

Cover to Cover: From Genesis to Maps
Sermon # 66 – “Revelation”
November 1, 2009

Revelation: Some Background Information

Title: The word “revelation” is a translation of the Greek word *apokalypsis*, from which comes our English word “apocalypse.” “Revelation” literally means “an unveiling” or “a disclosure.”

Authorship: The author identifies himself simply as “John” (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8). The traditional view is that it is the Apostle John, although some scholars believe it to be a different John.

Audience: The book was originally sent to seven local churches in Asia Minor.

Date: Either the latter part of Nero’s reign (A. D. 54–68) or the latter part of Domitian’s reign (A. D. 81–96). Most scholars opt for the later period, dating the book about A.D. 95 or 96.

Occasion: Christians were entering a time of severe persecution. John himself had been exiled to the isle of Patmos. The Book of Revelation was born out of John’s profound spiritual experience while on that island.

Purpose: To comfort and encourage the persecuted saints by magnifying the Person of Jesus Christ, unveiling His redemptive purpose, His unfolding plan, His future return, and His ultimate triumph over evil. (Someone has said that the Book of Revelation is an extended commentary on Matthew 16:18.)

Literary Form: The Book of Revelation fits into the literary genre known as apocalyptic literature, a kind of writing that is futuristic and highly symbolic. Revelation is the only book in the Bible wholly composed of apocalyptic literature.

Key Words/ Phrases: “God” (98 x); “angel” (75 x); “see”/ “behold” (62 x); “voice”/ “sound” (55 x); “seven” (54 x); “after (these things)” (47 x); “throne” (46 x); “beast” (38 x); “seal” (31 x); “lamb” (29 x); “spirit” (23 x); “nations” (22 x); “twelve” (22 x); “church” (20 x)

Visions/ Portraits of Christ: (1) Christ among the churches, administering their affairs (1:12-20); (2) Christ before the throne, receiving worship as the slain Lamb of God (5:1-14); (3) Christ in judgment, destroying evil and asserting His rightful authority (19:11-16); (4) Christ in eternity, the Light of His people (21:22-27).

Interpretation: Interpreters of Revelation generally fall into one of four groups: (1) **Preterists** (from the Latin word *praeter*, meaning "ahead of" or "beforehand") understand the book exclusively in terms of its First Century setting, claiming that most of its events have already taken place. (2) **Historicists** view the book as a forecast of

historical events from the First Century A.D. to the end of history. **(3) Futurists** place the book primarily in context of the end times, regarding everything from Revelation 4:1 onward as belonging to a period of time yet to come. **(4) Idealists** see the book as not referring to any specific historic event, but as symbolically picturing timeless truths that are applicable to believers in every age.

Revelation: An Outline

1. **Prologue, Greetings and Doxology (1:1–8)** 1:3 - “*Blessed is/ are...*” - first of 7 Beatitudes (also 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14)
2. **Jesus among the Seven Lampstands (Churches) (1:9–20)**
3. **The Letters to the Seven Churches (Chapters 2–3):** Ephesus (2:1–7); Smyrna (2:8–11); Pergamum (2:12–17); Thyatira (2:18–29); Sardis (3:1–6); Philadelphia (3:7–13); Laodicea (3:14–22)
4. **Worship in Heaven: The Throne, the Scroll and the Lamb (Chapters 4–5)**
5. **The Seven Seals (6:1—8:1)**
 - The First 4 Seals: The Four Horsemen (6:1–8) - [White horse: conquest; Red horse: war; Black horse: famine; Pale horse: death]
 - The Fifth Seal: The Cry of the Martyrs (6:9–11)
 - The Sixth Seal: The Great Earthquake (6:12–17)
 - INTERLUDE: The 144,000 (7:1–8) & The Great Multitude (7:9–17)
 - The Seventh Seal: Silence in Heaven (8:1)
6. **The Seven Trumpets (8:2—11:19)**
 - The Preparation (8:2–5)
 - The First Four Trumpets: (8:6–12)
 - The Eagle’s Warning (8:13)
 - The Fifth Trumpet (First Woe): The Plague of Locusts (9:1–12)
 - The Sixth Trumpet (Second Woe): Release of the Four Angels (9:13–21)
 - INTERLUDE: The Angel and the Little Scroll (Chapter 10) & The Two Witnesses (11:1–14)

- The Seventh Trumpet: Judgments and Rewards (11:15–19)
7. **The Conflict Between the Church and the Powers of Evil (Chapters 12–14)**
- The Woman, the Dragon, and the Male Child (12:1-6)
 - War in Heaven and War on the Earth (12:7-17)
 - The Two Beasts: One from the Sea and One from the Earth (Chapter 13)
 - The Lamb and the 144,000 (14:1–5)
 - INTERLUDE: Impending Judgment: The Harvest of the Earth (14:6–20)
8. **The Seven Bowls / Plagues (Chapters 15–16)**
- The Song of Moses and the Seven Angels with the Seven Bowls (Chapter 15)
 - The Seven Bowls Poured Out. (Chapter 16)
9. **Babylon: The Great Prostitute (17:1—19:5)**
- Babylon Described (Chapter 17)
 - The Fall of Babylon (Chapter 18)
 - Praise for Babylon’s Fall (19:1–5)
10. **The Final Victory (19:6-22)**
- The Marriage of the Lamb (19:6–10)
 - The Rider on the White Horse (19:11–21)
 - The Thousand Years (20:1–6)
 - Satan’s Doom (20:7–10)
 - The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11–15)
11. **The New Heaven, The New Earth, and The New Jerusalem (21:1—22:5)**
12. **Conclusion and Benediction (22:6–21)**