A PASSAGE THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

Part Eleven "The Revelation to John"



by J.S. Smith

The Revelation to John Author: John the Apostle • 96 A.D.

Revelation is the unfolding of God's will in prophecy. Revelation 1:3 urges its readers to hear and keep it, and so it was mainly for the immediate use of the Christians who were reading it and being comforted by it in the first century.

Revelation is apocalyptic, rich with symbolism and figures. In fact, it was written in a code revealed in the Old Testament language. Revelation was written as it is so that the persecutors of the era could not understand it while the suffering people of God could.

The theme of the book is stated in 17:14: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords and king of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." This statement and this book are intended as a consolation to the suffering Christian in the late first century. Jesus is portrayed throughout the book as the Victor and Conqueror. He overcomes hades, death, the beasts, the dragon and those who worship the beast. Although victory seems uncertain and conditions seem gloomy, the saints will overcome.

Revelation was likely written by John when Domitian ruled Rome between 81-96 A.D., specifically around 95. Persecution was widespread

in this era and included Caesar worship. Domitian was a wicked, cold-blooded persecutor who demanded to be addressed as "Lord God." Those who refused to bow to him were persecuted or killed.





The Christian had to choose Caesar or Jesus. Revelation sought to show why the choice should be Jesus. There is much evidence from man's history, especially from Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, that leads to this late dating for the Revelation. Some argue it was written during Nero's reign and predicts the fall of Jerusalem.

The Preterist View makes all symbols related only to the events of the day in which Revelation was written. The imagery of the seals and trumpets and bowls of wrath depicted events in Domitian's empire and have no place in the future. All have been fulfilled and the book has only literary interest today.

The Historical View holds that Revelation outlines in symbolic form the entire course of history from Pentecost to the return of Christ. The symbols predict every great event that has occurred.

The Futurist View advocates that Revelation is dealing with only future events at the end of the

world. Futurists are literalists and millennialists. Revelation means literally what is said and the events of chapters 4-19 will transpire over a seven year period called "The Rapture."

The Spiritual View finds no reference to specific events or persons of the past, present or future, but

The Spiritual View finds no reference to specific events or persons of the past, present or future, but only presents great principles to guide Christians throughout all ages. The Preterist View is the closest to accuracy.

Lesson 1: Preface

Revelation 1:1-20

1. (Introduction) What was the great universal concern of our brethren in the late first century?
2. What role does Revelation play in the lives of early brethren?
3. What role does the Revelation play in our lives today?
4. Does the Revelation foretell a coming millennial kingdom on earth in which Jesus will reign from Jerusalem?
5. (1:1-3) What is the significance of "signified" in verse 1?
6. What is the importance of the phrase "shortly take place" in verse 1 and "the time is near" in verse 3?
7. (1:4-6) To whom does John address his comments? Why is this significant?
8. How is Jesus the firstborn from the dead (1 Cor. 15:20)?
9. (1:7-11) The image of the Lord coming in the clouds is a recycled metaphor from the Old Testament. To whose judgment does this phrase refer in Isaiah 19:1? To whose in Ezekiel 38:16? Could the coming here in Revelation also be a temporal judgment worked by human hands?
10. (1:7-11) The image of the Lord coming in the clouds is a recycled metaphor from the Old Testament. To whose judgment does this phrase refer in Isaiah 19:1? To whose in Ezekiel 38:16? Could the coming here in Revelation also be a temporal judgment worked by human hands?

- 11. (1:12-17) This passage describes what John saw when the Lord began to speak to him. How did John react to this appearance (verse 17)? How did Ezekiel react when God spoke (Ezek. 1:28, 3:23)?
- 12. Without going into each detail, what does the overall appearance of the Lord reflect?
- 13. What is represented by the seven stars? What is signified by the seven lamp stands?
- 14. The fate of the soul after physical death is of great concern to most everyone. How does Jesus reassure them about eternity?
- 15. According to 1 Corinthians 15:50-57, what will happen to the dead when Jesus returns? What will happen to the power of death?
- 16. Is the final judgment under consideration in Revelation's central theme, though? Refer again to 1:3—when will this prophecy be fulfilled?

