

Revelation

A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #1

6/21/2006

As we begin our study of this book, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, we need to recognize that there is a very strong and important relationship between this book, the last book in the Bible, and Genesis, the first book in the Bible.

“**Genesis**” means “**beginnings**,” and is derived from the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew word, *toledoth* which means “**generations**.” Genesis deals with things related to the beginning of this world while Revelation is the Unveilings of the world’s future.” As we have seen in our Sunday night studies Genesis presents the great foundational truths of God’s Word which are then explained, illustrated and applied throughout the Bible. Many of these truths come to their climax in the book of Revelation. The word “Revelation” is from the Greek word, apokalupsis, which means “an unveiling” of something previously concealed. In this book we will learn about God uncovering and unveiling some of the great truths of the Bible, particularly about Jesus Christ.

In his book, The Revelation Record on page 22 (published by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1983) Dr. Henry Morris has given us some very interesting comparisons between Genesis and Revelation.

PROBATIONARY WORLD (Genesis)

Division of light and darkness 1:4
 Division of land and sea 1:10
 Role of sun and moon 1:16
 First havens and earth finished 21:1-3
 Man in a prepared garden 2:8,9,
 River flowing out of Eden 2:10
 Tree of life in midst of garden 2:9
 God in the land 2:12
 Bdelium and the onyx stone 2:12
 God walking in the garden 3:8
 The Spirit energizing 1:2
 Bride formed from her husband 2:21-23
 Command to multiply 1:28
 Garden accessible to the Liar 3:1-5
 Man in God’s image 1:27
 Man the probationer 2:17

CURSED WORLD (Genesis)

Cursed ground 3:17
 Daily sorrow 3:17
 Sweat on the face 3:19
 Thorns and thistles 3:18
 Eating herbs of the field 3:18
 Returning to the dust 3:19
 Coats of skin 3:21
 Satan opposing 3:15
 Kept from the tree of life 3:24
 Banished from the garden 3:23
 Redeemer promised 3:15
 Evil continually 6:5
 Seed of the woman 3:15
 Cherubim guarding 3:24

ETERNAL WORLD (Revelation)

No night there 21:25
 No more sea 21:1
 No need of sun or moon 21:23
 New heaven and earth forever 21:1
 Man in a prepared city 21:2
 River flowing out of God’s throne 22:1
 Tree of life throughout the city 22:2
 God in the city 21:2
 All manner of precious stones 21:19
 God dwelling with His people 21:3
 The Spirit inviting 22:17
 Bride adorned for her husband 21:2
 Nations of the saved 21:24
 City closed to all liars 21:27
 Man in God’s presence 21:3
 Man the heir 21:7

REDEEMED WORLD (Revelation)

No more curse 22:3
 No more sorrow 21:4
 No more tears 21:4
 No more pain 21:4
 Twelve manner of fruits 22:2
 No more death 21:4
 Fine linen, white and clean 19:14
 Satan banished 20:10
 Access to the tree of life 22:14
 Free entry into the city 22:14
 Redemption accomplished 5:9,10
 Nothing that defileth 21:27
 Root and offspring 22:16
 Angels inviting 21:9

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Many people think that the book of Revelation is hard to understand, but that isn't really true if one simply accepts what God says as being "literally true." It would be more correct to say, instead of saying that it hard to understand, that it is hard to believe. This can be true for even those who take it literally because the things God unveils are about the future and many of these things are not only so new and different that we have nothing to compare them to, but that many of the things are so fantastic, traumatic and awesome that the world has never seen anything to compare these things with. The only thing in the history of our world that has some resemblance to the judgments presented in Revelation is Noah's Flood. Not only did Jesus relate the events surrounding Noah's Flood to the end times, specifically the rapture, but also in 2 Peter 3:3-11 God tells us that scoffers, who scoff at Noah's Flood, also dismiss the coming judgment revealed in Revelation. Accept all of the Bible, including Genesis and Revelation, as being God's Word, recognizing that God says what He means and means what He says, and you will have far fewer difficulties understanding the book of Revelation.

God gave us His own introduction to the book.

Revelation 1:1 **The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:**

Revelation 1:2 **Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.**

Revelation 1:3 **Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.**

Notice it is "**Revelation,**" not **:"Revelations."** It is "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ.*" Thus, the book is an unveiling of Jesus Christ, telling us some things we have not read before and emphasizing other things which were not so prominent in the Gospels, which told us about His first coming.

"To show His servants things which must shortly come to pass" also regards Jesus Christ. The word "*shortly*" is tachu (5034) and refers to quickness, swiftness, suddenness or speediness. It does not indicate that something was to happen real soon, but that when it happened it would be sudden, quick and swift. It would be so sudden, quick and swift that the people involved would not have time to do anything in response to its happening.

Then God said that He sent this message, this unveiling of Jesus Christ via an unnamed messenger or angel. The word "*signified,*" semaino (4591) refers to public signs or signals and likely had some relationship to the many miracles and signs that God would show His writer, John.

This messenger, God said, was going to present firsthand information that he knew to be true and he was a witness of all these things.

Then we have a statement that draws out our attention: *"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."* God announces a new beatitude for those who read, hear and keep these words. This is the first of seven beatitudes given to us in the book of Revelation.

The *"time is at hand"* referred to the need and warning for the believers in John's day, and even more so in our day to study God's message given to us in this book. Almost 2000 years have passed since God gave this message to us. Surely we all realize that the time of its fulfillment is much closer to us today than it was in John's day. The contents of this book are so significant that God, in effect, is saying "know and get ready for these things to happen!"

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Revelation 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

The writer, John (the Apostle) then identified himself. He was the writer of four books included in the New Testament, but this is the only one in which he identifies himself. We take note of this unusual fact and recognize that it is important.

He tells us that the letter or message is addressed to the *“seven churches which are in Asia.”* Two things to note. First, these seven churches were real and historical. They were present in John’s day. Secondly, each of these churches also represents a time period or stage in the life of the church, the body of Christ. Each of these churches received a letter from Jesus and these letters make up the second and third chapters of the book.

“Him” is Jesus. His eternal, unchangeable nature is emphasized here in the beginning. He is present, past and future, and the same in each of these dimensions. This theme is repeatedly presented to us in this first chapter and its repetition demands our attention to its importance.

One reason for this emphasis is that Jesus is going to be presented in a different light in this book than He was presented in the Gospels. The Gospels tell us about His first coming when He came to die for man’s sins and offer grace. The book of Revelation will tell us about His second coming to judge those who have rejected His grace.

He is the same Jesus. He has not changed, nor will He change. He will always love every person even if that person does not love Him. He will love that person who rejects Him so much that He will give that person what he says he wants. He will not force His grace upon any person.

He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He has always been King of Kings just as He has always been man’s Redeemer.

“From the seven Spirits which are before His throne” means the complete Holy Spirit of God and not seven different Spirits. This is the first time we confront the numeral “seven,” but we shall find it often in the book. In fact, we will learn that numerals have significance and meaning and often God used them in this book to convey meaning rather than numbers.

Please spend some time in the next week reading and rereading verses five through eight. They are a composite introduction of Jesus Christ. You, if you so desire, will even find that these verses are not difficult to outline. They are worth your special interest and devotion. In a sense, they contain the complete Gospel of Jesus Christ.