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Revelation Intro

Social Quote: "The point of Revelation isn't to fix our eyes on the troubles around us, but the Savior above us."

Revelation 1:1-3

ANNOUNCE

- Thanksgiving communion next Sunday as normal
- 1st service - Honest Evangelism class
- Hibachi meal for discipleship - November 27

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 1:1-3 NKJV] 1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants--things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified [it] by His angel to His servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. 3 Blessed [is] he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time [is] near.

INTRO

We have arrived at the beginning of our study in the book of Revelation! We have 22 chapters to go, so I think it's safe to say that we might be here for a little while... if the Lord doesn't return by the time we are finished!

- The book of Revelation is arguably one of the most complex to teach and certainly to understand.
- I realize I said the same thing about Hebrews, so I guess I'm a glutton for punishment! Maybe next, I'll teach the book of Romans (just kidding).
 - Nonetheless, Revelation is the one book in the bible that promises a unique blessing to those who read, hear, and keep its words.
 - While God inspires the entire Bible through the Spirit, Revelation is also unique in that it contains the direct words of Jesus to His church regarding the future, the end of time and the world as we know it, and the consummation of all things to their intended state.
- While we honestly and humbly acknowledge some of the challenges of the book of Revelation, we also must understand that something from the Lord should not be avoided because it is intimidating.

I also recognize that our audience comprises people all over the spectrum regarding their understanding of the faith and the Bible. We have some mature Christians and others who just came to know Jesus and aren't sure where to find Revelation in the Bible (Good news, God made it easy and put it last). Some folks here are eschatological enthusiasts, while others don't even know what the word eschatology means (the study of the last things or end times).

- I have no doubt that there will be moments when you are scratching your head regarding eh things you're reading and the vision they are creating. There will be moments when I'm scratching my head along with you!
- But I believe with all my heart that if we open our ears, we will hear something profoundly relevant and essential, not only for the growth of our faith but for preparing us to be the kind of church Jesus desires for the final days before His return.
- Eight times in the book of Revelation, we see this phrase, **"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."** The Josh Blevins (unauthorized) translation: ***You better spiritually tune in and listen up to what God is saying in Revelation!***

1 Interpretation

INTERPRETAION

Quite possibly, what makes Revelation one of the most challenging studies, is the fact that there are varying philosophies of interpretation that have divided the church over how the last days play out, what the kingdom of God looks like, what is literal and figurative regarding John's heavenly vision, the timing and characteristics of Christs coming, and many other things.

- Before diving in, I think it's worth spending a short time looking at the four main methods of interpretation within the church and why we will approach it the way we are.

1. **The Preterist Approach:** This approach states that Revelation deals only with the church in John's day. In the Preterist approach, the Book of Revelation doesn't predict anything futuristic. John cryptically describes the events of his current day and puts them in symbolic "code" so those outside the Church couldn't understand his criticism of the Roman government. In the Preterist view, the Book of Revelation was for them and not really for us outside of revealing certain things about the past.

1. Most biblical scholars agree that this book was written by the apostle John (vs. 1, 9) between 90-95 AD. Many within the preterist camp argue (without strong evidence) the book of Revelation was completely written and fulfilled by 70 AD when the Roman empower Titus invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. They date the writing of the book to about 67 AD. They believe that Caesar was

the anti-Christ and that the thousand-year reign of Christ is figurative and not literal. It is interesting that the earliest records we have from the church fathers indicate that John's exile on the Island of Patmos was under the reign of emperor Domitian sometime between 87-96 AD. This supports the view that revelation was written after 70 AD, rendering a Preterist view highly improbable.

2. **The Historicist Approach:** This approach believes that Revelation is a sweeping, disordered panorama of all church history. In the *Historicist* approach, Revelation predicts the future, but the future of the "church age" - not the future of end-time events. In the *Historicist* view, Revelation is full of symbols that describe what we are currently experiencing within the church. John's visions are strictly allegorical. Not literal, and are supposed to be interpreted figuratively. Of course, one of the main

problems this presents is "how do you interpret these pictures?" All of the sudden, the four horsemen, the stinging locusts, and the star falling to the earth are all spiritual pictures of something. Of what? Who knows, but there is no limit to the number of theories depending on where you live and what you experience. In my opinion, this method leaves the interpretation too broad to be helpful or cohesive for the believer.

3. **The Poetic Approach (spiritual)**: This approach believes that Revelation is a book full of pictures and symbols intended to encourage and comfort persecuted Christians in John's day. In the *Poetic* or *allegorical* view, the Book of Revelation isn't literal or historic. Revelation is a book of *personal* meaning. If Revelation is supposed to be a personal devotional, it's the most frightening and convoluted one ever written.
4. **The Futurist Approach**: Or the literal view. This approach believes that beginning with chapter four, Revelation deals with the end of the age, the final seven years of Jacob's trouble. The period fulfilling Daniel's 70th-week prophecy directly preceding Jesus' return, kingdom, and judgment. In the *Futurist* view, Revelation is a book that mainly describes actual events that will take place before the literal, physical return of Jesus. This is the approach that I have adopted.

