

1/4/04

### Introduction To Revelation

We want to begin our verse by verse study through Revelation by looking at an introduction and general overview so that we can see it as a whole before examining the individual chapters.

The book of Revelation has received a renewal in terms of interest and study from the past centuries and we have come to understand much more in light of the time we are living regarding prophecy, even as God told Daniel that in the last day knowledge would increase.

\* “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and **knowledge** shall increase.” Dan. 12:4

The Time of the Gentiles which God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar is about to be over and the time of Jacob’s trouble about to begin. Dan 2; Jer. 30:7

Israel is back in the land since May 14, 1948. the Lord could come for His church at any time!

1. The only book that promises a blessing if you read it. Rev. 1:3
2. The only book, if you will that has a table of contents, in order that it not be misunderstood. Rev. 1:19

2. The clear declaration that it is not a sealed book. Rev. 22:10
4. There is a stern warning to those who would tamper with the book. Rev. 22:18-19
3. The only prophetic book of the New Testament.
  - I. **The nature of the book of Revelation.**
    - A. The book of Revelation is apocalyptic in nature.
      1. It is like Ezekiel, Zechariah and Daniel and in fact is the fulfillment of many of the prophecies in these and other of the prophets.
      2. The literary genre is found in the first verse by the word Revelation “apocalupsis”, which means to lay bare or make naked, so as to reveal the truth or make visible.
        - \* Much like if you had a new car model that was covered with canopy and at the removal of it the car would be revealed clearly!
      3. There are seventeen books of prophecy in the Old Testament, but the book of Revelation is the only book of prophecy in the New Testament which deals with the future as God has ordered it after His divine decrees.
      4. The book of Revelation is eschatological in that it deals with the end times, the last seven years of human history on this

earth as we know it, when God will bring to close the world that is under the god of this world, known as “the present age”.

5. The book of Revelation is apocalyptic revealing the unveiling of Jesus Christ, the all powerful God, who will set up His kingdom on the earth in righteousness, known as “the Age to come”.
6. The present temporal world and the two conflicting powers of our God and Satan should never to be thought of as “dualism” of equal powers, for Satan is a created being, created by God.
7. These books deal with symbolic language describing literal events through visions and symbols that for the most part are interpreted for us in the context and in fact are the fulfillment of many of the end time prophecies of Jesus and the epistles. Matt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21; 1-2Thess.
8. The authority of John is divine authority as he is speaking the word of God, not his own, not like the apocalyptic literature of the Old Testament. Rev. 1:1-2, 3; 22:7, 10, 18, 19
  - a. Seven times the word “prophecy” appears in the Revelation. Rev. 1:3; 11:6; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18, 19
  - b. “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of **prophecy**.” Rev. 19:10g

**B.** The Old Testament apocalyptic literature flourished from the Maccabean period, between 200-100 B.C.

1. They sought to strengthen and encourage God’s people in their sufferings, knowing that inspired revelation had ceased.
2. The literature was pseudo-pigraphic meaning ascribed to some great man of Israel’s past instead of the actual writer, like Abraham, Moses, Ezra, etc.
3. The purpose of the writings were to remind people of God’s intervention in human history to end and destroy the wicked but presented the present without meaning and very pessimistic.
4. Visions, figurative language, angels were all part of this literature but it was not inspired, for no prophet was prophesying during the four-hundred years of silence.
5. John’s apocalypse is different in that it is inspired of the Holy Spirit, not pseudo-pigraphic and the unveiling of future things by God’s Spirit would result in true hope of God’s deliverance and the present is very meaningful, God is at work in His redemptive work to bring about the final act.
6. This being after the nature of the prophetic office John occupied by his

own words recorded. Rev. 1:3; 22:7, 10, 18, 19; 22:8

- a. He is acting as a Seer.
- b. He is the last prophet to close the common of Scripture.

7. Revelation remember means “unveiling”, it is the unveiling of Jesus Christ. Rev. 1:1a

*The nature of the book of Revelation is apocalyptic!*

## II. The particulars of the book Revelation.

### A. The Author and date of the Revelation.

1. The author is clearly stated to be John the apostle by name, appearing five times in the Revelation. Rev. 1:1, 4, 9; 21:2; 22:8
  - a. He is called a “servant”. Rev. 1:1b
  - b. He is called a brother and companion in tribulation. Rev. 1:9b
  - c. There are those who attribute the Revelation to John Mark, John the elder, a disciple of John the Baptist, some Palestinian Jew, etc, without any internal evidence.
2. The chain of command for the Revelation is given. Rev. 1:1
  - a. The Father gave it to the Son, Jesus.
  - b. The Son gave it to his angel.
  - c. The angel gave it to John.

