

Brief Glossary of Biblical and Theological Terms

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Resources

The following definitions of key expressions in this study of Revelation are adapted from several reference works, among them: Collins, John J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity*, (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1984), Collins, John J. Ed., *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (Semeia 14: The Society of Biblical Literature, 1979), Ferguson, Everett. Editor, *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, (New York: Garland Publishing Co. , 1990), Hanson, Paul D. *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: The Fortress Press, 1975), and Soulen, Richard N. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979), James, M. R. *The Apocryphal New Testament*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), Hennecke, Edgar and William Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2 Vols. , (Philadelphia: the Westminster Press, 1963), Robinson, James M. *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, (San Francisco: Harper, 1990), Goodspeed, Edgar J. *The Apocrypha: An American Translation*, (Chicago, Ill. :University of Chicago Press,1938), Goodspeed, Edgar J. *The Story of the Apocrypha*, (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1939), Nickelsburg, G. W. E. *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishna*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), Stone, M. *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), and Clouse, Robert G. Ed. , *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1977.)

Amillennialism

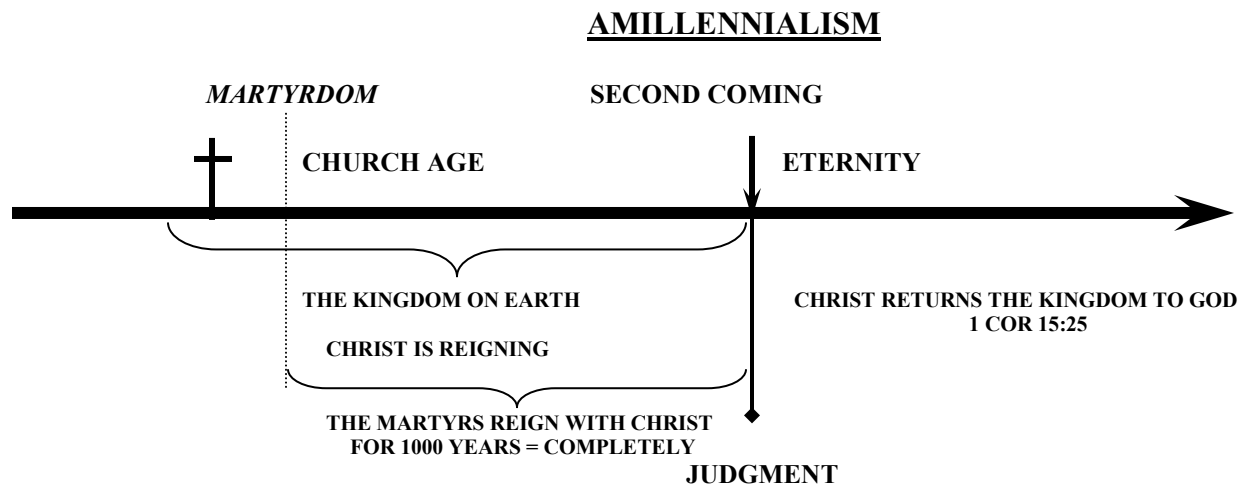
Amillennialism is one of the terms used to describe theological theories regarding the 1000 year reign or the “anticipated” millennial reign of Christ. Other terms falling under the category of millennial theology are Premillennialism, Dispensationalism, and Postmillennialism. Each of these is discussed in its own right in the glossary.

As will be noticed under the discussion of Millennialism, the term derives from the Latin terminology for 1000 years, namely, *mille* – 1000, and *annus* – year. Hence the term millennial refers to theories of the 1000 year reign of Christ of Rev 20:4.

Amillennial is the term used to refer to theories that do not see in Rev 20:4 and the 1000 years a literal period of time, or to that extent, any period of time. Amillennial theories suggest that the millennium refers rather to conditions or situations implying *completeness*, since the figure 1000 is understood to refer to completeness. In the case of Rev 20:4 the reign of the martyrs for 1000 years refers to the fact that they reign *completely* with Christ. They are conquerors (victorious) and thus share with Christ in his victory and reign. Rev 20:4 does not say that Christ reigns for 1000 years, nor that his reign is on earth. It is the martyrs who reign *completely* with Christ (for a 1000 years with the 1000 figuratively referring to the completeness of their reign).

Amillennial theories do not follow a literal interpretation of the figurative language of apocalyptic and Revelation, and furthermore are committed to setting the message of Revelation within the context of the 1st century church suffering under Roman persecution. Amillennial scholars explain that the theological principles revealed in the message of Revelation to the 1st century church apply today to Christians suffering persecution or affliction.

Although Amillennial views differ, the following chart diagrams the Amillennial view commonly adopted:



Antichrist

The term “antichrist” nowhere appears in the text of Revelation itself, but is found often in commentaries, especially those coming from some Protestant, Fundamentalist, or Dispensationalist persuasions. The Greek term *antichristos* appears only five times in the New Testament, and only in the Johannine Epistles (1 Jn 2:18, 22; 4:3; and 2 Jn 7). In the Johannine Epistles the term is used only in regard to those who deny that Jesus is the Christ or that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. In this case the problem seems to be a Gnostic type heresy (see Glossary under Gnosticism) which in no way addresses the theological problem of Revelation. The use of the term “antichrist” in the context of Revelation is unfortunate, arising in most cases from a poor understanding of who the beast is in Revelation, and the nature of the problem Christians were encountering with the beast. This commentary will not make reference to the “antichrist” nor refer to the beast as the antichrist. Certainly, the beast is opposed to the Christian faith and in that sense is anti-Christian, but the term “antichrist,” having been used in the biblical text in other contexts, is not suitable for this study.

Apocalyptic

Apocalyptic derives from the Greek word *apokalypsis* meaning “a revelation, an uncovering, a disclosure.” Apocalyptic is a broad term, appearing first in Biblical criticism at the beginning of the 19th cent. The term is used to designate those ancient visionary writings or parts of writings which, like the NT apocalypse from which the name is derived, namely, the book of Revelation, claim to reveal mysteries relating to the end of the world (age) and the glories of a future transcendent world (age) that is to break into human experience.

Apocalyptic literature is not, however, limited to the canonical Scriptures, for a vast pool of apocalyptic, or heavily apocalyptically flavored texts are available to the biblical critic. This rich storehouse of information provided an appropriate and powerful vehicle for the authors of our biblical texts. This is particularly true of the author of Revelation who found in the apocalyptic mindset, genre, and literature a most suitable medium for his theological message.

