

Revelation Introduction pt 2

Since I'm no expert on this book, think of this series as "Revelation for Dummies", and I'm the lead dummy.

Let's begin today with 1:9-20

9 I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance *which are* in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like *the sound* of a trumpet, 11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; 13 and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. 14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. 15 His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. 16 In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. 19 Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. 20 As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Do you remember the last words commands of Jesus?

If you compare the final sections of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the Book of Acts, we see that the final words of Jesus deal with the command to take the gospel to the whole earth, his presence with them until the end of the age, and the need to know the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

In Revelation, John reminds his audience of these same things in various ways.

REMEMBER THIS KEY VERSE FOR JOHN'S AUDIENCE and US - 12:11 HOW TO OVERCOME

11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

***The test of whether or not we "get" Revelation is NOT knowing the content, but rather it is two fold:

Are you worshiping Christ more? V17

Are you standing firm with an outward WITNESS to a lost world, even in the face of persecution or death?

If you get nothing else out of the series, get that!!!

In the Book, God Dwells Among Us, the authors make the point that Revelation itself is a **CONSUMMATION** of those final words of Christ. Throughout the bible we see the theme of "I will be your God, you will be my people, I will dwell in your midst, and you are to be a light to the nations."

That is at the core of the OT & NT - it is a thread that runs from the garden of Eden to the New JERUSALEM.

It is the promise of "God with Us." Keep that theme in mind as you read Revelation.

What was lost in the Garden - the unhindered intimacy of the presence of God - is regained in the New Jerusalem. As we tap into that reality, we can practice the presence of God and stand firm because of the work of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Beale p.15 (GDAU). In military combat, a mission's objectives are defined by the commander's intent....As believer's, our commanders intent is seen by the picture of "mission accomplished" that is painted in Rev.21-22... This picture in Revelation 21-22 fulfills the mission given in Genesis 1-2, and the progress of this mission can be traced throughout the entire Bible. In Genesis 1-2, Eden is the dwelling place of God, and God commissions Adam and Eve to expand the boundaries of that dwelling place to fill the earth (Gen 1:28).

God's mission of being glorified in all the earth doesn't begin with the Great Commission of Matt 28. Mission is God's heartbeat from Gen 1 until the New Heaven and Earth become God's dwelling place of the Lord God Almighty in Revelation 21-22. (GDAU p. 16)

THAT'S WHERE THE STUDY OF REV WILL TAKE US. It's the end game. Begin with the end in mind.

Because of the genres or style of the book, there are numerous interpretations. People of sound theology who love the Word and the Lord can and do disagree on certain aspects of this book.

During this series you are going to hear terms that may or may not be familiar. I'm not trying to impress you or confuse you.

One of the key issues is understanding how the various visions relate to one another. There are two main views: (Beale and Campbell - Revelation Commentary)

- 1. Chronologically Linear Futurist Perspective.** The futurist position generally holds that the order of the visions, from 4:1 to 22:5, represents the chronological order in which the events described in the visions are to unfold. The seals are preparatory events preceding the trumpets and the bowls. The trumpets, visions (the "signs" in 12:1-14:20), and bowls are seen as the contents of the seventh seal, in that the seventh seal is said to have no content of its own. As you might expect, there are variations of this view. Nevertheless, generally the futurist view sees the events of history unfolding in a chronological order corresponding closely, or at least roughly, to the visions as listed.

With that in mind, this view would say that the main events of the visions have not yet happened.

2 The Recapitulation Perspective. This position holds that the various series of judgments are parallel descriptions of the same events. The pattern is identical within each series. Toward the end of each series, there is an intensified description of judgment followed by a depiction of salvation (6:12-17 and 7:9-17; 11:18a and 11:18b; 14:14-20 and 15:2-4; 16:17-18:24 and 19:1-10; 20:7-15 and 21:1-22:5).

KEY WORD IS RECAPITULATION - "can you say that?"

"An act or instance of summarizing and restating the main points of something." (shall I say it again?)

Format - see Michael GORMAN - P. 67-68

The narrative of the main section of Revelation is not strictly chronological. Instead of a straight linear progression, the structure of Revelation presents a movement that is spiral. Earlier events are presented in different forms and use different images. This is not to negate the claim that Revelation has a plot. Rather, we must recognize that the plot unfolds like a symphony, with variations on the main theme as the piece moves toward its goal. This non-linear movement means that an outline of the book is more like a spiral, a series of connected circles that moves forward.

Ex G.K. Beale p. 33 One example of recapitulation...

The earthquake of 6:12-17 (sixth seal) is like that of 16:17-21 (seventh bowl). With that is a parallel with 20:11 which describes how the earth and heaven flee because of the presence of the One who sits on the throne. Thus, we see that 6:12-17 is a preview of 20:11. It is the same theme told from a different angle. The visions related to the seven seals come before the visions of the seven trumpets and seven bowls, yet here, the sixth seal is already giving us what we'll see later in the seventh bowl.

IT IS RECAPITULATION.