Lesson 2: The Seven Churches

Revelation 2:1-29

1. To summarize the seven letters, read each passage and fill in the blanks of the chart:			
CHURCH Ephesus Rev. 2:1-7	COMMENDATION	CRITICISM	
Smyrna Rev. 2:8-11			
Pergamos Rev. 2:12-17			
Thyatira Rev. 2:18-29			
2. (2:1-7) What does i	it mean to have left one's first	t love?	
3. What is signified b	by eating of the tree of life in	paradise?	
4. (2:8-11) What does	it mean to be in poverty, but	still be rich?	
5. (2:12-17) What term	rifying event had taken place	in Pergamos?	

- 6. What two false doctrines were upheld in Pergamos? What does this passage teach generally regarding tolerance of error?
- 7. (2:18-29) Although Jezebel is likely symbolic for this person or movement, what was the result in the church at Thyatira?
- 8. Verse 27 is quoted from Psalm 2. Far from a millennial promise of dictatorship for Christians, it describes the gospel era and the rule of the Lord. According to Acts 13:32, what event fulfilled Psalm 2:7?

Lesson 3: The Seven Churches (B)

Revelation 3:1-22

1. To summarize the seven letters, read each passage and fill in the blanks of the chart: **CHURCH** COMMENDATION **CRITICISM** Sardis Rev. 3:1-6 **Philadelphia** Rev. 3:7-13 Laodicea Rev. 3:14-22 2. (3:1-6) What was the problem with Sardis? 3. What would happen to those there who did not rediscover their zeal? 4. (3:7-13) According to verse 11, how is the Lord planning to come? Would 1900 years and counting fulfill this promise to a beleaguered and anxious people? 5. Would it harmonize with other scriptures if the sinners were worshiping the saints? 6. (3:14-22) How do Christians fall into the Laodicean fault? 7. How can they overcome it?

8. How did Jesus find the faith of the Laodiceans?

9. How does God chasten us (Heb. 12:1-11)?

Lesson 4: The Lamb and The Scrolls

Revelation 4:1-5:14

1. (4:1-5) Who sat on thrones around the central throne?	
2. The number seven symbolizes completeness in Oriental numerology. What might the seven spirits God then describe?	of
3. (4:6-17) Describe what each of the four creatures is like.	
a.	
b.	
c.	
d.	
4. What was their occupation?	
5. (5:1-7) What caused John to weep?	

6. Who is finally located to open the scroll?

7. Why does the term *lamb* apply to him?

8. (5:8-14) How does the new song compare to 1 Peter 2:9-10?

