

Revelation

by Peter Hammond

The Book of Revelation reveals God's sovereignty and control over human history, warning of the judgement of the harlot and the beast, and promising the ultimate victory of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Revelation 1:1-12

Topics: "Eschatology", "Persecution"

Description

Peter Hammond delves into the Book of Revelation, written by John while in exile on the island of Patmos, to reveal the visions he received from Jesus Christ. The book was penned before the Jewish War of AD 67-70, depicting the impending judgement on those who rejected and crucified Christ. The historic context of Revelation addresses real first century Christians in actual churches, warning them of the tribulation they were entering and the imminent return of Christ. The message emphasizes the importance of standing firm against deception, enduring persecution, and remaining faithful to Jesus amidst a world filled with satanic counterfeits and globalist agendas.

Transcript

Author

John, the author of the fourth Gospel and the three Epistles, was the last surviving Apostle. While in exile on the small, barren island of Patmos, located in the Aegean Sea, John received a series of visions from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dating the Book of Revelation

Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 also indicate that the book of Revelation was written prior to the Jewish War of AD 67-70, because Christian Jews and unbelieving Jews were still intermingled at the time of writing. A sharp religious, cultural and legal division between Christians and unbelieving Jews ensued after AD 70. Therefore the Book of Revelation had to have been written prior to the destruction of the Temple in August AD 70; before the death of Nero 8 June, AD 68; before the Jewish War began in AD 67, but after the outbreak of Nero's persecution of Christians in November AD 64.

When Was Revelation Written?

Revelation was written by AD 65 and it speaks to the first century Church concerning the tribulation which they were entering: "I, John, who also am your brother and companion in the tribulation and in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ..." Revelation 1:9. Revelation 11:1-2 indicates that the Temple was still standing in Jerusalem when the book of Revelation was written. Luke 21:5-7 and Luke 21:24 were fulfilled in the Jewish War with Rome, from Spring AD 67 to the destruction of Jerusalem in August AD 70, a period of 42 months - which fits the precise measurement of the prophecy in Revelation 11:2.

The Theme of Revelation

The judgement of God upon the generation that had committed the greatest crime in history, the betrayal and murder of the Messiah. They had rejected and crucified the Lamb of God. Jerusalem is depicted as a harlot and Rome as a beast. The wrath of God was poured out on Jerusalem with the destruction of the Temple in AD 70. (See *Before Jerusalem Fell - Dating the Book of Revelation* by Ken Gentry)

The Historic Context of Revelation

The Revelation of Jesus Christ: "...To the seven churches in the province of Asia..." Revelation 1:4. "...to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea." Revelation 1:11. Real first century Christians, in actual churches, in historical cities, were addressed.

What Must Soon Take Place

The first century Christians were meant to read and understand the message of Revelation as most relevant to themselves. "...what must soon take place..." Revelation 1:1. "...the time is near." Revelation 1:3. "Look He is coming with the clouds and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him..." Revelation 1:7. "...I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth..." Revelation 2:16. "I am coming soon..." Revelation 3:11. "...the things that must soon take place. 'Behold I am coming soon.'" Revelation 22:6-7. "Behold I am coming soon!..." Revelation 22:12. "...Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near." Revelation 22:10 (Compare with Daniel 12:9, where the prophecies were sealed because the time was a long way off).

Coming with the Clouds

Compare the apocalyptic language of "coming with the clouds" with: "...See, the Lord rides on a swift cloud and is coming to Egypt. The idols of Egypt tremble before Him and the hearts of the Egyptians melt within them." Isaiah 19:1. "...He makes the clouds His chariot and rides on the wings of the wind. He makes winds His messengers, flames of fire His servants." Psalm 104:3-4. (Also Psalm 18:7-15; Joel 2:1-2). Christ's hearers understood His coming to be in Judgement upon their own generation. (Matthew 21:40-45). "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened." Matthew 24:34.

Identifying the Harlot in Revelation

"Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berakiah, whom you murdered between the Temple and the altar. I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation." Matthew 23:34-35. "All the people answered, 'Let His blood be on us and on our children!'" Matthew 27:25. "Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called

Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified." Revelation 11:8. "Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns... This title was written on her forehead: Mystery Babylon the Great, The Mother of prostitutes and of the Abominations of the Earth." Revelation 17:3, 5. "In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints and of all who have been killed on the earth." Revelation 18:24 (Leviticus 20:10; Leviticus 21:9; Isaiah 1:21; Jeremiah 3:14; Jeremiah 22:8; Lamentations 1:1; Ezekiel 16:8-59; Hosea 4:1; Acts 7:51-52; Revelation 16:13-14 & 19; Revelation 17:16). Who is the harlot referred to in Revelation? Jerusalem.

