



**A PASSAGE THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT
PART TWELVE**

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

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5. After almost 22 chapters, Jesus is still “coming quickly ... for the time is near” (22:7, 10; cf. 1:3). Who was the initial and primary audience for the book of Revelation?

6. (22:14-17) Who may claim a right to enter the city and access the tree of life?

7. Who are outside?

8. (22:18-19) What is the warning attached to this book of revelation?

9. (22:20-21) Why would this message have brought comfort to that original audience?

The Revelation to John

Authorship: John the Apostle, A.D. 96

The book of Revelation proves to be mysterious and often confusing, even unapproachable to the average Christian. For this reason, it has been exploited by the devil through human speculators to the disillusionment of millions. Revelation is the unfolding of God’s will in prophecy. Revelation 1:3 urges its readers to hear and keep it, and so it was mainly for the immediate use of the Christians who were reading it and being comforted by it in the first century.

Revelation is apocalyptic, rich with symbolism and figures. In fact, it was written in a code revealed in the Old Testament language. Revelation was written as it is so that the persecutors of the era could not understand it while the suffering people of God could.

The theme of the book is stated in Revelation 17:14: “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords and king of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.” This statement and this book are intended as a consolation to the suffering Christian in the late first century. Jesus is portrayed throughout the book as the Victor and Conqueror. He overcomes hades, death, the beasts, the dragon and those who worship the beast. Although victory seems uncertain and conditions seem gloomy, the saints will overcome.

Revelation was likely written by John when Domitian ruled Rome between A.D. 81-96, specifically around 95. Persecution was widespread in this era and included Caesar worship. Domitian was a wicked, cold-blooded persecutor who demanded to be addressed as “Lord God.” Those who refused to bow to him were persecuted or killed. The Christian had to choose Caesar or Jesus. Revelation sought to show why the choice should be Jesus. There is much evidence from man’s history, especially from Eusebius’s *Ecclesiastical History*, that leads to this late dating for the Revelation. Some argue it was written during Nero’s reign and predicts the fall of Jerusalem.

Although there are some practical points in Revelation, especially in chapters two and three, its value to modern readers is mainly in the encouragement that comes from seeing God gain victory over the Roman persecution of the early church.

Sadly, every generation since the resurrection of Christ has believed it was surely the last. Because evil men tend to wax worse and worse, it always seems to the current generation of saints as if God must be about to act (Second Thessalonians 2:1-12). Christians of the first and second centuries, however, were persecuted first by the Jews and then by the

Romans, who held the power of law over the world and could execute anyone who refused to worship Caesar. The saints may very well have expected the gospel age was expiring, but in fact, the faith would rise even higher in a few generations and so God's patience would bear fruit. The apostles had forewarned every convert of this threat (Second Timothy 3:10-13).

The Preterist View makes all symbols related only to the events of the day in which Revelation was written. The Historical View holds that Revelation outlines in symbolic form the entire course of history from Pentecost to the return of Christ. The symbols predict every great event that has occurred. The Futurist View advocates that Revelation is dealing with only future events at the end of the world. The Spiritual View finds no reference to specific events or persons of the past, present or future, but only presents great principles to guide Christians throughout all ages. The Preterist View is probably the closest to accuracy, but has flaws also.

Domitian is a horrible, blasphemous ruler who goes so far as to demand that his royal subjects address him as Lord, God Caesar. Most of his subjects go along with this demand because to refuse may very well mean execution, but this demand is far too much for you and your brethren in Christ. To call one on earth God is to deny Christ and seal your eternal condemnation where Nero and Domitian will suffer by your side in hellfire.

What will become of the church of Christ, the very cause of Christ, if God does not act? When will we ever find consolation and overcome? Or will we at all?

John has received a revelation from God that will bring comfort and courage to every suffering saint. It is a message that has been encrypted in a code of numerical and scriptural symbolism. The numbers will denote very general characteristics while the scriptures will describe specific kinds of events. Infidels like the emperor may understand the numbers if they intercept the message but they will never see into the scriptures for they are naturally untrained.

God has seen that this message will only encourage His people and not tip off Domitian's servants to the way in which the Lord will cease the persecution, punish the guilty and set the church back to its mission. Perhaps most encouraging is God's timetable. The opening of the message says that these things will come to pass shortly (Revelation 1:1-3). If the message had told of events 2000 years from now, it would have only discouraged them more, but the turn of events is promised to begin shortly and so it is a consolation instead. Such language is not new to scripture and God had never failed to make words mean things (Genesis 41:25-32). He had even told the Roman brethren that he would bruise Satan's power shortly in using false doctrine if they would adhere to the truth (Romans 16:17-20).

