

Revelation

Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must take place. He made it known by sending his servant John, who saw and heard these things, and he wrote them down in this book.

sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.
17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on my head and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades."

Introduction to the Book of Revelation, Pt 1

John the apostle and evangelist, who was in the province of Asia, writes to you from him who is the Son of Man, who is to come, and he says: "Blessed are those who read the prophecies of this book, for the time is near. The one who hears the prophecy of the book must add to these things. The one who is thirsty, let him come and take the water of life free of charge. The one who is hungry, let him come and eat the bread of life free of charge. The one who is thirsty, let him come and take the water of life free of charge. The one who is hungry, let him come and eat the bread of life free of charge."

place later. 20 The seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

I. How do we interpret the book of Revelation?

A. The Preterist View

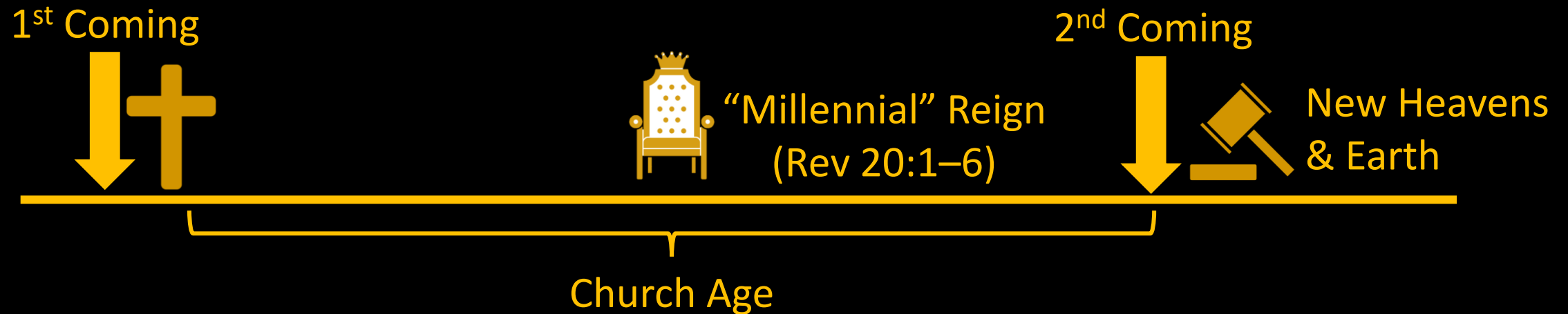
- ***Understanding of Revelation:*** Most—if not all—of the prophecies of the book have already been fulfilled.
- The term “Preterism” comes from the Latin term *praeter*, meaning “past” (the prophecies of Revelation were fulfilled *in the past*).
- Preterism argues that the book of Revelation was written around AD 65—i.e., prior to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.
- It argues that the Great Tribulation occurred approx. AD 67–70, with Christ’s second “coming” manifested in the destruction of the temple.
- Revelation is thus a history book on the events that took place, largely in Nero’s reign, from the apostolic era to AD 70.



- There two basic kinds of “Preterism”:
 - 1) *Partial Preterism* believes a few prophecies in Revelation remain to be fulfilled: a final second coming of Christ, a final resurrection, and the last judgement (Rev 20:7–22:21).
 - The initial second “coming” (*Parousia*) at AD 70 was a “judgement visitation”—a “coming in the clouds” (Rev 1:7); but the final second “coming” is yet future.
 - 2) *Full Preterism* believes that all the prophecies in Revelation have been fulfilled, including Christ’s second coming, the final resurrection, and the last judgment (all symbolically interpreted).



- The *partial Preterist* view is common among *postmillennialists*, including *Christian nationalists*.
- *Postmillennialism* is the view that Christ's second coming occurs immediately after ("post-") the millennium.



- *Optimism*: the church will eventually dominate the world through the triumph of the gospel, or a combination of evangelism and the enforcement of Christian laws. The "tribulation" of Rev 6–19 is past.

