

Sunday, February 1, 2009
Living Hope EFC

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Intro to the Book of Revelation: Chap.1.

INTRO: J. Vernon McGee – “Loved a good Mystery.”

-In his commentary introduction to Revelation he wrote:

“When I began my ministry...on Sunday nights ...I would get into bed and read one of the mystery stories.

About 1am in the morning – the heroine has been tied to the railroad tracks by the villain, and old Number 77 is coming...the hero is in a warehouse, tied to a chair under which is a stick of dynamite with the fuse already lighted! ... I can't leave them at...in that kind of predicament...I slip over to the final page...I see the hero and the heroine sitting in a yard...a lovely cottage with a white picket fence. They are married and have a little baby playing on the lawn.

So I would turn back to the place I stopped reading, and I would say to the hero and heroine, “I don't know how you are going to get out of it, but I'll tell you this: It's going to work out all right.”

Revelation = Is the last chapter of the book, the Bible!

- In many ways it's like reading the last chapter of a mystery!

The overwhelming story line is that God, the Creator, Lover, Savior, Omnipotent Sovereign & Judge - is in control!

...He's never lost control. And He is moving history on a steady course toward a final hour when He will set His Son upon the throne of the universe – and every knee will bow before Him.

In Revelation we find the grand finale of numerous themes.

(Many, which began as far back as Genesis!)

1. Genesis = contrasted with Revelation.
 - a. Earth is created. Rev. New heaven & earth. -21
 - b. Satan's first rebellion. Rev. - Satan's last rebellion. -20
 - c. Entrance of sin. Rev. – Banishment of sin. –21:26-26
 - d. Death entered. Rev. – No more death. -21:3-4
 - e. Human relations destroyed. Rev. – All are restored.
 - f. The “curse” pronounced. Rev. – Curse removed. –22:3
 - g. Marriage of first Adam. Rev. Marriage of last Adam 21:9
 - h. Building of Babel, man's city. Rev – New Jerusalem. 21
2. The Church – first mentioned in Matt.16:18, Rev.19 = Bride.
3. Resurrection – Sheol & Hades all empty in resurrection.
4. The Lord Jesus – Gen.3:15 “Seed of woman,” Rev.1:17-18.
5. The Great Tribulation – Deut.4:25-31, Rev.6:16-17.
6. Satan & evil – Ezek.28, - Rev.20 thrown into Lake of Fire.
7. Man of Sin – Dan.9:26-27, 2 Thes.2; - Rev.12 & 13 appears.

8. False religion – Gen.11 Babel; NT Epistles; - Rev.17 Harlot!
9. "Time of the Gentiles" – Dan.2,7, Luke 21:24; - Rev.19!
10. Second coming of Christ – O.T. Prophets; - Rev.19 He returns.
11. Israel's Covenants – Gen.12 given; - Rev. 20 – K'dom comes!

POINT: Revelation records the final chapter of life on earth affected by sin's domination of cosmic affairs. It is like a train station at which all the lines of history intersect & terminate.

POINT: In order for all these themes to be completed in Revelation and for us to understand that they are completed, Revelation has to be "understandable." Not confusion!

- **In fact: it is one of the most orderly, understandable books in the Bible.** It is when people pay no attention to proper principles of interpretation that the book becomes a maze.

Features of proper interpretation of the Book

1 – It is a "Revelation" (Αποκαλυψις; απο – "from," καλυπτω "to hide or cover.") = From hiding; **revealing**, unveiling, disclosure.

- It is not a "**sealed**" book of prophecy: **Dan.12:9; Rev. 22:10.**
- **It is the unveiling of the Person and work of Jesus Christ – regard- ing the events that take place just before & after- 2nd coming. 1:1-2.**
- Revelation is the opposite of a "mystery." It is meant to be und/.

2 – It is the only book of prophecy in the N.T. (There are 17 in OT)

- As other prophecies in O.T. came/ will come true, so those in Rev.

3 – There is a blessing promised to the study of this book 1:3.

- It is the only book in the Bible containing such a promise.
- For this reason it also adds a warning to any who change or misuse or tamper with this book – **22:18-19.**

4 – It is "apocalyptic" literature, using many symbols.

- **But symbols have a literal meaning behind them.**
- About half the symbols are interpreted by the book itself, **1:20**
- Many others relate back to symbols in the O.T. & N.T. and find their meaning clarified in those contexts.
- It is calculated that there are over 500 references or allusions to the O.T. in Revelation. Understanding of the O.T. is crucial!

5 – Key Interpretive Principle: The literal interpretation is always preferred unless John makes it clear that it is otherwise. When symbols are used, there is a real meaning behind the symbol to be understood, not an allegorical or spiritualized meaning that is detached from the explanation from other Scriptures.

6 – Jesus Himself gives us the key to understanding the order of the Book: 1:19.

Following this guide is crucial to und/ the book.

NOTE the parallels:**1:18**

I am the Living One

1:19Write what you have seen
(Past tense: The vision in 1:12-16.)

I was dead & am alive

What is now (Pres. Tense)
(As Head of Church: chap.2-3.)

