

# Keys to Understanding Revelation I As it Relates to the Rest of the Bible

Fred R. Coulter

I've suggested many times what a person needs to do in their personal Bible study is to go through the book of Revelation on a survey basis and you will learn some very important things, and you will understand why the book of Revelation is the last book in the Bible. *The book of Revelation cannot be read in isolation from the rest of the Bible.*

It's a fallacy of beginning Bible students to go to the most complicated Scriptures to start, and they fall by the wayside or don't understand or get misled. Many have experienced that. I've seen that with many Protestants. The first place they want to go is to the book of Galatians. Well, unless you understand the basics of the Bible, to go to Galatians does you no good, except to lead you down a blind alley of misunderstanding and lawless grace. Likewise, in rereading the book of Revelation in isolation or something you want to read first, you cannot understand it.

So, there are some keys to understanding the book of Revelation and we'll see what they will be and we're going to survey. I'm going to mention a lot of other Scriptural references that we are not going to turn to, because there are so many, that if we turn to every one, we would be years going through this. As we will see, it encompasses the whole Bible.

Let's begin at the very last few verses in Revelation. If you have *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*, please get on a study program of reading and studying the commentaries and the appendices. Those will help you greatly in understanding the New Testament. Also, the commentaries and appendices are actual Bible Studies using Scriptures along with history and other things so you will come to understand the Bible even more. The reason we are beginning in Rev. 22:18 is so we can understand the basis of the book of Revelation, which will help us to understand when we come to the beginning of the book.

Revelation 22:18: "For I jointly... [John and Christ] ...testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book... [we're going to see that same phrase at the beginning] ...*that* if anyone adds to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in **this book**"—has to be referring to the whole Bible, as well as the book of Revelation. The truth is, you cannot understand the book of Revelation unless you have a good grasp of the whole Bible—Old Testament and New Testament.

Verse 19: "And if anyone takes away from the words of *the* book of this prophecy..." All Scripture was *give by inspiration*—God-breathed Scriptures—and *not from any man*. So, not only just this book, but the whole Bible.

"...God shall take away his part from *the* Book of Life..." (v 19). Does the book of Daniel talk about the Book of Life? *Yes it does!* In Exo. 32<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup> Moses says to God regarding the Book of Life: 'Take away my life, but spare the Israelites. Take it out of the Book of Life.' God told Moses, 'I will do what I will do.' In other words, not even Moses is going to tell God what to do. *Think about that!*

"...and from the Holy City, and from the things that are written in this book. He Who testifies these things says, 'Surely, I am coming quickly.' Amen... [that is Christ testifying because He's jointly testifying] ...Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (vs 19-20) You will notice in the *Faithful Version* I've got little asterisk there—a little footnote. So, I'll read that to you:

The statement "Surely I am coming quickly" followed by "Amen" stresses the certainty of His coming instead of the immediacy of His coming at the time John wrote these words....

Because it has been nearly 2,000 years.

...Perhaps, it could also carry the meaning that in the end-times, when the Book of Revelation is understood by the people of God (Dan. 12:9-10), then His coming is at hand.

I think that's what it means. You have to have a proper interpretation of it. We can also have this interpretation, too: Can Christ come upon anyone at any time without it being His second return? *Yes, He can!*

- He can judge the individual
- He can forgive the individual
- He can help and inspire and uplift the individual
- He can cause them to have judgment and death at any time

We need to expand out some of our understanding of the book of Revelation.

We're going to see very similar words. What we will understand is that the very things that Jesus

is saying in the first chapter. We're going to take many of the verses and we're going to plug in some other Scriptures as we go along; by referring to them rather than going back and quoting them.

### **Revelation Chapter One:**

Revelation 1:1: "*The* revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to show to His servants the things that *are* ordained to come to pass shortly..." It is a *revelation*. How does that revelation come?

- Jesus reveals the Father (Matt. 11:25)
  - God has revealed His mystery through the apostles, as Paul said.
  - He reveals by His Spirit (1-Cor. 2)
  - The secret of the Lord is with those that fear Him (Psa. 25:14)
  - A good understanding have they that keep His commandments (Psa. 111)
- all of that is contained here.

"...and He made *it* known... [which has to include all of the Word of God] ...having sent *it* by His angel to His servant John" (v 1).

- John 21:21-25—here's a prophecy that John would receive the book of Revelation when Jesus answered the question of Peter, when?

Peter said, 'Lord, what's going to happen to him?' pointing to John. And Jesus said, 'What is it to you if I desire that he remain till I come? You go preach the Word.' John was the one whom Jesus loved. John was also a servant here. You've got to go back and read the chapter on the canonization of the New Testament by the Apostle John. What was he? *He was of priest lineage!* So, you need all of those things to put it together.

Revelation 1:2: "Who gave witness to the Word of God..." That includes not only *all the sayings contained here, but all of the Word of God!* (John 1:1-3) You probably already have that memorized: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'; He's called *the Word of God*.

What we're covering now, with the *keys of Revelation*, is to give you impetus to go more deeply into all the aspects of the things that we are covering here, so that you get a perspective; that the book of Revelation is not something you can just read and understand. But *every verse is packed* with a background of other Scriptures.

