

"The Introduction to Revelation"

Revelation 1:1-3

Introduction: Today we have finally come to the book of Revelation. This will be a study which will be a true blessing to every one of us and that is something which we can surely count on which we will see in the weeks to come.

Now there are many people who believe that we should never attempt to study the book of Revelation because they say that it is much too difficult to understand. One of my friends years ago told me that his Pastor told his church that he would never preach any messages from the book of Revelation. He told them that this book was impossible for anyone to understand. This is the way many people view the book of Revelation today. But as we move through our study of this letter, we shall see that as believers we can understand this letter and the message here is of great importance.

Before we get into our study today, I want to help you to understand what is behind the movement to avoid this book. It is all Satanic! Satan does not want us to study this book for many reasons, and we shall touch on them all as we work our way through the book. One of the reasons is because this book tells us of his end and destruction.

Revelation 20:10

¹⁰ And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

This is one reason why he convinces many to avoid the book. It also tells of the eternal comfort of the believer.

Revelation 21:1-4

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

² And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

³ And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

⁴ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

There are many more Truths which Satan hates, but these are 2 major reasons why he steers people from this book.

I. The Theme of the Book

Notice Revelation 1:1

John opens this letter by presenting the theme in the very first line. He tells us that this book is a REVELATION. This is a very interesting word. Many people have been convinced that this book is too difficult to understand because there are secret TRUTHS that are hidden within the pages. But as we step into this letter, we can see that it is not a book of hidden TRUTHS, but it is a book of REVELATION. This is the word which we get our word "APOCALYPSE" from and the word apocalypse means "to unveil", "a disclosure of TRUTH". So this book is not hiding anything but it is an unveiling of the TRUTH.

Now when we studied the book of James we were able to see that James had many parallels with the Sermon on the Mount. In the book of Revelation we shall see that John will present many parallels with Matthew 24-25 which is The Olivet Discourse. Let me get back to the fact that this book is a REVELATION.

In this study we shall see that this book will reveal many spiritual Truths which were veiled in the Old Testament. So this will be an unveiling of that which was previously hidden. Now there is not one direct quote from the Old Testament but there are many parallels with the Old Testament. Listen to the words of David Guzik:

It contains more than 500 allusions to the Old Testament, and 278 of the 404 verses in Revelation (that is almost 70%) make some reference to the Old Testament.

Notice Revelation 1:1 again.

As we continue to read, we can see that John tells us this is THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. I believe this means the book is FROM Jesus Christ. Some teach the book is ABOUT Jesus Christ.

Now in a sense the book is about Jesus Christ, for it presents Him in a way that we only get glimpses of in the Gospels. In the Gospels we can see glimpses of Jesus Christ in His glory, but they are only short glimpses.

Matthew 17:1-2

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

² And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

Here is a glimpse of Jesus in His glory, but it is but a short glimpse. His glory was also seen in the miracles which He performed.

John 11:40-44

⁴⁰ Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

⁴¹ Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

⁴² And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

⁴³ And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

⁴⁴ And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Here is one such case where we are able to see the glory of Jesus Christ when He raised Lazarus from the dead. But there is even more to consider here.

The last time the world was able to see Jesus Christ, He was hanging on a cross suffering for the sins of the entire world. But here in Revelation we shall that the next time the world sees Jesus, it will be in all of His glory as He returns to set up His Kingdom. Let me show you what the Old Testament says.

Isaiah 45:23

²³ I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

Now notice what Paul wrote in Romans.

Romans 14:11

¹¹ For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Philippians 2:9-11

⁹ *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:*

¹⁰ *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

¹¹ *And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

We shall see the fulfillment of these verses. So in a sense the book is a REVELATION of Jesus Christ in all of His glory, but the meaning of the verse is that Jesus gave the Revelation to the angel to give to John.

II. **The Source and the Recipients of the Book**

Notice Revelation 1:1

This REVELATION was given unto Jesus so that it could be given unto HIS SERVANTS. The word "servants" here means "bond slaves" or "**one who gives himself up to another's will those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men**".

Let me just say that this is why the world around us struggles with the contents of this book. It is NOT for the world but it is for believers ONLY. The unsaved world will never begin to get their minds wrapped around this letter because the unsaved world cannot understand the spiritual things of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14

¹⁴ *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

III. **The Contents of the Book**

Notice Revelation 1:1 again.

The book of Revelation contains the "things which must shortly come to pass". There are a few thoughts here that I want to point out to you.

1. **The word "MUST" is very significant here.**

We are told that the things which are in this book **MUST** come to pass. Remember I told you that this book has many parallels with Matthew 24-25?

Matthew 24:3-6

³ *And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*

⁴ *And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.*

⁵ *For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*

⁶ *And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things **must** come to pass, but the end is not yet.*

Here is the point. The events within the book of Revelation are terrible beyond anything that we can imagine.

Matthew 24:23

²¹ *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

But they are necessary, and they are part of God's plan. This is not a time when things are out of control. God is always in control, and the events of this book **MUST** come to pass so as to set the stage for the Millennial Kingdom.

2. **The meaning of the word "shortly".**

Notice Revelation 1:1

The word "shortly" means "with swiftness". There have been many critics who have pointed to this word and claimed that John was inaccurate in his words. **They believe the word refers to a short period of time.** In other words they say that since 2000 years have passed and nothing has happened since John wrote this letter, that it is inaccurate.

They are making a mistake when they believe the word shortly refers to a short period of time. The word "shortly" means "WITH SWIFTFNESS". In other words it means that when the events of this book begin to unfold they will fall like hammer blows in rapid succession. The seal judgments, the trumpet judgments, and the bowl judgments will happen very rapidly once they start; and they will come to pass at God's appointed time.

IV. **The Means of Communication**

Notice Revelation 1:1 again.

Here we see that He sent and "signified" by His angel unto John. The word "signified" could read "sign-i-fied". The idea is the revelations of this book were given to John using signs and symbols. But we must be very careful when we study the book. We cannot spiritualize the symbols but instead we must use the Bible to interpret what is being said.

V. The Testimony of John

Notice Revelation 1:2

This verse is so important because John testifies of 3 things here.

1. This Book is the Word of God.
2. This Book came from Jesus Christ.
3. John was an eye witness to all he recorded.

Let me show you the importance of what is recorded here.

Deuteronomy 19:15

¹⁵ *One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.*

In the Old Testament nothing was to be believed unless there was 2 or 3 witnesses. Paul carries the same idea in 2 Corinthians 13.

2 Corinthians 13:1

This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

It took 2 or 3 witnesses to prove a testimony to be true. John presents 3 witnesses here to affirm this book is 100% accurate. He points to the testimony of God the Father, Jesus the Son, and himself.

VI. The Blessed Promise

Notice Revelation 1:3

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Revelation Study #1

This verse makes this book very unique. It is the only book that promises a blessing to both the student believer and the teacher.

This is another reason why Satan does not want us to study this book.

Conclusion:

We are in for a long journey, but it will be a time of great blessings as we work our way through this book.