B. The Historicist View

- *Understanding of Revelation:* The prophecies of the book are being fulfilled now, in the present era.
- The book of Revelation is a panorama of world history, describing events from the first coming of Christ until His second coming.
- The seven churches (Rev 2–3) are not necessarily literal churches but figurative ones that describe types of churches or eras of the church throughout history.
- Every generation tries to find its own “key events” in Revelation (the fall of Rome, rise of the Roman Catholic Church, WWII, etc.), leading to constant revision of the “fulfillments” of Revelation’s prophecies.

Book of Revelation Timeline

Destruction
of Jerusalem
70 A.D.

The Seven Seals
96 A.D. - 476
A.D.

Protestant Revolution (republican Rome
1330 A.D. - 1776 A.D.
(Rev. 10 "Little Book")

Sea Beast turns
into Scarlet Beast
(republican Rome
revival)

The Day of the Lord

Final battle/Armageddon
Old heaven and earth pass away
Resurrection of the dead
Great White Throne Judgement

John writes
Book of
Revelation

Deadly head wound (last
Roman Emperor/"restrainer"
removed

Deadly head
wound healed
after "short space"

Rev. 14 Harvest

We are here

Scarlet Beast desolates
the Harlot church
(revival complete;
rules the world)

"Holy" Roman Empire 800-1806 A.D.

3 unclean spirits=
3 World Wars

Rev. 12 "Battle In Heaven"
Christianity Legalized
313 A.D.

1260 days (years) reign of man of perdition (Pope)
538 A.D. - 1798 A.D.

New heaven
and earth

The Seven Trumpets
400 A.D. - 1453 A.D.

Martin Luther
measuring of the
temple (Rev. 11)

The Seven Bowls/Vials
1793 A.D. - current

Ephesus
33-100 A.D.

Smyrna
100-313 A.D.

Pergamos
313-538 A.D.

Thyatira
538-1514 A.D.

Sardis
1514-1798 A.D.

Philidelphia
1798-1866 A.D.

Laodecia
1866 A.D.-present

Church

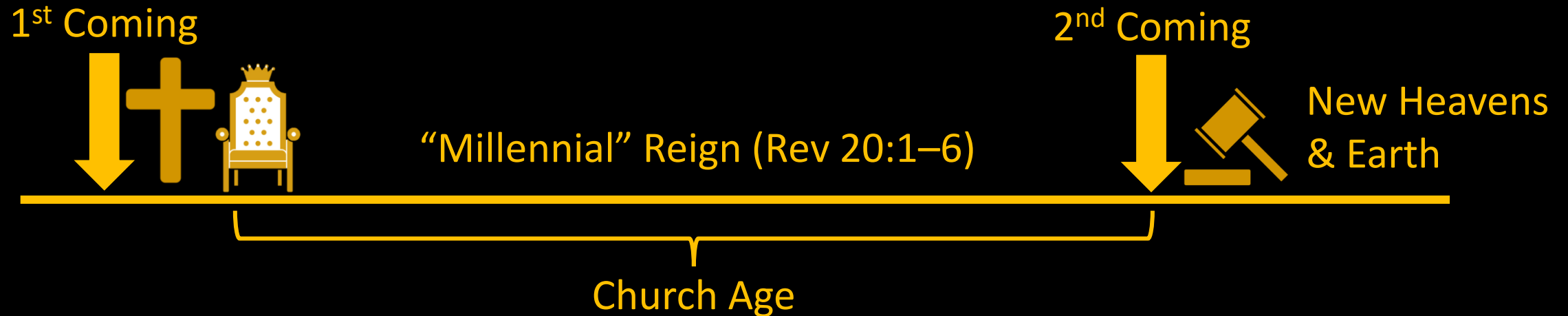
Two Witnessed Killed In 1514
Raised from the dead 3.5 years later

Age (of Rev. 20)

C. The Idealist View

- ***Understanding of Revelation:*** The contents of the book are not prophecies; they point to transcendent truths pertaining to the timeless battle between good and evil.
- The book of Revelation is neither a textbook on church history nor does it contain prophecy of things to come.
- The book of Revelation is to serve as a *story*—a kind of *drama* or *allegory*—that is to bring hope and encouragement to believers of any age.
- Very little in the book of Revelation is to be taken as descriptive of future realities; it is all symbolic and ahistorical.

