

**THE BOOK OF**

# **REVELATION**

*A Brief Study of the Times and Events of the Apocalypse*

**Teacher**



**by**

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## INTRODUCTION

A proper understanding of Revelation will begin in the book of Genesis where we read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The chapter continues by focusing on God forming and filling THE EARTH. It is not surprising, then, to find the scriptures that follow focus on activity taking place on earth. **A focus on EARTH.**

Much later, God called Abram to "a land that I will shew thee" (Gen. 12:1). God confirmed this covenant with Abram, the father of the nation of Israel, a few chapters later with a reminder that "I will give to thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession: and I will be their God" (Gen. 17:8). Note: the earthly land of Canaan would be given to Abraham's descendants for an everlasting possession. This focus on earthly inheritance was not pronounced to just be a temporary thing; God has a plan for earth for eternity. **An inheritance on EARTH.**

Even before Abraham, Enoch had already been prophesying of the Lord's coming to earth (Gen. 5:21-14; Jude 1:14). Since the beginning, God had a plan for the earth. A plan that, after the nations rejected Him, centered on the nation of Israel. **A future for EARTH.**

Moving forward to the days of Moses, the Lord once again confirms His covenant with Israel in Deuteronomy 1:8: "Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them." Israel was told that the Lord had brought them to the land that He had promised to give them; it was now upon them to enter in and possess it. **A land on EARTH.**

Heading out of the Pentateuch into the Historical books of Scripture, Joshua, old and feeble, gives instructions for the people to continue in his absence. He reminds them, "And the Lord your God, He shall expel [the land's current inhabitants] from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the Lord your God hath promised unto you" (Josh. 23:5). The Lord had promised this land to them, it would be theirs if they obeyed in faith to drive out the inhabitants. **A possession on earth.**

As we arrive at David's kingdom, we read of a kingdom reign promised on earth. Part of that promise was "Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime" (2 Sam. 7:10). This "place of their own" was a kingdom centered in Jerusalem, which is why this city becomes the focus of so many prophesies going forward. **A kingdom on EARTH.**

The Prophetic books also speak of an eternal future for Israel on earth. Though the verses are too numerous to list here, we will focus on a few passages. Jeremiah 30 was inspired and written as the nation of Israel was captive outside of the Promised Land. This expelling from the land was God's judgment on the kingdom for its persistent rebellion against His ways and their refusal to turn back to Him. However, Jeremiah 30:4-11 reminds the people that the Lord always keeps His promises and that He would regather His people back to the land one day.

# LESSON 1

## INTRODUCTION

No book has received more attention than the Book of Revelation. Bible conferences based upon the events of this book regularly attract large audiences curious to know the future. But, as we study the Book of Revelation, curiosity alone ought not to be our sole motivation. Rather, we should approach the study desirous to discover new truths concerning God and His dealings with mankind.

There are several methods commonly employed in the study of Revelation; they are:

1. The **PRETERIST** approach. This approach views the events in this book as having already taken place. Because of this viewpoint, the book has no real meaning to us. The word "PRETERIST" means "past." It already happened.
2. The **ALLEGORICAL** approach. This approach views the events of the book as an allegory of the age-old conflict between good and evil. With this view there are no controls on the imaginations of the interpreter, therefore, the true meaning is obviously obscured. It is spiritualized  
"Kingdom is in our hearts."
3. The **HISTORICAL** approach. This view looks at the book as a wide-sweeping view of the church from the time of John to the end of the age. Those who hold to this view see the events as symbols of the rise of the papacy, the corruption of the church, and the various wars fought throughout church history. It is tied to church history.
4. The **FUTURIST** approach. This view holds that all of the events seen in the vision are future happenings. This is the more literal approach. As one studies the book carefully, it becomes apparent to the honest student that the events depicted have not yet transpired. No event in history has even come close to those depicted here. It hasn't happened yet.

It is the position of our study that the events recorded in the vision of John, in the revelation received by him, have not yet taken place, and that they are indeed future. But one day they will be **LITERALLY (Futurist)** fulfilled in what we will discover as the period called "The Day of the Lord" or "The Time of Jacob's Trouble." It will actually happen as it is described.

It is often argued that the Book of Revelation is full of symbolism that makes it difficult to understand. In reality, while the book does contain a great deal of symbolism, in most cases it is explained in the book itself. These symbols include such things as the "Seven Candlesticks" and "Seven Stars."

