

Revelation Unraveled Part 1 - Introduction

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. taught in Berean Sunday School Class

†Revelation 1:1-3

¹ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John:

² Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

³ Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand.

The last time I taught verse by verse from the Book of Revelation was 5 years ago and it took me 50 weeks to complete. I have no idea in knowing how long it will take us to get through it this time but I don't want to rush it.

Hopefully by the time we are finished we will all have a better understanding of the Book of Revelation. Some of the things that we will be covering are:

1. Questions about the end of times.
 2. About prophecy
 3. The Anti-Christ
 4. The false prophet
 5. The Beast
 6. The 4-horsemen
 7. The 4 and 20 elders
 8. The number 666
 9. The tribulation
 10. The millennial reign of Christ
 11. The New Jerusalem
 12. The new heaven and the new earth
 13. The rapture of the Church
 14. The two resurrections
 15. The judgement of believers and non-believers
 16. The marriage supper
 17. The bowl judgements
 18. The vial judgements
 19. The trumpet judgements
 20. The scrolls
 21. The battle of Armageddon
 22. The battle of God and Magog
-and the list goes on and on. It is going to be pretty intense.

One thing I would like to stress about this study is that we will place an emphasis on Jesus Christ being the dominate figure in the Book of Revelation. That is, afterall, the reason it was written, to unveil, to reveal Christ to fallen man.

So, now that we've got the introduction out of the way, let's begin with an overview of the Book. I know everybody wants to get into the juicy stuff but let's set a foundation first and we will get into the juicy stuff soon enough.

1. First and foremost, the name of the Book is "**Revelation**" (singular) and NOT "**Revelations**" (plural). That is one of my pet-peeves. People always going around saying "**The Book of Revelations**." While there are many prophecies given in the Book, there is only one revelation that is dealt with and that is the revealing of Jesus Christ.
2. **What is the Book of Revelation?** First let's understand what the Book of Revelation is, and what it isn't. If your Bible is like most Bible's, the Book is introduced as "**The Revelation of St. John the Divine**." Does anyone else's in here say anything different? That's what mine says but I wish it said what it truly was, "**The Revelation of Jesus Christ**." Yes, the prophecy was given to John but they belong to Jesus Christ and are about Him. Some Bibles actually title it "**The Revelation of Jesus Christ**," which is how the Book even begins in Rev. 1:1: [The Revelation of Jesus Christ...](#)
3. The Book of Revelation is a Book of Prophecy. It is broken down into 3 things:
 1. Things that were.
 2. Things that are.
 3. Things which shall come to pass.This is indicated in verse 19 of Chapter 1.
Revelation 1:19: Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;
4. The Book of Revelation was most likely written in the years A.D. 95-96
5. Revelation is not a Book to be feared. It is a glorious book which should give us much hope. Don't fall into that trap of saying, "*well, that book isn't supposed to be understood and I've read the back of the book and we win, etc...*" friend, the Bible says in **Revelation 1:3: Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein...** God wants us to read this book and to have an understanding of it. No author writes a book and then makes the last chapter where you can't understand it! You build up to a climax, the same way God has designed His precious word. God doesn't intend for us to be spiritual dummies. **Satan** has been instrumental in making God's people think they can't understand the Revelation because he doesn't want us to understand it or read it.

The word **Revelation** comes from the Greek word **apokalypsis** (opp-uh-khaul-upp-sees) which we get our English word Apocalypse. It means to be uncovered, disclosure: - appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, to remove the veil. - It is the revealing of all things hidden in Christ. The study of the end-of-times is called Eschatology. Don't let that big word scare you, it simply means the doctrine and study of the end of times.
6. **Who is the author?** The author is God; the human pen-man to this Book is John. He identifies himself and why he is there in verse 9: **9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.**, This John is whom most believe, and I believe as well, to be the beloved disciple, the man that Jesus named one of the sons of thunder, the brother of James and the son of Zebedee, the one that he entrusted the care of his mother to when he was on

the cross. John was apparently the only apostle still alive in 95 A.D. John was the only disciple who fulfilled all 3 offices of being an apostle, an evangelist, and a prophet. John had been banished to the Isle of Patmos by the Roman Emperor, Domitian, for preaching the Gospel. Patmos was a rock quarry island that was 25-miles off of the coast of Asia Minor. This was where prisoners were sent to serve out their sentence. They would spend their days chipping off rocks to be used for building pagan temples and state buildings. It is while on this island that John receives these revelations given to him by the Lord Jesus Christ.