Identifying the Beast in Revelation

Revelation 17:7-14 clearly identifies Rome and the emperor Nero. Rome was built on 7 hills and Nero was the sixth emperor of Rome, who reigned after the deaths of his five predecessors and before the brief rule of the seventh emperor. Josephus, the first century historian, listed the first emperor of Rome as Julius Caesar, followed by Augustus, Tiberius, Caius/Caligula, Claudius and Nero. Revelation 17:10: "...Five have fallen..." the first 5 emperors are dead; "one is..." the sixth emperor, Nero, was reigning as John wrote. Nero reigned from October, AD 54 until 8 July, AD 68; "the other has not yet come, but when he does come, he must remain for a little while." The seventh emperor Galba reigned only six months, until 15 January, AD 69.

The Message of Revelation

Revelation means unveiling. God is in sovereign control of all the events of human history. Even during times of violent persecution when evil seems pervasive, Christians can be encouraged that our Lord Jesus Christ will ultimately frustrate, confound and conquer all His enemies. Christ will come again in glory to Judge and to rule.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Revelation is first and foremost a Revelation of Jesus Christ (1:1):

He is "the faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the dead and the Ruler over the kings of the earth." (1:5);

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end... Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty." (1:8);

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last." (1:11);

"The Son of Man." (1:13);

Whose eyes are "like a flame of fire." (1:14);

Whose voice is "as the sound of many waters." (1:15);

Who has in His right hand "seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength." (1:16);

"I am He who lives and was dead and behold I am alive forevermore. Amen.

And I have the keys of Hades and of death." (1:18)'

"The Son of God who has eyes like a flame of fire and His feet like fine brass." (2:18);

"He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts and shuts and no one opens." (3:7);

"The faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the Creation of God." (3:14);

"The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David." (5:5);

"The Lamb who was slain." (5:12);

"The Lamb who was in the midst of the Throne, who will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters." (7:17);

"The kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever!" (11:15);

"You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things." (16:5);

"After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in Heaven, saying, 'Alleluia!

Salvation and glory and honour and power belong to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." (19:1-2);

"And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!'" (19:6);

"Now I saw Heaven opened and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire and on His head were many crowns.

He had a Name written that no one knew except Himself." (19:11-12);

"He was clothed with a robe dipped in Blood and His Name is called the Word of God." (19:13);

"Now out of His mouth goes a sharp Sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (19:15);

"And He has on His robe and on His thigh, a Name written: King of kings and Lord of lords." (19:16);

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." (22:13);

"I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning Star." (22:16);

Cosmic Conflict

The Kingdom of God is in conflict with the forces of Satan. Revelation 13 describes a beast with many heads and horns. The dragon gave the beast power, a throne and great authority. The beast mouthed blasphemies against God, blaspheming His Name, His Tabernacle and those who dwell in Heaven. The

beast made war with the saints and gained authority over every tribe, tongue and nation. "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Revelation 13:8

Religious Deception

The beast will capture and kill the people of God. There will also be another beast, a religious beast, who will have worldwide authority and who "causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast... he deceives those who dwell on the earth..." Revelation 13:12-14

Globalism

This Scripture makes clear that this devilish power will work to bring about a one-world government, a one-world religion and a one-world economic system. Those who refuse to follow this one-world religion will be persecuted and killed (13:15).

Hostility to God and Blasphemy

The Word of God warns us of a devilish system that seeks to impose a one-world government, a one-world religion and a one-world economic system. It will be further identified by its blasphemies and hostility towards God and His Name. As well as by its hostility towards believers of the past, those who are in Heaven now.

War Against God

Throughout history there have been those who have attempted to impose their political and religious will on the world, such as Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Caesar Nero of Rome, commanded everyone in the Empire to worship him. They were to place the ashes of the incense they had burned before his image on their forehead, before they were allowed to trade in the marketplaces. From Babel to Babylon, from Rome to the French Revolution and from the Soviet Union to Red China, those who seek to impose a one-world government and a one-world religion, also seek to control the economy. They pour out blasphemies against God and His people, persecuting those who refuse to bow to their political and religious will. They make war on the saints and attempt to stamp their mark on all that they have power over.

