

February 2025

WAKE UP! MONTHLY

PROCLAIMING THE REVELATION OF JESUS



Wake Up
America
Seminars



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Views on Prophetic Study

Dear Wake Up Family,

Individuals who begin studying Bible prophecy soon realize there seems to be nearly as many interpretations of prophecy as there are interpreters. However, most prophetic investigators use similar belief systems when they evaluate Bible prophecy. Since John wrote the book of Revelation, students of prophecy have developed four schools of thought regarding how they believe the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation should be interpreted. Each perspective affects how individual prophecies are interpreted and produces a structure, or paradigm, for the broader subject of biblical interpretation. We can understand the foundation of a person's prophetic perspective if we understand how they are approaching Bible prophecy. Let's review the four major interpretive schools that prophecy students use as the justification for their interpretation.

Preterism—Everything Happened in the First Century AD

Preterists believe that all the prophecies contained in the book of Revelation occurred during the lifetime of those who lived during the time of Christ, since Jesus said regarding the end times, **“This generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.”** (Matthew 24:14) So, according to preterists, any prophetic interpretation that extends the fulfillment of prophecy beyond the first century AD would be like calling Jesus a liar. They believe that John wrote the book of Revelation during Nero's reign since they understand the Great Tribulation had to occur before AD 70 when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed. The preterists maintain that Revelation symbolizes first century events, not end-time events. They assert that events such as the second coming and the resurrection of the dead have already occurred, and argue the final judgment is still in process. The Jesuit Luis de Alcasar developed the preterist view in the 17th century as a defense against the Protestant historicist view that the Roman Catholic Church was in apostacy.

Idealism—Symbolic or Spiritual View Applying to All Generations

The idealist considers the prophecies of Revelation to be a collection of highly symbolic stories that apply to all succeeding generations. In

this view, Revelation's symbols do not refer to specific individuals or historical events. Instead, they provide a basis for spiritual lessons that we can use in our personal Christian experience. Some idealists may believe in literal future events such as the second coming and the final judgment. The idealist believes that separate individuals can obtain completely different spiritual lessons from the same prophetic story. While elements of idealism existed during the Middle Ages, authors began documenting this perspective during the 19th century.

Historicism—Most Prophecy Occurred in the Past, Few Literal Future Events

Most historicists believe the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation relate to events from the time the authors wrote them until Jesus' return and creation of a new earth. They understand prophecies like the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven churches symbolize past historical events that were fulfilled simultaneously and only a few major events like the second coming are yet future. The Seventh-day Adventist church, a primary proponent of the historicist view, maintains that the seven bowls symbolize future literal events, unlike the other prophecies which it considers are fulfilled. The earliest evidence of the historicist perspective was recorded in about 300 AD. However, this perspective grew when Martin Luther and the Protestant reformers in the 16th and 17th centuries used it to claim the Roman Catholic pope was the antichrist, and the papacy was the beast of Revelation 13 and the whore of Revelation 17. William Miller built on the historicist method to propose that Jesus would return, and the world would end on October 22, 1844. Most Protestant churches supported the historicist view until the futurist view became popular.

Futurism—Most Literal Events Will Occur in the Future

Most Christians today use the futurist view as the framework to understand eschatological prophecy. Futurists believe that the major events described in Bible prophecy are literal, physical, apocalyptic, and yet to occur. They also believe in a 7-year tribulation period that ties into Daniel 8's 70 weeks. Many futurists believe that these events will occur after a *secret rapture* that brings the saints to heaven, leaving the sinners remaining on earth to experience these

horrific events. Others think the saints will be taken to heaven at the midpoint, end, or throughout the 7-year tribulation. Most futurists think a literal Antichrist will appear and restore the Jewish temple services in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. Early Protestants contended the futurist perspective, initially proposed by Jesuit priests Lacunza (1537–1591) and Ribera (1731–1801), was used to defend the papacy against the claims of Protestant reformers. John Darby is considered the father of current futurism and Cyrus Scofield promoted it when he produced the Scofield Reference Bible.

