

The Book Of Revelation

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INTRODUCTION

UNIQUE FEATURES ABOUT THIS COMMENTARY

All of the scriptures in the book being studied are written out completely and are the Authorized King James Version Bible. This allows for both the complete reading of this book of the bible and the author's comments.

The book is outlined in a manner that helps its teaching come to light for the reader. This also helps as you may have the occasion of teaching through the book and in the preparation and preaching of sermons.

Although the bible book being studied is written out in full, it is recommended that the reader have their own bible available and read all of the other scriptures being referenced. This will give you a fuller understanding of the subjects being studied.

The author has attempted to be as thorough as possible. Some light should be shed upon each passage.

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Pastor Bill Rains

A Thorough Commentary on the Book of Revelation by Pastor Bill Rains, Th.D.

The Revelation Of Saint John The Divine by Pastor Bill Rains, Th.D.

As the very first verse of the book states very clearly, John the Apostle is the Writer. See also chapters 1:4, 9, 21:2, and 22:8. John is also the writer of the Gospel bearing his name and the three General Epistles bearing his name. The book of Revelation was written to the seven churches which were in Asia, "Unto Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea", chapter 1:4, 11. We are also obviously recipients of the epistle. According to the very first verse, the book of Revelation was written to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. It therefore concerns future events. It is a revelation, a revealing, or unveiling of Jesus Christ and what he will do in this world in the future. "Write the things which thou hast seen, (chapter 1), and the things which are, (chapters 2 and 3), and the things which shall be hereafter; (after the church age is over), Revelation 1:19.

This verse also presents to the serious student the proper divisions of the book as far as its doctrinal study goes. It is also written to provide God's message to all churches. Every church of every generation from Christ's establishment of the church until his coming for the church may determine its spiritual condition from these seven messages given to the seven churches in Asia. And also, each individual Christian may see their own spiritual condition in these messages to the churches, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." Revelation 2:7.

The book of Revelation instructs the churches, chapters 1-3, illustrates the rapture or departure of the church from the world, chapter 4:1, gives us knowledge of the tribulational events coming upon the world, shows us the second coming of Christ to earth, chapter 19, the millennium, one last and brief rebellion which Christ soon puts down and the Great White Throne judgement, chapter 20, and finally, it shows us the new heavens and earth of the eternal age. It was written around AD. 95 during the reign of Domitian the Roman Emperor. John was exiled to the isle of Patmos at the time God gave him the Revelation.

REVELATION CHAPTER 1

1:1-2 • THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

“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; Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.”

The purpose of the book is to reveal or unveil Jesus Christ and what he will do in this world in the future. This book is not, as some suggest, a sealed book filled with symbolism of spiritual things which no one can understand. This ideal is clearly refuted in the very meaning of the word Revelation, (to reveal or unveil). Notice also that this Revelation of Christ has been signified (shown or pointed out, announced) by God’s angel to John. He is an eyewitness to, and bears personal testimony to the events recorded. It is also interesting to note that in the last chapter of this book, Revelation 22:10, John is clearly told, *“Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.”* So, however difficult it may at first appear, you may rest assured that God does want us to understand this book. And the main thrust of this book becomes clearer as one properly studies it. This book has a threefold authenticity. It was signified by an angel of God, It is testified to by John the servant of God, and presence of Jesus Christ fills the book.”

1:3 • THE POWER OF THE BOOK

“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.”

This book has power! It has power to bless the one taking the time to read it, power to bless the one taking the time to hear is being read and taught, and power to bless those who keep it’s instructions. This verse is also the first of seven beatitudes contained in it: The other beatitudes are found in chapter 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7,14.

1:4-5, 11 • THE PRESENTATION OF THE BOOK

“John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Saying, I am

Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.”

God presents this wonderful book as a circular letter to those seven church which were evidently representative of all churches and which would in turn spread the message to all. Some interesting things to notice about these verse are:

A. Grace and peace is sent from God the Father, who is said to be him which is presently, him which was in the past, and him which is to come. He is eternal God! (Exodus 3:14-15).

B. Grace and peace are likewise extended from the seven Spirits which are before God’s throne.

Who are these seven Spirits before the throne of God? It seems certain that we again encounter these same Spirits in Revelation 4:5 *“Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”* They are unidentified. However, they must either be seven Spirits or angels of high rank and order who are serving God and his purposes. (Hebrews 1:7). Or, they are beautiful emblems denoting the perfection and completion of God the Holy Spirit. There is little doubt that the number seven in scripture denotes completion or perfection. In the book of Revelation we find that there are:

1. Seven churches in Asia, chapter 1:4, 11
2. Seven beatitudes, see notes on chapter 1:3
3. Seven stars in Christ’s right hand, chapter 1:16, 20
4. Seven candlesticks, chapter 1:16, 20
5. Seven seals upon a book, chapter 5:1
6. Seven angels with seven trumpets, chapter 8:2
7. Seven angels with seven vials, chapter 16:1

By the constant use of sevens in the book of Revelation we may understand that God is assuring us that the events recorded will complete his dealings with man and usher in that perfect eternal day!

C. Grace and peace are also extended from Jesus Christ. Grace came by Jesus Christ, (John 1:16-17), and he gives us peace amidst a troubled world, (John 14:27). And therefore the greeting is always appropriate.

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1:5-6 • THE PRAISE OF THE BOOK

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

Obviously you can tell that after John extends grace and peace to the readers, he burst into praise to Christ. Notice how he praises him:

A. As the faithful witness. Christ is “he that is true”, (Revelation 3:7). It may be that there are many false witnesses in the world, but you and I can rejoice that “Christ is the truth”, (John 14:6).

B. As the first begotten of the dead. This is not to say that he was the first to be raised from the dead, the bible clearly records people in the Old Testament and in the earthly ministry of Christ being raised from the dead. However, all of these had to die again. Christ was the first begotten from the dead to die no more, (Revelation 1:18, 1 Corinthians 15:20).

C. As the prince of the kings of the earth. Compare (Revelation 11:15). This will be the case when Christ rules the earth during the Millennium. And, even now it is so, because he is God and permits both the rise or fall of all earthly ones!

D. As the one who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Compare (1 Peter 1:18-19). Listen friends, it was not just the death of Christ that was necessary for our salvation, it was the shedding of God’s own blood, (Hebrews 9:22, Acts 20:28, John 3:16).

E. As the one who hath made us kings and priests unto God and his (Christ) Father. We are now a royal priesthood, and now offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God, (1 Peter 2:5). We pray for and minister to others in his name, and we praise God with our hearts, lives, and our words, (Hebrews 13:15-16). In the future, during the Millennium, we will rule and reign with him as kings, (11 Timothy 2:12, Revelation 20:6). This fact is so unchangeable that God speaks of it as already the case, (Romans 4: 17).

F. To such a Saviour as this, belongs glory and dominion for ever and ever. Compare (Revelation 4:10-11, 5:9-14).

1:7-8 THE PROPHECY OF THE BOOK

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

This book is a book of prophecy, verses 1 and 3. And the prophetic climax is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth to rule it as it’s rightful King. Things to understand about these verses:

A. Verse 7 is not a reference to the rapture of the church, the book of Revelation contains a picture of the rapture event, chapter 4:1-2, but it is not primarily about the rapture, John had already recorded Christ’s teaching on the rapture, (John 14:1-3), and Paul had already covered the rapture in good detail, (1 Corinthians 15:51-58, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). This verse is a reference to the return of Christ to earth to defeat his enemies and establish his kingdom. The coming of Christ is actually in two phases, First, his coming for his saints known as the rapture, at which time he doesn’t actually touch down on earth, he calls us up into the air to meet him. Secondly, approximately seven years later, he returns to this earth with his saints to rule it for a thousand years, this is known as the revelation, (Matthew 24:29-31, Revelation 1:7, 11:15, 19:11-21, 20:1-7).

B. At Christ return to earth every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him. This would obviously be a reference to the nations Israel and Rome, (Acts 2:22-23, John 19:28-37, Zechariah 12:10). This will be a very visible, all conquering event. However, the rapture of the saints will be an unseen, sudden, stealing away of the redeemed from the earth, with only the results of his rapture coming seen and felt by it, (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4).

C. Whereas the rapture will be a wonderful experience for the saved, its effect, and the subsequent return of Christ to earth will be a wailing, devastating experience for the unsaved. All the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of it. Even so, Amen.

D. Verse 8 tells us very clearly that Jesus Christ is the eternal God. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, the beginning and the ending of all things. He is the Lord, which is presently, was always, and shall always be, the Almighty! See (Isaiah 9:6, Micah 5:2), and the many other passages that attest to the fact that Jesus is God. The prophecy of Revelation, as is all the bible, is stamped with the authority of the Almighty God. You and I may rest assured that the things it says will come to pass.

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1:9-10 THE PENMAN OF THE BOOK

“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,”

The Penman of the book describes himself and tells us of the occasion in which he received this book of prophecy.

A. He is of course, as already noted in verse 1 and 4, the one who wrote this book.

B. John tells the churches that he is their brother in the Lord, (I John 3:14,16).

C. He also tells the churches that he is their companion in tribulation. The tribulation John mentions here is not the coming great tribulation referenced in (Matthew 24:21-31). It is a reference to the trials, troubles, and tribulations that he and other Christians were enduring during his life time, (John 15:20, 16:33, Acts 14:22, II Timothy 3:12). John had been banished to an island called Patmos for his testimony of Christ, and for his teaching and preaching of the word of God.

D. John tells the churches that he is their companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

Christians are in the kingdom of God by new birth, (John 3:1-8). And, we must be patient in waiting for Christ to return and establish his millennium, (James 5:7-9). Until then we must live by (Romans 8:28).

E. John tells us that he was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day. He is in complete union and under the complete control of the Holy Spirit. There are two things to notice about the Lord’s day.

1. The Lord’s day is usually, in our minds, equated with Sunday, the first day of the week on which new testament Christians are to worship, (Acts 20:7, John 20:1, 19, 26, I Corinthians 16:1-2).

2. However, doctrinally speaking, the Lord’s day is not just Sunday, it is a period of time known through out the old testament as the Day of the Lord. It’s a future time beginning with the rapture of the church and continuing through the millennium, and all the way through the destruction of the heavens and the earth, and the great white throne judgement. The Day of the Lord or Lord’s day is actually some 1007 years in duration, (Jeremiah 4:4-24, Joel 2:1-11, Zechariah 14:12, I Thessalonians 5:2-3, II Peter 3:10-13).

F. John the apostle was actually transported by and in the Holy Spirit from the day in which he lived, forward into the future time known as the Day of the Lord. Hence he actually saw the future events unfolding as he describes

them. John the apostle was a time-traveler! One of at least three such men in scripture. Ezekiel the prophet was another, he was transported backward and forward through time and across distances, (Ezekiel 8:1-18, 11:1). And Paul the apostle goes forward and backward, (II Corinthians 12:1-4), as John does. The Spirit of God was their time-machine!

G. John then hears a great voice as loud and distinct as a trumpet. This is the voice of Christ.

1:11-18 THE PERSON OF CHRIST

“Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. and I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

A. The words of Christ in verse 11 have already been commented on in verse 8. (Hebrews 13:8).

B. But also, in verse 11 we see that Christ is interested in his churches because he sends them his messages.

C. In verse 12 and 13 Christ is seen standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks. One does not have to wonder what this is because we’re clearly told in verse 20. The seven golden candlesticks represent the seven churches in Asia to which Christ sends his messages. Christ’s church is the light in this world, (Matthew 5:14-16), and we shine the light of Christ in a dark and sinful world, (John 1:4, 8:12, II Corinthians 4:4-6). Notice please, how instructive this passage is, if you will see or find Christ, you must look in the direction of his churches. The local church is of far greater importance than we realize. The church is the organization that Christ founded and died for. And we should know this, the local church is at the center of what God is doing, in fact, every ministry involved in, to be scriptural, must be out of and connected with the local church. Christ ministers in and through his churches. He isn’t much interested in ministries apart from them. When John heard Christ’s voice and turned to see, he first saw the churches! And then Christ in the midst of the churches!

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D. Christ is seen as one like the Son of man, compare Daniel 7:13. The Son of God became the Son of man that we might become the sons of God! (John 1:12, 5:24-27).

E. Christ is seen clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. Paps is old English for breast or chest. This kind of clothing depicts him as the great high priest of the church, (Hebrews 4:14, Exodus 28) describes the priest's garment. Here, Christ is seen as the priest of the church who stands amidst the churches judging them as he sees fit. His garment speaks of strength and truth. Every church must realize this and seek to be just what God wants them to be.

F. In verses 14 and 15 Christ is seen as having hair as white as wool or snow. This identifies him as the eternal God, the ancient of days, (Daniel 7:9-13). He is wise and sinless. His eyes are as a flame of fire, his gaze pierces, purifies, and searches the heart. His feet are like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace. This also is descriptive of judgement. The brazen altar of the old testament tabernacle was where sin was judged. His voice is as the sound of many waters. When Christ wants, he can speak in a way to you that you will hear him above every thing else.

G. In verse 16 Christ is seen holding in his right hand seven stars. These seven stars are clearly identified for us in verse 20, they are the angels of the seven churches. It seems certain that, since angels are messengers from God, that it is the Pastors of the churches who are seen as stars and angels by the Lord. It may also indicate that each Pastor has a particular angel who represents him and his work in heaven. In fact, (Matthew 18:10) indicates that children and each believer has a particular angel that ministers to and represents them before God. At any rate, it is good for me to know that when God speaks of me as a Pastor, he speaks of me as an angel. Some people consider me anything but an angel!

H. In his vision of the glorified Christ John sees that out of his mouth goes a sharp sword that has two edges. Obviously this is clearly designed to speak of God's word. The word of God is a sharp two edged sword that pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, (Hebrews 4:12).

I. The countenance of Christ is as the sun shineth in his strength. This is a look at his face, compare (Malachi 4:2) where the Son of God is referred to as the Sun of righteousness which arises with healing in his wings. His countenance is warm, soothing, life giving and sustaining.

J. In verse 17 we find that when John sees this glorified Christ, he falls at his feet motionless and quiet as if he were a dead man. Compare (Daniel 10:7-9) for Daniel's experience in seeing the Lord. But, Christ laid his right hand upon John, comforted and calmed his fears. He need not fear for it is the eternal God before who he has bowed and God will take care of him.

K. In verse 18 Christ reminds John of his death and resurrection and of the fact that he is alive for evermore with authority over hell and death. Christ has the key to the door of death and hell. A person cannot enter death's door without the permissive will of God, he must open the door! And, since Christ has the key to hell's door, you may be assured that he has locked the saved out of hell and will lock the unsaved in hell! Isn't that great!

1:19 THE PROPER DIVISIONS FOR STUDYING THE BOOK

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;"

The proper divisions for studying the book of Revelation are given in this verse, they are as follows:

A. The things which thou hast seen. This would obviously be chapter 1 for John had just seen what we've been reading.

B. The things which are. This would be the things of chapters 2 and 3. The church things of our present time, the church age.

C. The things which shall be hereafter, or after the church things in chapters 2 and 3. The things hereafter are the things beginning in chapter 4 and continuing through the rest of the book. They are future things.

If you will remember these divisions and will study the book accordingly, you will be better able to keep all things in proper perspective and will avoid a lot of confusion and misunderstanding.

1:20 THE PASTORS AND THEIR CHURCHES

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

As previously commented on, the mystery of the stars is clarified, they are the **angels of the churches**, they are God's messengers, **God's Pastors**. If you want to know who the real stars of society are, examine the word of God, they are the Pastors of the churches up through the ages. There is no more difficult job in the world, and regardless of those who have fallen over the years, there is no brighter shining examples in the world than God's Pastors. And, I've had the privilege of being one for a good many years. Thank God! The mystery of the **candlesticks** is clarified, **they are God's churches in the world**. There is not a more important organization than the church. It shines God's light into a sin darkened world. And if you're not a faithful supporting member of one you're not right with God. ■