

Twelve Lessons

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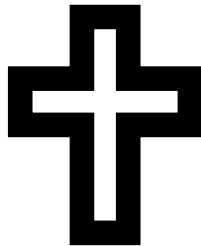
Revelation I

(1:1 - 3:22)

Compiled and Written

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\$6.00

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THE BLESSING TO THE BELIEVER – LESSON 1

Introduction: To many Revelation is confusing, but to those who know its author, it is the capstone of Divine inspiration.

1. The Bible is an unfolding revelation that originates in Genesis and consummates in Revelation.
2. This Book has been hated by Religion. Heretics have tried their best to have it taken from the Canon of the Bible.
3. What has been the controversy? Namely, Rev. 20:1-6 which describes the coming 1,000 year reign of Christ, commonly called the Millennium.
4. Rev. 20:1-6 teaches that there will never be “peace on earth” until He returns in power.
5. Rev. 20:1-6 teaches that all governments and religions will ultimately be destroyed and replaced with a Theocracy (a Divine Government).
 - a. Three types of theology regarding the Millennium: Post-Millennialist, Pre-Millennialist, and A-Millennialist.
 - b. The correct Theology is the Pre-Millennial view.
6. Four Schools of Interpretation – Futurists, Preterist, Spiritual, and Historical.
 - a. Preterists teach that this Book was fulfilled during the 1st Century. They try to put the writing of the book at 70 A.D. during the reign of Nero and the judgments could then be applied to the destruction of Jerusalem. But since it was written between 91 A.D. and 96 A.D. during the reign of Domitian, the Roman Emperor, the judgments could not be the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - b. Spiritualists teach that this Book simply shows the struggles between Christ and Satan.
 - c. The Historical School teaches this Book as a history of the world with most of it already fulfilled.
 - d. Futurists teach that Chapters 2-3 are the Church Age, Chapters 4-19 are to be fulfilled as Daniel’s 70th Week. Chapter 20 describes the 1,000 year reign and Chapters 21-22 describe the New Heaven and the New Earth.
7. Interesting to note that the Manuscript “B” (Vaticanus) does not contain the Book of Revelation because Origen, Eusebius, and the Catholic Hierarchy do not believe God will grapple the governmental reign of the world out of the Catholic Church’s hands.
8. The Book is both Literal and Symbolic. It must be translated Literal whenever possible and the Symbolism must be interpreted with “like” Symbols in the Word of God.
 - a. Rev. 7:1 – “*sea*” is literal and is water.
 - b. Rev. 13:1 – “*beast rise up out of the sea*” – Since we know the “beast” symbolizes the “Antichrist” so the “sea” must be symbolic. Isa. 57:20 – “*the wicked are like the troubled sea.*” Thus the Antichrist is coming to power out of wicked humanity.

Lesson Goals:

1. Examine the unfolding of the book of Revelation.
2. To research the author of the book of Revelation.
3. Analyze the blessings of reading and studying the book of Revelation.

Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Millennium – From Lat. *mille*, “thousand,” *annum*, “year”; a theological term based upon Revelation 20, indicating the thousand-year period of Christ's future reign on the earth in connection with the establishment of the kingdom over Israel (Acts 1:6).
2. Revelation – (Grk. *apokalupsis*, an “uncovering or unveiling”). A term expressive of the fact that God has made known to men truths and realities that men could not discover for themselves.
3. Martyr – A witness. Because the early Christians frequently suffered for their faith, the word martyr soon came to mean one who suffered or died because of his witness to Christ. Thus the apostle Paul calls Stephen a martyr (Acts 22:20) and the Book of Revelation mentions “the martyrs of Jesus” (17:6).
4. Prophecy – Predictions about the future and the end-time; special messages from God, often uttered through human spokesmen, which indicate the divine will for mankind on earth and in heaven.

I. THE BOOK OF REVELATION OUTLINED

A. Practically

1. The Introduction – Rev. 1:1-11
2. The Past Described – Rev. 1:12-20
3. The Present Described – Rev. 2:1 – 3:22
4. The Future Described – Rev. 4:1 – 22:20

B. Prophetically

1. Pre-Millennial (Chapt. 1-20)
2. Millennial (Chapt. 20)
3. Post-Millennial (Chapt. 20:7-22:6)

II. THE BLESSING TO THE BELIEVER – The Bible is not a blessing to the lost as the book of Revelation is not a blessing to the lost. Revelation is a mystery to the lost. A mystery in the Bible is a previously hidden truth now divinely revealed. Matt. 11:25 – *“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”* There is a reason. I Cor. 2:14 – *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*

