



Revelation – Introduction

Hold onto your hearts as you throw all your effort into studying this awesome book, you will be changed beyond all recognition.

When looking at this on a weekly basis we must beware of getting our focus on the images drawn for us in the different scenes; or concerned about the timings; and other's opinions of God's plans for the future of humanity. Our reason for studying this book is to focus on Jesus only, it is His story and at the right time He will return and we will be in a good position to recognise Him. We must be able to know Him when He returns more than identifying the signs or the activities of the time. If we are

focusing on some expected fulfillment of prophecy **more** than Him we may be disappointed. Many didn't recognise Him the first time and yet they knew lots that was written about Him, but when He was in front of their faces they had no idea who He was, what a challenge. Will we recognise Him if He returns tonight?

The Book of **Revelation** is a personal letter from God. It was written by John the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ while he was exiled by the Romans on the island of Patmos probably around AD 95. It has never been more relevant than it is today. What could be more treasured than a letter from Jesus? Jesus was given the message by God Himself and sent by His angels to His servant, John, who became the mailman. It is written in 'apocalyptic' form which is a type of Jewish literature that uses symbolic imagery to communicate hope to any in the midst of persecution. The Jews knew they were God's chosen people so although their history was a catalogue of disasters they knew there was hope that although no human leader was going to deliver them, God would do it Himself for His chosen ones.

It's a challenge for us to capture the prophetic significance of the book, but still gain its personal implications for our lives. All the way through we should be aware of what the Word is saying personally for our lifestyle and attitudes and the amazing promises for our future. It is not written in strict chronological sequence which does make it harder to follow. It is always good to remember that the best commentary on the Bible is another part of the Bible. We may well find this book difficult at times and bewildering, but we need to push through as it will be so worthwhile to listen to what the Spirit is saying to **this** Church today.

When Jesus came as a baby the first time He came in meekness to do a job for His Father but the second time He will come with His Glory revealed in great power and authority and He will smash the opposition. There will be great fear in Satan's camp and great rejoicing for the children of God. All our faith must hold onto this Truth whatever we see happening in the world. Revelation often becomes an object of sensation or speculation, as we study it's easy to become disjointed in our perspective, so constantly we need to come back to our view of Jesus. It's not a revelation of information; it's a revelation of Jesus Christ Himself and His life work. It's not a revelation of prophecy; it's a revelation of Jesus. "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants." Revelation 1:1. It is of Him and it is from Him. He didn't want us to guess about all the happenings and significant visions until He comes again. So be open to the Holy Spirit and let the pictures lead you into deeper worship that even if we do not understand it all, we can totally trust what God has planned without fear.

This will not be a study of doom, gloom and destruction leading to fear of who the antichrist is; what about the mark of the beast? When will the rapture happen? Am I going through the Tribulation? The Holy Spirit controlled what was written in the rest of the Bible so He is well able to declare to us what He wants us to learn from this book. He will not write sixty five books full of love, mercy and grace and when He comes to book sixty six He fills it with terror, hopelessness and condemnation. Try to put behind you all preconceived ideas of previous opinions or teachings and enter the study with a real enthusiasm of what God wants to say to you personally. If you are not sure of what something means just hold on and put it to the back of your mind and allow God to join up the dots to this end-time picture at a later date. This is not the revelation, or unveiling, of the wrath of God, but the revelation of Jesus Christ. In the Gospels we saw Jesus revealed as the Saviour, in the Epistles we see Him as Head of the Church, His Bride. In Revelation we see Jesus as the Triumphant Lord over all of creation.

We see Satan's biggest attack against the earth described in Revelation but even this fails, his best is not good enough or powerful enough. Of course, there will be times during these years when Satan will feel really pleased with himself just like he felt after the Crucifixion. But very soon he will realise he has made a

very big mistake and God has turned the situation around for growth in His Kingdom. This should really encourage us that there is absolutely nothing Satan can do against us that will separate us from the amazing love of God as seen in His Son Jesus, **Romans 8:35**. Nothing that Satan does against us is outside the knowledge of our loving Father who will make sure it is not more than we can be victorious through.

For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance and that is not adjusted and adapted and belonging to human experience, and such as man can bear]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the means of escape to a landing place), that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently'. **1 Corinthians 10:13 (Amplified Bible)**.

Make sure this promise is one we keep as a focus for us as we study Revelation. Satan has no weapons, we are the ones who have been given those to bring down strongholds, he only has tools like fear, strife and confusion. 'The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds'. **2 Corinthians 10:4**

No speculation

'And we have the prophetic word [made] firmer still. You will do well to pay close attention to it as to a lamp shining in a dismal (squalid and dark) place, until the day breaks through [the gloom] and the Morning Star rises (comes into being) in your hearts. [Yet] first [you must] understand this, that no prophecy of Scripture is [a matter] of any personal or private or special interpretation (loosening, solving). For no prophecy ever originated because some man willed it [to do so--it never came by human impulse], but men spoke from God who were borne along (moved and impelled) by the Holy Spirit.' **2 Peter 1:19-21 (Amplified Bible)**

There are hundreds of YouTube 'ten minute' teachings on the web where people are sharing their opinion or they have copied a well know preachers teaching and then refuted it. There are also those on the web that have an interesting 'Revelation' heading but it turns out to be someone who wants to give an opinion against the teachings of Christ. It is so important that we don't latch on to a certain interpretation that we have picked up from the web or commentary and we blindly follow this thinking and also push it in our discussions. Most writers who have books about Revelation would say, years later, that they have changed their mind about some aspect of what they have written. If we are all walking with Christ He has started a good work in us and He intends to complete it, **Philippians 1:6**. It is not our job to do His work, it is only our work to obey His leading by the Holy Spirit, from a heart full of love. So each of us as individuals need to see what Jesus is saying to us through His Spirit and agree with that; but not to be pushed into agreeing with someone else to keep them happy or we think they are more spiritual.