The term is used in a variety of ways and may refer to a range of concepts and theological motifs typical of this genre of literature. It may refer to a sociological or theological mind set, a method of communicating, or a type (genre) of literature, all of which are heavily influenced by visions, symbols, cosmic eruptions and wars, and threatening beasts. Biblical apocalyptic is a distinctive Jewish and Christian phenomenon that flourished in the four centuries between 200 B. C. and 200 A. D. the roots of apocalyptic, however, reach back into the 6th and 5th cent. B. C. Two of the best examples of the Biblical genre are Daniel and the book of Revelation. Many other Biblical texts, both Old and New Testament draw in varying degrees on the apocalyptic genre: Isa 13:4-16; 24-27 (the “Isaiah Apocalypse”); Joel 2; Zech 9-11, 12-14; Ezek 38-39; Amos 5:16-20; 9:11-15; Mk 13; Mat 23-25; Lk 21; 1 Thess 4-5; 2 Thess 2:1-2; 1 Cor 15; Rom 1:18-32; 8:18-25.

Many of the Pseudepigraphal and Apocryphal writings (see the glossary on these terms) are designated Apocalypses, or are considered to be heavily influenced by apocalyptic. Though no complete agreement exists, those so designated usually includes: Apocalypse of Abraham; Apocalypse of Baruch (II or Syriac Baruch); Apocalypse of Esdras (IV Ezra 3-14); I Enoch; Book of Elijah; I Baruch; Apocalypse of Moses (or the Life of Adam and Eve); Apocalypse of Sedrach; Apocalypse of Elijah; II Enoch; Assumption of Moses; Sibylline Oracles; Book of Jubilees; Testament of Abraham; Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs; Ascension of Isaiah, et. al. Of this list, the first four, plus the canonical apocalyptically influenced Daniel and Revelation, are the best literary examples of this type.

Several of the Dead Sea Scrolls are also considered to be significantly influenced by apocalyptic interests. In particular the War Scroll, the Description of the New Jerusalem, and the Thanksgiving Psalms manifest striking apocalyptic features. Several prominent apocalyptic works found among the Dead Sea Scrolls indicate the apocalyptic interests of the Dead Sea Covenanters. They are Daniel; I Enoch; and Jubilees.

Challenging questions arise when discussing Apocalyptic: How does one define Apocalyptic? What are its unique characteristics? How does it work, and what was its purpose? What unique sociological and religious contexts gave rise to this genre? And why was it so popular among Jewish and Christian writers during the 400 years of its zenith? Several challenging questions have challenged scholars addressing this unique and fascinating genre. Questions as to whether it constitutes an identifiable literary genre continue to be debated, although an Apocalyptic Group meeting as part of the Society of Biblical Studies study groups has made significant strides in identifying this genre. (See J. J. Collins' two works referenced below in the Bibliography.) Those with somewhat negative attitudes toward an identifiable literary genre argue that apocalyptic simply uses, adapts, and transforms older traditional genres. Klaus Koch has, however, identified six general literary features which are normally present in apocalypses: 1) discourse cycles (frequently called "visions") between the apocalyptic seer and a heavenly being, revealing the secret of man's destiny; 2) formalized phraseology depicting the spiritual turmoil of the seer (trance, etc.) that accompanies the vision; 3) a paraenetic discourse conveying an eschatological ethic or an introductory legend illustrating proper behavior; 4) pseudonymity, bearing the name of some ancient worthy - although the book of Revelation is an exception; 5) mythical images rich in symbolism (animals, angels, demons, cosmic phenomena); and, 6) a composite character (70 percent of the book of Revelation is influenced significantly by previously written sources).

In terms of general content, apocalyptic is characterized by the belief 1) that the radical transcendent transformation of this world lies in the immediate future, Dan 12:11,12; Rev 22:20; II Baruch 85:10; IV Ezra 4:50; 2) that a cosmic catastrophe (war, fire, earthquake, famine, pestilence) precedes the end; 3) that the epochs of history leading up to the end are predetermined; 4) that a hierarchy of angels and demons mediate the events in the two worlds (this world and the one to come) and that victory is assured to the divine realm; 5) that a righteous remnant will enjoy the fruits of salvation in a heavenly Jerusalem; 6) that the act inaugurating the kingdom of God and marking the end of the present age is His (or the Son of Man's) ascension to the heavenly throne; 7) that the actual establishment of the New Kingdom is effected through a royal mediator, such as the Messiah or the Son of Man, or simply an angel; 8) that the bliss to be enjoyed by the righteous can only be described as glory (Rev 21:1; Dan 12:3; I Enoch 50:1; etc.).

The origin of apocalyptic is variously ascribed to Hebrew prophecy, Iranian religion, Hellenistic syncretism, and Old Canaanite myths, with the greater number of scholars acknowledging at least the influence of eastern religion, particularly Zoroastrianism. For a full appraisal of the question of the origins of apocalyptic and the methodology used to answer it, see Paul D. Hanson, John J. Collins in the Bibliography below. Points often debated in contemporary NT scholarship relate to what extent Jesus and the NT writers, especially Paul, were influenced by apocalyptic; to what extent was apocalyptic pessimistic about world history; and to what extent can the kingdom of God be continuous with this world or the present age or time.

John J. Collins and his working associates in the apocalyptic study group propose the following working definition of an apocalypse: "Specifically, an apocalypse is defined as: *'a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcending reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.'* "

For the purpose of this study we will consider apocalyptic to be a mindset that expressed itself in literary form which eventually became an identifiable literary genre. The context of apocalyptic usually is a people under severe sociological, political, or religious opposition and persecution. Fundamentally pessimistic about human potential and the role of history (man's effort) to resolve the problem, apocalyptic looks to divine or transcendent

intervention as the only hope for the future. Drawing on cosmic visions in a kaleidoscopic manner, and a intense symbolism, the author paints impressionistic pictures as he develops his theme. The primary theme or theology of apocalyptic, especially as it relates to the biblical texts and in particular, Revelation, is that the only hope for victory over the “enemy” is God’s transcendent intervention. The persecuted are encouraged through the apocalyptic genre and its theology to not lose or compromise their faith, to be faithful to God “even unto death,” and God would transform any defeat into a magnificent victory. In the words of Paul (Rom 8:37ff) “we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” A major theme in Revelation is that Christians conquer Satan and the “enemy” through dying for their faith (martyr from the Greek *martus* mean to “witness to one’s faith”). Martyrs are raised by the power of God, thus vindicated by God, and reign with Christ in God’s kingdom.

Apocrypha

The term Apocrypha derives from the Greek *apokruphos* meaning “hidden” or “concealed.” In biblical studies it has reference to a collection of writings that are considered highly spiritual, close to the biblical mindset, yet not completely in keeping with the biblical integrity. As a result the apocryphal books of Judaism and Christianity were not included in the biblical canon (list of books received by the church or community of faith as authoritative and normative. There are both New and Old Testament apocryphal books. Although not considered “inspired” or “normative” these writings were highly esteemed at the time the New Testament books were being produced and in many cases formed the conceptual framework of the writer. We will notice this in particular in regard to Revelation, but an interesting demonstration of this can be found in Jude 8, 9, 14. The Apocrypha became a plentiful and significant resource of ideas and expressions for the writer of Revelation.

