

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PRAYER ATLANTA
INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION
AUGUST 13TH, 2017 – BILLY HUMPHREY

I. Introduction

A. The Bible is a seamless story with clear continuity from Genesis to Revelation. Revelation is the capstone of prophecy in the Word of God in that it brings to a conclusion the story of creation from the Old and New Testaments. Through it we see the Father's wondrous plan to bring to a conclusion the story of this age and transition the creation to the ages to come under the leadership of His Son.

B. It is both a summary of all prophetic Scripture as well as a clarification of theological concepts from the whole of the Bible. It can also be considered the height of all Biblical theology because it ties together and summarizes many theological concepts about the Kingdom of God from the rest of Scripture.

C. The book of Revelation directly references the Old Testament over 400 times. When studying the book, it is extremely helpful to be familiar with Old Testament prophecy, specifically the writings of David, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah.

D. Revelation is the Father's unveiling of Jesus Christ. It is given by the Father to the Son and then given by the Son to His Bride.

Rev 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John,

1. While the gospels are meant to be an evangelistic invitation for multitudes to come to know Jesus, the Book of Revelation was given to the church to provide a clear picture of Jesus, particularly at the end of the age.

2. The book of Revelation is the greatest revelation *about* Jesus in the entire Scripture. Simultaneously it is the greatest revelation *from* Jesus regarding the Father's plans and purposes in giving His Son the nations of the earth.

3. The book is not the comprehensive revelation of Jesus Christ; it is a specific picture, highlighting key facets of His character. It's the primary way that God wants His Son to be known and understood by the church at the end of the age.

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E. The Book of Revelation is the only book that pronounces a blessing upon the one who reads it and a curse upon the one who changes its meaning (1:3, 22; 18-19).

F. It is important to understand that Revelation was written for ordinary people, not merely for scholars. Because it was firstly written to ordinary people from the first century church, It is reasonable to assume that church members throughout the ages can read and understand the main concepts of the book.

II. Purpose

A. The Greek word for Revelation is “Apokalupsis.” It literally means the uncovering or revealing of something or someone. The book of Revelation is therefore first and foremost an uncovering or revealing of Jesus Christ.

1. Like no other book in the Bible, Revelation is the unveiling of Jesus. It does not cover every facet of His character, but it does unfold a unique picture of who Christ is and specifically highlights Him as the Bridegroom, King and Judge.

2. As the Bridegroom He is burning with love for His Bride. As the King He is coming to reign over the nations in righteousness and as the Judge of the earth He is going to destroy the enemies of God in fury and fire.

3. We must always remember this book is the revelation of Jesus Christ, not the revealing of Antichrist, Satan, the false prophet, Babylonian Harlot or the story of the “end of the world.”

B. The chief purpose for studying the Book of Revelation is to come into a deeper recognition and understanding of the beauty and majesty of the Son of God.

III. Five Additional Reasons to study the Book of Revelation

A. Encouragement to Church at the end of the age - The greatest portion of the book is designed to give encouragement to those who will live through the events of the final 3.5 years of this age. In light of this, Revelation could be considered a manual to strengthen the hearts of believers to stand in the face of martyrdom.

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B. Prayer - Because of the detail that it gives regarding the last 3.5 years of this age it may also be considered a prayer manual for the prophetic church at the end of the age. In other words, it shows believers what to pray, prophesy and preach during the last 3.5 years.

C. Guidance through tribulation- Revelation is also a prophetic guidebook that unveils God's end time action plan to bring as many people to righteousness while releasing an ultimate judgment upon Satan and his kingdom. It gives great detail into the specific events and is a helpful tool to prepare the church for that time.

D. Understanding of the ways of the Lord - Just as the book of Acts describes the activities of the Holy Spirit through the Church in the first century, the book of Revelation gives us clear depictions of the activity of the Holy Spirit through the church during the Great Tribulation. Therefore, we consider Revelation to be the "end time book of Acts."

E. Clarity of Biblical theology- Finally, the Book of Revelation is the capstone of Biblical prophecy. It brings to a conclusion all of the prophetic passages throughout the old and new testaments. It shows us the wondrous plan of the Father to bring to a conclusion the story of this age and transition the creation into the ages to come under the leadership of His Son.

IV. Central Themes

- A. The revelation of the beauty and majesty of Jesus (Rev 1)
- B. The revelation of the beauty and majesty of the Father (Rev 4)
- C. The worthiness of Jesus Christ, the King of Kings (Rev 5)
- D. The call to the church to be overcomers through tribulation, persecution, and martyrdom (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7)
- E. The victory of the church even through suffering (Rev 12:11, 14:14-20)
- F. The ultimate purification of the bride (Rev 19:1-10)
- G. The great harvest of the ages, both Jew and Gentile (Rev 11-14)
- H. The sway of the kingdom of darkness over the nations (Rev 13)
- I. The judgment of Babylon (the world system) (Rev 17-18)

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J. The call to live in light of an eternal perspective (Rev 22)

K. The future eternal aspect of God's Kingdom (Rev 20-22:5)

V. Structure

A. The structure of the book is divided into a prologue (1:1-20), epistles (2:1 – 3:22), chronological sections, parenthetical sections & an epilogue (22:7-21).

B. Prologue & Epilogue - It is clear that John added at minimum a prologue and epilogue after the original vision, perhaps when He was released from Patmos, in order to give clarity to what it was that he had seen and heard. For instance in 1:9 he declares, "I, John... was on the Island that is called Patmos..." This would indicate that he added the greeting and introduction to the book at a later time.

C. Epistles – The book contains a set of seven letters to seven unique churches. It is clear that these were actual letters written to churches in Asia Minor in the first century. Each letter specifically identifies the Author, Jesus, and the recipient of the letter, the church to whom the letter was written.

D. Chronological & Parenthetical Sections - Through the chronological sections, we see Jesus' plan to systematically cleanse the earth by judging the Antichrist's systems using the seals, trumpets and bowls. It is through the parenthetical sections that we gain additional information and perspective from angels as to the story line of the book, what happens to the saints, and the reasoning behind the need for such severe judgments.

1. The events in the chronological sections are presented in the actual order that the events will unfold. The chronological chapters are:

a. Rev 6 – First 6 Seal Judgments

b. Rev 8-9 – 7th Seal & First 6 Trumpet Judgments

c. Rev 11:14-19 – 7th Trumpet & Second Coming of Christ

d. Rev 15-16 – The Bowl Judgments

e. Rev 19:11-21:8 – Jesus' Triumphal Entry, Millennial Reign and the Eternal Earth

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2. Each parenthetical section follows a chronological section and is an explanation or a commentary of the chronological sections. The parenthetical sections address the reasons, impact and responses to the crisis events of the Great Tribulation. These sections help us interpret the storyline of the book of Revelation. The parenthetical sections are as follows:

- a. Rev 7 – The sealing of the 144,000 and the great Multitude
- b. Rev 10-11 – The Seven Thunders, the Finishing of the Mystery of God and the Two Witnesses
- c. Rev 12-14 – War in the Heavens, The Woman and the Male child, The Beast and the False Prophet, the Victory of the 144,000 and the Two Harvests
- d. Rev 17-18 – The Great Harlot Babylon, the Beast Kingdom and its ultimate destruction
- e. Rev 21:9-22:5 – The Eternal Earth and the New Jerusalem