History tells us that all of the disciples died horrible deaths except for John. **Fox's Book of Martyrs** records the following about him: The churches of Smyrna, Pergamos, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Thyatira, were founded by him. From Ephesus he was ordered to be sent to Rome, where it is affirmed he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil. He escaped by miracle, without injury. Emperor Domitian afterwards banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. Nerva, the successor of Domitian, recalled him. He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death.

7. **Who are the recipients?** The recipients of this Book are the **7 churches** in Asia Minor, which is modern day Turkey. Jesus lists them in **verse 11 of Chapter 1:** ***11** Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. -- These churches were started primarily from Paul's ministry at Ephesus. With Ephesus being the key church and these others being started from it. This prophecy no doubt was first given to the Church at Ephesus and then traveled onto the next churches. I believe they received the prophecy in the order that the Bible lists them in.*

It was a message of comfort to these churches which were in the hot bed of turmoil. They were in the midst of immortality of pagan religions, mysticism, Gnosticism, Jewish persecution, Roman persecution, you name it; these churches were suffering. These words will give them comfort in knowing that evil would not prevail, that good would overcome evil and Christ would be King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

These words were preserved and handed on down to us.

8. **What is the outline of the Book of Revelation?** It is actually given in **Revelation 1:19:** ***19** Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;*
- The things which you have seen: Chapter 1:1-20
 - The things which are: Chapters 2:1 – 3:22
 - The things which shall be: Chapter 4:1-22:21
9. **What is the deal with all of the numbers?** I want you to pay close attention to several number during our study, especially of the number 7. It is no mistake that there were 7 churches mentioned and not 6 or 8. The number 7 signifies perfectness, some people call it the "God number." In the Book of Revelation,

the number SEVEN is used throughout. There are SEVEN churches, SEVEN Spirits, SEVEN stars, SEVEN seals, SEVEN trumpets, SEVEN vials, SEVEN personages, SEVEN dooms, and SEVEN new things. SEVEN symbolizes Spiritual Perfection. All of life revolves around this number. SEVEN is used over 700 times in the Bible. It is used 54 times in the Book of Revelation. On a side note worth mentioning, the number seven is also used 54 times in the Book of Genesis...

You will find the numbers 1=unity, 2 =division, 3 =divine fullness, 4 =earthly completeness 5 =God's grace, 6 =man, 7= perfectness, 10 = governmental perfection, 11 =disorder, 12 =perfect governmental rule, and so on and so forth. All numbers have significant meanings.

10. **Types of Interpretations:** How should Revelation be interpreted? There are 4 different schools of interpretation when it comes to the Book of Revelation.

1. The Preterist – the word preterist is based on the Latin word preter which means "past." They interpret Revelation as a description of first-century events in the Roman Empire. They claim everything mentioned in the book has already happened. The problem with this is that the Book of Revelation itself says that it is prophecy. Also, there are events that clearly have not happened yet, such as the second coming of Christ.

2. Historical – interprets Revelation as a symbolic or allegorical survey of church history from the apostolic times to the present. You could also call it the "continuous view." They take events that have happened and are happening, and interpret them into the various symbolism that is founding the Book of Revelation. The problem with this view is that the Book of Revelation was written to 7 specific churches telling them that these things were going to happen. If they had already happened then why bother with the prophecy?

3. Idealist – interprets the Book of Revelation as simply symbolism for the timeless struggle between good and evil and ignores it being actual prophecy or actual events that have taken place.

4. Futuristic – Interprets the Book of Revelation literally. Chapters 6-22 are future events that have not occurred yet, thus agreeing with the prophecy. This view is a literal interpretation of the Scripture that sees the people, events, and symbolism as actual things that will occur. The prophecy given is to be interpreted literally unless told by John to do otherwise.

I will say right up front that this is the view that I hold. I believe Revelation to be prophecy of future events that has not yet occurred. I believe in the pre-tribulation rapture of the church. I believe in 7 years of tribulation, I believe Christ will set up His Earthly Kingdom in Jerusalem and reign upon earth for 1,000 years. I believe in the end there will be a White Throne Judgment where the devil and all unsaved people will be judged and cast into a literal burning lake of fire where they will remain for all eternity fully conscious and in eternal pain and punishment.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version