I am a recapitulationist and will be teaching from that perspective.

You will find many ways in which scholars handle the structure of Revelation. I'm going to give you my synthesis that has helped me. IT IS NOT CRUCIAL in understanding the purpose of the book, but it is simply an aid to grasping the unity in the design. There are many ways to breakdown the structure, and we don't have to obsess about a tidy format, but there are some clear divisions that are repeated in the book.

There is a Series of Seven cycles with Messages or Visions (they retell the same time frame).

The seven series run parallel as each covers the SAME period between the first and second coming of Christ.

The Book of Revelation consists of five groups of mainly apocalyptic visions, preceded by a group of letters and followed by a climactic vision of the consummated kingdom. Austin Farrer suggests that the structure is sabbatical That is, there are six groups of seven followed by a final sabbath. Theologically, this is appealing because the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21-22 corresponds with the "sabbath rest of the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9-11). Gorman p. 55 (This is no hill to die on, but it does present an interesting approach to the format.

❖ **Prologue –Announcement of the unveiling and blessing to those who hear, read, and heed.**

❖ **Christ among the SEVEN churches / lampstands ch 1-3**

Letters to Churches chs. 2–3

❖ **Vision of Heaven and Seven Seals on a Scroll ch 4-8:1 5:1–8:1**

Six seals opened (6:1-17)

- White horse - conquer
- Red horse - war
- Black horse - famine
- Pale green horse – death and chaos / Hades
- Martyrs – the reason for the Lamb is inflicting judgment
- Terror

followed by interlude – Chap 7

- 7TH SEAL

❖ **Seven Trumpets 8:2–11:19**

6 Trumpets followed by Interlude, then 7th trumpet

- 1 hail and fire - 1/3 of earth burned
- 2 a great mountain thrown into sea 1/3 of creatures died
- 3 a great star- Wormwood fell like torch to pollute 1/3 of waters
- 4 1/3 of stars, sun and moon darkened
- 5 (9:1) star fell and got key to bottomless pit – smoke and locusts – King Abaddon / Apollyon
- 6 9:13 Release four angels in corners of the earth – kill 1/3 of people. The rest DID NOT repent

INTERLUDE between 6th and 7th Trumpets

Chat 10 – Little Book

Chat 11:1-14 Two Witnesses

- 7th Trumpet 11:15 before the presence of God.

❖ **Seven Histories – ch 12-14**

Grouped 1-6, then 7 is separated by an interlude.

- The woman,
- the dragon,
- the beast from the sea,
- the beast from the earth,

- the 144,000 believers,
- the angelic messengers,
the Son of Man.

WE SEE FIVE enemies of the church: 12-14

- The dragon- Satan
- The beast out of the sea – anti-Christian persecution (Rome and others to follow)
- The beast of the earth (false prophet) antichristian religious teaching (Emperor worship, pagan religion, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, etc)EX: Harvard atheist elected president of Chaplains
- The great harlot, Babylon- antichristian seduction (Rome, then others)
- The men that have the 'mark of the beast'- those who give themselves to the spirit of the age in their time.

❖ Seven Bowls of Wrath chs. 15–16

6 Bowls, interlude, then 7th

- First bowl poured out on the earth- malignant sores
- Second bowl poured out on the sea – became like blood
- Third bowl poured out on the rivers and springs of water – became like blood
- Fourth bowl poured out upon the sun to scorch men with fire
- Fifth bowl poured out on the throne of the beast – his kingdom became darkened
- Sixth bowl poured out on the great river and it dried up
- INTERLUDE
- Seventh bowl poured out upon the air- a great voice, “It is done.”

Fall of Babylon – The Punishment of the Great Prostitute chs 17-19

❖ Seven Various Visions 19-20

The Great “Sabbath” Consummation 21-22 The New Heaven and New Earth

In Revelation we see the scope of the presence of Christ with His people, His Bride:

This final picture of the whole earth filled with God’s presence fulfills God’s original intention from the sanctuary of Eden. (GDAU p. 16) When sin disrupted the fellowship of mankind with God, we see God’s faithfulness by establishing the tabernacle and temple as the focal point of His presence. The true temple arrived in the flesh in the person of Christ, who makes His people a living temple by His Spirit.

All of this is consummated in the New Jerusalem where The Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (21:22) and where we circle back to the Tree of life, last seen in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3).

22:1 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of fruit*, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; 4 they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads.

This is the compelling vision that has sustained God’s people for thousands of years.

I pray it compels us as well. AMEN

SOURCES CITED:

GK BEALE and Mitchell Kim – God DWELLS AMONG US
GK BEALE and David Campbell – Revelation Commentary
Michael Gorman – Reading Revelation Responsibly
Graeme Goldsworthy – The Gospel in Revelation
Austin Farrer – A Rebirth of Images

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This format adapted from

Michael Gorman – The Gospel in Revelation; Austin Farrer – A Rebirth of Images; Third Mill Lesson 2 on Revelation; Dennis Johnson, Studies in Revelation for Core Christianity