

**REVELATION  
INTRODUCTION**

*Brief Overview Illustrating Important Points For Understanding Revelation*  
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I. Preliminary Questions

- A. how many of you already have a definite view of Revelation?
- B. How many of you are pan-millennialists?
  - 1. I humbly submit to you that pan-millennialism is not the way to go

II. Personal Introduction

- A. essentially two ways to interpret Revelation
  - 1. preterist and futurist
    - a. preterist
      - i. most (not all) eschatological events occurred between AD 30 and AD 70
    - b. futurist
      - i. most (not all) eschatological events occurred 2000+ years after Christ
      - ii. there are all kinds of futurists
        - A/ the most prominent futurists are dispensationalists
  - 2. hyperpreterist caveat
    - a. hyperpreterists are heretical preterists
      - i. they say ALL eschatological events happened between 30-70AD
        - A/ including the resurrection of the dead
    - b. when I say I'm a preterist, I mean I am an *orthodox* preterist
      - i. I believe that several important eschatological events happen at the end of time
        - A/ Jesus' bodily return
        - B/ the resurrection of the dead both Christian and non-Christian
        - C/ casting of Satan and non-believers into hell
        - D/ release of the earth from its bondage to decay
- B. I was inundated with futurism in high school and college
  - 1/ just like almost everybody else in the South was
  - 2/ fed a steady diet of
    - a/ Antichrist
    - b/ 10 nation revived Roman Empire
    - c/ 200,000,000 man army invading Europe from China
    - d/ nuclear bombs destroying Israel
    - e/ "great tribulation"
    - f/ "great apostasy"
    - e/ black helicopters, plagues, famines, disaster, earthquakes, rumors of wars
    - f/ one-world government
    - g/ 666
    - h/ microchips under the skin
  - 3/ futurism led to fear

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- C. I have rejected panic porn prophecy for orthodox preterism
  - 1. I didn't come here to offend anybody
    - a. warning
      - i. Steve Atkerson says he has the gift of offending people
        - A/ but he's an amateur
          - 1/ I am a professional
    - b. but I might have to do that in order to convey how much I hate doom-and-gloom futurism
    - c. my goal is less to refute futurism than it is to establish orthodox preterism
      - i. but along the way there will be some refutation as a minor refrain
        - A/ Please do not be offended
  - 2. I came to this after 8 solid years of studying futurism and becoming entirely frustrated
    - a. then one day in England Steve Atkerson mentioned the word preterist to me
      - i. he was dealing with hyperpreterists in his church
        - A. in understanding and refuting that, I came to understand orthodox preterism
  - 3. I have hope for the future of the prosperity of the church
    - a. even though now things seem so bleak morally, culturally, politically, and ecclesiastically
    - b. orthodox preterism opens the door for an optimistic Christian philosophy of history

### III. Logistics

- A. Every session will be up on Sermon Audio
- B. I will be teaching verse by verse starting next week starting where Steve left off
- C. I will teach Wednesday night and Sunday morning
  - 1. which means many of you will be missing half of the teaching
    - a. so please listen to the ones you miss on Sermon Audio or on my PGBS podcast

### IV. Introductory Material for Revelation

- A. Introduction
  - 1. Always been considered notoriously difficult
    - a. John Calvin was driven mad by Revelation!
      - i. allegedly didn't write a commentary on Revelation because he couldn't understand it
      - ii. "The study of Revelation either finds a man mad, or leaves him that way."
        - A/ Calvin almost went crazy because he was using the wrong key to unlock the book
          - 1/ a treasure-house with a huge padlock and chain is easy to unlock with the proper key
    - b. Martin Luther wanted to run it out of the canon!
      - i. "'I feel an aversion to it, and to me this is sufficient reason for rejecting it."
  - 2. I will teach it from an orthodox preterist, post-millennial perspective
    - a. IMHO, all the other views lead to nothing but confusion
      - i. and in fact might explain Calvin and Luther's attitudes
        - A/ they held the historicist view
      - ii. if you start with a seriously flawed premise, one will never understand
        - A/ I humbly suggest these other frameworks are seriously flawed
          - 1/ historic premillennialism
          - 2/ dispensational premillennialism
          - 3/ futurist amillennialism
          - 4/ historicism
          - 5/ literary framework

