



Empowering People to Change the World

The Unveiling

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The Unveiling!

The Revelation of Jesus Christ-Introduction

Introduction:

The late British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill once described the former Soviet Union as a “riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.” Many believers and students of the Bible feel that way about the book of Revelation.

- It has many confusing symbols. It's A book of Sign Pictures: There will be many symbols and word pictures that many have not understood.
 - 17x we will switch back from heaven to earth in the book.
 - There are 44 separate visions.
 - “Like” or “likeness” used 22x, it looked like.
 - “I saw” 60x.
 - “Behold” 30x.
 - “Great” 84x. (Great earthquakes, plagues, etc.)
 - The number “7” used 54x. (Of angels, churches)
 - Angels are referenced 74x!
- The entire book is signs and visions that speak in figurative language of spiritual realities. Signs that speak of spiritual truths.
- Even John Calvin, the greatest commentator of the Reformation, did not attempt a commentary on Revelation.

Yet, such short sightedness robs the reader of a blessing...the only book of the Bible that promises a blessing to those who read it!

- No book of the Bible takes such a high view of God and specifically Jesus Christ.
- No book of the Bible takes such a high view of the Scriptures: out of 404 verses, 278 allude to the Old Testament.
- No book of the Bible so reveals the majesty and power of God the Father.
- No book of the Bible so describes heaven. The only place in the Bible that actually shows us what heaven looks like!

- No book of the Bible describes the end times in more detail.
- This book will describe the great tribulation, the rapture of the church, but preeminate is the description of our great and powerful Lord Jesus Christ in all of his glory and majesty!
- The Book of Revelation is a cosmic pageant—an elaborate, colorful series of visions that involve celestial beings, beasts, oceans, and the heavenly world.

It is important to understand that the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, and Genesis, the first book of Bible, are intricately linked together.

- The two most powerful books of the Bible are the capstones: Genesis and Revelation.
- If we think of these two books as the Great Circle of Truth, beginning with Genesis, moving through the Old and New Testaments, and concluding with the Apex of Truth in all of the Bible, Revelation.

These two books are the most controversial and most maligned in the Bible:

- Genesis, because it is the book of “beginnings” and records the creation of the earth in 6 literal days. Evolutionists have a real problem with that.
- And yet recent discoveries of DNA are showing the foolishness of evolution.
- Recent archeological discoveries are bringing to light proof of the stories and events in the book of Genesis.
- Satan doesn’t want it literally believed because it shows the demise of him, “He (Christ) shall bruise you head” Satan is cursed!
- Revelation, because it speaks of the coming of Christ and the events of the last days.

Harry Ironside, writing in 1920, wrote, “If you think of Holy Scripture as a golden circle of truth, we start with Genesis, the book of beginnings, and go through the Testaments until we come to Revelation—the book of last things, and lo, we find that it dovetails perfectly into the book of Genesis, thus perfecting the inspired ring!”

The book of Genesis is no less than Paradise Lost, and the book of Revelation is no less than Paradise Regained!

Paradise lost
(Genesis)

Paradise regained
(Revelation)

Cursed ground (3:17)
Daily sorrow (3:17)
Thorns and thistles (3:18)
Sweat and labor (3:19)
Returning to the dust (3:19)
Banished from the garden (3:23)
Redeemer promised (3:15)

No more curses (22:3)
No more sorrow (21:4)
No more pain (21:4)
Tears wiped away (21:4)
No more death (21:4)
Free entry to the city (22:14)
Redemption accomplished (5:9,10)

- Genesis gives us the creation of the heavens and the earth; Revelation gives us a new heaven and new earth.
- Genesis gives us an earthly paradise; Revelation gives us a heavenly paradise.
- In Genesis we see the first Adam and his wife set over God’s creation; in Revelation we behold the Second Adam and His bride ruling over a redeemed world.
- In Genesis we learn of the beginnings of sin with the introduction to the serpent; in Revelation we see the end of sin and the serpent cast into the lake of fire.
- In Genesis we see the city of man; in Revelation we will view the city of God.

This will be such an exciting study! If you are going through great struggles and intense fire, this is the book for you!