Lesson 5: The Seven Seals

Revelation 6:1-8:5

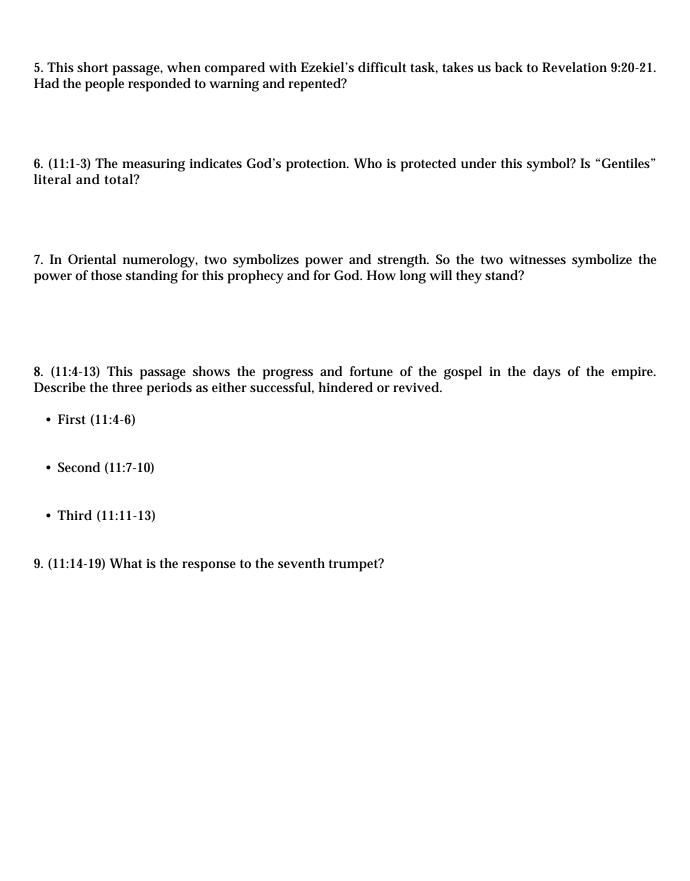
1. (6:1-2) What is revealed as the first seal is opened?
2. (6:3-4) What is revealed with the second seal?
3. (6:5-6) What is revealed in the third seal?
4. (6:7-8) What is revealed with the fourth horseman?
5. (6:9-11) Who is shown in the fifth seal and what is their plea? How much longer must they await justice?
6. (6:12-17) A number of recycled symbols are used in the sixth seal. The earthquake John promises is justike the one Isaiah promised in his prophecy. On what was this earthquake to symbolize justice in Isaiah 29:1, 6?

7. John's image of the darkened sun and bloody moon is like that of Isaiah 13:10. Consider verse 1 of that chapter. Was this the final judgment or a temporal one?
8. John says stars will fall. Again, Isaiah 13:10 uses this image. What did it symbolize there?
9. The apostle then says that the mountains and islands will shake. About whom did Ezekiel use the same symbols in 26:15-18 of his prophecy?
10. John says some will cry to be hidden in the rocks from the Lamb. How does Hosea 10:8-9 about Israel's fall) compare?
11. (7:1-8) The angel of the east stalls the impending trial until what can take place? Compare to Ezekiel 9:1-4.
12. What was the number sealed? Who is God's Israel in New Testament times (Rom. 2:28-29)? Is this number symbolic or a literal limitation?
13. (7:9-17) This second group, the multitude is not sealed. Where are they standing and how are they attired? Why then would they not need the protection the first group did?
14. (8:1-5) What immediately follows opening the seventh seal?

Lesson 6: The Lamb and The Scrolls

Revelation 8:6-11:19

1. (8:6-12) What happened as each of the trumpets sounded?
• First
• Second
• Third
• Fourth
2. (9:1-21) What happened as the next two trumpets sounded?
• Fifth
• Sixth
3. (10:1-7) When will this period of delay end? How long were they supposed to wait, according to 6:11? Is it implied that some of their number would see this day or that none of them ever would?
4. (10:8-11) What did John do with the little book? What did Ezekiel do with his book in Ezekiel 2:8-3:14?



Lesson 7: The Struggle Revelation 12:1-17

1. (12:1-6) Chapter 12 opens with the familiar New Testament image of a pious woman. Later, she will be the bride of Christ (22:17, 21:9). Who is she, then? Who was her counterpart in Isaiah 66:7-11?
2. Who is meant by the male child?
3. Who stood by to persecute her child at the birth? How impressive is his tail? Who was the church's great oppressor at this time?
4. (12:7-12) If the war in heaven is literal, what becomes of the security , comfort, holiness and assurance of God's abode?
5. What three terms are used in verse 9 to refer to the dragon?
6. According to Peter in Acts 2:29-31, what event placed Jesus on the throne of his kingdom? How long does the "devil" have to trouble the kingdom?

7. What does verse 11 imply happened to John's brethren?

8. (12:13-17) Who, then, are the rest of her offspring?

