

I. The Book

- A. Author - The Revelation of Jesus Christ was given to and written by John the Beloved Apostle near the end of the first century. John is nearing the end of his life, now in exile on the island of Patmos. The place in which political prisoners and enemies of the state would be sent.
- B. Date – There is currently some disagreement (Preterist Interpretation) over the dating of the book of Revelation. However, most agree and hold to the traditional viewpoint through church history that John wrote this book early to mid-90 AD.
- C. Genre – The book of Revelation includes 2 different genres of Hebrew writing.
 - 1. Epistolary - The book of Revelation is also primarily a letter from John to the seven churches that he had most likely been given charge over. From the initial opening phrase to the exhortations given in the subsequent chapters (2-3) and beyond, this prophetic work is unique in its construction as a continuous letter to a church. This book could have been titled “The Epistle of Jesus”.
 - 2. Apocalyptic - Meaning “an unveiling or unfolding of things not previously known which could not be known apart from the unveiling”. Apocalyptic works sought to communicate divine perspective on this world; such visionary transportation to heaven, visions of God’s throne room, angelic messengers of revelation, symbolic visions of political powers, coming judgment, and new creation all served to reveal the world in the perspective of God’s divine purpose.

II. Why Study Revelation

- A. It is the revelation of Jesus - The book of Revelation reveals the glory of Jesus. We say, “Well, that is obvious.” Actually, it’s not obvious. As you read commentary on Revelation, books about the last days, and hold discussions you will find that most think the book of Revelation is about events. The events become an end in themselves, and a unfruitful distraction if you primarily view this book through the lens of events. The events are the expression of the glory of God found in the man Christ Jesus. (Eph 1:17)
 - 1. His Identity – There are over 30 descriptions/titles of Jesus in the book of Revelation that give us great insight into who He is and reveal His glory to us. It reveals His zeal to see justice and righteousness and manifest it.
 - 2. His Heart – We see His zeal to establish justice and righteousness upon the earth while working in conjunction with His loving kindness and patience upon the wickedness of man. Over and over John is marveling at the divine heart of our God.

3. His Leadership - We see His dramatic plans to bring the restoration of all things. We stand in awe at His wise and loving plans that combine God's sovereignty, human free will, and satanic rage. His plan results in a great harvest of souls, a victorious Church, and the end of sin. He will do this without violating justice or man's free will.
- B. It Prepares the Church – The prophetic nature of the book of Revelation informs the church and prepares her to be victorious in trials, participate in God's judgments, interpret the current events rightly, walk with urgency, and have confidence in who God is and what He is doing. (Mat 24:13, Dan. 11:32-34)
- C. The Bible Stresses it – There are 150 chapters in the bible that have end time things as their main theme. All of revelation, many of Paul's letters, Jesus' teaching, and many old testament books including Psalms, Daniel, Joel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Micah ect.
- D. It Builds Hope – Hope is highlighted over and over in the scriptures as the anchor for our hearts. The scriptures point to the return of Jesus and ushering in of the Kingdom of God as our greatest hope. The book of Revelation builds tangible details of the return of Jesus and the coming Kingdom unlike any other book of the bible. (1 Cor. 15:19)

III. Posture of our Hearts

- A. Doctrinal Stances - We must recognize varying degrees of importance regarding Biblical, end-time beliefs and themes:
1. Essential Doctrines - Those of primary importance that are essential for the fellowship of Jesus Christ and continuity of saving faith.
 2. Core Convictions – Are the doctrines held by our leadership team in addition to the essential doctrines held by the Church. We are confident that the bible is very clear on these subjects. Every ministry has a set of core convictions that, if they compromise them, they are compromising all together. We are not open to changing our core convictions, but still respect and honor those that hold to different core convictions. We do not break the fellowship of Jesus Christ over core convictions.
 3. Personal Opinions - A teaching or theme we believe is Biblical, but they are our opinions. Meaning, we draw them as an implication from the Scripture and believe they are informed opinions. These views hold lesser value than core convictions and we are open to changing them.

“In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, diversity; and in all things, love.”

- B. Humility - We should present the Biblical message of the end times in a humility that promotes unity without compromising important truths. We acknowledge the value of other people who have totally different views. I have friendship with those who hold very different views than my own. We have a great friendship and our differing views do not hinder our fellowship at all. We do not fellowship around our differing views. Sometimes we talk about them, sometimes we have fun with them, but we honor each other. We always want to posture ourselves to learn and listen.
1. Any presentation of a detailed narrative of future events from a Biblical perspective must be tempered. History is littered with self-confident teachers who proudly overstated their position or were dogmatic where the Scriptures were not. We are to respect others with differing views on the end times, as long as Biblical essentials are upheld and sound. Teachers must be careful not to imply that their opinion on the end times is the only correct one.
- C. Posture of a Berean – The Berean’s received the teaching of Paul with eagerness and zeal to be taught. Then they searched the scriptures on their own under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to see if what he was teaching was true. (Acts 17:10-11)
1. I want you to search the scriptures on our views as you seek to establish your own core convictions. As a teacher, I value the process of challenging ideas and interpretations because you develop your own core convictions through that process. It is my opinion that the body of Christ must discipline themselves to develop their own core convictions on the doctrines of the scriptures. This is our best defense against deception and immaturity. (1 Jhn. 4:1)

IV. Four Main Interpretative Views

- A. **Idealist** (Figurative View) – There is no historical or prophetic meaning in the book of Revelation. It is simply an allegorical story of Good vs Evil or God vs Satan. Good will win in the end.
- B. **Preterist** (Figurative View) – The events in Revelation as being fulfilled in the past, believing nearly all the prophecies in the Book of Revelation have already been fulfilled usually in context to the destruction of Jerusalem and the fall of Rome in the first 3 centuries after Christ. However, Jesus said the Book of Revelation was clearly prophecy and not history – which leads to the debate over the dating of the book.

- C. **Historical** (Figurative View) – Revelation is a progressive unfolding of Church history from the Book of Acts until the Second Coming. Historicists believe that most of the events in Revelation have already been fulfilled, concluding that it seems unreasonable to suppose that a major portion of Biblical prophecy must wait for fulfillment until after the Rapture of the Church.

- D. **Future** (Literal View) - View (Rev. 1-3) as fulfilled, and (Rev. 4-5) as in heaven and (Rev. 6-22) as referring to the coming End-Time events released at Jesus' Second Coming. This is the view I will teach, as it is my personal view and the core conviction of the leadership team here at Restoration Fellowship. This view has also been the dominant view of the majority of the Christian church throughout history.