

**Notes & Outlines**

# **REVELATION**

**Dr. J. Vernon McGee**

# REVELATION

**WRITER:** John the apostle

**DATE:** About A.D. 95

**THEORIES OF INTERPRETATION:** There have been many approaches to this book, but these can be divided into four major systems (Broadus lists seven theories of interpretation; Trigelles lists three):

- 1. Preterist theory:** All of Revelation has been fulfilled in the past. It had to do with local references in John's day. It had to do with the days of either Nero or Domitian. The view was held by Renan and most German scholars, also by Elliott.
- 2. Historical theory:** Fulfillment of Revelation is going on in history, and Revelation is the prophetic history of the church, according to this theory.
- 3. Historical-spiritual theory:** This theory is a refinement of the historical theory and was advanced by Sir William Ramsay. It states that the two beasts are Imperial and Provincial Rome. The point of the book is to encourage Christians. According to this theory, Revelation has been largely fulfilled and there are spiritual lessons for the church today. Amillennialism, for the most part, has adopted this view. It dissipates and defeats the purpose of the book.
- 4. Futurist theory:** This theory holds that the Book of Revelation is primarily prophetic and yet future, especially from Revelation 4 on to the end of the book. This is the view of all premillennialists and is the view which we accept and present.

## STRIKING FEATURES:

- It is the only prophetic book in the New Testament (in contrast to seventeen prophetic books in the Old Testament).
- John, the writer, reaches farther back into eternity past than any other writer in Scripture (John 1:1-3). He reaches farther on into eternity future in the Book of Revelation.
- Special blessing is promised the readers of this book (Revelation 1:3). Likewise, a warning is issued to those who tamper with its contents (Revelation 22:18, 19).
- Revelation is not a sealed book (Revelation 22:10). Contrast Daniel 12:9. It is a revelation (apocalypse), which is an unveiling.
- It is a series of visions, expressed in symbols.
- This book is like a great Union Station where the great trunk lines of

prophecy come in from other portions of Scripture. Revelation does not originate but consummates. It is imperative to a right understanding of the book to be able to trace each great subject of prophecy from the first reference to the terminal. At least ten great subjects of prophecy find their consummation here:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:15)
2. The church (Matthew 16:18)
3. The resurrection and translation of saints (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52)
4. The Great Tribulation (Deuteronomy 4:30, 31)
5. Satan and evil (Ezekiel 28:11-18)
6. The “man of sin” (Ezekiel 28:1-10)
7. The course and end of apostate Christendom (Daniel 2:31-45; Matthew 13)
8. The beginning, course, and end of the “times of the Gentiles” (Daniel 2:37; Luke 21:24)
9. The second coming of Christ (Jude 14, 15)
10. Israel’s covenants (Genesis 12:1-3), five things promised Israel

**KEY VERSES:** Revelation 1:18, 19

*I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hades [hell] and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.*

**OUTLINE:**

- I. The PERSON of Jesus Christ — Christ in glory, Chapter 1**
  - A. Title of the Book, v. 1**
  - B. Method of revelation, v. 2**
  - C. Beatitude of Bible study, v. 3**
  - D. Greetings from John the writer, and from Jesus Christ in heaven, vv. 4-8**
  - E. The post-incarnate Christ in a glorified body, judging His church (the great High Priest in the Holy of Holies), vv. 9-18**
  - F. Time division of the contents of the apocalypse, v. 19**
  - G. Interpretation of the seven stars and seven lampstands, v. 20**
- II. The POSSESSION of Jesus Christ — the church in the world, Chapters 2, 3**
  - A. Letter of Christ to the church in Ephesus, Chapter 2:1-7**
  - B. Letter of Christ to the church in Smyrna, Chapter 2:8-11**
  - C. Letter of Christ to the church in Pergamum, Chapter 2:12-17**
  - D. Letter of Christ to the church in Thyatira, Chapter 2:18-29**

- E. **Letter of Christ to the church in Sardis**, Chapter 3:1-6
- F. **Letter of Christ to the church in Philadelphia**, Chapter 3:7-13
- G. **Letter of Christ to the church in Laodicea**, Chapter 3:14-22

### III. **The PROGRAM of Jesus Christ — the scene in heaven,**

Chapters 4 — 22

#### A. **The church in heaven with Christ**, Chapters 4, 5

*...I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.* (John 14:3)

1. Throne of God, 4:1-3
2. Twenty-four elders, 4:4, 5
3. Four living creatures, 4:6-11
4. Book with seven seals, 5:1-4
5. Christ: the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb that has been slain, 5:5-10
6. A myriad of angels of heaven joins the song of praise and redemption, 5:11, 12
7. Universal worship of the Savior and Sovereign of the universe, 5:13, 14