The Martyrs' Prayer

"When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?' Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed." Revelation 6:9-11

The Mark of the Beast

"He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand, or on their foreheads and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666." Revelation 13:16-18. Many Bible scholars

have focused on how the mark would be placed on the right hand, or on the forehead, perhaps by tattoo, or more recently, as the technology has become available, by a microchip. These methods may be possible, but the emphasis in the Scripture is on our way of thinking and on our actions. We are commanded in the Word of God to bind His Law on our hands and on our foreheads. This is speaking about having our way of thinking governed by the Word of God and having our actions governed by the Law of God (Deuteronomy 6:5-8). Many people have the mark of the beast, without any tattoo or microchip. When one allows one's way of thinking to be conformed to the world and one's actions to be in conformity to what satan wants, then one has the mark. "You shall not follow a crowd to do evil..." Exodus 23:2

Satanic Counterfeits

The beast described in Revelation 13 is a counterfeit of Christ, an antichrist.

Just as Christ is the exact image of God, begotten of the Father (Psalm 2:7; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3); the beast is an image of satan whom satan brought forth (13:1).

Christ has many Crowns and worthy Names (19:12), the beast has ten crowns and blasphemous names (13:1).

Christ has power (5:12-13), the Throne (3:21) and authority (12:10) from the Father (John 5:21-23); the dragon gave the beast his power, throne and great authority (13:2).

Counterfeiting the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the beast recovers from a seemingly fatal wound (13:3).

We are to worship both the Father and the Son (John 5:23), worship is misdirected to the dragon and the beast (13:4)

Christ alone is worthy. "...For You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Revelation 5:9. The beast seeks the worship of the whole world.

Christ declares the praises of God (Hebrews 2:12), the beast utters blasphemies (13:5).

The beast makes war against the saints (13:7), Christ makes war against the beast (19:11-21).

The worship given to the beast in 13:4 counterfeits the song to God in Exodus 15:11.

The Fake vs. The True

Satan is a counterfeit warrior "...behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it and it had ten horns." Daniel 7:7. Satan attempts to counterfeit the creation of God, bringing forth his image out of chaotic waters (13:1). A false prophet, or religious beast (13:11-18) attempts to counterfeit the work of the Holy Spirit deceiving nations to worship the beast (13:13-14). As Christians are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13), so satan seeks to impose his mark on his subjects (13:16); satan, the beast and the false prophet form a demonic triad (16:13) attempting to counterfeit the Holy Trinity. Satan is a deceiver (2 Corinthians 11:14-15), he deceives nations, the whole world. (12:9). God is the Creator. Satan is an imitator. Babylon, the harlot attempts to counterfeit the bride of Christ (17:1-18). Ultimately, this is a battle between Christ and satan.

Mystery Babylon - Religious Prostitution

"Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, 'Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.' So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marvelled with great amazement." Revelation 17:1-6

Stand Fast Against Deception and Defilement

Satan attacks the saints with persecution and through deception and disinformation attempting to seduce and defile the servants of God. Revelation depicts an evil state and a whoremongering false religion, which together blaspheme God and persecute the faithful people of God, through heretical teaching, threats and violence. God's people are assailed and afflicted. We are called to stand fast against all temptation, to endure all suffering and to remain faithful to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

God Will Judge Babylonian Idolatry

"And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.' And I heard another voice from Heaven saying, 'Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to Heaven and God has remembered her iniquities.'" Revelation 18:2-5

The Lamb and the Lion

The first time our Lord Jesus Christ came as a Saviour, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The second time, He will not come as a lamb, but as the Lion, as the King of kings and Lord of lords, as the Eternal Judge, to conquer and to defeat all His enemies.

There are Seven Sevens in Revelation:

Seven churches;

Seven seals;

Seven trumpets;

Seven signs;

Seven last plagues;

Seven dooms and

Seven new things.

A Vision of Christ

In Revelation 1, John is granted a vision of Christ. On earth, John was comfortable enough to lay his head on Jesus' shoulder, during the last Supper. Yet, when the Apostle John saw the Risen, Ascended Christ, he fell on his face as a dead man. Jesus is the Light of the world and we are called to be lights to the world. The churches are depicted as lampstands and Christ stands in the midst of the lampstands. He is described as majestic and awesome. Clothed with a garment down to His feet, girded around His chest with a gold band, His head and hair white as snow, His eyes like a flame of fire, His feet like fine brass, refined in a furnace, His voice like the sound of many waters. In His right hand are seven stars and out of His mouth comes a sharp double-edged sword. His countenance is like the sun shining in all its strength. He is The Ancient of Days. He is from the beginning to the end. He is all knowing, everywhere present and all-powerful. He is the Eternal Judge (1:12-16).

Transformed by Christ

When Moses saw the Lord, his face shone. Job abhorred himself and repented in ashes. Isaiah saw himself as unclean. Thomas bowed and declared: "My Lord and my God!" Saul the persecutor, fell down and worshipped Him and rose up to become the Apostle Paul, His Missionary. It is impossible to see Christ and not be utterly transformed.

