

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Week 1– Thus Far and Moving Forward

January 24, 2017

LUKE 1:26-33

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" ²⁹ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. ³⁰ Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Revelation is the culmination of God's plan for the world from eternity past. God gives us His plan for redemption and restoration. Revelation reveals the triumph of God. God is a God of purpose (Isa. 14:24). God is working out His plan for the world (Gen. 12:3; Gen. 18:18; Rom. 11:15...). AND, so my mind goes to...

I Sam. 17:46 - when David, as a shepherd boy, before he became the King of Israel, killed Goliath, he told the giant, *This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that ALL THE EARTH MAY KNOW THAT THERE IS A GOD IN ISRAEL.* This is God's desire and it will happen...that ALL the earth may know that God is God. *That all the world may know...* this is repeated in Scripture (Josh. 4:24; I Kings 8:43; I Kings 8:60; II Kings 19:19; Isa. 52:10; Jn. 17:23). Hab. 2:14 – God tells Habakkuk that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God. AND, it will be so!

God made a covenant with Israel. Why? That the WORLD may know HIM. God chose Israel to tell the Gentile world about the one true God. Israel was chosen to be an instrument of blessing for the world (Gen. 18:18)!

In Luke 1:26-33, the angel Gabriel jettisoned Mary and us forward into the Millennial Kingdom after he announced the Incarnation – the birth of Jesus as Immanuel, God with us. Gabriel spoke of the two comings of the Messiah in his announcement. Jesus came first to die for our sin; He will return, at His Second Coming, as a conquering King and set up His Kingdom on earth that God had promised to the Jewish people. And, we who are believers in Jesus, whether we are Jewish or Gentile, will be living in the Millennial Kingdom for 1,000 years.

Knowing the future, knowing how the book ends...will allow us to live godly, holy lives today. When we have an eye on the world to come, we can better live this life now...for the Lord (I John 2:28; II Pet. 3:10-13).

www.jewishrootsofchristianity.org – lessons link – PDF’s...Book of Revelation – handouts for each week from the last term. MP3’s...Book of Revelation - audio recordings for each week from the last term. SUGGESTING: Week 3 – The Basic Flow of the Chronology of End Times; Week 5 – How Do I Understand the Book of Revelation? and Week 6 – Basic Flow of the Chronology of End Times.

Rev. 1:1-3 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it (communicated it) by His angel to His servant John,² who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.³ Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

The book of Revelation reveals Jesus! The content of the book is about Jesus and, He is the provider of this revelation!

The Greek word translated “Revelation” is apokalupsis (apocalypse) which means “a revealing, an unveiling, an uncovering, a disclosing” God is telling us this book which many look upon as impossible to understand...reveals, unveils Jesus! In order to grasp the meaning of this revelation, we are directed to approximately 550 references in the OT! The OT speaks much of when God will bring justice and righteousness to the earth through the Messiah when He physically returns to this earth and sets up His kingdom (Deuteronomy, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah. . .). The book of Revelation is meant to CLARIFY what we’ve already read/studied in the Bible.

This book does teach about the antichrist. It speaks about God’s judgment on the earth. It highlights calamity on this planet in dreadful detail. BUT, we need to know that above all else, this 66th book of the Bible is the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. If we catch everything else in this book, but miss Jesus, we have missed the book of Revelation.

The book of Revelation opens with an invitation to gaze on the love between the God the Father and God the Son. God the Father has given God the Son, the revelation of Himself, Jesus, to show those who are believers in the Son. We are being shown Jesus’ glory! At His first coming, Jesus came humbly to earth. He emptied Himself of the glory He had from eternity past. He NEVER emptied Himself of His deity. Jesus is God – eternally! At His birth in Bethlehem, He came in the flesh. He came as Immanuel, God with us (Isa. 7:14). He laid down His life for us! He came to suffer and die a criminal’s death for us! But He was resurrected and ascended to heaven.

In Isa. 53:10 we read (NASV) that He offered to take on the role of a guilt offering *But the LORD (JEHOVAH) was pleased to crush Him, (Jesus) putting Him to grief; if He (Jesus) would render Himself as a guilt offering*

In the book of Revelation we see Him in His majesty! He, in His Second Coming will be vindicated, proven to be Who He is - GOD! And, every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is LORD. BUT, for some, it will be too late

John is told to write down what he sees. We have graphic pictures in the book of Revelation. The readers are shown these things. Show, *deiknyo* (DAK nu o) in the Gk. means to expose to the eyes. The connotation of this word is to give evidence or proof of something.

The book of Revelation is for all because it presents our destinies after we die. For the believer in Jesus, our destiny is everlasting life with God in the New Jerusalem/the Eternal State following the Millennial Kingdom. For those who are not believers in Jesus, there is also an afterlife. Daniel calls that destiny for non-believers in Jesus, *everlasting shame/everlasting contempt* (Dan. 12:1-2). If one doesn't know Jesus, it's not too late. Please consider what the Bible teaches. There's an urgency regarding coming to faith in Jesus. Scripture screams out to us...NOW is the time of salvation – TODAY is the day of salvation. Do not wait. You don't know when you'll take your last breath.

