

A Study of the Book of . . .

Revelation

**Chapter by chapter
and verse by verse . . .**

**Revelation made simple and
easy to understand**

This last book of the Bible bears the title "*Revelation*," meaning, "*unveiling*," yet, it presents visions of:

- horses racing across the land
- breaking of seals on a mysterious scroll
 - angels sounding trumpets
 - pouring out vials
 - and dragons and beasts

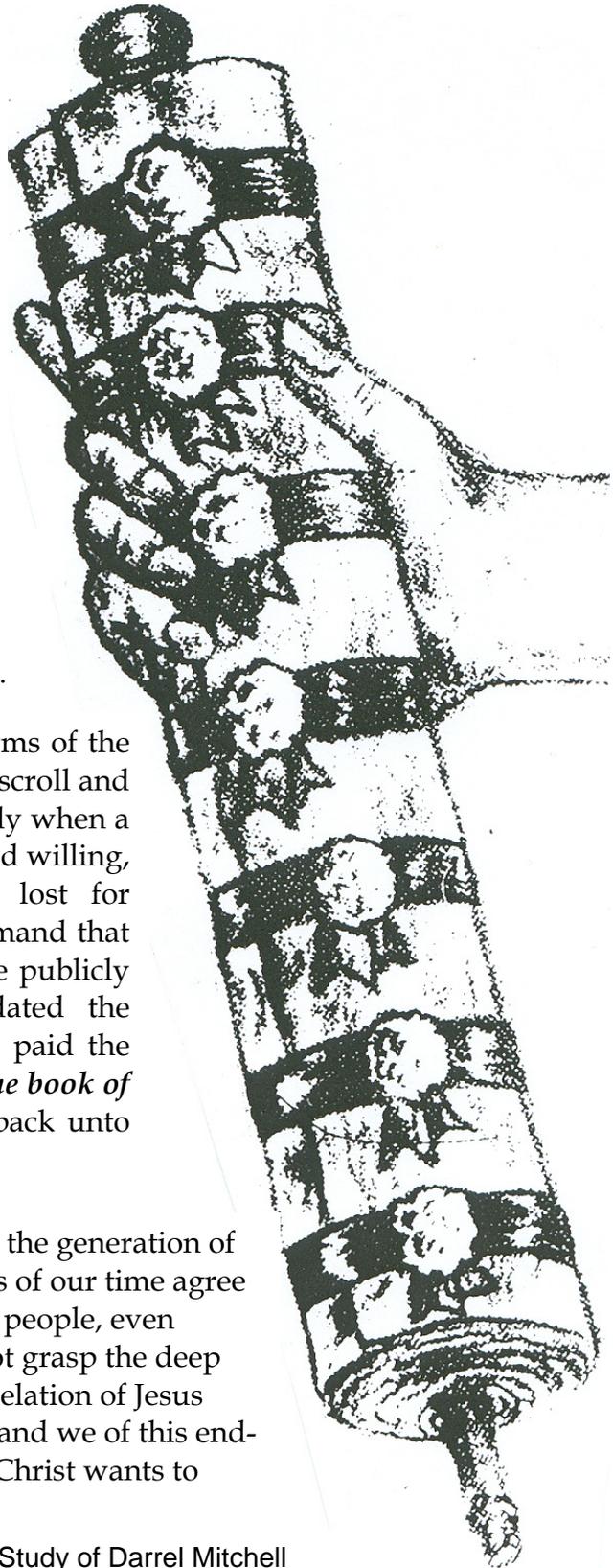
Revelation is the most controversial book in the Bible and, yet, it is the only book, which *specifically* promises a blessing to those who hear it, and who meditate upon it.

Under the law of the Old Testament the terms of the "*Law of Redemption*" were written within a scroll and placed in the Temple. It was brought out only when a "*kinsman*" gave evidence that he was able, and willing, to redeem the property that had been lost for whatever the reason. The *kinsman* could demand that the sealed document be brought forth as he publicly tore the sealed scroll open that invalidated the mortgage and the property returned as he paid the price of redemption. *This is the picture of the book of Revelation.* Jesus is redeeming the world back unto Himself for His coming Kingdom!

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God gave the book of Revelation especially for the generation of the end-time. The majority of the Bible scholars of our time agree that these are indeed the latter days. Yet many people, even though they may be skilled in the Word, cannot grasp the deep and important message of Revelation. The Revelation of Jesus Christ is written in a tone of extreme urgency, and we of this end-time should study and seek the guidance that Christ wants to give us for this perilous age.