A. The Revelation – 1:1 – Notice singular not plural “Revelations.”

1. Correct Title – “The Revelation (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ,” not St. John the Divine. It is the common rule with Scripture names, to express the substance of the things to which they are applied.
 - a. Apokalupsis – To uncover, reveal, to lift up like a curtain, unveil like a picture or a statue.
 - b. The world doesn’t mind Christ in a crib or on a cross, but they despise Him with a crown.
 - c. The Four Gospels introduce Jesus as the “Incarnate Lamb Rejected” while the Revelation introduces Jesus as the “Glorified Lamb Reigning.” The central figure is the Lamb of God.
 - d. The Lamb is the Lord
 - 1) The Lord of the Church – Chapters 1-3
 - 2) The Lord of the Creation – Chapters 4-19
 - 3) The Lord of the Court – Chapters 19-20
 - 4) The Lord of the Consummation – Chapters 21-22
2. Correct Transcript – 1:1 – Many say, “I can’t understand the Book of Revelation. They should for Rev. 22:10 says, *“Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book.”* There’s a reason.
 - a. Shew unto his servants – *“shew”* – “exhibit publicly” unto his servants (doulos – slaves).
 - 1) There are 5 Greek words in the N.T. translated “servant.” A servant can be forced, hired, elected, positioned, or free choice. Servant here is doulos – a bond slave – free but choosing to remain. This servant was in a permanent relationship to his master which only death could break.
 - 2) *“Things which must shortly come to pass”* – According to God’s clock not ours. The Greek word “shortly” is *en tachei*, meaning “must come to pass with rapidity.” It’s the same Greek word from which we get the word “tachometer” – the instrument used to determine the speed of an engine. Thus, the Lord is telling us in this verse that when end time events begin to happen, they’ll increase their rpms and happen with great rapidity.
 - 3) In his Gospel of John reaches farther back into eternity than any other Bible writer (John 1:1-3) and in Revelation he reaches farther on into eternity than any other writer (Rev. 21,22).
 - b. *“Sent... by his angel”* – “Sent” (apostello – a commissioned person – sent out – a missionary).
 - 1) NOTE: No other book in the Bible has been commissioned by God except this Book.
 - 2) This angel was *“sent”* (commissioned with all the rights, power, and authority of God). The same word is in John 1:6 – *“There was a man sent from God.”*
 - c. *“Signified... by his angel”* – “Signified” – written with marks, symbols, signs, or tokens. “Sent” suits the literal interpretation and “signified” suits the symbolic interpretation of the Book of Revelation showing what its manner of interpretation should be. Note: Every symbol used in Revelation is explained or alluded to somewhere else in the Bible. The noun, in Revelation, is translated sign (15:1); wonder (12:1,3); and miracle (19:20). This is the same word John used in his Gospel for the miracles of Jesus Christ, for His miracles were events that carried a deeper spiritual message than simply the display of power.
 - d. *“Signified...unto his servant John”* – John gives His name because a “prophecy” requires a “prophet” who is to be held accountable if the prophecy does not come to pass (Deut. 18:20-22). Five times (Rev. 1:1, 4, 9; 21:2; 22:8) John’s name appears in this Book.
 - 1) Note: This is not John’s Revelation. Notice the flow of delivery: God – Christ – angel – John. The true origin of the book of Revelation is God.
 - 2) John wrote his Gospel that we might believe, his epistles that we might be sure, and the Book of Revelation that we might be ready.

B. The Recorder – vs. 2 – *“Who bare record”* – Record is (martureo) witness. Our word “martyr” comes from the same word.

1. Witness to the Prophetic Word – *“of the word of God”* – John knew the Written Word. John was well acquainted with O.T. Prophecy.
2. Witness to the Personal Word – *“of the testimony of Jesus Christ”* – John knew the Living Word. I John 1:1 – *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have Seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.”*
3. Witness to the Predicted Word – *“and of all things that he saw”* – John knew the Revealed Word.
 - a. The word “saw” (*eidon*) implies not only the mere act of looking, but the actual perception.
 - b. God gave him the ability to understand what he was seeing. The word “saw” is used 45 times.

C. The Reader – vs. 3 – *“Blessed”* (This is not a general blessing to everyone). I interpret this “blessing” as a three-fold blessing only to someone who is intending to do all three. Note: There are seven “blessings” in Revelation: 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14. The word “blessed” is one which denotes the blessed condition of a person because of the inner spiritual life of the person involved. It is parallel with the word used in Psalm 1 to describe the godly man. It is the same word used by Jesus in the Beatitudes.

1. Personal Blessing – *“Blessed is he that readeth”* – The word “read” means to “read out loud.”
 - a. “Readeth” – *anaginoskon* – Luke 4:16 – The Synagogue had an official position.
 - b. The Early Church adopted this Jewish custom of reading the Scripture (II Cor. 3:14). Where is the “church reader” in our churches today?
2. Public Blessing – *“and they that hear the words of this prophecy”* – “Hear” (*akouo*) is not just to give an audience to but to also understand and attend to (Matt. 13:11-16). Many hear with the natural ear but the blessing comes when “you have to have an ear to hear.”
3. Private Blessing – *“and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”*
 - a. “Keep” – *teros* – to guard (from loss or injury) by keeping the eye upon. This statement means to make a rule of faith and practice. James 1:22 – *“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”*
 - b. “Written” – *grapho* – to impress deeply, fix indelibly, established permanently. Here is another verse authenticating the Eternity of the Word of God.

D. The Reason – *“for the time is at hand”* – I Cor. 7:29 – *“the time is short”*

1. These expressions are to be understood as to how God computes time rather than man’s computation. The word “time” is not *chronos* (regular word for clock-time) but *kairos*, referring to a fixed season.
2. So when the events found in the Book of Revelation begin to take place, you know the end is drawing near. The events in the Revelation are sure and when they begin to take place, they will take place, speedily.
3. One of those events is the “luke-warm” church, Laodicea in Rev. 3:17.