

Revelation Introduction

Jesus Christ! Just the name itself will invoke very different emotions in people. To some, He is King of All Kings and Lord of all Lords. To others, He is a stumbling stone. His name, “Jesus – Jehovah saves”, combined with His title “Christ” - the Anointed One – says it all. Jesus is the “Anointed One of God who alone can save”.

Let's jump right into the text of chapter one briefly just so I can give you a sense of this study will flow week to week. As this is our introductory message we will take verse one of chapter one but then backtrack to discuss the entire nature and scope of our study as we progress forward in future weeks.

Revelation chapter 1 verse 1.

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto his servant John.”

The Revelation

Just as the English language is spoken almost throughout the world of our day, the language of the day as the New Testament was written was primarily Greek. As such, you will hear me on occasion refer to the 'Greek' word in a text which has been translated into English in our modern text. That begins right in the title of the book itself.

In the original Greek text of scripture the word translated 'Revelation' is *apokalupsis* (in the English, Apocalypse) which means, “the unveiling or uncovering”. In short – the REVEALING, or 'Revelation' of Jesus Christ. People make the Book of Revelation out to be many different things but at it's heart the purpose of God in giving it to us is to reveal Jesus in His full glory and power – but also His judgment over the rebellion of Satan as well as mankind. The gospels revealed Jesus as the perfect God/man who came in the flesh to redeem us (buy us back from sin) but Revelation reveals Him in His coming again in power. Everything in the scriptures should point us to Jesus. As Revelation 19:10 says, “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

The next phrase in verse one should *trouble you* if you were listening closely,

“which God gave unto Him”.

The “Him” in verse one is Jesus Christ. Read that as – God the Father gave the Revelation to Jesus the Son”. If Jesus is fully God – can He learn? Was there something He did not know? It says here that God the Father gave Jesus the Revelation of the conclusion of all human history. Did Jesus not know this already as omniscient God?

As Luke described Jesus as a young boy in [Luke 2:52](#),

“Meanwhile, Jesus kept on growing wiser and more mature, and in favor with God and his fellow man.”

In [Matthew 24:36](#) Jesus was responding to a question by His disciples, what will be the “sign” of your coming and of the end of the age? Jesus response in verse 36 was - “But concerning that day and hour

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no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

Just prior to His ascension back into heaven the disciples asked Jesus in **Acts chapter 1, verse 6**,

"Lord, is at this time you are restoring the Kingdom to Israel (in other words, the Millennial Kingdom)? Jesus responded in verse 7 – "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

So what are we to make of this. The exact moment of our Lord's return cannot be calculated by anyone. Many have tried and have even attempted to proclaim the year of the Lord's return. Over and over these attempts have ended in failure. Even the Lord Himself, when speaking of these events in real time as He walked the Earth stated that information was known only by the Father. In the Matthew 24 and Luke chapter 1 accounts Jesus was obviously speaking from the perspective of His human knowledge – not His divine omniscience. Make no mistake, Jesus was fully God as He walked this Earth and remains so throughout eternity and this fact is clearly reflected most in John's gospel (**John 1:1, 14**). The key to understanding this verse is this. When Jesus clothed Himself in humanity He voluntarily limited the use of certain of His divine attributes as detailed in **Philippians 2:6-8**. He did not manifest these attributes unless directed by the Father (see **John 5:30; 6:38** and others.). He did demonstrate His omniscience on specific occasions (**John 2:25; 13:1**) but He always submitted Himself to the will of His Heavenly Father, thus relating to us in our humanity and making Him that faithful High Priest who identifies with us in all our weaknesses.

The next phrase in verse 1, "to show unto His servants"

I have always appreciated the scene in John chapters 13 thru 16, what is commonly referred to as the 'Upper Room Discourse'. Throughout the course of that evening Jesus repeatedly warned His disciples about what was to come in order that their faith would not be shaken and in order that they would have peace in their hearts.