Lesson 13: Come, Lord Jesus

Revelation 22:1-21

1. (22:1-5) What grows along the river? When had access to it been lost?
2. What is the fruit for? What might this mean?
3. What curse is taken away in verse 3?
4. (22:6-13) Why does John keep trying to worship angels (cf. 19:10)? What is the angel's response?

5. What is the lake of fire and who are its captives?

6. (21:9-21) Is this description of the triumphant church somewhat figurative or material and literal? If figurative, what is the meaning of the symbolism?

7. (21:22-27) Why did the new city have no temple or shining stars?

8. What is the Lamb's book of life (see Philippians 4:3)? How does one get his name in it? Could a name ever be removed from it (see Exodus 32:33, Revelation 3:5)?

Lesson 1: Preface

Revelation 1:1-20

1. (Introduction) What was the great universal concern of our brethren in the late first century?

2. What role does Revelation play in the lives of early brethren?

3. What role does the Revelation play in our lives today?

4. Does Revelation foretell a coming millennial kingdom on earth in which Jesus will reign from Jerusalem? Where is Jesus seated now (Acts 2:29-33)? How does his kingdom already exist (Colossians 1:13, Matthew 16:16-19)?

5. (1:1-3) What is the significance of "signified" in verse 1?

6. What is the importance of the phrase "shortly take place" in verse 1 and "the time is near" in verse 3?

7. (1:4-6) To whom does John address his comments? Why is this significant?

8. How is Jesus the firstborn from the dead (First Corinthians 15:20)?

9. (1:7-11) The image of the Lord coming in the clouds is a recycled metaphor from the Old Testament. To whose judgment does this phrase refer in Isaiah 19:1? To whose in Ezekiel 38:16? How could the coming here in Revelation also be a temporal judgment worked by human hands?

10. (1:12-17) This passage describes what John saw when the Lord began to speak to him. How did John react to this appearance (verse 17)? How did Ezekiel react when God spoke (Ezekiel 1:28, 3:23)?

11. Without going into each detail, what does the overall appearance of the Lord reflect?

12. What is represented by the seven stars? What is signified by the seven lamp stands?

13. The fate of the soul after physical death is of great concern to almost everyone. How does Jesus reassure them about eternity?

14. According to First Corinthians 15:50-57, what will happen to the dead when Jesus returns? What will happen to the power of death?

Lesson 12: New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:1-27

1. (21:1-8) Compare this passage to Peter's descriptions of judgment (Second Peter 3:1-13).

2. What is the difference between Revelation 21:3 and Matthew 18:20?

3. What are the first things that have passed away?

4. What is necessary to drink of the water of life? Who will inherit all things? Who will not?

7. (20:1-3) Since chapter 12, three enemies have troubled the church. Which one remains unfettered until now?

8. For how long would he remain in this setting?

9. (20:4-6) Precisely who is it that lives and reigns with Christ during this period?

10. Like spiritual Israel in John's day, fleshly captive Israel in Ezekiel's was downtrodden and of low morale. Ezekiel's message, like this first resurrection, was intended to uplift. Consider Ezekiel 37:11-12 – is this resurrection intended to be literal or the figurative rebirth of their strength and cause?

11. (20:7-10) What happened to the deceiver and his allies after their release?

12. (20:11-14) According to what evidence are all men judged?

Lesson 2: The Seven Churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos and Thyatira

Revelation 2:1-29

1. To summarize the initial four of seven letters, read each passage and fill in the blanks of the table:

CHURCH	COMMENDATION	CRITICISM
Ephesus (2:1-7)		
Smyrna (2:8-11)		
Pergamos (2:12-17)		
Thyatira (2:18-29)		

2. (2:1-7) What does it mean to have left one's first love?

3. What is signified by eating of the tree of life in paradise?

4. (2:8-11) What does it mean to be in poverty, but still be rich?

5. (2:12-17) What terrifying event had taken place in Pergamos?

6. What two false doctrines were upheld in Pergamos? What does this passage teach generally regarding tolerance of error?

7. (2:18-29) Although Jezebel is likely a symbolic name for this person or movement, what was the result in the church at Thyatira?