Parables—Luke 8:9-10

# The Book of Revelation

NOTES/QUICK GUIDE    What do the *Seven Stars* represent? (1:20)

V.1 “To show”  
The Lord wanted the information to be understood, which is why most symbolism is interpreted.

We should not permit these symbols to deprive us from truly enjoying the rich truths that are presented here. While every book of the Bible is important to know and understand, this book is of importance because it contains information of things which “must shortly come to pass” (1:1). Revelation deals with the end of the age and is the *ONLY* book of the New Testament that is primarily prophetic.

## THE AUTHOR

V2 John is just the recorder of God’s Words, much like all the authors of Scripture.

We discover the name of the author from the book itself (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8). But contrary to what many Bibles contain as the title (“The Revelation of John”), it presents not the Revelation of John, but, rather, the “Revelation of Jesus” (1:1). Therefore, while John is the named “*human*” author of the book, it contains the revelation given to him by an angel of Jesus Christ (vs. 1) and tells of His return to earth bringing to conclusion His work with Israel.

V3 READS  
HEARS  
KEEPS

The glorious person and power of Jesus Christ<sup>1</sup> is presented as the chapter opens. John’s message is said to come from the eternal One, the First begotten, the One Who washed away all of their sin and has made them kings and priests.<sup>2</sup> Jesus Christ will return with (or from) the clouds (heavens), and those who pierced Him, and all the world, shall wail because of Him (vss. 4-7).

V4 Eternity past  
Present  
Eternity future  
Jam. 1:17; Is. 57:15

## THE AUDIENCE

V5 “witness” is Greek word *martus* out of which we get our word “martyr.”

There is much discussion as to *WHOM* this book was originally written. Much of the debate centers on the churches named in the opening Chapter (1:4, 11).

“first begotten of the dead” is also the Eternal One, which is proof Jesus is God. (1:18).

V7 “which pierced” (Jn. 19:15; Acts 2:23; Zech. 12:10)

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<sup>1</sup> The name “Jesus Christ” is the name used primarily in relationship to the Nation of Israel. It refers to the One Who humbled Himself but is now exalted and glorified as Christ. In the Gospels it means Jesus the Messiah. While the same order is presented in the writings of Paul, in reality the order should have been reversed (and is properly reversed in some manuscripts). The important thing to note is that this order is used primarily with Israel not the Church, the Body of Christ.

“coming” (Zech 14:4)

V8 I AM (Ex. 3:14)

<sup>2</sup>The “sins” spoken of in Revelation 1:5 would refer to all sin including Israel’s “national sin.” This sin has been forgiven, but the application of that forgiveness awaits Israel’s repentance. The “time of Jacob’s trouble” will bring the nation once-and-for-all to that point. Also, the reference is made that that lie has “washed” and made them kings and priests. This cleansing was accomplished in His blood. The ceremonial type of this was carried out at the Laver and through the rite of Baptism. What is about to be fulfilled in Exodus 19:5-6?

What are the names of the seven churches?

1. Ephesus
2. Smyrna
3. Pergamos
4. Thyatira
5. Sardis
6. Philadelphia
7. Laodicea

Some argue that the seven-mentioned churches were literal churches in existence at the time John received his revelation. It is said that they existed in what is now modern Turkey (See Figure 1). Some among this group hold that the letter was received by them and that the events of the book have already taken place.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 1

In contrast, others hold that while these churches may have existed at the time of John, the events portrayed must be viewed as future. This would extend even to the churches themselves and that while they are no longer in existence today, they will one day be restored. In addition, it is held that these seven churches, complete with their individual

#### NOTES/QUICK GUIDE

Just because the word “church” does not mean this is the Body of Christ.

The word “ekklesia” is also used for:

- “church” in the wilderness (Acts 7:36-38)
- riotous mob (Acts 19:32)
- Town council (Acts 19:39,41)
- Meeting (Jam. 2:2)
- Body of Christ (Col. 1:18)

John had confined himself to minister to the circumcision (Gal. 2:9).

<sup>3</sup> In reality, nearly all commentators will speak of these churches as existing in John's day and having reference to the Church, the Body of Christ. At the same time, they reject any notion that they represent Jewish churches in the Tribulation. The following quotation is typical of those who reject the “futuristic” character of the seven churches. “The teaching of some that the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 represent assemblies in Tribulation arises from Satanic delusion.” (William R. Newell, *Revelation: A Complete Commentary*, World Bible Publishers, Iowa Falls, Iowa, 1987, page 9.)