3. John says that he saw, heard these things and commissioned to write them. Rev. 1:19; 21:2; 22:8
  - a. Sixteen time John is told to “write”.
  - b. **He was told, “Write** in a book. Rev. 1:11f
    - 1) The book is mentioned by John, the angel and Jesus and the indication of it being written already and completed. Rev. 1:11; 22:6-19; 22:7-15; 22:18-19
    - 2) It is incorrect to think that John waited till he returned to Ephesus to write the Revelation.
  - c. **“Write** the things which you have seen”. Rev. 1:19a
    - 1) He said, I was in the **Spirit** on the Lord’s Day.” Rev. 1:10
    - 2) He said, “And he carried me away in the **Spirit** to a great and high mountain,” Rev. 21:10
    - 3) Thirteen times John mentions the Holy Spirit as the agent as the source of the Revelation directly. Rev. 1:1, 10; 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22; 4:2; 14:13; 17:3; 21:10; 22:17
  - d. Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to **write**; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Seal up the things which the

seven thunders uttered, and do not **write** them.' Rev. 10:4

- e. **“Write:** `Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on”. Rev. 14:13b-c
  - f. “Then he said to me, **“Write:** `Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.” Rev. 19:9
  - g. Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, **“Write**, for these words are true and faithful.” Rev. 21:5  
\* Notice the writing was occurring simultaneously. Rev. 1:19; 14:13; 19:9
4. John received the Revelation through visions in the Island of Patmos. Rev. 1:9
- a. Patmos was a small barren rocky island 75 miles southwest of Ephesus in Aegean Sea, used particularly for banishing political offenders.
  - b. John was sent there in 95 or 96 A.D., under Domitian who reigned 81-96A.D., after being boiled in oil, tradition tells us, but failed to die.
  - c. Emperor worship was well known and it helped to strengthen the empire by

making their claims the authority of divine status.

- d. Caesar accepted worship as a god during his lifetime, while Augustus was more cautious in the city of Rome but he did sanction temples to himself in the provinces.
  - e. After his death he was worshipped widely in the western provinces
  - f. Caligula demanded homage to his statue, by the time of Nero the imperial cult was established as a religious institution.
  - g. I was not until Domitian, who was the first to demand worship of a living emperor and failure to honor the emperor as a god became political offense and punishable by death by failing to burn a pinch of incense to Caesar as god.
  - h. Emperor worship was well known before Domitian but he was the first to demand worship of the living Emperor, A.D. 81-96..
5. The book of Revelation has been dated as early as Claudias, A.D. 41-45 to as late as Trajan, A.D. 98-117
- b. The death of Domitian was in September 18, 96 A.D., therefore the Revelation was probably written about 95-96 A.D.

- a. There are some who place it under Nero's reign around 65 A.D. , prior to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D..
- B.** The Revelation is addressed to the seven churches. Rev. 1:4, 11
- 1. They are identified as the seven churches which are in Asia, therefore the Revelation is Pastoral in nature, addressed to Pastors. Rev. 1:4b
  - 2. John names the seven churches as he heard a voice saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." Rev. 1:11
  - 3. John writes a particular letter to each of the seven churches by name. Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14
- C.** The Revelation is the only New Testament book which is prophetic in nature and contains the Old Testament phraseology. writing under a Divine command. Rev. 1:10-11,19

- 1. The purpose of the book is to inform the church of future things, "things which must shortly take place" Rev. 1:1,19
- 2. The future Revelation is not given to simply inform and satisfy human curiosity but in order;
  - a. To bless those who hear and obey. Rev. 1:3
  - b. To encourage and give hope to those under persecution. Rev. 1:9.
  - c. To provoke people to live holy. Rev. 3:4-5
  - d. To warn of coming judgement. Rev. 3:10.
  - f. To insure the complete defeat of Satan and the establishing of the kingdom of God. Rev. 12:10  
 \* "Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the **kingdom** of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.""
  - g. To assure His people of His coming.
    - 1) "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to **come**, the Almighty." Rev. 1:8