#### B. **The Great Tribulation in the world**, Chapters 6 — 18

1. Opening of the **seven-sealed book**, Chapters 6 — 8:1
  - a. Opening of the first seal, 6:1, 2  
(Rider on a white horse)
  - b. Opening of the second seal, 6:3, 4  
(Rider on a red horse)
  - c. Opening of the third seal, 6:5, 6  
(Rider on a black horse)
  - d. Opening of the fourth seal, 6:7, 8  
(Rider on a pale horse)
  - e. Opening of the fifth seal, 6:9-11  
(Prayer of the martyred remnant)
  - f. Opening of the sixth seal, 6:12-17  
(The Day of Wrath has come — beginning of the last half of the Great Tribulation)
  - g. Interlude, Chapter 7
    - (1) Reason for the interlude between the 6th and 7th seals, vv. 1-3
    - (2) Remnant of Israel sealed, vv. 4-8
    - (3) Redeemed multitude of Gentiles, vv. 9-17
  - h. Opening of the seventh seal, 8:1  
(Introduction of seven trumpets)
2. Blowing of the **seven trumpets**, Chapters 8:2 — 11:19
  - a. Angel at the altar with censer of incense, 8:2-6

## **The Seven Churches**

**Ephesus means full-purposed or desirable, The Loveless Church:** Revelation 2:1-7

The people in Ephesus were hard-working people who endured and hated evil. From the outside, they may have looked like they had it together but their hearts were wrong. The 2 greatest commandments are to love God and love people (Mark 12:30-31) and Ephesus was missing this single greatest component of all Christianity. Love.

Ephesus pictures the first few years of church history before the persecutions began to be severe.

**Smyrna**, speaks of bitterness or suffering. **The Persecuted Church:** Revelation 2:8-11

There was no rebuke for this persecuted church. Although they were continually under physical hardship, the people of Smyrna were promised that they would not be hurt by the second death. They were encouraged to stay faithful, even when facing physical death.

**Pergamum or Pergamos means mixed marriage, The Worldly Church:** Revelation 2:12-17

This church was the tolerant church. Although they refused to deny Christ, they allowed sin like idols, immorality, cults and heresies to remain among them. God intends that the church shall be the bride of Christ (see 2 Cor. 11:2-3), but about a.d. 300 the Roman Emperor Constantine said that he was going to be a Christian, so he stopped the persecutions and commanded everyone in his empire to accept Christianity. He offered to build beautiful churches and to give a great deal of money to them.

The church leaders accepted his offer, for it sounded very fine. Thousands of heathen priests who would have been out of office pretended to obey the command. Without any real repentance from sin or belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour, millions of heathen began to call themselves Christians. The church thought how wonderful it was that all these people were becoming Christians.

They gave up looking for the early return of Jesus and settled down to enjoy heathen pleasures and power in this world. It was as if the church became "married" to the "world. Many heathen customs and ceremonies soon became a part of church services almost without the true Christians realizing it. The real truth of the gospel was almost hidden under a mass of ceremony, untruth, and traditions of men.

**Thyatira means continual sacrifice, The Wrong Doctrine Church:** Revelation 2:18-29

The church of Thyatira had love, faith and good works. They were even patient people who were eager to grow. Where they fell short was their doctrine, which was infiltrated by idolatry, sexual sin and pagan traditions. Ignoring the fact that the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross was sufficient to forgive his sin (Heb. 10:12). In prophetic-historic

meaning, Thyatira speaks of the period in which the rule over the church was given to one man as its head around a.d. 500. Christ is the Head of the church, and no man has a right to usurp His authority (see 1 Tim. 2:5).

**Sardis means those escaped, The Spiritually Dead Church: Revelation 3:1-6**

Almost all of the people in the church of Sardis had fallen asleep spiritually, except for a small remnant of believers. The Dead Church was encouraged to kindle and revive any small bit of faith they had left. The message describes those in the whole \*church who protested against erroneous teaching begun in Pergamos and carried on in Thyatira, and these protesters tried to reform the church. The protest started about a.d. 1500 when the Spirit of God began to raise up, from time to time, servants of His to bring to light many truths of the Bible, which had been lost to the church as a whole by being buried under untruths. The danger into which the Protestant churches fell was of professing to believe all the doctrines of the Bible but of failing to carry them out in their own lives. This is why the Lord said to them: 'Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead' (Rev. 3:1).

**Philadelphia brotherly love, The Spiritually Alive Church: Revelation 3:7-13**

Philadelphia did well. There was no rebuke for this church of faith. They kept the name of Jesus and never denied it. There is a promise in the kingdom of heaven for these Christians. During this period, following the Reformation (Sardis); the Holy Spirit began to revive many believers and to draw them closer together in brotherly love, even though Europe as a whole was being torn apart by fearful religious wars. The Holy Spirit could do this because the people truly loved the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word. The test is "Thou ... hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" (Rev.3:8).

