

Session 2 – A Simple Overview of the Book

I. THE CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

- A. The central message of the book of Revelation is the beauty of Jesus and the reality of His return.

“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.” (Revelation 1:1-3)

- B. This message of the beauty of Jesus and the reality of His return is the articulation of the person, power and purposes in Jesus’ heart that are manifest during the Great Tribulation as He closes this age and inaugurates the next.
- C. The vision that John saw displayed the nature of this transition period. The book of Revelation explains what the transition will be like. It is the most detailed description in the Bible of the hour that leads up to the second coming. With over 300 allusions to the Old Testament, it is like a Bible study from all the books of the Bible on the final generation compiled into one book.
- D. The majority of the book is dedicated to the final 3 ½ years of this age before the return of Jesus (chapters 6-19) known as “the Great Tribulation.” The scriptures for the last 3½ years of this age include 6 different expressions: **42 months** (Rev. 11:2; 13:5), **1260 days** (Rev. 11:3; 12:6), **time, times and half a time** (Rev. 12:14; Dan. 7:25; 12:7), and **Middle of the Week** (Dan. 9:27), the **Great Tribulation** (Rev. 7:14), **Jacob’s Trouble** (Jer. 30:7). The 3½ year time period is designated in three different ways numerically so as to render it impossible to spiritualize or make symbolic.



- E. As we touched on last week, Jesus commands us and requires us to **know the hour of His return.** Often people cite Matthew 24:36 to discourage the saints knowing the hour of His return. But Jesus made the statement that “no one knows” to provoke confidence that we can and must know. 7 times the Lord used the word “know” in that chapter. 2 times it’s an explicit command to know the hour of Jesus’ return.
- F. The timing indicators are screaming that we are approaching this 42 month period of unprecedented intensity. In view of that, I want to charge you as an individual and us as a corporate family to ask the Lord for grace to begin to develop a life vision that takes into consideration the fact that you may have to lead your family, your ministry and your region through these events. **We need to have 10, 20 and 30 year visions that are built upon the conviction that we will see the skies torn open and that the pursuit of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ is the greatest investment of our time, energy and money in this age.** Many in the church are so disillusioned and ignorant of who Jesus is and what He’s about to do that if clear voices do not emerge the casualties will be unfathomable.

“Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:28-36)

- G. These chapters (6-19) tell us the broad trends and some of the important details that will be present on the earth in that hour.
1. It will be the greatest crisis the world has ever known

And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of



the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth. (Rev. 6:8)

So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. (Revelation 9:15-18)

²¹ There will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world...nor ever shall be. ²² Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved. (Mt. 24:21-22)

"At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. (Daniel 12:1)

"Thus says the LORD: We have heard a cry of panic, of terror, and no peace. Ask now, and see, can a man bear a child? Why then do I see every man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor? Why has every face turned pale? Alas! That day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it. (Jeremiah 30:5-7)

Behold, the LORD will empty the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist ["distort" NKJV] its surface and scatter its inhabitants. (Isaiah 24:1)

2. It will be the greatest awakening unto salvation in history as the Gospel is preached with power and the Great Commission is completed



After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:9-14)

Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. (Rev. 14:6)

3. It will be the most violent and devastating hour that the Jews have ever known ¹

Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. (Revelation 11:1-2)

¹ Many wrongly presume that the state of Israel will be protected in the end-times and that all who attack them will be destroyed. This is not true. While the remnant will be protected and preserved (Rev. 7:1-10; 12:1-17), the current nation state will collapse. Many will choose to flee to the nations of the earth (Amos 9:10-16) and many will choose to stay and fight. Those who stay will undergo the most horrific hour of bloodshed in history eclipsing even the holocaust of the Nazi time. Zechariah tells us that "1/2 of Jerusalem will go into captivity" (14:1-3) and "2/3's" of all the Jews "in the land" will die. Jeremiah called this "the time of Jacob's Trouble." (Jer. 30:7) Daniel said that during this time "the power of [Israel] will be completely shattered." (Dan. 12:7) This is why Jesus said that this hour would be worse than any other time in history (Matthew 24:21-22).