"...and the testimony of Jesus Christ..." (v 2). What is the testimony of Jesus Christ? What is the final testimony of Jesus Christ? Not only His

crucifixion. Not only the fact that He died for the sins of the world. Here's what Jesus testified to them:

John 12:37: "Although He had done so many miracles in their presence, they did not believe in Him, so that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled who said, 'Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of *the* Lord been revealed?' For this *very* reason they could not believe because again Isaiah said, 'He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts so that they would not see with *their* eyes and understand with *their* hearts, and be converted, and I would heal them" (vs 37-40). You ask any Baptist to try and explain that to you; trying to save every soul in the world, and if you're not saved, you go to hell.

Verse 41: "Isaiah said these things when he saw His glory and spoke concerning Him. But even so, many among the rulers believed in Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God. Then Jesus called out and said, 'The one who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him Who sent Me. And the one who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me. I have come *as* a light into the world so that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. But if anyone hears My words and does not believe..." (vs 41-47). This is the testimony of Jesus; all the Gospels are the testimony of Jesus—that's the whole point that I want to make here.

Then we're going to see that this ties in with Deut. 18:15 about *the Prophet* that God would raise up like unto Moses. This is why the book of Revelation is the capstone of the whole Bible. And you can't understand the capstone unless you understand the rest of it.

"...if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world" (v 47). Judgment comes later, because He said later, 'I have many things to say of you and judge.'

Verse 48: "The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has one who judges him; the word which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day." Tie that in with what we read at the end of the book of Revelation. Isn't that almost the same kind of wording: 'you don't believe!'

Verse 49: "For I have not spoken from Myself; but the Father, Who sent Me... [we're going to see how this ties in with Rev. 1] ...gave Me commandment Himself, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life. Therefore, whatever I speak, I speak exactly as the Father has told Me" (vs 49-50).

We haven't gotten very far—have we? We're going to see this all the way through. Rev. 1 is very loaded, so we'll probably spend a little more time here, but as we go through the rest of them we will also see some other principles, too, which then ties the whole Bible together. That's what's so absolutely fascinating about the book of Revelation. It compacts the meaning of the whole Bible together within this one book.

If you don't know the rest of the Bible substantially well, you're never going to understand the book of Revelation. I'll add one more caveat here: As we go along with these prophecies, we will see that *God never intended them to be understood in isolation*. They had to be understood with the rest of the Word of God, especially the book of Daniel and also could not be understood *until we could see how they would be fulfilled*—very important to understand.

Revelation 1:2: "...the testimony of Jesus Christ, and all the things he saw. Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of this prophecy and **who keep the things that are written therein...**" (vs 2-3). Let's understand, that applies to the whole Bible—*all the Word of God!* We're going to see that's what Rev. does.

"...for the time *is* at hand.... [the time to understand comes in stages] ...John to the seven churches that *are* in Asia..." (vs 3-4).

If it's important to have the prophecies of the major civilizations in the world leading up to the end-time, and since the Church of God is the most important thing in God's eyes, why did God not give prophecies concerning the Church of equal weight, or more weight, than He did to the civilizations of the world? Some people might ask this question, but we're going to see, *yes, He did!* And that's hidden in Rev. 2 & 3 with many, many other lessons in those two chapters, as well, to the seven churches; directly to the churches.

This also tells us something else, only those churches who love God and keep His commandments will understand. Those who have varying degrees of infiltration of the religions of this world will have varying degrees of understanding, because of their disobedience to God.

"...Grace and peace *be* to you from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come..." (v 4). That's Christ. What does this tell us?

- *The One Who is*—that's Christ in heaven right now.
- *The One Who was*—that tells us two things:
  1. He was the Lord God of the Old

#### Testament

2. He was the Savior; God manifested in the flesh on earth

- *The One Who is to come*—that He is coming, His promise is sure. What did Jesus say? *If I go, I will come again*' (John 14)—so He's coming!

But He's not coming in the way, or the time or the method that men may think. He's coming at the set time that God has given. But His promise is sure and He's going to come, because He said He would come, and **God cannot lie!**

"...and from the seven spirits that are before His throne... [note sermon series: *Spirit of God, Spirit of Man, Seven Spirits of God*] ...and from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness..." (vs 4-5). Does that not cover all the Gospels? *Yes!* Does this not, since He was Lord God of the Old Testament, cover all the Old Testament?

"...the Firstborn from the dead..." (v 5). You can tie that in with the accounts of His resurrection.

- 1-Cor. 15
- 1-Thess. 4
- Heb. 4; 2 (see sermon series: *Hebrews*)

"...and the Ruler of the kings of the earth..." (v 5). Who's controlling everything that's going on? (Dan. 4) What was the lesson there? *He struck down Nebuchadnezzar*—till he learned that **'God rules in the kingdoms of men and gives it to whomsoever He will and sets up over it the basest of men.'** Then you can go back and you can read all in the books of Kings and Chronicles about the kings—the kings of other nations, the kings of Israel, the kings of Judah—their righteousness, their sins and so forth.

"...To Him Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (v 5). That ties in with the Passover, crucifixion and also we are going to see that ***without the knowledge of the Passover and the Holy Days and Feasts of God you also cannot understand the book of Revelation!*** So, there's a whole lot packed into this book!

"...and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (v 5).

- Gen. 15 and the covenant that God made with Abraham
- we've already mentioned the Passover.
- many sections of the book of Acts and preaching about the forgiveness of sin and the resurrection of Christ.
- the first eight chapters of the book of Romans, concerning justification, forgiveness and the removal of sin, and the sacrifice of Christ.
- the book of Hebrews.

If we could use a modern phrase: *this is dynamite stuff!* It's all there.

Verse 6: "And has made us kings and priests to God and His Father..." That ties in with:

- Rev. 20—we're kings and priests
- 1-Pet. 2—we are a royal nation, a nation of priests.
- Exo. 19—the mission that was given to Israel was that they would be a kingdom of priests to the world—and they failed!

We have, right here, in the first six verses of Rev. 1 reference to the whole Bible—specific references to parts of the Gospels, the New Testament and so forth. Isn't that fantastic? I mean, just think about how this is compacted together. Then he says, "Amen" (v 6). There comes the end of the section. When God says 'amen' He means *so be it*. It means it's going to happen! All of this helps us have more faith and understanding, conviction and belief in God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Word of God and what God is doing.

Verse 7: "Behold, He is coming with the clouds..."

- Acts 1—'you men of Galilee, why do you stand here gazing up into the heavens. This same Jesus Whom you see ascending into heaven is coming again in like manner.'
- Matt. 24—you see the Son of man coming in power and great glory in the clouds of heaven.' He's coming with clouds.

"...and every eye shall see Him..." (v 7). That ties in with all the events of:

- Matt. 24
- Mark 13
- Luke 21
- Dan. 7

"...and those who pierced Him..." (v 7). Two meanings to this:

1. Everyone who has sinned had their part in the crucifixion of Christ—that means all sinners.
2. Those Roman soldiers that did pierce Him—either by putting the nails in His hands and feet or by thrusting the spear in His side—at the second resurrection are going to see Him. And I wonder what they will say?

"...and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him..." (v 7). You can tie that in with all the prophecies referring the second coming of Christ in the Old Testament. You can tie that with the rest of what we find in the book of Revelation; about everything that's going to take place, and why it's

going to take place.

The truth is, human nature—led by Satan the devil—does not want Christ! Satan does not want people to know Christ is coming again! That's why—in spite of all the doctrines that they have to the contrary—Christ is going to come, and *He is going to do it at a time that they least expect!* They're going to be mad! Angry! It's going to be a mammoth event.

"...Even so, Amen" (v 7).

- Rev. 6; 8; 9; 16; 19—they'll 'wail against Him' and fight against Him.

Verse 8: "'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending,' says the Lord..." This gives us another clue. This tells us He was Creator in the beginning. This tells us that He's going to finish the plan of God (note sermon: *The Work of Christ: Was it Finished at the Cross?*) No! That was one phase of it. There's the beginning and there's the ending. It says the 'Lord, Who is, Who was, Who is to come'—*the Almighty!* We're going to see that again when we get to Rev. 4.

This tells us, yes, there is an ending. The end is coming, and we're closer to it than we have ever believed before. It's going to be greater and more spectacular than we have ever thought. Those of you have been in the Church for a long, long time and you look back at the years where we had our little 'ole doctrines all worked out when Christ was going to return and where we were going to a place of safety and all this sort of thing—and it's *petty! selfish! carnal!* We wanted to save our physical skins! The thing is, we have to be right with God, and if He desires to spare us—as Rev. 12 shows some will be spared the Tribulation—or if He desires not to spare us in our physical lives, that *we remain faithful*; that's what's important.

Verse 9: "I, John, who *am* also your brother..." I think that's important because this shows *the humility of the true servants of God*. I look at it this way: What I understand is not because I'm smart, and it's not because I have anything greater than any other person. If it isn't by the Spirit of God and it isn't by the Word of God, and if I'm exalting myself, then I'm serving myself and it's going to come to an end. Haven't we've seen that happen over and over again?

- Did John learn the lesson of Matt. 20?
- Remember the lesson of Matt. 20?
- What was it?

'*Mom, hey, get us the best spots, would ya!*' So, mother came up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, I have somewhat to ask You.' He said, 'Say on, tell Me what it is.' She said, 'These two, my sons—James

and John, the sons of thunder—sit one at Your right hand and one at Your left hand.’ And He said, ‘You don’t know what you’re asking.’ And He turned to the two boys who were right there with mom; they couldn’t speak to Jesus directly, though they were standing there. Jesus said, ‘Are you able to be baptized with the baptism that I am?’ They said, ‘Oh, yes!’ He said, ‘You bet, it’s going to happen! You’re going to be baptized with that. To put you on the right hand or left hand is not Mine to give. That’s reserved for the Father. He will give it to whomever He wants to give it.’ Then He said, ‘Whosoever will be great among you, let him become your servant, and become the least.’