**Laodicea means the people speak, The Lukewarm Church: Revelation 3:14-22**

The church of Laodicea, unlike Philadelphia, only received rebuke. They were neither hot nor cold as we read in Revelation. Their reliance on riches and things of this world resulted in a lukewarm, halfway-in type of Christianity. The city of Laodicea was noted for its warm springs, pleasant for bathing but sickening to drink, and it is a picture of the church just before her Lord returns. Though some were warmly devoted and some utterly cold, most were the mixture of lukewarmness that is disgusting to the Lord.

**Bonus! Patmos**, Where John Received Revelation: The book of Revelation, written by John describes the apocalyptic ruin of the world and the triumphant battle and return of Jesus Christ. This island is best known as the location where John actually received the visions that led to him writing the book. The actual cave where historians believe John was when receiving Revelation can be seen today.



**Map of the  
7 Churches  
of Asia**  
**Revelation 2 & 3**

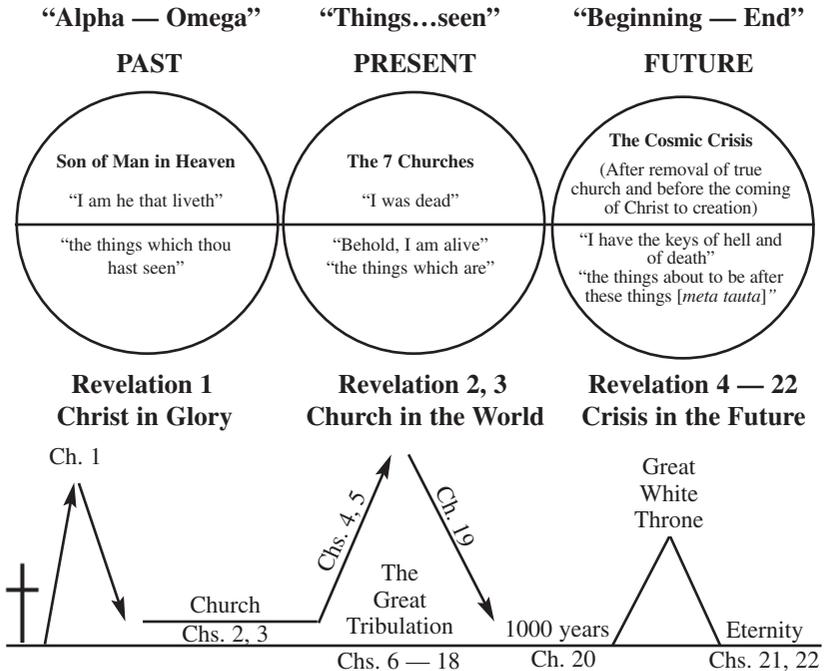
- b. First trumpet — trees burnt, 8:7
- c. Second trumpet — seas become blood, 8:8, 9
- d. Third trumpet — fresh water becomes bitter, 8:10, 11
- e. Fourth trumpet — sun, moon, stars smitten, 8:12, 13
- f. Fifth trumpet — fallen star and plague of locusts, 9:1-12
- g. Sixth trumpet — angels loosed at river Euphrates, 9:13-21
- h. Interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets, 10:1 — 11:14
  - (1) The strong angel with the little book, 10:1-7
  - (2) John eats the little book, 10:8-11
  - (3) Date for the ending of “the times of the Gentiles,” 11:1, 2
  - (4) Duration of the prophesying of the two witnesses, 11:3-12
  - (5) Doom of the second woe — great earthquake, 11:13, 14
- i. Seventh trumpet — end of Great Tribulation and opening of temple in heaven, 11:15-19
- 3. Seven performers during the Great Tribulation, Chapters 12, 13**
  - a. The woman — Israel, 12:1, 2
  - b. The red dragon — Satan, 12:3, 4
  - c. The child of the woman — Jesus Christ, 12:5, 6
  - d. Michael, the archangel, wars with the dragon, 12:7-12
  - e. The dragon persecutes the woman, 12:13-16
  - f. Remnant of Israel, 12:17
  - g. Wild beast out of the sea — a political power and a person, 13:1-10
    - (1) Wild beast, description, vv. 1, 2
    - (2) Wild beast, death-dealing stroke, v. 3
    - (3) Wild beast, deity assumed, vv. 4, 5
    - (4) Wild beast, defying God, vv. 6-8
    - (5) Wild beast, defiance denied to anyone, vv. 9, 10
  - h. Wild beast out of the earth — a religious leader, 13:11-18
    - (1) Wild beast, description, v. 11
    - (2) Wild beast, delegated authority, vv. 12-14
    - (3) Wild beast, delusion perpetrated on the world, vv. 15-17
    - (4) Wild beast, designation, v. 18
- 4. Looking to the end of the Great Tribulation, Chapter 14**
  - a. Picture of the lamb with the 144,000, vv. 1-5
  - b. Proclamation of the everlasting gospel, vv. 6, 7
  - c. Pronouncement of judgment on Babylon, v. 8
  - d. Pronouncement of judgment on those who received mark of the beast, vv. 9-12

