

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 20TH-21ST, 2024 // REVELATION

WHY REVELATION?

- Revelation 1:3

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** and there is a special blessing bestowed to people who take the time to study this book.

A HIGHLY MISUNDERSTOOD WORK

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

- Many churches have twisted or ignored it, and some 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 end of the Bible. If he can convince us Genesis is a myth and Revelation is too complicated, he wins.

THE DIVINE OPINION

This book is very important. Special blessings are given to those who keep these words and follow them. Also, great consequences fall on those who 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

One of the original 12 and extremely close to Jesus. John wrote five books of the Bible but never intended to write Revelation. It came to him unexpectedly while in exile.

- John was the only apostle who died of natural causes. Oddly enough, he was the only one of the 12 present at the cross.

JOHN ESSENTIALLY JUST HELD THE PEN

John had been boiled alive by Emperor Domitian, and then exiled to Patmos in Asia Minor. While on Patmos, John audibly and visually received Revelation. 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.

IS 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 no one has seen.

APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

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.

- We will not understand everything, but Revelation will give us clear warning signs.

VIEWS ON HOW REVELATION RELATES TO TIME

- **Cyclical:** The idea that history repeats itself. The world gets worse, then better, and so on until Jesus decides to return.
- **Rhythmic:** Similar to Cyclical; time works in cycles, but never repeats the same way.
- These views often lead people to believe every generation has its "Antichrist."
- **Optimistic:** The idea that the world is always progressing toward good things.
- Not only the Bible but most credible research also points away from this.
- **Pessimistic:** The idea 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 permanently better than they've ever been.

SYMBOLS AND NUMBERS

One popular characteristic of apocalyptic literature is symbols and numbers. Some are obvious, some are explained, some parallel with other Scripture, and very few are obscure.

- This is the trickiest part of Revelation. This is also where some people get weird and

get wrapped up in **gematria**.

REMEMBER, THIS IS APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

Revelation is just that, a revelation of things God wants us to know. **This book is meant to show us things, not conceal them.**

- We must be careful to keep the main thing the main thing. **God wants us to grow closer to Him through this book, not live in fear or conspiracy about the end times.**

SCHOOLS OF INTERPRETATION

30% OF REVELATION IS PREDICTIONS

Because there are 56 or so prophesies in this book, interpretations vary quite a bit. It is important to know that no one school of thought explains Revelation. **It takes several approaches (tools) to tackle Revelation.**

- Revelation **takes some work and control** to get through without distorting it.

THE PRETERIST VIEW

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

- Strength: It focuses on context.
- Weakness: The prophecies weren't fulfilled according to history.

THE HISTORICIST VIEW

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

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

THE FUTURIST VIEW

Believes everything after chapter 3 is in the future but compressed into a short time. Typically, people in this camp believe in a pre-tribulation "rapture" and try to decipher codes.

- Strength: It acknowledges prophecies.
- Weakness: It strips importance away from Scripture and focuses on signs/codes.

THE IDEALIST VIEW

Views Revelation as moral parables. They believe the underlying themes of Revelation to be true, but not actual future events. 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 (Ch. 1-3, 4-18, and 19-22), and the different views and interpretations are to be used in different sections to help us (different tools).

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

OUR FOCUS

THERE ARE MANY PRACTICAL TAKEAWAYS

From Revelation we get many themes: **worship, Christian persecution, God's protection**, the importance of **repentance, perseverance**, and a reminder that **Jesus is returning** for those who love Him.

- **Revelation was written to normal people for practical reasons.**

A BOOK ABOUT PERSEVERANCE

Revelation is valued more in nations where people are persecuted for their faith because it gives the oppressed hope. This book should also be studied by us because it prophesies that all true Believers will go through trials.

- **Believers are called to endure and lean on God even in the worst times.**
- Revelation 14:12

A KEY WORD IS "OVERCOME"

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

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

MAJORING ON THE MAJORS

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

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

REVELATION WILL STRETCH US

- Revelation shouldn't scare us. If we humbly focus on the central themes of this book, it will greatly challenge and bless us while also begging the questions:
- "How much do we love Jesus?"
- "How committed are we to our faith?"
- "Are we ready to meet God face-to-face?"