

VIA EMMAUS: A CHRIST-CENTERED WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE

The Revelation of Jesus Christ (42)

INTRODUCTION

Author	John, the Apostle (AD 94-96)– <i>Writing from Patmos (1:9); Recipient of Revelation</i>
Hermeneutics	Revelation is filled with symbolic imagery – <i>What does the symbols refer to?</i> The Old Testament, not the New(s)Paper – <i>400 + Allusions to Old Testament</i>
Genre	<u>Apocalyptic</u> Symbolism fills the book of Revelation – Rev 5:4-5; 17:6; 21:2 <u>Prophecy</u> Rev 1:3; 10:10-11; 22:6-7, 10, 18-19 <u>Epistle</u> Rev 2-3; 12:11; 21:7 = “ <i>Revelation is a prophecy cast in an apocalyptic mold and written down and given in letter form</i> ” (Carson, Moo, Morris)
Approach	Literarily, not Literally = Look at the big picture not the details (ILL: Pixels) Christology, more than Eschatology = <i>There is End Times, but Revelation is about Jesus</i> Prologue (1:1-8) Epilogue (22:5-21) – what must soon take place (1:1; 22:6, 16); blessings (1:3; 22:7, 9); John’s self-ID (1:1, 4; 22:8); Alpha & Omega (1:8; 22:13) <u>Body (1:8-22:5)</u> – <i>5 Seven-Fold Series (e.g. letters, seals, trumpets, bowls, events)</i>

MAJOR INTERPRETATIONS¹

Preterist. This approach focuses on the historical setting contemporary with the original author and recipients. It takes seriously the historical context attempting to understand the way John’s readers would have understood it. This approach tends to devalue the end-times aspect of the book. Most preterist proponents date the book of Revelation to ca. AD 60’s. Many contemporary, critical scholars hold this view.

Historicist. This approach understands Revelation to be a preview of the entire sweep of church history from the first century until Christ’s return. No two proponents of this view are in agreement to which parts parallel time in church history. Martin Luther and John Calvin both held this view.

Idealist. If the historicist position was too historical, the idealist is not historical enough. It understands Revelation to be a timeless depiction of the ongoing battle between good and evil, between God and Satan. This view correctly sees the relevant timeless principles involved in the spiritual battle between good and evil, but it is not historically rooted. Most amillennial readers understand Revelation in this way.

Futuristic. This approach understands the vast bulk of the book to reader almost exclusively to the events still in the future. It rightly takes into account the end-times features of the coming kingdom of Christ, but the view is weak in demonstrating the relevance to original audience. Robert Thomas and Tim LaHaye are proponents of this sort of view. *Left Behind* is “teaching” this sort of view.

Eclectic. This view sees merit in several of the above options. While believing that Revelation clearly teaches about the future, those who hold this position also understand the book to have a message to its first readers, as well as presenting timeless truth for each generation of Christians. Proponents of this view include Robert Mounce, George E. Ladd, Grant Osborne.

¹These notes along with the following outline are adaptations from Bill Cook’s lecture notes taken from his class on Revelation, taken at Southern Seminary, Spring 2008.

