Revelation does say there are things it is predicting that would shortly take place. This view holds that the book's not referring to any particular things that ever happen at any one time.

Just principles and transcendent truths that apply all the time. And, this view doesn't seem to do justice to it. Of course, one of the questions people have ended up with, and I'll quit with this, is, is it possible to combine views? Is it possible for there to be dual fulfillment? Is it possible that it did have relevance to the war of the Jews in the first century and also to the end times? Is it possible that there's double fulfillment here? Or, even if the ideal is used, multiple fulfillments.

Could it be that many situations throughout history have seen a replay of many of these ideas, including the end times? So, you could be, in a sense, a futurist and a preterist and an idealist, in a sense, at the same time. You'd have to assume that the book is referring to a lot of things that have multiple fulfillments. But, there are prophecies in the Bible.

Not all of them, certainly, but many prophecies in the Bible do have multiple fulfillments. As you read the book of Revelation, I'm afraid what we've got over may make you more confused than enlightened. And, I would just say, I do have my verse-by-verse through the Revelation at the website.

Everything's free there, if you want to go through it that way. I do talk about all the views in more detail, verse-by-verse. I've never done this in an hour before.

And, I'm going to have to just turn this over right now to Matt, so he can close it up with dignity. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

Thank you. All right, let's all stand up. Take out your number two pencils.

The good news is that we got a lot of information. That was incredible. And, in ten minutes, if you hang around for the ice cream and stuff, CDs will be available in the bookstore.

So, you can listen to it over again, or you can go online and listen to it. And, tonight was the first night that we live-streamed the entire service from worship to the end of the

message. So, awesome.

I just love that. That was great.