8. Verse 27 is quoted from Psalm 2. Far from a millennial promise of dictatorship for Christians, it describes the gospel era and the rule of the Lord. According to Acts 13:29-39, what event fulfilled Psalm 2:7?

Lesson II: The Victory of God

Revelation 19:1-20:15

1. (19:1-10) Who is the Lamb's bride? In what is she attired?

2. What error does John make?

3. (19:11-16) Comparing verse 13 to John chapter one, who is the rider on the white horse? What emanates from his mouth? How does this compare to Hebrews 4:11-12?

4. Compare verse 16 to First Timothy 6:15. Is this title only now given to Jesus, or has he held it for some time?

5. (19:17-21) Whose return from Babylonian captivity did Ezekiel describe with nearly identical language (39:17-21)?

6. Into what are the beast and false prophet cast?

6. (18:9-18) Three groups stand by weeping, identified in verses 9, 11 and 17. Who are they?

7. (18:19-24) How complete was the harlot's downfall to be?

8. According to verses 20 and 24, why was this happening?

Lesson 3: The Seven Churches: Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea

Revelation 3:1-22

1. To summarize the last of the seven letters, read each passage and fill in the blanks of the table:

CHURCH	COMMENDATION	CRITICISM
Sardis (3:1-6)		
Philadelphia (3:7-13)		
Laodicea (3:14-22)		

2. (3:1-6) What was the problem with Sardis?

3. What would happen to those there who did not rediscover their zeal?

4. (3:7-13) According to verse 11, how is the Lord planning to come? Why wouldn't 1900 years and counting fulfill this promise to a beleaguered and anxious people?

5. What scriptural disharmony would be created if the sinners were worshiping the saints?

6. (3:14-22) How do Christians fall into the Laodiceans' fault?

7. How can they overcome it?

8. How did Jesus find the faith of the Laodiceans?

9. How does God chasten us (Hebrews 12:1-11)?

Lesson 10: The Fall of Babylon

Revelation 17:1-18:24

1. (17:1-9) What had intoxicated the harlot?

2. According to verse 9, what do her seven heads represent?

3. (17:10-18) Where does the symbolic beast fit into the sequence of succession?

4. In John's day, what great city ruled over the kings of the earth? According to verse 16, will the empire's provinces always remain loyal to the empire?

5. (18:1-8) What did the second voice from heaven implore?

6. (16:8-12) According to verse 9, what type of person was hurt by the fourth bowl of wrath?

7. What happened when the fifth bowl was poured out on the beast's throne? Who literally sat on this throne?

8. Following the dispensation of the sixth bowl, where could the kingdom have looked for invasion?

9. (16:13-16) To where are these gathered for battle? For what had this place become especially noted?

10. (16:17-21) What did the voice from the temple say?

Lesson 4: The Lamb and The Scrolls

Revelation 4:1-5:14

1. (4:1-5) Who sat on thrones around the central throne?

2. The number seven symbolizes completeness in Oriental numerology. What might the seven spirits of God then describe?

3. (4:6-11) Describe what each of the four creatures is like.

a.

b.

c.

d.

4. What was their occupation?

5. (5:1-7) What caused John to weep?

6. Who is finally located to open the scroll?

7. Why does the term *lamb* apply to him?

8. (5:8-14) How does the new song compare to First Peter 2:9-10?

Lesson 9: The Seven Bowls

Revelation 15:1-16:21

1. (15:1-4) In chapter four, the sea of glass separated the saints from God. Now, where are the saints? What change does this signify (Matthew 16:25)?

2. (15:5-8) What do the seven bowls contain? Who may enter the inner abode of God while they are meted out?

3. (16:1-7) Who were afflicted by the first bowl of wrath? What did worshiping the beast signify in that era?

4. In chapter 8:9, a third of the sea was killed by that symbol; how much is destroyed by the second bowl of wrath?

5. Judging from the context, who are made to taste their own medicine by the third bowl?

6. (14:6-13) As John wrote, the real nation of Babylon had been gone 500 years. This must be a symbolic reference to another. How was a new Babylon troubling God's kingdom?

7. Whose worship did the third angel forbid?

8. What does it mean to die in the Lord?

9. (14:14-20) Compare this judgment prophecy to Joel 3:13. Was Joel talking about the final judgment or a temporal visitation of divine wrath upon an enemy nation?

