

Keys to Understanding Revelation II As it Relates to the Rest of the Bible

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In order to understand the book of Revelation you cannot read it in isolation. You cannot just begin reading it and whatever idea comes to your mind is what it means, because the book of Revelation is only understood when you have a good grasp of all the rest of the Bible. If you will take a look at the center margin of your Bible, you will see there are many, many references to other parts of the Bible. This is important to understand. When we go through Revelation and we come to a particular sentence, that sentence may support many parts of the New and the Old Testaments, to give it substance and to give it background and to give it understanding.

Revelation 1 (review):

There were some other things that we could add to what we covered last time.

Revelation 1:8: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the Ending,*” says the Lord, “Who is, and Who was, and Who *is to come*—the Almighty.” Tie that in with:

- John 1:1-3, ‘In the beginning was the Word’—and the Greek is such that it could also be translated, because it does mean, *before the beginning the Word was.*

That’s important to understand, because there are a lot of people who say, ‘Well, Jesus was just a man who did not exist until He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary.

- **Who is**—He’s now alive
- **Who was**—because He was on the earth
- **Who was**—the Lord God of the Old Testament
- **Who is to come**—the Almighty

Look at all the prophecies in the Old Testament that this covers:

- He was the Lord God of the Old Testament
- He came in the flesh
- He died—‘washing us in His blood’ Rev. 1:5)
- forgiveness of sin
- Passover

—all of those things! One verse in the book of Revelation then requires you to know much of the Bible in order to understand that one verse. So, this covers an awful lot.

Verse 11: “Saying, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last’...” This brings together many things out of the book of Isaiah. The

very fact that He says, *first and last, beginning and ending* brings to us a lot of information and tells us that we’d better know what we’re talking about when we come to read and understand—or in particular, to try and interpret—the book of Revelation. It is a very simply written book, but *complex and deep in its meaning and its understanding,* and we have to realize that.

This also gives us the identification, too. This tells us the God of the Old Testament [Christ] is manifested in the flesh and then you have to go back and tie in all of the things concerning the prophecies of the birth of Jesus Christ. All of those are weighted in those few words.

Isaiah 44:6: “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his [Israel] Redeemer *even* the LORD of hosts: ‘I *am* the First, and I *am* the Last; and beside me *there is* no God.’” How do you explain that when the Bible teaches that God—‘Elohim’—includes the Father and the Son. The answer is simple:

- Matt. 11:25, that Jesus ‘revealed the Father’ when He came

And the only revealed God out of Elohim was the One Who became Jesus Christ; therefore, the ‘One Who *is* and *was* and *is to come*’ all fits together. That’s quite a thing.

Let’s come over here to Isaiah 45:21—this also shows us how to understand. “Declare and bring near; yea, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this of old?... [the One Who *was*; the One Who *is* First and is also Last] ...Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And *there is* no God besides Me; a just God and a Savior...” This tells us that *the God of the Old Testament became the Savior of the New Testament,* and that ties right in with what we just read there in Rev. 1:5. You see how compact the book of Revelation is in its meaning? *It is fantastic! It is just great!* But it has to be understood properly.

What is the thing that most people do when they first start reading the Bible? I did; you probably did. *You read the Bible to justify what you already believed!* That is you read the Bible to find out that your beliefs are right. You are very susceptible to misinterpretations, because you want to find what you want to find and that’s how false doctrines and false interpretations come about; especially with the book of Revelation!

“...*there is none beside Me.*” (v 21).

John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.’” And there is no other Savior except Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 45:22: “Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth...” Universal salvation. That ties in with what? *That goes clear into all the Millennial prophecies that we have in the Old Testament!*

- Rev. 20 and the thousand-year period. That includes the other Scriptures which show that the Gentiles should keep the Sabbath, etc., etc.

“...for I *am* God, and *there is* none else. I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone out of My mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not turn back... [It says in another place, it shall not ‘return to Me empty.’] ...that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (vs 22-23).

- Phil. 2—refers directly to Jesus Christ, which then affirms that the Lord God of the Old Testament is One Who became Jesus Christ.

Do you see how all of this evidence mounts and mounts and expands the meaning of what we find in the book of Revelation. Let’s look at another one.

Isaiah 48:12: “Hearken unto Me, O Jacob and Israel, My called...” This talks about physical Israel, the 12 tribes. You have to go back and you read all about the history of Israel; that includes all of that.

“...My called...” They were called as a nation—were they not? Let’s apply that to the Church, spiritual Israel (Gal. 6:16); that the Church is the true Israel of God.

