

Preface to Revelation

The Apostle John was the most venerated Christian leader throughout Asia Minor, particularly around Ephesus, where he had been the pastor for much of the last half of the first century.

He outlived all the other apostles, in fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in John 21 v.20-24.

The Gospel that bore his name (written about 85 AD) was an instant success among late 1st century Christians so that a book by him about 10 years later, given almost totally to prophecy and graphically different, was nonetheless accepted and used in the churches for over 300 years.

All the external evidence points to the writing of Revelation by John when he was banished to the Isle of Patmos during the reign of Roman emperor Domitian (91-96 AD), for, as he said, "the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Evidence has been found that Patmos and surrounding islands were indeed used to incarcerate prisoners or the so called "enemies of the state" at that period of history.

That would make the writing of Revelation in and around the traditionally accepted date of 95 AD, near the very end of John's life.

The isle of Patmos lies about 37 miles west southwest of Miletus in the Mediterranean Sea.

It is about ten miles long and six miles wide at the north end, and consists mainly of volcanic hills and rocky ground.

It was an island used by the Romans to exile prisoners.

It was in the year 95 AD during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian that the Apostle John was exiled here for his faith in God.

This was no tropical paradise. It was a lonely, deserted, barren place.

But it was the Lord's day and despite the fact John was alone and in desperate circumstances, he decided to worship God.

Little did John realize that this worship experience would not only dramatically transform his own life, it would impact generations to come and affect the destiny of the entire world.

How Revelation Was Revealed to John.

No other book in the Bible so carefully and fully explains its supernatural origin, its chain of transmission, and the exact way the message was communicated to the writer.

It also stresses that John was commanded to write about only the things to which he was a personal eyewitness.

The essential point is this: John constantly testifies throughout the Book that he "saw" and "heard" the things about which he writes.

Hal Lindsey tells about Daniel and some of the things he had prophesied and didn't understand the meaning.

When he asked about the meaning, he was told: "But as for you Daniel, shut up the words and seal the scroll until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

He was then told to "Go your way Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Many shall be purified, and made white, and refined, but the wicked shall get more wicked; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand."

Hal states that it dawned on him that all that is to be written in prophecy about the end times has already been written.

So if the prophecies are shut up and sealed, it must be by encoding the message until the time for it to be understood arrives.

John didn't have to imagine the horrors he described.

He witnessed them firsthand, with his own eyes and ears.

He recorded exactly what he saw and heard.

Think of John not as a poet, nor a fictional novelist, as many so called "biblical scholars" have through the years.

Revelation is not an allegory. It is not a collection of mysterious, unintelligible symbolism. It is not fiction. It is not arcane mumbo jumbo.

It is a living, breathing, prophetic and historical account of events yet to take place.

It was written to be understood by the generation that was near the fulfillment of the astounding things predicted to immediately precede the Coming of Jesus the Messiah.

I believe we are that generation.

John considered how the wicked prospered while he suffered, it almost broke his spirit.

"until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end.

Surely you set them in slippery places; you cast them down to destruction" (Psalms 73, v.17-18).

In other words, it encourages him to see that injustice would not always triumph.

The same encouragement is given at least twice in the book of Revelation.

Rev. 13 v.9-10 says, "If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword.

Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”

What gives persecuted saints “patience”?

What assurance does their “faith” give them?

That God is a righteous judge who will settle all accounts.

The idea is found again in Rev. 14 v.12.

After a graphic description of the eternal torments awaiting those who worship the Beast and receive his mark, the text says: “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

In many such ways throughout Scripture God says, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay” (Deut. 32 v.35, Romans 12, v.19 & Heb. 10 v.30).

Over the years, there has been much confusion and division in the Church regarding the Book of Revelation.

Bible scholars who have studied this book for years have depended upon their natural reasoning to interpret the Scriptures or simply rehashed other men’s theories.

Theologians have set forth so many different speculations and interpretations that many Christians don’t know what to believe.

One week, they hear a preacher declare one thing and the next week they hear someone else say exactly the opposite.

Many believers avoid the Book of Revelation because they think it is too complicated, too full of symbolism and beyond their understanding, but by studying completely all that’s contained in these pages you will no longer be confused about the future.

YOU WILL KNOW THAT YOU KNOW!

God has placed His Spirit within us so that we can know the things He has given us:

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor. 2 v.12).

God has given us the Holy Spirit to show us things to come:

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come” (John 16 v.13).

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2 v.27).

There are five major reasons it is important for believers to study the Book of Revelation:

(1) You receive a blessing when you study it:

“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” (Rev. 1 v.3).

(2) It is necessary for full maturity, as it is part of the Word:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3 v.16-17).

(3) It enables you to understand the future and how it relates to the past and present:

“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” (Rev. 1 v.1).

(4) Prophecy authenticates the Word of God. Fulfilled prophecy authenticates that which the Word says is true:

“but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe” (1 Cor. 14 v.22).

(5) Prophecy affects the way we live. The advent of the end times motivates us to live holy lives, knowing that we will give an account of all things:

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness” (2 Peter 3 v.11).

It motivates us to reach out to a lost and dying world when we realize that time is short:

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9 v.4).

From the beginning of time, God has had a master plan for the world:

“(He) planned for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify all things and head them up and consummate them in Christ (both) things in heaven and things on earth” (Eph. 1 v.10).

The events that are happening on the earth today and those that will occur in the future are not by chance.

