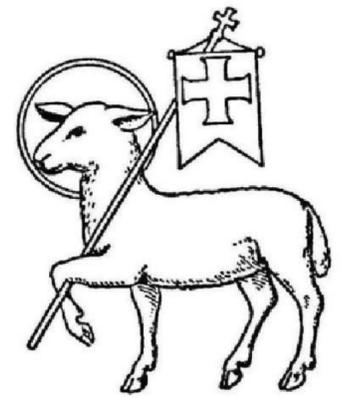


The Book of Revelation

1. Prophecy in general and Background to the Book



Apocalypse soon?

- The uncertainty of our times
- Nightmare scenarios unfolding
- Global warfare; environmental change; pessimistic predictions.
- Original name for Revelation was 'The Apocalypse' Greek: *(Apokalypsis)*
(translated as 'revelation' - something revealed; the curtain drawn back.)

What does the future hold?

- People are desperate to find out (*Old Moore's Almanac; Nostradamus*)
- The 'Blessed Hope' (Titus 2:13) '*The manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Rev 1:7 'He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him.'*

Prophecy

- Large sections of the Bible 27% (and 26% of Matthew's Gospel)
- Forth-telling (including the charismatic gift of prophecy) and foretelling
- Supernatural – a miracle of knowledge, not from the natural mind or a naturally pessimistic spirit, or having issues or 'an axe to grind.' Rev 1:1 '*the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave.*'
- Jesus the prophet. (Matthew 26:1-2; 24:24 '*he told them all this before it happened.*')
- The dating of the Gospels – before or after the events?
- The prophets themselves. Mainly men like Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Amos, etc) but also a few women (Deborah Judges 4:4) Huldah (2 Kings 22:14); Abigail (1 Samuel 25:28-31)
- The medium of prophesy: dreams, daytime visions 'In the spirit' (Rev 1:10) when observing a natural object; the word of the Lord came to me; sometimes accompanied by angels (Rev 1:1)

The purpose of prophecy

- Not to excite, speculate, argue over, become inactive or lazy. (1 Thess 5:14; 2 Thess 3:6)
- Practical - Take action
- Return to the Lord; live ethically in obedience to Christ
- The future having an impact on our present ministry (Hebrews 13:17; 2 Tim 4:7; Matt 25:1-46; Rev 22:12)

The conditional nature of prophecy

- Leviticus chapter 26 and Deuteronomy chapter 28
- 2 Kings 20:1-6; Jeremiah 18:7-10; Rev 2:21 & 9:20
- Even in the reign of evil in Revelation, there is the offer to repent (Rev 2:21; 9:20)
- The nature and character of God to be merciful
- Judgment as self-inflicted.
-

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Probably the most neglected book in the New Testament

- It is apocalyptic and symbolic. What does the symbolism mean? The style is similar to Ezekiel, Daniel 7-12; Zechariah 1-6; Matthew 24-25.
- Some of the imagery is quite scary! The stuff of nightmares and apocalyptic horror films.
- The quarry from which some have drawn strange and novel doctrines
- yet outside the Church, several writers and filmmakers draw on its imagery and characters, 'Good Omens' (Neil Gaiman); 'The Omen' 1976 film written by David Seltzer.

A special blessing

- Those who read it and listen to it and seek to live by its teaching will receive a special blessing. (Rev 1:3).

Background to the book

- **Author:** Traditional – The Apostle John, who also wrote the Gospel and Epistles of John. Agreed by the testimony of early Church Fathers Justin Martyr (165) Irenaeus (185) Clement of Alexandria (220). But modern scholarship disputes this (because of the 'rough' Greek in which it was written, compared with John's Gospel and Epistles ("The Johannine School" in 2nd century).
- **Date:** Traditional view (if Apostle John is author) around 96AD at the end of the persecution of the Emperor Diocletian (reigned 81 – 96AD)
- **Purpose**
 - (i) To encourage Christians going through persecution.
 - (ii) To remind them (and their enemies) that God is on the throne, his purposes will come to pass, and Jesus is the Lord of all creation.
 - (iii) Evil and Satan will not have the last word but will be ultimately defeated by Jesus.
 - (iv) Suffering, tears, service and martyrdom will not be in vain
 - (v) To show how the story began at Creation ends with believer's resurrected bodies in a transformed universe.
- **Time scope.** Rev 1:19 from the time John was writing throughout history right up to the end of the world at the Second Coming of Christ, and beyond into eternity. Many of the events will 'soon take place' (1:1) The phrase 'I am coming soon' has to be seen in the context of the age of the universe. We are living in the 'last days' (Hebrews 1:1)
- **Structure and symbolism of the book**

A series of pictures, symbolic numbers and constantly changing scenes in earth and in the heavenly places, There are sounds, smells, songs, responses and choruses – Revelation is full of worship.