...things that must shortly take place

They *must* – God's promises that we read in Scripture are guaranteed to transpire. *Scripture cannot be broken* (John 10:35).

Isa. 14:24 - *The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, 'Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, and as I have purposed, so it shall stand:*

Isa. 46:10 - *Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'*

Matt. 24:6 - *And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*

These events which will be unfolded to us MUST take place because of Who God is! He is faithful and true. He has sworn by Himself (Heb. 6:13).

Shortly take place –The phrase addresses closeness in time, but from **God's perspective**.

Rev. 22:7 - *Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.* Jesus, God the Son, is telling us of His timeframe.

Rev. 22:20 - *He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly."* These are Jesus' words.

The response, *Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*

With these words we are hearing/reading of Jesus' imminent return – His any moment return.

Rev. 1:7a – *Behold He is coming. . . .* His return is upon us... This is our great hope!

Rev. 1:2 - *John bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

John was exiled to the island of Patmos (v. 9) for not denying the truth of the Bible and for not denying the witness of Jesus. Patmos, located in the Aegean Sea off the coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey), was a barren, rocky island. Patmos served as a place of banishment during the Roman

period. It appears that John was exiled to Patmos during the reign of Emperor Domitian (*Eusebius, ecclesiastical history, 3:18-20*).

Consider: on this barren, rocky, secluded island intended to serve as an isolation cell, so to speak, for those accused of crimes against the Roman Empire, John was visited by the glorified Christ, the Messiah in all His glorious splendor. How does that encounter impact us? John bore witness *to all things that he saw*. John saw Jesus in His glory!

Rev. 1:3 - Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Blessed – Gk. word *makarios* – happiness.

Blessed is he who reads – Gk *anaginosko* –to distinguish, to recognize, to know accurately, to acknowledge. What we see in this Gk. word for “read” is a progression toward a goal. (And, know that in John’s day, there were readers of God’s word in congregations)

Blessed are those who hear the words of this prophecy – “hear” - Gk *akouo* to attend to, to consider what is being said or to what has been said, to perceive. More of a progression. We might liken “hearing” in this verse to listening. Blessed are those who perceive.

prophecy – Gk *propheteia* (pro fa ta a) – declaring the purposes of God; revealing things hidden; foretelling future events.

and who keep those things which are written in it – herein lies the goal. The Gk. for “keep” is *tereo* (tereo) – to attend to carefully, to guard, to cause one to persevere or stand firm in what one believes. Keeping is action! Action occurs when someone is impacted by what he/she has, in this case, read and heard! I’m suggesting that “keeping” indicates that a heart has been impacted, a life has been changed.

This book of Revelation is POWERFUL – it’s LIFE-GIVING!

Revelation promises this blessing at the outset and at the end of this book and at the end specifically in terms of “keeping.”

Rev. 22:-7 - ⁷Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

Why should we read, hear, and keep? . . .*for the time is near*

Time – ERA/EPOCH/SEASON – the next great epoch of God’s redemptive history – the next great event in God’s end time program.

Near – Gk *eggys* (engus) – at hand; of times imminent – it’s expected...not soon – but at any moment. Sooner than soon! *Imminent* means approaching, coming, on the way, in the offing, in the pipeline, on the horizon, in the air, just around the corner, coming down the pike...imminent means UPON US! What is “upon us”? WHO is “upon us”? Jesus’ return! Which return?

Jesus’ physical Second Coming, when His feet will touch the Mt. of Olives (Zech. 14:4), is preceded by signs: the tribulation, the antichrist being revealed, 144,000 Jewish male virgins being sealed and used by God as His servants (for the purpose, it strongly

appears, of evangelism), the two Jewish witnesses coming on the scene and preaching, angels proclaiming the Gospel. . . . Jesus' physical second coming cannot be imminent.

BUT, Jesus' return for His followers...Jewish and Gentile believers in Him, when we will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, is imminent. It is the Rapture of the Church (John 14:1-3; I Cor. 15:51-52; I Thess. 4:15-18).

Scripture unfolds for us one story/one narrative. From Gen. 3:15 God unfolds His plan of redemption for the world. Gen. 3:15 – at the moment sin entered the world because man rebelled/sinned, God immediately promised the Redeemer, the Messiah, Who would come and redeem man...buying us out of bondage to sin! And, salvation throughout Scripture is ALWAYS by grace through faith in God's revealed message which ALWAYS points to Jesus.

To understand the book of Revelation, we need to know that apart from Jesus saving us from our sin, people without Jesus are under the wrath of our holy God! We will see the wrath of God most clearly in our study of the book of Revelation this term. Please note, however, that during the seven years of Tribulation there will not only be unparalleled judgment, there will also be unparalleled evangelism. We will see the largest awakening of people who will come to faith in Jesus in this book of Revelation. How do we understand God's wrath? God is a gracious, merciful, loving God. He is also a holy and just God. God must punish sin. If God does not punish sin, He is not God! From what are we saved? Rom. 5:9 - *Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.* The Hebrew word for salvation is Yeshua!

