

# REVELATION - THE FINAL VICTORY

## (Lesson 1)

### **Intro: Why study the book of Revelation, if it is so hard to understand?**

- Rom 15:4 - "everything that was written in the past was written to teach us so that through endurance and encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope"; understand the broad outlines and basic teachings which are clear, don't press every detail, like a parable these are visions - seven grand paintings depicting the whole history of the NT. Church; John in a vivid way helps us remember the words of Jesus that the gates of hell will not prevail against his church

### **1. Background**

Author: John in exile on the island of Patmos (a small island 50 miles southwest of Ephesus)

Date: 95 A.D. (latter part of Domitian's reign - 81-96)

Purpose: To comfort the infant church in their suffering and assure them of their final victory

#### Outline of the Book

Introduction: John's Vision of Jesus on the Island of Patmos (1: 1-20)

I. The Seven Letters to the Seven Churches (2:1 - 3:22)

II. The Vision of the Seven Seals (4:1 - 8:6)

III. The Vision of the Seven Trumpets (8:7 - II: 19)

IV. The Seven Visions (12: 1 - 15:8)

V. The Vision of the Seven Bowls (16:1-21)

VI. The Victory over the Antichrist (17: 1 - 19:21)

VII. The Victory over Satan (20: 1 - 22:7)

Conclusion (22:8-21)

### **2. The Introduction**

- The Title Page (1:1-3) - How did the revelation of this book take place? - *The Father gave it to Jesus which emphasized that this is the same message, given to an angel who gave it to John - it was what John saw (vision)*
- The Greeting (1 :4-8) - What do you notice about the form of the greeting? - *Author – John; recipients - 7 churches in Asia; grace and peace - - standard greeting from the Father, seven-fold Spirit (Isaiah 11:2), and from Jesus, the faithful witness (prophet), firstborn (priestly work), ruler (king)*

How is Jesus further described? Significance? - *who keeps on loving us, who freed us from our sins, and made us to be a kingdom and priests - N T. Israel (cf. Exodus 19:6); We are his, he is coming*

How does Jesus describe himself (v. 8)? Significance? - *Alpha & Omega - ruler over all; who is, was, and is to come - eternal God, same as Father; Almighty – all power, Lord of hosts; first direct message*

- The Vision of Christ (1 :9-20)

What does John mean when he says that he is a companion in the "suffering", "kingdom," and "patient endurance" of his fellow believers? - *3 important themes of the book - suffering, tribulation, hardships, persecution; kingdom - kingship, ruling, we rule with Christ, all things are for our good; patience - endure patiently, final victory is ours*

How does John being "in the Spirit" help us in our interpretation of this book? - *a spiritual state to see and hear things not normally heard and seen, state for visions; this is fantastic symbolism*

What impresses you about the vision John sees of Jesus? - *with his church, clothes of high priest, white purity, fiery eyes - see into men's hearts, feet?, voice - powerful Word, sword –law & gospel*

What truths about himself does Jesus share with John in the following:

"I am the First and the Last" - *true God, eternal Lord of history (Isaiah 41 :4; 44:6)*

"I am the Living One" - *death and resurrection for our salvation*

"I hold the keys of death and Hades" - *power over eternal damnation*

What are the seven golden lampstands? the seven stars? (v.20) - *seven churches & their pastors*

### 3. The First Vision: The Seven Letters

#### - The Letter to Ephesus (2:1-7) - A church beginning to decline

What was right with the church? What was wrong with the church? – *confessed Christ, true to his Word; lack of love for Christ and others, constant need for daily repentance or faith is lost*

Truth: Jesus wants a church in which all actions are based on love for Christ. (*recognize false teachers, do not join in fellowship with them*)

#### - The Letter to Smyrna (2:8-11) - A church strong in tribulation

What was right with the church? *despite poverty and persecution from Jews – they remained faithful*

Truth: Jesus wants a church willing to suffer for his name's sake. (*be willing to suffer persecution*)

#### - The Letter to Pergamum (2: 12-17) - A church lax in discipline

What was right with the church? What was wrong with the church? *center of emperor worship, first martyr – boiled to death, not renouncing faith; idol worship – immorality of Nicolaitans with it*

Truth: Jesus wants a church which exercises discipline against false doctrine. (*doctrinal discipline*)

#### - The Letter to Thyatira (2: 18-29) - A church with an emotional tendency

What was right with the church? What was wrong with the church? *deeds of love and faith, loving service; Jezebel brought Baal worship, woman and followers punished for immorality, idolatry*

Jesus wants a church which has both love and the truth. (*don't look for "secret truth", hold on to the gospel*)

#### - The Letter to Sardis (3:1-6) - A church about to die

What was wrong with the church? What was right with the church? (*reputation for active congregation, but not in the right "spiritual works" – perhaps more social gospel; whiteness of Christ's righteousness*)

Truth: Jesus wants a church which faithfully and eagerly works for him. (*preach the word, administer the sacraments, not social, economical or political involvement*)

#### - The Letter to Philadelphia (3:7-13) - A church with an open door

What was right with the church? *open door – for mission work or to receive God's blessings which he will pour out; little strength in not dying out, kept word, withstood persecution from Jews*

Jesus wants a church that faithfully uses the keys. (*office of the keys – confessing our sins, announcing forgiveness in Christ; used with counseling, even member to member*)

#### - The Letter to Laodicea (3:14-22) - A church that was sickening to Jesus

What was wrong with the church? *neither hot – zeal for Christ, nor cold – strong opposition, but lukewarm – indifference boasted of material wealth and prosperity; spiritually poor, naked and blind*

Jesus wants a church that realizes it is weak and needs him. (*problems today – materialism, humanism, lack of zeal for God's Word and the work of his kingdom – being lukewarm*)

**Conclusion: Jesus concluded each letter - "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."**

**What would Jesus say about our church?** *Commendation? Criticism? What would Jesus say about our own Christian life – Commendation? Criticism?*