

Preface

The REVELATION – It is amazing, mystifying, baffling, astonishing, surprising, bewildering, but every word is true! Every word will be fulfilled in the same order, in the same way, in the same time! We call this book a prophecy about the future but perhaps that is the wrong way to think about it. Actually, the LORD’s prophecies are promises. Just so we know, the LORD always keeps His promises – exactly as He promised – with no differences, discrepancies, divergences or deviations. This is the story of the LORD’s future, His Second Coming, His reign as King of kings and LORD of lord, His fulfillment of other promises that He has already declared starting in the book of Genesis and running all the way through the book of Jude.

The REVELATION – It means the *uncovering*. Sadly, it seems that everyone misses the point that Jesus is *uncovering* the details of His return. The details we tend to focus on are simply the pageantry that will accompany His coming.

The REVELATION – It also tells the story of the reuniting of the chosen people with their LORD. In their stubbornness, they rejected the LORD when He came to become the full and final sacrifice for their sins. Their eyes were blinded then and still are today. But this promise shows how the LORD will manipulate the history of the world before He arrives, and then, His chosen people will finally accept Him as their Messiah and reign with Him as He rules the world with absolute authority!

The REVELATION – It begins with the story of Jesus and ends with the prayer that His coming will occur soon! Accept it for what it is! Add nothing to it! Take nothing away from it! It is His promise that it will happen just as He said it would.

Jim Hastings

The Revelation

Chapter 1

I. The Introduction of the Book

Rev. 1:1a The Revelation of Jesus Christ,

The REVELATION – It seems that the whole world wants to know about this book! For some strange reason new Christians dive into it before they know anything about all that has transpired to make its message understandable and meaningful. Movies have been made about it - about the end times, the Armageddon, the final battle, the this and the that! Books have been written about it, rarely dealing with the actual material within its pages. They all have one thing in common, the terrible end of the world. But the Revelation really does not have anything to do with the end of the world; rather, it has everything to do with this world’s new beginning in the eternal future. How do we know that for a fact? We know it because the book of Revelation, the last book of God’s written Word, pulls together all the

prophecies yet to be fulfilled into a final summary of things yet to occur, and it sprinkles a few new facts into the mix just to fill in the gaps.

The REVELATION – It holds the position as the last book of God’s Word on purpose. You see, the Bible story started in eternity past and ends in eternity future. The story began with God’s crowning creation, man and woman, the only part that has the ability to communicate with Him and the ability to choose to love or reject Him. Throughout the story, God made promises and predictions concerning His crowning creation and by the end of the Bible, long before all His Words are fulfilled, He summed up the story of the future in this last of the sixty-six books that tells the tale of the magnificent work of God.

The REVELATION – We cannot study it without looking at all that came before. The Bible has a purpose in its organization. It begins with Genesis. Think of that book as the giant base of a triangle made up of layers. Genesis covers about 2700 years from creation to Jacob’s family settling in Egypt. If you remember, Jacob’s name was changed to Israel and his descendants took that new name as the name of their nation. Therefore, Genesis is about the heritage of God’s people which led to the family of Israel. The next layer includes Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1st Samuel, 2nd Samuel, 1st Kings, 2nd Kings, 1st Chronicles, 2nd Chronicles, Job, Esther and Nehemiah. These books tell about the formation and history of the Nation of Israel and the other people in the world from the exodus out of Egypt to Israel’s return to the Promised Land after the exile. The third layer includes all their writings, their songs, their sayings, and their poems that were produced during the time that was covered in the second layer. Then the fourth layer includes all the books of prophecy. Even though they are separate books, the human writer of each book lived some time during the history of the second layer, but the message within their pages told promises about the future, before they happened, in order that God could prove to us that He is God and we can trust Him to keep His promises. He promised many things in those books. We call it the Old Testament. But, the greatest promise of all found in those books concerned the coming Savior. By turning to the New Testament, we see that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John would not be stories at all if the entire Old Testament had not happened. Those four books build on the Old Testament and that fifth layer tells the heritage of the coming Savior and the establishment of the Church. The sixth layer holds the book of Acts which tells the story of the formation and development of the Church. The seventh layer presents the writings of the Church beginning with Romans and ending with Jude. Then, on the eighth layer, the point of the triangle, the New Testament prophecy book called the Revelation appears. It rests on the writings of the Church, which rests on the formation of the Church, which rests on the establishment of the Church, which rests on the prophecy, writings, history, and heritage of the Nation of Israel. There, in that peak layer, the point of the triangle, God, for the final time in His Holy Writ, prophesies Israel’s future and its place in eternity. It all fits together. You cannot understand the end without understanding the beginning and all the minute pieces revealed in between.