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3. Date
  - a. there are two major views on when John wrote Revelation
    - i. early date (c. 65 AD)
    - ii. late date (c. 95 AD)
  - b. one's view of the date has huge implications
    - i. a late date authorship destroys orthodox preterism
  - c. today's majority view is late date
    - i. but in 19<sup>th</sup> century, majority view was early date
      - a. Philip Schaff, 1910  
i/ "The early date is now accepted by perhaps the majority of scholars"
    - ii. a modern defense of early-date is Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*
4. Hermeneutical principle used
  - a. a "literal" hermeneutic leads to total confusion
    - i. apocalyptic texts should be interpreted *metaphorically*
5. Revelation is (probably) John's version of the Olivet Discourse
  - a. Matthew, Mark, Luke had Olivet Discourse
    - i. John didn't need to repeat  
A/ he rather elaborated
6. Three major themes of Revelation point to AD 70
  - a. Old Jerusalem is destroyed, New Jerusalem is established
    - i. most of first part of book about the destruction of Old Jerusalem
    - ii. last part of Revelation about the culmination of the New Jerusalem  
A/ i.e., the new covenant  
1/ which runs from First Advent to Second Advent and beyond to eternal state
  - b. There were two persecutors of the church who God is going to destroy
    - i. the Old Jerusalem  
A/ the apostate murderers of Jesus
    - ii. the Roman Empire  
A/ their government murdered Jesus for the apostate Jews
  - c. Believers will conquer their persecutors so that the gospel might be preached

IV. **Revelation 1:1-2 (NASB)** *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to his bond-servants, the things which must **SOON** take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to his bond-servant John<sup>2</sup> who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.*

- A. "Revelation" (v1)
  1. it's the book of *Revelation*, not the book of *Obfuscation*
  2. the book was meant to be understood, not speculated about
    - a. God gave it to Jesus to SHOW to Jesus' servants
      - i. God was not trying to confuse his servants
    - b. how can one be blessed by a book one does not understand? (Revelation 1:3)
- B. "show" (v1)
  1. not to hide it from believers!

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- C. “soon” (ἐν τάχει, from τάχος) (v1)
1. John writing in late sixties
    - a. the end of the world is not soon compared to the late sixties
      - i. so, Jesus was not writing about the end of the world
        - A/ nor was he concerned about 2000 years of world history (historicists)
        - B/ otherwise, the book is entirely irrelevant to everyone except for those relatively few Xns alive at the end of the world
          - 1/ not relevant to John’s fellow believers
          - 2/ not relevant to us today
            - a/ especially if we are pretribbers
            - C/ writing about the end of the apostate Jewish nation and the end of the RE
    2. all Christians reading the word would know what take it in its common usage
      - a. NT Scriptures
        - i. **Acts 12:7 (CSBBible)** Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. Striking Peter on the side, he woke him up and said, "**Quick** (ἐν τάχει), get up! " And the chains fell off his wrists.
          - A/ when Herod Agrippa I threw Peter into jail
        - iii. **Acts 22:18 (CSBBible)** and saw him telling me, 'Hurry and get out of Jerusalem **quickly** (ἐν τάχει), because they will not accept your testimony about me.'
          - A/ Paul is relating Jesus’ vision upon Paul’s first visit to Jerusalem after conversion
        - iv. **Acts 25:4 (CSBBible)** Festus, however, answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself was about to go there **shortly** (ἐν τάχει).
          - A/ Paul at end of Acts dealt with three Romans
            - 1/ Lysias, Felix, Festus
        - v. **Romans 16:20 (CSBBible)** The God of peace will **soon** (ἐν τάχει) crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
    3. “soon” (τάχος) is used 7 times in Revelation
      - a. listed
        - i. **Revelation 1:1 (ESV)** The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to his servants the things that must **soon** take place.
        - ii. **Revelation 2:16 (ESV)** “I will come to you **soon** . . .”
        - iii. **Revelation 3:11 (ESV)** “I am coming **soon**. . . “
        - iv. **Revelation 22:6 (ESV)** “ . . . the Lord . . . has sent his angel to show his servants what must **soon** take place.”
        - v. **Revelation 22:7 (ESV)** “ . . . I am coming **soon** . . . ”
        - vi. **Revelation 22:12 (ESV)** “ . . . I am coming **soon** . . . ”
        - vii. **Revelation 22:20 (ESV)** “ . . . I am coming **soon** . . . ”
      - b. the first verse and the next to the last verse of the book have “soon”
        - i. so what part of “soon” do we not understand?
      - c. the related word “near” (ἐγγύς) is used twice
        - i. **Revelation 1:3b (CSBBible)** . . . the time is **near**.
        - ii. **Revelation 22:10 (CSBBible)** Then he said to me, "Don't seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is **near**.

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### E. “communicated” (v1)

#### 1. NASB margin: “signified”

##### a. Rev is a book of “signs,” or symbols

i. it was never, ever meant to be interpreted literally

ii. the symbols were never meant to be secret

A/ subject only to interpretation using a secret code

B/ the symbols are evident to those who are familiar with the symbolism of the OT

1/ Revelation quotes OT more than any other book

### V. **Revelation 1:3 (NASB)** “*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is NEAR.*”

#### A. “Blessed”

1. The first of seven “beatitudes” in the book

2. how many people scared to death of black helicopters, 200 million Chinese, and nuclear war are blessed by reading this book?