- 2) To the churches He said, “I will come”.
- 3) “He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, **come**, Lord Jesus!” Rev. 22:20

**D.** Most of what is in Revelation is found in the Old Testament.

1. There is not one single direct quote from the Old Testament in the entire book yet it is full of Old Testament influence in images, allusions, language and thought.
2. Exodus, Psalms and the major prophets are used most frequently.
3. There are according to some scholars 348 identifiable allusions found and nearly 70 of these allusions to Daniel.  
\* These figures will differ from one o the other.
4. They tell us that there is an average of fifteen Old Testament allusions per chapter.
5. Some of the key verses because there are so many. Rev. 1:1, 3, 7, 18, 19, 20; 19:10; 22:16-21

*These are some of the particulars of the book Revelation!*

**III. The authenticity of the book Revelation.**

**A.** The external.

1. Revelation has the most abundant evidence of early recognition, more than any other News Testament book.
2. The fact that it was addressed to seven churches assured its wide circulation and acceptance.
3. Some believe that Papias, bishop of Hieropolis, a neighboring city to Laodocia, was the first to use Revelation because Andreas of Caesarea in Cappodocia quoted remarks on Revelation 12 on his commentary in 614 A.D., in the early part of the second century.
4. Justin Martyr who lived at Ephesus for some time in the first part of the second century, 130 A.D., accepted as written by John and mentioned it in his writings. 100-165 A.D.
5. Melito, bishop of Sardis wrote a commentary on Revelation in 175 A.D.
6. Irenaeus in his work Against Heresies, quoted from nearly every chapter 202 A.D.
  - a. Irenaeus speaks of “all the genuine and ancient copies” of the Revelation of John”, indicating its early circulation.
  - b. Irenaeus is important because as a boy he had know Polycarp who in turn

had a close relation and disciple of John the apostle.

7. Eusebius records Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, using the Revelation to oppose false teaching 180 A.D.
8. The Muratorian Canon includes the Revelation as universally recognized at Rome, 170 A.D.
9. Clament of Alexandria accepted it as the work of John between 155-215 A.D., as well as his younger contemporary Origen, 185-253 A.D., etc.
10. Tertullian quotes from all bur four chapter of Revelation as he wrote from Carthage, believing John to be the author, in the early third century..
11. Hippolytus, the most important third century theologian of the Roman church quoted Revelation repeatedly and considered it to be written by “the apostle and disciple of the Lord”, in 236 A.D.
12. One most important find was from Gnostic material discovered in 1945 at Chenoboskion in Upper Egypt, a document of Apocryphon of John, cited Rev. 1:19 and claimed to be written by John., dating in the first part of the first century. (N.T. Com., Robert h. Mounce:11)
13. Morris cites B.W. Bacon who said, “There is no book of the entire New

Testament shoe external attestation can compare with that of Revelation, in nearness, clearness, definiteness, and positiveness of statement” (N.T. Com., Robert h. Mounce:11)

#### B. The internal.

1. John uses his own name five times, distinct from apocalyptic literature. Rev. 1:1, 4, 9; 21:2, 22:8
2. He identifies himself as a servant, brother, companion in tribulation and a prophet as already noted. Rev. 1:1, 3, 9; 10:11; 22:9
3. He declares to be in Patmos for the testimony of God’s Word. Rev. 1:9
4. The evidence of Johnnian words are found throughout the book.
  - a. The word “Logos”, to speak of Jesus as in his gospel. Jn.1:1,14; 1Jn. 1:1; Rev. 19:13
  - b. The word “Lamb”, a title for Jesus is found twenty-eight times in Revelation. even as John uses it in his gospel also. Jn. 1:29, 36; Rev. 5:6, 8, 12, 13
  - c. John is the only gospel that records the piercing of Jesus’ side and mentions it. Jn. 19.34; Rev.1:7
  - d. The word true “alethinós” occurs ten times in Revelation, eight times in the

gospel of John, four times in First John. but only five times in the rest of the New Testament and three of the five are in Hebrews. Rev. 2:13; 3:7, 14; 6:10; 15:3; 16:7; 19:2, 9, 11; 21:5, 6