In the whole land, declares the LORD, two thirds shall be cut off [will be killed] and perish, and one third shall be left alive. And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" (Zechariah 13:8-9)

And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time [3 ½ years of the Great Tribulation], and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished. (Daniel 12:7)

"Thus says the LORD: We have heard a cry of panic, of terror, and no peace. Ask now, and see, can a man bear a child? Why then do I see every man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor? Why has every face turned pale? Alas! That day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it. (Jeremiah 30:5-7)

And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach." [because of how many men died fighting] In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. (Isaiah 4:1-4)

4. It will consummate this age

"...but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be finished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets." (Rev. 10:7)



5. It will be a violent take-over of every earthly kingdom, institution and sphere of influence

“Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.” (Revelation 11:15-18)

“Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.” (Revelation 19:11-16)

II. A SIMPLE APPROACH TO THE BOOK

- A. The book of Revelation is meant to be understood. And the only thing necessary to understand it is hunger and humility.

At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will/good pleasure. (Matthew 11:25-26)

- B. In this session I want to lay out an “action plan” of how to approach the book. It’s my conviction that if we can understand three things almost every reason we have to be intimidated by the book is removed. The three things are: (1) the **Outline**, (2) the **Storyline** and (3) the **Symbolism**.



- C. The book of Revelation is broken up into **four parts**. The fourth part contains **five sections**. And within that fourth part there are **seven symbols**. If we can discern these four parts, understand the five sections and see the interpretation of the seven symbols, there is little reason to be intimidated by the book.
- D. The reason people stay away from the book is because it appears to have a nebulous structure that contains too much unexplained symbolism. Both of these assumptions are wrong.
- E. **The structure of the book** is actually quite easy to understand. John saw a vision. That vision told a story. That story contains a coherent and logical storyline – like a storyboard for a film. The storyline is comprised of chronological events that unfold one after the other AND angelic interjections that are meant to help us understand certain truths related to the chronological events.
- F. **The symbolism of the book** is even easier to understand than the storyline. There are only seven symbols in the book. And all of the symbols are interpreted either by the verse before or after it OR by Scripture somewhere else in the Bible. There are no grounds on which to interpret the symbols as anything other than what the angel told John it was. Most people refuse to study the book because they assume that the symbolism is too difficult to understand. It is not. It is explained in the book. And there are logical, sensible and literal realities behind all of them. And we do not need to interpret them ourselves. In fact, the context of the symbols prohibit from doing so.
- G. I will be presented the book by explaining the four parts first. And then we will spend most of our time looking at the five sections. I liken these five sections to acts of a play. It was as if John was watching a story unfold in front of him on a screen. That story contained five acts. Each act consists of a series of unfolding events and an angelic interjection that speaks into those events.
- H. In this next session we'll deal with interpretation issues regarding the accurate approach to controversial issues like the Rapture, the Millennium and the Timing of the Book's Fulfillment. But first, before we address any of that we need to look at the book itself to get our bearings.

III. THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK: THE FOUR PARTS

1. John's Commissioning (1)
2. The Seven Letters (2-3)
3. The Throne Room (4-5)
4. Jesus' End-Time War Strategy (6-22)

IV. THE STORYLINE OF THE BOOK: THE FIVE SECTIONS



Section One

Rev. 6 Judgment Event: THE SEAL JUDGMENTS

Rev. 7 Interjection: PROTECTION OF ELECT JEWISH REMNANT & THE CHURCH

Section Two

Rev. 8–9 Judgment Event: TRUMPET JUDGMENTS

Rev. 10–11 Interjection: DIRECTION GIVEN BY END-TIME PROPHETIC MINISTRY

Section Three

Rev. 11:15-19 Judgment Event: SECOND COMING PROCESSION

Rev. 12–14 Interjection: SATANIC RAGE IN THE END-TIMES

Section Four

Rev. 15–16 Judgment Event: BOWL JUDGMENTS

Rev. 17–18 Interjection: SEDUCTIVE DANGER OF HARLOT BABYLON

Section Five

Rev. 19–20 Judgment Event: ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM & VICTORY (Rev. 19:11–21:8)

Rev. 21–22 Interjection: RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS (Rev. 21:9–22:5)

V. THE SYMBOLISM IN THE BOOK: THE SEVEN MAIN SYMBOLS

1. **Dragon:** Satan
2. **Woman with a Male Child:** Elect Remnant of Ethnic Jews and Jesus
3. **Beast:** Antichrist
4. **Another Beast:** False Prophet
5. **Harlot Babylon:** A Global End-Time Demonized Religious and Financial network
6. **Seven Heads:** Seven Empires that Persecuted Ethnic Israel
7. **Ten Horns:** A 10 nation confederacy of nations in the Middle East (Ez. 38-39)