New Testament Apocrypha

The NT Apocrypha dates from the second to the sixth centuries A. D. They are written in the form of gospels, acts, (histories), epistles, and apocalypses, and claim to report events, teachings, and prophecies related to Jesus and the early apostles which are not recorded in the canonical Scriptures. These writings contain little of historical value in terms of the subjects with which they deal (e. g. , the birth of Mary, and the childhood of Jesus, etc.) But are of inestimable value in understanding the mind set of both orthodox and heterodox Christianity of the early centuries. Like the books of the NT, the apocryphal NT writings derive from the life and concerns of the early Christian communities.

The great flood of new material that in recent years has enriched the field of biblical studies, much of it due to the discovery in 1945 of a hoard of Coptic Gnostic texts at Nag in upper Egypt, has increased and enhanced the apocryphal materials available to scholars, and provided both a sociological and religious laboratory for research into early Christian beliefs and practices.

The following list of the most important apocryphal texts, organized into the four traditional categories represented in the canonical NT, demonstrates the proportions of this valuable resource of pseudo-biblical material:

- *Gospels*: Arabic Gospel of the Infancy; Armenian Gospel of the Infancy; Assumption of the Virgin; Gospel of Bartholomew; the Book of the Resurrection of Christ by Bartholomew; Gospel of Basilides; Gospel of Cerinthus; Gospel of the Ebionites; Gospel According to the Hebrews; Protoevangelium of James; History of Joseph the Carpenter; Gospel of Marcion; Gospel of the Birth of Mary; Gospel of Philip; Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew; and finally possible one of the most valuable, Gospel of Thomas.
- *Acts*: Apostolic History of Abdias; Acts of Andrew; fragmentary story of Andrew; Acts of Andrew and Matthias; Acts of Andrew and Paul; Acts of Barnabas; Ascent of James; Acts of James the Great; Acts of John; Acts of John by Prochorus; Martyrdom of Matthew; Acts of Paul; Passion of Paul; Acts of Peter; Acts of Peter and Andrew; Acts of Peter and Paul; Acts of Philip; Acts of Pilate; Acts of Thaddaeus; Acts of Thomas.
- *Epistles*: Epistles of Christ and Abgarus; Epistle of the Apostles; Third Epistle of the Corinthians; Epistle of the Laodiceans; Epistle of Lentulus; Epistles of Paul and Seneca; Apocryphal Epistle of Titus.
- *Apocalypses*: Apocalypse of James; Apocalypse of Paul; Apocalypse of Peter; Revelation of Stephen; Apocalypse of Thomas; Apocalypse of the Virgin.

Additional writings, known by little more than their name, could be included in this list of Apocryphal writings, as well as some literature classified under other categories of early Christian literature.

Old Testament Apocrypha

The OT Apocrypha is comprised of those books, or portions of books, included in the LXX (*Septuagint*, or Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. Tradition has it that this translation was made in Alexandria, Egypt, in *circa* 270 B. C.), or included in the Old Latin translation of the LXX, but *not included in the Hebrew canon of the Old Testament*. These writings were accepted by some sectors of the early church as sacred writings, but were never included in the Hebrew canon. They represent deeply religious writings that date from *circa* 300 B. C. Some of them are as late as 70 A. D.

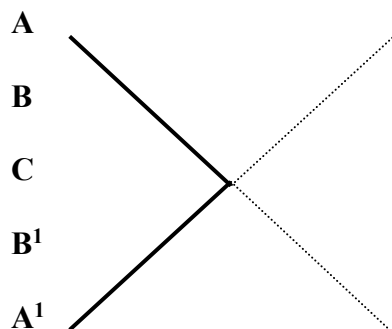
In preparing his edition of the Bible in Latin (known as the Vulgate), Jerome (*circa* 400 A. D.) chose to follow the Hebrew canon rather than the LXX which included the additional non-canonical books. Jerome included the additional books into a distinct corpus which he termed “apocryphal.” These he also described as “ecclesiastical books” in contradistinction to the “canonical books” of the Hebrew OT. Since Jerome, the theological and physical place of the Apocrypha in the Christian canon has continued to be a matter of dispute, with the Eastern and Russian Orthodox, the Roman Catholics, and the Protestants accepting differing solutions as indicated below.

Apocryphal books include

- Tobit; Judith; the Wisdom of Solomon; and Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Jesus; the Son of Sirach - of the apocrypha these alone were accepted as canonical by the Eastern Church at the Synod of Jerusalem in 1672.
- Baruch; the Letter of Jeremiah (or Baruch, ch. 6. In the LXX these two writings appear as additions to the book of Jeremiah); the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men (or Holy Children); the History of Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon (in the LXX the last three appear as additions to the book of Daniel); and 1 and 2 Maccabees.
These writings were “confirmed” as canonical by the Council of Trent in 1548, though entitled “Deuterocanonical” since they did not appear in the Hebrew Bible.
- I Esdras (called Esdras A in the LXX, III Esdras in the Vulgate where Ezra and Nehemiah are called I & II Esdras) which contains portions of II Chron, Ezra, and Nehemiah plus other material; 2 Esdras (called IV Esdras in the Vulgate, also known as “The Ezra Apocalypse” (spec. Chs. 3-14), chs. 15-16 which are called V Esdras in some MSS [manuscripts] are a composite work and do not appear in the LXX); and, the Prayer of Manasseh, a brief penitential prayer - these writings were not confirmed as canonical by the Council of Trent and consequently appear in Catholic Bibles in an appendix or not at all (so the Jerusalem Bible). In modern Protestant editions of the Apocrypha (RSV, NEB) all of the above (A-C) are included.
- In the LXX and in the Appendix to the Greek canon one finds also Ps 151 and III & IV Maccabees.

Chiasm

Chiasm is a technical term used in literary criticism and biblical interpretation to refer to a literary style or structure adopted by an author to add sequence, meaning, or force to the message. The background of the term chiasm is the Greek letter *chi* which when in written form is similar to the Arabic X. The front half of the X, becomes the shape of the literary structure as indicated below in solid lines.



Chiasm

CHIASM

The schematic of chiasm is that a statement is made (A) which is followed by a statement (B) which leads to the climactic statement (C). This is followed by another statement (B¹), which is either parallel to (B) or antithetic to (B). A final statement (A¹) follows which like (B¹) is either parallel or antithetic to (A). By writing in this form the author builds an argument leading up to a climactic or main point.

