

The Book Of Revelation.

Week 1

Over the next 10 weeks, we will cover each chapter of the Book of Revelation, aiming to provide a clearer understanding of its content.

As you may know, there are many ways to interpret Revelation. We intend to present a biblically centred look at the book and create a space for reflection and engagement to bring the storyline to life.

During the 10 Weeks We Will Cover The Following.

Week 1. Why should we study the book of Revelation?

Week 2. What is the best interpretation to take?

Week 3. (Chapters 1 to 5). John's vision begins, Letters to the churches. The throne room in Heaven.

Week 4. (Chapters 12 to 13). The Antichrist. (Covering old and New Testament verses).

Week 5. (Chapters 6 to 8). The 7 seals.

Week 6. (Chapters 7 to 11). The 7 trumpets and other topics in these chapters.

Week 7. (Chapters 14 to 18). The three angels, the great harvest, bowls of wrath and Babylon the Harlot

Week 8. (Chapters 19 to 22 and Old Testament). We will look at the return of Jesus, and the defeat of the Antichrist. We will study the Millennium reign of Christ, The final war, the New Heaven and New Earth, and Judgement Day

Week 9. Deception And The Great Apostasy

Week 10. Finally, to ground all this information for our lives today we will look at the end time parables of Jesus, and other bible verses.

Why should we study Revelation? Here are 10 simple answers.

Answer 1. Start With what The Bible Says. Jesus Commands Us to Know When He Is Coming Back

We strive to be obedient to Jesus in all aspects of life, as this is paramount. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will obey me.". Our aim is to follow His commands in everything we do, including gaining knowledge about His return.

- In Matthew 24, Jesus says, "When you see these things, flee to Judea.". This command is for the Jews and others living in Israel just before His return, urging them to leave when these events begin to unfold to avoid death. It is a matter of life and death. Jesus instructs His followers to be aware of the events in Israel, emphasizing the importance of being informed.

He also mentions that it will be the worst time in human history, indicating that we must be prepared for this future event.

When the world sees these events unfolding in Israel on the news, we can be more prepared for the tribulation period, and warn others accordingly.

In Matthew 24, Jesus quotes from the book of Daniel, indicating that He expects us to understand Daniel's words and the prophets concerning His return. The Old Testament prophets offer extensive insights about Jesus's second coming.

- Evidently, Jesus wanted us to understand how the end times will unfold. Otherwise, He would not have provided detailed information in the Olivet discourse. We cannot be prepared if we don't know what to expect. Additionally, God would not have given John the Revelation if it were not meant to be read and understood.
- People often quote Matthew 24:36 out of context. Jesus says, "But concerning that day and hour no one knows...". This does not mean we cannot know anything about His return. It is true that we cannot know the exact date, but we are supposed to be ready for His return.
- Jesus doesn't want us to be obsessed with date fixing, because then we might miss out on the importance of living in the present and our duty to reach people today. However, this does not mean we should be ignorant of the signs of His return. We are called to know and be aware of what to expect.
- Jesus also said, "Keep watch,". This implies that there are things to watch for. That will signal His imminent return.
- Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5 that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When people are saying "peace and safety". (likely due to the covenant the antichrist will make with Israel), sudden destruction will come upon them, and they will not escape. The Hamas attack of October 2023 is perhaps a small foretaste of this.
- Paul also notes that we are not in darkness, so this day should not surprise us like a thief. Therefore, let us not be like others who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober
- Paul speaks of spiritual sleep and dull hearts, not physical sleep. The conclusion is clear. If our lives are consumed with the cares and desires of the natural world to the point where we have no time to learn about the end times, then Jesus's return will take us by surprise. The good news is that if we are sober and alert, understanding what scripture says about the end times and walking in faith with our spiritual armour on, this day will not come as a surprise. While we will never know the exact day or hour, we will recognize the season of His return as events unfold according to the biblical narrative.
- Based on the commands from Jesus and Paul, we are to be ready, not just in a general sense as most people believe, but to know what the events will be when they start.
- Can we truly know when He is coming back? The Bible is full of signs and events to expect, so we need to study them to be aware and not be caught off guard. Believers have no excuse not to know when these events begin. Although these signs are scattered throughout the Bible, they require diligent study, like gems to be found, and Revelation brings them all together.

Answer 2. The Book Of Revelation Completes The Full Picture Of Jesus.