1. First, it allows us to take literally what is conveyed literally and take figuratively that which is obviously symbolic. Sometimes those lines get blurred, but trust me, it's a lot less confusing that trying to figure out the allegorical, spiritual meaning of everything described in the book.
2. Second, Jesus clearly tells us the outline: **[Rev 1:19 NKJV] 19 "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this."**

1. **The things which he had seen** - 9-18 - the heavenly vision of Jesus.
2. **The things which are** - chapters 2-3 - the seven churches and the church age.

3. **The things that will take place after (the church age)** - 4-22 - the final events of history before Jesus returns.

We believe that the return of Jesus is literal.

- **[Act 1:9-11 NKJV] 9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."**

We believe the judgment is literal:

we believe the judgment is literal.

- **[Act 17:31 NKJV] 31 "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."**

2 Content

APPLICATION

Let's face it, if you've ever read Revelation, the imagery is mind-boggling. It's almost unfathomable to imagine the amount of destruction, demonic activity, and spiritual manifestations that occur in such rapid succession. Although I will say the more we progress with technology and globalism, some of the pictures and predictions of Revelation make more sense to today's audience than ever before in history.

There is something very important to understand when studying Revelation:

Revelation comes from a heavenly vantage point.

EXAMPLE: Have you ever looked down on the world from a higher perspective? Maybe from a plane? How much more would you see from space?

Though not in perfect chronological order, the book of Revelation takes us through a rapid succession of events over seven years. And though these events are difficult to interpret, the picture they paint is pretty simple to understand. The world has rejected Jesus. They have rebuilt the system of Babylon and have enthroned the human race as God, placing the ultimate antichrist as their political and spiritual savior. While things seem to go well at first, the true Satanic motives are revealed. At that point, all hell breaks loose on earth, the like of which history has never seen.

CHART

- After the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, the final stage of human history was set into motion. We call it the last days.
- As we will see, the Bible indicates that at one point in time, the church age that we are

- AS we will see, the Bible indicates that at one point in time, the church age that we are currently in will come to an end when the Lord calls His church to "Come up here," and we will see the sites that we find in **Revelation 4-5**.
- **Revelation 6-18** records the time of tribulation that Jesus says is the worst the world has ever known.
 - At one point, 1/4 of the world's population is wiped out within an hour. Today, approximately 2 billion people would be gone in the snap of a finger.
 - Plagues, famines, and pestilences all converge in rapid succession worldwide to create chaos that no one on earth can manage and keep up with.
 - Do you think today's economic forecast is rough? A time is coming, according to Revelation 6, that an entire day's wage will get you enough wheat to make a single loaf of bread.
 - God pours out his rightful wrath and justice upon the earth. People still reject him and wage war against Israel.
 - **Revelation 19 & 20** - He ultimately returns to finish the job and establishes his prophesied and perfect earthly kingdom for 1000 years. Satan has one last hoorah and draws all the remaining nations to war with Christ the King. Jesus wins. All people are judged.
 - **21-22** - A new heaven and earth are created where the righteous dwell for all eternity. No more tears, no more pain, no more sin. Perfect harmony with God and one another in a perfect world with a perfect environment and perfect joy forever. See, easy!

The book of Revelation brings light to every other book of the Bible. It contains more Old Testament connections than any other New Testament book.

APPLICATION

1. **A Revelation of Christ** - I believe that if we miss the book's opening words, we set ourselves up for failure. **[Rev 1:1 NKJV] 1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ,**

1. What we are about to read is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. In the sense that it belongs to Him, and the things revealed are His to reveal. But also in the sense that Revelation is centered around revealing the person of Jesus Christ. The word Revelation is singular, not plural. It's not many revelations, it's one revelation. And some of your Bibles might say the revelation of John the Divine. THAT'S NOT BIBLE! That's translators who forgot to read verse one. This book is about Jesus; it was given to Jesus, conveyed from Jesus, and it reveals Jesus as

about Jesus; it was given to Jesus, conveyed from Jesus, and it reveals Jesus as he is now and as He will be when he returns to this earth.

1. In Revelation, He is revealed as:

- God
- Shepherd
- Savior
- Judge
- Conquerer
- King

2. The Greek word "revelation" is apocalypses (apocalypse). We get visions in our minds of destruction and heavenly calamity, but the word simply means "unveiling." Many think that Revelation obscures the future, but it is unveiling it. And the most important unveiling that takes place is that of Jesus. ***Let's remember that the purpose of this book is for us to be in awe of Jesus, to eagerly await the return of Jesus, and to be consumed with serving and loving Jesus!***

3. ***The book is less about 666 and more about Holy, Holy Holy! Yes, Revelation contains an unveiling of judgment, but more importantly, it's the unveiling of Jesus.***

1. ***Funny thing - the size of the file I was saving for the presentation (image)***

4. ***If you read Revelation and become more consumed with prophecy than you are with Jesus, you are missing the point.*** While we certainly are exhorted to redeem the time, to be aware of the times and seasons in which we live, and to not be ignorant regarding the rapture and the return of Jesus, God has not called us to be paranoid about every potential prophetic event.