- Are we called?
- Are we selected?
- Are we chosen?
- *Yes!*

“...I *am* He; I *am* the first, I also *am* the last. My hand also has laid the foundation of the earth...” (vs 12-13).

John 1—Before the beginning! You have to exist before you can lay the foundation of the earth; so it’s before the beginning.

“...and My right hand has stretched out the heavens. When I call they stand up together” (v 13). That’s something!

Isaiah 45:5_[corrected]: “I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else. *There is* no God besides Me; I clothed you, though you have not known Me.” What does this mean?

- John 3:16—God has so loved the world

- Does God not give life and breath to everyone on the earth?
- Is that not the love of God? *Yes, indeed!*
- Has He not created the world so it will produce the things that are necessary for life? *Yes!*
- And food and everything like that?

Whether they know God or not, God loves them in providing those things for them:

- whether they are good
- whether they are evil
- whether they are just
- whether they are unjust
- whether they are believers
- or non-believers

Verse 6: “That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none besides Me. I *am* the LORD, and there is none else; I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil.... [He uses that for judgment] ...I the LORD do all these *things*” (vs 6-7).

Isaiah 46:5: “To whom will you liken Me, and make *Me* equal, and compare Me, that we may be alike?” Then He talks about idolatry. It talks about everything that men do with their idols. It’s quite something. God mocks the idols over and over again.

Verse 6: “They pour gold out of the bag, and weigh silver with the balance, *and* hire a goldsmith; and he makes it a god; they fall down, yea, they bow down *to it*.”

- Rom. 1—that they worship the created more than the Creator
- Rev. 9:21—that they haven’t repented of their idolatry

Think about this and the processions of carrying the statue of Mary. I watched a thing on plagues—the Black Plague—and how that spread in Europe. That was really something! Within two years it spread all through Europe, rapidly! That was from 1347-1349—and it was really quite a thing! Pope Clement VI did not get it. He was not in Rome. The pope, at that time, was in Avignon, France—southern France, near Marseille where the plagues started to come in because of the ships bringing it in. They had plagues of rats and their sanitary conditions were awful! Only the ones that lived out in the country, away from everybody, did not get it—plus, certain ones that ate certain things and took care of themselves and were not susceptible to it. They showed two things.

1. What they tried to do to appease the wrath of God with this plague was to have

processions down the middle of the town with an idol of the virgin Mary; doing all of the chanting and everything that they do, and guess what they concluded: Mary did not help anyone! And yet, how many people go ‘ga-ga’ over Mary and apparitions and things like this today?

2. Then they showed another fanatical Catholic religious group in Germany that were called ‘Flagellators’—they would make whips and beat themselves. If they suffered enough and had the suffering of Christ then they wouldn’t get the plague.

But that didn’t help either. So, they finally had to outlaw the Flagellators and what happened: In the course of two years the plague ran its course. Then they had a great economic boom because those who were left inherited 40% more wealth.

Verse 7: “They carry it upon the shoulder, they carry it and set it in its place...” I can just see the whole entourage of the priests and the incense and the sprinkling of the ‘holy water’ and the hymn-singing and the coming down the isle of the cathedral and marching up to the place where they’re going to install this idol.

“...and it stands; it shall not move *itself* from its place. Yea, *one* shall cry unto it, yet, it cannot answer, nor save him out of his trouble. Remember this, and show yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O you transgressors. Remember the former things of old; for I *am* God, and there is none else, **I am God, and there is none like Me**, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things which were not *yet* done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure’” (vs 7-10).

That is an apt description of the entire book of Revelation! It’s quite something! That’s why I’m going through these keys, so that we stay with the Bible, stay with the Word of God and we don’t get carried off with weird and strange doctrines and interpretations to please our own vanity.

What we’re studying here is only scratching the surface and doing an overview and a survey so that you will be able to, on your own, study more and put the book of Revelation together yourself and see how fantastic it is when the Word of God is put together this way. Remember, ***the Word of God does not contradict itself anywhere!*** Where it appears that it does *it needs to be understood in the light of other Scriptures*, and you’ll find that there’s no contradiction, indeed!

Let’s come back to Revelation, the first chapter, again, and let’s just key the verses—we’re not going to read much, but we are going to look at

the glorified Christ. This is another vision of Christ in His glorified form, as He is in the midst of the lampstands, which are the seven churches.

Revelation 1:16 shows that “...His countenance *was* as the sun shining in its *full* power.”

Let’s tie this together with other Scriptures in the Old Testament. Since He was the One Who was, and is, and is to come, let’s see that He also revealed His glory partially. What we are seeing here in the book of Revelation is a greater understanding of God. We’re also going to see that John was granted privileges of understanding God and seeing visions that no other man in the entire Bible was allowed to see and hear and write.