In the gospels we see the saviour, healer, deliverer, full of grace and truth.

In Revelation we see the judge, the warrior, we see all the attributes and names that fully describe Jesus.

Without the book of Revelation, we only have half the picture. When Jesus was questioned by Pilate, He said "My kingdom is not of this world". However, when the seventh trumpet sounds, there are loud voices in Heaven which say "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah".

- The book is filled with over 37 different names and descriptions for Jesus in its 22.

Some examples of His names are as follows:

He who tests minds and hearts. Revelation 2 verse 23.

He that holds the seven stars. Revelation 2 verse 1.

The bright morning star, Revelation 22 verse 16.

King of Kings, Revelation 17 verse 14, there is no one greater than Him in all of creation.

- If we want to understand God's sovereignty and that He has everything under control, studying this book will show us how God works. Even in chaos, we can trust Him, both now and if we are alive in those days.
- The book brings the whole Bible together. It is the culmination of the biblical storyline which started in Genesis, leading into the new age to come. Why would we choose to miss out on the final piece to the story and where we are all heading to?
- The book states, "the mystery of God is complete.". We should fully understand what God will do in those days to truly know Him and be set free now.
- If we only see Jesus through the lens of Western church traditions and not the full story of God, we won't fully understand His ways when dark days come upon the earth.
- It creates a true reverence and fear of God. It is too easy to focus on the blessings of God, which the modern church has often emphasised.
- In Revelation, Jesus initiates world-wide catastrophes to bring people to himself. This goes against the grain of Western church theology of blessing. Jesus commands us to take up our cross.

The parable of the prodigal son shows that some people must go through desperate times to come to true repentance. The logic of persecution is repeated all over the old testament and will happen again on a global scale.

Answer 3. Studying End Times Produces Repentant Hearts.

Knowing that Judgment Day follows closely on the heels of end times events, compels us to examine our hearts with sobriety and seriousness. This understanding should prompt us to repent of any sins we are accommodating and cultivate a new awareness of the fear of the Lord.

This renewed awareness of God's majesty and the certainty of His judgment should inspire us to live more faithfully and obediently. It encourages us to align our lives more closely with His will, striving to live in a manner that pleases Him. By doing so, we not only prepare ourselves for the day of judgment but also deepen our relationship with God, experiencing His grace and guidance more fully.

In essence, knowing that Judgment Day follows the events of the end times should serve as a catalyst for spiritual renewal. It should drive us to sincere repentance, foster a deeper understanding of the fear of the Lord, and lead us to live lives marked by holiness and devotion to God.

Answer 4. We Want To Shout What The Bible Shouts, Whisper What It Whispers, And Be Quiet On What It Is quiet.

There are more Verses in the Bible about Jesus's 2nd coming than his 1st coming, this means the bible shouts a lot more about Jesus's second coming than his 1st coming. Some facts in the bible include the following.

- There are 1,845 biblical references to the second coming of Christ.
- The second coming is emphasised in no less than 17 books of the Old Testament.
- 23 of 27 New Testament books explicitly refer to the second coming of Christ.
- There are over 300 references to the Lord's second coming in the 260 chapters of the New Testament. That's 1 out of every 30 verses.
- Of the 333 prophecies about Christ, only 109 were fulfilled in his first coming leaving 224 yet to be fulfilled in his second coming.
- The second coming is the most dominant subject in the New Testament other than salvation.
- Jesus said more than 50 times to be alert and ready for his return!
- The disciples and early church studied and knew about it in great detail, so should we, especially since we are getting closer to those days.

Answer 5. It Is the Least Preached Subject In The Average Church.

Therefore, all the more reason to get a balanced understanding of the end times from a biblical perspective. Why is it so little preached about?

- Because of the many different end times interpretations, it seems safer to avoid the topic altogether to retain credibility, for fear of teaching the wrong interpretation.
- The teaching of wrath and judgment seems incompatible with grace and mercy, leading to concerns about how this message will be received, especially among those who are young in the faith. We need to understand that He is sovereign, without missing out on half of His character that we don't like to preach or teach about.

- If we don't believe we are the generation who will see the Lord's return, what reason is there to focus on end times teaching? It seems better to teach on subjects more relevant to our lives in the here and now.
- Most churches in recent history have avoided teaching the subject of Revelation for many reasons. This is dangerous because it doesn't equip people for testing times. The Bible says a "great falling away" will happen in those days, partly because it hasn't been preached and understood properly. So, we need to study it.

