

Pastor's Class #1: Intro to Revelation
June 5, 2016

Why Are You Here? Why am I Here?

The Pastoral Heart and Vision Behind This Study

- Overcoming either our obsessive preoccupation or fearful avoidance
- Reclaiming hope and a Christ-centered vision of the future

Plans, Logistics, Resources

- Meet now through the end of August (sans July 3rd)
- Attendance
- Format/Vision
- "Unveiled Hope" – Scotty Smith (available as PDF on the Four Oaks reg. page)
- D. A. Carson's lectures on Revelation; GK Beale's commentary on Revelation

Text

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near. John to the seven churches that are in Asia: (vs. 1-4a)

Our Goals for Tonight

- First few verses as a jumping off point
- Themes, Overview, Our Approach, etc.

Date, Context, and Circumstances of the Letter

- Author
- Audience
- Circumstances
- Circular Letter
- Date; Why this is important
- Purpose: Revelation 14: 7

Themes

- ☐ Suffering
- ☐ The Throne
- ☐ The Reality of Evil and Satan
- ☐ The New Creation
- ☐ Place of Christians in the World
- ☐ Hope

The Basic Approaches to Reading and Understanding Revelation

1. Preterist
2. Futurist
3. Historical
4. Idealist
5. Something Else

What Kind of Book is Revelation?

- Genre
- Apocalyptic

The Use of Symbols and Numbers: What's Literal, and What's Not?

- Revelation and the Old Testament
 - The meaning of the term "revelation" - "apocalypse"

The Greek word used in this phrase ("The Revelation"; "The Apocalypse") means to "signify" or to set forth in symbols what is to be communicated. As John wrote the Revelation he did so with a particular literary format in mind that was different from both the way he wrote his gospel and his three epistles. We must be very careful, therefore, not to be overly zealous in creating visual representations and in assigning meaning to every detail in Revelation.

- Cultural Comparisons and Cautions
- Principle and Example

"We are told in the book's introduction that the majority of the material in it is revelatory symbolism. Hence, the predominant manner by which to approach the material will be according to a non-literal interpretative method." - Beale, p. 52

Our Interpretive Framework

- An integrated approach: Redemptive-Historical Form of Modified Idealism
- Series of visions that re-tell or recapitulate the story and themes of redemption
- Key themes:
- Examples
- Revelation 11: 15; 20: 12-15

Notes on Text (vs. 1-3)

- "Revelation of Jesus Christ"
- "Must soon take place"
- Daniel 2: 28,29; Hebrews 1: 1-2
- What's the central charge of this letter?

The Main Thought to Leave with Here Tonight:

As John Stott put it so brilliantly, we do not need "a detailed forecast of future events which has to be laboriously deciphered, but (rather) a vision of Jesus Christ, to cheer the faint and encourage the weary. John's desire is not to satisfy our curiosity about the future but to stimulate our faithfulness in the present." He is writing to encourage, not to confound! "Grace and peace", not "perplexity and puzzle" should come from studying the last book of the Bible. "Blessed", not "left scratching their heads", are the ones who read and hear and take to heart these words (Rev. 1:3). Again, let us remember, this is a revealing not a concealing! (Chapter 1 of "Unveiled Hope", p. 26)