Lesson 5: The Seven Seals

Revelation 6:1-8:5

1. (6:1-2) What is revealed as the first seal is opened?

2. (6:3-4) What is revealed with the second seal?

3. (6:5-6) What is revealed in the third seal?

4. (6:7-8) What is revealed with the fourth horseman?

5. (6:9-11) Who is shown in the fifth seal and what is their plea? How much longer must they await justice?

6. (6:12-17) A number of recycled symbols are used in the sixth seal. The earthquake John promises is just like the one Isaiah promised in his prophecy. On what was this earthquake to symbolize justice in Isaiah 29:1, 6?

7. John's image of the darkened sun and bloody moon is like that of Isaiah 13:10. Consider verse 1 of that chapter. Was this the final judgment or a temporal one?

8. John says stars will fall. Again, Isaiah 13:10 uses this image. What did it symbolize there?

9. The apostle then says that the mountains and islands will shake. About whom did Ezekiel use the same symbols in 26:15-18 of his prophecy?

10. John says some will cry to be hidden in the rocks from the Lamb. How does Hosea's message about Israel's fall compare (see Hosea 10:8-9)?

11. (7:1-8) The angel of the East stalls the impending trial until something can take place? What is it? Compare to Ezekiel 9:1-4.

12. What was the number sealed? Who is God's Israel in New Testament times (Romans 2:28-29)? Is this number symbolic or a literal limitation?

13. (7:9-17) This second group, the multitude, is not sealed. Where are they standing and how are they attired? Why then would they not need the protection the first group did?

14. (8:1-5) What immediately follows opening the seventh seal?

Lesson 8: The War Against the Saints

Revelation 13:1-14:20

1. (13:1-4) If the dragon is working by the Roman Empire, to whom has it entrusted its throne and authority and enslaved the world in human deification? In other words, who is represented by the sea beast?

2. (13:5-10) Who are they that refuse to worship the sea beast?

3. (13:11-18) The second ally of the dragon is the land beast. According to verses 15-17, what was the symbolic creature's occupation in the world?

4. From verse 18, it is overwhelmingly obvious that this is not a literal beast. What is his number?

5. (14:1-5) How could the 144,000 have become the first fruits of redemption (see verse 4)?

5. What three terms are used in verse 9 to refer to the dragon?

6. According to Peter in Acts 2:29-31, what event placed Jesus on the throne of his kingdom? How long does the “devil” have to trouble the kingdom?

7. What does verse 11 imply happened to John’s brethren?

8. (12:13-17) Who, then, are the rest of her offspring?

Lesson 6: The Lamb and The Scrolls

Revelation 8:6-11:19

1. (8:6-12) What happened as each of the trumpets sounded?

1. First:

2. Second:

3. Third:

4. Fourth:

2. (9:1-21) What happened as the next two trumpets sounded?

1. Fifth:

2. Sixth:

3. (10:1-7) When will this period of delay end? How long were they supposed to wait (6:11)? Is it implied that some of their number would see this day or that none of them ever would?

4. (10:8-11) What did John do with the little book? What did Ezekiel do with his book (Ezekiel 2:8-3:14)?

5. This short passage, when compared with Ezekiel's difficult task, takes us back to Revelation 9:20-21. How had the people responded to warning?

6. (11:1-3) The measuring indicates God's protection. Who is protected under this symbol? Is the term "Gentiles" literal and total? Explain.

7. In Oriental numerology, two symbolizes power and strength. The two witnesses seem to symbolize the power of those standing for this prophecy and for God. How long will they stand?

8. (11:4-13) This passage shows the progress and fortune of the gospel in the days of the empire. Describe the three periods as either successful, hindered or revived.

1. First (11:4-6):

2. Second (11:7-10):

3. Third (11:11-13):

9. (11:14-19) What is the response to the seventh trumpet?

Lesson 7: The Struggle

Revelation 12:1-17

1. (12:1-6) Chapter 12 opens with the familiar New Testament image of a pious woman. Later, she will be the bride of Christ (22:17, 21:9). Who is she, then? Who was her counterpart in Isaiah 66:7-11?

2. Who is meant by the male child?

3. Who stood by to persecute her child at the birth? How impressive is his tail? Who was the church's great oppressor at this time?

4. (12:7-12) If the war in heaven is literal, what becomes of the security, comfort, holiness and assurance of God's abode?