The REVELATION – The culmination of all that has been told in God’s Word is not different from what has happened with all of creation. It involves the interaction between God, Jesus, the Spirit, angels, demons, and man. A whole cast of characters is involved in the REVELATION and it will help tremendously if we get to know a little about them before we study them in the story.

II. The People of the Book

(In Order of Appearance)

Jesus Christ (1:1)

Jesus is the main character in this book and we meet Him in the first verse of the first scene in this story. It is His story. It is about His Second Coming. It is about His coming to earth to be the King of kings and LORD of lords. One day in the future, He will return to the Mount of Olives to establish His kingdom on earth. He will arrive and place His foot on the same place from which He ascended in 30 AD. This story is about the events that will take place before, during and after His Second Coming. They are in exact chronological order.

John (1:1)

When Jesus lived on earth, John was His biological cousin. John was the youngest of the twelve Apostles and by 95 AD, he was the sole survivor of the twelve. In this story, John's job was to describe exactly what he saw played out in living color before his eyes. The story he saw occurred exactly as it will take place someday in the future. John's task was to describe what he had seen even though he might not know what it was. Even today, there is a good possibility that some of the things John saw, described and wrote about have not been invented yet.

Angel Attendant (1:1)

This angel was sent to attend John as the story was presented to him. He will be with John through the whole production.

Membership of Seven Churches (1:4)

Within the REVELATION, letters to members of seven Churches are included. John had disciplined the seven pastors who were serving in those seven Churches. It is also believed that he sent them to those Churches to be their pastors. For that reason, John had a special relationship with each of them. These were not the only Churches in the world. By 95 AD, thousands of Churches were in existence. But these seven Churches were important because each of their stories acts as a time marker. In other words, the events that start in chapter 4 cannot begin until these seven Churches cease to exist in their towns.

The seven Churches were in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. In the story, we will see these seven Churches presented first as seven candlesticks, lights for the Gospel of Jesus in those towns.

Seven Stars (1:16)

When John described Jesus' appearance, he mentioned the seven stars that he saw in Jesus' hand. These stars represented the seven angels or messengers to the seven Churches. We can think of them as seven angels who guarded the Churches, but, perhaps, it is better to think of them as the seven pastors who led those Churches. Either way, and we do not know for sure which is correct, we can be assured that these seven messengers were in direct contact with members of those seven Churches in that day.

Seven Spirits (1:4)

These seven spirits were created by Jesus in the beginning and were assigned to be in front of His throne forever, fulfilling His commands. In this story, they will blow the seven trumpets and pour wrath from the seven bowls. They are angels.

Nicolaitans (2:6)

In the letters to the Ephesus and Pergamum Churches, the Nicolaitans are mentioned. The Church of Ephesus and Jesus hated them; the Church of Pergamum accepted them. They were counterfeit Christians who had taken charge of some of the churches in the area and were including immoral acts in their worship practices and were guilty of putting stumbling blocks in front of non-believers to lead them astray so that they would not believe the true Gospel of Jesus.

Jews of the Synagogue of Satan (2:9)

In Smyrna and Philadelphia, Jewish Synagogues existed that were composed of members who were non-Jews. These non-Jews claimed to be real Jews. As Jews and fake Jews, they rejected Jesus. Therefore, He called them Synagogues of Satan.

Satan (2:13)

We all know about Satan. We met him in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. In this story we find Satan still up to his old tricks and he is mentioned in the letters to Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira and Philadelphia. Through his efforts, he will cast some Church members into prison, he will kill others, he will live among the church members and he will convince them to practice his rituals and believe his teachings. He actually had an earthly throne and base of operation in Pergamum. As the story develops, Satan shows himself as the major instigator of all evil rebellion just before the time of Jesus' Second Coming.

Antipas (2:13)

This was not King Herod Antipas. It was another Antipas who was a faithful witness for Jesus, but he had been killed in Pergamum before the writing of this REVELATION.

Jezebel (2:20)

This immoral woman had taken charge of Thyatira claiming to be a prophetess of God. She had her own doctrines that she taught in the Church. Those teachings were called the "deep things" of Satan.