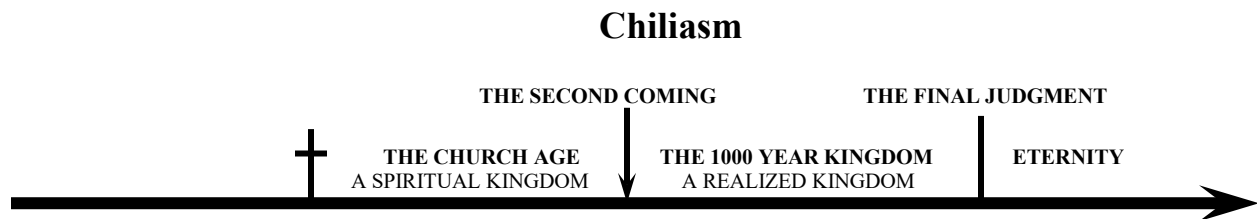
It is the opinion of many scholars that the literary structure of Revelation is best described as a chiasmic one in which the high point of the literary piece is Rev 12 and Christ the Lamb of God. This is more fully described in the Introduction to this study.

Chiliasm

Like Millennialism, the term Chiliasm describes kingdom views relating to the 1000 year reign suggested in Rev 20:4-7. Chiliasm derives from the Greek word *chilias* meaning 1000. Chiliasm is the term used to describe 1st century views of the millennium. There are several similarities between Chiliasm and Premillennialism. An important difference between the two words Chiliasm and Millennialism is that the former is used almost exclusively for early 1st through 6th century theories relating to the 1000 year reign, whereas millennialism is used in reference to modern day theories. Because of the similarity of these two terms and their concepts, those like Eldon Ladd who espouse a form of Premillennialism known as Historic Premillennialism trace the roots of Premillennialism back to the 1st century Chiliasm. In fact, chiliasm *is* a form of premillennial thinking. As will be discussed below there are, however, significant differences between Chiliasm and Historic Premillennialism.

It seems that Chiliastic views had their roots in Phrygia in western Asia Minor, now Turkey. The general sense of chiliasm is that following the death and resurrection of Jesus the church was established in what one could term the church age. Due to early persecutions and social opposition the many Christians hoped for a future period of peace in which they, together with Christ, would reign in a peaceful kingdom. Such hopes generated heated discussion and led to considerable controversy in the early church with opinions divided over whether this future kingdom would be physically on earth, or a spiritual kingdom in heaven. Because of this debate, some groups were reluctant to include Revelation in their canon since it was the source of much of this speculative theology. Primarily Chiliastic views were that with the second coming of Christ a kingdom would be established when the saints would be caught up to be with the Lord in his kingdom.

As one surveys Chiliastic views during the first six centuries one finds a wide range of ideas. Fundamental to all of them, however, is the longing for a period of peace following times of stress. Some views stressed that this 1000 year reign would be centered in Jerusalem and would be followed by the general resurrection and judgment. Chiliastic thought can be found in such early prominent figures as Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (western Asia Minor), Justin Martyr, Hippolytus of Rome, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, Methodius of Olympus, and others. Both Origen of Alexandria and Caesarea, and Augustine of Rome were staunch opponents of Chiliasm, preferring to see in the 1000 year reign a figurative symbol rather than a literal period of time.



As can be seen from the above chart, basic Chiliasm holds that the church age is also a period of spiritual kingdom experience. However, the peace on earth that the 1000 year kingdom promised remained unfulfilled in this life, so Chiliasts looked for a future period (1000 years) of peace in kingdom with Christ. The major difference between Chiliasm and Historic Premillennialism is the emphasis that Premillennialism gives to the Jewish nature of the fulfilled kingdom, interpreting it as a fulfillment or restoration of the Jewish kingdom, this time, however, with Christ reigning as king. Chiliasm does not make as much of the restored Jewish kingdom.

It should be noted as well that Chiliasm of the early centuries was far from a unified system, but was characterized by a wide range of emphases.

Conqueror or Conquer in New Testament Theology

A repeated theme in Revelation is *the one who conquers* or *the one who overcomes*. In each of the seven letters to the seven churches Jesus rewards those who *overcome* or *conquer*. The term is variously translated in the KJV, NIV, ASV and the NAS, RSV, NRSV Bibles. The KJV tradition including the NIV render this as *overcometh* or *overcome* while the NAS, RSV traditions render it as *conquer*. The term is a translation of the

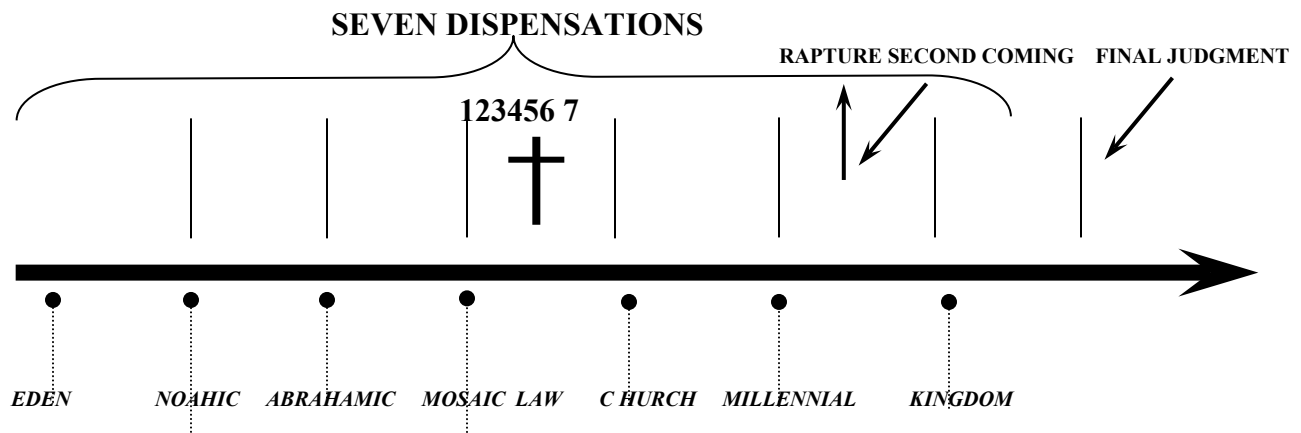
Greek noun *nikē* or the verb *nikaō*. In a war context such as Revelation the translation *conqueror* or *conquer* is preferred. In Revelation *conqueror* becomes a synonym for *martyr*, one who *conquers* Satan by dying for their faith in Jesus.