- The *Idealist* view is common among *amillennialists* and some *postmillennialists*.
- *Amillennialism* is the view that Christ's second coming occurs without ("a-") a literal rule of Christ on the earth.



- *Realism*: The gospel will have mixed success throughout the world. Only the second coming of Christ will bring final victory over sin. The “tribulation” of Rev 6–19 is purely symbolic of the ongoing struggle.

D. The Futurist View

- *Understanding of Revelation:* The prophecies of the book, which begin in 4:1, are fulfilled in the future—after the church age.
- Key to this view is the framework provided in Revelation 1:19.

Revelation 1:19

“Therefore write

the things which you have seen,

and the things which are,

and the things which will take

place after these things.”

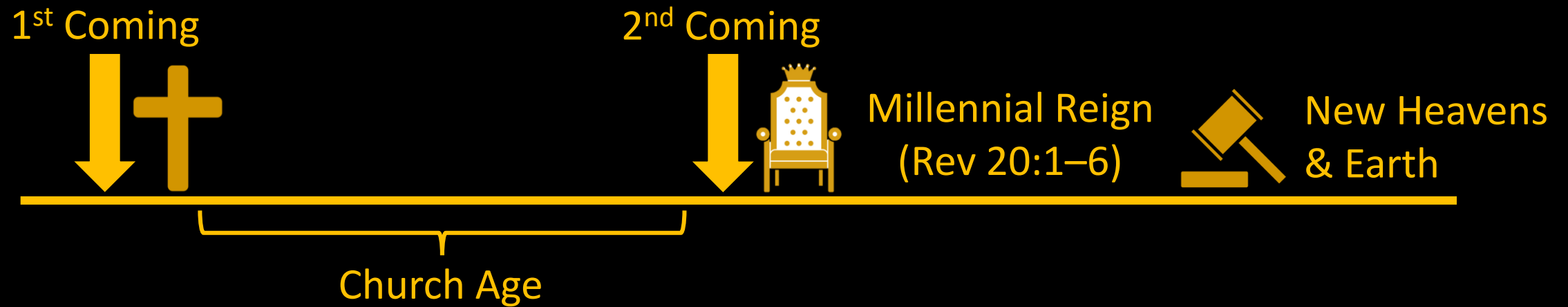
chapter 1 (John’s
vision of Jesus Christ)

chapters 2–3 (the
current church age)

chapters 4–22 (the
future age)