You will see as you read all the Epistles of Paul and the general epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude; and you read the book of Acts and the Gospels, that’s the attitude that all the true servants of God have. It’s not by anything of their own, but by the Spirit of God. So, whatever we understand and however it is, it is not to be exalted as some great mucky-muck above the brethren of God! But the one who is going to be great is going to be the servant of all.

That also implies this: Whatever understanding that God gives the ministers of God, through His Word and Spirit, *they are duty-bound to teach the brethren those things*, so that the brethren can grow in grace and knowledge. God does not reveal these things to exalt the person receiving it, but so that God, because He’s chosen to use human instrumentality, can let His will be known in the way that He has desired.

John is saying the same thing right here: John is not saying, ‘Hey, I’m the last living apostle. I must be great. The Lord had to be with me. I’m given this, I’m going to see the Kingdom of God return, just as Jesus said.’ *NO!*

He said, v 9: “I, John, who *am* also your brother and joint partaker in the tribulation... [trials and difficulties he went through] ...and in the kingdom and endurance of Jesus Christ... [he was greatly humbled] ...was on the island that *is* called Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ” (v 9). *He was exiled! Alone!* So much for a great congregation—right? Well, God raised him up out of that and brought him back to the city of Ephesus again.

Verse 10: “I was in *the* Spirit on the Day of the Lord...” Unfortunately, some have translated that as Sunday. *Not true!* This is the Day of the Lord, the Lord’s day in reference to *His Second Coming*, ‘*every eye shall see Him!*’ That’s what it’s referring to. Not a day of the week, but a day of the intervention of God.

“...and I heard a loud voice like a trumpet behind me... [that’s going to get your attention] ...saying, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last’; and, ‘What you see, write in a book...’” (vs 10-11).

This becomes important. God expects His Word to be written down. Why? *So that you will know what God has said and what God means!* Did He not write the Ten Commandments on the original tables of stone with His own finger? *Yes!* Stone is the most permanent thing you can etch something in. He wanted it written down! What happened when there were more instructions to give? What did He tell Moses? *Write it in the book of the law!* And He told all of His prophets to *write*. And the apostles *wrote!* You cannot rely on oral transmission or tradition. God wants it written. Did not Peter talk about writing? *Yes!* Did not Paul talk about writing in all the epistles? *Yes!* God does not expect anyone to believe anything except His Word and properly divided and explained and revealed.

So, just like everything else, He says, ‘Write!’ because He wants it written. “...write in a book, and send *it* to the churches that *are* in Asia...” (v 11). God deals with His church *first*. And this gives us the first point in understanding the book of Revelation and gives us a pattern and a key.

Now, are there more churches in the world than these seven in Asia? *Of course!* There was a church in Jerusalem, in Corinth, in Thessalonica, in Rome, in Britain, in Mesopotamia—many, many churches. Why did He pick these seven? We’ll see His specific reason a little later, but these seven were on a mail-route and connected. So this tells us several things:

1. These churches were contemporaneous with the Apostle John.
2. Because they are connected, that is type of a prophecy down through history.

God is not going to give the prophecy of the nations down through history without also giving a comparable prophecy of His churches down through history.

3. It is undoubtedly a type of the churches at the end-time, as God views the world.

We’ll have to understand that that is not to be understood in relationship to a *corporate organization*; because God is looking to the brethren. ***The brethren consist of the Church; that is the Church;*** not a building; not a corporate structure. These show that not only the original churches, but a prophecy of the churches down through time, and a condition of the churches at the end-time. That ties in with the *One that is, the One*

that *was*, and is yet to come—threefold thing for the churches, as well.

“...to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea” (v 11).

Then he sees the vision of Christ in His glorified form. We’ll add a few things to it so we can be sure and understand it.

Verse 12: “And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me...” That’s interesting—isn’t it? How do you turn to see the voice? That means to the one who was speaking.

“...and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands” (v 12). These are different than the menorah pictured in the temple or in the tabernacle. We’ll tell you why.

Verse 13: “And in *the* midst of the seven lampstands *one* like *the* Son of man...” The menorah that was in the temple had seven little cups to hold the olive oil with the wicks and they were in a line. This is entirely different. These are pictured in a circle and they are ‘lampstands.’ Each one is a lampstand by itself. Christ is in the midst of them—fulfilling Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph. 1:21-24, and other places where it talks about Christ as the Head of the Church).

It also shows that Christ is “...clothed in a *garment* reaching to the feet, and girded about the chest with a golden breastplate” (v 13). Tie all of that in with Eph. 6, about putting on the whole armor of God, which comes from Christ.

Verse 14: “And His head and hair *were* like white wool, white as snow; and His eyes *were* like a flame of fire”—showing His glory and His power. He’s going to refer to this again when we come to dealing with the churches.

Verse 15: “And His feet *were* like fine brass, as if *they* glowed in a furnace; and His voice *was* like *the* sound of many waters.”

(go to the next track)

Now we’re going to see the beginning of understanding. It’s hard to understand the prophecies out into the future, except in a general way. For example: After the Protestant Reformation and their rebellion against Rome, there were various interpretations of Rev. 13. They could understand Rev. 17, that it depicted the ‘woman who rode the beast’ was Rome, who was the great whore.’ That was revealed at that time; they could understand that. But they couldn’t understand the *beast* that had one of the heads with a ‘deadly wound and was healed’; and they couldn’t understand the *mark of the beast*. So, they gave their interpretations of it,

and it was written in commentaries. The basic sum of it was this:

The *deadly wound that was healed* was a revival of the Roman Empire. *Not true!* It can be a type, but that’s not true, because the Roman Empire was a *beast* not a *head*. *Mark of the beast*, they said, was Sunday-keeping—that is, the Sabbath-keepers said ‘Sunday-keeping.’ I’ve explained that before. The point is, we began to understand Rev. 13 and the *mark of the beast* when man had the technology to put an identification chip into the right hand or in the forehead. Going back into the 1600s/1700s:

- Could they even imagine such a thing?
- Could they even think about such a thing?
- Could they think about the need to number everything, like it has to be today?
- *No!*

So, all of the interpretations leading up to this time have no validity whatsoever. We’re going to see that everything we’ve understood subsequent to realizing that it was an implantable chip in the right hand or in the forehead is true and is going to be fulfilled in such a fantastic way that it’s going to be just breathtaking, indeed!

Now likewise, that illustrates a point: we can understand certain prophecies, that we come to a point that it has been revealed not only in the Word of God, but revealed in the flow of history and the events of human life; likewise, with the churches. The seven churches could be understood at the beginning from the time of John dealing with the seven churches that existed. But God intended for it to go way down through time in history, though it did deal, originally, with the seven.

Verse 16: “And in His right hand He had seven stars, and a sharp two-edged sword went out of His mouth...”

- Heb. 4:12—the Word of God
- Rev. 19—whereby command He destroys the armies

“...and His countenance *was* as the sun shining in its *full* power” (v 16)—the great power and glory of God.

How are you going to come up against something like that? Stop and think! How can puny man think that he is so great and so almighty that he’s going to tell Jesus Christ what to do? That he’s going to tell God what he will believe and what he won’t believe and what he will accept and what he won’t accept? *That’s pure carnality!* And whose attitude is it? *Satan’s!* That’s why it’s like this. Now, how did John react? *If anybody has an exalted attitude toward God like that, they better start reacting like John did!* You better start having a

little repentance.

Verse 17: “And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead...”—nothing to say, nothing to think, nothing to do. ‘I’m in the presence of God!’ Let’s understand this: If you have the Spirit of God, you’re in the presence of God—are you not? *Yes, indeed!* What does God give you the blessing of being able to do? *Come right into the Holy of Holies through prayer!* He’s promised that He will hear. So, in our lives, maybe we better think about having a little bit more of the attitude of John. God does not do this to terrify you. *God does this to inspire you:*

1. in humility in approaching Him
  2. of His great power that He will do what He says and has the ability to carry it through
  3. so you will see, so you will understand part of the glory that He’s going to give you
- Rom. 8:14-39—that we are joint heirs in the glory ‘to be revealed in us.’
  - Heb. 1—about the glory of Christ, as He looks in His glorified form; and having the very character of the Father.

And for us to also understand that Jesus humbled Himself so that we could share in that existence.

“...but He laid His right hand upon me, saying to me, ‘Do not be afraid... [though we are to fear God] ...I am the First and the Last, even the one Who is living; for I was dead, and behold, I am alive into the ages of eternity. Amen. And I have the keys of *the grave and of death*’” (vs 17-18). Jesus did not give it to any pope—guaranteed! You show me one man the pope has resurrected.

Even the latest pope that died—John Paul II—they want him proclaimed as a saint. Watching that whole procedure on television will give you a bird’s eye view education of the ultimate occultism of the Roman Catholic Church. It will give you a bird’s eye-view of the highest glory that Satan can exalt on a human being, and he still dies. The one who succeeded him—Pope Benedict XVI—was conducting the funeral service, and they were praying for the pope’s soul. I thought if he were such a perfect man and they want him to be a saint already, why do they have to pray for his soul? Did he go to purgatory? They have to have everybody buy him out of purgatory? It’s all the ‘mystery of iniquity.’ Christ alone has the keys of the grave and death, showing that He alone is going to resurrect.

- John 5:25-27—‘the hour is coming when all in the grave shall hear His voice, the Son of man, and shall come forth: some to everlasting life, some to judgment and condemnation.’
- Dan. 12—the resurrection
- Job 19—the resurrection

- Ezek. 37—the physical resurrection of the whole house of Israel
- Rev. 20—the second resurrection
- Rev. 11—the first resurrection
- 1 Cor. 15—first resurrection.

You see how much is there. Isn’t that amazing? Every verse in the book of Revelation is backed-up with all the other Scriptures in the Bible that pertain to that particular section.

Verse 19: “**Write the things that** <sup>[#1]</sup>**you saw...**[that’s why we have the book of Revelation—*write it, record it, preserve it*] ...<sup>[#2]</sup>**and the things that are...** [the seven churches that He’s going to talk about] ...<sup>[#3]</sup>**and the things that shall take place hereafter.**” This gives us a threefold thing of understanding the book of Revelation.

- **What you saw**—What did John see? *All the verses leading up to it!* John saw Jesus in His glorified form and the things that shall take place hereafter.

He doesn’t say ‘shortly.’ He did over here in Rev. 1:1—but He didn’t here. In Rev. 1:1 he says, ‘shortly.’ Why? *The day of the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as a day!* According to God this is going to happen quickly. According to our human lives, if it’s ten years down the road that’s a long time.

- **Take place hereafter**—after what? *After this first vision and what’s going to happen.*

Verse 20: The mystery...” There are many mysteries of God:

- Godliness
- Christ coming in the flesh
- the resurrection
- the interpretation of prophecy

“...of the seven stars that you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, *is this...* [God reveals His mystery] ...the seven stars are *the* angels of the seven churches; and the seven lampstands that you saw are *the* seven churches” (v 20).

Some people say that ‘angelos’ in the Greek means *messenger*, so this could refer to the messenger. But, would not God have an angel watching over the churches, as well? Because are not angels (Heb. 1) given as ministering spirits to those who are heirs of salvation? *Yes!* What we also see is this: We see multiple understandings and multiple interpretations in the book of Revelation, because that’s the way it’s constructed.

### **Revelation Chapter Two:**

It’s good that we take an overview and see

how all the Scriptures are tied into the book of Revelation. That

- gives us more understanding
- increases our faith
- gives us confidence
- gives us conviction

—which we’re going to need in the days that are ahead.

Revelation 2:1: “To the angel of the Ephesian church, write... [Notice how He refers back to Himself and His power and Who He is—again: the Head of the Church] ...‘These things says He Who holds the seven stars in His right hand, Who walks in *the* midst of the seven golden lampstands.’” Christ is *in His* Church, because of *His* Spirit. He still has to deal with the weakness of human nature. The Church has to deal with the encroachments of Satan. There is a spiritual battle going the whole time.

This also tells us, very clearly, that Christ does not take away free moral agency. He expects us to choose. He expects us to apply ourselves. It also tells us that God looks to our works. Not that it gains us eternal life, but it is a condition of eternal life. ***Eternal life is a gift of God by grace!*** Having the Spirit of God and having the commandments of God written in our heart and mind, God expects us to apply ourselves. It says in the *King James*, in the parable of the talents: He gave the talents to the different ones and said, ‘Occupy till I come.’ Occupy means *to work, to increase*; to constantly do it.

Obviously, not everyone is going to live until the return of Christ. As a matter of fact, most are going to die before Christ returns. But, when you come to the end of your life and you have safely lived to the end of your life and have been faithful, have overcome sin; and if you’ve had some backsliding in your life and you’ve repented and restored to God, God will bless you for that because of your choice and so forth, depending on how your life has been lived. But, you have your works, and our works become very important.

- Are they of God?
- or
- Are they of ourselves?
- or
- Are they of Satan the devil?

*God wants them to wholly be of Him!*

He says: “I know your works...” (v 2). If He’s in the middle of the Church—which He is; if you have the Spirit of God—which you do; God knows what you do all the time; which should be a source of inspiration from this point of view: Isn’t God gracious and merciful to give us of His Holy

Spirit

- *knowing* that we have human nature to overcome;
- *knowing* that we are going to sin as we grow and change
- *knowing* that He’s going to give us the conviction to repent and come back to Him

Isn’t that something? That’s what He wants us to understand. Whatever your difficulty or trial that you’re going through, never, *never, ever* be discouraged and never, *never, never* give up on God, though you feel like you’re down in the bottom of the barrel. God will lift you out of it.

Verse 2: “I know your works, and your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot bear those who are evil... [you’re not going to be compromising with evil] ...and *that* you did test those who proclaim *themselves* to be apostles, but are not, and did find them liars” (v 2). Right here you can plug in many, many Scriptures. Do a concordance study on *works* in the New Testament. I think you’ll be surprised. We can tie in there: those who are faithful to the end, for the endurance:

- Rom. 5
- 2-Tim. 4 where Paul endured
- Matt. 24:13<sub>[transcriber’s correction]</sub> the one who endures to the end the same shall be saved—all of those.

Each one of these phrases goes back through the reach of the whole Bible.

“...cannot bear those who are evil; and *that* you did test those who proclaim *themselves* to be apostles, but are not, and did find them liars” (v 2).

- 1-2 Cor.—loaded with them
- Acts 8—Simon Magus
- Acts 13—Elymas the sorcerer

This tells that false apostles come from *Satan the devil and who transform themselves into apostles of Christ*.

This also tells us that *we are individually responsible to test and to prove everyone who preaches the Word of God*—or attempts to preach the Word of God, or who claims to be a minister or elder of God—to test everything they do and say by the Scriptures. That’s our responsibility. God will give us the understanding and discernment to do so, but we have to do so! Not like the Church of God today when they came along and changed everything. God finally has removed His name from the Worldwide Church of God, and it is now called *Fellowship International*. There’s nothing left. As we’ve discussed, if you won’t serve God you’ll become a footnote in history. We are responsible!

Verse 3: “...and *that* you have borne *much*



and have endured...”

- Luke 11 about the laborers in the field.

Some were hired first thing in the morning and they worked all day long and then at the second hour, the eighth hour, the tenth hour, the eleventh hour and they all got the same wage. Here’s a lesson: However long you have to work, however long you have to endure, *you do it*, because you don’t expect more from God or because you’ve done it longer than other people. *‘The first shall be last, and the last shall be first.’* The least shall become great and the great shall become least. God is going to decide the reward, and He is going to decide what He is going to do and give to whomever He called ‘according to His own righteous judgment.’ Very important!

“...and for My name’s sake have labored and have not grown weary; nevertheless, I have *this* against you... [there is sin] ...that you have left your first love” (vs 3-4).

- Matt. 25:1-12—parable of the ten virgins
- Matt. 24:42-51—the servants who beat up on the other ones because the lord supposedly delayed his coming
- 2-Tim. 1:7—stir up the Spirit of God which is in you.

You have to be responsible for being faithful and zealous to God. That’s what it’s talking about.

But, what happens when things become established and procedures become accepted? *People begin to let down!* What happens when you begin to appease human beings instead of loving God? *You compromise! Compromise is one of the greatest doctrinal sins!* But in the world *compromise* is held out to be one of the greatest human virtues. How does Satan get his foot in the door? *Common ground! ‘Let’s talk about the things we agree on.’*

Now, “...left their first love”—how serious was it? We’ll examine it here:

Verse 5: “Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works...” Let’s analyze your *first love*. The Greek there is ‘protos’ which means *primary* or *first!* What did they compromise, because that’s what happens. Very basic Scripture, but what they did was a very basic thing.

Matthew 22:35<sub>[transcriber’s correction]</sub>: “And one of them, a doctor of the law, questioned *Him*, tempting Him, and saying, ‘Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is *the* first [‘protos’] and greatest

commandment” (vs 35-38). What did they compromise in doing? *They compromised the first four commandments!* Let’s understand something about the first four commandments.

Jesus says, v 39: “And *the second one is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (vs 39-40). Everything is based upon the love of God, even the law of God.

Let’s review a little bit and let’s look at it from another perspective, another point of view. We’re going to look at Exo. 20 just a little differently. The first four commandments are the most, from a human perspective, *intolerant* commandments, because *they give no wiggle room!* There is *no compromise!* If you lose your ‘first love’ in relationship to the first four commandments—what does that do? *It cuts you off from a relationship with God!* Or, as we found in Rev. 2, it compromises your relationship with God and puts you in a sinful condition of which you must repent! That’s what the *first love* is. Not just how excited you were when you first heard the Truth—that’s another whole thing.

### **First Commandment:**

Exodus 20:1: “And God spoke all these words, saying, ‘I *am* the LORD your God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **You shall have no other gods before Me**” (vs 1-3). You can’t get any more intolerant than that—right? The first four commandments, from a human perspective, are *intolerant*. Do you know what God says if you don’t like an intolerant commandment? *‘TOUGH! I’m going to judge you on it nevertheless!’* And if He judges His Church on it, you *know* He’s going to judge the world.

Almost every professing Christian religion in the world violates the second commandment. And James said *‘If you break one, you break them all!’*

### **Second Commandment:**

Verse 4: “You **shall not make...** [*intolerant— isn’t it?*] ...for yourselves any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in the heavens above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters under the earth.” It’s not a question of whether they worship idols or not, that’s secondary to the fact of *making* them. If you don’t make them, you can’t worship them!

So, the specious argument of the Catholics: ‘We don’t worship them, we venerate them.’ That’s not the question! Why did you make them in the first place? *and* Fill your cathedrals with all of these idols

and images and gools? Any church with an idol and an image is not of God. I don't care what you profess it's an idol or image of, because God said you shall not make any—*not one!*

This is what happened to the Church at Ephesus; the one that received the canonized New Testament by the Apostle John. They had the whole first original Greek New Testament right there at Ephesus, the headquarters of the Apostle John in his later life, where he was buried; and of which there was Timothy and Polycarp and Politiques; and after them they compromised and what did it entail? *Sabbath, Passover, idols!*

Verse 5: “You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them...” Yet, people have them—don't they? I mean, you can just drive down the road and you can see people have their little crosses, their little beads, all of these hanging down.

Listen, as I mentioned before, I watch baseball and that's really about the only sport I really like, because there's very little you can do to cheat in it. The ball is round, the bat is round, too many things can happen, too many mistakes can happen, and I get a kick out of it when the batter gets up there—who's Catholic—and he does the sign of the cross and strikes out! *or* hits a ground out or a fly out! I'm sure he did it so he could get a hit. So the truth is, *it's meaningless* because you're dealing with the 'law of averages.'

Remember this: ***Nothing physical you can do in worship toward God brings about a spiritual condition!*** You have to worship God 'in Spirit and in Truth' (John 4:22-24)—right? *Yes!* It's like the Jews have: a prayer shawl. If you have 10,000 prayer shawls on your head and you don't believe in Christ, what good are the prayer shawls? Well, they suffocate you and you die! You don't believe in your heart, or you don't love God from the heart—what good is it?