I have often viewed Revelation in much the same way. Jesus is letting His followers in on the cosmic plan of God in order that when the world really gets turned upside down we will still have peace because He has already waned us. Revelation validates the fact that God – not Satan, is in control. He is sovereign and is moving and shaping all the event so this world toward His purposes and plans.

As **Acts 15:18** states;

"known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

As **Amos 3:7** says,

"Truly the Lord GOD will do nothing without revealing his purposes to his servants the prophets."

This future deliverance of God's people and judgment of the wicked is portrayed in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus came to Abraham with two angels and declared in Genesis 18:17,

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The LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do”

God revealed His plans, Abraham interceded with the Lord for His family, and God removed Lot, his wife and his two daughters before bringing destruction on the godless cities. God reveals His plans to us but in *His* perfect time. Just as the prophecy of Daniel was *sealed* in his day (**Daniel 12:4**), John is ordered *NOT* to seal up the words of this prophecy in Revelation 22:10.

And what is God showing us. Again, verse one,

“the things which must shortly come to pass”

Revelation is not past history, as are the Gospel accounts. It is future. The word for “soon” in the Greek is *'en tachei'* (2:16; 22:7, 12, 20) means that when the action begins it will occur suddenly. We get our English word tachometer from it. Once the events begin they will proceed with increasing frequency and intensity.

The next phrase in verse one, is

“He sent and signified it”

the word 'signified' in the original Greek, '*sēmainō*', means to “make known by signs or symbols”. We get our word 'semaphore' from it - an apparatus for visual signaling (communication through flags, but you must be trained in what the flags and their positions mean in order to understand the message). In the case of our study, the Old Testament will reveal the New. The obvious question arises, however, why not speak plainly – why use “signs at all?”

The signs are necessary because John is relaying to us things of heaven, which Paul said he heard with *inexpressible words* (**2Cor. 12:4**). John described things he saw, so he could only use symbolic images to explain it because the heavenly visions are unlike anything we have ever experienced in this Earth.

It's like the person who invents something completely different and new. You cannot describe to a potential buyer over the phone something they have never seen or experienced. That is inventors build what is called a “*prototype*” so people can visualize what they have never seen before. The Holy Spirit will use these types, symbols, metaphors, etc. throughout His Revelation.

The next phrase in verse one, “**by His angel**”

as I said, we all approach subjects with preconceptions, biases that shape our beliefs and interpretations. In this case, we read the word “angel” and we think of those holy, heavenly beings that fly around. The original Greek word for angel is “angellos” which simply means messenger. Now we know from scripture that Michael is an arch-angel and Gabriel is a messenger angel normally associated with major announcements or events in Israel's history such as the announcements to Daniel, Mary, and Zechariah. Obviously, this Revelation being delivered to John from Jesus by Jesus' messenger is a major, major event, yet the “angel” is not named (although later, in chapter 22:6-9 he is said to be a “fellow servant of John and of the servants of Christ”).

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And lastly in verse one, “the message is being rendered into signs and delivered to Jesus' servant John.

The Greek for servant is “doulos” which means a bond-slave, one who has joined himself to the house of his master for the rest of his life. Have you joined yourself to God the Father for eternity by entrusting yourself to the person and work of Jesus Christ? If not you can do so today.

Unto His servant John

John was born at Bethsaida to Zebedee and Salome and was a Galilean fisherman; partner with Peter and Andrew. He was an early disciple of John the Baptist and seemed to be well connected (High Priest, Nicodemus, et al , cf. Jn 18:15).

John was one of Jesus inner circle (Peter, James and John): Mt. Transfiguration (Mt 17); raising of Jairus' daughter (Mt 9:18); Olivet Discourse (Mt 24); Gethsemane (Mt 26:37); Assigned care of Mary (Jn 19:26); ultimately retires to Ephesus after his exile. He and Peter seem to have become close prior to as well as after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus (both together on the way to the temple for prayer in Acts, both on trial together for the healing of the lame man).