#### B. “heed”

1. goal of the book is not prediction, but obedience

a. so the early church could survive the terrible persecution coming upon it

i. two things the futurists put in the future were happening to these 7 early churches

A/ “Great Tribulation”

B/ “Great Apostasy”

#### C. “near” (ἐγγύς)

1. destruction of Jerusalem coming very soon

### VI. **Revelation 1:4 (NASB)** “*John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him [the Father] who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before His throne,*”

#### A. “churches”

1. obvious from the descriptions that follow these are HISTORICAL churches

a. not some mystical description of seven church ages (Schofield)

i. ironic: futurists are SYMBOLIC here!

A/ when they should be LITERAL

ii. note that Laodicea is the last church

A/ Laodicean church cold, lukewarm

1/ which is how pessimillennialists think the last age of the church will be

#### B. “seven”

1. a basic symbol in Rev

a. meaning

i. “qualitative fullness”

A/ the essential nature of a thing

B/ the divine nature of a thing

2. “seven Spirits”

a. reference to the HS

i. note that the Trinity is mentioned in vv. 4-5

A/ which nails down that “seven Spirits” is HS

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C. “throne”

1. 46 times in Revelation
  - a. more than any other book
    - i. second place is Matthew (5)
  - b. Revelation is about the DOMINION and RULE and SOVEREIGNTY of Jesus Christ
    - i. the third of my three themes of Revelation

VII. **Revelation 1:5 (NASB)** *and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood –*

A. “from”

1. referring to grace and peace which coming FROM God and Holy Spirit in v4 and FROM JC here

B. “witness”

1. options
  - a. one who testifies about things in heaven
  - a. in OT, witnesses assisted (by throwing stones) in the execution of those guilty of capital crimes
    - i. Jesus was going to execute those who had murdered both him and his followers

C. “firstborn”

1. has to do with supremacy more than with timing
  - a. Lazarus, etc., resurrected before J was
  - b. the firstborn has the right to inherit a double portion (Deut 21:17)
    - i. note: this is not primogeniture  
A/ primogeniture, the first born gets the whole estate
    - ii. **Psalms 2:7-8 (CSBBible)** <sup>7</sup>I [David] will declare the LORD's decree. He [the Father] said to me [David, as a type of Christ], "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. <sup>8</sup>Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance and the ends of the earth your possession.  
A/ this illustrates the third theme of the book of Revelation
    - iii. **Colossians 1:18 (CSBBible)** He is also the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.
    - iv. **Psalms 89:27 (CSBBible)** I will also make him my firstborn, greatest of the kings of the earth.
      - i. John obviously had this verse in mind (cf. “ruler of the kings of the earth”)

D. “ruler”

1. He’s ruling NOW
  - a. doesn’t have to wait till some so-called millennial kingdom

E. “earth”

1. this could be “rulers of the land” instead of kings of the earth (DT)
  - a. would fit the theme of destruction of Israel better (DT)

F. “released”

1. this shows that sin is slavery

VIII. **Revelation 1:6 (NASB)** *“and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father – to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*

A. “us”

1. we rule with Christ
  - a. Jesus rules over the kings of the earth (v4)
  - b. illustrates my third theme of dominion

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### B. “kingdom”

1. there’s a new kingdom in the world now
  - a. Jesus and his disciples
  - b. the old Jewish and Roman kingdoms are finished

### C. “dominion”

1. **Daniel 7:14 (CSBBible)** He was given **dominion**, and glory, and a **kingdom**; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him. His **dominion** is an everlasting **dominion** that will not pass away, and his **kingdom** is one that will not be destroyed.
  - a. this occurred right after the power of the Roman Empire (4<sup>th</sup> beast) taken away
    - i. **Daniel 7:7 (CSBBible)** <sup>7</sup> "After this, while I was watching in the night visions, suddenly a fourth beast appeared, frightening and dreadful, and incredibly strong, with large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and it trampled with its feet whatever was left. It was different from all the beasts before it, and it had ten horns.
    - ii. this is when the CHURCH was founded
      - A/ **Luke 17:20-21 (CSBBible)** <sup>20</sup> Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with something observable; <sup>21</sup> no one will say, 'See here!' or 'There!' For you see, the kingdom of God is in your midst."
      - B/ it’s not talking of a premillennial kingdom at end of time
  - b. this is spiritual dominion, not political dominion

IX.. **Revelation 1:7 (NASB)** *behold, he is coming with the clouds [Dan 7:13], and every eye will see him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth [land] will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.*