Let’s look at Moses, Exodus 33:17: “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘I will do this thing also that you have spoken, for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.’ And he [Moses] said, ‘I beseech You, show me Your glory.’ And He [the LORD] said, ‘I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.’ And He said, ‘**You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live**’” (vs 17-20). That’s why what John saw was *all in vision*. Flesh cannot exist in the glorified presence of God!

With that we can understand that though Jesus was God manifested in the flesh, it would have been an impossibility for Him to be 100% God and 100% man, because the glorified God is 100% God, and 100% man cannot coexist because the glory of God would destroy the flesh. Therefore, He was as much God as He could be in the flesh, as God manifested in the flesh.

Verse 21: “And the LORD said, ‘Behold, *there is* a place by Me, and you shall stand upon a rock. And it will be, while My glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. And I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back parts. **But My face shall not be seen.**” (vs 21-23). That’s what God did!

Exodus 34:6: “And the LORD passed by before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.’” Keep that in mind when we come to Rev. 4 & 5, because that will be added to greatly.

Verse 7: “Keeping mercy to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but Who will by no means clear *the guilty*... [those who won’t repent] ... visiting the iniquity of

the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and to the fourth generation.”

We can see that that is happening today in many cases, in many societies in the world that reject God and go after Satan the devil. And it's going to be happening here. We are seeing a whole generation being punished because of the lack of the knowledge of God and the introduction of the knowledge of Satan. So, He did show His glory and proclaimed His goodness and mercy.

- Isa. 6—about the glory of God that Isaiah saw.
- Ezek. 1; 10

Now, let's come to the New Testament, Acts 7, and let's see something else. Look up everything in a concordance—*the glory of God; His glory; mighty God; Almighty God*—and tie it all together, and I think that you will be amazed at how much it talks about it in the Bible. Then bring all of that to Rev. 1. This is the account of Stephen, but what I want to show is *the glory of God*. We're talking about Jesus, we're talking the Father, we're talking about Revelation.

Acts 7:55: “But he [Stephen], being filled with *the Holy Spirit*, looked intently into heaven *and saw the glory of God...*” That must have been astounding! You talk about giving strength and encouragement to endure the death that he endured right at that moment, that certainly did it.

“...and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right *hand of God*’” (vs 55-56).

So that ties in with the vision that John had (Rev. 1) and subsequent visions that John had. Then later in the book of Revelation we will have things concerning the ‘glory of God’ and everything like that—so this is really quite a thing!

What I am doing in this is helping you to see how compact the book of Revelation is in its meaning, and how everything in the rest of the Bible must be brought together and be brought to bear on the book of Revelation. Being the last book of the Bible, and also being one of the most important books of the Bible, it relies on all the rest of the Bible. The interpretation and understanding of things in the rest of the Bible—especially concerning the prophecies of the end-time—cannot be understood in isolation without Revelation. ***Revelation cannot be understood in isolation without the rest of the Bible!***

Revelation Chapters Two & Three:

We have gone through the **Church at Ephesus** and everything that we covered with that. You can probably add a whole lot more to it. Remember that they have lost their ‘first love’ and that they need to repent and recapture it. They left their first love (Rev. 2:4). We covered the love of God (Matt. 22) but that goes back to Deut. 6, and that goes clear back to the Garden of Eden because Adam and Eve did not love God enough to obey God. Did they not also fall? Were they not removed from the Garden of Eden? *Yes!* So, we have the same thing working here.

The Church of the Smyrneans: This is important to understand. We're not going to go into detail in this, because I do cover it in other sermons. But sufficient to say this: All the way through, in every one of the churches. God says:

Revelation 2:9: “**I know your works...**” He says at the end of Rev. that we're going to be *judged according to our works. Works based on faith are works of faith.* Always remember that!

Here's what's important to understand: “...and tribulation and poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy of those who declare themselves to be Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan” (v 9). When it talks about Satan, what do we have? What do we have to tie in with this?

- Ezek. 28
- Isa. 14
- Gen. 3
- Matt. 16—where Jesus told Peter, when Peter didn't want to believe what Jesus said that He would be crucified, Peter said, ‘Far be it from You, Lord, that it happen to You.’ And Jesus said, ‘Get you behind Me, Satan.’ So this tells us that Satan is there to try and influence and interfere with us.
- Luke 10:18—Jesus said, ‘I saw Satan fall from heaven as lightning.’
- Rev. 12
- Eph. 6
- Col. 2

All of it out of one verse you take Satan and you've got all of that. Take your concordance and look up more.