KEY THEMES²

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| 1. Through his sacrificial death, Jesus Christ has conquered Satan , the accuser, and has ransomed people from every nation to become a kingdom of priests, gladly serving in God's presence. | <u>1:5, 18; 5:5–10;</u>
<u>12:1–11</u> |
| 2. Jesus Christ is present among his churches on earth through his Holy Spirit, and he knows their trials, triumphs, and failures. | <u>1:12–3:22</u> |
| 3. World history , including its woes and disasters, is firmly in the control of Jesus , the victorious Lamb. | <u>5:1–8:1</u> |
| 4. God is presently restraining his own wrath and his enemies' efforts to destroy the church as he patiently gathers his redeemed people through the testimony that his suffering people proclaim about Jesus . | <u>6:5–11; 7:1–3;</u>
<u>8:6–12; 9:4–6,</u>
<u>18; 11:3–7; 12:6,</u>
<u>13–17</u> |
| 5. Present disasters (war, drought, famine, epidemic disease), though limited in scope by God's restraint, foreshadow and warn of the Jesus return and final judgment . | <u>6:3–16; 8:6–13;</u>
<u>11:13; 16:1–21;</u>
<u>20:11–15</u> |
| 6. By maintaining their faithful testimony to the death, believers in Jesus will conquer both the dragon and the beast. Christ will vindicate the death and suffering of the martyrs' who have suffered for him. | <u>2:10–11, 26–29;</u>
<u>3:11–13; 6:9–11;</u>
<u>7:9–17; 11:7–12,</u>
<u>17–18; 12:10–11;</u>
<u>14:1–5; 15:2–4;</u>
<u>20:4–6</u> |
| 7. Satan attacks the church's perseverance and purity through violent persecution, through deceptive teaching, and through affluence and sensual pleasure. | <u>2:1–3:22; 13:1–</u>
<u>18; 17:1–18:24</u> |
| 8. At the end of the age, the church's opponents will intensify persecution, but Jesus, the triumphant Word of God, will defeat and destroy all his enemies ; the old heaven and earth, stained by sin and suffering, will be replaced by the new heaven and earth; and the church will be presented as a bride in luminous purity to her husband, the Lamb. | <u>16:12–16; 19:11–</u>
<u>21; 20:7–22:5</u> |

²Adopted from *The ESV Study Bible*.

OUTLINE

The Revelation of Jesus Christ (1:1-3)

<u>What</u>	v. 1	“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him...” “revelation...show...made it known...witness...testimony...prophecy...”
<u>When</u>	v. 2-3	“to show his servants the things that must soon take place... for the time is near” AD 94-96 – <i>During the reign of Domitian</i>
	4:1	“...what must take place after this.”
<u>Why</u>	v. 3	“Blessed is the one who reads... blessed are those who hear, and who keep...it” First of seven benedictions (cf. 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14)

Christ: The Exalted Ancient of Days (1:4-20)

- Greeting (1:4-8) – *A plethora of praise*
- Historical Visitation (1:9-11) – *On the island of Patmos, suffering for the word, the Lord’s day*
- The Ancient of Days (1:12-20) – *With absolute authority, Jesus commands John to write*

The Churches: Christ Rules the Church (2:1-3:22)

- 7 Letters to the 7 Churches – *Historical churches, Circular Route, Not exhaustive but representative*
- Common pattern in each letter: *Word from/about Christ, Commendation, Warning, Promise*
- Interpretive Help: *To fully understand each criticism/commendation must know background*
 - To Ephesus (2:1–7) – *The Danger of Diminishing Love, A Call for First Devotion*
 - To Smyrna (2:8–11) – *The Danger of Fearing Suffering, A Call for Loyalty*
 - To Pergamum (2:12–17) – *The Danger of Theological Compromise, A Call for Truth*
 - To Thyatira (2:18–29) – *The Danger of Moral Compromise, A Call for Holiness*
 - To Sardis (3:1–6) – *The Danger of Spiritual Deadness, A Call for Spiritual Authenticity*
 - To Philadelphia (3:7–13) – *The Danger of Failing to Advance, A Call to Endurance*
 - To Laodicea (3:14–22) – *The Danger of Lukewarmness, A Call to Simple & Pure Devotion*

In Heaven: Christ, the Glorious Slain Lamb (4:1-5:14)

- The Throne of God: Who is in charge of history? (4:1-11)
- The Lamb of God: Who is going accomplish God’s plan in history? (5:1-14)

On Earth: Christ, the Victorious Lamb (6:1-22:5)

Pattern: Historic Judgments (1-4); Intensified Judgments (5-6); Final Judgment (7) → Next Series

