

Intro to **THE REVELATION**

Title: The title of the book is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” The word, “revelation,” is the Greek word, “apokalupsis,” where we get the word “apocalypse.” Although the word has become associated with events surrounding the end of time, the literal meaning of “apokalupsis” is “the unveiling, the disclosure of things that were unknown beforehand, the revealing of what is coming to pass”

Author: The writer of The Revelation is thought to be the Apostle John, who received the revelation and wrote the book while he was exiled to the island of Patmos by the Roman Emperor, Domitian. Legend has it that Domitian tried to kill John by boiling him in a pot of oil, but somehow John miraculously survived. The Emperor then had him banished to the island, thinking that John would be out of sight and out of mind and would eventually die there. However, when the Emperor Nerva took over for the deceased Domitian, he released John, who lived out his final days with the believers in Ephesus.

The Purpose and Theme: As John, himself, states: “to show His servants what must soon take place,” and to be a blessing to the body of Christ. Even though the book was written to reveal those things which are to come, its ultimate revelation is Jesus Christ, himself, in all of His glory and splendor as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.—that he is Lord, that he is Savior, and that he is soon coming King.

Prologue (1:1-8)

In his opening prologue and greeting, John addresses the recipients of his letter—the seven churches in the province of Asia. In his greeting, he declares, “Behold, he is coming in the clouds and every eye shall see him, even those who pierced him, and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him.” In these verses, John conveys several points of important theology. One, that Jesus Christ will return to redeem His people, and two, that he is preexisting and preeminent. He is, He has always been, and He forever will be...the Almighty God.

The Vision of Jesus Christ (1:9-19)

Here John has his first vision, and his first vision is “One like unto the Son of Man.” The description in these verses is so vivid and powerful. “He was dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet...His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and His eyes were like blazing fire.” When John saw Him, he fell down as though he were dead. Then the figure placed His hand on him and told him to not be afraid, rather, to write down the things that he sees and send it to the seven churches.

Letters to the Churches (2:1-3:22)

In chapters 2 and 3, John writes to the seven churches. A summary of this material is included on a separate handout.

The Throne Room (4:1-4:14)

The next part of the unveiling is a description of the throne room in heaven, with a scroll being held by the one who sat upon it. Having no one worthy to open the scroll, a lamb emerges and takes the scroll from the hand of the one who sat on the throne. Then, all the inhabitants in heaven begin to sing, “Worthy Is The Lamb that was slain.”

The Seven Seal Judgments (6:1-17; 8:1-5)

The first of three series of judgments are executed by the opening of the seals on the scroll. These seven seal judgments are listed for you on a detailed handout.

The 144,000 (7:1-17)

The next section includes 144,000, representative of 12,000 from each tribe in the nation of Israel, who were sealed as servants of God. This segues into verses that tell of a great multitude of believers who were saved during the time of the great tribulation, lending to the belief that there will be those who will be saved during this turbulent time.

The Trumpet Judgments (8:6-11:19)

These are the second in a series of three sets of judgments brought by God upon the earth. These are listed in a separate handout. Also embedded in this section is the discourse concerning an angel and a small scroll in chapter 10, as well as the presence of two witnesses in chapter 11, believed to be Moses and Elijah.

The Great and Marvelous Sign—the Woman and the Dragon (12:1-13:1)

An interesting scenario is presented in these verses. The woman, the harlot, is believed to be Babylon, and Babylon is believed to be the Roman Empire. It was the Roman Empire that was the backdrop setting for the birth of Christ, it was Rome that became the hub of Christianity in the early centuries. It is believed that Rome will play an important part in the events of the end of days. John also describes a scene that seems to tell of the birth of Christ and the eventual battle between Satan and Michael over the child. Satan, “the dragon” was defeated and lost his place in heaven. He was then hurled down to the earth and given a season of time to lead the world astray.

The Two Beasts (13:1-18)

John tells of a beast that will emerge from the sea, and one who will emerge from the earth—which are interpreted as being the Antichrist and his False Prophet. During this time a mark is instituted so that no one can buy or sell unless they have this mark on their foreheads or their hands.

An Interlude (14:1-20)

In this interlude, John tells of seeing the Lamb with the 144,000 on Mt. Zion, the presence of three angels, and a scene where the One “like unto the Son of Man” takes a sickle and reaps a harvest of souls. A second reaping resulted in those souls being poured into a winepress of God’s wrath and trampled outside the city.

The Seven Bowl Judgments (15:1-16:21)

The last series of judgments come from seven bowls of God’s wrath that are poured out upon the earth. An analysis of these are included in a separate handout.

The Great Harlot and the Fall of Babylon (17:1-18:24)

In chapter 17, we are once again presented with the woman on the beast, who represents Babylon, who represents the Roman Empire. Added in the mix is a beast with ten horns, thought to represent a union of 10 nations that have come together to wage war against the Lamb. In chapter 19, a prophetic woe is given towards Babylon, paving the way for the return of Christ and an ultimate battle between Christ and Antichrist.

The Return of Christ (19:1-21)

Chapter 19 is the ultimate revelation of Jesus Christ on the white horse, as he triumphs in victory over the beast.

The Millennial Reign of Christ (20:1-10)

The return of Christ marks the beginning of a 1000 year millennial reign here on the earth, as Satan is bound for the duration of that time. At the end of the period, Satan is released for one final effort to sway the souls of men.

The Judgment (20:11-13)

After Satan is defeated and banished to Hell forever, the Great White Throne judgment takes place. The book of life is open, and people are judged according to what they had done. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into Hell.

Eden Restored (22:1-22:6)

John’s description of his vision on a new heaven and a new earth is one of the most descriptive and detailed passages in the book. The New Jerusalem will be adorned with streets of gold and precious jewels, but will have no need of light because “the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.” His description is representative of the restoration of the perfect world, which God created in the beginning, and a restoration of our perfect bodies and souls. The curse of the garden will be gone and the servants of God will see Him face to face.

Final Words (22:7-21)

John ends the revelation with a warning for readers to not add or take away any words to the prophecy contained within, and a blessing to those who hears the words and keeps them. He conveys a final word from the Lord, “Behold, I am coming soon. My reward is with me and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.” John ends with a personal appeal, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”