I have keys of hell & death

What will take place *afterward*
(4:1)- Same words: "After these things.)**Chap.4-22 deal with the future, "after" the church period.**

- Chap.4-22 deal with events after the church leaves earth.
- **What causes problems** is when people attempt to plug events found in chap.4-22 – into our day, into present history.
- This gives rise to wild and crazy interpretations.
- Jesus gives us a clear outline of the book to follow.

7. Chapters 4 – 22 refer to future events yet to take place, but not everyone follows this system of interpreting the book.

There are three – four main systems of interpretation of the book:

1. **Preterist** (from the Latin term "past"). It states that everything in the book (including chap.4-22) have already taken place.
 - a. Everything was fulfilled in John's day, 1st C. **It is not prophetic but descriptive**, taking place under Romans
 - b. This interpretation *originated* in the 17th C, when the Reformation identified Roman Church with Babylon,17.
 - c. Purpose of book = to comfort the persecuted church.
 - d. Problem: It has no meaning to us at all?? – Postmills
2. **Historical View**: Revelation gives a panoramic view of church history from the 1st C. to the Second Coming. – Postmills.
 - a. Problem: the events of the book are identified with definable eras of history, people, events – arbitrarily.
 - b. It becomes a matter of guessing. = Many variations.
 - c. It negates the whole prophetic future emphasis.
3. **Idealist approach** (historical-spiritualism): The book depicts the great spiritual struggle between good & evil in every age.
 - a. **The whole book is interpreted allegorically, with no definite historical recipients.** It is not prophetic.
 - b. The symbols could be attached to anything!
 - c. Amillennial – Christ is reigning now. No 1,000 yr K'dom.
4. **Futurist interpretation**: Beginning with Rev.4 we have a description of future events accompanying the end of age.

- a. These events are YET to be fulfilled and immediately precede Christ's second coming. It is prophetic!

DIAGRAM of BOOK.

- Chap.1 – Revelation of J.C. in His glorified position. In charge.
- Chap.2-3 – Christ, Head of the Church. Inspecting, perfecting.
- Chap.4-5 – The Throne of God in heaven, Christ opening seals.
- Chap.6-19 – The Great Tribulation.
- Chap.20 – The Millennial Kingdom on earth. White Throne Jmt.
- Chap.21-22 –The New Jerusalem, new eternal heaven & earth

b. The reason for holding this view: Rev.1:19.

- c. It takes the book at face value, literally
- d. It keeps us from pinpointing key figures, events, dates.

The main theme is stated in 1:1 –*The Revelation of Jesus Christ!*

The Book of Revelation – is “from” and “about” Jesus Christ.

We see Jesus as we’ve never seen Him before! 1:10-18.

- *John’s vision of the glorified Christ – Head of His Church!*
 1. Son of Man – Dan.7:13, approached Ancient of Days.
 2. Head – white. = Purity, holiness, age – eternity.
 3. Eyes blazing. Penetrating insight, searching righteousness, An x-ray penetration which sees to the very character (2-3).
 4. Feet, bronze. Meeting out justice and judgment.
 5. Voice, rushing waters. Overwhelming sound, absolute auth’y
 6. Sharp double-edged sword. The sovereign Word of God.
 7. Face, like the sun. The glory of His Majesty.–Rev.21:23-24; 22:3-6

He is dressed in a dignitaries robe, and He walks in the midst of His churches. 1:12 – Lampstands. 1:20 = Churches.

- O.T. Tabernacle, the priest was the only one who took care of the lampstand. He poured in the oil, lit it, trimmed wicks.
- The Church is the light of the world –Eph.5:8.
- Jesus is the High Priest. He pours in the oil (H.S.), trims wicks (disciplines), gives the light – as we abide in Him (Jn.15).
- He has given the Church His instructions (Bible), and expects us to obey. He sends discipline, blesses, strengthens, searches hearts. – all to strengthen His body on earth.

APPLICATIONS

1. Jesus Christ is the Head of this church. He inspects us, comforts, strengthens, gives an “open door,” that we serve Him.

- His desire is for us to be His Body & live out His commission.

2. History is not out of control, but under Christ’s sovereign control

- While men forcefully attempt to rule the affairs & kingdoms of earth, He is Ruler over the kings of earth.
- While we see troubling times everywhere, we focus on Him.

- History is not cyclical, but linear – on God's planned course.

3. Satan does not want you to read & understand this book!

- 20:10 = Satan loses the war. He doesn't want us to know!
- He wants us to keep Jesus – a baby in a manger, or hanging on a cross. He doesn't want us to see Him high and exalted!
- And he doesn't want men to understand their need to repent and come to Christ for their eternal redemption.

Are you trusting Him? Waiting for Him?

ILLUS: Flight at Denver Int. Airport >>>

- Green, 50

When a jet flies from Des Moines to Denver, the controller knows all the details of the flight pattern. He knows exactly when it left, where it is at various times, when it is scheduled to land. He knows all the facts. But they're just facts, like many other flights that arrive.

But a young lady at the airport waiting for her fiancé has a much different attitude about the flight. She can't wait for it to arrive – the one she loves is on the jet!

Many of us know all kinds of facts about Christianity, the Bible – they've become just "so many facts" that we take for granted. We're apathetic.

Questions Are we like the controller who knows a lot of facts about Christ and the Bible and is quite indifferent about Christ's arrival?

OR ... are we like the woman, waiting with great anticipation for One that we love and who fills our heart with joy – to think about Him?