Seven Seals (6:1-8:5) – *A fourth of the earth is consumed (6:8)*

- 1st Four Seals (6:1-8) – *Horsemen of the Apocalypse ([1] conquest, [2] war, [3] famine, [4] death)*
- Fifth Seal (6:9-11) – *Souls Under the Altar*
- Sixth Seal (6:12-17) – *Great Cosmic Disturbances*
- 1st Interlude (7:1-17) – *Who Can Stand?*
- Seventh Seal (8:1-5) – *Silence in Heaven*

Seven Trumpets (8:6-11:19) – *A third of the earth is consumed (8:7)*

- 1st Four Trumpets (8:6-12) – *Judgments Against Nature (earth, sea, sky)*
- Fifth Trumpet (8:13-9:12) – *Demonic locust from out o the abyss*
- Sixth Trumpet (9:13-21) – *200 million murderous calvarymen*
- 2nd Interlude (10:1-11:14) – *How much longer? (10:1-11) What about the church? (11:1-14)*
- Seventh Trumpet (11:15-19) – *A Chorus a Praise that leads into the Seven Bowls*

Third Interlude (12:1-14:20)

3rd Interlude – *Answers a number of important questions*

- (1) Why does the devil hate the church and want to destroy it? **(12:1-17)**
Seed Warfare that transcends the ages – Satan attacks Christ and his Church
- (2) How will the devil try to destroy the church? (13:1-18)
Beast from the Sea (13:1-10) + Beast from the Earth (13:11-18) = Anti-Christ + False Prophet
- (3) How will it all end?
The Lamb and His saints will triumph in true worship (14:1-5, 12-13)
The Earth-Dwellers will be judged (14:6-11, 14-20)

Seven Bowls (15:1-16:21) – With them the wrath of God is finished (15:1)

- The Vision of Heaven **(15:1-18)** – *The wrath of God elicits the praises of the saints*

Seven Bowls

- 1st Infliction of sores upon men **(16:2)**
- 2nd Turning the sea into blood **(16:3)**
- 3rd Turning the springs and rivers into blood **(16:4-7)**
- 4th Scorching men with fire **(16:8, 9)**
- 5th Afflicting the kingdom of the beast with darkness **(16:10, 11)**
- 6th Drying up the Euphrates River **(16:12-16)**
- 7th Earthquake destroys the cities of the world **(16:17-21; cf. Heb 12:26-29)**

The Fall of Babylon – *An Symbolic But Real Presentation of the Judgment of God*

The Harlot's Power and Luxury **(17:1-18)** – *Earth-dwellers whore after the Prostitute*

The Destruction of Babylon **(18:1-24)** – *Everything created is polluted & will be cleansed*

Praise for Babylon's Destruction **(19:1-5)** – *Important lesson for how to praise God*

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb **(19:6-10)** – *The first feast; All will be married*

Seven Final Events (19:11-22:5)

- 1st The Return of Christ **(19:11-16)** – *Jesus will return in victorious splendor*
- 2nd The Defeat of the Antichrist and his army **(19:17-21)** – *A second feast*
- 3rd The Binding of Satan **(20:1-3)** – *Satan will be bound for "1000 years"*
- 4th The Millennial Reign of Christ **(20:4-6)** – *Christ reigns on earth w/ his saints*
- 5th Satan's Final Doom **(20:7-10)** – *Final defeat of Satan and his followers*
- 6th The Great White Throne Judgment **(20:11-15)** – *Final Judgment*
- 7th The New Heaven, New Earth, and the New Jerusalem **(21:1-22:5)**

Christ: The Returning Lord (22:6-21)

Christ's word is reliable **(22:6-9)** – *True worship is only true according to this Book*

Christ's word is relevant **(22:10-15)** – *The word is eternal & to be proclaimed to all*

Christ's word is inviting – *the gospel calls for faith (22:16-17) and warns of judgment (22:18-20)*

Christ's word is gracious **(22:21)**