### A. “coming”

1. Daniel wasn’t talking about a BODILY coming from heaven to earth
  - a. **Daniel 7:13 (CSBBible)** I continued watching in the night visions, and suddenly one like a son of man was coming with the clouds of heaven. *He approached the Ancient of Days* and was escorted before him.
    - i. Daniel’s coming was Jesus coming UP to heaven to inherit a kingdom
      - A/ **Daniel 7:14 (CSBBible)** He was given **dominion**, and glory, and a **kingdom**; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him. His **dominion** is an everlasting **dominion** that will not pass away, and his **kingdom** is one that will not be destroyed.
  - b. therefore, it is logical to think John was not talking about Jesus’ bodily return at end of time
    - i. John is talking about Jesus spiritually coming to judge apostate, rabbinic Israel
      - A/ necessary for judgment in order for Jesus to inherit a kingdom (the church)

### B. “clouds”

1. one of the most familiar Biblical images for judgment
  - a. all the following OT references refer only to judgments in the past, not the end of the world
  - b. Scripture
    - i. **Exodus 14:24 (CSBBible)** During the morning watch, the Lord looked down at the Egyptian forces from the pillar of fire and cloud, and threw the Egyptian forces into confusion.
      - A/ occasion → Egyptian forces are in the Red Sea at the Exodus
    - ii. **Exodus 19:9, 16-19** “And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD... <sup>16</sup> And it came to pass on the third day in the

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morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled.

A/ occasion → Israel at Mt. Sinai

- iii. **Psalm 18:11-13** “<sup>11</sup> He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him *were* dark waters *and* thick clouds of the skies. <sup>12</sup> At the brightness *that was* before him his thick clouds passed, hail *stones* and coals of fire. <sup>13</sup> The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail *stones* and coals of fire.

A/ no reference to an historical event

- iv. **Isaiah 19:1 (CSBBible)** A pronouncement concerning Egypt: Look, the Lord rides on a swift cloud and is coming to Egypt. Egypt's idols will tremble before him, and Egypt will lose heart.

- v. **Ezekiel 32:7-8** “And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. <sup>8</sup> All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD.

A/ occasion → a lament for Pharaoh

- vi. **Nahum 1:3** “The LORD *is* slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. “

A/ judgment on Ninevah

- vii. **Matthew 24:30** “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

2. **Matthew 26:64 (CSBBible)** “You (#1) have said it,” Jesus told him. “But I tell you (#2), in the future you (#3) will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

- a. second person pronouns

- i. “You” (#1)

A/ singular, refers to Caiphas

- ii. “you” (#2)

A/ plural, refers to all the Sanhedrin present

- iii. “you” (#3)

A/ plural, refers to the entire Sanhedrin (not Caiphas)

- b. None of the Sanhedrin will see Jesus coming at the end of time

- i. but they did see Jesus come in judgment in AD 70

- c. if “coming on the clouds” means judgement in Matthew 26:64, ditto for Revelation

### C. “see”

1. see can be translated with sense of “understand” as opposed to physical sight

- a. Jews would understand that Jesus’ coming would bring judgment and mourning

2. can’t refer to physical sight

- a. how can people physically see Son of Man seated at the right hand of God (Power) in heaven?

- i. **Matthew 26:64 (CSBBible)** “You have said it,” Jesus told him. “But I tell you, in the future you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”



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D. “pierced”

1. OT Scripture where this comes from
  - a. **Zechariah 12:10a (CSBBible)** "Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the house of David and the residents of Jerusalem, and they will look at me whom they *pierced*.
  - i. John fulfills Zechariah 12:10 in the *first century*
    - a. **John 19:37 (CSBBible)** Also, another Scripture says: They will look at the one they *pierced*.
    - b. it’s logical to say the same John fulfilled Revelation 1:7 in the *first century*

E. “tribes”

1. the twelve tribes of Israel

F. “earth” (“land”)

1. perfectly equivalent translation of Greek γῆς (from γῆ) is “land”
  - a. which makes the reference to apostate ISRAEL being judged
    - i. not the whole planet

F. “mourn”

1. Scriptures
  - a. **Zechariah 12:10b (CSBBible)** "They will *mourn* for him as one *mourns* for an only child and weep bitterly for him as one weeps for a firstborn.
  - b. **Zechariah 12:12 (CSBBible)** The *land* [γῆ] will *mourn*, every family by itself: the family of David's house by itself and their women by themselves; the family of Nathan's house by itself and their women by themselves;
2. Argument that the “piercing” was in AD 30, and the “mourning” in AD 70
  - a. John 19:37 (AD 30) only has “pierced,” does not have “mourn”
    - i. Revelation 1:7 has “mourn”