Exiled to Isle of Patmos, a prison colony for Rome. It's a small island, 6 miles by 10 miles, 40 miles from Miletus and 24 miles from the coast of Turkey. John was exiled by Domitian (A.D. 81- 96), the brother of Titus who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD . According to Irenaeus (2nd century A.D.), Revelation was written by John during the reign of Domitian. Irenaeus, Clement, and Eusebius wrote that after Domitian died, John returned to Ephesus, went to the churches, and appointed leaders, and set things in order. It is also a matter of church history that John recorded the Gospel of John at Ephesus, which creates the provocative scenario that he wrote Revelation before the Gospel of John.

The dating of this writing is the end of the first century, 95 AD. At the time the Apostle John recorded this Revelation from Jesus all the other 11 Apostles were dead. Judas, the betrayer, dead first by suicide but the other 10 also dead by violent martyrs deaths scattered throughout the Roman world of that day. Jesus death, burial, resurrection and ascension were 65 years before John received this Revelation, as was the birth of the new Testament church. John's brother James, the other Son of Zebedee was martyred 50 years prior by Herod Agrippa I.

Jerusalem (the home of Judaism) and it's temple were destroyed 25 years before (in 70 A.D.) by the Roman general Titus. The sacrificial system system of the Jews could no longer be observed because there was no temple and, therefore, no altar on which to offer those sacrifices. The Jews would not be under control of Israel until May 14, 1948 (73 years ago). God kept the Apostle John alive in order to, among other things, receive and then record this Revelation and make it available for us today.

Purpose: The Gospel of John presents Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in His First-coming, Revelation presents Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Lord in His Second-coming.

That's verse one. We will not take that much time and detail on every verse in this Book but it will be a

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very detailed journey overall.

The rest of today's study will be a little different than future weeks given the fact we must lay some foundational groundwork for our future exploration.

Introduction

Only God is omnipotent (all-powerful), omnipresent (able to be present everywhere), and omniscient (all-knowing). He is the One who created time itself and is, therefore, beyond the realm of time. He knows what is coming to pass now as well as what is going to come about in the future and what He has desired for us to know about in the future is recorded in this book.

The primary challenge in studying the Book of Revelation is “how do we interpret it? In fact, I tend to think Revelation is more difficult to “believe”, rather than difficult to interpret. One of the reasons so many resort to an allegorical interpretation is because they have found the literal meaning difficult to accept and have, therefore, tried to explain them in a “less offensive” level if you will.

There are three main approaches to the interpretation of Revelation. One is what's called the

- 1) **Preterist approach**: that simply means Revelation is viewed as past history applying specifically to the issues and persecutions of the first-century church that existed at the time John records this.
- 2) The second is the **Historical Interpretation**: in this method, the events symbolically described in Revelation represent the chronological sequence of historical events from the time wrote up until the coming of Christ and the establishing of the eternal Kingdom.
- 3) The third perspective is the Futurist perspective. While futurist interpreters differ in some details, they generally regard Revelation chapter 4 thru 22 as events still future to come about at the end of the Church Age in which we now live.

I personally hold to this future view but it is important to know how others approach the book.

The first prophecy in scripture was not spoken by a man but God Himself in Genesis 3:15. In it, God addresses the cosmic warfare going on all around us every day. Satan originally sinned due to his pride and then led Adam and Eve into rebellion against God. Ever since, all of God's creation has been engaged in a spiritual warfare between God and our adversary, the Devil. Interestingly enough, however, the pronouncement of this warfare was initiated by God Himself as detailed in **Genesis 3:15**.

“and I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

Revelation, then, is the final word from God describing how God will stamp out all rebellion and remove the sin-curse from the creation through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Now a word about Bible Study itself. Every one of us approach situations with built biases and preconceptions and the study of scripture is no different. We have read things, learned things,

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committed things to memory. Sometimes those things are accurate and sometimes they are not. In this study of Revelation I will be following a literal approach. My personal bias as I interpret Scripture is that God says what means and means what He says

The last book the Apostle Paul recorded thru the Holy Spirit was his second letter to Timothy. In **2 Timothy 3:15-17** it says this, “and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that *leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*. All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness; *so that the man or woman of God may be fully capable, equipped for every good work*. When Paul, thru the Holy Spirit, stated “all scripture” that included the Book of Revelation.

