

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Just as Genesis is the book of beginnings, Revelation is the book of consummation. In it, the divine programme of redemption is brought to fruition, and the holy name of God is vindicated before all creation.

Revelation is a much misunderstood book.

Many Christians I speak to are frightened of it and rarely if ever, read it. This is because they major on the antichrist and the mark of the beast, which together with teaching that has led them to believe they will experience this time of judgement, effectively keeps them out of the book which in its opening remarks tells us we will be blessed if we read!

Satan has effectively got our eyes off of the main character, causing a partial eclipse of the Lord Jesus Christ, about Whom the book is written. This book is the Revelation - the revealing - of the Lord Jesus Christ which God gave Him to show His servants.

This is a revelation of His Supreme Majesty, the fully revealed magnificence of the Lord Jesus Christ: Who as God declares Holy War against the unbelieving nations, and the nation of Israel, as He refines Israel to prepare her for her Messiah.

It is a time of God's wrath and justice being revealed to an unbelieving world, and His avenging the blood of the saints who have been martyred for the cause of Jesus Christ. Revelation 19:1,2 *'After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven saying, 'Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honour and power to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgements, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her!'*

In the Tribulation period, Satan's function will be the same as it was in the garden of Eden, to test the heart of mankind, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 *'The coming of the lawless one (antichrist) is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.'*

He is granted power for three and a half years only - Revelation 13:15 *'He was **granted** power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name.'*

When his job is done, he will be cast into the lake of fire, which was the judgement passed upon him in the garden of Eden, together with the beast and the false prophet.

When we study at this apocalyptic book – which means a book which warns about the coming destruction and devastation – we must read it in the context of God’s holiness and judgements which come upon the unrighteous and in the context of His total omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence. He alone holds optimum power. The enemy can do nothing without permission.

We are looking at what is known in the Old Testament as ‘The Day of the Lord’ which is the day of darkness and not light. (Amos 5:17).

The scenario unfolds to John on the Isle of Patmos, where he is shown what has been, what is now and what is to come. From Revelation 6 onwards, we have the unfolding of the judgements on Israel and the nations, culminating in the rise of the antichrist and the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, all of which take place during a period of 7 years, which are split into two time periods of three and a half years each. The second three and a half years sees the rise of the one world government, headed by the antichrist, a one world monetary system and one world religion. This time is known as the Great Tribulation and the study of it is called eschatology, which is a study of end time events.

The predominant source of wrath, mentioned without apology, is the Lord Himself.

It is God Who is going to bring righteous wrath and judgement upon the unbelieving world and upon the nation of Israel. From chapter 6 to chapter 16, we see the outpouring of the wrath of the Lamb as only He is found worthy to open the seals. (Revelation 6:16) He is the source of the seal and trumpet and vial judgements.

Revelation 14:7 states *‘Fear God and give Him glory for the hour of His judgement has come. Worship Him who made the heavens, the sea and the springs of water’*. This is one terrible period of judgement that will come upon the earth.

Jesus says in Matthew 25: that the time has been shortened for the sake of the elect - the elect being his chosen people Israel who will be saved out of this terrible time because God has decreed its length in advance – 7 years. Known as the time of the Great Tribulation, or the time of Jacob’s trouble, *‘but he will be saved out of it’*. Jeremiah 30:7.

Satan has managed to put fear in the church because of the references to the antichrist, the mark of the beast etc. In fact none of that will affect us. We will not be here, and as we study the background to this book it will become very clear why we will be removed before the time of ‘Jacob’s trouble’ and the time of God’s judgement upon mankind, God does not judge the righteous with the wicked - ever.

It has been said, it is impossible to know the truth and not be responsible – we are responsible therefore, to warn, exhort and encourage believers and unbelievers alike, to look up and understand the signs of the times.

Be blessed as you walk with me through this most amazing of books. Tomorrow’s news today.