1. "A tree blew over on the border of Israel and Lebanon, Ezekiel 38 is taking place!"

2. Today is 11/20/22, we're missing the 21. 21 is seven divided three times...
777 - Jesus is coming today!

5. [Act 1:6-8 NKJV] 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

2. **A Revelation for us - which God gave Him to show His servants.** Are you a servant of Jesus? He doesn't want you to be in the dark. I believe this statement means for all of His servants, for all time until the church age ends. Revelation can not merely be a history book, because it expresses the heart of Jesus for His church, and you and I are his church!
3. **A Revelation of the future --things which must shortly take place.** Please don't get sidetracked by the word "shortly." Many believe that Revelation must have only applied to the early church because it was to take place "shortly" after John saw the vision. Two things here:

1. God defines shortly differently than we do. **[2Pe 3:8-9 NKJV] 8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day [is] as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning [His] promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**

2. The word shortly can be defined as "quickly," or the span of time between when an event starts and finishes. A compound word in the Greek: "En" and Tachos" literally means "in a quick or speedy manner." The things that will unfold rapidly once they begin."

1. **EXAMPLE:** If I was talking about the Christmas Eve service. I got a team of decorators to set up, and I said, "Regarding Christmas Eve, let me tell you the things that need to quickly take place to get ready." That doesn't mean that they will start setting up for Christmas tomorrow (although many people are). It means that they will happen in a certain order and timeframe when the time comes.
2. **EXAMPLE** – It's like when your wife asks you to go shopping with her. You say, "Fine, as long as we go quickly." What are you saying? From the time you get to the mall and the time you leave needs to be quick. One hour, not six.
3. Another good word would be "suddenly." **[Mar 13:35-37 NKJV] 35 "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming-- in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning-- 36 "lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. 37 "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"**
4. **[1Th 5:3 NKJV] 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.**

3 I do not believe that time has started yet, but once God hits the heavenly

3. I do not believe that time has started yet, but once God hits the heavenly stopwatch, there's no stopping that train. It will roll and roll quickly. Over 1/4 of the Bible is predictive prophecy. It's what makes it unique among all other religious works and writings. And it has a perfect track record so far.

1. Bible scholars agree that conservatively, Jesus fulfilled at least OT 300 prophecies in his first coming. My friends, you can bank on this fact, the prophecies about the future and his return will also be fulfilled just as they are written.

2. God says in Isaiah 46:9-10 - Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure...

4. A Revelation of truth - And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, [Rev 1:2 NKJV] 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

1. John was the last living apostle when he was taken into heaven to receive this vision from Christ. I'll give more history of John in our next study. But John had seen Jesus. Consider the language he used in His letter: **[1Jo 1:1-2 NKJV] 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us--**

1. John had seen the word of God, who became flesh. He watched Jesus' miracles, leaned against his chest as they ate together, laughed with Him, cried with Him, and experienced life with Him.

2. But this vision of Jesus was an entirely new experience. But John "bore witness." What John wrote wasn't a drug trip or a hallucination. It wasn't a dream. It was an actual experience with Jesus, the Living Word.

3. The visions and words of Revelation were not an interpretation of John's. They were the direct expressions and words given by Jesus, the Word of God. This means that, even in our limited understanding, every last word of this book is true and represents realities that have not yet been experienced.

3 The Promise

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 1:3 NKJV] 3 Blessed [is] he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time [is] near.

APPLICATION

The revelation was not revealed to be ignored.

- Is there anyone here who doesn't want the fullness of God's blessing?
- It comes through reading, hearing, and DOING. What is there to do? Well, chapters 2-3 are all directed to the church regarding the kind of people we are to be as those living in the last days.

MOTIVATION

The time is near - at hand. We are living in the last days. Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. Because we are living in the last days, it is good for us to keep in the forefront of our minds the truth of Jesus and the coming judgment upon the world.

[Eph 5:15-17 NKJV] 15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord [is].

What are the blessings that come with seeking to understand revelation and walk in the light of the future?

1. **The blessing of perspective** - I always enjoy a drive better when I know where I'm going. When you read Revelation, you recognize that the world is not eternal. Your life

is fleeting, everything around us is ultimately perishing, and your true future is still

ahead of you, past the here and now.

2. **The blessing of motivation** - If everything in this book is coming to pass, there is a mission worth living for while we have the opportunity. Now is the time to let people know there is good news concerning the end of the world and the end of their lives. They don't have to be afraid, but they can know the salvation of Jesus before it's too late.
3. **The blessing of security** - you will be happy you know Jesus and that your salvation is secure in Him after you read what awaits His enemies, both in time and eternity. I read Revelation and say, "Thank you, Jesus, that you are my salvation, protection, and eternal hope!" Jesus told His church that He has not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation and that those who are in Christ will be saved from the hour of tribulation that is coming upon the whole earth.
4. **The blessing of holiness** - when you read Jesus' letters to His church, it sanctifies you, causes you to repent, and refocus your heart. When you become who Jesus wants you to be, you are blessed with joy, peace, and strength.