Learn to identify the voice of the Holy Spirit to you and as long as it is in line with the Word of God, you are growing in Him.

All through the Word, God has established a pattern, He does not fluctuate His Truth to fit in with what He wants to say, He shows His steadfastness. **Revelation** was given to John with some signs, **Revelation 1:1** 'sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John.' The book has been 'sign-ified' meaning it is a book of signs and symbols. Half of the symbols are explained in the book itself. Where the symbols are not explained we hope to get help from other parts of the Bible for God's interpretation. We are not looking for an army of locusts or a collection of literal scorpions, we want the Holy Spirit to show us how He sees it, **Isaiah 55:9**.

It has been suggested that the book was written like this so the Romans, ruling at the time it was written, would not understand the book otherwise they would see that it was declaring the downfall and destruction of the Roman Empire and so Christians would have been slaughtered and massacred without question. The Emperor Domitian was allowing people to worship only him, so if he found out that John was prophesying his destruction, Christians would be killed.

There is a strong mathematical pattern in the book with the letters to the seven churches; then there is the opening of the seven seals, the blowing of the seven trumpets and the seven vials containing bowls of judgment. Just as a month contains weeks and weeks contain seven days, so as the seals are opened they contain trumpets. As they are opened they contain the vials of judgment.

The book starts in heaven with a blessing from God and ends in heaven with the last judgment and the beautiful celestial city. This is the final answer to the Lord's prayer, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven', **Matthew 6:10**.

God's will is decreed and declared in heaven, then we see His will being done on earth. Revelation shows that no power in heaven, earth, or hell can frustrate the fulfillment of that plan. God's kingdom will come and we are going to learn how as we go through this study!

Revelation – Introduction – Challenge Questions.

It is important to note that the author certainly does not have full truth about this book and is gaining revelation daily along with all students. Do not hesitate to email any difference of opinion or fresh revelation from the Holy Spirit this will be much appreciated.

Please try to answer all the questions as this will help you to participate more fully in the Group Discussions. Also, you might be able to help others who are finding it difficult to answer the questions. Do not be concerned about getting answers 'wrong'. Everyone will learn something from these sessions

1. **Read the Notes and the Bible Verses** referred to in them. Highlight the points that 'speak' to you. Be willing to share in your group.

Read Revelation 1:1-8

2. Who gave this Book to be written? What was the purpose of it being given? To whom was this Book written?
3. According to **Daniel 2:27-28**, who cannot reveal mysteries about the future, and who can? Was King Nebuchadnezzar a Believer? Did God speak to him and if so, how? Does God speak to those who are not Believers today? If so, can you explain some of the ways in which He might speak to them?
4. Can we know the identity of the Angel in **Revelation 1:1**, and who might the Angel be? Who was John? In what circumstances might he have met Jesus and what did he learn from Him?
5. **Revelation 1:2** states that John testified to everything he saw. What did he see? How can the word of God be seen? What are the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ? Explain simply.
6. What is a blessing? Such a thing is promised to different types of people in this Book of Revelation, who are they, and what conditions do they have to fulfil to receive a Blessing? Do you expect to receive a Blessing from your studies of Revelation, and what do you expect to receive by way of a Blessing? What will happen to those who detract from the things written in this Book? Do you believe that this will happen literally?
7. What part of the world did the people inhabit? Who was the Ruler of this part of the world? Do you think that being a Believer was easy? Explain your reasons. Is it easy to be a Believer today?

8. **Read Revelation 1:4.** Grace and Peace were expressed to those who would receive this Book. Define each term and say how that might apply to your life today. This verse speaks of an area. What is this timeframe? What is meant by the term 'the seven spirits'?

9. **Read Revelation 1:5.** Jesus also sent the same greeting. He is described as being a) the faithful witness, b) the firstborn from the dead and c) the ruler of the kings of the earth. Explain each of these expressions. Did the authorities recognise any of the titles claimed in this verse, and how would they have reacted to anyone claiming to be His follower? Why is that any different today?

10. What has Jesus done for us? What does it mean to be freed from our sins by His blood? Why are Believers described as a kingdom? Who is a Priest, and what is his (or her) purpose? Is there confusion in the Church today over this issue and how would you clarify it to someone who did not understand?

- Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17**
11. **Revelation 1:7** describes the return of Jesus. What do you think 'coming with the clouds' means? Do you expect Jesus to return? What would be the purpose of His return?

12. **Revelation 1:7** also describes every eye being able to see Jesus when He returns. How might that be accomplished? Who are those that pierced Him, and why would everyone mourn because of Him?

13. What is the meaning of the phrase 'the Alpha and the Omega'? Can you find another place in the Bible where this or a similar phrase is used? Write this verse down and be prepared to share the context in which it is used.

14. Sum up in one short sentence what you have learnt from this study. Is there any action the Holy Spirit is leading you to take?