Dispensationalism

The term “dispensationalism” derives initially from the Greek term *oikonomia* which occurs eight times in the New Testament. The term in the New Testament is translated in a variety of ways depending on the context of the term. *Oikonomia* is the root of our English word “economics” which conveys the sense of the plan, or how a something is carried on, or brought into being. The Greek term, being comprised of two words (*oikos* – house, and *nomos* – law or principle) literally means “principles by which a house operates.” Of specific interest would be Eph 1:10, where the RSV translates the term as “a plan” in reference to how God would unite all things in Christ. The modern theological term, “dispensationalism,” is derived from King James usage where *oikonomia* is sometimes translated as “dispensation,” sometimes as “stewardship.” Working out of this “dispensational” King James terminology, and with the unfortunate casting of God’s saving work in terms of a time period rather than a system of operation, Dispensationalists have developed their unique doctrinal views.

In Dispensational use the term represents a period of time, differentiated from other periods of time, in which God works his plan in a specific manner. In different “dispensations” God works his plan in different ways. Each dispensation begins with an offer by God which mankind is to accept and obey, and ends with man rebelling or failing to obey God. Based on a literal interpretation of several Old Testament passages, notably Daniel 9:24-27, Dispensationalists hold that there will be seven dispensations, five before the incarnation, or first coming of Christ, one representing the church age or the age of grace, and then a final millennium or dispensation. Between the sixth and seventh dispensations there is to be a “rapture” in which believing saints will be caught up into the air to meet Christ (1 Thess 4:13-17). Toward the end of this sixth dispensation of grace, there will be an apostasy of the church which will introduce a period of tribulation (based on Dan 9:24-27). The final dispensation, or the millennial kingdom will be initiated by the second coming, to earth, of Christ who will then re-establish the Jewish kingdom over which he will reign eternally. This millennial kingdom will be on earth, centered on Jerusalem, and the finalization of God’s eternal plan or purpose. In this kingdom the law of God will be re-established along with the sacrificial system.

The following chart will represent a basic Dispensationalist scheme. We should remember, however, that Dispensationalists have through the years differed significantly in their understanding of this scheme. Each dispensation begins with an offering or promise to man by God, is followed by man’s disobedience, and finally by God’s judgment on man’s sinful ways.



Although Dispensationalists claim that this system dates back to the early doctrines of the church, especially into the 2nd century, Dispensationalism as we know it today dates from the early 19th century when a new type of Premillennialism was introduced by John Nelson Darby. Darby had been educated as a lawyer, graduating from Trinity College in Dublin. Darby’s academic preparation and education in the classical languages, humanities and arts was extensive and impressive. His theological education was, however, self-learned. An ordained deacon in the Church of England, Darby became dissatisfied with what he interpreted as the apathy and lethargy of the Church of England. With several others who were disenchanted with the traditional church, Darby began a “house

meeting” movement which soon became known as the Plymouth Brethren; their millennial theology being designated “Darbyism. ”Impressed by a literal interpretation of Daniel 9, Darby divided human history into seven periods of time, or dispensations. These periods of time, or dispensations, are listed below:

Dispensation 1: Gen 1:28 – The period of *Innocence*

Dispensation 2: Gen 3:7 – The period of *Conscience* and Moral Responsibility

Dispensation 3: Gen 8:15 – The period of *Human Government*

Dispensation 4: Gen 12:1 – The period of *Promise*

Dispensation 5: Ex 19:1 – The period of *Law*

Dispensation 6: Acts 2:1 – The period of the *Church*

Dispensation 7: Rev 20:4 – The period of the *Kingdom*

Fundamental to Darby’s Dispensationalism and those following him, was the view that the Church Age is unknown to the Old Testament prophetic system, it being “unforeseen” by Daniel and the other Old Testament prophets. This is described as the “great parenthesis” inserted between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel 9. In other words, the “kingdom clock” was stopped with the rejection of Jesus by the Jews and would only be started again at the second coming at which time the kingdom would begin.

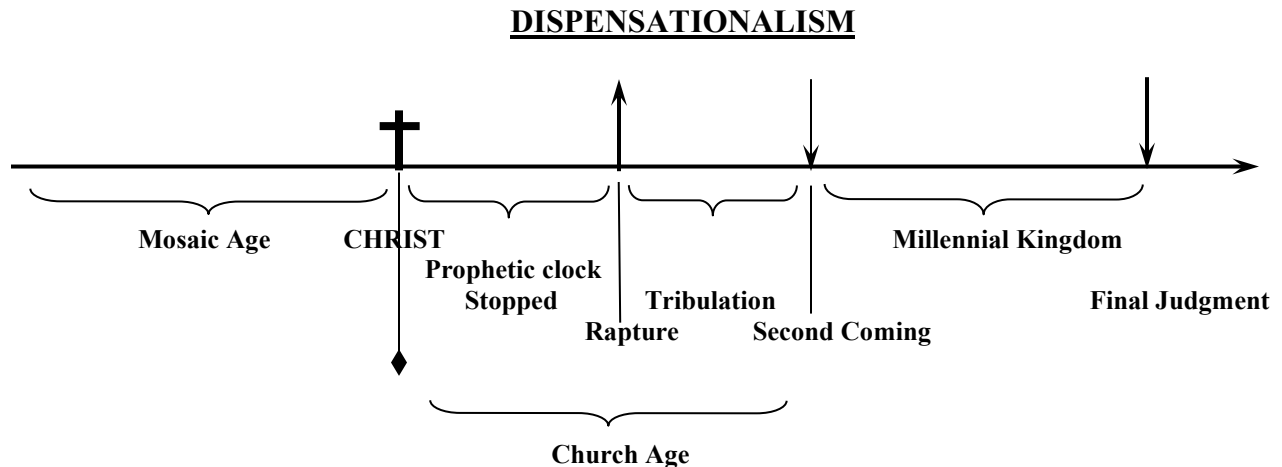
Although Darby made several visits to the United States, beginning in 1840, where his views were adopted by Charles Henry Mackintosh and William Blackstone, “Darbyism” was “popularized” on the American theological scene primarily by Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843-1921), a lawyer from Kansas who became a Congregationalist minister in 1882. Early in his theological career, Scofield was influenced by Mackintosh and Blackstone, and after attending the Niagara Bible Conference where he was deeply impressed by a lecture on “Darbyism,” Scofield’s influence spread widely with his edition of the bible accompanied by “Notes” interpreting the Bible along Darby’s Dispensational lines. So influenced was he by Darby that Scofield openly advanced the view that Darby was the most profound Bible scholar of his day. Dispensationalism in America owes much to the drive and foresight of Cyrus Ingerson Scofield who through his ministry in the Congregational Church in Dallas, his Scofield Notes in the Scofield Reference Bible, and his relationship with Lewis Sperry Chafer, minister for the Scofield Memorial church in Dallas and founder of the Dallas Theological Seminary, did much to shape American Dispensationalism along Darbyism lines. A common thread running between Darby, Scofield, and Chafer was that none of them had formal theological training.