From the Study of Darrel Mitchell



Forward

There is far more order and classification in the Bible than most people seem to realize, in fact, the Bible is the unfolding of a great plan that was ever in the heart of the eternal God. The only way to understand the details of God's Word is to have a clear understanding of it as a *whole*. Let me say that too much should not be made of any charts within this study. These charts should be compared to an architect's plans, which he uses with his specifications. *The Word of God is our specification*, all our information must be found within its sacred pages, and we use the charts merely as a blue print to give God's specifications various parts and divisions and thus simplify them for the earnest and diligent soul.

The reader is invited to take the views of this study and submit them to the test of Scripture and, if in his judgment they are not in accordance with the teaching thereof, he, certainly, is at liberty to reject them. However, at the same time, let us remember that neither the reader's judgment nor this study can lay claim to infallibility. Hence, the main purpose of this study is that the reader may be led, by a perusal of the following study, to a deeper interest, and a more profound study of the infallible Word of God.

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Before we start our study of . . .

Revelation

. . . let's consider a few important truths

There has been much abuse of prophetic Scripture! Many foolish and sensational speculations have gone under the title of "*Prophecy*." Imagined future events or fixed dates have brought discredit upon the whole study of Bible Prophecy. Thus, a necessity of a *sane* approach to Bible Prophecy is all the greater.

In this study of the book of Revelation, we will be stepping into an unfamiliar world of angels, demons, lambs, lions, horses, dragons, seals are broken, trumpets blown, and contents of bowls poured out! To many it is an insoluble puzzle containing chaotic confusion of weird mysterious visions. For the most part it has been totally abandoned, or else, it has become the happy hunting ground of religious fanatics,

Instead of relegating Bible Prophecy to oblivion, the honest student of God's Word will give himself to diligent study of this *book of the hour*, and discover for himself what God has revealed by this *revelation*.

Bible Prophecy was not written to frighten, or bewilder, but to aid the reader in understanding God's program for time and eternity. WE MUST NOT NEGLECT IT! Indeed a special blessing is promised if we read and study it.

Revelation 1:3 states, "*Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.*"

If God devoted *one-fourth* of the Scriptures to the subject of prophecy, it certainly behooves us to give attention to it. If the book of Revelation is the only book in the New Testament given exclusive to prophecy, does it not deserve our time to study it diligently?

HOW SHOULD ONE INTERPRET PROPHECY?

1. Give the words of prophecy the same meaning one would give words of history.
2. Don't change the literal to a *spiritual*, or symbolic, meaning.
3. Don't seek to find hidden meanings in words of Scripture.
4. Believe that prophecy can be understood, as it is simply a record of things yet to happen.
5. Forget the idea that prophecy must be *fulfilled* before it can be understood. When God uses a symbol, or figure of speech, one has a right to expect Him to make true explanation elsewhere in Scripture.

The following facts and principles of interpretation should be understood in order for one to arrive at a correct understanding of the book of Revelation.

1. The book of Revelation must be taken *literal* whenever possible. Every statement is to be taken to mean for exactly what is written unless such interpretation is highly improbable to spiritual reason, or against Scripture elsewhere. Only when the passage will not admit a *literal* interpretation is one to seek a *symbolic* explanation. This is the only **safe** method. Since God has entitled this letter, *the book of Revelation*, it is just that..."a *Revelation*"...and, one should not attempt to *spiritualize* it.
2. In order for one to understand any symbol correctly he should find a sufficient number and variety of the same symbol elsewhere in Scripture and study carefully the truths of those identical symbols, which are explained in Scripture. One will find that the language and statements of Scripture, itself, should make these symbols clear.
3. A symbol is simply an object used to represent something else. Example: The wine and bread in the Lord's Supper are symbols of the body and blood of Christ. Symbols merely give variety of expression and beauty to the thing expressed. For instance, the word "*dove*" is used as a symbol of peace, however, one would not say that the *bill, feet, wings, etc.* of the dove symbolize different aspects of peace. The principle is: Only the part of the symbol, which conveys the truth intended, should be emphasized.
4. If one is to understand the book of Revelation fully...specially the time of its fulfillment...he should always remember the *three divisions*, which are given to us by Christ, Himself. It is when one forgets these three divisions that he becomes confused as to the order of things, which are so clearly given, in *consecutive* order.

The *three divisions*, given in Revelation 1:19 are:

- (1) *Those things, which you (John) have seen,*
- (2) *Those things what now are taking place*

That is things concerning the Church Age
...from Pentecost to the Rapture of the Church...
(Covered in Revelation, chapters 2 & 3).

- (3) *Things, which will take, place later*

5. Revelation is a *succession of consecutive events*, rather, than an unsystematic, or confused, book. The events must be taken in the order which God gives, and, if not, then upon what ground does one attempt to fix the arrangement of these events, and by what authority?