Answer 6. Unless You Are Aware Of The Biblical End Time Narrative There Are Dangers Which Are As Follows.

I could be deceived about the season, and focus on natural things instead of Jesus's return, the biggest issue to all believers and non-believers is deception.

The bible is so clear about deception, and warns against it many times. Over the years there have been many teachers who have led many astray and have given the study of end times a bad name.

Some deception is extreme, for example there have been cults, such as an end-time group in the USA whose leader, Jim Jones, eventually believed he was a reincarnation of Christ. Their cult committed mass suicide in 1978, resulting in 900 deaths.

The two leaders of Heaven's Gate thought they were the two witnesses of Revelation 11, and convinced 39 members to take part in a mass suicide in 1997 in order to ascend through space to board the UFO, which they believed was travelling in the wake of the Hale-Bopp comet.

David Koresh, leader of the Waco cult, isolated his followers, convincing them that end time events were playing out in the news. Eventually, the fear of authorities was so disproportionate, that when police officers accessed the compound to enquire about the well being of their children, it triggered a suicidal chain reaction involving explosives and weapons.

These are extreme examples, but in most cases deception is more subtle, for example some ministries have an interpretation that is mainly correct, but introduce their own ideas into the narrative. By knowing the book and getting close to the word we can be protected from this kind of deception..

We also want to be careful not to predict the date of the rapture or the return of Jesus as the Seventh day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses have done many times. This can lead to panic and confusion.

- Focus on stockpiling and self-preservation.
While it makes sense to store up a good amount of non-perishable food, if the purpose of learning about end times is to find out how much we need to survive in a bunker for 7 years, then we have actually missed the point. The purpose of end times teaching is to help us examine our hearts soberly, focus on a deeper relationship with God, and reach out to the lost, not fearing persecution.
- I could be deceived about the antichrist, expecting him to arise from a particular location on earth, and from a specific system, so not open to recognising the situation brewing in front of us.

- If I don't recognize the antichrist, I could easily be deceived into taking the mark, especially if it ensures I can continue earning and spending money.
- If my life was under threat, I could deny my faith especially if I was not aware that this was the final period, and if I had no idea about the soon coming Earthly Millennium reign of Jesus.

Answer 7. We have good reason to believe that We are near the end times season.

Matthew 24 says, "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree". Some people think the fig tree represents Israel. Therefore the generation who witness her in birth (1948) will see the return of Jesus. Or it could simply mean that as summer follows the budding of the tree, so will Jesus return follow these events.

Either way, there are certain prerequisites that are necessary for the story of the Book of Revelation to unfold, two have happened and one is yet to happen.

Events already taken place

- *The nation of Israel was reborn in 1948. Israel has to exist as a nation for any end time prophecy to make any sense. Speaking of the Antichrist, Daniel says in chapter 11 verse 31, His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress, and abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation. How can there be a daily sacrifice without a Jewish Temple? And how can there be a Jewish Temple unless the Jewish people are back in the land given to Abraham?*
- *East Jerusalem and The temple mount was annexed by Israel in 1967, although they allow Jordan to control the Temple Mount area. This event is a necessary first step if Israel is ever to build a third temple.*

Events to come, which must take place before or at the beginning of the final tribulation period.

- *A peace treaty with Israel. Daniel describes a king of the North, who confirms a covenant with many. However, midway through the 7 year period he reneges on this covenant, and stops the sacrifices, and sets up an abomination in the temple. But it all starts off with a peace treaty with Israel.*

Other events which will prepare the way for end time events, and may happen before or during the final Tribulation Period.

The building of the Third Jewish Temple, which would be necessary for Jesus words in Matthew 24 verses 15 to come to pass. Daniel 8 verses 14 specifically says that there are 2,300 days which equals 6 years and 4 months, from the beginning of sacrifices until the re-consecration of the temple, which we understand to happen when Jesus returns. Taking

these figures and doing some simple maths, we think that the temple will likely be built around the start of the 7 year tribulation period.

Replacing cash with electronic or digital currencies. This would seem to be the only way that credit and debit to your bank account can be prevented or controlled centrally. Revelation 13 verses 17 says that "they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark (of the beast)".