David (3:7)

We met this same David in the Old Testament. He was the second king of the Nation of Israel. He followed Saul as king. Solomon was his son who followed him as king. The "key of David" mentioned in the letter to Philadelphia was also called the "key to death and Hades" later on. In this story, David holds a special position in Jesus' kingdom with an office in a special place in the new earthly Temple during Jesus' thousand-year reign on earth. For all practical purposes, in the thousand-year reign of Jesus, David will be second in charge.

Twenty-four Elders (4:4)

These twenty-four elders sit in front of the throne of Jesus in heaven. They wear crowns, hold bowls of incense and have harps. Their main job is to continually give praise to the LORD. Some speculate that these twenty-four elders are comprised of the twelve sons of Jacob and the twelve Apostles, but that is speculation. If it did include the twelve Apostles, surely John would have said that he saw himself, but he did not. Some say that this was the smaller group of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem that made special decisions, but that cannot be true either. Others say that they were the original priests who were appointed by David to minister in the Tabernacle and Temple, but that cannot be so either. Because they worshiped the LORD, cast their crowns at His feet and offered the incense of prayers, these elders were probably created on the first day and had been giving praise to the LORD since the foundation of the world.

Four Living Creatures (4:6)

A lion (4:7)

A calf (4:7)

A man (4:7)

An eagle (4:7)

These four living creatures, also found in Ezekiel 1, 3 and 10, are cherubim (Ezekiel 10:20). They are a specific form of angels who normally stayed in front of Jesus' throne and join the elders in singing praises to the LORD. In this story, they will warn of danger and of divine justice. Each creature has a different face and each has six wings.

The Lion of Judah (5:5)

The Lion is a symbolic title that refers to Jesus. The first prophecy of this title occurred in Genesis (Genesis 49:9).

Lamb of God (5:6)

The Lamb is a symbolic title that refers to Jesus. John the Baptist called Jesus the Lamb of God (John 1:29). When Jesus offered Himself on the cross, He was slain as a lamb for the sins of all the people of the world. Because He did that, He holds the title of the Lamb of God.

Strong Angel (5:15)

This angel has the unique privilege of asking, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" One elder gives the answer – it is Jesus, the Lion, the Lamb.

White Horse Rider (6:2)

At the right time, this white horse rider will come forth to attempt to peacefully take control of the world. Although he will have weapons of war, he will not have or use ammunition.

Red Horse Rider (6:4)

After the white horse rider has successfully taken control of the world and everything seem to be at peace, this red horse rider will seek to take the peaceful nations by bloody force, pitting man against man in a bloody battle that leads to the death of many.

Black Horse Rider (6:5)

The destruction caused by the red horse rider will bring great heartache to the world. With food resources depleted, the black horse rider will arrive with a great famine.

Ashen Horse Rider (6:8)

Death (6:8)

Hades (6:8)

Once the effects of the black horse rider are fulfilled, the ashen horse rider will arrive to bring the logical conclusion of starvation, physical death and a trip to the underworld and place of the dead called Hades.

The Souls Under the Altar (6:9)

In heaven, under the altar of the LORD, living quarters have been established for the eternal souls of people who died because they would not change their testimony about the love of Jesus in their lives. They died as martyrs. From heaven, these souls see the increasing turmoil of death occurring on earth before the Second Coming of Jesus and they wonder and ask, “how long will the trouble on earth continue?”

Four Angels of the Four Corners of the Earth (7:1)

These four angels control the movement of the winds upon the earth. At just the right time, they will stop the winds from blowing for just a short time.

One Hundred and Forty-Four Thousand (7:4)

At the appropriate time, while the angels have stopped the wind from blowing, Jesus will put a mark on the heads of 144,000 Jews to protect them from Satan and his crew who are working with him to take over the world. These Jews are extremely important to this story because they are the Jews on earth who will finally recognize and accept Jesus as their intended Messiah.

Another Angel (8:3)

This angel holds the censer (firepan) that contains the prayers of the saints. When he casts it down on earth, a great earthquake will occur.

Wormwood (8:11)

Wormwood is a star that will fall to the earth. When it hits the earth, one-third of the fresh waters will turn bitter – bitter enough to bring death. In the Old Testament, wormwood is called *hemlock* (Amos 6:12).

Locusts (9:3)

John describes these animals as locusts. It is the best description he can give. He sees them coming from the east to bring judgment on mankind.