They were designed from the beginning of time by a God of purpose, design, and objectivity and the details were recorded in His Word so His people could know the future, their ultimate destiny, and their part in His plan.

As you study, open your spirit to God.

Ask Him to speak to you personally concerning what He wants you to hear with your spiritual ears, to show you things in your life you need to see, and reveal to you what you must do to prepare for His coming.

God's purpose for revealing His end time plan in the Book of Revelation is so that you can know what will happen in the future so you can be:

- Busy working the works of God (Matt. 25 v.14-30).
- Watching for the coming of Christ (Matt. 24 v.36-44).
- Prepared for the future (Matt. 15 v.1-13).

I believe God wants to accomplish four major things in your life through this prophetic study based on the Book of Revelation.

- YOU WILL learn how to accurately interpret biblical prophecy by using the keys to the kingdom God has placed in your hands.
- YOU WILL be prepared to face the future from a position of knowing. You will no longer be confused, fearful, or doubting.
- YOU WILL be able to face every negative circumstance you may encounter in the future with power and authority because you will know your destiny as a 100% conquering, victorious child of God.
- YOU WILL rise up in these end times to take your God given position of power, authority and dominion as we reap together the greatest spiritual harvest this world has ever witnessed.

If you're thinking, Is it really possible for me to know God's end time plan, the answer is a resounding YES!

It is not only possible, but God wants you to have this revelation.

That is why He gave it.

That is why He had his servant, John record it in His Word.

A revelation is to reveal something, not to conceal it.

Jesus is coming soon! The time is at hand.

It is time for us to understand the signs of the time, to watch, prepare, and to be ready.

It is time to use the keys God has given us to unlock the door to the future.

The Book of Revelation begins with a bold declaration of its supernatural, divine authorship.

God is its source.

The word "revelation" used here is translated from the Greek word "apokalupis" which means "an uncovering," or "drawing away of the veil of darkness."

The revelation John received on the Isle of Patmos did not come through his natural mind, but it was revealed to him while he was “in the spirit”.

Four times in the Book of Revelation John is said to be “in the spirit”: Rev. 1 v.9-10; 4 v.1-2; 17 v.1-3; and 21 v.9-10.

Spiritual revelation is not a function of the natural mind because our natural minds do not understand the things of the Spirit:

“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” (1 Cor. 2 v.14).

This is why we must understand this revelation with our spiritual minds.

John received “the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him.”

Here is the divine order of transmission:

God gave the revelation to Jesus and it was sent and signified (made known) to His servant, the Apostle John (Rev. 1 v.1, 4, 9 and 22 v.8).

The purpose of this revelation was “to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass” (Rev. 1 v.1-2).

It was given so that His people would know what will happen in the future.

This powerful Revelation came to John in one of the darkest times of his life.

Divine revelation often comes in difficult times:

- It was in exile that Jacob saw God at Bethel (Gen. 35 v.1).
- It was in exile that Moses met God at the burning bush (Exodus 3 v.1-2).
- It was in exile that Elijah heard the voice of God (1 Kings 19 v.3-9).
- It was in exile that Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord (Ezek. 1 v.3).
- It was in exile that Daniel saw his vision of God (Dan. 7 v.9).

If you are going through a difficult time in your life you can either succumb to depression or pity, or you, like the Apostle John, can get in the spirit and begin to worship God.

Reflect for a moment: What might God be trying to birth through you or reveal to you in your darkest hour?

We learn in this passage that the Book of Revelation is the “**The Revelation of Jesus Christ**”.

This book reveals more about Jesus Christ than any other book in the Bible.

(Take time to look up each of these references in the Book of Revelation.) Jesus is described as:

- Jesus Christ 1 v.1.

- Faithful witness 1 v.5.
- First begotten of the dead 1 v.5.
- Prince of kings of the earth 1 v.5.
- Alpha and Omega 1 v.8.
- Son of man 1 v.13.
- First and the last 1 v.17.
- Keeper of keys of hell and death 1 v.18.
- Son of God 2 v.18.
- Keeper of David's keys 3 v.7.
- Lion of Judah 5 v.5.
- Root of David 5 v.5.
- Slain Lamb 5 v.6.
- Angry Lamb 6 v.16-17.
- Tender Lamb 7 v.17.
- Our Lord 11 v.8.
- King of saints 15 v.3.
- Faithful and true 19 v.11.
- Word of God 19 v.13.
- King of kings 19 v.16.
- Lord of lords 19 v.16.
- Beginning and the end 22 v.13.
- Bright and morning star 22 v.16.

The key to understanding the Book of Revelation is to realize that it is a revelation about Jesus Christ.

Revelation 19 v.10 declares, "for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

This is a tremendous spiritual key to understanding prophecy, the entire Word of God, and the Living Word, Jesus Christ.

This passage is not only the key to prophecy, it is the key for understanding and interpreting the entire Word of God.

Beginning with Moses and the Old Testament prophets right through to the Book of Revelation, all of the Scriptures concern the revelation of Jesus Christ and God's plan of the ages as fulfilled through Him.

When Christ's disciples were walking the Emmaus Road and puzzling over things Christ had told them, Jesus supernaturally appeared to them and said, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" (Luke 24 v.17).

The disciples recounted to Him the recent events in Jerusalem, including the death of Jesus and the empty tomb discovered by the women three days later.

Then Jesus said to them: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24 v.25-27).