- Revelations is one of the most complex and most misunderstood of all the books of the Bible

There are four major interpretations of Revelation:

1. The Preterist Approach interprets Revelation as a description of first century events in the Roman Empire.
 2. The Historical Approach views Revelation as a panoramic view of church history from apostolic times to the present-seeing the symbolism as depicting events in history.
 3. The Idealist Approach views Revelation as a timeless depiction of the cosmic struggle between the forces of good and evil.
 4. The Futurist Approach insists that the events from chapters 6-22 are yet future, and that those chapters will literally happen and symbolically depict actual events that will take place.
 - In my opinion, this view only does justice to Revelation's claim to be prophecy and interprets the book by the same grammatical-historical method as the rest of scripture.
- As we study this book, you, who are walking with Christ will experience great excitement and comfort.
 - If you don't know Christ, you will feel very uncomfortable. We hope this book will bring you to Him.
 - Great Commentaries: Harry Ironside (written in the 1920's), John Walvoord (former President of Dallas Theological Seminary), Henry Morris (whom I just loved his commentary on Genesis), and John MacArthur's excellent commentary.

Revelation 1:1a *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*

- This is not a revelation of John, but a revelation of Jesus Christ. It is a revelation given to John. This is, like the whole Bible, a revelation, not of man's imaginations, but a revelation given by Jesus Christ.

John Walvoord writes, “The book of Revelation, beginning as it does with the Greek word *apokalypsis*, by its very title is apocalyptic in character, that is, a book which claims to unfold the future, the unveiling of that which would otherwise be concealed.”

- The word rendered *revelation* is the translation from the Greek word, *apokalypsis*, meaning an unveiling, uncovering, manifestation, or disclosing of a reality that previously has not been revealed.
 - This is the *apokalypsis Yesu Christu*...the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - In the Old Testament, we have the prophecies of the coming Messiah.
 - In the New Testament Gospels (Matt, Mark, Luke and John) is the life, ministry, and death of Christ. It is about Christ in his humiliation.
 - In the Epistles, we receive the Theology of our Christian Faith.
 - But the book of Revelation presents Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God and the King of all Kings, in His second coming in majesty and exaltation!

The Unveiling: This is the theme of Revelation...the unveiling of Christ.

- This book is unique in the Bible in that it is a “revelation” of future things, not before known to man! We are uncovering a mystery!
- It is a supernatural understanding of future events.
- It is an uncovering of fallen angels, the antichrist, heaven, and hell—Divine Intelligence of the Last Days.
- It is an unveiling of the last days and what God is doing to prepare the earth for His coming...it is the focus of such mystery passages of the Second Coming: Luke 1, Mark 13, Mat 24, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, all come together in Revelation. This is the unveiling of Jesus Christ in the Last Days!

- It is the unveiling of the final battle, Armageddon, the antichrist, the earthly reign of Christ.
- Unveiling of Who Christ is, through the names given, than any other book of the Bible; in chapter one alone:
 - He is the “Faithful Witness,” “First Born of the dead,” “the Ruler of the kings of the earth,” “the One who loved us and washed us,” “the Alpha and the Omega,” “the One who is, who was, and who is to come,” “The Almighty.”
 - The title most often used of Jesus Christ in Revelation is “The Lamb of God” 28x in 22 chapters.

Vs. 1b The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show His servants-

- In Daniel 12:9 we read, “seal up until the end times” Daniel’s prophecy, which we will look at too, is only to be understood in the last days.
- But the book of Revelation is a book to be opened!
- To show His servants! This is not a book for unbelievers, skeptics, and curiosity seekers! This is a book “to show His servants.”
- It is written to the 7 churches as an encyclical to be read aloud in the churches.
- Revelation 22:10 - And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. NKJV
- For some of you this will be a fresh new revelation to you. I have found that most Christians have never studied in depth the wonderful Revelation of Jesus Christ.
- This is a revelation into how to live in light of eternity...especially during times of stress, persecution, and difficulties.

-which God gave Him to show His servants-things which must shortly take place.

