

## **Revelation Introduction**

- I. The Basics
  - A. Author – John, the apostle
  - B. Date – likely in the mid-90s (though there is a strong case for the early to mid-70s)
  - C. Context
    - 1. Continuation and increase of continued Roman persecution against Christians
    - 2. Predominance of Gentile presence in most congregation
    - 3. Significant time since the destruction of the Temple in 70AD (20-25 years)
    - 4. John the only surviving apostle
  - D. Audience – The “Seven Churches” (Rev. 1:11)
- II. A Caution About The Study of Revelation
  - A. There are several viable interpretative grids
  - B. Many have improperly labeled certain views as “heretical” or “dangerous”
  - C. Some have improperly viewed their own view as “the only orthodox view”
  - D. There is a great deal of freedom in the holding of various viewpoints
  - E. Then why make a study of it at all?
    - 1. It is in the Bible
    - 2. It has a blessing associated with its reading
    - 3. We should all be challenged and stretched by the Word
    - 4. We all can continue to learn things from God’s Word
- III. Major Methods of Interpreting Revelation
  - F. Our study will not be a focus on why certain views are wrong; rather, it will positively focus on what we can learn of Christ and His gospel.
  - A. Preterist – Most (if not all) of the events referenced in the Revelation are concerning things that have already taken place (fall of the Temple, fall of Roman Empire, etc.)
  - B. Historicist – The events described in the book of Revelation are to be associated with things that have taken place throughout history (Rise of Islam, Protestant Reformation, Napoleon, etc.)
  - C. Futurist – most, if not all, of the events of the Revelation are to take place in future at some point. These events will be successive and easily identifiable once they have begun
  - D. Idealist – The book is a symbolic expression of the conflict between good and evil, between the two kingdoms. The only specific historical event prophesied is the Second Coming.
  - E. Eclecticism – a combining of several aspects of the above views, with a heavy reliance on the symbolic nature of the idealist viewpoint. This view considers the Revelation a re-telling of the story of redemption from multiple vantage points.
- IV. How We Will Approach The Book In Our Study
  - A. I hold that the book of Revelation should be understood in three ways:
    - 1. It is the key to understanding how the Old Testament should be read from a Christological perspective

2. It is a re-telling of the historical-redemptive narrative, meant to encourage and strengthen a weak and suffering church toward hope in the gospel and the ultimate victory of Jesus Christ
3. It is a message of both exhortation and encouragement to Christians that are conscientiously struggling between already being in Christ and not yet having seen the fulfillment of all Jesus' promises come to pass.

V. The Basic Outline We Will Follow – The “Seven Visions”

A. Outline

1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ (1:1-3)
2. A Call To Write (1:4-11)
3. The Vision of the Exalted Christ (1:8-20)
4. To Him Who Overcomes (2:1-3:22)
5. Vision 1 (4:1-8:1)
6. Vision 2 (8:2-11:20)
7. Vision 3 (12:1-14:13)
8. Vision 4 (15:1-16:21)
9. Vision 5 (17:1-19:10)
10. Vision 6 (19:11-21:8)
11. Vision 7 (21:9-22:7)
12. The Invitation (22:8-21)

B. Each of these sections will guide us through this message of hope in the exalted Christ