Other significant personalities in the American Dispensational movement have been A. C. Gaebelein, Dwight L. Moody, Charles Spurgeon, Watchman Nee, John Walvoord, and Hal Lindsey.

Clarence B. Bass has defined the basic Dispensational position and view. “What, then, are the distinguishing features of dispensationalism? They are: its view of the nature and purpose of a dispensation; a rigid applied literalism in the interpretation of Scripture; a dichotomy between Israel and the church; a restricted view of the church; a Jewish concept of the kingdom; a postponement of the kingdom; a distinction between law and grace that creates a multiple basis for God’s dealing with man; its view of the purpose of the great tribulation; its view of the nature of the millennial reign of Christ; its view of the eternal state, and its view of the apostate nature of Christendom. ” Clarence B. Bass, *Backgrounds To Dispensationalism*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), p. 19.

Problems one encounters with dispensational theology are the extreme literal interpretation of Scripture, failure to see beyond a Jewish fulfillment of Scripture, extreme speculative prophetic projections (especially of Daniel 9), the restoration of the Jewish system (which amounts to a direct challenge to the all sufficiency of Christ’s atoning work), and the fact that much of its theology is based on poor biblical interpretation (for example the Rapture, and the view based on Rev 20:4ff that the kingdom would be set up on earth).

The following is an attempt to diagram the dispensational scheme in similar fashion to other schematics developed in this study:



Dispensationalism is not limited to any one denominational group but cuts across such religious affiliation. There are some religious movements, however, that are significantly dispensational in orientation. These would obviously include the Plymouth Brethren, but another religious group committed to dispensationalism as a fundamental tenet of faith would be the Jehovah Witness sect. As indicated above, those graduating from the Dallas Theological Seminary would most likely be of this persuasion. It may not be an overstatement to observe that most followers of a literalist interpretation of Scripture, any biblical fundamentalism for example, would be of this persuasion. Many of the community bible fellowship churches would be dispensational in theological outlook, especially in their interpretation of Revelation.

Eschatology

The term eschatology derives from two Greek words, *eschatos* – “last,” and *logos* – “speech, word, or discussion.” As a theological technical term eschatology carries the basic meaning of a “discussion of the last things or the last age.” It is used in a variety of different, yet related contexts such as the second coming of Christ, the final judgment, or the final days of human history. In another “timeless” sense, the term is used in regard to “significant” events which have “end time” significance. Thus the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, repentance, baptism, and matters relating to divine activity relating to the inauguration of the kingdom are referred to as eschatological events or matters having eschatological significance. In the context of genre such as apocalyptic or Revelation, significant events such as the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. are often described in eschatological terminology. The intent is not to imply that such events inaugurate the final end time, but is intended to demonstrate that the event carries within it end time significance.

In the context of Revelation, the author relies heavily on both apocalyptic and eschatological genres. In one sense, much apocalyptic is eschatological in that it draws heavily on the transcendent intervention of God, and in the case of Revelation such intervention bears end time significance. Hence in Revelation much of the apocalyptic genre has eschatological implications. The use of the eschatology of Revelation is not intended to imply that the eschatological terminology describing an event is intended as a prophecy regarding some end time event. The intention is that the event being described in eschatological language simply bears end time significance.

See also Proleptic Eschatology below.

Gnosticism

Gnosticism is a term used to designate a wide range of thought that emerged during the late 1st century A. D. , and became a serious threat to both Judaism and Christianity in the 2nd century. The term stems from the Greek word *gnosis* meaning “knowledge.” It referred to a doctrine which argued that “salvation” or “deliverance” came through the possession of a special intuitive knowledge that was possessed by those “enlightened” by some “deliverer” or one who would break in from “above.” Gnosticism never formed a specific religion, but remained an influence or way of thinking that permeated most religions or philosophies of its day. It is not possible to define Gnosticism with any specific precision since it ranged over such a wide spectrum of thought, but a few leading concepts can be traced in most Gnostic-like communities. There was the thought derived from Platonic schools that matter was evil since matter and mankind were created by a “mischievous” or wayward child

(sometimes identified with Jehovah) of the ultimate God who is absolute light and goodness. This wayward god-child also created other spirit beings which ruled the “space” between the physical world and the ultimate god of light. In order for mankind to return to this god of light they would have to negotiate space and escape these spirit beings (demi-gods) on their way back to the god of light. However, another child of this god of light, the deliverer, managed to make this journey from the god of light to mankind and enlighten certain ones, thus enabling them to return through space to the god of light by escaping the “spiritual beings in the heavenly places.”

The evident similarities of this school of thought to the Christian faith made the Christian faith an obvious target for this philosophy. The challenge lay especially in the fact that this school views the physical creation as inherently evil. This would rise on Christian circles as a serious challenge to the resurrection of Jesus and eventually the general resurrection, since why would one want to raise an evil body and place a pure redeemed spirit back in captivity in the evil body? Another, even more serious challenge to the Christian faith, and one which John addressed in the Johannine Epistles, was the denial that Jesus the Christ had come in the flesh, since flesh is evil.

Other serious problems encountered in this Gnostic mindset were its obviously heretical cosmogony (an evil creation being the result of the wayward god-child, Jehovah), its challenge to God’s saving activity in history (notably Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection, both seen by Christians as God’s saving activity in history), and its emphasis that “deliverance” lay exclusively in possession of some special esoteric knowledge possessed by an elite community of believers. This heresy also tended to take sin lightly since sin was something intangible resulting from the flesh. Those “spiritual beings” enlightened by *gnosis* were not responsible for these sins of the flesh. This strange concept of special “grace” led to an antinomian (no law) and lascivious, licentious (one has a license to do something) attitude which was a direct contradiction to the ethical standards of both Judaism and Christianity.

Concerns over such forms of Gnostic thought (some of them Jewish forms) permeate much of the New Testament in some form, especially the Johannine Epistles. The problem in the Johannine Epistles, where John refers this mindset as the “antichrist,” had to do with the denial that Jesus had come in the flesh which lay at the very heart of Christian faith. This “antichrist” flesh problem is not what we encounter in Revelation, and it would be pushing the Gnostic argument to the extreme to see Revelation as a response to this form of Gnostic thought. Since Revelation was written in the context of Ephesus and Asia Minor, which was certainly a hotbed for Gnostic thought, it is not surprising to find a possible reference to Gnostic tendencies in the references to the Nicolaitans of whom we know very little other than the fact that they appeared to be an antinomian and licentious challenge to the Christian faith. Obviously, Gnosticism and the “Antichrist” of the Johannine Epistles are not the problem addressed by John in Revelation.

