

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 9/30/09 Wednesday evening

## New Testament Survey—Revelation

This evening we're finishing our journey through the New Testament, through the Bible in fact. In January 2008 we began a survey of the Old Testament, one book per week. Then in January 2009 we moved into a survey of the New Testament, again one book at a time. And now we've reached the end of the book, and how the book ends!

I'm thankful for the book of Revelation. In God's gracious purposes, this was the book that He used to bring me to faith in Christ as a ten year old. My family had moved to a new town and a new church and my new pastor was preaching about the end times from this book. God used its message to help me realize I was unprepared for what's coming in the future, and that the only way to be prepared is to know Jesus Christ as one's Savior and Lord.

To do: Write down the first things that come to your mind when you hear these words, "The Book of Revelation." What effect does this book have on you?

- **Who wrote the book?**

--John, the apostle (1:4)

Q: What other books did John write? In what order? The Gospel of John, 1, 2, 3 John

Discuss: The first words of a book are key: "The revelation of Jesus Christ." What does this indicate about the material in this book? It's not primarily a book about events, but about a person. It's the *revelation* of Jesus Christ.

What is a practical implication of this truth? We should read this book with an aim to get to know Jesus better, not merely to get a "chart" to debate with.

To do: Scan the following verses. What do we learn about Jesus from them?

1:5 He's the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth [hold that final thought...THE ruler]

1:5 He's the one who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood

1:6 He's made us to be a kingdom. He's the one who possesses all glory and power.

1:7 He's coming with the clouds. Every eye will see Him.

1:8 He's the beginning and the ending...

Q: Who received the book? 1:4 "To the seven churches in the province of Asia"

Q: Describe the occasion on which John received this revelation. See 1:9-10.

Q: What makes this book so special, according to 1:3? "Blessed..."

- **When was the book written?**

--95 A.D. (during Domitian's reign)

--A few suggest an earlier date in the reign of Vespasian, A.D. 69-79

Q: What was happening in the Roman world towards the end of the first century?

1. There was the cult of Emperor worship. Roman authorities were taking aggressive action against anyone who would not confess the Lordship of Caesar.

2. Christians were facing severe persecution. Why? Because they would not bow to Caesar.

Discuss: How would a book like Revelation encourage Christians living in such a situation?

- **Why was the book written?**

--God gave the book to encourage persecuted Christians to be faithful to Christ by giving a graphic picture of who He is and what He will do.

### Key: The Special Literary Form of Revelation

To do: The Holy Spirit did not use just one literary form in writing the Bible, but several. Name the various types: narrative, poetry, epistles (letters), discourse, prophecy, proverbs (wisdom literature), etc.

Note: We believe in the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation, but you can't read and interpret all passages the same way. For example: "The Lord is my shepherd." Does that mean God literally has a shepherd's crook, and that David saw himself as a literal sheep with wool? No. It's a poetic image.

Q: What kind of literature is the book of Revelation? A special kind called "apocalyptic," a type of writing that is highly symbolic. It may even seem bizarre to the Western reader because it's a literary form we don't have.

### Clues in the Book of Revelation

In the book, we find several clues to help us know what some of the images represent (from *NIVsb*).

Q: What are stars? 1:20 Angels of the seven churches

Q: What are lampstands? 1:20 The seven churches

Q: Who is the great prostitute? 17:1 Babylon (Rome?), see 17:5, 18

Q: Who is the heavenly Jerusalem? 21:9-10 The wife of the Lamb

### Interpretation of the Book

Four options (see *NIVsb*, p. 1923)

1. Preterists
2. Historicists
3. Futurists
4. Idealists

- **What is the outline of the book?**

--The key verse is 1:19, "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later."

Have Been	Are	Shall Be Hereafter
Ch. 1	Chs. 2-3	Chs. 4-22
Past	Present	Future
Christ	Churches	Consummation

(from Robert Gromacki, *NT Survey*, 395)

- **What is the message of the book in one sentence?**

--The book of Revelation reveals to us a picture of Jesus and shows us what He's going to do to the world in the future.

- **What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?**

1. *Revelation presents the unveiled picture of Jesus Christ.*

When He came to earth, He was veiled (except for one time when He allowed His splendor to be seen. When? The mount of Transfiguration). But Revelation shows Him in His splendor...

- a. He is exalted in heaven (chs. 4-5).
- b. He will be exalted on earth (chs 6ff).

To do: Make a list of all the titles ascribed to Christ in the book.

Discuss: What effect does reading the book have on your understanding of the person of Jesus Christ?

## 2. *Revelation teaches us about key, end-time events.*

- a. The Great Tribulation
- b. The Judgment that God is going to pour out on the earth
  - \*Seven seals (6:1-8:1)
  - \*Seven trumpets (8:2-11:19)
  - \*Seven Bowls (chs. 15:16)
- c. The Return of Christ to the earth (19:11-21)
- d. The Millennial Kingdom (20:1-6)
- e. The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15)
- f. The New Heaven and New Earth (21:1-22:5)

Discuss: How should knowing about these events affect our lives?

Q: What warning does God give at the end of the book? 22:18-19

Q: What are the last words of the Bible? On what note does the Bible conclude? See 22:20-21

--A promise from Jesus (20), "I am coming soon."

--A response from his people [from John?] in verse 20, "Come, Lord Jesus."

--A provision to keep us until He comes (21), "The grace of the Lord Jesus"

--A final word of assurance (21), "Amen." It's true! So be it!

Let's conclude our survey of Revelation, of the NT, and of the Bible with a time of thanksgiving for the privilege of having God's Word and the opportunities to study it!