- e. Praise for those who die in the Lord, v. 13
- f. Preview of Armageddon, vv. 14-20
- 5. Pouring out of the seven mixing bowls of wrath, Chapters 15, 16**
  - a. Preparation for final judgment of the Great Tribulation, 15:1 — 16:1
    - (1) Tribulation saints in heaven worship God because He is holy and just, 15:1-4
    - (2) Temple of the tabernacle opened in heaven that seven angels, having seven golden bowls, might proceed forth, 15:5 — 16:1
  - b. Pouring out of the first bowl, 16:2
  - c. Pouring out of the second bowl, 16:3
  - d. Pouring out of the third bowl, 16:4-7
  - e. Pouring out of the fourth bowl, 16:8, 9
  - f. Pouring out of the fifth bowl, 16:10, 11
  - g. Pouring out of the sixth bowl, 16:12
  - h. Interlude: kings of inhabited earth proceed to Har-Magedon, 16:13-16
  - i. Pouring out of the seventh bowl, 16:17-21
- 6. The two Babylons judged, Chapters 17, 18**
  - a. The apostate church in the Great Tribulation, Chapter 17
    - (1) Great harlot riding the wild beast, vv. 1-7
    - (2) Wild beast destroys the great harlot, vv. 8-18
  - b. Political and commercial Babylon judged, Chapter 18
    - (1) Announcement of fall of commercial and political Babylon, vv. 1-8
    - (2) Anguish in the world because of Babylon's judgment, vv. 9-19
    - (3) Anticipation of joy in heaven because of judgment on Babylon, vv. 20-24
- C. Marriage of the Lamb and return of Christ in judgment, Chapter 19**
  - 1. Four hallelujahs, vv. 1-6
  - 2. Bride of the Lamb and marriage supper, vv. 7-10
  - 3. Return of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, vv. 11-16
  - 4. War of Armageddon, vv. 17, 18
  - 5. Hell opened, vv. 19-21
- D. Millennium, Chapter 20**
  - 1. Satan bound 1000 years, vv. 1-3
  - 2. Saints of the Great Tribulation reign with Christ 1000 years, vv. 4-6

3. Satan loosed after 1000 years, vv. 7-9
4. Satan cast into lake of fire and brimstone, v. 10
5. Setting of Great White Throne where lost are judged and follow Satan into lake of fire and brimstone, vv. 11-15

**E. Entrance into eternity; eternity unveiled, Chapters 21, 22**

1. New heaven, new earth, New Jerusalem, 21:1, 2
2. New era, 21:3-8
3. New Jerusalem, description of the eternal abode of the bride, 21:9-21
4. New relationship — God dwelling with man, 21:22, 23
5. New center of the new creation, 21:24-27
6. River of the water of life and tree of life, 22:1-5
7. Promise of return of Christ, 22:6-16
8. Final invitation and warning, 22:17-19
9. Final promise and prayer, 22:20, 21



## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Barnhouse, Donald Grey. *Revelation, an Expository Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971.
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Revelation*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1915.
- Hoyt, Herman A. *The Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ*. Winona Lake, Indiana: Brethren Missionary Herald, 1966.
- Ironside, H. A. *Lectures on the Book of Revelation*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., 1960. (Especially good for young converts)
- Larkin, Clarence. *The Book of Revelation*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Published by the author, 1919. (Includes fine charts)
- Lindsey, Hal. *There's a New World Coming*. Santa Ana, California: Vision House Publishers, 1973.
- McGee, J. Vernon. *Reveling Through Revelation*. 2 vols. Pasadena, California: Thru the Bible Radio Network, 1979.
- Newell, William R. *The Book of Revelation*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1935.
- Ryrie, Charles C. *Revelation*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1968. (A fine, inexpensive survey)
- Seiss, J. A. *The Apocalypse, Lectures on the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957.
- Strauss, Lehman. *The Book of Revelation*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1964.
- Walvoord, John F. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966. (Excellent comprehensive treatment)

*These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.*



### THRU THE BIBLE RADIO NETWORK

*Taking the whole Word to the whole world for over 60 years!*

U.S. Address: Box 7100, Pasadena, California 91109-7100

Phone: (800) 65-BIBLE Fax: (626) 449-4430

Website: [www.ttb.org](http://www.ttb.org)

(16222-3/10)