5. The word “witness” is one of the favorite words of John, Twenty-five in the gospel, eight in First John, three in second John and four in Revelation. Rev. 1:5; 2:13; 3:14; 20:4
7. The word worship appears twenty-four times in the book of Revelation.
  - \* The most common word for worship in the New Testament is “proskuneo” which means to kiss the hand or the ground, once again the idea is prostration and adoration and worth..
  - a. The word is used of God, Christ, man, demons and idols and it appears the most numerous in Revelation, twenty-four times.
  - b. “You are worthy, O Lord to receive glory and honor and power: for you created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.” Rev. 4:11
  - c. And they sang a new song, saying...Rev. 5:9-10
    - 1) Taking us from lost to saved.

2) Taking us from enemies to sons and daughters.

- d. John tells us that the angels and elders around the throne fell on their faces and worshipped God. Rev. 7:11
- e. “And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before you, For your judgments have been manifested.” Rev. 15:3-4

### C. The opposition to the Revelation.

1. It began with Marcion, the second-century heretic rejecting all non-Pauline writings.
2. Not much later a group of heretics in Asia Minor, the Alogi” who opposed Montanism rejected both the gospel of John and Revelation.
3. According to Epiphanius, they attributed the Revelation to the Gnostic Cerinthus.
3. Dionysius attributed Revelation to “John the Elder” by misinterpreting the clear distinction of the apostle John “the Elder” in the writings of Papias, setting

the pattern for modern criticism as he objected to the Revelation due to language and style, 250 A.D.

\* Yet, until the time of Origin and including him, the whole church knew of only one John, the apostle”.  
(Lenski:10)

5. In the west from the second century on the Apocalypse had won wide acceptance and the East began to reverse its negative position.
6. In the fourth century Athanasius in Alexandria endorsed it without hesitation and the Third council of Cathage, 397 A.D. listed the Apocalypse as canonical and appropriate for public reading in services.
7. The Third Council of Constantinople, 680 A.D., gave formal acceptance to the Apocalypse as New Testament scripture.
8. Interesting that Luther was offended by the book of Revelation and regarded it, “neither apostolic nor prophetic”.

***This is the authenticity of the book Revelation!***

#### **IV. The interpretations of the book Revelation.**

##### **A. The history of interpretation.**

1. The early church fathers were “chiliasts”, which means a thousand, they believed

the Apocalypse foretold of a literal millennial kingdom on earth to be followed by a general resurrection, judgment and renovation of heaven and earth.

2. The Roman Catholic Church taught she was the Vicar of Christ reigning and at the end of the thousand years, Christ would return.
  3. A spiritualizing approach developed by the allegorical method, like Origin, Augustine and Tyconius.
  4. This mystical form of interpretation controlled the first millennium, under the three-fold approach of finding the literal, figurative and spiritual meaning, while making the spiritual predominant.
- B. The four methods the book of Revelations is interpreted.**
1. The Preterist.
    - a. Preterist means past or beyond,.
    - b. They believe and say that all that is in the book of Revelation has been fulfilled in the past political and historical time of the first century church.
  2. The Presentist.
    - a. Presentist believe that their fulfillment may be repeated over and over in

- history, being a modified form of Preterist.
- b. They are concerned with the present.
3. The Spiritualizing.
- a. These are the idealist.
  - b. They interpret the book of Revelation figuratively and metaphorically as a spiritual conflict and not literal.
  - c. They hold to the old form of allegory, giving subjective interpretation to everything, rather than distinguishing figurative from literal.
  - d. It denies the entire purpose of the book of the coming of Christ to bind Satan, set up the kingdom, bring judgment and bring in the eternal kingdom.
4. The Prophetic or futurist.
- a. These believe in a yet future fulfillment from chapter four to the end.
  - b. The book of Revelation was the less read book until lately.
  - c. Many misconceptions
  - d. Revelation is not a sealed book, like the book of Daniel. Dan.12:4;  
Rev.22:10
  - d. There is a blessing that is promised in the book of Revelation. Rev. 1:3; 22:7

- C. Some key facts to insure proper interpretation.
1. That as we go through the study is to be aware of the events whether they are in heaven or on earth.
  2. That the interpretation always be interpreted with the context, the language and historical background, allowing the simplest interpretation to speak for itself.
  3. That the figurative, symbolic language be interpreted by the context of the verse, the book and the whole of scripture, as well as the entire book of Revelation.
  4. The majority of the book of Revelation is from the Old Testament and much is interpreted for us in the book.
- D. The structure of the book of Revelation.
1. Some take the structure to be chronological in its entirety.
    - a. This will cause many problems to the interpretation of time and the events being described.
    - b. This method is rejected by most contemporary writers.
  2. Others take the book and see it in a chronological order in terms of the events, with parenthetical passages.
    - a. These parenthetical passages provide details to be inserted.