Once cash has been replaced by electronic or digital transactions, either worldwide or in certain parts of the world, all we need is a financial worldwide crash, which is then rescued by a bank connected to the antichrist system. Once this happens, all the groundwork is in place for the mark of the beast. Interestingly the IMF website states that over 100 countries are now in the exploration stage of implementing Central Bank Digital Currencies. Brazil, China, Europe, India and the UK are at the forefront of this exploration.

The Bible tells of other signs that point to the end times.

Ezekiel 37 verses 3 to 14.

Prophecy to these bones and say to them, Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones. I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.

Ezekiel is saying Israel will come back from the Dry Bones.

Isaiah 11 verse 12. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel. He will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Isaiah is saying God will bring the Jewish people from four corners of the earth back to Israel.

Isaiah 5 verse 20. Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

People will call good things bad, and they will call bad things good.

2 Peter 3 verse 5. They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago by the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water.

Peter is saying People will be willingly ignorant of the truth.

Daniel 12 verse 4. Roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.

Daniel is saying in the Time of the end, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.

2 Timothy 3 verse 2. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy.

Matthew 24 verse 6 to 8. You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

Zechariah 12 verse 2 to 3. I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.

Zechariah is saying in the last days the world will turn against Israel.

We need to be more alert than ever as the world around us is being set up for the final period of history in this present age, before King Jesus returns.

Answer 8. Studying The End Times Produces Peace In The Midst Of a Storm.

Jesus described the great tribulation in Matthew 24 verse 21 as "unequaled from the beginning of the world until now...". This includes all the wars and catastrophes in history. Society will be in utter chaos. Luke 21 verse 25 describes it as distress and perplexity, with people's hearts failing from fear. This will be a time when only those who have put God's word first will have peace. Only those who understand the end times' biblical narrative will be able to evangelize in this time of extreme confusion and darkness.

We want to have peace today, and also leading up to the end times. The world is becoming more chaotic, with all sorts of events occurring, and these will only increase as the Bible says. By knowing the final end story, we can have peace and joy in knowing that Jesus is in control.

Answer 9. Use The Book Of Revelation As An Evangelism Tool.

By understanding the events that are going to take place during the most chaotic time in history, we will be able to be a rock for people, to guide people to Jesus.

1. The world will be in utter chaos everywhere, but we can hold firm and show others the way.
2. There will be unprecedented suffering, people dying in the billions, and many will not have a clue what is going on. We can know and guide people to Jesus.
3. Jesus said many will come in my name, so we expect an explosion of false prophets in the end times, but we will know the truth, and protect people from false teaching.

4. We want to be able to point people to Jesus, showing them that these chaotic events have been ordained to bring people to Himself.
5. In the Bible it says mens heart failing them for fear, Luke 21 verse 26, this is a stark statement. Even the believers are going to struggle, We need to have a balanced view of the end times narrative, to have the best chance of staying close to Jesus.

Answer 10. Finally Put An End To Any Confusion.

Many people have avoided studying the Book of Revelation because they find it intimidating or confusing. They either choose to remain willingly ignorant or are put off by the complex symbolism. However, the truth is that the book is not meant to be complicated and is intended to be understood, by those who take the time to study it diligently.

The key to understanding Revelation is to clear up any confusion and focus on the core storyline and message. The fundamental message of the book is straightforward, and the most important symbols are explained and interpreted within the Bible itself.

By taking the time to study Revelation, we can demystify its contents and grasp the essential themes and lessons it presents. This process involves examining the text closely, cross-referencing with other parts of the Bible, and seeking guidance from trusted biblical scholars and teachers.

Ultimately, The Book of Revelation is designed to be accessible and enlightening. Its primary purpose is to reveal who Jesus is as King and God's plan for the future, provide hope and encouragement to believers, and underscore the ultimate victory of good over evil.

By engaging with the book and understanding its symbols and messages, we can gain a deeper appreciation of God's sovereignty and His promises for the end times.

We need to remove our Western mindset and avoid applying any Westernised perspectives to the book itself. The Book of Revelation was written by a Jew. Gentiles are grafted into the Jewish line and faith. To uncover the real meaning of the book, we must understand it through the eyes of first-century Jewish believers.

What Do You Think?

What are the dangers of being obsessed by end times teaching?

And vice versa what are the dangers of being ignorant?

And how do we balance the two?

Is there any point in studying the book of Revelation if it is unlikely to unfold in your lifetime?

There have been wars between Israel & neighbouring nations since its birth. Do we think the current conflict is any different?

From this information are you stirred to need to know more?