Lesson 8: The War Against the Saints Revelation 13:1-14:20

A Decree Through the New Testament
9. (14:14-20) Compare this judgment prophecy to Joel 3:13. Was Joel talking about the final judgment or a
8. What does it mean to die in the Lord?
7. The third angel forbade the worship of whom?
6. (14:6-13) As John wrote, the real nation of Babylon had been gone 500 years. This must be a symbolic reference to another. What empire was troubling the church in John's day?
5. (14:1-5) How could the 144,000 have become the first fruits of redemption (verse 4)?
4. From verse 18, it is overwhelmingly obvious that this is not a literal beast. What is his number?
3. (13:11-18) The second ally of the dragon is the land beast. According to verses 15-17, what was the symbolic creature's occupation in the world?
2. (13:5-10) Who alone refuse to worship the sea beast?
1. (13:1-4) If the dragon is working by the Roman empire, to whom has it entrusted its throne and authority and enslaved the world in human deification? In other words, whom is represented by the sea beast?

temporal visitation of divine wrath upon an enemy nation?

Lesson 9: The Seven Bowls

Revelation 15:1-16:21

1. (15:1-4) In chapter four, the sea of glass separated the saints from God. Now, where are the saints? What change this signify (Matt. 16:25)?
2. (15:5-8) What do the seven bowls contain? Who may enter the inner abode of God while they are meted out?
3. (16:1-7) Who were afflicted by the first bowl of wrath? What did worshiping the beast signify in that era?
4. In chapter 8:9, a third of the sea was killed by that symbol; how much is destroyed by the second bowl of wrath?
5. Judging from the context, whom are made to taste their own medicine by the third bowl?
6. (16:8-12) According to verse 9, what type of person was hurt by the fourth bowl of wrath?
7. What happened when the fifth bowl was poured out on the beast's throne? Who literally sat on this throne?

8. Following the dispensation of the sixth bowl, w	where could the kingdom have looked for invasion?
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9. (16:13-16) To where are these gathered together for battle? For what had this place become especially noted?

10. (16:17-21) What did the voice from the temple say?

Lesson 10: The Fall of Babylon Revelation 11:1-18:24

1. (17:1-9) What had intoxicated the harlot?
2. According to verse 9, what do her seven heads represent?
3. (17:10-18) Where does the symbolic beast fit into the sequence of succession?
4. In John's day, what great city ruled over the kings of the earth? According to verse 16, will the empire's provinces always remain loyal to the empire?
5. (18:1-8) What did the second voice from heaven implore?

6. (18:9-18) Three groups stand by weeping, identified in verses 9, 11 and 17. Who are they?

7. (18:19-24) How complete was the harlot's downfall to be?

8. According to verses 20 and 24, why was this happening?

Lesson 11: The Victory of God Revelation 19:1-20:15

1. (19:1-10) Who is the Lamb's bride? In what is she attired?
2. What error does John make?
3. (19:11-16) Comparing verse 13 to John 1, who is the rider on the white horse? What emanates from his mouth? How does this compare to Hebrews 4:11-12?
4. Compare verse 16 to 1 Timothy 6:15. Is this title only now given to Jesus, or has he held it for some time?
5. (19:17-21) Whose return from Babylonian captivity did Ezekiel describe with nearly identical language (39:17-21)?
6. Into what are the beast and false prophet cast?
7. (20:1-3) Since chapter 12, three enemies have troubled the church. Which one remains unfettered until now?

8. For how long would he remain in this setting?
9. (20:4-6) Precisely who is it that lives and reigns with Christ during this period?
10. Like spiritual Israel in John's day, fleshly captive Israel in Ezekiel's was downtrodden and of low morale. Ezekiel's message, like this first resurrection, was intended to uplift. Consider Ezekiel 37:11-12: is this resurrection intended to be literal or the figurative rebirth of their strength and cause?
11. (20:7-10) What happened to the deceiver and his allies after their release?
12. (20:11-14) According to what were all men judged?

Lesson 12: New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:1-22:21

1. (21:1-8) What is necessary to drink of the water of life? Who will inherit all things? Who will not?
2. (21:9-21) Is this description of the triumphant church figurative or literal?
3. (21:22-27) Why did the new city have no temple or shining stars?
4. (22:1-11) What grows along the river? When had access to it been lost?
5. (22:12-21) Who may claim a right to enter the city and access the tree of life?

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