

# The Book of Revelation - Notes

## Introduction

### Goals

- Perform an inductive study of Revelation
- Learn proper methods of interpretation
- Consider valid applications for today

### Introduction

- Author: John, the apostle
- Audience: The bond-servants of Jesus Christ
- Date: c.a. 95 A.D.
- Genre: apocalyptic prophecy, letter/narrative
- Outline
- Major Themes
- Principles of Interpretation

### Genre

- Apocalyptic literature reveals hidden secrets through heavenly beings using esoteric symbols (e.g., Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel)
- The focus of prophecy is revealing God's will for people rather than revealing the future
- Revelation is a prophetic letter and a story of the battle between good and evil

### Outline

- Introduction (1:1-20)
- The Seven Churches (2:1-3:22)
- The Seven Seals (4:1-8:5)
- The Seven Trumpets (8:6-11:19)
- The Woman & Dragon (12:1-17)
- The Two Beasts (13:1-18)
- The Great Harvest (14:1-20)
- The Seven Bowls (15:1-16:21)
- Babylon & The Beast (17:1-19:5)
- The Millennium (19:6-20:15)
- The New Jerusalem (21:1-22:5)
- Conclusion (22:6-22:21)

### Major Themes

- The sovereignty of God Almighty
  - The futility of Satan's rebellion
  - The need to repent and obey God
- Dr. Grant R. Osborne, Revelation Verse by Verse

### Four methods of interpretation

- Historicist: Covers the first century to the 2nd Coming
- Preterist: Fulfilled during the Roman Empire
- Idealist: Symbolic depiction of spiritual warfare, not literal
- Futurist: Mainly describes future events, the 2nd Coming

- Historicist: Covers the first century to the 2nd Coming

Pros: Revelation begins with a letter to first century churches and ends with the Second Coming

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Cons: There is no way to connect the letter to the seven churches with Church history

- Preterist: Fulfilled during the Roman Empire

Pros: Revelation begins with a letter specifically addressed to seven churches in the first century

Cons: Revelation ends with the Second Coming, which has not yet happened

- Idealist: Symbolic depiction of spiritual warfare, not literal

Pros: This approach is more devotional & practical, rather than wasting time on wild speculation

Cons: The letter to the seven churches deals with real people, practical matters & historical events; Jesus told John about “the things which must soon take place” (Rev 1:1 NASB)

- Futurist: Mainly describes future events, the 2nd Coming

Pros: Revelation predicts global catastrophes and the Second Coming, which have not yet happened

Cons: The letter to seven churches appears to be symbolic; there were more than seven churches at the time, the number seven is highly symbolic, and the letter appears to progress to the end time

### Conclusion

Each method is useful, but Futurist seems best. The letter to the seven churches has timeless truths for all ages, but it may also be sequential eras of Church history

### Principles of Interpretation

Prediction addiction is a spiritual pathology where people set specific dates for certain events based on questionable interpretations of prophecy

The purpose of Revelation is to encourage Christians to remain faithful, not to give us a specific a time table for end time events

### Principles of Interpretation

God gives understanding to those who obey Him

Ps 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.

Dan 12:10 Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.

### Principles of Interpretation

Commentaries are a blessing and a curse; carefully separate the wheat from the chaff

Scripture is the best commentary on Scripture, so let the Bible interpret the Bible whenever possible

Revelation contains up to 700 allusions to the Old Testament; understanding the Old Testament is the key to interpreting Revelation correctly

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### Principles of Interpretation

The Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha are not inspired, and they should not be used to interpret inspired Scripture

They only provide Jewish speculation from the intertestamental period about Old Testament prophecies and end time events

### Principles of Interpretation

Daniel provides the five key time periods:

Dan 9:24 - 70 heptads to finish God's plan, one left

Dan 9:27 - 7 year covenant, broken in the middle

Dan 12:7 - 1260 days of Beast authority, tribulation

Dan 12:11 - 1290 days abomination of desolation

Dan 12:12 - 1335 days consummation blessing

### Principles of Interpretation

Revelation uses literal & figurative language; visions are not always accurate descriptions of reality

Literal (adj) adhering to fact or the primary meaning of a term or expression ([www.Merriam-Webster.com](http://www.Merriam-Webster.com))

Figurative (adj) something that is not interpreted literally, but instead uses a symbol or a likeness ([www.yourdictionary.com](http://www.yourdictionary.com))

### The Book of Revelation

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."

—Dr. David L. Cooper (1886-1965),  
founder of The Biblical Research Society

The shorter and more famous version of this saying is: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense, lest it result in nonsense."

### Principles of Interpretation

There are several detours in narrative of Revelation, visions that do not follow the sequential, chronological order of the rest of the book:

- Rev 7:1-17
- Rev 10:1 - 11:14
- Rev 12:1 - 14:20
- Rev 17-18