DANGERS IN STUDYING BIBLE PROPHECY

1. **CURIOSITY** - Some people delight in hearing "*some new thing*" (Acts 17:21), however, Bible prophecy is not a curiosity shop or simply a "*hobby*."
2. **PRIDE** - Some people become spiritually proud because they are able to distinguish between the beasts, or because they are able to interpret Daniel's image, they feel that they possess a spirituality that puts them on a superior plane than those who have not been taught these things.
3. **FELLOWSHIP** - Bible Prophecy should never be the basis of fellowship between believers, but, rather, the basis of fellowship should always be the Person and work of Jesus Christ.
4. **MISSING CHRIST** - All Scripture is given to reveal Jesus Christ. Revelation 19:10 states, "*For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*"

If the student of Bible prophecy becomes *so* interested in the "*Antichrist*" that Christ is removed from the place of centrality, then he has been derailed from that which is meant to be preeminent...the Person of Jesus Christ!

VIRTUES OF STUDYING BIBLE PROPHECY

1. **STRENGTHENS FAITH IN GOD'S INFALLIBLE WORD**
God's prophecies of past events which have proven to be so accurate, certainly makes reasonable to believe that His predictions of things yet to be fulfilled will receive a like realization. "*Fulfilled prophecy*" proves that a God, Who can tell what is yet in the future, is a God Who is to be trusted.
2. **REVEALS THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD**
As the Bible student pursues the study of prophecy he will come to new depths of understanding of the wisdom, power, and might of our eternal God.
3. **REVEALS THE PURPOSE OF GOD**
As God revealed His purpose in destroying Sodom to Abraham (Genesis 18:17), He reveals to the student of His Word the unfolding purpose of the events of the last

days, in order that believers can understand "why" God allows certain events to take place.

4. BRINGS PEACE AND ASSURANCE

In John 14:1-4 Jesus states, "*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.*"

Being acquainted with prophetic Scriptures, the believer rests in the assurance, having before him God's blueprint of future events.

5. PRODUCES A HOLY LIFE

Note whenever the second coming of Christ is mentioned in Scripture it is always followed by an exhortation to holy living. (See, for instances: Philippians 3:12 to 4:1; Colossians 3:1-5; and 2 Peter 4:10-11)

6. INTENSIFIES ONE'S DESIRE FOR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

In Scripture, we see that God often revealed to those who followed Him what His intention for the future was.

7. MAKES INTERCESSORS AND SOUL-WINNERS

When Abraham realized Sodom's awful fate, it led him to intercede for the souls of that city. If one realizes God's terrible judgments about to overtake this world, he would set himself to plead that many would turn to Him, ere the day of vengeance engulfs them.

The book of Revelation closes its awful description of the judgments which are coming upon the earth by inviting to the sinner, "*Come to Christ,*" and, after one reads and understand the book of Revelation, he too will close the book and invite the sinner to, "*Come, and receive, Jesus Christ as you Savior.*"

One's soul-winner power would, certainly, more than double if he diligently studies, and understands, the book of Revelation, and realizes what is going to take place on earth before too long.

8. GIVES A RIGHT PERSPECTIVE OF WORLD'S EVENTS

Instead of the child of God being discouraged and depressed, he can rejoice in the face of present conditions because he realizes things are in God's hands and progressing as He foretold in His Word.

9. EMPOWERS ONE TO RUN THE RACE SET BEFORE HIM

Habakkuk 2:2-3 warns, "*Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation waits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.*"

Hebrew 10:37-38 states, "*For in just a very little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.*"

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As the believer begins to understand what God is doing...and what He will do... on the earth, he disentangles his affections from all that is alien to the mind of the Coming One, Jesus Christ, and functions as a tireless runner, running toward the glorious goal which awaits all who follow on to know the Lord!

God's Word gives a positive command to study Bible prophecy because it is the revelation of God's mind concerning coming events. The believer is guilty of gross neglect if he closes his mind to what God desires him to know!

The student must never approach the study of Bible prophecy in a haphazard manner; however, as certain principles are recognized, the student will find that careful study of Bible prophecy will always produce both profit and pleasure.

Dogmatism is out of place when it comes to unrevealed details of Bible prophecy. A good rule to follow is: "*IN ESSENTIAL THINGS - UNITY; IN DOUBTFUL THINGS - LIBERTY; AND, IN ALL THINGS - CHARITY*"

Without the book of Revelation the canon of Scripture would be incomplete.

- Will sin continue? • Will Satan be defeated? • Will sorrow; pain, and death go on?
- Where are we in God's plan? • When will the Church be raptured?
 - Is Christ returning to the earth?
 - What are we to expect on earth before Christ's coming?
 - In what order are the events of the last days to come?
 - Where is Christ to reign during the Millennium?
 - When is Antichrist revealed?
 - What about church union?
 - Where will saints spend eternity?

These, and many other indispensable questions, are nowhere fully answered apart from the book of Revelation!