Four Angels (9:15)

These four angels have been bound at the Euphrates for centuries. At the proper time, Jesus will release them, and they will kill one-third of the humans. The army coming with them will include 200 million warriors.

Two Witnesses - Two Olive Trees (11:3)

Two witnesses will arrive in Jerusalem to proclaim the name of Jesus for 1,260 days. At the end of those days, they will be killed. Their bodies will lie in the street for three days. On the third day, they will rise from the dead and everyone in the world will see it happen. They will then ascend into heaven. It is their witness that will change the minds of the Jewish leaders who have constantly rejected Jesus.

Woman Clothed with the Sun (12:1)

This woman is symbolically the surviving Nation of Israel. Even though this story is about the Second Coming of Jesus, it is also a story about the Nation of Israel accepting Him as the Messiah (Christ). Satan will attempt to destroy all the remnants of the Nation of Israel so they will not accept Him as LORD. This woman will be protected through the tribulation to the end.

Great Red Dragon (12:3)

This Great Red Dragon is none other than Satan. He is always portrayed in the Scripture as some form of reptile, whether the slithering snake in Genesis or the fire-breathing dragon in the Revelation. He is always a reptile.

Male Child (12:5)

This *male child* is a reference to Jesus. It refers to Jesus as the Child of the Nation of Israel Who will one day rule all the kingdoms of the world with a rod of iron. This passage, this Child, Jesus, has already been born and has returned to heaven to sit on His throne. After the mention of this Child in the story, the Nation of Israel will require protection for three and a half years, or 1260 days.

Michael (12:7)

According to Daniel, Michael is one of the chief angels assigned to the Nation of Israel (Dan. 10:13, 21; Dan 12:1). He is the angel that always seems to lead the battles against Satan - the Devil, the old serpent, the red dragon.

Beast out of the Sea – The Scarlet Beast (13:1)

A leopard (13:2)

A bear (13:2)

A lion (13:2)

This beast is often called the anti-christ. Although he is an anti-christ, there are millions of other anti-Christ's who have and will live before this scarlet beast arrives. When he does arrive, he will have characteristics of a leopard, bear and lion. He will be the ruler who pulls the ten toes described in Nebuchadnezzar's prophecy together to fulfill it. In Daniel, he is presented as the "little horn that came up among the ten horns," (Daniel 7:8). Those countries are Britain, France, Spain, Italy, North Africa, Greece, Macedonia, Syria, Turkey and Egypt.

He will also be the chief earthly enemy of Jesus at that time. He will be called the ruler of the west. During his seven-year reign, he will fight the rulers of the north, south and east. He will not be the ruler of the world but only of the ten nations that will be known as the revived Roman empire.

[Beast out of the Earth \(13:11\)](#)

This beast will be a minister but not a minister of Jesus. He is often called the *false prophet of the end times*, and that he is. Upon his arrival, he will require undying devotion to the first beast and the acceptance of the mark of the beast. He will be the religious leader of the majority of the people who make up the revived Roman Empire consisting of the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

[Woman Sitting on the Scarlet Beast \(17:3\)](#)

This woman is the religion led by the false prophet, the second beast. She sits on the scarlet beast and controls its government with her religious laws. The scarlet beast will put up with this religious woman as long he needs her, but then, in one hour, he will destroy her – a whole religion destroyed in one vote to make her laws illegal.

[The Bride \(18:23\)](#)

The Bride is the universal Church after she has gone through the marriage ceremony with Jesus in heaven.

[Angel Standing in the Sun \(19:17\)](#)

This angel will call all the birds and invite them to assemble in the valley of Megiddo to dine at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb with the menu being the flesh of all of Satan's army.

[Angel from Heaven Holding the Key \(20:1\)](#)

This angel has the key that locks and unlocks the door to a holding chamber at the bottom of the deepest ocean in the abyss. At the designated time, he will grasp Satan and lock him in the chamber for 1,000 years.

[Gog \(20:8\)](#)

Gog is the ruler of the people of Magog. In the story, he and his people will see Jerusalem in a state of peace and attempt unsuccessfully to take it by force.

[Magog \(20:8\)](#)

Magog is a country directly north of Israel and specifically, directly north of Jerusalem. After the Tower of Babel debacle, Japheth's second son, Magog, settled the land mentioned in this story. The people of Magog look to Gog as their leader. Three and a half years before Jesus' Second Coming, they will follow Gog in an unsuccessful attack on Jerusalem (Ezekiel 38:2; 39:1 and 6).