The Holy Spirit specifically includes it in the Canon of Scripture – The Bible, so why is it so neglected? People are confused by the types and symbols, they may be intimidated because they feel they are incapable of “getting it”, some avoid it because their pastors avoid it.

The Holy Spirit, in fact, *does* use veiled language in the Bible at times but always for a purpose and it is always revealed elsewhere in scripture. Hosea addresses this issue head on in **Hosea 12:10**, as the King James versions puts it,

“I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used *similitude's* (similes), by the ministry of the prophets. Just as Jesus spoke in parables, the Holy Spirit uses similes, metaphors, types, allusions, puns and other devices all throughout the scripture but they are defined elsewhere by the scriptures themselves, not by our own private interpretation.

In Galatians 4:24 the Holy Spirit, thru Paul, states that the lives of Hagar and Sarah were an allegory being played out as an object lesson. Don't get me wrong, they were also real people who lived actual lives. Yet those lives were an illustration to us of law and grace, bondage and freedom.

The first thing to recognize is that while all scripture builds and blesses us, Revelation is the only book with a unique blessing attached with it.

Revelation 1:3 states, “*Blessed is the one* who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophecy and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

The Apostle Paul states in **Romans 15:4** says, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written *for our instruction*, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have *hope*. (NASB)

The study and understanding of the Book of Revelation will take us through the entire Bible, particularly Genesis, certain Psalms, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah. Scripture is it's own best commentary. There are 404 verses in Revelation and over 800 direct Old Testament references which help us understand and explain the types, symbols and word pictures the Holy Spirit uses in Revelation. Now that DOES sound intimidating except for at least two spiritual facts. Number one, those who have entrusted themselves to Jesus Christ for salvation have been given the gift of God's Holy Spirit who, among other things, leads us into all truth and reveals the scriptures to us (1 Cor. 2:10-12). Number two, God has also given His church the gift of teaching pastors (Ephesians 4:11-12) for the equipping

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of the saints in order that we might advance Christ's Kingdom.

Topics we will cover throughout the course of the study

Methods of Interpretation themselves! Why? As human-beings we all approach any form of study – including the Bible – with preconceptions, long-held beliefs, personal opinions and even biases. For example, do you approach the text as Allegorical? Literal? Has it already happened? Is it future?

Hermeneutics is simply the science of the rules of interpretation. Your hermetical approach will determine your interpretation. For example, The Millennium – the thousand-year reign of Christ with His resurrected saints as detailed in Revelation 20 can ONLY be in the future if you interpret it with a literal method because, for one reason, Jesus has never literally yet sat on the Throne of David. Today He is seated on HIS FATHER'S throne in heaven – not David's in Jerusalem. I just want you to be aware that there are different approaches to the interpretation of Revelation. As we progress week by week I will briefly explain what they *are*, why they *exist*, *what* we as a church believe and *why* we hold our particular beliefs.

Again, today's study is very different than our normal weekly approach which will be exploring the text of the Bible verse by verse but the overview we are examining today is very critical to proper interpretation and application as we go forward in the following weeks.

Other topics

Jesus – sovereign (always keep Jesus as your focus in this book)
Judgment – consistent justice
Grace – Restoration (what began in the Garden of Eden concludes in Rev. 2)
The Kingdom – Jesus vindicated
The Rapture (the harpazo): Pre, post, mid
The Antichrist (the Beast)
The “Tribulation” (really, the “Great-Tribulation”): who goes thru it and why?
One-world Government
One-world economic system: on our near horizon
The Millennium (amill, pre, post)
The Seed of the Serpent vs. the Seed of the Woman
Babylon/Nimrod Vs. Truth/Jesus
The Marriage Supper of the Lamb
Armageddon scenarios: in our lifetime?
The Final Judgment: who's in – who's out
The Resurrection
The New Jerusalem
Eternity: what exactly is it?