Then He says: This is so important that I want you to understand something: “...for I, the LORD your God *am* a jealous God...” (v 5).

- He jealous for ***His way***, because it leads to blessings and salvation.
- He is jealous because ***He is God***, and not any idol.
- He is jealous because ***He is God***, and not Satan or any of his demons.

There are consequences, just like we read back there for the Church at Ephesus (Rev. 2).

“...visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me” (v 5).

- ***if*** you have any other gods before God, you hate Him

- ***if*** you have any idols, you hate Him
- ***if*** you serve Satan the devil, you hate Him
- ***if*** you have any of the counterfeit, pagan things that people do to claim they're serving God, you hate Him

Just like today, guess what's in India? They're starting the Festival of Lights, which happens to fall right around the time of Halloween, and the point of great darkness of Satan the devil. 'Oh, we're such good people; we have the festival of lights.' Guess what happened? *They had four bombings in New Delhi just this morning because of it!* That is darkness. Remember what Jesus said, 'If the light in you be darkness, how great is the darkness indeed!'

It goes to “...the third and fourth generation of those that hate Me” (v 5). If you don't keep the commandments of God, you hate Him—very simple! This effects even the Churches of God.

Verse 6: “But showing mercy unto thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.” New Testament doctrine! Doctrine in the book of Revelation:

- Rev. 12:17—those who keep the commandments of God and keep the testimony of Jesus Christ
- Rev. 14:12—those who have the faith of Jesus and keep His commandments—right?
- Rev. 22:14—blessed are those who keep Him commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life. See how it all ties in?

Now then, all those who are young out there, if God has blessed you and your family, don't get all exalted and lifted up in your eyes of how special and great that you are; because you're receiving a blessing given from God which originally came because your parents loved God and kept His commandments. What are you going to do?

### **Third Commandment:**

Verse 7: “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain...” God is going to hold you accountable for it. Every minister ***better take heed*** to this commandments, because

- if you preach anything other than the Word of God
- bring any other doctrine that did not originate in the Word of God
- if you lie and twist and turn the Scriptures of God to your own ends, for your own manipulation and power and control over people, and accumulate wealth and money to yourself and your organization

***you*** are taking the name of God ***in vain and He is going to judge you!***

These first four commandments are very intolerant, because you're dealing with the righteousness of God, *not the sayings of men!* Swearing and cursing, that's another thing! Shouldn't do that at all either. But that's lesser than religionists who say the Lord said, and He didn't say! "...for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain" (v 7).

#### **Fourth Commandment:**

Verse 8: "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it Holy." Everyone in the world knows which day that is; there is no doubt; there is no argument whatsoever. All Sunday-keepers know it's the seventh day. They have crossed the bridge whether they will obey God or not. He doesn't say, 'remember *a* seventh day.' The reason you keep it Holy is *because God made it Holy!*

Verse 9: "Six days shall you labor and do all your work. But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter; your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates. For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath Day and sanctified it" (vs 9-11).

Always know that God is Creator! He won't allow any evolution. What happened to the Church at Ephesus? *God told them to repent!* You know what they had to repent of. You cannot understand that verse in isolation, just by reading it. You've got to know the rest of the Bible. You've got to know the commandments of God.

Jesus says, Revelation 2:5: "Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works; for if *you do* not, I will come to you quickly; and I will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent."

That doesn't mean at His second coming. That means a visitation by Christ, the Head of the Church, to remove that Church. We've also seen how He can do that, even in this day—right? *Yes, indeed!* The faithful brethren He removes over to another place—right? *Yes, indeed!*

We'll go through and try and tie an overview and keys to the New Testament—it involves all of the Word of God in understanding the book of Revelation.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order, a Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

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Secondary Scriptures (not quoted):

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  - Exodus 32
  - Daniel 12:9-10
- 2) Revelation 1:1
  - Matthew 11:25
  - 1 Corinthians 2
  - Psalm 25:14
  - Psalm 111
  - John 21:21-25
- 3) Revelation 1:2
  - John 1:1-3
- 4) John 12:37-50
  - Deuteronomy 18:15
  - Revelation 1
- 5) Revelation 1:2-5
  - Revelation 2; 3
  - John 14
  - 1 Corinthians 15
  - 1 Thessalonians 4
  - Hebrews 4, 2
  - Daniel 4
  - 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings
  - 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles
  - Genesis 15
  - Acts
  - Romans 1-8
  - Hebrews
- 6) Revelation 1:6
  - Revelation 20
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- 14) Revelation 1:20
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- 15) Revelation 2:1-2
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  - Acts 8; 13
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  - Matthew 25:1-12; 24:42-51
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- 17) Matthew 22:35-40
- 18) Exodus 20:1-4
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- 16) Exodus 20:5-11
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- 19) Revelation 2:5

Also referenced:

Sermon Series:

- *Spirit of God, Spirit of Man, Seven Spirits of God*
- *Hebrews*

Sermon: *Work of Christ: Was it Finished at the Cross?*

FRC:bo  
Transcribed: 1-18-10  
Reformatted: 3/2014