

THE REVELATION

LESSON 2: GETTING ORIENTED TO THE BOOK

Intro:

BIG IDEA: The basic _____ of the *Revelation* help us to properly _____ the *Revelation*.

AUTHOR:

“... his servant John,² who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ...” **Revelation 1**

Tradition: John the brother of James and author of the Gospel and 3 letters to churches.

Against: Not John, son of Zebedee.: little overlap in _____ and _____.

Defense: 1.) While in exile, he may not have had access to an amanuensis- or _____. Such a person may clean up grammar. 2.) It is unfair to expect John to use the same style and vocabulary when writing something so incredibly different.

AUDIENCE- the original audience was the church, particularly of Asia Minor (_____), which was enduring great persecution.

“For what possible good would the suffering and severely persecuted Christians of John’s day have derived from specific and detailed predictions concerning European conditions which would prevail some two thousand years later?” **William Hendriksen**⁷

DATE- 2 options in the lifetime of John: Nero reigned from A.D. 54- 68 and Domitian from A.D. 81- 96.

“One cannot find a single really cogent argument in support of the earlier date.” **William Hendriksen**⁸

(Cogent) Arguments for 60’s:

- Revelation 11:1-2 speak as if the _____ is still standing unless you want to take a futurist position and say there will be another temple.
- _____ character of much persecution- prior to the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem unbelieving Jews persecuted Christians throughout the Roman Empire (see the Acts of the Apostles). After this persecution was largely limited to Rome. After AD 70, the Jews were being persecuted!

⁷ Hendriksen, William. *More Than Conquerors*. Grand Rapids, Baker Book House. 1940. pp. 9-10.

⁸ Ibid. pp. 14.

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- Revelation 17:10 mentions 7 kings, 5 who have fallen, one who is the last who is not yet (king). Nero was the 6th to be recognized as Emperor, and the 7th would destroy Jerusalem (in 68-69 3 men struggled for control, all 3 claiming the throne).
- Revelation 13:18. Many see _____ as identified by “_____”.
- It is predicting events that are about to happen. No such events happened shortly after Domitian’s reign, but did after Nero’s.
- Over 130 scholars and commentators have favored the early date, including Kenneth Gentry, Jay Adams, Philip Schaff, J.B. Lightfoot and Alfred Edersheim.

Arguments for 90’s:

- External evidence for the late date is based primarily on the testimony of _____.
- Revelation 13- the mortal wound that healed, some apply to a legend that many thought _____ would rise from the death.
- Claim that emperor worship was not enforced until the reign of _____, widely considered the “Second Nero”.
- The Seven Churches experienced a spiritual decline that seems more fitting for A.D. 90 than A.D. 65. But the NT letters indicate big problems for many churches.
- _____ - Hendriksen argues that since there was an earthquake in A.D. 60, the early date is too soon for them to rebuild the city.
- Some interpret _____ to mean there was no church in Smyrna before Paul died (“we knew him not”) in A.D. 67.

PURPOSE: To encourage persecuted Christians with knowledge that Christ indeed reigns and will bring justice to the persecuted.

“Revelation’s main focus of attention is this: God will soon judge the first century Jews for rejecting and crucifying his Son, their Messiah.” **Ken Gentry**⁹

GENRE:¹⁰ While containing 7 letters, the book is primarily _____, the unveiling of that which has been kept hidden. As Apocalyptic, it contains many _____ which are not intended to be interpreted literally but as signs of a deeper reality.

⁹ Pate, C. Marvin editor, *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1998. pp. 46.

¹⁰ Beale, G.K. *The Book of Revelation* (NIGTC). Grand Rapids, Eermans. 1999. pp.50-58

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Daniel 2:28-30, 45	Revelation 1	Revelation 4:1 & 22:6
<p>²⁸ but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these:</p> <p>²⁹ To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be.</p> <p>³⁰ But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind. ... A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”</p>	<p>The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ... ¹⁹ Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.</p>	<p>After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”</p> <p>⁶ And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”</p>

“*Make known*” or “to show by a sign”.

“*to show*”

_____ Level => _____ Level

What He _____ => What it _____

Metaphor violates the normal boundaries for meaning of words. “I am the door”.

Door- a moveable, usually solid, barrier for opening and closing an entranceway, cupboard, cabinet, or the like, commonly turning on hinges or sliding in grooves.¹¹

You use one word with some of the associated meanings of the other. While Jesus doesn’t have hinges, grooves or is in a wall, is a means of approach to God.

Simile: when two words are linked by “_____”. The 2 words usually have very different meanings, so one is compared to another; there is often the “impossibility of any intelligible literal interpretation” or would be outrageously false if taken literally.

¹¹ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/door?s=t>

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Numbers:¹² they have a symbolic significance. The most common numbers are 3, 4, 7 and 12. They and their multiples have symbolic meanings.

3 is the number for _____ (Isaiah 6:3).

7 is a number of completeness.

4 is a number of completeness indicating a _____ or _____ scope.

12 is a number of completeness conveying _____ in _____.

We find 4 _____ of 7 _____ - the _____ scope of God's _____ wrath upon all of (unbelieving humanity).

The fourfold formula "every tribe, tongue, people and nation" is used _____ times.

"the Lord God Almighty" and "the one who sits upon the throne" both occur _____ times.

Christ is used _____ times, Jesus is used _____ times, and the Lamb _____ times indicating "the universal scope of the Lamb's complete victory."

STRUCTURE: This question is greatly affected by your overall orientation to the *Revelation*.

Futurists and Historicists view the book largely in chronological order. Preterists and Idealists view the book as a series of 7 p _____ p _____ visions that recapitulate the same events from different perspectives with a different emphasis, as we find in the Prophets.

The repetition of events and phrases point to these parallel visions.

"Battle"- Revelation 16:14; 19:19; 20:8

"3 and ½ years" – Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5

This is one example put forward.

Christ in the midst of the Church (1-3)

Christ and the 7 Seals (4-7)

The 7 Trumpets (8-11)

The True God and His People vs. The Counterfeits (12-14)

The 7 Bowls of Wrath (15 & 16)

Judgment of the Beasts and the Harlot (17-19)

Judgment on the Dragon & Cosmic Renewal (20-21)

Time-Frame Matters

"time is near"- 1:3; 22:10

¹² Beale, pp. 58-64.

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“soon” – 1:1; 2:16; 3:11; 22:6, 7, 12, 20

Conclusion: