

A Commentary of the Book of
Revelation

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

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INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Its Current Significance.

Revelation 22:10 instructs to "*Seal **not** the things of this book.*" Throughout history the Book of Revelation has been much understood and neglected. Christians down through the ages have known that Christ's return is presented in Scripture as imminent, but because of the world situation the Second Coming looked distant. There was little interest in prophesy until the Jews returned to Palestine in 1948 and reestablished the Nation of Israel in ancient Canaan today called Palestine. This dramatic event kindled a vigorous new interest in this Book. The Jews returning Palestine, coupled with the drawing to a close of the past the 20th Century, the realigning of European nations and the recent moving toward a world government have affirmed the relevancy of the Book of to our time.

The book is the consummation of God's revelation. It fittingly has the last place ending the scriptures and God's revelation to man. The key passage in the Book is Revelation 1:19, which give the scope of this revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ. It says, "*Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.*" Therefore, the material in this Book is the final revelation from God addressees the things that John had seen in the past. Further, it shows the present situation at the time of the writing of the book, and the future things that would come thereafter. Revelation 4-22, reveals the future end time events that extend into the future unto eternity and establishes this as the end of God's revelation to man. God is showing the past, present, and the unfolding of future history.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION CAN BE CONTRASTED WITH THE BOOK OF GENESIS:

1. Commencement of life. Consummation of heaven and earth.	Gen. 1 Rev. 21:1
2. Entrance of sin into the world. End of sin.	Gen. 3:1-19 Rev. 21:27; 22:3
3. Dawn of Satan. Doom of Satan.	Gen. 3:1-7 Rev. 20:10
4. Tree of life relinquished. Tree of life restored.	Gen. 2:9,3:24 Rev. 22:2
5. Death enters. Death exits.	Gen. 2:17-5:5 Rev. 21:4
6. Sorrow begins. Sorrow banished forever.	Gen. 3:16 Rev. 21:4

Schools of Thought as to the Interpretation of the Book.

The Four Main Views of Interpretation.

Preterist View: A Latin word that means "past." It teaches the prophecies in Book were fulfilled in the period of the early church.¹ This false view teaches the seven year Tribulation (Daniel's 70th Week) occurred in 70 AD when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews dispersed. It views the book as symbolic rather than revealing actual literal events of prophetic history. Clearly, historically, the events beginning in Revelation 4:1 and following have not yet occurred in time. Nothing in history can compare with the various worldwide judgments that God says will be poured out on earth and certainly Jesus Christ has not returned to earth and set up His Millennial Kingdom at the Book of Revelation plainly states.

Historical View: This school of interpretation is similar in its teaching to the Preterist view stating the events of the book are a record of the unfolding of **past** history. Examples: Fourth Trumpet Judgment "the failure of Rome" (Rev. 8:12-13); Fifth Trumpet Judgment "the rise of the Moslems" (Rev. 9:1-12); Chapters 13-17, the rise of the Papacy of Roman Catholicism. As with the Preterist view, this interpretation is inadequate in explaining the catastrophic events prophesied in the Book of Revelation. This view was popular during the Reformation and was first form of Post Millennialism. John Walvoord concludes each generation of those who held to the historical view saw the events as ending their generation.² As many as fifty different interpretations of the book of have evolved depending on the time and circumstances of the expositor.

Idealist or Spiritual View: This view states the book is totally allegorical has no reference to history, past, present or future and its symbolic language has spiritual meanings only. Clearly this view is in error. (See Section VIII for an explanation as to why God used symbol language)

Prophetic School or Futurist View: This is the correct view that based on a literal interpretation of Scripture. It sees the book as the actual recorded events of past and future history. The Prophetic View interprets the book in light Revelation 1:19. (See below - The Key to the Book) What is recorded as past is past. What is stated as future is yet to come. This represents the Pre-Millennial view held by fundamentalists and conservatives who correctly see the book of Revelation as recording actual past, present and future history. This futuristic approach sees the book outlined as follows:

Chapter 3 - Beginning in John's day an unfolding of the church history which ends with the Rapture.

Chapters 4-18 - Future events the beginning of the seven-year Tribulation that ends at the Second Coming of Christ.

Chapter 19 - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 20 - The Millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

Chapters 21-22 - Events at the end of the Millennium, the New Heaven and Earth and then Eternity future.

THE KEY TO THE BOOK. Rev. 1:19. *"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."* John is told to record the things that he had seen, the things that were presently in John's time, and the events that would occur in the future. God in this verse is giving us the key to correctly interpreting the book. Throughout history many who have misinterpreted the book because they failed to use the key God provided. God revealed to John literal events in history that John had seen and revealed to him what the future held. The *"things thou hast seen"* were events John had witnessed in the past. (Rev. 1:1-20) The *"things which are"* were current situations in John's day. (Rev. 2-3) The *"things that shall be hereafter"* refer to the prophetic history yet future to John's time. (Rev. 4-22)

As an apostle of Jesus Christ, John was an eye witness to all Christ did, including His death and resurrection. John also lived longer than all the apostles and at the writing of this book was an old man. It had been at least sixty years since Christ's death and resurrection and if John had been just twenty when the Lord called him he would have been at least eighty years old or older when God revealed this book to him. His ministry was for most of his life in Asia Minor giving him firsthand knowledge of the churches there.