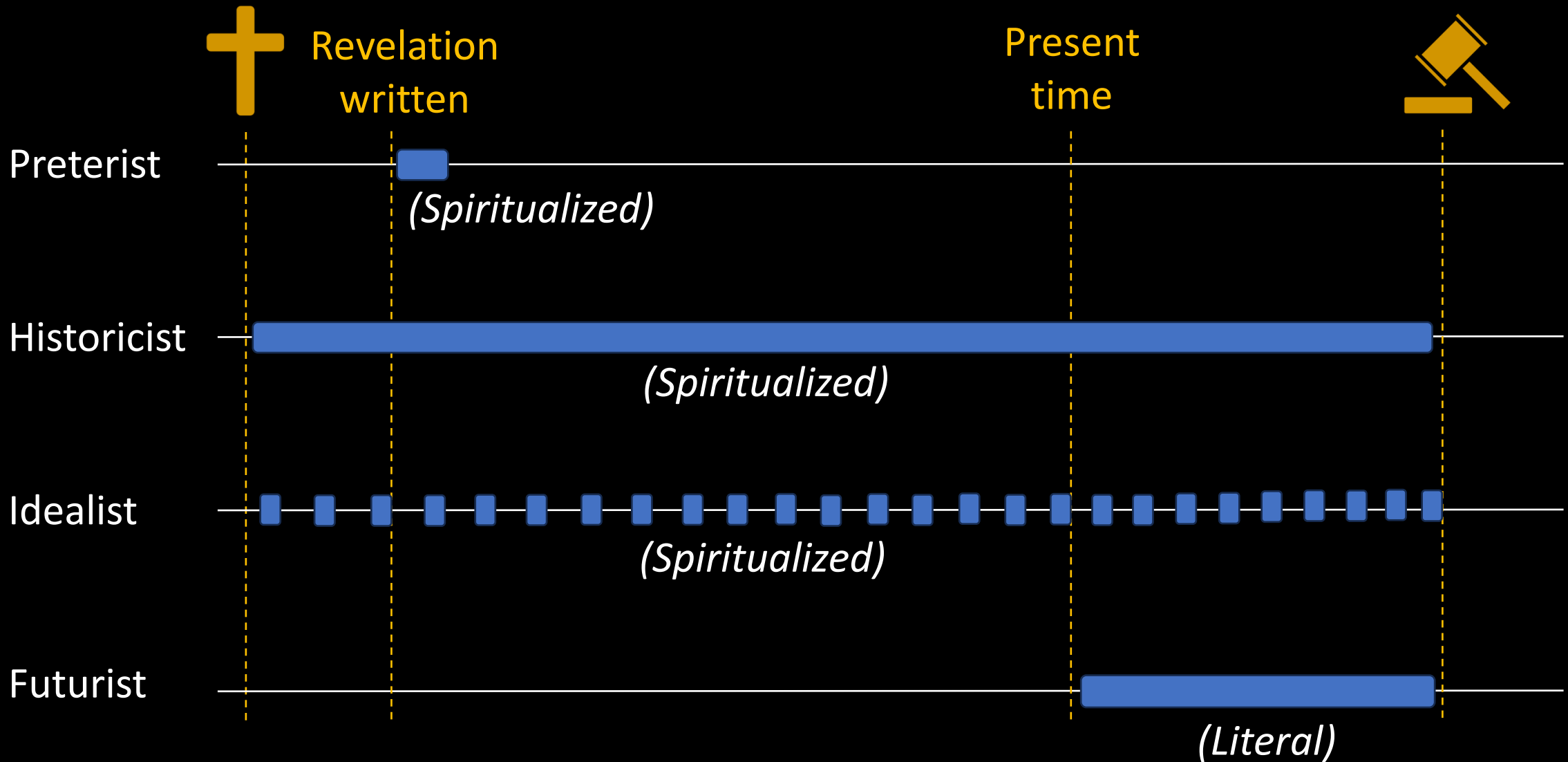
- Out of all the approaches, the futurist approach takes the book in the most literal sense possible.
- Out of all the approaches, the futurist approach also respects the book's self-identification as true "prophecy" (1:3; 22:7, 10, 18, 19).
- The futurist approach also reflects the earliest testimony of the church:
 - *Didache* (2nd cent. AD)
 - *Epistle of Barnabas* (2nd cent. AD)
 - *Shepherd of Hermas* (2nd cent. AD)
 - Papias (c. AD 60–130)
 - Justin Martyr (c. AD 100–165)
 - Irenaeus (c. AD 130–202)
 - Tertullian (c. AD 155–220)
 - Nepos (3rd cent. AD)
 - Commodianus (3rd cent. AD)
 - Lactantius (c. AD 260–330)

- The *Futurist* view is the standard view of *premillennialists*.
- *Premillennialism* is the view that Christ's second coming occurs immediately before ("pre-") His millennial rule on earth.



- *Pessimism*: The church will face increasing opposition and significant apostasy. Victory over the enemies of Christ will only come when He physically returns. The “tribulation” of Rev 6–19 is literal and yet to come.

Summary: Approaches to the Book of Revelation



*The blue indicates the perceived “fulfillment” of Revelation 4–20)