Major Questions

These four views on apocalyptic prophecy serve as demarcation lines between Christian groups. Nearly all Christians identify with one of these approaches giving them a paradigm for their interactions with other Christians and a basis to interpret prophecy. How can a person who understands that the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are literal events in the future communicate with one who believes the prophecies represent past symbolic events? Let's consider the seven trumpets. A historicist, idealist, or preterist says the seven trumpets are primarily symbols of events that have occurred in the past. The futurist says that obviously, this is a literal event yet to come. Read Revelation 11:15. **“The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.’ ”** The preterist position is that this event occurred after Christ ascended to heaven, the temple was overthrown in AD 70, and Christianity became the world religion. The idealist position is that this verse is a symbol of when God begins His reign at the final consummation of earth's drama. The historicist believes that the seventh trumpet is the continuation of the trumpet events (symbolic) that began in the apostle John's day and it symbolizes events that are occurring at the end of earth's history. The futurist believes that the seventh trumpet heralds Christ's literal second coming.

As you can see, prophecy students approach the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation with different paradigms that can have a significant impact on their prophetic conclusions. I believe there are three underlying foundational questions that determine the conclusions of a student of prophecy: 1) Are the Bible prophecies symbolic or

literal? 2) Do the prophecies identify past or future events? and 3) Are events in the prophecies sequential? Unfortunately, many Christians do not have foundational rules that support their answers to these questions, which results in countless interpretations of the same prophecy. That is why it is so important to establish rules of interpretation. Let's evaluate the individual questions.

Bible Prophecy – Symbolic or Literal

The futurists and the historicists have a common understanding that an event as described in prophecy specifically refers to a historical or future occurrence. For example, Revelation 8:8 describes the first trumpet saying **“The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth.”** Both groups relate this verse to an event that has occurred or will occur on earth. Some historicists maintain this event symbolizes the fall of Jerusalem while others believe the verse reveals the barbarian attacks on Rome in the fifth century. This illustrates a key weakness in the historical view. Historicists have a great temptation to pick and choose a symbolic event that matches their preconceptions of prophecy and history. Futurists generally believe the first trumpet describes a literal future event demonstrating God's judgment on a sinful human race. Students of prophecy must have a clear understanding of what a prophetic symbol represents, or they cannot agree on what event the symbol represents.

Bible Prophecy – Past or Future Events

Prophetic interpreters do not agree on whether the events John described in Revelation occurred in the past or are yet to occur. Preterists (first century focus) and idealists (attention to all generations) do not concern themselves with current dating of prophetic events because their understanding is not time dependent. However, the time gap between historicists' focus on the past and the futurists' focus on the future is continuing to grow. Historicists believe most prophetic events have already occurred and only a few rapid literal prophetic events will occur shortly before Jesus' second coming. Each year that passes, widens the gap between the historicists view of past events and the final days of earth's history. This delay of a century or two is minor compared to the futurists' view which has a gap of nearly 2,000 years between prior biblical events surrounding Jesus' time on

earth and the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Neither group will clearly identify prophecies that extend through the time we are living today. Most historicists cannot identify the next prophetic event because they believe most prophecies have already been fulfilled. Most futurists believe that the next prophetic event is a rapture of the church which begins a seven-year tribulation period as described in Revelation 4 and succeeding prophecies.

Bible Prophecy – Sequential Events

Because idealists consider end-time prophecies to be a symbolic close to the New Testament, they do not believe any of Revelation's prophecies present a progression of events; they look instead to a full revealing of Jesus Christ. While preterists understand that certain prophecies in Revelation occurred sequentially, they have no bearing on end-time events because all the events led to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Remember, historicists and futurists understand that prophetic events in Revelation occur in sequential order; however, they disagree on when the sequence(s) happen(s). Historicists consider individual sequences like the seven trumpets or seven seals were simultaneous historical events. While futurists disagree on when the saints and the resurrected dead will be taken to heaven (pretribulation, mid-tribulation, or post-tribulation rapture), they generally believe that John's vision describes a single sequence of events between Revelation 4 and 22.

A Warning Message

In 1988, Larry Wilson printed the first edition of *Warning! Revelation is about to be fulfilled*. In that book, he presented his conclusions based on another method of interpreting Bible prophecy. Some historicists and futurists attacked his methods and conclusions, but he developed a structured framework that has attracted Bible students worldwide with a message that Jesus loves each one of us and He is coming very soon to take us home. In the April *Wake Up Events* we will compare Larry's method of study with the existing schools of prophetic thought and describe this unique framework that allows us to identify the next prophetic event.

