

# Questions About Validity of Using Gaius Marius Victorinus Commentary on the Apocalypse of the Blessed John

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Gaius Marius Victorinus\_Commentary on the Apocalypse of the Blessed John.pdf  
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This is the earliest known full commentary on the Book of Revelation...remarkably it was written during the time of Diocletian and survives to this day...I consider it to be a valuable resource when considering the Historicist interpretation of this time in Christianity.

Is it valid and good to study?

## Answer:

Yes — Victorinus of Pettau's *Commentary on the Apocalypse of the Blessed John* is a **valid and valuable resource** to study, especially if you're interested in the history of interpretation and the historicist method. However, like any ancient commentary it should be used with discernment and always in light of the full biblical text. Here's a breakdown of how useful it is, what its strengths and limitations are, and how you might use it well.

## **Why it's good to study**

1. **Earliest full commentary** — Victorinus's work is the earliest surviving complete commentary on the book of Book of Revelation.
2. **Historical witness** — It gives a window into how Christians in the 3rd century were interpreting Revelation (before many modern interpretive systems emerged).
3. **Historicist alignment** — Victorinus uses many interpretive moves that align with the historicist approach (seeing Revelation's symbols as unfolding across church history) which makes it relevant if you're studying that tradition.
4. **Source text value** — It helps you see what early readers assumed (for instance, he dates John's exile under Domitian, connects the beast to Rome, etc.).

## **What its limitations are**

1. **Cultural & theological distance** — Victorinus wrote in the 3rd century; his assumptions, theology, and background are very different from modern readers. Some of his connections may reflect his time more than the timeless text.

2. **Theological presuppositions** — For example, he holds a millennial (chiliasm) expectation (a literal thousand-year reign), which later church tradition often rejected.

3. **Transmissions & modifications** — The text we have has been edited (notably by Jerome around the 5th century) because certain parts (especially millennial ones) were considered problematic.

4. **Not binding doctrine** — As interesting and helpful as it is, it is *not* Scripture. It cannot override what the Bible itself says nor dictate a fixed interpretive approach in all cases.

### How to use it wisely

- Use Victorinus's commentary as **historic-interest**: To see how early Christians understood Revelation, what questions they asked, and how they read the symbols.
- Compare his interpretations with the **biblical text** itself and with other traditions (preterist, futurist, idealist).
- Identify which of his interpretations might still speak well today, and which might reflect his own era or assumptions.
- Use it to **augment**, not replace, your primary study of Revelation. Let the biblical text and sound hermeneutics remain your foundation.

### My Conclusion

Yes — you're right to consider Victorinus's commentary *valuable* for a historicist approach. It offers real insight and is a legitimate part of the history of interpretation. But don't treat it as the final word or as a substitute for the text of Revelation or for modern scholarship and exegetical tools. Use it as one of several "lenses" through which you examine Revelation.