

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

1. Introduction

- Written around AD 96 by the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos—Rev. 1:4, 9
- It is a Revelation given to him by the ascended Lord Jesus Christ—Rev. 1:10-18
- It is predictive of the future, to the end, Millennium and Judgment
- It was written in Greek

2. Revelation is a Book of Symbols

(taken from *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* by John F. Walvoord)

- The seven stars (1:16) represent angels (1:20)
- The seven lamp stands (1:13) represent seven churches (1:20)
- The hidden manna (2:17) speaks of Christ in glory (cf. Ex. 16:33-34; Heb. 9:4)
- The morning star (2:28) refers to Christ returning before the dawn, suggesting the rapture of the church before the establishment of the Kingdom (cf. Rev. 22:16; 2 Ptr. 1:19)
- The key of David (3:7) represents the power to open and close doors (Isa. 22:22)
- The seven lamps of fire represent the sevenfold Spirit of God (4:5)
- The living creatures (4:7) portray the attributes of God
- The seven eyes represent the sevenfold Spirit of God (5:6)
- The odours of the golden vials symbolize the prayer of the saints (5:8)
- The four horses and their riders (6:1 ff) represent successive events in the developing tribulation
- The fallen star (9:1) is the angel of the abyss, probably Satan (9:11)
- Many references are made to Jerusalem: the great city (11:8), Sodom and Egypt (11:8), which stand in contrast to the new Jerusalem, the heavenly city
- The stars of heaven (12:4) refer to fallen angels (12:9)
- The woman and the child (12:1-2) seem to represent Israel and Christ (12:5-6)
- Satan is variously described as the great dragon, the old serpent, and the devil (12:9; 2:-2)
- The time, times, and half a time (12:14) are the same as 1,260 days (12:6)
- The beast out of the sea (13:1-10) is the future world ruler and his empire
- The beast out of the earth (13:11-17) is the false prophet (19:20)
- The harlot (17:1) variously described as the great city (17:18), as Babylon the great (17:5), as the one who sits on seven hills (17:9), is usually interpreted as apostate Christendom
- The waters (17:1) on which the woman sits represent the peoples of the world (17:15)
- The ten horns (17:12) are ten kings associated with the beast (13:1; 17:3, 7, 8, 11-13, 16-17)
- The Lamb is Lord of lords and King of kings (17:14)
- Fine linen is symbolic of the righteous deeds of the saints (19:8)
- The rider of the white horse (19:11-16, 19) is clearly identified as Christ, the King of kings
- The lake of fire is described as the second death (20:14)
- Jesus Christ is the Root and Offspring of David (22:16)

3. **Outline of the Book**

(taken from *A Revelation of Jesus Christ* by J.B. Smith)

- Part One—The Prologue (1:1-8)
- Part Two—The things which thou has seen (1:9-20)
- Part Three—The things which are (2:1-3:21)
- Part Four—The things which shall be hereafter
- Part Five—The Epilogue

4. **Why Study Revelation?**

(taken from *The Book of Revelation, The Smart Guide to the Bible Series* by Daymond R. Duck)

- Revelation is the Word of God (the Bible)
- Jesus told us to watch for signs of things to come
- Revelation is about Jesus
- Revelation reveals God's plan for the future
- A special blessing is promised to all those who read Revelation
- Revelation will change our lives
- Revelation will give us a concern for those who reject God and his Son, Jesus
- If prophecy is being fulfilled, people should want to know the details
- Warning—Rev. 23:18-19

4. **Doctrines**

(taken from *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* by John F. Walvoord)

- The Father
 - God is presented in all the majesty of the Jehovah of the Old Testament, who is holy, true, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal. There is emphasis on the righteousness of God and His divine judgment upon sin, with comparatively little mention made of His love and mercy. The character of God is in keeping with the role in which He is presented as the Judge of men.
- The Son
 - Though there is reference to both the Father and the Son, the central revelation concerns Christ, in keeping with the title of the book. Many allusions are made to His human origin as coming from the tribe of Judah and the house of David and to His humiliation while on earth as represented in the symbol of the slain lamb.
 - The supreme revelation is continued in chapter 19 where He is described as descending from heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords to slay the wicked, to deliver the righteous, and to accomplish His righteous purpose in the earth.
- Anthropology and Hamartiology
 - The emphasis on the doctrines of man and of sin the book of Revelation is apparent.
- Angelology
 - No other book in the New Testament speaks more often of angels than the book of Revelation. They are the principal vehicle of communication to John of the truth which he is recording. The holy angels are seen in power and majesty in sharp contrast to the wicked angels or fallen angels described in the book.

- Soteriology
 - The redemptive purpose of God is constantly in view in the Apocalypse, beginning with the reference in 1:5 to Christ as the One who “loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” His crucifixion is mentioned in 1:7, and constant allusions follow as Christ is presented as the slain Lamb, as the One who redeemed mankind by His blood out of every kindred, tongue, and nation in 5:9, and the One whose blood can make white the robes of the martyrs in 7:14.

- Ecclesiology
 - A major section and contribution to ecclesiology is found in the opening chapters of Revelation with the incisive letters to the seven churches. Here the emphasis is on practical truth and holy living.

- Eschatalogy
 - Nowhere else in Scripture is there more detailed description of the period just before the second coming with special reference to the great tribulation. The events immediately preceding and following the second coming are also spelled out in detail.
 - Here alone the millennial kingdom is declared to be one thousand years in length, and a clear distinction is made between the millennium and the eternal state which follows.