Heilsgeschichte

Heilsgeschichte is a German word that has become a theological technical term relating to God’s plan of salvation or scheme of redemption. The fundamental theme of *Heilsgeschichte* is that God has worked his plan of salvation in the context of real history. The idea is that God’s acts of salvation have taken place in real events in history according to a plan that God has been working on since the fall. This plan reached a climax in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus which all took place in history. Salvation is not something worked out in some form of specialized knowledge such as Gnosticism, but is located in decisive acts of God in history which are revealed as part of the process of history. *Heilsgeschichte* does not claim that history itself is salvific but that God’s acts of salvation have taken place in history.

Millennialism

Millennialism is a broad term that applies to modern interpretations of the 1000 year reign of Rev 20:4. The term derives from the Latin *mille* – “1000,” and *annus* – “year.” Millennial views and theories are many and different in many ways. Several sub-categories are included in Millennialism, namely, Amillennialism, Premillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Dispensationalism. Each of these is discussed in this Glossary. Basically, these theories attempt to interpret the statement in Rev 20:4 that the saints described in Rev 20:4 (martyrs) will reign with Christ for 1000 years. This millennial kingdom/reign is perceived by some to follow the Parousia or Second Coming of Jesus (Premillennialism and Dispensationalism), or to precede the Parousia or Second Coming (Postmillennialism). In either case, millennial theories have been extremely divisive in church

history. One millennial view of the ancient church, Chiliasm (see the Glossary discussion of this term) was similar in some form to Premillennialism. This view in a variety of forms was most likely the dominant theory of the early church, and prevailed until Origen and then Augustine challenged the extreme literal interpretation of the biblical text upon which most millennial theories stand. In similar fashion today, Amillennial scholars challenge most millennial theories, charging that they are not the result of careful biblical exegesis and hermeneutic (interpretation), and manifest an extreme literalist interpretation of the biblical text. Other challenges to millennial theories are that they remove the message of Revelation from the 1st century church and push the message into the distant future.

Montanism

Montanism was a late 2nd and early 3rd century heretical Christian movement originally known as the “Phrygian Heresy.” In later years it was identified with, and named after its founder, Montanus (ca. 170 A. D.). The group was characterized by ecstatic prophecy and revelations, engrossment in millennial speculation, extended periods of fasting and asceticism, and an interest in eschatological conjecture. The movement generated a bitter controversy with the mainline church which ultimately led to the excommunication of Montanus and the Montanist movement. Montanism’s influence was significant enough, however, to sway the great church scholar Tertullian of Carthage who converted to this persuasion shortly after 208 A. D. Montanism gained a considerable North African following as a result of Tertullian’s influence. Because of the movement’s emphasis on ecstasy, revelations, and prophecy, the book of Revelation became one of the movement’s favored texts with the result that many mainline churches became suspicious of Revelation and resisted the inclusion of this book into the church’s canon. In time, however, Revelation was looked upon in its own right and was accepted into the canon. After the 3rd century references to Montanism in Christian literature began to ebb with only sparse mention indicating that by the 7th century Montanism was no longer of any interest in church concerns.

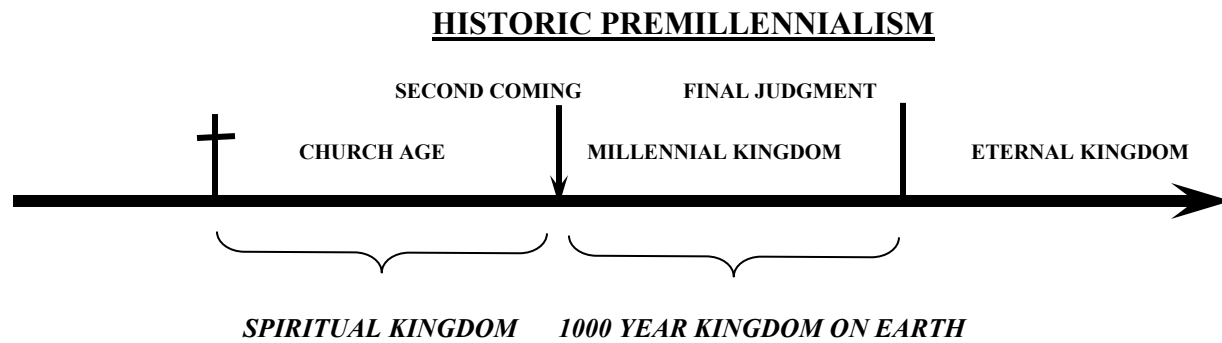
Montanism’s interest to Revelation studies is limited to references to early millennial thought, and the role this movement played in Revelation being accepted into the church’s canon. In the larger context of Christian study, the reluctance of the mainline church to accept the charismatic tendencies of Montanism indicate the declining interest and suspicion of the mainline church in charismatic expressions of Christian faith.

Parousia

Parousia, like many of the terms in theological discussion derives from Greek roots. Two terms are combined producing a unique Christian technical term. *Para* – “alongside” in conjunction with *ousia* – “substance” literally means “the coming alongside in substance.” In Christian dialogue the term *parousia* refers to the literal “coming of Jesus in substance,” or more simply, the *second coming* of Jesus. The term is used in reference to the real, “bodily” or “physical” coming of Jesus in place of a spiritual coming as in the presence of Jesus with his church today. The term is eschatological in the sense that it refers to Jesus’ coming in judgment at the end of the age.

Postmillennialism

The roots of Postmillennialism can be identified in Christian theology as early as the century following Origen and Augustine’s allegorizing hermeneutic and the church’s abandonment of Chiliasm. The optimistic mindset following Constantine’s “conversion” and the establishment of a universal state church paved the way for a view of the church as the arrival of the kingdom of God on earth. In the modern era, however, Postmillennialism first came into prominence in England as a result of the influence of Daniel Whitby, a Unitarian minister (1638-1726). The religious fervor and revival in America following the preaching of Jonathon Edwards and others ushered in an optimistic view of the church’s potential to “convert” society and prepare it for the coming of Christ to take up his reign on earth. Postmillennialism, being an optimistic view of history and progress, thus looks toward a “golden age of spiritual growth and prosperity” as the preaching of the gospel of Christ ushers in an age religious or spiritual revival. Postmillennialists therefore interpret this period of great religious awakening and conversion as the millennial age which precedes the return and reign of Christ. The reign of Christ is thus “post-millennial.” Loraine Boettner, a prominent 20th century Postmillennialist observes regarding Postmillennialism that it is “that view of the last things which holds that the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals, that the



A major difference between Historic Premillennialism and Dispensationalism is the absence of a Rapture and Postponement (prophetic clock stopped) Theory in Historic Premillennialism. Both, however, stress the Jewish nature of the millennial kingdom and the fact that this kingdom will be on earth and centered in Jerusalem.