INTERPRETIVE VIEWS OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

There are four main views or ways that the Book of Revelation is interpreted. Each view is related to the coming Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ in His earthly Kingdom promised to the nation of Israel. (See Ezekiel 36-48).

Post-Millennial View: Post-Millennialism teaches the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will follow the thousand years of peace and righteousness on earth. This optimistic view sees the events of the Book of Revelation as mostly figurative and that this present age will end with a period of righteousness and blessings through the preaching of the Gospel. It applies the promises God made to Israel also with the institution of the church. It teaches that the churches through their evangelist zeal would eventually win the world for Christ and thereby prepare the mankind for the Second Coming of Christ. It does not view the Kingdom as literally being on earth, but rather a spiritual one in heaven. It does not see the return of Christ as imminent, but sometime in the far distant future and certainly not our time. The Tribulation is seen as symbolic in nature and not a literal prophecy of events within a future seven year period. This view sees the return of the Lord as a singular event with one general resurrection. It is based on the erroneous view that God has set aside Israel and given the promises made them her to the churches. The error of this view is compounded in that it ignores the dispensational truths taught in God's word. God in the Old Testament dispensation worked with the nation of Israel, but today is working in this dispensation through the local churches. There is a future dispensation called the "The Kingdom Age" or Millennium when God will reestablish the nation of Israel and Jesus Christ will literally rule on earth from His throne in Jerusalem. The Postmillennial position was fueled by the great missionary efforts around the turn of the 19th Century that optimistically thought their evangelistic work would convert most of the world to Christ. However, after the horrible events of World War I and the state of the world since, most saw the fallacy of this view and it has been largely abandoned.

Amillennial View: "A" millennial: means "no" thus Amillennial means no millennial. This false view states we are presently in the Great Tribulation and the next prophetic event will be the Second Coming of Christ and a "Sheep and Goat Judgment" with a general judging of the world with the saved on the right hand of God and the lost separated on the left. This view falsely interprets Matthew 25:32 as supporting this view. Actually, this passage addresses the judgment at the end of Daniel's 70th Week which is the Tribulation. The Amillennialists teach that there is no thousand year reign of Christ or Millennium and that eternity begins immediately after the Second Coming. It ignores or symbolizes all the Old and New Testament prophecy concerning the restoration of Israel and the many unconditional promises God made to them as a nation. (See Gen. 15:18, Isa. 10:21-22, 19:25, 43:1,65:8-9, Jer. 30:22, 32:38, Eze. 36:1-48:35, 43:24, 30-31, Mic. 7:19-20, Zech. 13:9, Mal. 3:16-1) Further is "spiritualizes" the thousand years of Revelation 20:5-7 and denies they are literal. The Amillennialist falsely concludes that God rejected Israel totally and that all the promises God made to Israel were transferred symbolically to the churches in this dispensation. Therefore, there will be no thousand year millennial reign of Christ on earth. It does not accept the literal interpretation of the Book of Revelation and instead spiritualizes or allegorizes most of prophesy to make it fit into their interpretation. This false view is held by most Protestant denominations, most Covenant theologians and many in the Reformed movement. Is the position of most the Southern Baptist Convention schools. It should be noted that even though the Amillennial view is held by most SBC schools many conservative SBC churches are Premillennial.

Pretribulational, Premillennial View: This is the biblical view of end time prophecy and is held by those who correctly hold to a literal interpretation of the Bible. The Bible teaches that the next prophetic event to be fulfilled is the rapture of the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ refers to all believers saved in this the Church Age which began in Acts 2. (See 1 Thess. 4:13-18, 1 Cor. 15:51-52) The rapture is followed by the seven year Tribulation (Daniel's 70th Week - Dan. 9:27). At the end of the seven year Tribulation Christ returns to earth at His the Second Coming. The Second Coming is followed by the Millennium, in which Christ will fulfill His promises to Israel and set up the promised earthy kingdom. Christians in this dispensation of the Church Age will be a part of the Millennial kingdom serving the Lord Jesus as He rules the earth. (2 Cor. 6:2-5) Afterward the one thousand year kingdom will end with the Great White Throne Judgment in which Jesus will judge the unsaved and they will be cast into the Lake of Fire. (Rev. 20:15-18) Following the final judgment of the unsaved the Lord will establish the New Heaven and Earth. (Rev. 21-22) The earth will have been purified of all sin and sinners, and the city, the New Jerusalem, comes down from heaven. The redeemed of the Lord continue to serve the Lord through eternity.