In Scripture we see the glory of God in salvation in the midst of judgment...not once, but throughout the Bible. When God delivered Israel from bondage to slavery in Egypt, God was glorified. God told Pharaoh that He raised Pharaoh up for His glory (Rom. 9:17). Pharaoh never believed. Judgment came upon the Egyptians. Their first born were killed! Pharaoh's army drowned in the Red Sea. Moses told the Jews ...*stand still and see the salvation of the Lord...* (Ex. 14:13) in the midst of all the plagues and the deaths! Salvation in the midst of judgment is not exclusive to the book of Revelation.

Salvation in the midst of judgment is noted in additional accounts in Scripture. At the fall when Adam and Eve rebelled against God, they were judged and immediately God gave them the promise of the Redeemer (Gen. 3:15). There was hope! The universal flood swept away all life and ravaged the earth while saving Noah and his family. The nation of Israel has a covenant relationship with a holy God who proclaims His goodness and mercy while judging sin and justly punishing transgressions. The book of Numbers opens with the children of Israel marching toward the Promised Land. They are stalled in the wilderness because of their rebellion. God judges. Israel continues to exist. In Deuteronomy we read of the people being prepared to enter the Promised Land. The book closes with blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. The prophets warn the northern kingdom, Israel, and the southern kingdom, Judah, against idolatry primarily...years before judgment would be levied. Here we see God's grace...offering them the opportunity to repent following the warning. AND, in the midst of Judah being

carried away into exile to Babylon, God carves out a certain number of years that we read of in Daniel which leads to the restoration of Israel (Dan. 9)!

The glory of God in salvation through judgment is seen most graphically through the cross. Salvation for man is made possible because of the judgment that fell on Jesus at the cross. The cross of Jesus is the climactic expression of the glory of God in salvation through judgment!

In broadest terms, the Bible can be summarized in four words:

CREATION, FALL, REDEMPTION, RESTORATION.

These four words speak of the ONE NARRATIVE of Scripture.

CREATION: God created the world as a place where He would be known, served, worshipped, and where He would be present – where He would dwell with man. Ex. 25:8 - *And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.* God created man for relationship. God desired to have a relationship with man. Gen. 1:26a - *Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.* This defines man's unique relation to God. Gen. 1:26b - *...let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.* Dominion speaks to ruling over, nurturing, and serving. God promised man that he, man, would have dominion over the earth – over God's creation. Man would rule and nurture and serve God's creation.

THE FALL: Man rebelled. Sin entered the world. Man lost dominion over the earth. The enemy usurped dominion over God's creation. Satan is the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4), the ruler of this world (John 12:31), the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). We need to remember that God alone is OMNIpotent (ALL powerful), OMNIscient (ALL knowing), OMNIpresent (everywhere present; all is in God's presence). Satan has limitations! Satan's ability is always limited by the purposes and plans of God! We note the affects of the fall, of sin, throughout Scripture. Gen. 3:15 - *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.* Yet, in the midst of this curse – of this hatred – of this judgment – we have been given words of hope! Words of redemption – of breaking free - came in the midst of the judgment God spoke over the serpent! That hope is the Messiah! We see the glory of God in salvation against the backdrop of judgment. AND NOTE that this verse, this first Messianic prophecy, is speaking about the CONFLICT... the spiritual warfare that is ongoing...the battle of the ages between Satan and God.

REDEMPTION: Immediately upon sin entering the world, God gave man hope and promised redemption. God promised a Redeemer through Whom there would be redemption. Redemption means to buy out of the marketplace. Who was sold in marketplaces throughout history? Slaves – those in bondage. Through sin, mankind was in bondage to Satan. Rom. 6:6 – Jesus died so that we might be freed from sin – *that we should no longer be slaves of sin.* Redemption is a breaking free of that bondage to sin/to Satan.

God created for relationship. Yes, mankind sinned. BUT GOD's plan to give man eternal life and dominion over the earth will not be thwarted. God promises the defeat of Satan and the victory of the Redeemer. And, from this victory springs hope and the promise of redemption and ultimate restoration. And so we move forward in the Bible seeing this story unfold! And so, creation, the fall, and redemption – all lead to. . .

RESTORATION: Within God's plan we see that the curse on the earth would be removed. Rom. 8:21 - *the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*. Within God's plan we see a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21; Isa. 65:17-25).

RESTORATION! The fulfillment of all that God had originally decreed!

This is the BIG PICTURE and now we move forward in Revelation.

QUESTIONS

What did you focus on in this lesson? What stood out as, perhaps, a V8 moment (a thought that never occurred to you in the past)?

What questions did this lesson stir up?

Will grasping the "Big Picture" of the Bible impact your study of Scripture? How?

What are you hoping to learn from studying Revelation regarding your knowledge of the Bible as well as intimacy with God/your walk with the Lord?

HOMEWORK

Read Daniel 12:4-9.

Read Revelation 4 and Revelation 5.

Write down your observations regarding these passages.

Write down your questions concerning these passages.