

Summary of the Four Views of the Seven Letters and Sealed Scroll

The End Times

In my last post, we completed the seven letters to the **Messianic Communities** in chapters 2 & 3. In this post, we will examine a summary of the **Four Views** of all **Seven Letters** and begin to look at the **Four Views** of the **Seven Sealed Scroll**.

Before we get started on the **Four Views**, I wanted to share a crib chart produced by the ESV Study Bible. Due to the limitations of WordPress in handling large charts, you need to download the PDF version here.

Special Comparative Note on Chapters 2 ~ 3 ¹

Having considered **Yeshua's** assessment of the historical state of the seven churches, we are prepared to go on to the prophetic events about which He wished for them and us to be informed.

In view of the **Historicists**, the letters contain cryptic reference to the conditions in which the whole church would be found at varying times in her history. The church at **Ephesus** represents the church in **Yochanan's** own day, while the church at Laodicea stands for the church in the **End Times**.

The **Preterists** consider the letters to apply to little else than the contemporary situation of the seven churches as they existed in **Yochanan's** time. As with all biblical epistles, however, application to similar churches of any time is acknowledged.

Futurists may side with the **Historicists** or, alternatively with the **Preterists** and the **Idealists** interpreters regarding the application of the letters, though they see the reference to ***what is now, and what will happen afterwards***~ Revelation 1:19 (CJB) as referring to the end of the present age.

Idealist interpreters see the purpose of the book as communicating to the whole church the facts of God's sovereignty in history and His vindication of the righteous. The seven churches symbolize the church of all times, and the letters apply to any churches in which relevant circumstances prevail.

Special Comparative Note on the Seven Sealed Scroll ²

What events do the mysterious scroll and its unsealing represent? When do these events occur?

Historicist Approach:

- Unsealing of the scroll represents the beginning of the fall of the Roman Empire.
- The seal-sequences begins the reign of Domitian (who died in 96 CE) and follows the decline of the Empire through the invasions of the Goths and Vandals in the fourth and fifth centuries.
- Alternative Historicist opinions will be surveyed as we go through the remainder of our study.

Preterist Approach:

- Unsealing of the scroll represents the judgment of God upon Jerusalem (66-70 CE). 144,000 Judean Believers escape to Pella.
- The Four Horseman represent the Roman invasion of Israel to quell the Jewish rebellion (66 CE), bringing bloodshed, civil war, famine, death, and ultimately the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

¹ Material in this section is taken from "Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated" by Steve Gregg

² Ibid.

Futurist Approach:

- The scroll and its unsealing represents the Rapture of the church and the beginning of the Great Tribulation (4:1, per the dispensational view). 144,000 Jews of the End Times are saved.
- In the End Times, the Antichrist rides forth conquering on the white horse; war, famine, and cosmic disturbances (possible nuclear war) follow.

Idealist Approach:

- The scroll and its unsealing represent God's dealings with mankind, seen in cycles of war, martyrdom, and judgment recurring repeatedly throughout history.
- The visions underscore God's sovereignty in the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms and His protection of the saints in the midst of political upheavals, without tying these experiences to specific **Historicist** events.

In my next post, we will begin to explore **Revelation Chapter 4**.