

Revelation Introduction and Overview

A PERSONAL LETTER FROM JESUS CHRIST

Revelation introduces us to a **new phase** in the purpose of God. It is described in **Luke 21** as **“the times of the Gentiles”**. The Jewish era concluded. As a nation they failed and were sent into captivity in AD70. In the book of Revelation Jesus Christ now exhorts **Gentile** ecclesias, and his love for them. Jesus says, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me”* **Jn 10:27-28**. We hear his voice in the book of Revelation. Jesus also says, *“If a man love me, he will keep my words”* **Jn 14:23**. Jesus Christ introduces Revelation similarly: **Rev 1:3**. Revelation is the only book given personally by the Lord Jesus Christ. There is something very unique in this and it demands our attention. These are Christ’s **last words** to his friends. Last words are very special, as they were in the final days of Jacob, Moses and David.

THE PRINCIPLES OF REVELATION IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Jesus Christ gave us this final book and as such the principles therein reflect those in the 4 gospels. **John’s gospel** and **epistles** particularly have extensive themes which traverse the whole of Revelation. This will become clear as we progress through.

There is one particular event in the life of Christ that is **pivotal** to Revelation, in **Mt 26:63-64**. Caiaphas the High Priest says, *“Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God”*. **Jesus responds**, *“Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”* He could have simply said **“apocalypse!”** This statement launches us into Revelation! He is quoting from **Psalms 110** and **Daniel 7** about him **coming in clouds** to bring **judgment** upon his enemies. This also introduces us to the fact that **Jesus Christ is the true high priest** who in turn has **“made us kings and priests”**. He is also **Son of Man**.

IMPORTANT THEMES IN REVELATION

A significant theme is associated with the word **apocalypse** in **Rev 1:1**. This word is especially handpicked, and the use of this word elsewhere in the NT unlocks the secret to Revelation. **Apocalypse** (Gk. *apokalupsis*) here often relates to the **revealing of Christ and the Saints in glory**. They often speak of **trials** where believers are strengthened to overcome by visions of the Kingdom, eg. **1 Pet 1:7; 4:13**. A key verse is **Rom 8:19**: *“the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed (apocalypse) in us... for creation waits for the manifestation (apocalypse) of the sons of God.”*

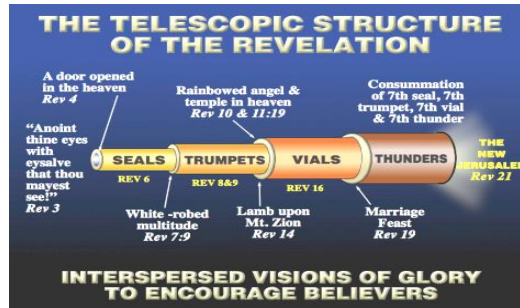
John was a living example of these themes: *“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ”* **Rev 1:9**. The **tribulation** of believers is a continual theme, eg. **Rev 7:14**. The **patience** of the saints is recorded 7x in the context of those martyred for their faith: **13:10** (see notes on **1:9**). To each of the 7 ecclesias, eternal life is promised to **him that overcometh**. The most dominant theme however is that of being a **witness** and a **martyr** (often translated **testimony**, from the same Greek root word). This is found 18x in Revelation. Further explanation of these themes are found in the notes on **Rev 1-3**.

This leads us to another important subject which Bro John Thomas writes about beautifully in Eureka Vol 1 (p.27-58). That is **the Apocalypse Rooted in the prophets**. The use of *apocalypse* in the NT reveals a **day** when the saints become a **light** to the nations, inflicting **judgment** on the wicked, at the **personal appearance of Christ and resurrected saints**. These subjects are deeply rooted throughout the OT prophets.

God ruling in the Kingdom of Men is the grand theme of Daniel: **Dan 4:17,25,32;5:21**. This continues in Revelation. Jesus and his followers rejected political power, preaching a **future Kingdom**. Jesus said to Pilate, *“My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight”* **Jn 18:36**. Also, *“You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above”* **Jn 19:10-11** cp. **Dan 8:24**. This is a fundamental principle: **Rev 12:17; 13:10**.

