

A panoramic view of the book of Revelation

Sermon notes



The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; 5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 1:1-6

I want to give you a quick resumé of the book of Revelation, the 66th book in the Canon of Scriptures. There is one thing you must not do and that is to get your understanding about the book of Revelation from Hollywood. Whenever you see an apocalyptic movie it is always about destruction and total despair in the earth and consequently people have equated the word **apocalypse** with total devastation. I am sure you have seen the movies where meteorites are falling from the sky, buildings are falling apart, famous landmarks are destroyed and monsters from the deep are wreaking havoc on the earth. In fact many dictionaries define the words **apocalypse** and **apocalyptic** as doomsday, doom-laden, ominous, portentous, momentous, catastrophic and disastrous event. However this is not what the word **apokalypsis** which is the Greek word for **revelation** means.

Apokalypsis simply means the unveiling or the revealing of something. It is just like when a sculpture or commemoration is unveiled for the first time by a dignitary. The Queen, the President, a Senator or Congressman, the Prime Minister or some dignitary pulls the cord and the covering drops which unveils a figure for all to see. The book of Revelation and it is one revelation not revelations as is often misquoted is the revelation and unfolding of the Lord Jesus Christ. While some would think it is about the revelation of the antichrist, the beast, the whore of Babylon, the plagues, the disasters which is what Hollywood has majored upon but for the believer the book of Revelation is the unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are more titles and attributes to Jesus in the book of Revelation than in any other books of the Bible.

John the Beloved or the Revelator wrote the book of Revelation in AD 95 from the Isle of Patmos where he was sent as a prisoner or an exile. To understand the book of Revelation we must also understand the book of Daniel. What the book of Revelation is to the New Testament is what is the book of Daniel is to the Old Testament. There are other books which are apocalyptic in nature such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel to name a few. There are 66 books in the Bible - 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. If you consider it as one book with 66 chapters. Since the book of Revelation is the last book of the Bible (the closing chapter) it is difficult to understand this book (66th chapter) without reading the previous 65 books (65 chapters). The previous 65 chapters give a framework, the background, the characters and final scenes for the 66th closing scene. The book of Revelation reveals

- **Person of Jesus**
- **Plan of Jesus**
- **Power of Jesus**
- **Prophecies** - From church age, Rapture, tribulation, Second Coming, Millennial reign, final judgment and to the establishment of new heaven and new earth
- **Period** - Revelation covers a period from when John wrote it in AD95 which was part of the **Church age which began on the day of Pentecost**, the present and beyond the Rapture, tribulation, Second Coming, Millennial reign, final judgment and to the establishment of new heaven and new earth

QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE PERIOD IT COVERS

1. **Church age period (AD95 as of John's writing) - Rapture**
2. **Tribulation Period - 7 years between the Rapture of the church and the Second Coming. The 7 years is called the Tribulation period which is divided into 2 segments of 3 1/2 years with the latter half being known as the Great Tribulation. The tribulation ends with the Second Coming of Jesus on the earth to literally rule and reign from Jerusalem.**
3. **Millenium Period - Jesus reigning on the earth for 1000 years from Jerusalem**
4. **Eternity - Final judgments, new heaven, new earth**

Now let me give you an panoramic view of what John the Revelator saw.

*And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. **Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;***

Revelation 1:17-19

The apostle John's assignment was to write and there were three specific things he was to write about.

1. **Write the things you saw**
2. **Write the things which are**
3. **Write the things that shall be hereafter.**

With an understanding of these three outlines/sections/segments/ divisions, the book of Revelation will unfold into its place before you.

SEGMENT 1 : WRITE THOSE THINGS YOU HAVE SEEN - REVELATION 1

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Revelation 1:12-18

The shortest segment of the book. John saw Jesus as he is now in heaven not from what he remembered him in his earthly ministry.

- High Priest
- The First and the Last
- The Alpha and Omega

SEGMENT 2—WRITE THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE - REVELATION 2-3 CHURCH AGE

Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 - John saw the church age which began on the day of Pentecost but at the time of his writing was AD95 until the closing of the church age - resulting in the catching away of the church.

Jesus had a message for and to the seven churches. These seven churches were literal churches in Asia Minor which today we would know as Turkey. Apart from the fact that these seven churches were literal churches, there are several understandings of these seven churches that are held in Christendom. I have not put them in order of importance but just in order of my thoughts.

- Firstly Jesus was communicating with these seven literal physical churches, addressing their positions, pitfalls and their needs at that time.
- Secondly these seven churches were a foreshadow of seven different periods in the history of the Church. Many scholars believe the seven churches represent seven periods of church age
 1. **Ephesus: Apostolic Church (A.D. 33—100)**
 2. **Smyrna: Era of Persecution Under the Ten Caesars (A.D. 100—312)**
 3. **Pergamum: Era of Church-State Union (A.D. 312—590)**
 4. **Thyatira: Era Spanning the Middle Ages (A.D. 590—1517)**
 5. **Sardis: Protestant Reformation (A.D. 1517—1750)**
 6. **Philadelphia: Era of Revival and Great Awakening (A.D. 1750—1925)**
 7. **Laodicea: Era of "Higher Criticism" (A.D. 1900—Tribulation)**
- Thirdly these seven churches represent the seven types of churches that exist today. When you look at these seven churches you will find what kind of church your church is in that list.

Let's look at these seven churches and their characteristics:

- Ephesus : The church that left its first love, the Lord Jesus. Legalistic - The Legalistic and Loveless church
- Smyrna: The church suffered great persecution and remained faithful in the midst of persecution. Many believers are in areas where the church suffers terribly every day - The Persecuted church
- Pergamum: The church that allowed ungodliness in, idol worship and worldliness corrupt it from the inside out. Compromise and anything goes - The Compromising church
- Thyatira : The church that taught heresy they had allow to creep in. The Church that Follows False Prophets - The Adulterous church
- Sardis : The church that seemed to have everything but they were spiritually dead. - The Dead church
- Philadelphia : The church that was graced by love for one another - The Faithful church
- Laodicea : The church that was in apathy, slumber and lukewarm. It made Jesus want to throw up for the insipid attitude - The Lukewarm church

SEGMENT 3—WRITE THOSE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER- CHAPTERS 4-22

As chapters 2-3 are the seven messages to the seven churches, chapter 4 begins *'After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither...'* (Revelation 4:1,2) This is the Rapture of the church and the church does not appear again until she returns back with Jesus in the Second Coming. Here's an overview of the rest of the chapters of Revelation. Here is a quick snapshot of the rest of the chapters:

1. **THE RAPTURE REVELATION 4:1**
2. **The Tribulation. - Revelation 6:17.**
3. **The Battle of Armageddon. Revelation 16:16; 19:11**
4. **Second Coming of Christ—with His church Revelation 19:19.**
5. **The Millennium - Revelation 20:1-6**
6. **Final Battle, Satan's End, The Final Judgment - Revelation 20:7-15**
7. **Eternal Heaven or Eternal Hell, New Heaven, New Earth - Revelation 21:1 to 22:21**