
Revelation Message 1
An Introduction
5/26/2013

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Overview

Revelation is the last book of prophecy written in the Bible. In fact, it is the only book of prophecy found in the New Testament. Many have misinterpreted this book and have used such misinterpretations to lead people down a very destructive path.

The book of revelation is filled with Old Testament references and symbolic imagery. At The Well Church of Lewisville, we will begin to explore the book of Revelation to understand it's meaning and how it applies to the church today.

How to Study Revelation:

Just like any Bible study, it is important to know the author, the intended audience, the setting in which the book was written, and the events that were taking place. We will use this approach as we study the book. In addition, it is important to have a good understanding of the Old Testament due to the multiple references in Revelation to the Old Testament.

The Author, the audience, the setting and the events

The book of Revelation is accredited to John the apostle during his time on the island of Patmos. It is believed that the book was written somewhere around the year 68 AD, although some historians place the writing around 90 AD.

During the 60's there was great persecution against the church during Nero's reign. In 66, there was a Jewish revolt against Rome, which caused this intense persecution. Church tradition indicates that many Christians moved into Asia during this revolt. It is in Asia Minor that the Apostle Paul and the Apostle John planted several churches. It is said the John lived in the city of Ephesus and was "later

arrested and banished to the Isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea to work in the mines, and that this occurred during the reign of the Roman emperor, Domitian. This supports the author's own claim to have written from Patmos because of his witness for Christ (1:9)" (1996, Keathley III).

(between At this time, John was the only living apostle and it is believed that he is the only of the twelve apostles to die of old age. The other apostles had all been martyred.

The book of Revelation is said to be written during the rule of Emperor Domitian who is believed to have sentenced Paul into exile on the Island of Patmos.

Revelation is a letter to the 7 churches in Asia Minor. Jesus Christ is speaking to John to deliver this message to the church. The letters are to instruct the churches and encourage the churches to stand upon their faith in Christ and to not lose hope. Jesus is telling the church that they have not been forsaken and that He will return to collect His people.

Let's Begin by Reading Revelation 1

Revelation 1 (NIV)

Revelation 1:1-3 (NIV)

Prologue

1 The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

In the first verse of Revelation, John identifies himself as the author and testifies that what he is writing are revelations for Jesus Christ Himself. Other than the Gospels, there are no other books in the New Testament where Jesus Christ speaks so clearly to the church.

Jesus revealed this information to John by sending an angel. This is often how God delivers messages to Prophets. In fact this is how God delivered his prophetic message often in the Old Testament: Visions given to Ezekiel (40-48), Daniel (Dan. 7-12), and Zechariah (Zech. 1-6). Angels also gave the news to Mary and Joseph about the coming of their Son, Jesus Christ.

, ² who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

John also states in Verse 2 that this is not just his testimony, but it is to be considered the Word of God, directly from Jesus Christ. This is why this book is included in the canon of Scripture. The book was written by an apostle, who was a direct disciple of Jesus Christ and commissioned to deliver the news to all nations.

3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

In verse 3, John tells us that the book of Revelation is to be read aloud, it is to be spoken to the church. He also tells us that this book of Revelation is a blessing to all who hear! This book is meant to bless, not scare. Often times, we read Revelation with anxiety and fear from all of the talk of beasts, war, and persecution. John is writing this for us to know that Christ has prepared a place for us in His Kingdom, just as He had promised. He is returning.

Jesus tells us in John's Gospel

John 14:1-3

14 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2 My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

John 1:4-5**Greetings and Doxology**

⁴ John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

John states in his greeting that this Revelation is to be read to the Seven churches in the Province of Asia. The seven churches John is writing to are:

1. Ephesus
2. Smyrna
3. Perganum
4. Thyatira
5. Sardis
6. Philadelphia
7. Aodicea

The Asia referenced in the New Testament is not the Asia we think of today, which includes China. Asia at the time of the New Testament is where Modern Turkey is located and was under the Roman Empire.

These churches were all facing great persecution. In addition, the churches were receiving false teachings and doctrines. Jesus was speaking words of rebuke and words of encouragement to each of the churches.

Jesus is clearly reaching out to the church and telling the church to take warning and stand strong in the faith. This is an important message to each of us today. The church is not a brick and mortar building. The church is a living organic organism that includes each of us. We are to not compromise on the things that the world wants us to compromise upon. We must remember that our Lord and Savior will return to bring us into His Kingdom and that is far greater than anything this world can ever offer.

Conclusion

- (1) The Author of Revelation was the Apostle John.
- (2) Revelation is meant to Bless the believer, not scare.
- (3) Revelation is a letter to the 7 Churches in Asia.
- (4) During this time, the church was experiencing a great persecution under the Emperor Nero.
- (5) Revelation is a book of Encouragement and Hope for the Church
- (6) Outside of the Gospels, Revelation is the only book where Jesus speaks to the church.
- (7) Jesus sent an angel to deliver these revelations to John.
- (8) The book of Revelation is said to be the direct Word of God (Rev. 1:2).