The number Seven: churches, lampstands, stars, angels, spirits of God, seals, eyes, horns, bowls, trumpets, thunders, hills. Seven represents completion in the Bible.

The Book of Revelation: Outline

- I. Chapter 1 – Prologue and Vision of Christ
- II. Chapters 2 and 3 – Letters to Seven Churches
- III. Chapters 4 and 5 – A Vision of Heaven
 - 1. The throne of God
 - 2. The Lamb on the throne
 - 3. The seven-sealed book
 - 4. The Lamb worthy to open the book
 - 5. Lamb worshiped because of His redemptive work
- IV. Chapters 6 and 7 – The Seven Seals and a Parenthesis
 - 1. 6:1-17 – The six seals
 - a. The white horse
 - b. The red horse
 - c. The black horse
 - d. The pale horse
 - e. The souls of the slain
 - f. The earthquakes eclipse, etc.
 - 2. 7:1-17 – The Parenthesis
 - a. 7:1-8 – The sealing of the redeemed
 - b. 7:9-17 – The bliss of redeemed in heaven
- V. Chapters 8 through 11 – The Seven Trumpets (Seventh seal was seven trumpets)
 - 1. 8:1-5 – A heavenly vision of angels
 - 2. 8:6 – 9:21 – The seven trumpets
 - a. on earth
 - b. on sea
 - c. on streams
 - d. an eclipse
 - e. the woe of locusts
 - f. the woe of army of horsemen
 - 3. Chapter 10 – The angel and the little book
 - 4. 11:1-13 – The vision of the two witnesses
 - 5. 11:14-19 – The seventh trumpet
- VI. Chapters 12 through 14 – The Seven Mystic Figures
 - 1. 12:1-2 – The sun-clothed woman
 - 2. 12:3-4 – The red dragon
 - 3. 12:5-17 – The child and war in heaven
 - 4. 13:1-10 – The beast from the sea
 - 5. 13:11-18 – The beast from the earth
 - 6. 14:1-13 – The Lamb on Mt. Zion
 - 7. 14:14-20 – The Son of Man and doom on the earth

VII. Chapters 15 and 16 – The Seven Vials

1. 15:1-8 – A vision of heaven. The triumph of the redeemed.
2. 16:1-21 – The seven vials
 - a. Earth
 - b. Sea
 - c. Waters
 - d. Sun
 - e. Realm of beast
 - f. The great river Euphrates
 - g. The air, i.e., storm; cup of wrath poured on Babylon

VIII. Chapters 17 and 18 – The Doom of Babylon

1. 17:1-6 – Description of woman
2. 17:7-15 – The interpretation of beast by the angel
3. 17:16-18 – The destruction of the harlot
4. 18:1-24 – The doom of earth

IX. Chapter 19 – 20:10 – The Manifestation of Christ and Final Doom of Satan

1. 19:1-6 – A hallelujah chorus
2. 19:7-10 – Marriage of Lamb
3. 19:11-21 – The appearance of King of Kings and smiting of nations
4. 20:1-3 – Binding of Satan
5. 20:4-6 – First resurrection
6. 20:7-9 – Satan loosed for season
7. 20:10 – Final doom of Satan

X. Chapter 20:11 – 22:6 – Vision of New Heaven and New Earth

1. 20:11 – 21:7 – The believers dwelling in New Jerusalem
2. 21:8 – The second death
3. 21:9-27 – The New Jerusalem described: size and beauty
4. 22:1-21 – The completion of God's redemptive process and last message of the Bible
 - a. 22:1-6 – The final redemption shown by reappearance of tree of life and appearance of river of life flowing from throne of God
 - b. 22:7-22 – Last message of Bible