- The early church really believed that they were living in the “last days,” we see evidence of this throughout the New Testament letters.
- Paul said in 1st Corinthians that “the time is short.”
- The Thessalonian letters speak of the coming of Christ being soon. (See 1 Thess 4:16-18; 2 Thess 2:1-2)
- There was this sense in the early church that we are all “pilgrims and sojourners” on this earth...anticipating the coming of the Lord.
- Peter wrote, “I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims...”
- The phrase, “shortly come to pass” The phrase does not speak of soonness but speed and brevity.
 - Greek: *en tachei*, that is, “quickly or suddenly coming to pass” indicating rapidity of execution after the beginning takes place.
 - These things, once they begin, will snowball and when these things begin, things will happen quickly.
 - In Rev 6, with the 4 Horsemen of the Apokalypse, ¼ of the world’s population will be destroyed...that’s a population of all of South America, all of Canada, and all of Europe destroyed by war. These things will happen quickly!
- I think we have many indicators that we are living in the last days. That this generation might be the last and great generation: 4 Apocalyptic Indicators:
 1. Abortion: Satan has tried to abort this generation; no generation has experienced such a holocaust.
 2. The Sexual Revolution: Satan has tried to steal their purity and innocence through the greatest onslaught of pornography and sexual temptation the world has ever known.

3. Family Disintegration: Satan has been more successful than ever in the history of the world at tearing the family apart.
4. The growing apostate church: So many solid evangelical churches compromising on biblical truth.
 - This means that when the time is right, everything will happen very quickly...suddenly.

And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. NKJV

- John is the author...4x the author refers to himself as “John.” (Rev 1:1,4,9; 22:8)
 - He is the last of the Lamb’s 12 apostles. The last one alive.
 - John was well known to his readers, His spiritual authority unmatched among the early church leaders.
 - John is the last of the Lamb’s Original 12. He had been through much...tradition says that he was boiled in oil and tortured, yet survived.
 - Thus, the phrase, “witness to the word of God” has special meaning...Witness in the Greek is *martus*, from where we get the word “martyr” or “martyrdom.”
 - John has been banished to the tiny island of Patmos, a tiny island in the Aegean sea, only 13 square miles, off the coast of Turkey.
 - John is now between 90 and 100 years’ old.
 - John later returned to Ephesus and died during the reign of Trajan between 98-115 AD He took care of Mary, Jesus’ mother, who is also buried nearby.
- This was written during a time of extreme persecution of the church...

- There are two perspectives about when Revelation was written:
 - One perspective is that Revelation was written before the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in AD 70, and is both a prophecy of the soon destruction of Jerusalem and also of the coming destruction of the whole world.
 - Another perspective: The early church fathers place the dating of the book sometime in the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96). I believe in this later date:
 - The early church fathers all believed in the later date, some of whom may have even known John: Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Victorinus (who later wrote the first commentary on Rev.) Eusebius, and Jerome, all affirm the later date.
 - This fits with the demise of the churches, which would have been in existence for well over 60 years
- With either dating, Jesus is providing a picture of God's past faithfulness which comforts our present struggles with future promises!

Vs. 3

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

- This is the only book of the Bible that promises a “blessing” to those who read, study, and keep those things written in it.
- 7x it promises a blessing to the reader.
- Listen, this book is for the “overcomer”, the fighter, the one who knows that Jesus Christ reigns! The theme of this book, and don't miss this: **The Revelation of the Reigning, Powerful, Majestic Jesus.**
- Yet, it is such an ignored book. Satan does not want us studying this book. This letter was meant to be read out loud to the believers.
- It may be that the believers are under such extreme persecution that they are living in such places as the Catacombs of Rome, under ground...

- I know that my Redeemer lives! I know there will be a day when we will be gathered around the throne and this mortality will have put on immortality, this corruption, incorruption! No sorrow, no tears, no suffering!
- The kingdom of God is growing in value against the yen, the euro, the dollar.
- Blessed are those who read...blessed are those who hear.
- You are here because God wants you blessed.
 - But, you must respond! You must make that decision for yourself. Choose life.
 - Choose newness of life. If you are a Christian and you are living in sexual immorality, sin, you are out of your mind!
 - Watch the news. Jesus could interrupt human history at any moment.

Conclusion:

- It says of the prodigal son, that there was a day that he “came to his senses” and realized it made better sense to be a servant in the house of his father than to grovel with the pigs...
- The indication is that someone in that condition has lost their senses! Return to your senses. The time is at hand. This book will give us hope!

Prayer: Lord, for those who have been brought here by a friend. I pray that they would turn their hearts to you. For those who know you but have turned away in compromise or because of the pressures of life, we ask that you would be gracious and touch them. Bring back eternal perspective and may it weigh against the vanities of this life. Bless us as we read and live this prophecy.