Mid-Tribulational, Pre-Wrath View: Although there are variances in these views, all these false views teach that the church will go through some part of the seven year Tribulation, but be raptured sometime before the Second Coming before God pours His wrath upon the earth. The Pre-Wrath view holds that the first part of the Tribulation will be a time of relative peace which will be broken by Satan who possesses the Antichrist's releasing his hatred for God on the world. The view holds that the Christians will go into the Tribulation, but be raptured before the judgments of God are poured on the earth. Most who hold the views see the Rapture at the middle of the seven year Tribulation after the first three and a half years and at the time when Satan is cast down to earth (Rev. 12) The

major flaw in these views is two-fold. First, this view fails to recognize that the seven year Tribulation is God once again working with the Jews in preparation for the restoration of Israel. Thus, the mix God's plans for Israel with His for Christians in this the Church Age. Second, is that they teach that the Seal judgments are the judgments of man and not of God. However, Revelation 5:5 plainly states that Jesus, "*the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.*" Revelation 6:1f states that the Lamb (Jesus Christ) opens the first and the subsequent seven seals which begin the seven year Tribulation and God's outpouring of His wrath on the earth. Jesus Christ is God and He is the Judge. (John 1:1; 1 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 20:11-15) (See Appendix One, which explains in detail, why the Prewrath view is incorrect)

DEFINITION OF TERMS.

Rapture: Taken from the words "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. "Rapture" is the derived from a Latin word *reperere* meaning "to catch up" or "snatched away in body or spirit." It is used to refer to when Christ returns to earth and takes His bride (Rev. 21:2), that is made up of all saved people living and dead since Acts 2, when the Church Age began. This event is the resurrection of the believers in who will have lived in the dispensation of the Church Age only. (See 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-52)

Body or Bride of Christ: Christians in this dispensation of the Church Age are referred to in the New Testament as the "body or bride" of Christ. (See Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 10:16, 12:12, 27; Eph. 4:12; Rev. 18:23, 21:9, 22:17) Christians have a specific place in God's program and specific promises. The word "church" is often used to denote the bride of Christ; however the New Testament teaches the "ekklesia" (translated "church") is an assembly of believers who meet in a specific geographical location. The New Testament does not teach a universal or catholic view of Christians all being in one universal "church." There is only one time the New Testament shows all Christians gathered together in one place at one time and that is at the rapture.

The Great Tribulation (Daniel's 70th Week): This is the seven year period of time in which God will again begin to work with Israel. It is referred to as "Daniel's Seventh Week" based on the time table of Daniel 9:25-27. It is the period when God will pour His wrath on earth in the Seals, Trumpets and Bowl judgments described in Rev. 6:1-18:24. It is the time the Antichrist and the false prophet will reign on earth. It will also be a time of great evangelizing of the world by the 144,000 saved Jews who accept Jesus as their Messiah (Rev. 6:9-11, 7:1-8, 14:1-5).

This seven year period begins after the rapture when God restarts His prophetic clock and again begins to deal with the nation of Israel. The next prophetic event in history will be the rapture. Israel rejected their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and God temporarily stopped the fulfillment of prophecy concerning Israel. In other words the advancement of God's prophetic clock was temporarily stopped after 70 AD, when Titus the Roman Emperor's son destroyed Jerusalem, the Temple, and the nation of Israel. Biblical Judaism has not been practiced on earth since that time. However, in the Tribulation, Israel and Judaism will be fully restored and the Temple will be rebuilt. (See Eze. 37-42) With the rebuilding of the Temple and worship according to the Old Testament, biblical Judaism will be resumed. All the events of the Tribulation center on the restoration nation of Israel. Christians of this the Church Age will be in heaven with the Lord awaiting His return to earth at the Second Coming. As the Tribulation period advances all the nations of earth will

come against her. However, at the end of the seven year Tribulation, Christ comes back to earth touching down at the Mount of Olives. He destroys all the enemies of Israel and purges the earth of all sinners and then sets up His kingdom, which God promised to Israel. (See Micah 4:1-8; Hag. 2:7-9; Zech. 2:10-13; 6:12-13; 8:1-8, 13, 18-23) The events of the Tribulation begin in Rev. 4:1 and continue until Rev. 19, with the Second Coming of Christ.

The Second Coming of Christ: Christ will return to the earth visibly and will come to purge the world of sinners and set up His Kingdom over which He will reign for one thousand years (Acts 1:11, Matt. 24:29-31, Rev. 19). The Second Coming is divided into two parts taking place seven years apart. The first part of the Second Coming is when Christ comes for His bride at the Rapture. (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58) He does not come to earth, but the believers who have died and are alive when He comes, ". . . shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." (1 Thess. 4:17) The "them" of verse 17, is referring to those of this present Church Age who died in Christ. At the Second Coming, after the seven years of tribulation, He will appear in the air and physically return to earth at the Mount of Olives, and bringing swift judgment to earth and removing all unbelievers. The events of the second part of the Second Coming are recorded in Matthew 24:29-31, 25:31-46, and Rev. 19:1-21.

The Millennium: The word "Millennium" means one thousand and stands for the one thousand year reign of Christ on the Earth following the Great Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ. After Christ returns to earth He will set up His Kingdom in Jerusalem and then rule on earth for one thousand years. This kingdom will be the restored kingdom that God promised to the nation of Israel. Further God made unconditional promises to Israel in four yet unfulfilled covenants. Being unconditional, their fulfillment does not rest on Israel's obedience, but solely on God word. God will bring about the consummation of these promises regardless of man's input or response. These promises are such that they can only be fulfilled in the context of a future kingdom ruled by the Messiah, Jesus Christ. These covenants are briefly explained as follows:

In the **Abrahamic Covenant** God unconditionally promised that Abraham would have an eternal "seed" which become a great nation. Further God made very specific promises that would result from the covenant. (Gen. 12:1-3, 13:14-17, 15:1-21, 17:1-21, 22:15-18) God told Abraham this kingdom and land would be to his descendants and would have specific borders. (Gen. 15:18) The covenant was reiterated and confirmed to Isaac (Gen. 26:2-5) and Jacob "Israel" (Gen. 28:10-16) for eternity. History records that the extent of the promised kingdom has never materialized, thus it must be a future kingdom.

The **Palestinian Covenant** promised to Moses a world-wide gathering of the Jews and the repossession of the land after their last diaspora. (Deut. 29:1-30:20)

The **Davidic Covenant** clearly promised repeatedly that God would restore the throne of David in a future kingdom. Therefore, after His Second Coming Jesus will sit on the throne of David and rule the world from Jerusalem. (See 2 Sam. 7:14-16; Jer. 31:31-34; Luke 1:32-33, also Amos 8:9-17)

The **New Covenant** promised a spiritual regeneration of Israel. (Jer. 31:31-34) God promised that in the future all of Israel, every individual, would know the Lord and serve Him.

The **Supposed Covenants of Grace and Works**. Nowhere in the Bible does God mention any covenant of grace or works. These are supposed covenants imagined by the Reformed movement and Covenant theology to explain its erroneous views.

It is paramount that one must understand that the covenants were made by God to Israel and to Israel alone. Ignoring this truth is one of the greatest mistakes a Bible student can make. The details and elements of these covenants pertain to Israel and only through God working with Israel will they be accomplished. It is a serious mistake to try and impose these unique promises on the institution of the local church in this dispensation. The fulfillment of these promises will not be made in this dispensation of the Church Age, but in a future kingdom promised by God. Daniel promised there would be 490 years to when the Messiah, the most Holy, would be anointed. That will come to pass exactly as promised at the end of the last seven years that God has appointed in His working with Israel to bring her to Himself. Four hundred and eighty-three years has expired, and now for two thousand years God's prophetic clock has temporarily stopped, but awaits the moment the Antichrist will sign the peace treaty with Israel and it begins ticking once again. (Dan. 9:24-27) When the 490 years is completed, Christ will return as God promised and fifty days later set up the Millennial kingdom and thus fulfill all His promises to Israel.

The Millennium will be a time of peace on earth with Satan and his evil angels locked up in the "bottomless pit". Revelation 20:4 "*...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*" Those believers on earth, who survived the Tribulation, when Christ returns at the Second Coming will go into the Millennium in their physical bodies and repopulate the world. At the end of the Millennium, Satan who was bound during the Kingdom, is loosed from the pit and leads a rebellion against Christ (Rev.20:1-3). The Millennium ends after the thousand years is past and Satan will be loosed out of the "bottomless pit" and shall deceive many who were born during the thousand years. Satan will lead a worldwide revolt against Christ, but then Christ utterly defeats Satan and his armies and they are cast in the Eternal Lake of Fire (Gehenna), called the Second Death. (Rev. 20:3, 7-10, 11-15) Eternity follows the Millennium, with a New Heaven and Earth. (Rev. 21-22)

Pre-Millennium: The prefix "pre" added to the word Millennium means "before" the Millennium. This is the position that the Rapture and the seven year Tribulation and Second Coming of Christ will happen before the Millennium. This biblical view is based on a literal interpretation of Scripture and sees the Rapture, Tribulation, Second Coming and the Millennium as actual prophetic events in the future. This view is held by fundamentalists and conservatives.

Pre-Tribulational: It means the rapture of the church is "pre" (before) the Tribulation and will occur before the seven year Tribulation period when God brings the various judgments on the Earth prior to His Second Coming. This is the correct view.

The Great White Throne Judgment: After the Millennial Reign of Christ and Satan's final revolt Christ sits in a final Judgment of all unbelievers of all time. Rev. 20:11-15, describes the event and the name is taken from verse 11, "*and I saw a great white throne.*" At present the lost or unbelievers who die go to a place called, "Hades" and translated "hell" in the King James Bible. But Hades is only the temporary abiding place of the unsaved dead. Since time began, the unsaved that have died have gone to Hades and now await the final judgment which is the Great White Throne Judgment (GWT). Revelation 20:11-15

prophecies that Christ sits on the throne and judges all lost men according to their works on earth and then they all are cast into the Eternal Lake of Fire, which the Bible calls "Gehenna." There are no saved people involved in the Great White Throne Judgment.

The New Jerusalem: This is the beginning of eternity or the eternal state of things. (See Rev. 21-22) The earth will be destroyed and purged of all sin. Then the new order will be set up with a new heaven and earth. (See Isa. 65:17, 66:22, 2 Peter 3:13, Rev. 21:1)

The New Heaven and Earth: Revelation 21:1 states that God will create a new heaven and earth and the first earth will pass away.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

The Title of the Book: The book has incorrectly been called the Revelation of John or the Revelation of Saint John the Divine. Verse 1 states that this is the "Revelation of Jesus Christ." Although God choose the Apostle John to pen the book, the revelation is not his, but Jesus Christ's (2 Peter 1:21) It is the revelation "about" or "concerning" Jesus Christ and comes from Jesus Christ Himself. The word translated "revelation" is the Greek word "*apocalypse*" and means, "a manifestation, or to uncover, unveil or disclose." As it is used here it means that the purpose of the book is to reveal the person of Jesus Christ and His future prophetic plans. Contrast this with word "apocryphal" which means "hidden."³ (Examples of the use of the Greek word "*apocalypse*" in the New Testament: Romans 8:19, "*manifestation*"; 1 Corinthians 1:7. "*coming*"; 2 Thessalonians 1:7, "*shall be revealed*"; 1 Peter 1:7, "*appearing*"; 1 Peter 1:13, "*revelation*".)

The Reason God Instructed John to Write the Book. Note the stated reason in the first verse of the Book is, "*to shew unto His servants which must shortly come to pass.*" Clearly, the book was written to the "servants" of God which would include all believers. In Verse 3, God says "blessed" are those that read, hear and keep the teachings the book. Eight times phrase is used, "*he that hath an ear, let him hear.*" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22: 13:9) In light of the clear teaching of 1 Corinthians 2:14, only the child of God can discern these things.

How did message come? Verse 1, states that this Scripture came "to" John "from" God "by" an angel (messenger). (Rev. 1:4, 9; 22:8) In Verse 9, John says he is on the aisle of Patmos a prisoner. The Isle of Patmos was a fifty mile square island located in the Aegean Sea, southwest of Ephesus. Extra-biblical history, states that John was sent to Patmos in exile as a prisoner during the persecution of the Roman Emperor Domitian. In spite of his advanced age John was forced to work as a miner on the island. After the death of Domitian (96 AD), John was permitted to return to Ephesus tradition says he died there.

The Promise of the Book. (Rev. 1:3) The book has a stated promise to those who read, hear and apply its teaching. God promises that those who read, hear and then keep the teachings in the Book will be blessed. (Rev. 1:3)

The verb "read" is used in the New Testament of both private, (Luke 4:16; Acts 8:28, 30, 32; 2 Cor. 3:15; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27, and Rev. 1:3) and of public reading of the Scriptures. (Matt 12:3, 5, 21:16, 24:15) "Hear" is also a verb, referring to listening to a voice. The meaning of the word "keep" denotes the action of to watch over, preserve and to observe or give heed to something. The adjective "blessed" is the same word used in

Matthew 5 in the Beatitudes. It is used seven times in the Book of Revelation in Rev. 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, and 22:7. It is a general reference to the state of happiness and peace concerning the future that believers have who read, hear, and apply the teachings of the book.

God is telling us to repeatedly read and study the book employing its principles in our daily lives and reaping the blessing which will be the natural result. The blessing that is obtainable is qualified to those who read and hearing, and who KEEP the things written in the book. (See James 1:23, 2:18-20) The teachings of the Book of Revelation are to be applied in how the believer lives his life.

Lehman Strauss concludes, "There is no doubt in my mind, however, that the promised blessing is to all who take up this book and read it with regularity and reverence."⁴ He further states that, "All who willingly submit to Christ will have little difficulty with this book."⁵

It is a blessing to know what God is going to do in the future. It is truly comforting to know that the evil course this world will one day end. Jesus Christ will one day rule over all the world and those that believe and place their trust in Him will reign with Him. It is also an encouragement for those who preach and teach God's truth and are belittled and persecuted for their uncompromising stand for Christ, that they will one day see the truth revealed to all men. No longer will Christ's name be slandered and His word cheapened and polluted by rebellious unbelievers and false cults and churches. The blasphemous mouths of false teachers and churches that are used of Satan to deceive so many will be silenced.

Various "Blessings" found in the book. The blessing of:

1. Challenge	1.3 (Read and follow)
2. Comfort	1:13
3. Cautiousness	16:15
4. Calling	19:9
5. Conquest	20:6
6. Cherishing	22:7
7. Conformity	22:14

THE TIME FRAME OF THE BOOK: "FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND?" (Rev. 1:1, 3)

The Time Frame of the Book. Note that verse 1 says, "*things which must shortly come to past.*" And verse 3 states, ". . . for the time is at hand."

The word "time" refers to a "season." For an example: The calendar records the change of seasons from winter to summer. Spring is a transitional time when the weather begins to change from winter to summer. As the days become warmer and you know that summer will soon arrive. (It begins June 21) It then becomes hotter and dryer, and there is a period when it seems there is little change and the nights are shorter. But as time passes the nights grow longer and it begins to turn cooler, even without a calendar you know fall is approaching followed by winter.

Similarly, the Bible reveals future "seasons" in time. We are presently in the season that is referred to as the Church Age or Dispensation of the Churches. How long this season will last is only known by the God the Father. (Matt. 24:36) The present season we know has lasted two thousand years. Although, the events of the Tribulation have not occurred we can see the season beginning to change. For example, the nation of Israel has been brought back into existence after nearly two millenniums. Israel plays the center role in the circumstances the Bible reveals will happen during the seven year Tribulation when God's wrath is poured on earth. Before 1948, and the reestablishment of Israel in Palestine, it was hard to imagine how Israel could once again be a nation. It is much easier to see the events of the Tribulation happening now than it was before this developed. Almost daily the news to some degree is focused on Israel and its conflicts with the surrounding Arab nations bent on its total destruction.

Another example is that we can see a modern trend towards a world government. Modern technology has made the one world government controlled by the Antichrist a present day reality. The European nations now have united in the new European Union and in January 2002 issued a common currency. Although the EU is presently in serious trouble it still appears that the nations of the world are beginning to line up toward the final stages that will end the end time prophecies.

The United States in the past decade has been declining in power and prestige especially since 2008. With the current times being so unsettled and volatile the United States could lose its position and strength almost overnight. Politicians, government officials, the new media are constantly talking about the United States falling off an economic "cleft." For the first time in history many are predicting the imminent demise of America. America's current foreign policy is in a shambles and with drawn-out wars, that seem to be unwinnable, the decline of the dollar in world markets, the USA's indebtedness of 16 Trillion dollars to China's and other lenders, coupled with China's rising influence, the rampant runaway nation debt fueled by unsustainable entitlement programs, is destroying the nation's status and power as the world's sole superpower. The Arab nations are falling like dominos in what has been called the "Arab Spring of 2011). Arab nations are being overtaken by extremist radical Muslims bent on world domination. Terrorist attacks are also increasing. Iran getting a nuclear weapon soon aids greater instability to the world. The picture certainly looks bleak and like the end times is near.

Catastrophic geological events are unfolding all around the world. Jesus' prophecy stating that, "*For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places*". (Matthew 24:7) These events are happening with such frequency and magnitude their significance cannot be ignored or shrugged off. Many believe the time is short and the Lord will soon return.

The Tribulation will last for seven years and will be followed by the Second Coming when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to the earth purges the world of sinners. Following will be an interval of fifty days before the Millennium begins and Christ sets up His kingdom on Earth. The Bible records that the Millennium will last for one thousand years and be the time when God fulfills His promises to Israel made in the Old Testament. At the beginning of the Tribulation the Jews will be re-gathered to their Promised Land and when Christ's earthly kingdom is set up the land will be divided among the twelve tribes and Israel and the world will experience a period of peace where the results of the sin curse placed on the earth at the Fall of Man in Genesis 3 will be reversed. It must be understood that the

prophecies concerning the Tribulation and the Millennium are imminent, but they are not applicable to us today as these events are yet future and will occur after Christ returns for His bride. God's prophetic clock is temporary stopped and will only begin again until after the rapture, when the Antichrist is revealed, and when the peace treaty is signed by Israel. Although many current events mimic prophecy no prophetic events are presently occurring. The prophetic events of the Book of Revelation will begin after the Rapture of the Bride of Christ, which are those that have believed and received Him as Savior by faith since the establishment of the institution of the local church. (See Acts 2)

THE BOOK OF REVELATION REVEALS PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE FUTURE.

The word "prophecy" is used seven times as a noun in book in Revelation 1:3 and 11:6; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18, 19. The word is used both as being predictive and representative in revealing the mind of God and having application in our lives.

THE BOOK BEGINS WITH A PROMISE AND ENDS WITH A WARNING.

The Book begins with the promise of Revelation 1:3, *"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."*

The Book ends with a warning to not add or remove anything of God's revelation. (Rev. 22:18) *"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."* (Revelation 22:18-19)

This is a warning that not only applies to this Book, but to the entire Bible because the scope of the Book extended into the future from John's day and into eternity. It precludes that God is today giving modern revelation. When the Book of Revelation was complete God's word to man was complete and He is now not giving mankind any further instructions.

All of the cults such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons), and Roman Catholic Church conclude that this warning only applies to the Book of Revelation. They fail to understand that the sixty six books of the Bible are God's complete revelation to man. This book is not isolated from the rest of God's revelation, but is the concluding statements of God that deal with the finalization of His plans for the world. Revelation 1:19 states, *"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."* Clearly this gives this Book and the statement of Revelation 22:18-19 a much wider application than just the Book itself.

Many have blatantly corrupted the word of God with false translations such as the Jehovah's Witnesses' New World Translation, Bible paraphrases such as Taylor's "Living Bible" and "The Word." Modern translations presents themselves as being better translations when in fact they are based on the corrupt ancient manuscripts and the faulty work of unbelieving modern scholars such as Westcott and Hort in the 19th Century.

Modern translations such as the New International Version (NIV) have literally removed or changed thousands of words and passages from God's word.

A more subtle way of "adding to" or "omitting from" God's Word is found in the traditions of the so-called church "Fathers" or writing of modern day church prophets and leaders. Examples would be the Roman Catholic Pope speaking "*ex cathedra*" meaning with the full authority of Jesus Christ. In other words, when the Pope speaks *ex cathedra* it is to be received the same as if Christ had literally stated his words. This means the Roman Church is placing statements by the Pope, church councils and traditions as being equal with Scripture. Modern prophets who founded the various "Christian" religions, including modern revelation given by TV/Radio evangelists does not come from God. The Pentecostals and Charismatics are some of the most blatant of violators, who through their supposed modern revelations and experiences are deceiving millions.

Another modern trend of adding to the Bible is to falsely claim current events as fulfilled prophecy: Examples are misapplying various prophecies of scriptures as being fulfilled in such modern day events such as Israel's Six Day war of 1967, the Yom Kippur war of 1973, the Egyptian/Israeli peace treaty, the Camp David Accords and the Begin/Sadat treaty during the Carter administration and other world events. The practice of claiming fulfilled prophecy in our day by the TV and radio evangelists is misleading, and a gross misrepresentation of God's word.

This is one reason that those who advocate that God is giving modern revelation conveniently limit the application of Revelation 22:18-19 to only the Book of Revelation. Modern revelation offers no test to verify its validity. However with the Bible, which has stood the test of time for 3500 years can be tested to see whether its statements are true or false. These modern false prophets who add to the Word of God fail to accept that the sixty six books of the Bible represent the completed inerrant and infallible word of God. The position of the Book of Revelation, the position of these verses, and its contents are not by chance. They are the last inspired words of God has given to man and conclude His written word. Since the completion of Book of Revelation, over two thousand years ago, God has not given any new revelation to His written word and nothing more is needed.

ARE THERE MODERN PROPHETS?

There are no modern day prophets because the Bible is complete and is God's total and final Word or revelation to man. A preacher or Bible teacher can "prophesy" by teaching the revealed prophecies and doctrines of the Bible, but God is not giving new information that He has not previously given.

Many false teachers are misapplying biblical prophecy are proclaiming fulfilled prophecy in our day. Biblically there is only one prophetic event recorded in Scripture that applies to the Church Age and this dispensation we are now in. That prophetic event will be the Rapture of Christ's body made up of all believers dead and alive since Pentecost (See 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-57; Acts 2). After the Rapture, when the Seven Year Tribulation begins, the events of prophecy, as recorded in the Old and New Testaments, will again begin. God will start again His prophetic clock and time will move toward the completion of His work with the Nation of Israel. The seven year Tribulation will end with the Second Coming of the Messiah and the establishment of His Millennial kingdom on earth.

When the Nation of Israel rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah they also rejected God's promised Kingdom for them. God did not set Israel aside or permanently reject them. He temporarily stopped His prophetic clock, withdrew the offer of the kingdom for that time. (See Jer. 51:5, Zec. 12:1-3, Rom. 11:1-36, Heb. 6:13-20)

God revealed to Daniel the events which involved the coming of their Messiah, His death, the Great Tribulation, and His Second Coming (Dan. 9:20-27). These events involve God's unprovisional promise of the Kingdom to His chosen people Israel. Therefore, the kingdom will be established exactly as God recorded in the Old Testament and was presented to Israel in the Gospels.

