

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPT 1ST-2ND, 2018 // REVELATION: INTRODUCTION

WHY REVELATION?

REVELATION IS FOR MATURE CHRISTIANS

- A common mistake that many non or new believers make is to read Revelation before reading the rest of the NT.
- **The primary function of Revelation is to prepare Christians for Jesus' return.**
- There is a special blessing bestowed by God to people that take the time to dive into this book.
- **Revelation 1:3 (CSB)**

A HIGHLY MISUNDERSTOOD BOOK

Revelation has been one of the most read and misunderstood books of the Bible. Not only has the content been questioned, but the worth of this book has as well.

- Churches have either twisted or ignored it, and many great theologians (Calvin and Luther) have rejected its canonization.

THE HUMAN OPINION

This is a low opinion of Revelation. Many people believe it is too complicated and has little to no relevance to us today.

THE SATANIC OPINION

Satan really hates the beginning and ending of the Bible. If Satan can convince us Genesis is a myth and Revelation is too complicated, he wins.

THE DIVINE OPINION

This book is extremely important to God. Special blessings are given to people that keep the words of this book and follow them. Also, great consequences fall on people that neglect the warnings of this book.

- **Revelation completes the Word. It reminds us that Christ will return, and tells us how the end will unfold.**

IMAGINE THE BIBLE WITHOUT REVELATION

Without Revelation, the Bible ends with Jude, a small book focusing on false teachers infiltrating the church.

- Revelation is the climax of humanity's relationship with their Creator. **Revelation tells us that tough times will come, but Jesus and His people will triumph.**

AUTHORS

JOHN THE REVELATOR

- John was one of the original 12 and extremely close to Jesus. He wrote 5 books of the Bible, including Revelation.
- He was the only original disciple that died of natural causes. Oddly enough, the only one at the cross as well.
- John never intended to write Revelation. It came to him unexpectedly while in exile.

JOHN JUST HELD THE PEN

John had been boiled alive as an act of persecution from Emperor Domitian, and then exiled to the island of Patmos in Asia Minor. While on Patmos, John received Revelation both audibly and visually. God told him to write down what he saw and heard.

- God is truly the author, but John is the one taking down the words.

WAS IT THE SAME JOHN?

Because Revelation was written in "inferior Greek" and is stylistically different from his other contributions, some scholars don't think it was the same John.

- One has to imagine how this was received. Not only does John receive tons of info rapidly, but it is of things he has never seen.

APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

THE WORD APOCALYPSE GETS A BAD RAP

The word *apocalypse* simply means an unveiling. Apocalyptic writing *tells of things that are coming*.

- Revelation is unique in the fact that it encompasses the past, present, and future because God sees all time as a whole.

DIFFERENT VIEWS ON HOW REVELATION RELATES TO TIME

1. **Cyclical:** The idea that history repeats itself. The world gets worse, then better, and so on.
2. **Rhythmic:** That time works in cycles, but never repeats the same way.
3. **Optimistic:** That the world is always progressing towards good things.
4. **Pessimistic:** That the world is only getting worse until it becomes unsustainable.

THE APOCALYPTIC VIEW

In this view, people think the world will get steadily worse until something suddenly happens to make things better than they've ever been before.

- Jews, Communists, and Christians all share this view. The Jews think the coming Messiah will be the catalyst, Communists think it will be social revolution, and Christians believe it is the 2nd coming of Jesus.

SYMBOLISM AND NUMBERS

The most popular defining characteristics of Apocalyptic Literature are symbols and numbers. Some of them are obvious, some explained, some paralleled with other scripture, and some are obscure (very few). This is the trickiest part of Revelation. This is also where some people get super weird.

SCHOOLS OF INTERPRETATION

30% OF REVELATION IS PREDICTIONS

Because there are 56~ prophesies in this book, interpretations vary. It's important to know that no one school of thought explains Revelation. **It takes several interpretations to tackle Revelation.**

- This is a complex book that takes some work and control to get through without distorting it.

THE PRETERIST VIEW

This is the view that Revelation was fulfilled when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. That would mean that this book was specifically for the 1st Century church and is all historical.

- **Strength:** Focuses on context. / **Weakness:** The prophecies weren't fulfilled according to history.

HISTORICIST VIEW

This view looks at the writing of Revelation as things that have happened, but also as cyclical. This is the idea that every generation has similar events take place (an antichrist in every generation).

- **Strength:** Applies to every generation. / **Weakness:** It is the weakest theory based on history.

FUTURIST VIEW

Believes everything after chapter 3 is in the future and compressed into a short span of years. Typically people in this camp believe in a "rapture" before any tribulation. Often, futurists try to decipher codes in Revelation.

- **Strength:** It acknowledges prophecies. / **Weakness:** It strips importance from scripture and focuses on codes.

IDEALIST VIEW

Views Revelation as myths or fables that have good morals and truths. They believe the underlying themes of Revelation to be true, but not that there are actual future events coming. It also doesn't promote an "End Time."

- **Strength:** It focuses on morals & values. / **Weakness:** It reduces the book to parable like stories.

THE EMPHASIS WILL CHANGE THROUGHOUT

Revelation is broken into distinct parts (Chapters 1-3, 4-18, and 19-22) and the different views and interpretations are to be used in different sections in order to help us understand.

- **I advise us to not get so hung up on these views, but to focus on context and who the passage is speaking to.**

THE POINT

THERE ARE MANY PRACTICAL TAKEAWAYS

From Revelation we get the theme of **worship**, that Christians will be **persecuted**, **God's protection** of His people, the **importance of repentance**, and a reminder that **Jesus is in fact returning** for those that believe. Revelation was written to normal people for practical reasons.

REVELATION IS A BOOK ABOUT PERSEVERANCE

Revelation is focused on more in nations where people are being martyred because it gives the oppressed and persecuted hope. This book should also be studied by us because it prophesies that all believers will go through persecution.

- **Believers are called to endure and lean on God even in the worst times.**

THE KEY WORD IS "OVERCOME"

The central theme of Revelation is that the church will overcome all persecution because Jesus will overcome all evil.

- The central idea in Revelation is simple: **Jesus is victorious**. The question is, **will we remember this when the world starts to fall apart?**

DON'T GET LOST IN THE WEEDS

If we approach Revelation with an open mind and humble heart, we will find an amazing prophesy that gives vivid imagery of God, heaven, and how God's people spend eternity.

- Don't get lost in the non-essentials of this book! Focus on Jesus and preparing for His return!