Apocalyptic Symbolism

The visions, symbols and numbers used in Revelation all carry special meaning and bring to mind similar images and symbols from the Old Testament. It is most constructive to study the Book of Daniel and Revelation together.

Numerical Significance

Four usually refers to the earth or to a place, such as the four horseman of the Apocalypse (6:2-8).

Six falls short of perfection, the number of man.

Seven means perfection, or completeness.

Twelve, the number of tribes, speaks of God's people.

A hundred and forty four (12x12) is the whole host of God's people.

A thousand stands for a great number.

The Four Living Creatures

We also read of the four Living Creatures around God's Throne (ref: Ezekiel 1): Animal-like angels with features like that of a lion, a bull and an eagle (4:6-9).

The Seven Letters to the Seven Churches

Each letter refers back to an aspect of John's vision of Christ. Each contains a command, a commendation and/or condemnation, a correction and a challenge.

Commendations

In the Letters to the Seven Churches, the Lord commends: hard work, patient labour, refusing to tolerate those who are evil, testing those who claim to be apostles and exposing the false, persevering in service for the Lord and not becoming weary, hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans, enduring tribulation and poverty, resisting the blasphemies of the synagogue of satan, resisting Babylon and the beast, holding fast to the Lord's Name, refusing to deny the Faith, despite persecution and the threat of martyrdom, patient love, service and faith, keeping God's Word, being faithful to Him and overcoming the world.

Condemnations

In the Letters to the Seven Churches, the Lord condemns: those who have left their first love, tolerating the doctrines of Balaam and the heresy of the Nicolaitans, tolerating idolatry and immorality, allowing Jezebels who call themselves prophetesses to teach and seduce God's people to commit immorality and idolatry, being spiritually dead, tolerating the synagogue of satan, being neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, being spiritually wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.

Commands

To the Seven Churches the Lord commands: Remember, repent and repeat. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Be faithful unto death and I will give you the Crown of life. Hold fast what you have until I come. Keep My works. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain. Remember what you have received and heard. Hold fast and repent. Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. I counsel you to buy from Me gold, refined in the fire, that you may be rich and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed and anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see. Be zealous and repent. Hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Overcome the world.

The Message of Revelation

In Revelation we see every creature in Heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them worshipping the Lord together (5:13).

We see that satan hates the people of God and will persecute them.

We see that woe will come upon the whole earth because of those who refuse to repent of their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality and their thefts (9:21).

God will destroy those who destroy the earth (11:18).

The people of God will triumph over their persecutors. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony and they did not love their lives to the death." Revelation 12:11. Those who have suffered for Christ and been faithful will reign with Christ (20:4).

All those who worship the beast and his image and whoever receives the mark of his name will be tormented with fire and brimstone forever and ever (14:10-11).

Everyone will stand before God and be judged according to their works, as recorded in the books in Heaven (20:12).

God will condemn "the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars..." to the lake of fire (21:8).

From Genesis to Revelation

Genesis is the Book of beginnings (Genesis 1:1).

Revelation is the Book of consummation (Revelation 21:5-6).

In Genesis, the heavens and the earth are created (Genesis 1:1).

In Revelation, a new Heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1).

In Genesis, the sun and moon appear (Genesis 1:14-19).

In Revelation, there is no more need for sun and moon, for Christ is the light of the new Heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21:23).

In Genesis, God plants a garden (Genesis 2:8).

In Revelation, He unveils the Holy City (Revelation 21:2).

In Genesis, there is the marriage of the first man, Adam and the first woman, Eve (Genesis 2:22-25).

In Revelation, the marriage supper of the Lamb, the second Adam (Revelation 19:6-8).

In Genesis, you see the beginning of sin (Genesis 3:6-7).

In Revelation, the end of sin (Revelation 21:3-4).

In Genesis, we are introduced to the great adversary and enemy, satan, the accuser of the brethren.

In Revelation, satan is finally and completely defeated and judged (Revelation 20:7-10).

In Genesis, tears and sorrow, pain and death are introduced as a result of sin.

In Revelation, God wipes away all tears and there will be no more pain, suffering, or death (Revelation 21:4).

In Genesis, man is banished from the Tree of Life.

In Revelation, the Tree of Life is in the centre of the City (Revelation 22:1-2).

Is your life marked by the world or the Word?

Is your name written in the Book of Life?

Is the Lord Jesus Christ your Saviour? Or your Judge?

Are you resisting Babylon and the Beast?

Are you faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ?

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