Next to the plan of salvation and the sufferings of Christ, nothing should be more interesting to the child of God than the study of Bible prophecy because it enlightens us to the wondrous destiny of the church, the glorious future of Israel, and the future of all mankind generally.

Though the child of God should always be ready to benefit by the study of others whom he knows to be of God, yet, he should be very slow in embracing any new ideas. Let us always be absolutely dependent upon the Word of the great Author of all true, reliable, prophecy and He will reveal to us a correct understanding of that which He has written concerning the future; for we must interpret all Scripture in harmony with the general scope of the Bible as a whole. No prophecy is of private interpretation, and therefore, all prophecy must be accumulated and examined before a conclusion is drawn.

There must not be a violation of the general teaching of the whole Bible, but, rather, prophecies must be arranged in the order that they demand to be placed, and give them that interpretation which is in perfect harmony with all other Scripture revelation.

2 Timothy 2:15 states, "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

Acts 1:9, referring to Christ's ascension after His resurrection, states, "*a cloud received Him...(Jesus Christ)...out of their sight.*" The book of Revelation is the gradual melting of that cloud! It is an *apocalypse...that is, it is, an "unveiling" of Jesus Christ!*

As a "*revealing*" of what is behind the breaking veil, it is a literal transcript of facts and events actually seen by John.

Of the thirty-five symbols in the book of Revelation, twenty are explained, and thus cease to be symbols. Fifteen undeciphered symbols, certainly, does not make the book of Revelation a book that one cannot comprehend what God is saying to the Church in this book.

Since the judgments of God in the Old Testament, and the prophecies of the New Testament were fulfilled literally...[Prophecies, such as, the virgin birth, Christ being born in Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary's call into Egypt, Christ's entry into Jerusalem on a colt, Christ being betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, and the parting of Christ's garments]...then, one can only expect that the book of Revelation is to be fulfilled literal throughout.

The structure and proportions of the book of Revelation...that "*golden thread on which can be strung all the pearls of earlier of prophecy*"...are exactly defined, and defined once for all, by our Lord Himself

Suppose that someone from the deep forest of South America, who had never known anything of modern civilization, was suddenly transported into today's world and you decided to take them to visit the airport, after which they returned to your home and watched television before retiring to bed. The next morning you asked them to write down what they had seen the day before.

They probably would describe their adventure something like this, "*We rode in chariots without horses, which had fiery lights of amber behind and bright white ones in front. These horseless chariots were faster than lightning and rode on foundations of solid rock.*"

This native from the bush might describe traffic lights as, "*these chariots seemed to be directed by weird a three-eyed creator which had an eyes of amber, one of emerald and one of gold,*" and he might describe airplanes as, "*giant bird with the sound of a mighty sea, belching men from her side.*" And he would probably describe television as an "*eye of a monster glaring forth visions.*"

The point is that one describes the unfamiliar by his familiar language. John, the revelator, saw many unfamiliar things in his vision, however, he describes them in the

language that he was familiar with, which accounts for some of the strange descriptions one finds in the book of Revelation.

WHY DOES GOD USE SYMBOLS?

The disciples once asked Jesus, "*Why do You speak to people in parables?*" Jesus answered by saying, "*Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. For the people's heart is waxed gross...(callous)...and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and should heal them*" (Matthew 13:11, 13, 15).

Jesus uses parables so that those who have rejected Him...unbelievers...would **not** understand!

Matthew 11:25, "*At that time Jesus answered and said, `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.*"

Jesus, often, openly condemned the powers of man and, in order to protect Christians from unnecessary persecution, He spoke "*in parables*" (or symbols). God, in His Word seems to have ransacked every realm to use symbols that would convey a faint conception of the glory, splendor and majesty of Jesus Christ to our dull, finite, minds.

These notes are Bible lessons and, therefore, are to be studied with God's Word open before the student. Begin right, get your Bible and open it to the book of Revelation and read every verse in connection with this study.

A Study of the Book of Revelation

It is important that one reads God's Word along with any study of the Bible! Turn and read the first chapter of Revelation before you read the following notes!

Because Christ is so often pictured in His awful hour on the Cross-, many think only of the "*suffering of a lowly Jesus.*" Of course, it is right to reflect upon the scene at Bethlehem, when Christ was born as a *human* baby, and to remember "*the cross.*" the child of God needs recall to his mind...and never forget...the birth and crucifixion of our Lord!

However, many seem convinced that Jesus still is a *poor, helpless, crucified one that is in need of the world's sympathy* and have a conception of the world's Redeemer that enable them to feel quite comfortable to spend time living in sin to their hearts content.

I wonder if we have not presented a Christ that gives sinners a license to reject His claims? It is high time that men stop weeping about Christ's suffering and shed a few tears for the sins that drove Him to Cross.