Marty

Comparison of Interpretive Paradigms

	Idealism	Preterism	Historicism	Futurism
Timing	All Generations	Before AD 70	Apostles/Ongoing Fulfillment Today/ Events Just before Jesus' Return	Events Occur in the Future
Symbolic or Literal	Symbolic	Symbolic	Symbolic	Literal
First Trumpet	Symbol of Destruction Throughout History	Calamity for Jews in First Century	Fall of Jerusalem/ AD 70 or Barbarian Attacks/5th Century	Fiery Hail will Destroy Earth
Seventh Trumpet	Victory of Good Over Evil Throughout History	Final Judgment on Jerusalem/ AD 70	Triumph of Christian Church Against Rome or Christ's Final Victory Over Evil	Christ's Literal Second Coming
Seventieth Week	Symbolizes Messiah's Coming and Redemption of Man	Events Leading From Jesus' Crucifixion to Jerusalem's Destruction	Relates to the Time of Jesus and His Crucifixion	Future Seven Year Period of Tribulation

Quote of the Month

The destruction of Babylon foretold in the Apocalypse is total and final; as a threat "mill-stone" she is plunged into the deep; there is no recovery. This cannot refer to the mere burning of Rome in A.D. 410, for that event was speedily followed by the complete restoration of the city. When the Babylon of Revelation 18 falls the smoke of its burning goes up forever; it is found no more at all.

- Johannes Biermanski



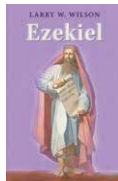
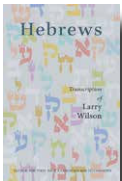
Prophetic Multi-Book Packs



Bible Study Books

Warning Revelation is About to be Fulfilled	\$4 each	15 Books/\$9
The Untold Story of Jesus	\$4 each	8 Books/\$7
No More Delay	\$4 each	10 Books/\$8
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Daniel Unlocked for the Final Generation	\$4 each	7 Books/\$9
A Study on the Seven Trumpets, Two Witnesses, and Four Beasts	\$4 each	8 Books/\$10
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- \$9 each
- \$50 Box of 10
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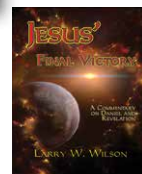
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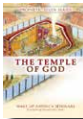
#5 – *Are You Ready for the Second Coming* (35)



#6 – *Sunday or Saturday Which is Holy?* (25)



#7 – *Does Life End at Death* (30)



#8 – *The Temple of God* (22)



#9 – *Was Jesus Created* (60)



#10 – *Salvation: Faith? Grace? Works?* (35)



#11 – *Does God Kill People?* (30)



#12 – *Is the Rapture a Hoax?* (25)



#13 – *The World Wars and Armageddon* (25)



#15 – *Four Beasts of Revelation* (30)



#17 – *The Israel of God Today* (25)



#18 – *What Changed at the Cross?* (30)



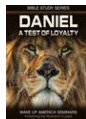
#19 – *Interpretation and Inspiration* (30)



#20 – *Angry with God* (30)



#21 – *Seven Trumpets* (30)



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#22 – Sealing God's People (30)



#23 – Which Israel Will be saved? (40)



#24 – Daniel – A Test of Loyalty (30)



#25 – A Faith More Precious than Gold (30)



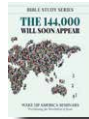
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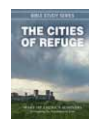
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#28 – Elijah the Tishbite (30)



#29 – Saul – Good Heart Wrong Head (28)



#30 – John the Baptizer (35)



#31 – Pilate's Judgment (45)



#32 – Noah and the Pig Pen (45)



#33 – Moses and the Mark (30)



#34 – Predestination vs. Free Will (40)



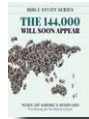
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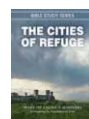
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#37 – The 144,000 Will Soon Appear (35)



#38 – The Cities of Refuge (35)



#39 – Protestant Protests (35)



#40 – When God Breaks His Silence (35)



#41 – What Must I Do to be Saved (25)



#42 – Is Sin Forgiven (30)



#43 – The Sealed Book (25)



#44 – The Trinity – One God or Three (20)



#45 – The 2,300 Days of Daniel 8:14 (25)



#46 – Four Messages (40)



#47 – Demonic Possession Through the Ages (30)

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