

Wednesday Night Bible Study

First Night

Revelation

Introduction

Revelation 1:1-3 (NIV2011) 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 Revelation the apostle John sees himself in the same line as the Old Testament prophets. Their role was to call God's people back to covenant faithfulness. Thus the focus of Revelation is how the church is to conduct itself in the midst of an ungodly, hostile world. It's language is similar to the language of the prophets.

As in the prophets, Revelation seems not to yield its treasures in the same way the Gospels and the epistles do although it has some epistle like passages within it. This book is not a historical narrative as second Samuel, nor an epistle like Romans, nor laws like Leviticus, or poetry like the Psalms, or the wisdom books.

Yet Revelation speaks to historical events, seven actual churches.

Revelation requires wisdom to unlock, **Revelation 17:9 (NIV2011) ⁹ “This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. It's language is the language of the prophets and with some of Jesus's teaching in the parables and the apocalyptic passages.**

The title of the book that it is pulling back the curtain to reveal the invisible realities that drive actual events in history. The events in heaven, like pouring out of a bowl, have historical consequences.

An important point to remember is that no single passage is understandable apart from the book as a whole and vice versa.

As we study the book and through its passages are understanding grows as to the whole book. The literary genre is the prophetic – apocalyptic.

If we are wedded to a particular pattern that in which we are not willing to be corrected or understanding of the whole book will be hampered.

I will now go over 10 principles to understanding the book:

1. The book's purpose is to reveal. God has given us this book and these words to give us light.

2. The book gives insight into first century Christian insight into the purposes of God in their time. Interpretation reaches beyond the original readers frame of reference are suspect.

3. The book is intended to be a blessing when read. At that time, it was a blessing to read it aloud in the churches.

4. The central siege all of His enemies under Hit eat. The church is called therefore to persevere through the hostility of the world.

5 numbers count

6. It was written to a church under attack.

7 the messages communicated to us although in words in visible form, that is signs. Reading Revelation is like watching the Lord of the rings.

8. Therefore it is a book to be seen.

9. One of the biggest lessons we learn is that things in reality are not as they seem to us in this physical world.

10. Paradox is a major feature of the book

Smyrna appears to be poor but is rich and approved.

Sardis has a reputation for life but is dead. Laodicea thinks it is rich but it is destitute.

On the plane of human history things are not what they seem. Revelation describes these accurately.

For instance the beast seems invincible, Revelation 11:7 (NIV2011) ⁷ Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them.

Revelation 13:7 (NIV2011) ⁷ It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation..

The Saints faithful to death will actually give them a victory over the Dragon, **Revelation 12:11 (NIV2011)** ¹¹ They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

The church's ultimate enemy is the Dragon and is manifested by his massive cunning symbolized by seven heads, **Revelation 12:3 (NIV2011)** ³ Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads.

He attacks the church from within and without through physical threat, spiritual deception, and material seduction.

The dragons assault on the churches symbolized in several ways. He attacks through the beast from the sea which is physical threat, the beast from the land which is the false prophet or spiritual deception, and the harlot that is material seduction.

The Saints will persevere, **Revelation 14:12 (NIV2011)** ¹² This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus. There perseverance is not through monastic withdrawal but through evangelistic confrontation with the world.

Always, in every age, the church is under attack.

The time references will require close attention, 10 days, 42 months, 1260 days, times, time, and ½ a time, and the 1000 years of Revelation chapter 20.

Revelation 1:4 (NIV2011) 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,

The symbolic use of numbers illustrates God's sovereignty over all history.