Verse 10: “Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer...” That's why we have to understand how to endure, how to be faithful, faithful unto death, that you see the world suffers because of their sins. We suffer because of trials and tribulations to make us purified spiritually, so that we grow in character.

Here's something also important to remember: ***You do not have to understand all***

doctrine and everything like that to be saved, because when you're chased around, you don't have time for Bible study. You may have a lot of time for prayer, or you're praying in your mind, etc., but if you are faithful unto death, and truly believe in Christ and have the Spirit of God, He says:

"...I will give you a crown of life. The one who overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death" (vs 10-11). That tells us an awful lot. What is the 'second death'? What do you mean the 'second death'? And the 'wages of sin is death.' So, you've got all of those things that combine with it.

- 1-John 5—You have a sin that is not unto death; you have a sin that is unto death
- Matt. 12—You have the incorrigible sin. This brings out:
 - What is the 'second death'?
 - When does it come?
 - Why does it come?
 - Who suffers the 'second death'?

That's not explained until Rev. 20.

The Church at Pergamos: Verse 12—He says, "...write: These things says He Who has the sharp two-edged sword." What is the two-edged sword of God?

- Heb. 4:12

The sharp, two-edged sword that goes out of His mouth is the Word of God. What is Jesus called? '*In the beginning was the Word*'—He is the Logos. He brings the Word. He spoke the Word of God. This also tells us that the 'sharp, two-edged sword' is going to judge us. You tie that in with

- Rev. 19—that out of His mouth goes a 'sharp, two-edged sword'

—which is *His Word that brings death to the armies battling at Armageddon!* Very interesting, if you look at the word 'sword' and drop the letter 's' you have 'word.' And also, if you put the 's' at the end, you have 'words.'

Verse 13: "I know your works... [God knows our works, no doubt about it. Here's the key: again] ...and **where you dwell, where the throne of Satan is...**" And this tells us how the church falls victim to the society around us, because they brought into the church doctrines of Satan the devil.

What we're going to do in examining this is understand how much we need to realize that the Old Testament has brought into the book of Revelation. Talks about "*those* who hold the teaching of Balaam..." (v 14).

- Num. 22-24—who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel,

to eat things sacrificed to idols...

- Num. 25—and all that fell because of that

'Eating things sacrificed to idols' brings in everything concerning idolatry—doesn't it? Brings in everything concerning all the pagan gods mentioned in the Old Testament, and how the children of Israel fell because of it. "...and to commit fornication" (v 14)—spiritual, physical, the whole thing.

Verse 15: "Moreover, you also have *those* who hold the **doctrine of the Nicolaitanes**, which thing I hate." *Over-lording of the brethren, which is the opposite of what Jesus said.*

- Matt. 20—"he who's going to be greatest among you let him become the servant of all.' And you're not to exalt yourself above anyone—that's what it says: 'he who exalts himself shall be abased.

You can bring all of those things to bare right here on this one verse. Look how much is packed into these three verses.

And when we become like the world, God expects us to, v 16: "Repent!... [Here's another thing to learn]: ...For if *you* do not *repent*, I will come to you quickly, and will make war against them with the sword of My mouth." He's going to judge them by His Word. **Christ can come upon anyone at any time to execute His will!** Did He not come upon Saul when He called him to be the Apostle Paul? *Yes, indeed!* You can add all of those things in there.

The Church at Thyatira: tells us an awful lot, too, and brings in a lot concerning the Old Testament. What is the lesson for the Churches of God? *Satan's devices of old are the same ones that he is going to try and deceive the Church of God with today.* Same one! Nothing new under the sun; just repackaged! To show you how Satan repackages everything to try and trip you up, he does the same things with doctrine. All of the satanic doctrines he does this way.

I'm going to read to you from a book called *The Marketing of Evil* by David Kupelian:

pgs 11-12—The plain truth is [referring to America and our society] within the space of our lifetime much of what Americans once almost universally abhorred has been packaged, perfumed, gift-wrapped and sold to us as though it had great value. By skillfully playing on our deepest felt national values of fairness and generosity and tolerance, these marketers have persuaded us to

embrace as enlightened and noble that which all previous generations since America's founding regarded as grossly self-destructive—in a word, evil!

That's what Satan does and that's what fell upon the Church at Thyatira. Tells them about their works.

Verse 20: "But I have a few things against you, because you allow the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess..." How do we understand about Jezebel?

- 1st–2nd Kings about what happened there. You read about Jezebel and Ahab.

Who was Jezebel? *She was the daughter of the high priest of Baal*, one of the Canaanite gods. This tells us that if it's Baal, *it's sun-worship*. Jezebel, in this case, can represent a *church preaching the doctrines of the sun-god*. Where does that reside? *In Rome!* So this tells us, in history, that the Church of God is going to come into close contact and proximity of those purveyors of evil doctrine, bringing it in perfumed, well dressed doctrinal packages, to make people believe a lie! Have we not experienced that even today? *Yes! Same thing!*

"...to teach and to seduce My servants into committing fornication... [spiritual fornication, physical fornication; divorce and remarriage rampant] ...and eating things sacrificed to idols" (v 20). That is to take the Eucharist or the communion, instead of the Passover.

You have to go back and understand all about the Passover. You have to understand all about when it is to be kept, how it is to be kept. The way that Jesus said it was to be kept. Which means again, we do not bring our own ideas into it, and *you cannot read the book of Revelation in isolation*. You must understand the rest of the Bible.

Here's another thing, v 21: "And I gave her time to repent..." God always gives space to repent. Understand that because people are successful and evil for a season.

- Heb. 11 it says there *is pleasure in sin for a season*
- Psa. 37 tells that *the wicked prosper*.

God is giving them two choices:

1. a chance to repent
2. rope to hang themselves so that when His judgment comes upon them they will not escape

They didn't repent! This tells us something.

Verse 22: "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation..." There great tribulation during the

medieval period, which tore asunder the Catholic Church.

"...unless they repent of their works. And I will kill her children with death..." (vs 22-23). Did that not happen? *Yes, it did!* Is it not going to happen again?

Here's the purpose: "...and all the churches shall know that I am He Who searches *the* reins and hearts..." (v 23). You take that and you go back through all of the Psalms, all of Job, about the reins and the heart and the mind and everything like that. {note sermon: *The Spirit of God, The Spirit of Man, The Seven Spirits of God*}

Verse 24: "But to you I say, and to *the* rest who *are* in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine..." (v 24). Is doctrine important? *Yes!* Anyone who comes to you and says 'doctrine divides, doctrine is not important, we must have love'—that's exactly how it happens. You cannot love God unless you have correct doctrine. You may have *a feeling* in your heart, that may be true, but if you have false doctrine it doesn't matter what you *feel*. Doesn't matter what you believe. It's a matter of what God knows and understands and how you stand before Him. And God is going to judge it on that basis.

Notice how far they went to the depths of satanism. Does that then include things like Masonry, Knights of Columbus, Illuminati, secret things like that? *Yes!* So look how much is contained here. Then he gives the whole account.

The Church at Sardis: Revelation 3:1: They "...have a name as if you are alive, but are dead." It shows that we need to be zealous, because God wants us to do. We need to have *living* faith, *living* understanding, the Holy Spirit in us, and we need to have complete works.

Verse 2: "...I have not found your works complete before God."

(go to the next track)

Very instructive, and you can tie this together other things in the Gospels:

Verse 3: "Therefore, remember what you have received and heard, and hold on *to this*, and repent. Now then, if you will not watch..."

- Matt. 24; 25
- Luke 19

"...I will come upon you as a thief... [do a little Bible study about how Christ is going to come] ...and you shall by no means know what hour I will come upon you." This shows God can come upon you in time and circumstances and judge you very quickly at a time you do not expect! So, don't let

yourself get dead. Don't let yourself fall into those things.

Church at Philadelphia: Verse 7 talks about "...the Holy One, the one Who *is* true..." Look up in a concordance: *the Holy One of Israel; the Holy One, God is Holy*. We're to pursue Holiness.

- Lev. 19
- 1-Pet. 1
- Heb. 11:36—we are to pursue Holiness!

Then God Who is true; the true God, the God of Truth, the Word of Truth—all of that. It just expands out.

"...the One Who has the key of David..." (v 7). What is the 'key of David'? *The key of David is understanding God!*

"...Who opens and no one shuts, and Who shuts and no one opens" (v 7). In other words, unless God is in charge it isn't going to work!

Verse 8: "I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no one has the power to shut it because you have a little strength..." (v 8). It doesn't matter

- how strong you are
- how young you are
- how old you are
- how weak you are

God delights

- in the least
- in the weak
- in the neglected
- in the forgotten

IF *you're faithful to God!* Tie that together with many things.

- How many laws are there in the Old Testament concerning taking care of the weak?
- Concerning taking care of the hungry?
- How many prophecies does it say that you have 'oppressed the fatherless and the widow'?

—those are the ones with 'little strength'—right?

Here's the key: "...and have kept My Word..." (v 8). 'My Word' then includes the whole Bible, and if you keep the Word of God—what does this show? *A high degree of doctrinal purity and understanding! Because you keep it!*

"...and have not denied My name. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan... [tie in all those verses concerning Satan] ...who proclaim themselves to be Jews [true Christians] and are not..." (vs 8-9).

- Rev. 13 about the *beast* with two horns that looks like a lamb and speaks like a dragon
- 1-2 Cor.—all the experiences that Paul went through with false prophets
- Acts 8, 13, 16—about all the false prophets, that they're lying

You can go back and tie that in with all the false prophets of the Old Testament, over and over again.

Then He says, v 10: "Because you have kept the Word of My patience..." Again emphasizing *keeping*. Tie that in with: What is the Word of God? the commandments of God? the statutes of God? the laws of God? All of that *we are to keep*; and expand that out.

There's a blessing for doing it, because He will "...keep you from the time of temptation, which *is* about to come upon the whole world..." {Note #26 this series: *Temptation to Try the Whole World*} Now we're dealing close to the time of the end where it's dealing with the whole world. What are we living in today? *Globalization! Worldwide instant news!* All of that!

Do you suppose—I mentioned earlier about the Black Plague in Europe—that anyone in China or Japan, which had high civilizations back then, knew that the Black Plague was going on in Europe until years after it occurred? *Of course not! They had no communication*. When you read Matt. 24, all the plagues, the pestilence, the earthquakes and everything—and then you look at how we have instant news—we know immediately when something happens! It's everywhere! When the temptation comes upon the whole world—it's going to come!—and that temptation is going to be what? (2-Thess. 2—do you love the Truth?) Well, the Philadelphians do and they're called 'the church of brotherly love'—right? Do you love the Word of God? *If you do, God's going to spare you from the temptation*. That may not be *the* Tribulation—could be, but it may not be. It may be something else.

"...the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth" (v 10).

- Rev. 3:11—a crown
- 2-Tim. 4—'a crown of righteousness is laid up for me.'
- Rev. 20—we're going to 'kings and priests'

—we're going to be given crowns, new names, new garments, new existence—all of those things tie in with that.

Then, it talks about "...a pillar in the temple of My God..." (v 12), which then is a place in New Jerusalem. Here you are one of the least, the weak, and God is going to put those of the Church of Philadelphia into great positions of responsibility.

Why? *Because they knew and kept and loved the Word of God; loved the brethren, and loved God!* You can't love the brethren unless you love God first. Just like you can't love your neighbor as yourself unless you love God first. You don't know the love of God and God has not dealt in your life so you don't know how to love your neighbor, especially when difficulties come. When there are no problems it's easy going. 'Hi, bye, and how are you.' But when times get tough it's a difficult situation, indeed!

We're going to have the name of God on us, the name of the city, New Jerusalem, "...which will come down out of heaven from My God..." (v 12).

- Rev. 21, 22—that all ties in with it.

Then in the beginning we go back to what? *The Garden of Eden that started it all!* So, we have the beginning and the ending again.

The Laodiceans: Lukewarm, cool. Isn't that an interesting expression for today? When things are fine, they're 'cool.' They're neither hot nor cold, they're 'cool.' They are compromising and they don't like the harsh words of God. 'You need to preach in love.' Well, when God says, 'Cry aloud and spare not!' (Isa. 58) He does not say, 'Go and coo and purr to them.'

In what is being said here, and what they need to do, then you need to understand how Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, especially, how that God fortified their minds and gave them strength, and told Jeremiah, 'I'm going to make you a pillar of iron and a brazen wall.' He said to Ezekiel, 'I'm going to make you a forehead like flint!' So, the Laodiceans can't handle that. You've got to be nice, got to be calm, don't rock the boat, don't correct, 'we can't handle that.' What happens? *They get deceived because they're living in the end-time and every thing that they would want in the way of physical goods is there!* So, if you get all wrapped up in those physical things, know for sure: ***spiritually, you're going to be 'wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked'*** and so forth. Then He says, 'Repent and be zealous!'

Revelation Chapter Four:

What a fantastic blessing for the Apostle John. Again, you can take all the glory of God that we looked at there in the first chapter, transfer that over here to Rev. 4 & 5. John was called to go up and see what no man has ever seen! Only one man saw it and that's John, and John was *the disciple whom Jesus loved*. So, he's called to come there and see it. He saw the throne and everything.

Revelation 4:5: "And proceeding from the

throne were lightnings and thunders and voices..."