Problems encountered in Historic Premillennialism are the Jewish nature of the future kingdom, the expectation of an earthly kingdom centered in Jerusalem, the literal interpretation of the 1000 years, the view that the kingdom must be the earthly fulfillment of the promise to the Jews of an earthly kingdom over all the world, which promise was not fulfilled in the past, and the denial of the fact that the church age is really the kingdom age; that there is something lacking in the church-kingdom.

Proleptic Eschatology

This concept derives from the word *prolepsis* which in turn derives from the Greek *prolepsis* or *prolambanein* which means to *take place beforehand*, *pro – before*, *lambanō – to take*. *Eschatology* (see above under eschatology) means a discussion of end time things. In the context of eschatology, proleptic means to describe, experience, or see something relating to the end time in advance of the end. The Lord's Supper or communion is a proleptic eschatological experience in the sense that during this meal the Christian experiences in advance the benefits of the great eschatological banquet that all of the saints will experience around God's table. Baptism is a proleptic eschatological experience in that in baptism one experiences in advance the resurrection to a new life in Christ. In Revelation John describes imminent judgment on Rome in terms of end of the world language. In this he is drawing on the concept of proleptic eschatological experience in that Rome is experiencing the final judgment in advance or that the judgment is expressed in advance in terms of end of the world language.

Pseudepigrapha

The Pseudepigrapha refers to a large group of writings falsely attributed to a person other than the one penning the work. The Greek term behind our English word simply means "false writing." In regard to New Testament Pseudepigrapha, the term refers to writings ascribed to an author other than the real writer. In the case of the Old Testament, however, the term has broader reference, namely, to literature not included in the canon, but considered sacred by early Jewish and Christian groups. Pseudepigraphy covers a wide range of literature covering what may almost be authentic to what is obviously falsely attributed to an author. Pseudepigraphy was not considered literary forgery in the early years of the church since the intention of the writer was not necessarily to deceive. Early Christians considered it a matter of respect and honor to attribute their writings to one who had inspired their work. Some even argued that failure to do so was a matter of failure to honor one's predecessors. By the year 120 A. D., pseudepigraphy was the norm among many Christian groups. Correctly speaking, pseudepigraphy was not the same as anonymity; pseudepigraphy was related in some fashion through a school of thought to some great person. Scholars judge only the *references* to the author to be "false," with the *content* of the writings themselves being considered invaluable for clarifying some early Jewish and Christian problems or difficulties. Some of the pseudepigraphical works were produced by learned and respected scholars. Important questions to ask pseudepigraphical writings relate not so much as to who wrote the work, but why the author wrote it and attributed it to another, and what the theme or theology of the book may be.

Examples of literature considered pseudepigraphical would be: *1 Enoch*; *Testament of Adam*; *Odes of Solomon*; *Apocalypse of Solomon*; *Apocalypse of Elijah*; *Ascension of Moses*; *3 Corinthians*; *Epistle to the Laodiceans*; *Apocalypse of Paul*; *Passions of Peter and Paul*; *Acts of Paul*; *Apocalypse of Peter*; *Gospel of Peter*;

Birth of Mary; Passion of Mary; Apocalypse of the Virgin; and many others. It is obvious that some of the pseudepigrapha are also listed among the apocryphal books.

The reason that the pseudepigrapha are important to Revelation studies is that much of the thought and message of Revelation is paralleled in the pseudepigrapha, and many of the conditions of the living community were similar. Such information provides a thought and conceptual background, as well as a terminological environment, for understanding Revelation as a real living piece of literature addressed to a real living community of believers whose faith was under question and being severely challenged.

Rebirth of Images or Recapitulation

This is a literary style in which the writer mentions a concept without developing it but will return to it progressively as the story is developed. On each revisit to the theme it is developed in greater specificity. In the tradition of Revelation hermeneutic reaching back to the 4th century A. D. *recapitulatio*, the Latin term for recapitulation, has been explored and considered a significant literary and theological device. Austin Farrer in modern times described this device as *The Rebirth of Images*. For instance, John introduces the expression *those who dwell on earth* early in Revelation without definition or expansion. He returns to this theme and expression repeatedly adding definition and specificity to where we learn that those who dwell on earth are not all those living on earth but those who belong to the world and who worship the Roman Emperor and persecute the saints.

Salvation

In Revelation, salvation is not expressed in terms of individual salvation but of God's ultimate scheme of redemption of his created universe. The apocalyptist looks beyond individual salvation to see salvation in the big picture. In this context salvation is often expressed in Revelation as *victory*, that is victory of God and the saints over Satan and the problem of evil and suffering. The Greek term is *sōtēria* which according to context can be translated *healing, salvation, or victory*. Since the context of Revelation is a war between Satan and God and Satan and God's people, victory is a suitable translation for *sōtēria*. Apocalyptic is not focused in salvation from sin but salvation or victory of God's creation over evil.

Soon

John uses the word soon, *τάχος, táchos*, for instance, Rev 1:1, where he records that God has revealed to the saints through Jesus that certain things *must soon take place*. The expression *soon* derives from the Greek *en tachei*. All of our major translations (KJV, ASV, NASV, RSV, NRSV, NIV, et al) translate this as *soon* or *shortly*. Greek lexicons and grammars inform us that the adverbial phrase *en tachei* should be translated as *soon* or *shortly* and not swiftly or quickly. In Revelation this means that the events revealed or discussed in Revelation must soon or shortly take place. This does not mean that they will take place *quickly* when they eventually happen, as futurists would have us believe.

Time

Two Greek words are translated into English as time, *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos* is normally translate as time as it passes without significance. *Kairos* carries the sense of *critical, important, or significant time*. *Kairos* can be translated as crisis time. Although translated as "time" in Revelation, the Greek word used by John is *kairos, significant time, crisis time*. The expression "the time is at hand" (Rev 1:3) carries the sense that *the crisis time, ho kairos eggus*, is imminent or about to break in on the readers.

Theodicy

A theodicy attempts to defend the righteousness of an all powerful, loving, and holy God in light of suffering and the persistence of evil. The term derives from two Greek words, *theos*, God, and *dikē, righteousness, judgment, justice*. One definition expresses theodicy as "A vindication of God's goodness and justice in the face of the existence of evil." Revelation is a theodicy in that it attempts to explain the meaning of suffering and martyrdom by innocent people living in an evil world. Revelation seeks to encourage the persecuted to see their life in the big picture of God's scheme of redemption (*Heilsgeschichte*) and to

understand that martyrdom, although evil, is not the ultimate end of life for those who maintain faith in Jesus