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Revelation Resolves All Human History

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| 1. Genesis, book of beginnings. | 1. Revelation, the book of the end. |
| 2. The Earth created (Gen 1:1). | 2. The Earth passed away (Rev 21:1). |
| 3. Satan's first rebellion. (Isaiah 14:12-16 ; Ezekiel 28:12-19) | 3. Satan's final rebellion (Rev 20:3 ; Rev 20:7-10). |
| 4. Sun, moon, and stars for Earth's government (Gen 1:14-16). | 4. Sun, moon, and stars, connected with Earth's judgment (Rev 6:13 ; 8:12 ; 16:8). |
| 5. Sun to govern the day (Gen 1:16). | 5. No need of the sun (Rev 21:23). |
| 6. Darkness called night (Gen 1:5) | 6. "No night there" (Rev 22:5). |
| 7. Waters called seas (Gen 1:10). | 7. "No more sea" (Rev 21:1). |
| 8. A river for Earth's blessing (Gen 2:10-14). | 8. A river out of God's throne (Rev 22:1 ; Rev 22:2). |
| 9. Man in God's image (Gen 1:26). | 9. Man headed by one in Satan's image (13). |
| 10. Entrance of sin (3). | 10. End of sin (21, 22). |

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| 11. Curse pronounced (Gen 3:14 ; Gen 3:17). | 11. "No more curse" (Rev 22:3). |
| 12. Death entered (Gen 3:19). | 12. "No more death" (Rev 21:4). |
| 13. Cherubim, first mentioned in connection with man (Gen 3:24). | 13. Cherubim, finally mentioned in connection with man (Rev 4:6). |
| 14. Man driven out from Eden (Gen 3:24). | 14. Man restored (22). |
| 15. Tree of life blocked (Gen 3:24) | 15. "Right to the Tree of Life" (Rev 22:14). |
| 16. Sorrow and suffering enter (Gen 3:17). | 16. No more sorrow (Rev 21:4). |
| 17. Man's religion, art, and science, resorted to for enjoyment, apart from God (4). | 17. Man's religion, luxury, art, and science, in their full glory, judged and destroyed by God (18). |
| 18. Nimrod, a great rebel and king, and hidden anti-God, the founder of Babylon (Gen 10:8 ; Gen 10:9). | 18. The Beast, the great rebel, a king and manifested anti-God, the reviver of Babylon (13-18). |
| 19. A flood from God to destroy an evil generation (6-9). | 19. A flood from Satan to destroy an elect generation (12). |
| 20. The Bow, the token of God's covenant with the Earth (Gen 9:13). | 20. The Bow, God's remembrance of His covenant with the Earth (Rev 4:3 ; 10:1) |
| 21. Sodom and Egypt, the place of corruption and temptation (13, 19). | 21. Sodom and Egypt again: (spiritually rev representing Jerusalem) (Rev 11:8). |
| 22. A confederacy against Abraham's people overthrown (14). | 22. A confederacy against Abraham's seed overthrown (12). |
| 23. Marriage of first Adam (Gen 2:18-23). | 23. Marriage of last Adam (19). |

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| 24. A bride sought for Abraham's son (Isaac) and found (24). | 24. A Bride made ready & brought to Abraham's Son (Rev 19:9) Mat 1:1 |
| 25. Two angels acting for God on behalf of His people (19). | 25. Two witnesses acting for God on behalf of His People (11). |
| 26. A promised seed to possess the gate of his enemies (Gen 22:17). | 26. The promised seed coming into possession (Rev 11:18). |
| 27. Man's dominion ceased and Satan's begun (Gen 3:24). | 27. Satan's dominion ended, and man's restored (22). |
| 28. The old serpent causing sin, suffering, and death (Gen 3:1). | 28. The old serpent bound for 1,000 years (Rev 20:1-3). |
| 29. The doom of the old serpent pronounced (Gen 3:15). | 29. The doom on the old serpent executed (Rev 20:10). |
| 30. Sun, moon, and stars, associated with Israel (Gen 37:9). | 30. Sun, moon, and stars, associated again with Israel (12). |