The chronology of these events as recorded in the Old Testament does not mention our present dispensation of the Church Age, with God working with the Gentiles through the institution of the local church. Clearly, today we are in an interval period where the Lord Jesus Christ is gathering to Himself a people. It began on the Day of Pentecost and will end with the Rapture. (1 Thess. 4:13-18). The Lord will return in the air as 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 records and remove all Christians which are His bride from the earth. Immediately, after the Rapture God's prophetic clock will again begin marking time as the events of the Daniel's 70th Week unfold and end with the Second Coming followed by the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ. God's promises are sure and He told Israel that He would never forsake them. He did not qualify His promises based on the condition that they had to be faithful to Him. Therefore, God's unconditional promises made to Israel will be fulfilled in the future actually as He said they would.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE BOOK.

The Apostle John. Within the Book the writer claimed to be the brother of those who were suffering persecution. He stated his name is John in Revelation 1:1, 4, 9; 22:8.

The early church fathers recorded that the Apostle John was the author. Justin Martyr wrote about 135 AD that the Apostle John had written prophecies concerning the Millennial reign of Christ. Irenaeus (180 AD) quoted the book five times and stated the author was the Apostle John. Clement of Alexandria (200 AD) accepted the book as Scripture. A surviving document called the Mauratorian Fragment (170 AD) lists the Book of Revelation as part of the Canon of Scripture at the end of the second Century.

When was the Book written?

The most substantiated evidence, both internal and external, place the time of the writing during the time of the Roman Emperor Domitian. It was Domitian who had the Apostle John banished to the Isle of Patmos. (Rev. 1:9) This would give the book a date as early as 90 AD or no later to 96 AD.

The Domitian persecution was one of the worst in history and ending in 95 AD. John was believed to have been released in 96 AD and then returned to Ephesus. Most hold to the view the Book was written on the Isle of Patmos, because the book says that the visions were received while on the Island of Patmos. (Rev. 1:9) This would give the Book a date of between 90 AD and 95 AD.

Eusebius affirmed that John returned from the island in 96 AD. Irenaeus also stated that John lived in Ephesus after his stay on Patmos during the reign of Emperor Trajan who followed Domitian. The question boils down to one point: If John the Apostle was banished to Patmos, and then he must be the writer of the book and the date around 95 AD.

To Whom is it addressed?

John states he is addressing the seven churches of Asia. (Rev. 1:4) This is the area now of modern Turkey. These seven churches were literal churches of John's day, but they appear to be also representative of the periods of Church History from Apostolic times until today.⁶ The character of the seven churches spoken of in the book very closely resemble that which typified the various characters and historic events of churches down through history.

The Book of Revelation obviously has current application through the Lord's instructions to the seven churches of Asia. His addresses to each of these churches reveal the mind of Christ concerning the faithfulness and relationship of all churches to false teachings and teachers. Also, it gives us great insight into the future plans of God for the world and helping in interpreting and understanding much of the rest of Scripture. It has future relevance to those who will experience the events of the seven year Tribulation.

WHY THE USE OF SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE IN THE BOOK?

There are two reasons God used symbolic language in the Bible. First, the prophecy about the future and is given to a prophet in his own time. The prophet's understanding of the future is limited by his knowledge of future events and is restricted to the time in which he was living. God used symbolic language that represented future events that could be understood to some degree at the time when the prophecy was given, but would be unmistakably being understood in the day the prophecy is fulfilled. God literally described the future events in a way they could not be fully understood in the day it was given. By using symbols God could reveal future events in such a way that could be understood to some degree by the prophet in his time and recognized by those who would see its fulfillment in the future.

The second reason God used a symbol is that much of what prophecy foretells regards to future nations. If God had given the specifics of the future in detail, men would have used the information to try to manipulate history. Paul Lee Tan, correctly states the Bible's prophecies deal with "the rise and fall of nations, the outcome of wars and struggles, and the destinies of peoples and individuals." He concludes that, "Symbols confuse unbelieving skeptics without necessarily frustrating believing Christians."⁷

¹The term "church" in this paper uses the biblical definition and does not apply to any universal or catholic view of a church. It refers only to the present church age. The word "ekklesia" which is translated in our English Bibles "church" means a "special called out assembly of people who met for a particular reason." Nowhere in the New Testament is there taught the idea that the "ekklesia" is a universal organization with a central hierarchy such as is practiced by the Roman Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox, and all Protestant churches. The "ekklesia" is always seen as a local body of believers meeting in a particular geographical area. The term "body of Christ" is used in the New Testament to identify all believers

of this present dispensation which began at Pentecost (Acts 2) when God began the institution of the local church. It will end with the resurrection of all believers dead and alive at the Rapture. (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-57)

²John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1966, p19.

⁴Lehman Strauss, *Revelation*, Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1977, pp 23.

⁵Strauss, pp 21.

⁶The word "apostolic" relates to the Apostles. It refers to the first churches established by the Apostles in the First Century.

⁷Paul Lee Tan, *The Interpretation of Prophecy*, Winona Lake, ID: Assurance Publishers, 1974, p154