- Exo. 20
- Deut. 5

When God came down on the mountain to speak—what happened?

- Ex. 19-20—*There were thick clouds, darkness, lightnings, trumpets blowing and everything.*
- Heb. 12—Mt. Zion and seven lamps of fire, which are the seven Spirits of God, *were* burning before the throne.

Then it describes it again about the seven lamps, seven spirits of God and so forth. Then we are given a glimpse into the 'four living creatures and the 24 elders.' This is the first mention of the 24 elders in the entire Bible! And this shows that God is in charge; the 24 elders have their part; all the angels are there.

2-Corinthians 12—John was given a blessing that even the Apostle Paul was not able to have. And he was able to see things of the throne of God and *hear* things and *write* things that Paul was not allowed to do.

- Matt. 16—about the transfiguration; seeing Christ in His glorified form—Moses and Elijah at His right hand and left hand.

That shows the vision of the glorified Christ in that instance.

2-Corinthians 12:1: "Indeed, it is not expedient for me to boast. But I will come to visions and revelations of *the* Lord. I know a man in Christ *who*, fourteen years ago... [he's talking about himself] ...was caught up to *the* third heaven.... [the throne of God] ...(Whether *this man was* in the body, I do not know; or out of the body, I do not know—God knows.) Now, I know such a man (whether *taken up* in the body, or out of the body, I do not know—God knows), *and* that he was caught up to Paradise, and heard unutterable sayings, which a man is not permitted to speak" (vs 1-4). Paul had a little more than Moses.

Now, look at John! We have two whole chapters—Rev. 4-5—describing for mankind, for the very first time, what the throne of God is like, and what is going on there. This tells us that *God is busy doing His work!* And that it is a great spiritual work as well as upholding all of the universe.

Revelation 4:8: "And each of *the* four living creatures had six wings respectively..."

- Ezek. 1—cherubim and seraphim
- Isa. 6

"...and around and within *they were* full of eyes..." (v 8). I can't imagine what that looks like, or what it is, or whether these were actual eyes or they looked

like eyes—I do not know.

“...and day and night they cease not saying, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was, and Who is, and Who *is* to come’” (v 8). They were probably not saying this every second all the time, but at specific times when it came to bow down and worship God; that’s when it occurred.

Verse 9: “And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanksgiving to Him Who sits on the throne, Who lives into the ages of eternity.” This shows that it at a specific time that this takes place; otherwise the only thing going on in heaven is the 24 elders bowing down and casting their crowns down before the throne of God—nothing else would be going on.

Verse 11: “‘Worthy are You, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power because You did create all things, and for Your will they were created and exist.’ That tells you all about the creation of God, the purpose of the world, why man is here—and you can plug in the whole Bible to that.

Revelation Chapter Five:

This tells us that God is actively busy and involved in carrying out His will. What is so dynamic and important about it is this: Since God is spirit and God works through spiritual power, and you cannot see and know and understand that these things are going on, except it be revealed as in chapters 4-5. But it tells us that God is working out everything according to the purpose of His will.

- Eph. 1
- Philip. 2

Add to that:

- the calling of God
 - the work of God
 - the fulfilling of prophecy
 - working in the governments of men to carry out His will
- Isa. 45 how He raised up Cyrus
 - Dan. 2 how He raised up Nebuchadnezzar

—how He raised up Solomon; David; Samuel—going all the way back. ***Nothing of righteousness occurs on this earth except as is directed by God from His throne in heaven above!*** That’s the whole lesson here.

- Acts 1—where the unveiling of prophecies falls under the authority of God the Father. And, as we will see, as He gives it to Jesus Christ to fulfill. They are in complete agreement in everything that is done.

Revelation 5:4: “And I was weeping greatly because no one was found worthy to open and to

read the book, or to look into it.” What does this tell us? ***Not only that God is going to carry it out, but no man—anywhere, anyplace, under any circumstances, in any society down through time until the present time—is going to tell God what to do or how prophecy is to be fulfilled!*** No one was found worthy to open it! or to look into it (v 3).

Verse 5: “Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. Behold, the Lion Who is of the tribe of Judah... [that goes back to where Christ came from: the tribe of Judah, of the ‘stem’ of Jesse] ...the Root of David, has overcome to open the book, and to loose its seven seals.’”

Then he saw a fantastic thing! He saw Christ, v 6: “...standing a Lamb as having been slain...” First of all it’s the lion of the tribe of Judah. This shows the two powers of Christ:

1. His war-making power, as David was
2. His Savior power as the Messiah, the Lamb

“...having seven horns...” (vs 5-6)—in the head of this Lamb. How many churches did we just read about?