Grouping of Seven's (completeness/fullness)

- 1) Churches (1:4, 11, 20)
- 2) Spirits (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6)
- 3) Candlesticks (1:12, 13, 20; 2:1)
- 4) Stars (1:16, 20; 2:1; 3:1)
- 5) Lamps (4:5)
- 6) Seals (5:1; 5:5)
- 7) Horns (5:6)
- 8) Eyes (5:6)
- 9) Angels (8:2, 6)
- 10) Trumpets (8:2, 6)
- 11) Thunders (10:3, 4)
- 12) Thousand (11:13)
- 13) Heads (12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 9)
- 14) Crowns (12:3)
- 15) Plagues (15:1, 6, 8; 21:9)
- 16) Mountains (17:9)
- 17) Kings (17:10-11)

Seven Beatitudes

- Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear and keep those things... (Rev 1:3).
- Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord (Rev 14:13).

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- Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments (Rev 16:15).
- Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9).
- Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection (Rev 20:6).
- Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book (Rev 22:7)
- Blessed are they that wash their robes (Rev 22:14).

Seven Persons (Chps. 12-13)

The Woman
The Man-Child
The Red Dragon
The 7-headed Beast
The False Prophet
Archangel Michael
The Lamb

Other Sevens

- Seven Years of Judgments 11:3; 12:6,14; 13:5
- Seven “I Am’s” of Christ 1:8, 11, 17, 18; 21:6; 22:13,16;
- Seven Doxologies in heaven 4:9-11; 5:8-13; 7:9-12; 11:16- 18; 14:2,3; 15:2-4 ;19:1-6
- Seven New Things 20, 21

Idioms

- “Friend of God” (Abraham; Disciples)
- “Dearly Beloved” (Daniel; John)

“Whole Counsel of God”

- Christ at the center Rev 1:1
- “More sure word of prophecy” 2 Pet 1:19
- “Search the Scriptures and they are they which testify of me” Jn 5:39
- “Volume of the book is written of me” Ps 40:7
- “Testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” Rev 19:10

“I was in the spirit...”

- On the “day of the Lord” (at Patmos) Ch. 1:10
- To the throne in heaven Ch. 4:2
- Carried away in the wilderness Ch. 17:3
- Carried to a mountain Ch. 21:10 “Thunders, voices, lightnings, and an earthquake”

Climactic Doxologies

- Glory, dominion (2) Rev 1:6;
- Glory, honor, power (3) Rev 4:11;

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- Blessing, honor, glory, power (4) Rev 5:13;
- Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, might (7) Rev 7:12.

Worship

- 1) Holy, Holy, Holy Ch. 4:8
- 2) Worthy art thou Ch. 4:11; 5:8-10
- 3) Unto Him that sitteth Ch. 5:11-13
- 4) Salvation to our God Ch. 7:9-12 Amen; Blessing...
- 5) Kingdoms of the world Ch. 11:15-18 We give thee thanks
- 6) Great & marvelous... Ch. 15:2-4
- 7) Four hallelujahs Ch. 19:1-8

Things Out of Place

- Israel fleeing the land v possessing the Land
- Church on earth v church caught up into Heaven
- Lamb on His Father's throne v Own throne
- Satan loose to deceive v Bound

Three Women in Revelation

The Wife of Jehovah	Woman of Revelation 12	Israel
The Virgin Bride	The Bride of Christ	The Church
The Harlot	Mystery Babylon	The Woman who rides the Beast

Method of Instruction

Types, symbols, why? Matthew 13 – that seeing they might not see, blocking the Enemies understanding

Road Markers to Avoid Confusion:

- “after these things”: meta tauta (Gr.)
- Seal, Bowl and Trumpet Judgments: 7th seal opens the bowl judgments, 7th bowl opens the 7 trumpet judgments

How Does the Holy Spirit Organize the Book?