- b. Though the book has a chronological order, it is given in cycles that run the entire seven years.
- 3. The author has provided for us the table of contents for the book of Revelation.  
Rev. 1:19
  - a. Things seen.
  - b. Things which are.
  - c. Things which will take place after this.
    - 1) To keep us from error.
    - 2) To keep us in line with the end time of the last seven year period that is to come upon the earth, prior to the Lord's return.

*These are the various interpretations of the book Revelation!*

#### **V. The division of the book of Revelation.**

- A. The prologue, the things seen. Rev. 1
  - 1. These things record things of the past regarding our Lord Jesus that remain to the present.
  - 2. He is presented as the triumphant Christ.
  - 3. He is presented as the Lord, Savior of mankind.
  - 4. He is presented as Judge.
- B. The things which are. Rev. 2-3

- 1. These things recorded are the things of the present, regarding the seven churches.
- 2. The first is Ephesus, the loveless church.
- 3. The second is Smyrna, the suffering church.
- 4. The third is Pergamos, the worldly church.
- 5. The fourth is Thyatira, the pagan church.
- 6. The fifth is Sardis, the dead church.
- 7. The sixth is Philadelphia, the missionary church.
- 8. The seventh is Laodicea, the apostate church.
- 9. The seven churches have a four-fold application.
  - a. Each represents a literal local churches in the days of John.
  - b. Each represents a period during church history.
  - c. Each represents a type of congregation throughout the history of the church.
  - d. Each represents a type of Christian throughout the church age.
    - 1) In all, there is a promise to the overcome.
    - 2) In all, there is a call to lend an ear to the warnings and promises.

C. The things which will take place after this.  
Rev. 4-22

1. These things recorded are the things of the future.
2. In chapter four and five the church is in heaven singing the song of the redeemed to the Kinsman, goel, Jesus. Rev. 4-5
3. In chapter six through eighteen the tribulation and great tribulation us recorded.
  - a. This period is known as, “The time of Jacob’s trouble”. Jer. 30:7  
\* “Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of **Jacob’s trouble**, But he shall be saved out of it.”
  - b. The six chapter to the eighth, the seven seals are opened. Rev. 6:1-8:1  
\* Parenthetical passage. Rev. 7:1-17
  - c. The seven, trumpets are sounded. Rev. 8:2-11:19  
\* Parenthetical passage. Rev. 10:1-11:14
  - d. The persecution by Satan, the Antichrist of the saints. Rev. 12:1-14:20  
\* Parenthetical passage. Rev. 14:6-20
  - e. The preparation and the seven bowls of God's wrath are poured out on the earth. Rev. 15:1-16:21

- f. The judgment of Babylon, both religious and commercial is executed. Rev. 17-18
  - f. The final victory and judgment of the Lamb is revealed in the Second Coming of Jesus to the earth. Rev. 19-20
  - g. The Millenium is described and the first and second resurrection. Rev. 19
  - h. The New heaven and new earth. Rev. 21:1-22:5
  - i. The epilogue. Rev. 22:6-21
- E. There are some relational contrasts between Genesis and Revelation.
1. Genesis records creation, Revelation records consummation.
  2. Genesis presents Paradise lost, Revelation presents Paradise brought back
  3. Genesis was the entrance of sin, Revelation is the end of sin.
  4. Genesis reveals the beginning of Satan’s dominion on earth, Revelation reveals the end of Satan’s dominion on earth.
  5. Genesis presents sorrow and grief, Revelation promises no more tears or sorrows.
  6. Genesis had the Trees of life relinquished, Revelation regains the Tree of life.

7. Genesis records the entrance of death,  
Revelation pronounces death exit.

*This is the division of the book of Revelation!*

**Conclusion**

“He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly”. Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” Rev. 22:20