

Introduction to Revelation

1. The Importance Of Studying Revelation

- A. II Tim 3:16 - "All Scripture ... is profitable ... that the man of God may be complete."
1. A deep and abiding conviction of this truth creates a thirst which drives us to the Scriptures for satisfaction.
 2. We are not complete until we have a working knowledge of **all** of God's word.
 3. We cannot avoid that which is difficult by saying, "Nothing in Revelation is essential to my salvation." You could eliminate many other books of the Bible by this rationale.
- B. Everybody else is reading Revelation (or reading books about Revelation or listening to their preachers teach from it), so we must be prepared to answer false doctrine.
- C. It is my hope that 13 weeks from now we will all have a sense of reward and accomplishment because we did what was right and studied a difficult book.

2. Overview of Revelation



- B. A book of conflict:
1. Satan, the archenemy of God, cannot destroy Him in heaven. His only alternative is to attack God's power and kingdom upon the earth - the church.
 2. Satan raises the Roman Empire for this task, even as he has used other empires (Egypt, Philistia, Assyria, Babylon, the Seleucids, the Ptolemies, etc.) to try and foil God's scheme by destroying the Jews.
 3. God will let Rome throw all of its economic, military, and political might against the church, even to the point of letting individuals be martyred.
 4. When it serves His will, He will destroy Rome and vindicate both His people and His rule.
 5. Finally, the church is victorious, the gospel is preached, and Rome is in ruins.

C. While the specific events alluded to are in the past, the principles which underlie them are enduring:

1. Jesus rules the nations with a rod of iron - 1:5; 2:27; 11:15; 19:15.
2. The prayers of God's people will be answered and their patience rewarded.
3. Christians must not abandon Christ and join the worldly forces.
4. Christians have nothing to fear - even death. They will not lose their reward.

3. The Difficulty of Revelation

A. The literary style:

1. Apocalyptic literature - The poetic expressiveness of trial and stress.
2. We are not in a crisis situation, so the style of writing does not engage our emotions.

B. OT imagery:

1. So many images in Revelation find their roots in the OT apocalyptic books: Zechariah, Ezekiel, parts of Isaiah, and especially Daniel.
2. A thorough background in the OT will become crucial in our future study of the book in order to gain a comprehensive understanding.

C. A book of pictures rather than logical argumentation.

4. As We Study ...

- A. Remember, this is a **survey**. 13 weeks is too short to get bogged down with the details of all these images.
- B. Don't allow yourself to get discouraged by the things you don't understand. Our goal should be to come out of the study knowing more than when we went in. Let's become familiar with the book, learn some of the basics, and save the rest for later.
- C. Remember the figurative nature of the images; very little in Revelation is literal. We will have the tendency to jump into literal applications when something in Revelation **sounds like** something else in the NT.