A CONTINUALLY UNFOLDING STORY

Revelation 1-3 forms the **foundation** to the book. The letters to the 7 ecclesias contain **promises which are expounded** further as the book unfolds. They also contain fundamental concepts which are developed for those keen to search (see **Prov 25:2**). It is most enlightening to also find that the events in the seals, trumpets and vials come about because of the **prayers of faithful saints**: **Rev 5:8; 6:9-10; 8:3-5**. This model is explained in the summary on the *Continuous-Historic Interpretation of Prophecy*.



THE SEED OF THE SERPENT v THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

Eve was deceived by the serpent: **Gen 3:6** cp. **1 Jn 2:15-17**. In **Gen 3:15** there is a promise of a Saviour, who was to defeat sin. Two opposing forces are revealed in this struggle: **1. The Seed of the serpent**: Those ruled by the natural impulses of human nature, and **2. The Seed of the woman**: those transformed by God’s Word.

The seed of the woman was fulfilled in Christ, and by extension it applies to all those who are **“in Christ”** by faith and baptism. These have **faith in God’s Word**: **Psa 119:97-105; Lk 4:4,8,10; Gal 3:6-9,26; Heb 11:1-6,13; 1 Jn 1:1; 5:4**.

The seed of the serpent was fulfilled in faithless individuals who **challenge God’s Word**: **Gen 3:1**. They also **deny its truth**: **Gen 3:4; Lk 3:7; Jn 7:7; Rom 8:7**. Throughout history, the seed of the serpent has been the overwhelming majority. For the seed of the woman it has been a struggle for survival. Consider **Rev 12:17**.

The Seed of the Serpent is symbolised by a series of **Beasts**, the Roman Empire: **Rev 11:7; 12:3-9; 13:1-18; 14:9; 16:10-13; 17:1-6; 19:19**. These are **in contrast** to the **4 living creatures** of the cherubim, Christ and the saints: **4:6-9; 5:8-10**.

THE GRAND THEME OF PROPHECY: BABYLON v ZION

In **Gen 4:6-8** Cain murders his brother **Abel**. This is a **type** of what was to unfold through history. When Cain murdered Abel he demonstrated this **enmity** between the 2 seeds. An interesting exposition of this is in **1 Jn 3:12-13**. Serpent enmity has also been represented by many **systems** of rule through the ages. These are the **Kingdom of Men**: **Dan 4:17,25,32; 5:21**. In **Gen 10:8-10** and **11:1-6** the seed of the serpent is organised into a political system based on the thinking of the flesh. The events of **Genesis 12** are in direct contrast to the events of **Genesis 10-11**. Here are **2 cities**. One is of men, the other is of God. Abraham was **called out from Babylon**: **Gen 12:1; Heb 11:8-16**. Revelation continues this story. Believers are called to **come out** from Babylon: **Rev 18:3-4**.

After the flood, two religious centres emerged, **Babel (Babylon)** and **Jerusalem (Zion)**. True worship is introduced in **Genesis 14** when Melchizedec, king of Salem (**Jerusalem**), priest of the Most High God, brings **bread and wine** and blesses Abram. Here in the Promised Land is revealed in a preliminary sense **the city of God**, upon which Abraham’s hopes were centred. This is the hope believers have grasped hold through the ages.

GENESIS AND REVELATION

These are book ends to God’s Word, holding together all God’s purpose. Genesis is the seed bed of the Bible, particularly **Gen 1-3**. Revelation brings God’s purpose to a conclusion by tying together all the Scriptural principles in one book.

Genesis

A natural creation **1:1 - 2:7**
The serpent speaks **3:1-5**
The curse is imposed **3:17**
Sorrow, death appear **3:16-19**
Tree of life access denied **3:24**
The first paradise closed **3:23**

Revelation

A spiritual creation **3:14**
It is restrained **20:2**
It is removed **22:3**
Sorrow, death taken away **21:4**
Access opened **2:7; 22:2**
Paradise is opened **21:25**

THE GLORIOUS CONCLUSION

Rev 20 The fulfilment of the **Promise in Eden**, which includes God crushing a final rebellion at the end of the millennium.
Rev 21 The fulfilment of the **Promises to Abraham** with a vision of the New Jerusalem. One nation (Israel) embraces all. This is the final destiny of all citizens of Zion.
Rev 22 The fulfilment of the **Promises to David**. Here is a glorious vision of Christ and the Saints in Mount Zion.