- Rev. 2-3—*Seven churches!*

In the Old Testament the ‘horns’ represent *a nation or a country!* So, this is talking about the Church. Who is the Head of the Church? *Christ is!* That’s symbolic of the seven horns that are in His head.

Now then, He came and took the book, He opened it and so forth (v 7). Shows the purpose. I covered that in other sermons. What I want to cover here is concerning Christ and what John saw. This tells us how profound the book of Revelation is in telling us about how God is working and what He is doing and how it’s going to be fulfilled.

Verse 9: “And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are You to take the book, and to open its seals because You were slain, and did redeem us to God by Your own blood, out of every tribe and language and people and nation.’” So much for sacred names. This shows that this ties in with all the Gospels, with all the preaching of the Gospels and the book Acts—‘went out into the whole world.’ This ties into all the epistles that Paul, James, Peter and John wrote. You cannot have salvation, you cannot have redemption out of every country, language and people, and so forth, unless you have the Word of God so they can read it and know it and understand it, and God sends His Spirit to accomplish it.

Verse 10: “And did make us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.”

- Rev. 20—and we shall reign on the earth, not in heaven.

This shows us no one is going to heaven. Here is the vision that is absolutely marvelous and this is what ends *The Messiah*—so if you have *The Messiah* and you feel down in the dumps, put it on and play it and especially play the very last one “Worthy is the Lamb.” That is so inspiring.

John was able to see this whole thing and *write* it for us, v 11: “And I saw and I heard *the* voices of many angels around the throne, and *the* voices of the living creatures and the elders, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb... [no man; no self-appointed ‘messiah’; no self-appointed prophet] ...Who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing’” (vs 11-12). That’s tremendous to understand! Also, what does this tell us? *Christ is going to share it with us, at the resurrection!*

- Heb. 1—because of what Christ did. It shows that He upholds all things by ‘the Word of His power.’

Notice what God controls, v 13: “And every creature that is in heaven... [all the angels] ...and on the earth, and under the earth, and those that are on the sea, and all the things in them, I heard saying...” That’s a fantastic thing, to hear the whole creation honor God! I don’t know exactly how it was done. ...‘To Him Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, *be* blessing, and honor, and glory, and sovereignty into the ages of eternity.’” Quite a magnificent thing—isn’t it?

- Rev. 21, 22 and everything that goes with it.

This is a blessing and understanding that only John was able to receive. Which also tells us this: If John loved Jesus, which he did, and Jesus loved John—the disciple whom He loved most—it also shows that God, through His love, if we love Him, will allow us to come to understanding some of the deep things of God that He reveals to us.

- 1-Cor. 2—about the ‘eye has not seen, the ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love Him.’

That God has revealed them to us by His Spirit. This is what happened here. John was able to see this. One of the greatest blessings of all!

I wonder how John felt after he saw the vision, after he wrote it all down, after he compiled the whole book of Revelation. He was on the Isle of Patmos, it was given to him, it was written down. Then he went to Ephesus, where then he, Philip and Andrew and the other elders canonized the New Testament.

I wonder what John was thinking. Here he was, a man approximately 100-years-old, one who had spent a lot of time with Jesus. He may have been a cousin of Jesus; knew Him growing up. Then, through the ministry, through seeing Christ in His three and a half years in preaching and teaching all the things that went on. And then seeing Him ascend up into heaven after He had given the final instructions (Acts 1).

Then going out and preaching and all the miracles and things that were done; seeing the apostasy, which happened within the Church. Then, as an old man, one of the last living apostles—probably Andrew and Philip with him—how he felt when he had this all written down and then read through it again.

When we read it, there is tremendous inspiration that the Spirit of God has jam-packed into it. I think it’s important to understand this inspiration and the love of God, because this was given so that when he began to reveal the rest of the book of Revelation and all of the horrendous things that were to come, he would be strengthened in faith; he would be strengthened in love; he would be strengthened in steadfastness and he would not waver in seeing all the horror and destruction that was going to come after this. I think that’s a pattern that God does for us. ***He gives us strength and inspiration and help so that when a trial comes we know we can lean on Him!*** We know that it’s all going to work out.

Verse 14: “And the four living creatures said, ‘Amen.’ And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped *Him Who* lives **into the ages of eternity**.” Isn’t that something! ***God has called us to live forever “...into ‘the ages of eternity.’”***

So, this is really quite a fantastic book, but it’s all got to be put together properly with the Spirit of God and the rest of the Bible.

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